

Byron's latest gallery a haven for cloud gazers



Haven Gallery has opened in the heart of Byron Bay in the former Woolies building, and sits alongside and inside the Haven nightclub. The gallery is an interactive landscape where play brings art to life through touch, movement, and curiosity. The exhibition blends light, sound, digital environments, and tactile installations to dissolve the line between audience and artwork. Rooted in sustainability and imaginative experimentation, Haven invites visitors of all ages to explore, participate, and rediscover their creativity. Pictured is gallery manager, Jessica Stephens, at the 'Sound Cloud' touch desk, with Shaun Johnston sitting back and allowing Jessica's composition to wash over him. Photo Jeff 'Clubbing Since the Dark Ages' Dawson

Middle Pocket landowner loses cost case against Council

Byron Shire Council has won a Land and Environment Court (L&EC) case against Middle Pocket landowner, Robert Wookey, whose holiday letting operation was shut down in late 2024. The decision on December 9, 2025 was handed down by J Duggan, and follows a 15 November 2024 court decision where Council successfully obtained urgent interlocutory injunctions to halt short-term tourist rentals of unauthorised buildings on a remote, heavily vegetated and steep property on Skyline Road, Middle Pocket.

Council at the time argued there were safety risks amid the bushfire season.

In May 2025, the L&EC granted a restraint order limiting use of buildings for tourist and visitor accommodation unless consent was granted, leaving only costs to be determined.

The December 9 decision ordered that the first respondent (Wookey) pay Council's costs of the proceedings and the hearing, but made no order as to costs between the Council and the second respondent, Benjamin Webster.

Council's legal team sought a gross sum costs order, supported by an affidavit from its solicitor, quantifying costs at about \$77,000, and Council abandoned any claim for indemnity costs, instead seeking ordinary basis costs.



Are you on holidays here, enjoying yourself? Well then read this... ► p5

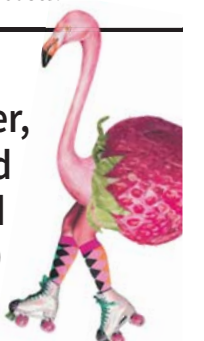
Belle Arnold asks, are you feeling safe? ► p6

Pancho Symes explores the global emergence of the 'surf town' trend ► p7

Mandy's Soapbox: You CAN change the world ► p15

2025, the year of living dangerously - in photos ► p18

Hello Summer, my old friend ► p20



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The *Echo* acknowledges the people of the Bundjalung nation as the traditional custodians of this land and extends respect to elders past, present and future.

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From Darlinghurst to Byron Bay: Dorothy May's artistic odyssey

Paul Bibby

Standing nonchalantly on a street corner in the inner-Sydney suburb of Darlinghurst is an iconic sculpture with a little-known link to the Byron Shire.

Known as *Joy*, the artwork is the world's first public sculpture depicting a sex worker.

Unveiled way back in 1995, the sculpture was controversially removed, less than two years later, owing to vandalism and complaints from conservative folk in Sydney's Eastern suburbs.

But late last year, nearly three decades after it came into the world, *Joy* returned to that same street corner – set in a new bronze casting to withstand attacks from prudes and misogynists.

The artwork's reinstatement, which followed years of campaigning, made headlines across the country.

But few picked up on the Byron connection.

The artist responsible for bringing *Joy* back into the world was long-time Byron resident, Dorothy 'Loui' May.

Having gone by the name Loui Fraser for most of her working life, the acclaimed sculptor returned to her birth name when she fulfilled a life-long dream by moving to the Shire 27 years ago.

'I never set out to be controversial with *Joy*,' Ms May told *The Echo* in an extended interview late last year.

'I just saw that there was a plinth there and thought "that's the perfect spot for a sculpture".'

'I'd walked though those streets as a young student to go through East Sydney Tech... and seen the prostitutes standing in the doorways smoking. But the reaction when she was unveiled... just an onslaught... letters to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Wentworth Courier*... she was vandalised a couple of times as well..

'To this day, people are still complaining. It took 12 months for it to come through City of Sydney Council [the second time] and some of the same people wrote to Council saying that they didn't want the sculpture there.'

Since moving to Byron in the late 90s, Ms May has enjoyed a more peaceful existence. But she has still



Dorothy at her Sunrise home. Photo Jeff Dawson. Inset: Dorothy 'Loui' May at the second unveiling of *Joy* in Darlinghurst in November 2025. Photo Annabel Osborne Photography



The sculpture *East* at its home in Brooklet.

contributed to the Shire's public artistic life through a number of iconic sculptures.

Drawn to Byron

'I always knew that Byron was my place,' she says.

'Every day I wake up and I'm happy that I'm here. The fact that you can drive for two minutes and you're in these beautiful hills, or standing on a fabulous beach...'

Having lived on Sydney's conservative North Shore for a big chunk of her adult life, she craved a more progressive culture where difference was celebrated rather than scorned. 'I just didn't fit in on the North Shore,' she says.

'I just felt, and I still feel, that anyone can feel accepted here in Byron. I know the feeling in town is changing. It's obviously more commercial than it was. But the beating heart of the town is still there, underneath.'

It was a desire to depict that beating heart which led Ms May to create her first local sculpture, *Hug*, which features two people locked in a classic Byron embrace.

Unveiled as part of the opening of the rebuilt Byron

Community Centre back in 2002, *Hug* was inspired by a random moment in the centre of town.

'I'd sort of made my mind up to retire from making public art when I moved here,' she says. 'But, not long after I arrived, I thought "I'd really like to do a piece for Byron".'

'One day I saw two people hugging in the middle of the pedestrian crossing... and I thought "that's the Byron hug" and that was the inspiration.'

Two other artworks followed.

Founding *Echo* editor sculpture

One was a sculpture of *The Echo*'s founding editor Nicholas Shand.

This sculpture was unfortunately repeatedly vandalised while sitting in its home in Stan Robinson park, Mullumbimby, and had to be removed.

The other, *East*, is located at the Gaia health retreat in Brooklet.

'That piece represents how I felt as a woman living

on the most easterly point in Australia,' Ms May says of *East*.

'The fact that Earth spins towards the east means that Byron leads Australia into the next day, and it just reminded me of a figurehead leading a ship into the new world.'

The sculpture of Nicholas Shand was a more difficult project. 'That was one of the more challenging ones to do... because he was a real person,' Ms May says.

'I only had a few photos to go on. But it was so rewarding to see it unveiled in the park. The idea was that people could go and sit next to Nick and have a conversation.'

'It was such a shame that it was vandalised so badly.'

Why the statue was damaged remains a mystery, but Ms May has long been aware of the capacity of public artworks to stir the passions of those who behold them.

'I think the role of art, and particularly public art, is to make people think and to question,' she says.

'Once you've done that piece and it's out there, you've got to let go of it. Whatever people's reaction is up to them...'

'I've never wanted to do shelf sculpture. It's about communication – just trying to get a message through. That's why I was particularly happy when I was asked to do the Nicholas Shand statue, because he was all about getting the message out into our community.'

'I would love to see more of that kind of art in our community here in Byron.'

\$2m boost for Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital



Richmond MP Justine Elliot with a patient and vet Dr Bree Talbot. Photo supplied

Richmond MP Justine Elliot has announced that the Albanese government is investing \$2 million to support Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital deliver life-saving care to sick, injured, and orphaned native wildlife.

'I'm proud to be delivering on my 2025 election commitment for \$2 million for the expansion of operations at the Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital,' said Mrs Elliot.

4,000 animals

'This funding will support the Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital to continue their incredibly important work in treating and rehabilitating native animals. This funding

is expected to support around 4,000 animals, while keeping skilled veterinarians and vet nurses employed.

'Since 2020, the Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital, which is a registered business of Wildlife Recovery Australia, has delivered quality care to more than 10,000 wildlife patients.

'This is part of the Australian Government's Local Environmental Projects Program that is protecting and improving our environment and heritage.

'Labor is taking strong action to better protect and recover our native wildlife, including on the North Coast, and this funding is helping do just that,' said Mrs Elliot.

Council seeks to improve its community consultation

Paul Bibby

Byron Shire Council has voted to beef up its community consultation process for large projects including significant policy changes.

Under a motion passed at the last Council meeting for 2025, every major project, or other matter that would normally go out for public exhibition, must now be accompanied by its own detailed 'community consultation plan'.

These consultation plans will set out the methods, timeframes, target audiences and accessibility measures to be used for community engagement on the given project or issue.

This is designed to ensure that consultation with the community on significant projects and issues is undertaken in a clear and consistent manner.

Greens Councillor Elia Hauge, who moved the motion, told Council that it had been failing to consistently act in alignment with its own community engagement principles, including its commitment to be open, transparent and accountable.

Cr Hauge said this was illustrated by a number of recent matters, including the lack of meaningful engagement with young people in relation to Council's playground policy, and the lack of effective consultation regarding the proposed development of the former Mullumbimby Hospital site.

'Councillors require sufficient information about planned engagement approaches to assess whether proposed consultation methods are appropriate.'

– Cr Elia Hauge

'I think we do a great job, and sometimes we need to make a call which the community won't agree with.'

– Cr Michael Lyon

'These examples demonstrate a gap between Council's engagement principles and their practical implementation,' Cr Hauge said.

'Councillors require sufficient information about planned engagement approaches to assess whether proposed consultation methods are appropriate to the scale and significance of the decisions being made.

'This is particularly important for matters affecting community access to democratic processes, youth participation, or other groups who face barriers to engagement.

'Transparent engagement planning strengthens decision-making by allowing councillors to identify potential gaps in consultation approaches before documents go on exhibition.

'It also builds community confidence by demonstrating that Council takes its engagement commitments seriously and plans appropriately for different consultation contexts.'

Councillors Lyon, Dods against

But independent councillors Michael Lyon and Jack Dods spoke and voted

accompanying Cr Hauge's motion, Council's General Manager Mark Arnold said it was 'not operationally feasible to include draft Communications and Engagement Plans in agenda reports'.

'As detailed in our Community Engagement Strategy, the engagement process considers a range of factors including who the project will

impact, how much impact the project will have and how interested the community might be,' Mr Arnold said.

'These plans are operational documents that evolve throughout a project lifecycle, and often require adjustment based on Council decisions, statutory requirements, and project milestones.

'Developing these plans prematurely can lead to significant rework, duplication of effort, and increased costs, which is not sustainable given current staff capacity and budget constraints.'

But these concerns ultimately fell on deaf ears. Councillors passed the new consultation measure by a vote of seven councillors to two. Read more at www.byron.nsw.gov.au.



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Court approves 25 dwellings on flood-prone Mullum land

Hans Lovejoy

A contentious, large development application (DA) for 25 multi-dwellings on flood-prone land next to Mullumbimby Showground will go ahead, after Byron Shire Council lost their second case against developer Callum Sked in court on December 22, 2025.

Surrounding residents at 30 Chinbible Avenue, Mullumbimby were united in their objection to the \$17.3m development, which they claimed was excessive in its bulk and scale; had inadequate drainage; lacked open space; and did not provide sufficient flood evacuation options.

Residents say they were unsupported by Council throughout the process.

Regarding a previous DA for the subdivision of the land, residents say they were only alerted to the settlement when they found the judgment, on April 30, 2025, on the NSW Caselaw website.

In that case, Sked took Council to the Land & Environment Court (L&EC) over a 'deemed refusal' which is where a council is accused of not assessing DAs in the statutory timeframe.

It became the subject of a compulsory conciliation process conducted behind closed doors, overseen by the court. According to the judgement by Commissioner P Nichols, Council's lawyers agreed to the applicant amending DA 10.2024.154.1, which led to the appeal being upheld and conditions imposed.

This also means that the DA avoids being debated and determined by elected councillors.

With Council losing that case [*Sked v Byron Shire Council (2025) NSWLEC 1265*], all costs were incurred by Council.



Image from DA 10.2024.154.1.

In May 2025, it was revealed by residents that no staff report on the DA was ever provided publicly.

Resident Aaron Diehm told *The Echo* at the time, 'Why hasn't Council gone into bat for us? Silence from our elected representatives is simply not good enough.'

Court conditions

The latest win by Sked was handed down on December 22, 2025 in the L&EC by Commissioner Shona Porter [*Sked No.2 Pty Ltd v Byron Shire Council (2025) NSWLEC 1913*].

Like the previous case, Sked appealed in the court against Council, owing to a 'deemed refusal'. As the respondent, Byron Shire Council was represented by Solicitor P Vergotis and Madison Marcus Law Firm.

A key issue, according to the judgement, was: 'At the hearing, Council confirmed that the remaining issues in the Statement of Facts and Contentions (SOFAC) had been resolved, with the exception of part of contention 32: (1) The development application should be refused

in the public interest having regard to the public submissions received.'

One impacted resident told *The Echo*, 'The developers' lawyer correctly pointed out Council led no evidence on the issue of public interest. It would only have been mentioned in objectors' submissions, which carried little weight in the end.'

The judgement reads, 'While the contentions are generally resolved, the court, in standing in the shoes of the consent authority, is still required to determine if consent should be granted with consideration of s 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA Act)*... I accept the parties' agreement that the substantive contentions have been resolved...'

As part of conditions for approval, there is, 'No fill or excavation proposed on site in the floodplain'... and, 'The Flood Assessment Report and modelling considered the projected climate change effects for both 2050 and 2100, and incorporated the recent 2022 flood event in Mullumbimby.'

And, 'Prior to the issue of

the Construction Certificate, all dwellings are required to provide detailed plans of a suitable 'shelter-in place' (SIP) area that: (i) is above the PMF level as shown in Table 1 in condition 20 for flood evacuation purposes during larger floods; and (ii) has a minimum area of 10m² and include a toilet and handwash basin'.

Commissioner Porter wrote, 'Council had raised at Contention 29 that the DA should be refused as it was contrary to the objectives of the *EPA Act* and aims of the BLEP (Byron Local Environment Plan) on the basis of the proposed dwellings resulting in an increase in flooding.'

'There are no express requirements [in] regard to either the objects of the *EPA Act* or aims of the BLEP, even having regard to s 39(4) of the *Land and Environment Court Act 1979 (LEC Act)*. Notwithstanding, flooding has been addressed and [is] satisfied.'

Public submissions

Commissioner Porter wrote, 'I agree that the majority of the concerns raised by the community are genuine and relevant to the consideration of the amended DA. However, the making of a submission and raising concerns by the public does not rise to a contested issue that joins the parties (see: *Billyard Ave Developments Pty Limited v The Council of the City of Sydney [2025] NSWLEC 22* at [24] and [78]).'

Regarding the strong opposition by neighbours as a factor in determination, Commissioner Porter wrote, 'I accept Sked's submissions as to the weight to be given to community objections and that higher weight is to be given to expert evidence (see *Port Stephen Pearls Pty Ltd v Minister for Infrastructure and Planning [2005] NSWLEC 426* at [72] - [73]).'

In line with 'future character'

While Commissioner Porter acknowledged that, 'The proposed development will be different to the existing subdivision and built form rhythm of Garden Avenue and surrounding streets', she said, 'However, the proposed development is highly compliant with the key planning controls such as height and FSR (floor space ratio).'

'With consideration of the architectural plans... I find that the proposed development is consistent with the desired future character that is facilitated by the suite of planning controls applying to the site.'

Profoundly disappointed

One impacted resident, Chris Leach, told *The Echo*, 'A profoundly disappointing decision. The legitimate concerns of residents were largely ignored. Although some minor concessions about use of fill and stormwater were negotiated, Council and L&EC demonstrated an essentially pro-development stance on density and the compromise of the local character and environment.'

Former Council planning director, Ray Darney, was employed by residents to defend the DA, and told *The Echo*, 'Obviously I am disappointed with the L&E Court's decision.'

'This cookie-cutter style of housing is a precedent for the residential development in the towns in our beautiful Shire', he said.

Sked previously proposed a similar, albeit smaller, high-density DA on unstable, slip-prone land in Ocean Shores in 2019, and faced stiff opposition from residents. He took Council to court over a 'deemed refusal' and won.

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Are you on holidays here, enjoying yourself? Well then read this...

Mandy Nolan

It's holiday time. It's hot. The beach is pumping. There's a sparkle in the air. They're here. The people who work in shit jobs that are killing them, with people they hate, to save for this two weeks of Byron. To relax. Have fun. To spend money. To get photos for Insta. This is the 'experience.' When you live in a place where other people take their holidays it's a conundrum. Where do we go for holidays? Somewhere not as good as where we live? Where can, we who live here, turn up to annoy people trying to live their non-holiday day-to-day work lives? Northcote? Surry Hills? Paddington? Can we swim with the hipsters? Run with the suits? Go belly up in a bunch of baristas? What's our holiday experience?

Chilled at everyone being here

And is it possible to have a 'holiday' at home?

I've tried it. And the short answer is no. Everyone comes here. And then they say, 'it's not like it used to be'. And we think yes that's true. It's mainly because two million holiday makers turn up each year, and that's pretty impactful when it comes to failing to retain the 'chill' vibe. We're not chill. Sorry. We're cranky. We're cranky because we can't afford to live in the place where we work. We're cranky because even a house that flooded in our coastal villages can cost over a mill. And we don't always love seeing houses that our kids or friends could be renting, be used for a party palace. But we get it. Holidays are cool. And Byron, is still a pretty awesome place to be. And we must continue to perform 'chill' even if we're very, very far from 'chill'.

Homeless thing

We love that you are having a good time, even when we're not.



Photo altered by Hans Lovejoy.

'We're not chill. Sorry. We're cranky. We're cranky because we can't afford to live in the place where we work.'

We do have this homeless thing. Did you notice? People sleeping on cardboard, or under a sarong. Just like in the city. Try not to look. It really wrecks the holiday vibe to be reminded that we all live in a capitalist society where structural injustice means some people can afford \$10,000 a week for a beach house, while some people end up sleeping on the actual beach

and don't even have \$10. But they know how to chill. So a lot of us are slogging it out. People on holidays, when you're trying to work, are annoying. I'm the middle-aged woman in a Byron Bay supermarket shaking my head at a couple of young women in Brazilian bikinis, saying 'put some pants on'. I'm trying to buy goats cheese and batteries. But why should they?

Pantless vacay

They are on holidays, and apparently, you don't need to wear pants when you're on vacay!

I imagine myself in Northcote at Aldi wearing a G-string on my next inner city Melbourne getaway. Then I see myself being arrested. Which to be fair, is one way to make a holiday 'unforgettable.'

Roman holidays

Apparently the Romans were the first people to have a holiday. But they didn't go away for a few weeks. They went away for two years. That was pre Jetstar \$89 flights. When you had to travel via chariot or foot, you ain't coming home in a hurry. Probably took six months to even get there.

Holidays weren't really a thing for me as a kid. We didn't go skiing or overseas. A week at my grandparents in Maryborough, or two weeks in a caravan at Hervey Bay with my mum's best friend - another single mum. We'd squeeze into the annexe, shower in thongs and if we behaved we'd get a fire engine with our fish and chips at the local pub on half-price kids night.

Holidays were for affluent families. I remember my mum saving for our week at a two-star Caloundra Hotel and someone stealing \$150 from an envelope in her bag and us having to cancel and go home.

Living in a holiday spot makes me super sensitive to people who live in the places where I travel.

I am aware that while I might wake up with nothing to do but eat and look at stuff, I try not to piss them off, but in no time at all I'm going to galleries, looking at stuff and pointing at monuments.

There's something bizarrely garish and stressful about achieving maximum holiday relaxation.

Because it's expensive. The more you pay.

The more pressure on the stay. Relax. Quick. More relaxing. And see stuff.

Climb stuff. Eat stuff. Buy stuff. Until, you're not relaxed anymore.


You're stuffed.

Dying to get home.

To get off the holiday treadmill.

To recover.

And to put on some pants.



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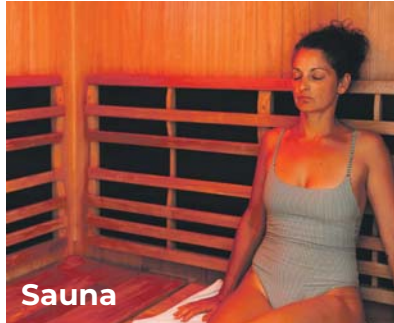
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Are you feeling safe? 'Tis the season, after all

Photo & story Belle Arnold

It's that time of year, the social norms of expectation for festive celebrations, generosity and decadence, on the back of exhaustion of the closing of the working year, and another year of housing and economic pressure.

It's a complex time of year, and I have noticed we are shifting away from wishing friends and family a merry and bright season, to a safe season.

As I child, I remember hearing this on network television commercials in reference to ever increasing road tolls.

Safety on the roads continues to be an important message at this time, the cocktail of human emotions, stress, alcohol, family dynamics and travel to be with loved ones is a recipe for disaster, so yes, do take care on the roads.

Safety defined

The reminder to have a safe season has a much deeper application than the roads.

So what is safety, the *Oxford Dictionary* defines safety as 'freedom from danger and risks of injury', a significant freedom indeed.

Safety is a fundamental human need, understood as the second tier in Abraham Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs', safety essential for survival and wellbeing after basic physiological needs are met.

Safety encompasses



'Safety is a human right, enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, we all have a right to feel safe and respected.'

physical safety, financial security, health, and a sense of order and predictability, crucial for preventing anxiety and fostering human flourishing.

Economic, social and political systems globally have not fostered a sense of human safety but for the elite rich. Complex social and health systems continue to be developed in Australia to address the lack of safety that is the result.

This lack of safety is a major driver of mental illness such as anxiety, phobia, depression, and PTSD.

(source: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/).

Trauma is a rupture, physical or psychological damage in relationship with self, community or Country

(environment).

The repair to trauma is the restoration of safety.

Safety is required to heal, so how are we building safety as a nation or community?

Safety is a human right, enshrined in the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*.

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, 'We all have a right to feel safe and respected. We all have a right to live our lives free from violence.'

Violence, harassment and bullying can violate the right to safety and impact on

is some guarantee of safety, even from those that we love most.

Australian 2025 data from the Australia Institute of Health and Welfare research and ABS raises concern with family, domestic, and sexual violence (FDSV), showing high rates of intimate partner violence (21 per cent of adults experienced partner abuse), significant child protection involvement (emotional abuse/family violence common), and concerning trends like increasing male perpetration of intimate partner violence.

The statistics are horrendous and they are concerning because significant FDSV goes unreported, unsupported and unhealed.

The most alarming of these data sets are around perpetrator trends.

'A decade-long study indicates over one in

three Australian males have used intimate partner violence, with an increasing number using violence for the first time annually' - AIHW June 2025 (source: www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence).

Distractions and disconnections

Clearly society is going backwards.

With increasing technology, and luxury, there is also increased distraction from the extreme pressure and disconnect in our communities and families.

We have lost our responsibility to each other and ourselves.

Safety is critical to the healing of all victims of violence, and an essential ingredient to peace.

Safety is more complex than the human experience. How do we as humans experience safety when there is no safety on Country? Increasingly at this time of year on Bundjalung Country 'Moogerahmbu - Storm Season' has brought extreme weather impacting our collective safety and the safety of all species on Country.

Patterns of weather that have existed for thousands of years, undermined by the impacts of climate change from global capitalism, are changing and we are seeing violent results.

Safety of Country

In November 2025, thunder, so loud and close to the Earth, shook the walls of my Besser block house and my body shook with it.

Without safety of Country our experience of safety is undermined. Restoring safety to the Earth must be the highest priority for society.

For the current season though, you can bring safety to all you touch through kindness, patience and acceptance.

Give the gift of grace and understanding to those who cause frustration, pause and reflect on your words to truly give kindness in your words and actions.

And please, have a safe season.

Happy new year from all of us at O'Meara Dental.

We wish our local community a happy and healthy year ahead. Thankyou for trusting us with your care. We look forward to keeping Byron shire smiling in 2026.



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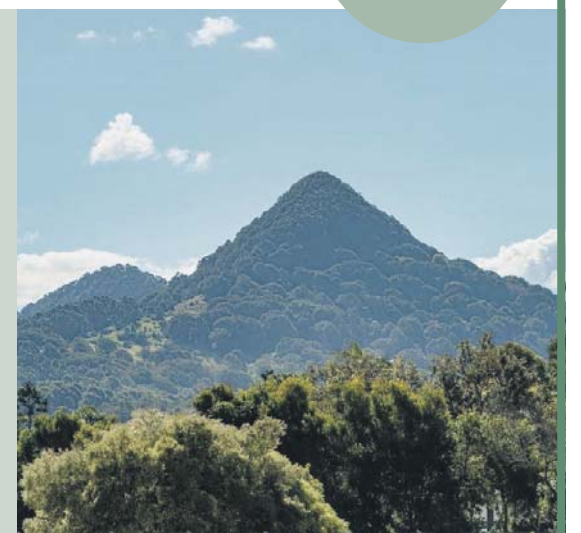


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The global emergence of the 'surf town' trend

Pancho Symes

Gentrification is the makeover process that a town undergoes when wealthier people move in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, often displacing current inhabitants in the process.

Ironically, its original character – that which first made it marketable as a destination – is sacrificed by the efforts of developers to appease its affluent visitors.

Byron Bae

This happened to Byron Bay. What was once a sleepy seaside village for whalers and pig farmers is now a hyperactive parade for influencers with selfie-sticks and Hollywood glitterati, hoping to enjoin themselves to the 'cool vibe' of the place.

Byron still sits on that beautiful Bay, but it's quiet old charm is mouldering somewhere in the soup of big brand-stores that have cloned the streetscape to behave like all the other 'bohemian' surf towns around the world.

Byron Bay is still utterly beautiful on a good day.

But on a bad day, spent navigating parking fines, fin-chops at The Pass, the catwalk on the footpaths, and the guy-in-the-park who wants to fight you, Byron can be a nightmare: a very pretty nightmare.

In his chapter, 'Problematising Place Promotion and Commodification,' Nigel Morgan states in his 2014 book, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Tourism*, that 'tourism discourse' gives places 'personalities,' homogenising them with a vibe.

'This immobilises our dynamic world,' says Morgan, 'changing it to spectacle and straitjacketing it in cliché'

'The representations of a place suck out its historical matter, embalming it in myth.'

For instance, Byron Bay is a home for people of varying ages and personalities with a rich history in production, and yet today it exists in the public mind only in two images – that of a stoned surfer or a plastic-lipped influencer.

Places were once known for the items they produced. Nowadays, they are known for the 'vibes' they produce.



Taghazout Beach in Morocco. Photo www.tripadvisor.com.au

Perhaps we have become less practical in today's age, instead dwelling in a deluded bubble of shallow fascinations.

'F*ck the customer'

Noel Gallagher was talking about music when he said 'F*ck the customer – he doesn't know what he wants.'

But the same principle goes for tourism. When developers kill a town's originality by supplying the same branded stores, and array of beige cafes serving expensive coffee with strange milk, they are trying to focus group the place to its customer.

But in these surf towns, less is actually more. The rugged is fresh and the uncommon is hope-inspiring for visitors.

'Commodified places often become a celebration of the culture of the copy,' Morgan said.

The global crawl of the 'surf-town' trend is representative of this.

I see the same symbols on every coastline I visit around the world, from Indonesia to Portugal, and from Sri Lanka to Peru. Nowhere is safe from smashed avo on toast or Nicki Minaj's 'Starships.'

Taghazout: prayer calls with Tinder swipes

Last year, I visited Taghazout – a surf town on the Moroccan coast.

This was an interesting town, because if you stopped and looked around for two minutes, you'd see tradition and modernity grinding simultaneously.

For many Westerners, Taghazout is a destination 'to get tubed, lit and laid,'

and yet for locals it is still a home – a place of practice, not hedonism. Every night in Taghazout, the call to prayer bounces along the desert cliffs like a ghost.

It is a reminder of a history, and a strict set of local values that survive beneath the thin layer of 'Westerner' film accumulated on the surface of the place.

In between the holiday-makers' vanity parade, taxi drivers point their prayer rugs toward Mecca and pray in the carparks.

While the vacationers sleep off their stork hangers, bands of grandmothers work in little pink tile kitchens, frying onion for 'msemen,' and flattening dough possibly with the same technique passed down since Carthaginian times.

On Main Beach, three women wearing black hijab's stride past all the cooking vacant flesh like it isn't even there. On the same beach, Muhammed and Ismael rent surfboards and wetsuits to tourists learning to surf.

'We sleep on the beach each night so that no one will steal our surfboards,' says Ismael, pointing to a little tent and a tagine on a bed of coals.

'One of us must always keep watch, because ours is a desirable business around here,' says Muhammad.

When I hear of this dedication and see the extent to which foreign money feeds local families, I understand that it is ignorant to demonise tourism.

The problem lies in gentrification, and when contrived development remodels the town for affluent guests who do not appreciate the place beyond how it can serve their own desires.

On a walk through the

all the flies,' Moroccan Clooney said.

'I used to surf at Anchor Point, but now it's full of idiots from all over the world who don't understand proper surf etiquette.

They've just wanted to stand up on a board so they can have "tum tum". Now this town is full of guys with soft boards looking for tum tum. They don't respect our values...'

'What is tum tum?' I asked him. With a grin, Clooney demonstrated the act of 'tum-tum,' thrusting his hips back and forth like an old hand.

Social media degrades tourism

Taghazout still held admirably on to its local customs, weathering the storm of cross-cultural confusion. Worryingly however, the growing force of social media and influencer culture could utterly ruin places like this, as tourists flock to 'Instagrammable' destinations purely for a selfie.

Never before has travel been so performative and self-centred.

This global fixation on 'capturing the aesthetic' causes gentrification, because 'trending' destinations are literally tidied up to provide satisfactory photo material.

This degraded type of tourism is white-washing fresh, stimulating places around the world. To be shocked, and curious, and to face the unknown is part of the human experience. Once these places are gone, they are gone forever.

This is a nuanced issue, because tourism is a balancing act between local economic growth and cultural preservation.

A middle-ground is needed between the unfor-giving sweep of modernity, and the peaceful stability of tradition.

Above all else, a town must continue to function as a place that supports its originals first.

It shouldn't be constructed into an image for a select group of affluent guests.

■ Pancho Symes is an *Echo* intern.

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Woman accused of violence, stealing food in Lismore

A 51-year-old woman is to face court in February after allegedly stealing food from a shop in Lismore's city centre and biting the shop owner when confronted.

Report on 4WD beach access fails to address risks

At its December meeting, Richmond Valley Council, in a five-part motion, resolved to continue to allow 4-wheel-drive vehicles (4WDs) access to Airforce Beach, Evans Head, but locals say risks have not been addressed.

Beekeeper support announced by NSW government

New honey bee compliance officers, a major R&D program, and tailored education and resources are part of a \$9.5 million NSW Varroa Mite Management program, commencing in January 2026.

Alleged Ballina DV offender arrested after car crash

A 47-year-old Ballina man is to face court next month over a series of alleged offences including a drunken car crash.

19 arrested for DV offences in Tweed-Byron

Another high number of domestic violence related arrests was reported in the most recent weekly count from Tweed-Byron Police.

Christmas Day cross-border police chase ends in Ballina arrests

Two adults and a teenager have been charged over an alleged car chase from across the Queensland border into NSW on Christmas Day.

www.echo.net.au

Clarence at risk of mining contamination, says community group

Hans Lovejoy

The Clarence Catchment, an important tributary which runs from the Great Dividing Range to the coast at Yamba/lluka, is under threat from mining and the NSW Labor government is ignoring calls for its protection, says community group Clarence Catchment Alliance (CCA).

Covering an area of over 22,000 square km, it is NSW's biggest coastal catchment, and is known for its stunning beauty, massive floods, and rich biodiversity (like eastern freshwater cod). Yet the catchment is also earmarked for mining exploration, with licences being granted by the NSW government. And given that the catchment is also a crucial freshwater source, supporting communities and agriculture, CCA have called on the NSW government to 'Ban all mineral exploration and mineral mining activity in the Clarence Catchment'.

In a statement, the CCA said they 'have been patient; deliberately so.'

'Since delivering a comprehensive 120-page evidence document to NSW Ministers' offices at Parliament House on 5 August 2025, the CCA deliberately held back from going to the media.

'That document, eight years in the making, did not just outline the serious risks of mineral mining in the Clarence Catchment, it also set out clear, lawful and practical actions available to Government to protect the region.

'We waited in good faith for the formal, detailed and considered responses our community deserves. We placed trust in the system; and in the responsibility of the two key portfolios that hold the levers for protection in NSW. To say we are disappointed in the response, or lack of, is an understatement.

'The CCA allowed time for the system to work, and for the two key portfolios that hold the levers for protection in NSW to respond:

- The minister responsible for the *Mining Act*
- The minister responsible for the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resources and Energy) 2021 (Mining SEPP).

'This approach was taken because the CCA's goal has always been clear; evidence-led protection of the Clarence Catchment, not political theatre. But the time for silence, and for generic reassurance, has passed.



What the CCA want

'The CCA formally called on the NSW Government to: 1. Ban all mineral exploration and mineral mining activity in the Clarence Catchment, because this is a high-rainfall, flood-prone drinking water catchment where contamination risks are heightened and irreversible once industrial activity begins. 2. Use existing powers under the *Mining Act* to cease the renewal and transfer of exploration licences and mining leases, revoke existing licences, and require stronger assessment in recognition of the Clarence Catchment's unique risk profile. 3. Amend Schedule 1 of the Mining SEPP to prohibit mineral exploration and mineral mining across the Clarence Catchment, including the relevant feeder sources to the Clarence River from surrounding local government areas. 4. Amend the *Mining Act 1992* to prohibit exploration and mining in major drinking water catchments, culturally and environmentally sensitive areas, and flood- and landslip-prone regions, including the Clarence Catchment.

'The CCA also made a specific, moderate and entirely lawful request to the minister for natural resources to use her discretion to call in environmental and social impact studies for exploration licence 'applications targeting antimony on the Dorrigo Plateau, inside the Clarence-Coffs regional drinking water catchment.

What the CCA received, and what it did not

'The CCA has received no response at all from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Paul Scully, despite that portfolio holding responsibility for the Mining SEPP and the planning mechanisms that can prohibit mining and exploration in sensitive and high-risk regions. 'Silence is not neutral. It leaves

communities without clarity, accountability, or assurance that drinking water protection is being treated with urgency.

'The CCA has received a response from the Minister for Natural Resources, Courtney Houssos, that does not address the evidence submitted, nor the specific Clarence Catchment-focused requests put forward. Instead, the response relies on broad descriptions of existing regulatory processes and general assurances about how mineral exploration is managed in NSW. However, exploration licences are issued for the purpose of progressing toward extraction and potential mining lease approvals. Approving exploration in a flood-prone, drinking water catchment without first addressing whether mining is acceptable in that location defers risk rather than managing it. The detection of antimony in the Coffs Clarence drinking water is a case in point.

'Also, the response does not address the CCA's call for environmental and social impact studies on the Exploration Licence Applications (ELAs) for antimony on the Dorrigo Plateau. It does not engage with flood-driven contamination risk, nor with the extensive global and Australian evidence of tailings dam failures and water contamination associated with mineral mining, particularly in high-rainfall environments.

'The Minister's response also failed to address a specific issue raised directly during the CCA's parliamentary meetings.'

Public comments

'More than 10,000 residents who signed a petition, and the 72 per cent of residents who responded to a Southern Cross University survey, all expressing opposition to mineral mining in the Clarence Valley.

'This is not an abstract policy discussion. The

Clarence Catchment is a flood-prone drinking water catchment. Contamination of water is heightened in such areas. Once contamination occurs, it cannot be undone by rehabilitation conditions or regulatory assurances. That is why precaution matters at the exploration stage, not after harm has occurred.

What happens next

'The CCA is again calling on the NSW Government Ministers responsible to respond properly, in writing, by addressing the evidence and specific requests point-by-point. The community is seeking clear answers as to why the evidence presented has not been sufficient to

trigger environmental and social impact studies.

'The CCA remains respectful, but will also remain clear, persistent and public. The region's rivers, drinking water, culture, economy and future generations deserve nothing less.

How the community can help

'Community members are encouraged to write respectfully to the Ministers and local representatives responsible to protect the region from mineral mining, say CCA.

Further information, the list of MPs, and guidance are available at www.clarence-catchmentalliance.com.au.

Holidays: a time to be careful

Northern NSW Local Health District is reminding local residents and visitors of the various healthcare options available to support people over the Christmas and New Year period.

The District's Executive Director Clinical Operations, Lynne Weir, said while hospital emergency departments will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, people can also seek medical care from a local GP, an urgent care clinic, medical centre, pharmacist or virtual service.

'If an illness or injury is not serious or life-threatening, we encourage people to call healthdirect on 1800 022 222, for free, instant health advice any time of the day or night. A registered nurse will answer your call, ask some questions and connect you with the right care,' Ms Weir said. 'Healthdirect is great for anyone who is not familiar with local health services, are unsure where to go to seek help, or get healthcare advice.'

Other help

Lynne Weir said, 'We are also fortunate to have two Medicare Urgent Care Clinics in the Northern NSW region, at Lismore and a new clinic at Tweed Heads South, which opened last week. These clinics offer free Medicare-funded services for people with non-life-threatening conditions, providing greater choice when people need urgent or after-hours medical care.'

'Non life-threatening injuries or illnesses include minor infections, minor fractures, sprains, sports injuries, neck

and back pain, urinary tract infections, and insect bites.'

The Medicare Urgent Care Clinics are open from 7.30am to 7.30pm, seven days a week, 365 days per year, including public holidays. They offer same-day, bulk-billed care with walk-in access.

The Lismore Urgent Care Clinic, is at 33-35 Rous Road, Goonellabah.

The Tweed Urgent Care Clinic, is at 33-35 Corporation Circuit, Tweed Heads South.

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, always call Triple Zero (000). Ms Weir said she wanted to thank to all NNSWLHD staff for their commitment and efforts during what was a busy year for health services in the region.

'As 2025 ends and we move towards 2026, I'd like to acknowledge and thank all staff across our hospitals and services who continue to provide quality care.

'Please look after yourselves and each other as we come together over the holiday season. Make safe choices, check in on loved ones, stay hydrated, and seek shade or air-conditioning during extreme temperatures. A little care goes a long way.'

For free health advice anytime day or night, call healthdirect on 1800 022 222.

Need support in your language? The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) is on 131 450 and ask for healthdirect.

More info on mental health services and support can be found on the NSW Health website at www.health.nsw.gov.au.

Happy New Year to all our readers – thanks for sticking with us through a tough year

In 2026, The Echo turns 40!

Turning 40 is impressive for a free community newspaper held together by caffeine, deadlines, and the collective belief that local news is still worth printing.

In today's modern, everything-costs-more-than-it-should world, delivering 22,000 free newspapers every single week is no small miracle. Paper costs money. Printing costs money. Fuel costs money. People who carry bundles of newspapers and all other staff also expect to be paid (fair enough).

This is where our advertisers come in. Their decision to promote their local businesses and events – in these pages and on our website – is what keeps this whole operation from becoming a very well-intentioned PDF. Quite simply: their support is why you're holding this paper instead of just thinking fondly about it.

The Echo would like to stick around for another 40 years (give or take a deadline). So when you call or email us about a daring beach rescue, a local legend, a community event, or something

that just doesn't seem right and needs daylight, we're able to chase the story thanks to the backing of our advertisers. For this reason, we'd like to loudly, publicly, and without irony thank our key advertisers of 2025.

If you see them around town, feel free to give them a nod, a smile, or a socially acceptable pat on the back. Their support quite literally creates the space on these pages – and helps us keep reporting on the stories, characters, and quirks that make this community what it is.

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The Byron Shire Echo
Volume 40 #30 • December 31, 2025

Let's unpack that court loss for Council (and Mullum residents)

Mullumbimby residents fought hard for a better outcome than what was proposed by developer Callum Sked on low lying land near the showgrounds (see page 4).

As has been reported throughout, residents say they felt unsupported by Byron Shire Council, something that should be of concern for all residents.

There are legitimate concerns when a much higher density development is built on flood-prone land next to your home.

And it's entirely reasonable for Council to require any developer to construct buildings that are sympathetic to the landscape that exists.

Yet it's still unclear why Council let this DA slide into a deemed refusal.

Or why there was no staff report on the DA ever provided publicly.

Public submissions

The December 22, 2025 Land & Environment Court (L&EC) judgement by Commissioner Shona Porter reveals a lot around what she considered important, and what led to her conclusion.

One important aspect to the judgement was that public submissions carry little weight, unless residents join with Council in the courts.

Yet it is too costly for your average long-term Mullumbimby resident with modest means to join a court case, and that's why we rely on Council to act on the community's behalf.

While Commissioner Porter agreed 'that the majority of the concerns raised by the community are genuine and relevant', she believed it did not 'rise to a contested issue that joins the parties', and referred to a precedent case where it did.

Neighbour Ruth Levy told *The Echo*, 'I was under no delusion that as an objector, I did not have 'locus standi' (standing in court)'.

She said, 'So, I engaged my own town

planning solicitor who provided me a legal opinion. I was also told that to be joined as a party to the proceedings, would cost me north of \$70,000'.

'So, what I've realised through this process is that only wealthy objectors, who have big money and can afford to be joined in these types of proceedings, actually have a say.

Ruth adds, 'For the community, if Council decides it's not in its interests to properly defend a matter, it doesn't matter whether there are 100s or 1,000s of objector submissions'.

And it also appears that a higher weight is given to expert evidence than to community objections, with Commissioner Porter accepting this as part of the reason for approval.

Ruth said of this aspect, 'I think this is the part I found the most disappointing – irrespective of the quality of one's experts, according to this case, their evidence is always going to be given more weight'.

'So, an objector with money can apply to be joined as a party to proceedings and engage top-brass experts, and only then will their evidence have weight'.

Also in her findings, Commissioner Porter said the DA was, 'highly compliant with the key planning controls', meaning that Council's policy settings will allow much higher density in the future.

Commissioner Porter wrote, 'I find that the proposed development is consistent with the desired future character that is facilitated by the suite of planning controls applying to the site.'

Ruth asked, 'Who's future desires? Certainly, not the communities'. This is the largest development of its kind in Mullumbimby and will change the character of Mullum – is this the vision for the future?

Hans Lovejoy, acting editor

News tips are welcome:
editor@echo.net.au

Are we any closer to animal justice?

If you think it's been a tough year to be a human, consider our fellow earthlings for a moment.

In 2025, federal legislation was finally introduced by Labor to stop live sheep exports (to take effect in 2028), but the cruel, wasteful live trade from Australia carries on, with cattle, goats and rock lobsters also being shipped out in growing numbers, whistleblowers be damned.

Horse and greyhound racing continues from coast-to-coast, with state-by-state regulations being very slow to catch up with evidence of cruelty, and politicians reluctant to act, particularly after seeing what the racing industry did to Mike Baird.

Mulesing (otherwise known as live lamb cutting) is still happening across Australia, despite the wool industry promising to ban it in 2010.

As for native species, duck hunting for 'recreation' is still allowed in Victoria, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania. Kangaroo hunting is legal in most places, with varying (theoretical) regulations, and you can easily get a licence to kill wombats, cockatoos, and other 'pest' animals if you're a property owner, without investigating humane alternatives.

Shark nets remain in place around the eastern Australian coastline, despite evidence that all they achieve is the slow, pointless deaths of multiple, non-target species.

Extinction is forever

Next year we commemorate 100 years since the last thylacine died in captivity, but Australians appear to have learned nothing from this tragedy.

2025 began with 42 additions to the national threatened species list, including 21 animals, 20 plants and one entire ecological community. This happened under the watch of the Albanese government, which committed to 'no new extinctions' in 2022,



'2025 began with 42 additions to the national threatened species list'

David Lowe

before allowing the destruction of twice as much threatened species habitat in 2024 as it greenlit in 2023.

The latest animal to officially go extinct was the Christmas Island shrew (that's 39 Australian mammals gone forever since colonisation), with the critically endangered Maugean skate probably not far behind, under the disgusting, polluting pressure of the farmed salmon industry.

Altogether there are now almost 2,500 animals, plants and ecosystems facing extinction in Australia.

As the climate emergency makes everything steadily worse, natural ecosystems continue to be destroyed by humans for everything from housing to coal mines, factory farms to forestry, roads to renewable energy infrastructure.

For many species, the future looks incredibly grim.

So what can governments do? With the new federal environment laws set to return more power to the states, this is likely to be bad news for animals in many places, but the news isn't all bad.

After years of sustained community pressure, the Labor Minns government recently agreed to deliver on its long-promised Great Koala National Park. Too little, too late? Maybe, but it's much better than nothing.

Also in NSW, negotiations between Labor and the shooting lobby to increase the number of guns in parks and the amount of shooting happening across the state under the guise of 'conservation hunting' are now highly unlikely to proceed, although animal welfare is not the reason.

In a decision which continues to divide animal-lovers, John Barilaro's protection of introduced horses in alpine national parks was finally swept aside, due to the devastation they are causing in the country romanticised by Banjo Paterson.

Also this year, Animal Justice Party representatives in NSW, Victoria and Western Australia celebrated their role in banning puppy farming, protecting blue goppers, outlawing glue traps, and improving funding for wombat mange treatment, animal rescue and cat de-sexing programs, as well as strengthening animal sexual abuse laws.

Federally, the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes is currently under review, and there are also calls to increase penalties for international animal smuggling, with over 4,000 illegal wildlife shipments intercepted by Australian Border Force each year, and many more likely going undetected.

Wildlife hospitals recently received new and much-needed funding, and \$5 million has been committed over four years to the renewal of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy, but these steps look insignificant compared to changes in other jurisdictions.

Maybe Australian nature needs a bumper sticker: 'I can't vote but I keep you alive'. In 2026, let's hope our politicians have a bit more respect for what makes this country precious, and unique.

■ David Lowe is an award-winning filmmaker, writer and photographer with particular interests in the environment and politics.

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Love the creator

I'm a religion-weary Australian. I'm a product of a country where our ancient race of original people were ripped away from their roots by 'well-meaning' Christians.

But I love Jesus. I get the story, it's good – Jesus came to Earth 2025 years ago with a message of peace. Two messages actually – 1. Love the creator 2. Love each other. That is all.

Organised religions on all sides are still causing division all these years later. I don't think the majority of Australians want any of it. We want peace. We want sunshine. We want to enjoy being the 'lucky country'. Part of that 'luck' (for us non-Indigenous Aussies anyway) is the fact that the country was colonised only 200 or so years ago so we've managed to avoid many wars. We don't want that luck to change.

Australian immigration has continued to open its borders to people from all over the world. It makes for an interesting nation (and amazing food), and our multiculturalism is a part of Australia's identity.

'We are one, but we are many, and from all the lands on Earth we come. We share a dream, and sing with one voice. I am, you are, we are Australian.'

We can not forget the shared dream. We can not divide ourselves over the choices that other nations' governments decide.

We should not boycott Russia, Israel, Palestine, Iran, or even New Zealanders because they don't know the real name for thongs.

We should not fight other's wars. We should not be swayed by other governments. We should not put our resources into other country's agendas. We should not be bribed by other nations' governments to become a voice for them and their agenda. We should not treat anyone as lesser than ourselves. All lives matter. All souls are equal in the eyes of the truth.

We are one and we are many. We are not taking sides and we should always remember the peaceful message of that wise little guy born 2025 years ago.

Love the creator. Love each other. That is all.

Sheri Buob
Mullumbimby



Cartoon by Jamie Hoile

Response to Heilpern

David Heilpern's editorial (*Echo* 17/12) should have had a 'mea culpa'.

His past *Echo* posts include poo-pooing the tens of thousands of Israeli Muslims who have joined the Israeli armed forces, and who fought and died alongside their Jewish compatriots in Gaza, (bolstered by another 1,500 Israeli Muslims who voluntarily joined the Israeli army post the Hamas massacre of both Israeli Jews and Muslims).

He defended calling out the Hamas Charter quote for an Islamist armed takeover of Israel 'From the River to the Sea'.

He dissed the federal government's antisemitism report, but made no comment on the Islamophobia report.

He has been running the Greens anti-Israel line, where their two-faced Greens deputy leader, repeatedly asked by a reporter, repeatedly refused to condemn Hamas, and marched after the Hamas massacre with those that support the Hamas attack, but posted her fake condolences for the Bondi massacre.

And where the Greens, including the Byron Greens Councillors, boycotted the recent Mayors Conference on Antisemitism on the Gold Coast (attended by 250 mayors and councillors and human rights organisations).

And where the elected Greens member in Newtown said exactly the same thing, (using a Nazi allegory of Jewish tentacles controlling the world), as the 60 Neo

Nazis calling for 'the abolishment of the Jewish lobby'. Heilpern's editorial says 'its not time to...', as if his, and the Greens, actions on Israel were separate to, and hadn't inflamed, the anti-Jewish toxic situation that resulted in Bondi. David Heilpern and the Greens, there's blood on your hands.

You and the Greens have consistently ignored that the same Islamist hatred of Jews that has resulted in the Bondi massacre, is a significant part of fuelling the massacres of Jews in Israel for the last 77 years.

Perhaps Mr Heilpern, in the new year, while you continue to condemn Israel to the same violence, significantly driven by the same ideology as Bondi, you may consider facilitating conciliation for, at least, the elimination of the increasing hostility to Byron's Jewish residents and business's, and for a safe and peaceful Australia.

John Lazarus
Byron Bay

■ A response to this letter is online: www.echo.net.au.

SEP and democracy

As the huge sky-reaching crane machines penetrate the astral atmosphere above the Byron township, questions abound; bewilderment, loss of trust, honesty, transparency and justice permeate the soul and spirit of the good democratic souls of common folk in the community.

The Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP), a colonising hedonistic model of

profit-making for billionaires has arrived, promising better times for families, children, artists, boozers and the whole township.

'We live in a plutocracy. Big business prevails... the destruction of native forests, along the cascading tragedy of global warming, is stirring the public' (Bob Brown *Defiance* 2025 p.198).

The east coast of Australia is scientifically predicted to face a three-metre rise in sea levels within 50 years. Other thinkers predict 25 years if we apply the current trend of floods surrounding Australia, eg. Sumatra, Indonesia, Torres Strait Islands. Larger critical issues demand local vision for the future.

Plutocracy is the antithesis of democracy. It is a 'state' in which the power is in the hands of the wealthy. Thus we witness the institutional rise of the plutocrat and consequent plutocratic social structures,

eg, abuse of power, secrecy, backscratching, dark-dealing, hood-winking the public, 'othering the public' to deflect the possibility of intentions and exposure, and other under-world features that aid greed. Mythically, Pluto is the God of the lower world, formed in the interior of the earth by the forces of heat; igneous rocks. It is a power that walks naked and devouring to the undetecting and untrained eye. Its effects are devastating socially, but enchanting and seductive to the life forces that lack humane social convictions. Plutonian power seeks and grabs onto pre-determined outcomes. It lacks humility, that would be an incurable rash to its supremacy. Worse still it avoids any force that demands integrity. Integrity, belongs to democracy an instinctual/eternal life giving force.

The plutocratic legacy is always 'power-over-all' and trauma to the deceived. It is the boldest and most potent of political tricksters. Yes a huge challenge to democracy, but she is flexible, open, defiant, embracing, caring, courageous, consultative; bestowing mutual aid, respect and transparency. At times she forgets she is bound to an eternal struggle, but that is when her engine needs oiling with the power of civil society and the demands of Mother Earth.

At this juncture, thanks to Chris Hanley and folk; they have held up the 'no trust mirror to the dominant plutocrats'... the vast majority of civil society do not want the SEP in Byron. There will be casualties but a caring bus will be provided to aid them home... better than the SEP

booze bus. The real struggle is about rights for all and oxygen for democracy. Direct focus on same will prevail.

Jo Faith
Newtown

MPs' economy flights

In response to controversies engulfing senior ministers, Australia-wide travel for family members will be removed, and partner travel will be limited.

Never vote for a sitting politician – it saves the nation a fortune (our earnings paid in taxes), and lets them know they're just like us – mere working-class plebs.

Ian Pratt
Bilinga

Gun reform and Recreational hunting

After the initial shock and trauma of the Bondi Beach shootings, people are asking why the shooters had six high-powered firearms, and why are we being told they were all legally owned?

National Cabinet has unanimously agreed to an overdue revision of gun laws. Recent research shows that there are four million guns in the hands of civilians, and it appears that getting a category A or B licence (which includes high-powered shotguns and 'repeater' rifles) is not difficult, requiring only a simple assessment as a 'fit and proper person' and a reason the shooter 'needs' the gun. This can include citing the obscene term 'recreational hunting'.

Recreational hunting can only be interpreted as killing for fun. *The International Handbook of Animal Abuse*
▶ Continued on page 13

Letters to the Editor and cartoons

Send your letters to the Editor: editor@echo.net.au. Deadline: Noon, Friday. Letters longer than 200 words may be cut. Letters already published in other papers will not be considered. Please include your full name, address and phone number for verification purposes.

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► Continued from page 11 and *Cruelty* states that ‘individuals with a history of animal cruelty were highly likely to be involved in other types of criminal behaviours including, but not limited to, assault, domestic violence and stealing.’ Hunting is ineffective in controlling animal numbers while it always involves appalling acts of cruelty. It is not a sport, nor should it be considered entertainment.

The Bondi shooters appear to have trained with 0.308 calibre ammunition, usually used to hunt larger animals. To those who see other humans as unworthy of life, humans (in this case Jewish ones) are just such large animals. The solution the Commonwealth and state governments should be imposing is to ban all so-called recreational hunting. Tolerating acts of violence towards any animal is a danger to all.

Dr Desmond Bellamy
PETA Australia
Sydney

AI and us

Yuval Harari, the author of *Sapiens* which has sold over 50 million copies in 65 languages, is probably the most influential historian and philosopher of our time.

He talks about how we humans are organic beings, animals, who need to work and rest and sleep and rejuvenate. This has been our lot for hundreds of thousands of years. If we don't rest our limbic system we go mad. (The limbic system is a group of brain structures that regulate emotions, behavior, motivation and memory).

The psychology of many people is still rooted in things that shaped our behavior 50,000 years ago, primitive instincts such as mistrust of strangers and territorial disputes, which is why it is so easy for populists to stir up anti-migrant sentiments and enlist angry and fanatical followers, easily convinced migrants are going to displace their race, take their jobs and change their culture.

Inorganic beings like bots and AI don't need to rest. They are working at the speed of light 24/7, digesting vast volumes of data with memories that never forget. These algorithms are buying and selling all day and night on the stockmarket, selecting the most sensational events to determine what appears in the daily news cycle. Harari believes these inorganic beings are a far greater threat to people's

livelihoods and well-being than migrants, but they have sneaked up on us in plain sight, because most people are still unaware of the threat they pose.

Crazy conspiracy theories that may have once reached hundreds have become click-bait for hundreds of millions, the more outrageous, the more clicks, generating new wealth for pedophiles, porn brokers, incels, terrorists, or any cohort who sets the bait. AI has learned what works and is creating its own click-bait, all programmed to funnel ever greater wealth back to the tech giants. In the USA, corporations were granted the same rights as people, as a way of getting around corporate payments to politicians. Yuval foresees a time when AI bots may also be granted the same rights as people in the USA.

Yuval said he thinks he may now be writing his last book, because he already concedes AI is writing better than he can. There are dozens of Yuval Harari's videos on Youtube. It is well worth taking a look.

Mike Balson
Upper Wilson's Creek

Is Netanyahu increasing antisemitism?

When are people going to call out the person most responsible for increasing antisemitism throughout the world; Benjamin Netanyahu?

Netanyahu, the Israeli government, and the Israeli Defence Force are responsible for promoting antisemitism right across the world. But they are not representative of all the world's Jews.

I say to those who are antisemitic because of Israel's genocide in Gaza and ethnic cleansing of the occupied West Bank, you are misguided. A great many Jews oppose what Israel is doing and support Palestinian sovereignty so blaming Jews or Judaism for Israel's crimes is irrational.

The Jewish Council of Australia asked the federal government to sanction Israel. Over 200 Jews were arrested in New York for blocking an entrance to Grand Central Station in a pro-Palestine rally. There are numerous examples of Jews, both inside and outside Israel, supporting the Palestinian cause.

If you are outraged by the genocide in Gaza direct your blame where it belongs; at Israel not at Jews.

Warren Kennedy
Mullumbimby

Free Palestine?

I'm just wondering what people mean when they chant 'Free Palestine!' There are pretty much no countries between Morocco and Pakistan that champion the Western ideals of 'freedom'. In fact the only country that does is Israel.

In Israel all citizens (including their 20+ per cent Muslim population) have equal rights, can rise to the highest levels in any profession (including government, judiciary, military, police), can dress however they want, have sex with whoever they want (regardless of gender or marital status), they have the right to protest, worship where they want, badmouth the government, etc. You want to try any of that in Iraq, Iran or Afghanistan? Or Gaza?

Since the barely held together ceasefire in Gaza, Hamas has been rounding up people and executing them for not being Hamas-ey enough! Is that your idea of a free Palestine? As long as religious nutjobs are in charge, no part of the Middle East will ever be 'free' by any Western definition of the word.

Then there's the 'globalise the Intifada' chant. Well the Intifada came to Bondi recently and if you endorse that you're really not Australian.

Of course I expect the standard responses to this, parroting mindless nonsense about colonisation, genocide, apartheid and whatnot but I genuinely wonder what you think a 'free Palestine' looks like.

Think about what you are actually chanting for.

Anthony Dwyer
Ocean Shores

Thank you Nicole Phillips

Thank you Nicole for your letter in last week's *Echo*, expressing exactly what almost ALL Jews in Australia are feeling re the lack of leadership, cowardice and incompetence of the Albanese government as well as the blind one-sided bias, especially from the ABC, SBS and the Greens that simply must have contributed to where we are today.

People love dead Jews, they express the shock and how sorry they are for what has happened in Bondi, yet it's business as usual with their ridiculously biased Jihadi supporting rhetoric continuing in the same breath.

► Continued on page 14

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On the wing – Albert’s lyrebird

Byron Bird Buddies

Imagine ourselves in a lush, Gondwana rainforest somewhere amongst the Border Ranges. It’s a cloudy day with a slight drizzle dampening the air. All around, towering Antarctic beech, palms, myrtle, kamala, wattle, ash trees and so many more – tattooed with moss and lichen, and knotted together by a tangle of liana vines – reach for the sun. Birds flit through the canopy, their calls resounding around the forest.

Suddenly, a strange ‘gronking’ sound – followed by a volley of bird calls peppered with chirps, creaks, trills, wingbeats and other unusual noises, interrupts our rainforest reverie. Is this a warning? Perhaps there’s a snake nearby. After a few moments, there’s another ‘gronk’ and the rapid fire of alternating bird calls resumes: kookaburra, cat-bird, currawong, honeyeater, king parrot, whipbird, crimson rosella, cockatoo...

We can’t see any of these birds yet their calls all seem to come from the same place. What on earth is going on? The penny finally drops.



We’ve been tricked by one of Australia’s greatest mimics – *Menura alberti*, commonly known as Albert’s lyrebird.

French ornithologist Charles Bonaparte, nephew of the famous Napoleon, is officially listed as having named this bird after then reigning Queen Victoria’s consort, Prince Albert. Renowned British ornithologist, John Gould, named the bird first, but in a publication released after Bonaparte’s announcement...

On his carefully constructed and lovingly tended display platform, a magnificent Albert’s lyrebird struts his stuff. Oh to be the object of his attention, the one to whom this fancy footwork, full body gyrations, ‘shake’n all over’ movement is directed. His seductive, feathery tail-veil is swept up and over his body and head, offering occasional glimpses of the strong, clever,

handsome fellow that he is.

As with the better-known and more widespread superb lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*), our Albert’s lyrebird males go to great lengths to woo their sweethearts, beginning with fastidious selection of the perfect place in which to fashion, groom, maintain and refurbish as required, a stage where their good looks and exceptional talents can be displayed. ‘Our’ lyrebird is found only in restricted pockets of south-eastern Queensland and north-eastern New South Wales.

There is still much to learn about Albert’s lyrebird – including evidence of details as basic as the size of its population and the key threats to its survival. We are fortunate to have the folk at the Albert’s Lyrebird Conservancy, including Byron Bird Buddies’ Vicki Sloane, who deploy cameras and sound recorders to collect data non-intrusively. Gathering, analysing and publishing this information in scientific papers helps safeguard our Albert’s lyrebird’s future.

To join or for more information please email byronbirdbuddy@gmail.com.

► Continued from page 13

Throwing money at us to build higher walls around our children and communities and changing gun laws are not the solution, they are just a coward’s way of kicking the can down the road. Radical Islamists also want to kill non-radical Muslims as can be seen yet again with the Muslim hero who risked certain death and disarmed one of the blood thirsty terrorists at Bondi, only to now have to live in fear from Islamic extremist assassins for the rest of his life? Wake Up!

Danny Wakil
Billinudgel

Sympathy for Dr Phillips

Dr Nicole Phillips has my sympathies. Her pain and suffering are apparent (Heilpern’s editorial, *Echo* Letters, Dec 23), but I’m guessing her doctorate isn’t in history. She manages to completely overlook the pain and suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people by Zionist ideology and the modern state of Israel, and characterises those who object to the infliction of such suffering as being ‘complicit in a jihadist war’.

Objectors of Jewish ethnicity she dismisses as ‘outliers’. I wonder if German people who objected to Nazi policies in the 1930s shared that label. I would like to remind Doctor Phillips of George Bernard Shaw’s aphorism: ‘Reasonable people adapt themselves to the world. Unreasonable people attempt to adapt the world to themselves. All progress therefore depends upon unreasonable people,’ or in the doctor’s language, outliers.

For an outlier, or more humane perspective, might I suggest that the good doctor reads *The General’s Son: Journey of an Israeli in Palestine*, by Miko Peled. It’s available in the local library system, where I believe other works by outliers are also available.

Doctor, my paternal grandparents were slaughtered at Auschwitz in 1945. Born in 1948, I never knew them, but I surmise that if they shared the kindness and compassion that characterised my father, they’d be turning in their graves at the atrocities being committed in their name. Surely, ‘never again’ only makes sense if it is applied universally.

John Mester
Clunes

A Putin apologist?

Putin apologist, John Scrivener is at it again. It seems he’s overdosed on the FBS (formerly known as the KGB) extensive online propaganda machine when he claims the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been a tremendous success.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Over one million Russians sacrificed by the Putin dictatorship in a war that stalled within weeks and whose front lines have been largely static since.

Tens of thousands of Russian mothers have lost their sons for just a few kilometres of now uninhabited land.

Most offensive of all, is John’s claim that this blood-bath is entirely Ukrainians fault and that Russia is indeed the victim!

Blaming the invaded nation for starting a war is a bit like the rapist blaming his victim for the clothes she’s wearing. Twisted and delusional! Hitler said the same thing when he invaded Poland in 1939.

We all know that every nation involved in any war has ulterior motives. However, Ukrainians motive is simply to survive.

It cannot end the war without surrendering to its former Imperialist landlord. To their credit, Ukrainians have largely held back vastly more numerous Russian forces. There’s nothing like a brutal foreign invasion to motive people. In war, the kind of resistance the average Ukrainian has shown is worth a million tanks and guns.

I ask John that if Australia were invaded by a aggressive neighbour 10 times our size; if Australian citizens were indiscriminately murdered by foreign forces; if Australian cities were destroyed beyond recognition; if Australian children were kidnapped and taken abroad to be raised by invader families or if Australians were given ultimatums by corrupt foreign dictators (who clearly has no value for the lives of his own people, let alone yours), would you just roll over and say surrender is inevitable?

Most of us would say, never!

We should be doing more to help Ukraine. One day Ukraine’s fate could be Taiwans or even ours. That is why thuggish Russian behaviour on the world stage must not succeed.

Simon Alderton
Byron Bay

Upping the antisemitism

We have known for decades that Netanyahu claims that any criticism of Israel is a result of antisemitism in order to portray any such criticism as nothing but an unjustified form of racism against Jews. Now Australia’s political leaders, including Prime Minister Albanese, claim that all opposition against Israel and its Jewish and other supporters in Australia is motivated only by antisemitism, as if such opposition only comes from a bunch of racist Nazis.

The massacre of Australian Jews at Bondi a fortnight ago was not motivated by racist Nazi antisemitism but was a result of Israeli treatment of Palestinians since 1948, particularly during the past two years in the Gaza strip. Of course Netanyahu claims that this is a response to the Hamas attack on 7 October, 2023. What has occurred in the Gaza strip since that date has not been a war against an armed opposition, like the Russian war against Ukraine, but a massacre of tens of thousands of innocent Palestinians, mostly women and children who had no participation in the 7 October attack.

Only one side in that conflict had an air force, artillery, tanks and all the other machinery of modern warfare, practically all supplied by the US. I think Trump continues to uniquely supply Israel with weapons of war at no cost.

As long as Australian Jews continue to ally themselves with Israel and support this barbarism which Palestinians have suffered in one form or another since 1948 they cannot expect friendly and peaceful treatment by all sectors of the Australian population.

No other immigrant group in Australia is treated similarly. All Australians except Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders are immigrants. Australia was known as terra nullius by the British colonists. I clearly remember when Palestine was called, by Israelis, a land without people for a people without land, They’re still a bunch of colonists.

Michael Trevaskis
Alstonville

► Letters to the editor letter are also published in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au/letters.

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Budding writers, old timers and first-time flyers are invited to submit a story of 500–1,500 words using the hook ‘The Hitchhiker’. The hook can be buried in a sentence, far off in the distance, it could be the name of a band playing at a pub, or it could be the centrepiece of your story!

Stories will be judged by local writers and industry experts. Submissions are open to anyone in the Northern Rivers. Selected finalists will be invited to present stories in a live story-telling performance at the very first ‘Mullum Moth’ hosted by Mandy Nolan and Creative Mullum, on 1 April 2026.

The sooner you get your story in, the sooner we can start selecting stories that will be published in *The Echo* in print and online at www.echo.net.au. Each writer is able to submit up to, but no more than two entries.

ENTER YOUR SHORT STORY HERE:

Story submission and questions at:
www.creativemullum.org.au/short-story-comp









Change the World

'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.'

Margaret Mead said that. She died in 1978, but the words of this American cultural anthropologist still ring true. I hear it repeated often. But today I really thought about it.

It's not governments who push progressive change. It's progressive people and movements who reach through with a voice so loud and true, that powerful people have to listen.

Sometimes when you feel like one small voice in a sea of injustice, the agitation, the discomfort and the pushback feels pointless. And in NSW, in a country where we celebrate our first world freedoms, under anti-protest laws you can get arrested.

Seems counterintuitive that the state have arrested a 97-year-old man for blocking the world's biggest coal port, but the billionaire who's profited from the climate change-causing fossil fuel extraction, that will one day cause the death of millions, gets another tax break. When it comes to upholding long-term community safety, my hero is the 97-year-old man.

I often wonder how people keep going. How they find the energy to keep resisting. For all of those good people who have decided not to sit back, for those who lean forward on peace and non-violence, on social justice, on a home for all, on racial equality, on a safe and inclusive world, and on protection and conservation of wild creatures and wild spaces, then it's good to remember that while it may feel impossible, change can happen. And very often it was those considered 'voiceless' who made the difference.

In the 1960s, Vincent Lingiari led 200 stockmen on the famous 'Wave Hill Walk-Off' for fair pay and decent working conditions. This sparked the Gurindji people to demand the return of their lands. Hence the famous pic of Whitlam pouring soil into the hands of the Traditional Owner.

Malala Yousafzai was 15 years old when she was shot in the head on her school bus by a Taliban gunman, for her activism in promoting girls' education. She had given her first speech on school



It's not governments who push progressive change. It's progressive people.

closings when she was 11. Thanks to Malala, children in Pakistan have the right to access free education. Her words still ring true: 'Let us pick up our books and pens. They are our most powerful weapons.'

Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison for his role in fighting South Africa's apartheid policy. In 1994 he became South Africa's first democratically-elected leader. When he walked free from Victor Verster Prison he emerged as a symbol of resilience, forgiveness and leadership.

American activist Tarana Burke sparked the 'Me Too' movement in 2006. She wanted to break the silence surrounding sexual assault, rape and harassment, and empower women through empathy and strength in numbers. Her work sits at the intersection of sexual violence and racial justice. As an activist and community organiser, she created a movement that cut through the dominant narrative.

In 2019, Greta Thunberg started the 'School Strike for Climate' as a lone action outside Sweden's parliament, every Friday. In less than a year six million people attended strikes globally. Now she stands loudly against genocide.

There are so many people and movements absent from this list. I don't have the space to list them all. Make your own. When you feel despairing, read their stories. And remember there is one common thread that we need to make real change. Something missing from our political stage, missing from our corporate leaders, missing from our grand narrative.

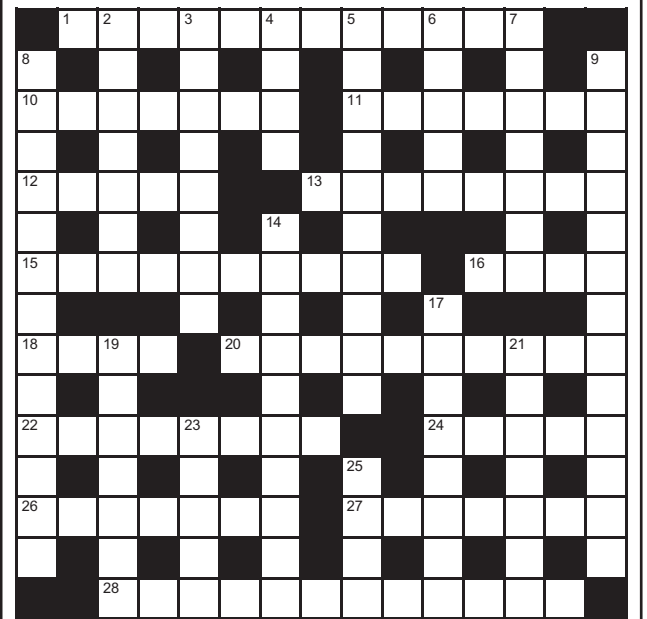
Something these quiet changemakers have in spades.

Courage.

Make it your thing for '26.

■ *The Echo's* coverage of political issues will remain as comprehensive and fair as it has ever been, outside this opinion column which, as always, contains Mandy's personal opinions only.

Crossword by Stephen Clarke #88



Cryptic Clues

ACROSS

- Small fairy briefly left with characteristic likeness (4-8)
- On reflection, shoe is too tight to accommodate foot (7)
- Discordant drone a uniform style of composition (7)
- Country right beside mountain range (5)
- A playboy cuddled by favourite bird (8)
- Promoter has broken promise to keep IRA out (10)
- Employer sure to be corrupt (4)
- Mogul likes to hold bird (4)
- Contemptible people, mostly Group One, have pasta (10)
- Far out picture, nothing like 'The Favourite'! (4,4)
- Cast gets second breather (5)
- Intellectual astronaut initially confined to chopper (7)
- Black ladies with snake that's inflatable (7)
- Teacher has answers primarily young listeners needed for a long time (7,5)

DOWN

- Roget's new internet protocol a boost to his image (3,4)
- Sufi mysteriously left one old queen for soldier (8)
- Witches caught out with baker (4)
- Pronounced fear more constant on Earth (5,5)
- Onsets of anxiety perhaps not entirely activated by sleep disorder (5)
- Unfinished papers on American mythical hero (7)
- Unwind black string to reveal launch pad for athletes (8,5)
- Goat and rats who keep dropping things (13)
- Romeo gets good service at rough-sounding sporting venue (10)
- Kill fish with sporting footwear (3,5)
- Nitrogen in refined diesel, a source of oil (7)
- Directions to keep Auden composition clean (7)
- Odd number of seconds not odd! (5)
- Picnic raider is circling dump endlessly (4)

■ If you would like to provide any feedback to Stephen Clarke about his crosswords please email: crosswordfeedback@echo.net.au

Quick Clues

ACROSS

- Artist's depiction of themselves (4-8)
- Affectionate term for a foot (7)
- French verse form with repeating lines (7)
- Relating to the countryside (5)
- Small colourful parrot (8)
- Theatre or concert promoter (10)
- Person who employs something (4)
- Seabird or one who is easily deceived (4)
- Thin pasta strands (10)
- Unlikely venture or distant photograph (4,4)
- Hurled or threw carelessly (5)
- Butcher's heavy chopping knife (7)
- Organ that stores urine (7)
- Very long time (7,5)

DOWN

- Self-indulgent behaviour (3,4)
- Member of certain infantry regiments (8)
- Kitchen appliance for baking (4)
- Solid ground (5,5)
- Temporary inability to breathe (5)
- Greek hero who slew the Minotaur (7)
- Sprinter's start platform (8,5)
- Clumsy person who drops things (13)
- Track for horse racing (10)
- Blade-fitted boot for frozen rinks (3,5)
- Flax seed used for oil (7)
- Wash clothes or legitimise illegally obtained money (7)
- Number of deadly sins (5)
- Wading bird with curved bill (4)

Last week's solution #87



STARS BY LILITH

Wishing all readers a smooth cruise into the new year with this distillation of wit and wisdom from your fellow sun signs...



CAPRICORN THE GOAT

ARIES: In this world there is room for everyone. More than machinery, we need humanity. More than cleverness, we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent. You have the power to create happiness, to make this life a wonderful adventure. - Charles Chaplin, Arian actor.

TAURUS: There isn't a right way things should be. There's just what happens, and what we do. A good plan isn't one where someone wins, it's where nobody thinks they've lost. And sometimes it's better to light a flamethrower than curse the darkness. - Terry Pratchett, Taurian author.

GEMINI: I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more. - Anne Frank, 15-year-old Gemini diarist, written during WWII.

CANCER: Cynicism is idiotic. Fear is a bad habit. Love is an act of heroic genius. Pleasure is your birthright. Life gives you exactly what you need, exactly when you need it. The universe is a prodigious miracle created for your amusement and illumination. - Rob Brezsny, Cancerian astrologer.

LEO: Love isn't an emotion or an instinct: it's an art. Anything worth doing is worth doing slowly. Those who are easily shocked should be shocked more often. An ounce of performance is worth pounds of promises. Don't ever make the same mistake twice - unless it pays. - Mae West, Leo screen icon.

VIRGO: There's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in. A sip of wine, a cigarette, and then it's time to go... So come my friends, be not afraid, we are so lightly here. It is in love that we are made; in love we disappear. - Leonard Cohen, Virgo poet.

LIBRA: Isn't this enough? Just this beautiful, complex, wonderfully unfathomable world? How does it so fail to hold our attention that we diminish it with cheap, man-made myths and monsters? We must think critically, not only about the ideas of others, but our own beliefs and prejudices. - Tim Minchin, Libran songwriter.

SCORPIO: The only unique contribution we will ever make in this world will be born of our creativity. Creativity is the power that lives in all of us: it is not a luxury, it is essential if we want to make meaning. As long as we're creating, we're cultivating meaning. - Brene Brown, Scorpio academic.

SAGITTARIUS: Rather than spending all our time watching stupid people doing stupid things on reality TV shows, why don't we spend a few minutes each day reading about good people doing good things? We've got to improve ourselves as a species or we're absolutely doomed. - Billy Connolly, Sagittarian comedian.

CAPRICORN: The world is far more subtle and miraculous than you thought. The meaning of life is just to be alive. Yet everybody rushes around as if it were necessary to achieve something beyond themselves. Nirvana is where you are, provided you don't object to it. - Alan Watts, Capricorn Buddhist.

AQUARIUS: There's many ways to become an enlightened human being, but the shortest is always through loving someone. If you don't know how to treat the ones you love then how are you going to treat those you don't know, or who are your enemies? - Shakira, Aquarian performer.

PISCES: I am glad that I paid so little attention to good advice; had I abided by it I might have been saved from some of my most valuable mistakes. Please give me some good advice in your next letter - I promise not to follow it. - Edna St. Vincent Millay, Piscean poet.



Good Taste

Eateries Guide

BILLINUDGEL



Rosefina's Mexican
 Thursday/Friday open from 4pm to late
 Happy Hour 4pm to 5.30pm
 Saturday 12 to 2.30pm, 5pm to late
 Sunday 12.30 to 8pm
 8/10 Wilfred St, Billinudgel
www.rosefinas.place

Rosefina's is going street-style with BBQ tacos for Sunday lunch

LENNOX HEAD



Lennox Pizza
 4/74 Ballina St, Lennox Head
 Views, Brews, Cocktails, Beats, and Eats!
 Live Music Friday, Sunday.
 Bookings essential.
 Head to lennoxpizza.com
 Follow on Insta: @lennoxpizza


BANGALOW



Bangalow Tuckshop
 Open: Tue for dinner
 Wed to Sat for lunch and dinner
 43 Byron Street, Bangalow
bangalowntuckshop.com
hello@bangalowntuckshop.com.au
 @Bangalowntuckshop

Where good food and good times bump into each other and decide to stay for a drink. They've taken modern Aussie cuisine, given it a cheeky spin, and packed it with the best locally sourced produce the Northern Rivers has to offer. Whether you're a local or just passing through, Tuckshop offers a dining experience that feels both special and familiar at the same time.

MULLUMBIMBY



Bacco Wine Bar
 Opening Hours: Wednesday – Sunday
 Opening times: 3pm – late
 Happy Hour: 3 – 5pm
 Email: bacco.mullumbimby@gmail.com
 Phone: 0434 450 415
 Instagram: @bacco.mullumbimby


Your favourite new wine and charcuterie board bar in Mullumbimby. Italian aperitivo in true enoteca style. Buon cibo. Buon vino. Buon amici.

BYRON BAY



Forest Byron Bay
 Open 7 days
 Breakfast: 7.30 to 10.30am
 Lunch on Verandah from 12 to 3pm
 Dinner: 5.30 to 9pm
crystalbrookcollection.com/byron/forest


Rainforest views, farm-to-table dining, and a menu showcasing the best of Northern Rivers produce. Forest Byron Bay offers fresh, seasonal dishes and crafted cocktails. Join the Crystalbrook Crowd (it's free) and save 10% on all food and drinks. From Tuesday to Saturday, indulge in Golden Hour from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.



Bar Henri
 Opening Hours:
 Wednesday to Friday & Monday:
 3pm – late. Tuesday: closed.
 Saturday & Sunday: 8am – late
 20 Burringbar St, Mullumbimby
 (02) 6684 2306

About Us: Family-owned and French-inspired menu, we serve locally-sourced produce alongside a selection of natural, minimal-intervention wines and carefully curated cocktails. Enjoy live music and entertainment in the heart of Mullumbimby.

NO BONES



NO BONES
 Kitchen + Bar.
 11 Fletcher Street,
 BYRON BAY
 0481 148 007

Celebrate Christmas at No Bones! Enjoy a vibrant five-course holiday banquet filled with festive flavours and indulgent dishes. Gather your loved ones and let us make your holiday one to remember. **Book via our website and celebrate the season.** www.nobones.co/whats-on

MURWILLUMBAH



Olivewood Bistro
 Located at Murwillumbah Golf Club
 Open Lunch Monday – Sunday
 Dinner Tuesday – Sunday
 Call: (02) 6672 1799
www.murwillumbahgolfclub.com.au

We warmly welcome Olivewood Bistro to Murwillumbah Golf Club.
 Locals know Le Ping and Simone from their time running 'White Olive' where they built a strong reputation for excellent food and warm hospitality.



Lord Byron Distillery
 Distillery & Tiki Bar
 Open 10am–5pm
 Tuesday to Saturday.
 4 Banksia Drive, Byron Bay
lordbyrondistillery.com.au
 (02) 8646 4901

We have something for everyone...

- Distillery Tour and Tasting
- Gin Distilling Class
- Cocktail Classes


Book Online

WILSONS CREEK



Threeways of the Valley
 Wednesday – Sunday 8am – 3pm
 (kitchen closes at 2pm, drinks & treats till 3pm) Saturday Evenings Pizza Nights 4:30pm – 7:30pm Friday Specials 4:30 – 9pm
 See website for upcoming events.
 10 Huonbrook Rd, Wilsons Creek
 0421 054 484 | www.threeways.store
 @threeways_of_the_valley


Nestled in the lush Wilsons Creek rainforest, Threeways is a vibrant, family-friendly cafe where nature, nourishment, and community meet. Enjoy seasonal, seed-oil free food, all-day breakfast, woodfired pizza nights, and upcoming Friday events. With Wi-Fi, gluten-free options, and space to relax or play, there's something for everyone.



Main Street
 Open for takeaway daily,
 12 midday until dinner.
 Menu, more details –
 @mainstreet_burgerbar
 18 Jonson Street
 (02) 6680 8832


Open for takeaway daily, 12 midday until dinner.
 Menu and more details
 @mainstreet_burgerbar
 'Make a meal of it'
 Add chips and a drink, just \$5.

CATERING



Celebrations Cakes by Liz Jackson
 lizzijackson@gmail.com
 0414 895 441

Gluten free and special dietary needs catered for.



Three Blue Ducks
 Located at The Farm
 11 Ewingsdale Rd.
 (02) 6190 8966
 Open every day from 7am.
 Mon-Thurs: breakfast & lunch
 Fri-Sun: breakfast,
 lunch & dinner

Exciting and seasonal food, live music every Sunday arvo, happy hour 3–5pm Friday to Sunday & our famous Sunday roast.
 Enjoy a wander in the fields, meet the pigs, and picnic in the sun... there really is something for everyone.



Roca Byron Bay
 Open:
 Every day (except Wednesday)
 from 6:30am to late
 14 Lawson St, Byron Bay
 (02) 5642 0149
 @rocabyronbay
www.rocabyronbay.com.au

Latin fusion all-day dining
 Come and try our new summer menu. Savour our chargrilled anticuchos, indulge in fresh ceviche & oysters, or elevate your night with the Roca dining experience. Pair it all with a classic Pisco Sour or our best-selling Hot Like Papi cocktail.
JUST OPENED: Roca Cabana – our brand new pool bar in the heart of Byron Bay.
 Follow us to find out more: @roca.cabana



Echo
 .net.au

Good Taste Deal of the Week

Main Street Burger Bar

BURGER & BEER FOR \$20

All day every Tuesday
 *Includes 'The Classic' burger with Stone & Wood Pacific Ale schooner only.

18 Johnson St, Byron Bay



Food Culture Ocean Shores: 'specialty goods for people who care about what they eat'

Food Culture has been Ocean Shores' unofficial pantry for years. The place you duck into for olive oil refills, a scoop of oats, a sneaky square of good chocolate or a chat with whoever's at the counter. It's a little slower than the supermarkets, stocked to the walls with specialty goods, and full of people who care about what they eat and where it comes from.

The new owners Rash and Jem recently moved to the area, fell in love with Food Culture and decided to help carry it forward. 'When the store came up for sale, it felt less like buying a business and more like being handed a set of guardianship keys. It rooted us even deeper in the community we call home,' they say.

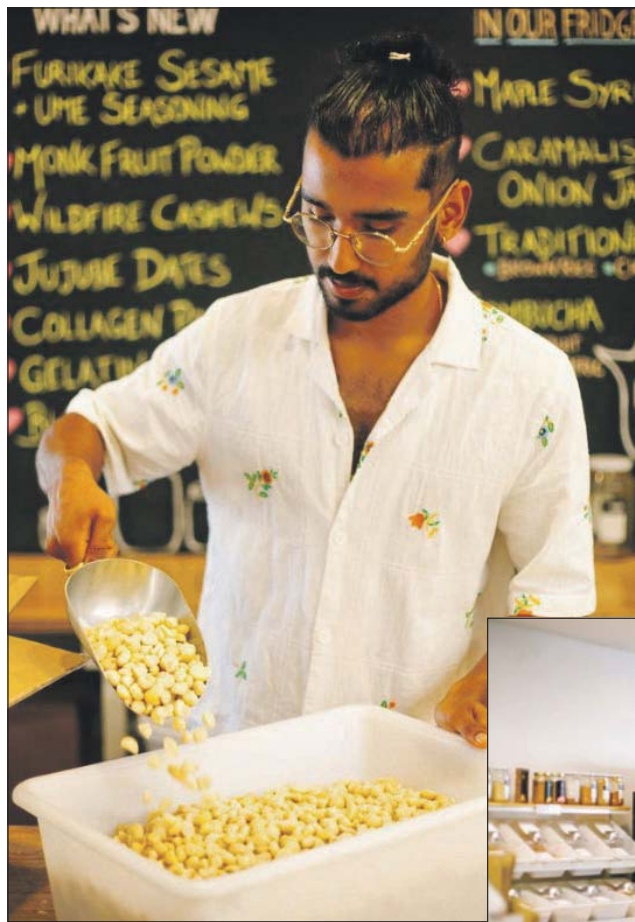
Food Culture is still the same at heart – bulk wholefoods, organic

pantry staples, herbal teas, spices, local flowers, bread, home refills, and no pointless packaging. But it's growing, gently. More local growers. More house-made blends. A few more conversations about soil, seaweed, ferments and how good it feels to know your farmer by name.

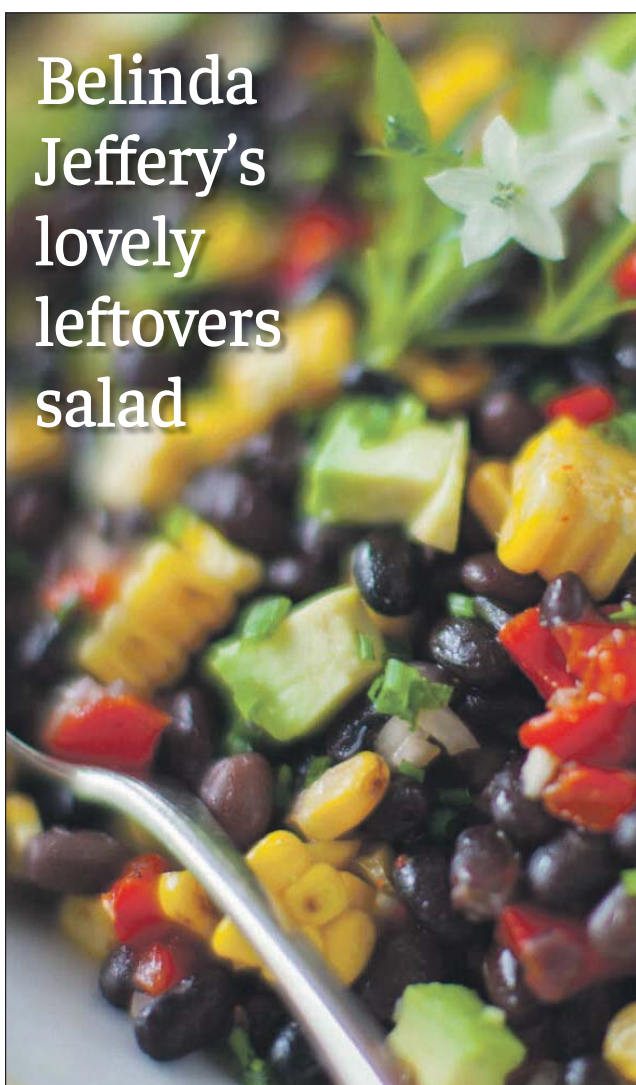
What makes this place special isn't on the shelves – it's in the people who shop there. The jar-bringers. The sourdough lovers. The earth carers. The locals who believe that food can be simple, joyful, and grown with respect.

Food Culture Bulk and Wholefoods is happy being what it is – a little village pantry, filled with good food, good people and a whole lot of heart.

■ Food Culture, Ocean Shores Shopping Centre
 Insta: @foodculturebulkfoods
 foodculturebulkfoods.com.au



Food Culture at Ocean Shores Shopping Centre reinterprets traditional market stalls, selling over 400 products in bulk. Photos supplied



Belinda Jeffery's lovely leftovers salad

Spice up your Christmas leftovers with some fresh Mullum Farmers Market produce. Photos supplied

Inspiration from Mullum Farmers Market

After all that Christmas food, why not make a lovely leftovers salad using ingredients that keep well, so you can whisk up something fresh, nourishing and full of flavour from your Mullum market haul?

This salad is adapted from a recipe by the lovely Belinda Jeffery, whose cooking is all about simplicity, generosity and letting good ingredients shine.

Lovely leftovers salad

Start with 1½ cups dried black turtle beans from the Mullum Co-op stall. Rinse them well, soak overnight in plenty of cold water, then drain and cook in fresh water until creamy and tender – this can take anywhere from 1½ to 2½ hours.

Drain the beans well and set them aside while still warm.

In a large bowl, whisk together ½ cup olive oil from Grumpy Grandma, 2½ tablespoons lime juice from Jumping Red Ant, 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard from Church Farm, 1 small clove garlic from Forest Organics (finely chopped), 1 small golden shallot from Summit Organics (finely chopped), 1 teaspoon ground cumin, ¾ teaspoon sea salt and ½ teaspoon sugar. Add the warm beans to the dressing and gently stir, allowing them to cool and absorb the flavours.

While the beans are cooking, grill 1 large red capsicum from Everest Farm or Jumping Red Ant until the skin blackens, then cover, peel and chop. Brush 2 corn cobs from Everest Farm or

Jumping Red Ant with a bit of olive oil and grill until tender and lightly charred, then slice off the kernels.

Fold the capsicum and corn through the beans, along with 1 small chopped chilli from Jumping Red Ant. Add 1 diced avocado if available, or substitute 1 small finely chopped cucumber, as avocados reach the end of their season. Finish with a handful of greens from The Farm if you like.

Serve at room temperature with a bright, herby and generous salad, perfect for post-Christmas eating and a beautiful way to honour both market produce and Belinda Jeffery's timeless approach to food.

■ For more inspiration see belindajeffery.com.au.

■ Mullum Farmers Market is on every Friday from 7am to 11am at Mullumbimby Showground.



Open 6am – 12pm
 Monday – Saturday
 Shop 6/108 Stuart Street
 Mullumbimby.
 @bimbi_coffee_shop
 ALLPRESS ESPRESSO



2025, The Year of Living Dangerously



2025 captured by *The Echo's* photographers, Jeff Dawson and Eve Jeffery.

1. The New Brighton after Cyclone Alfie took away the old one.
2. The annual V-Day reveal.
3. The rolling thunder that is Byron Taiko.
4. Survival Day with Jason Campbell, James, and Byron Shire Councillor, Delta Kay, taking time for pride and joy in Indigenous culture.
5. Emily Lubitz bus king queen.
6. The axeman cometh.

7. Bangalow's Young Archie competition entrant Albertine with subject and dad Trystan.
- 8,9,10. Bluesfest 2025: Here Come The Mummies, Tones and I. The Cat Empire's Neda Rahmani.
11. Grace and her sister on 'Miss Ruby's' wedding day.
12. Mark Thornton helps Mullum's St Martin's Church celebrate 100 years.
13. Mermaid Hannah Fraser swam up the Bruns.



14



16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



25



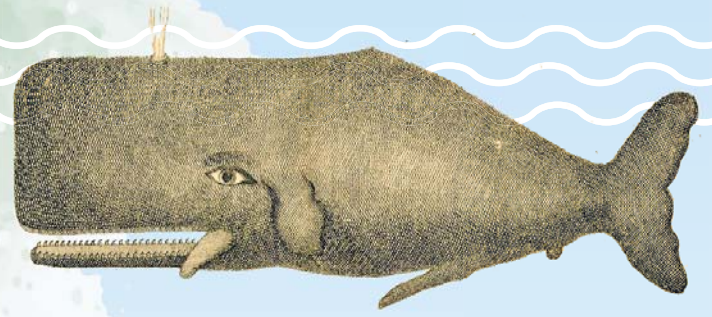
26

14. Mullumbimby came together to remember Ashleigh Grice.
 15. Some folk were rather unhappy about Paid Parking in Bruns.
 16. Byron Bay Film Fest for reel. 17. Brunswick SLSC prez Craig Reid.
 18. Bangalow Bowlo and community invite Norths to combine sex with travel.
 19. Kate Bushes running up that beach.

20. BVSD swan queens Ava Every, Franky Forbes and Mirabai Wilson. 21. Hashimoto's Cactus.
 22. Mini Maestro Soli enjoyed the Bruns Soundshell piano while it lasted.
 23. Back to Bruns in a Morrison Van. 24. Happy Days at Carsburgs.
 25. Before there was hip hop there was Lindy Hop.
 26. Versace Boys behaving badly in nice clothes.

Hello Summer

THINGS TO DO



Happy summer season

Enjoy your holiday, or splash out on the greatest gift of all, a wholesome experience with your loved ones. A hot air balloon flight with friends, family, or staff is not only a magical moment but also healthy, outdoors, and educational.

Learning the physics of flight whilst floating in the air across the Northern Rivers at sunrise is a special occasion not to be missed. Included is a delicious breakfast at the iconic Three Blue Ducks restaurant, the cherry on top of a great morning out!

Book your journey at www.balloonaloft.com

Lismore Regional Gallery

Happy Tropical Fruits season! As the Northern Rivers comes alive with colour, creativity and celebration, make time to visit Lismore Regional Gallery. Centrally located and easy to access, the gallery offers plenty of free parking, and a beautifully curated gallery shop perfect for gifts or keepsakes. The current exhibition program is rich and diverse, featuring Club Ate's Ex Nilalang, Episodes 1-4, Clare Milledge's Complex notophyll vine forest: ground-proof, and Sonka Pietrek's Memory of motion. Together, these exhibitions explore movement, environment, identity and imagination through contemporary art practices. Whether you're a dedicated art lover or simply looking for an inspiring break between events, Lismore Regional Gallery is a must-see destination for everyone to enjoy during your Northern Rivers visit this Tropical Fruits season.

11 Rural St, Lismore
Open Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 4pm
Thursdays until 6pm

Better By Bike

Making family adventures easy and fun! Located right at Murwillumbah Railway Station, it's the perfect spot to start your rail trail ride. Recently awarded GOLD at the NSW Tourism Awards for Best Retail, Hire and Service, you're in great hands! The fleet includes premium e-bikes, fat-tyre e-bikes, and awesome family options with tow-behind bikes, child seats, and chariots. Every hire comes with comfy gel seats, puncture-proof tyres, helmets, tunnel lights, locks, and waterproof panniers, everything you need to soak up the scenery and enjoy. With full trail support if you need to call us, plus genuine local insider tips, your rides will be safe, fun, and completely stress-free! Families have left hundreds of glowing 5-star reviews.

Murwillumbah Railway Station
Bikes can even be delivered to Byron Bay or the Tweed Coast. Open 7 days



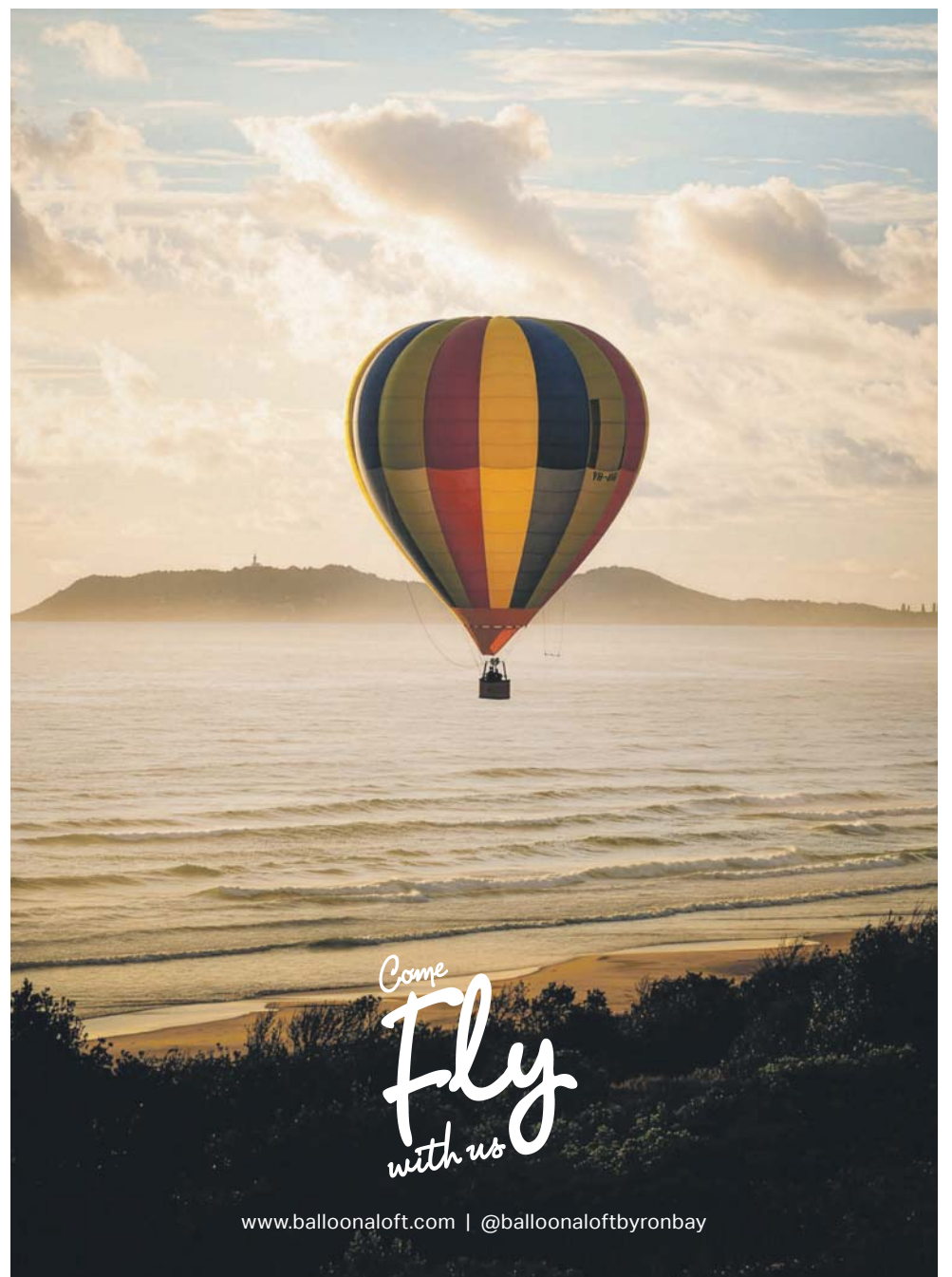
RAIL TRAIL E-BIKE ADVENTURE!

Two convenient start points: Murwillumbah or Mooball
Family & pet friendly: E-bikes, kids bikes & attachments
Award Winning: Gold in NSW Tourism Awards 2025! :)



BOOK NOW!

betterbybike.com.au
0408 444 858



Come
Fly
with us

www.balloonaloft.com | @balloonaloftbyronbay

Hello summer

Let's Go Surfing

Join the Let's Go Surfing team for an awesome time surfing or stand-up paddle-boarding (SUP) this school holidays. They offer private and group lessons and tours for all ages, as well as a two-hour kids only lesson. Their lessons include all equipment and expert instruction in really small groups.

These lessons provide education, maximum fun, and safety, for your kids. They cover the basics from warm-up, to paddling, catching waves and standing, while also catering to intermediate and advanced students (technique refinement and style improvement). Your kids will also learn important surf and safety rules including info on rips, tides, sandbanks and waves.

They offer lessons in Byron, Ballina, Lennox and SUP tours on flat water in the Brunswick River and Lake Ainsworth.

Open 7 days 8.30am to 4.30pm
Shop 5, 11 Fletcher St, Byron Bay
@letsgosurfingaustralia
(02) 6680 9443
letsgosurfing.com.au



Summer family fun: Magical Quest at Crystal Castle

This summer, Crystal Castle & Shambhala Gardens unveils The Magical Quest – a brand-new crystal adventure for families, running from now until Easter.

Children follow a playful map through the Shambhala Gardens, meeting crystal friends, solving riddles and discovering two secret magic words to claim a prize.

From now to 26 January, a special Holiday Program offers a daily 11am Guided Tour; 1pm all-ages Crystal Singing Bowls session; 2pm Crystal Meditation; and Crystal Singing Bowls at 12pm and 3pm. All included in your entry pass.

Family Day Passes:
(2 adults & 2 children) offer a 30% saving
Don't miss an unforgettable day out!
Book now: crystalcastle.com.au



Club Ate, Ex Nilalang, Episodes 1-4 (video still) 2017. Courtesy the artists and Art Gallery of New South Wales

HOLIDAY HOURS

3 – 4 January
10am – 4pm

7 – 11 January
Wednesday to Sunday, 10am – 4pm
Thursday, 10am – 6pm



LISMORE
REGIONAL
GALLERY

11 Rural St.

LETS GO SURFING SCHOOL HOLIDAY LESSONS

ALL AGES
ALL LEVELS
LIMITED SPOTS



BYRON BAY & LENNOX HEAD
Gift Certificates Available
BOOK NOW!

Scan me



LETSGOSURFING.COM.AU
CALL: 6680 9443



Visit the home of the world's
largest natural crystals.
Sit in an ancient amethyst cave.

You'll find the extraordinary only 20 mins from Byron Bay
81 Monet Drive Montecollum
Open every day 10am - 5pm
Closed Christmas and Boxing Day
Book tickets now crystalcastle.com.au



for the Byron Shire 2026



JULY						AUGUST						SEPTEMBER						OCTOBER						NOVEMBER						DECEMBER									
DATE	MOON PHASE/NOTES	SUN RISE/SET	MOON RISE/SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)	DATE	MOON PHASE/NOTES	SUN RISE/SET	MOON RISE/SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)	DATE	MOON PHASE/NOTES	SUN RISE/SET	MOON RISE/SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)	DATE	MOON PHASE/NOTES	SUN RISE/SET	MOON RISE/SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)	DATE	MOON PHASE/NOTES	SUN RISE/SET	MOON RISE/SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)	DATE	MOON PHASE/NOTES	SUN RISE/SET	MOON RISE/SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)				
1		6:39	17:00	7:34	21:33 1.76	14:26 0.37						1		6:00	17:31	7:58	22:55 1.38	16:47 0.40	1		5:40	19:29	7:00	23:00 1.10	15:52 0.33	1		5:40	19:30	7:00	23:00 1.10	15:52 0.33	1		5:40	19:30	7:00	23:00 1.10	15:52 0.33

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME CHANGE DATES
 Daylight Saving ends: Sunday 5 April 2026 3:00am
 Turn clocks back one hour to 2:00am.
 Daylight Saving begins: Sunday 4 October 2026 2:00am
 Turn clocks forward one hour to 3:00am.

NSW SCHOOL TERMS 2026
 Term 1: Tuesday 27 January to Thursday 2 April
 Term 2: Monday 20 April to Friday 3 July
 Term 3: Monday 20 July to Friday 25 September
 Term 4: Monday 12 October to Thursday 17 December

MOON PHASES TIMES AND DATES 2026
 Moon phases data sourced from www.timeanddate.com

MOON PHASES KEY:
 New Moon: ● First Quarter: ◐ Full Moon: ○ Third Quarter: ◑

SPECIAL LUNAR EVENTS IN 2026

- Total Lunar Eclipse visible in Byron Shire on 3-4 Mar
- Super New Moon: 17 May
- Blue Moon: 31 May (second Full Moon in same month)
- Micro Full Moon: 31 May
- Super New Moon: 15 Jun
- Micro Full Moon: 30 Jun
- Super Full Moon: 24 Dec

LUNATION	NEW MOON	FIRST QUARTER	FULL MOON	THIRD QUARTER	DURATION
1274			3 Jan 9:02pm	11 Jan 2:48am	29d 18h 09m
1275	19 Jan 6:52am	26 Jan 3:47pm	2 Feb 9:09am	9 Feb 11:43pm	29d 16h 09m
1276	17 Feb 11:01pm	24 Feb 11:27pm	3 Mar 10:37pm	11 Mar 8:38pm	29d 13h 22m
1277	19 Mar 12:23pm	26 Mar 6:17am	2 Apr 1:11pm	10 Apr 2:51pm	29d 10h 28m
1278	17 Apr 9:51pm	24 Apr 12:31pm	2 May 3:23am	10 May 7:10am	29d 8h 09m
1279	17 May 6:01am	23 May 9:10pm	31 May 6:45pm	8 Jun 8:00pm	29d 6h 53m
1280	15 Jun 12:54pm	22 Jun 7:55am	30 Jun 9:56am	8 Jul 5:29am	29d 6h 50m
1281	14 Jul 7:43pm	21 Jul 9:05pm	30 Jul 12:35am	6 Aug 12:21pm	29d 7h 53m
1282	13 Aug 3:36am	20 Aug 12:46pm	28 Aug 2:18pm	4 Sep 5:51pm	29d 9h 50m
1283	11 Sep 1:27pm	19 Sep 6:43am	19 Sep 6:43am	27 Sep 2:49am	29d 12h 23m
1284	11 Oct 2:50am	19 Oct 3:12am	26 Oct 3:11pm	2 Nov 7:28am	29d 15h 12m
1285	9 Nov 6:02pm	17 Nov 10:47pm	25 Nov 1:53am	1 Dec 5:08pm	29d 17h 50m
1286	9 Dec 11:51am	17 Dec 4:42pm	24 Dec 12:28pm	31 Dec 5:59am	29d 19h 32m

Hello SUMMER



Fresh flavours, good vibes and a splash of sunshine love every day

Enjoy the holidays or any day with everyone's favourite... Yoflo!

Byron Bay's iconic frozen yoghurt and dessert bar. Their self-serve experience is all about creativity, quality ingredients and celebrating our vibrant local community.

Independently-created-and-operated in Byron Bay since 2011, Yoflo starts with 100% real natural yoghurt. Treat yourself to local toppings like Brookfarm granola and muesli, honey-roasted locally-grown macadamias, and delicious gluten-free ByronBrownies. Choose from a great selection of fresh cut fruit and finish with a wide range of hot sauces, including local Byron Bay Peanut Butter and macadamia cream.

Build your perfect treat, sip on something refreshing or settle in and enjoy a moment that feels as good as it tastes.

Lawson Street, Byron Bay

Holiday trading hours:

Open every day 8am to 9.30pm

Beyond Byron E Bikes

Looking for an unforgettable adventure this school holiday break?

Beyond Byron E Bikes, located in Mooball - closest to the Byron Bay end of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail, offers a fantastic way to explore, with rides designed for ultimate comfort and fun. Their German-made e-bikes feature gel seats and puncture-proof tyres, ensuring a smooth journey as you take in stunning natural scenery. Families are well catered for with kids' e-bikes, tag-a-longs, baby seats, and even dog trailers for furry companions. Riders can enjoy leisurely breaks and plenty of delicious options along the way.

Easy online booking at

www.beyondbyronebikes.com.au

Byron Art Collective School Holiday Program

Byron Art Collective is a new gallery and creative hub in the heart of Byron Bay, created to celebrate art, connection and community. More than just a gallery, the space has been designed as a welcoming place where people can linger, connect and feel inspired. Alongside an ever-changing collection of artworks by local creatives, the Collective hosts high teas, creative workshops and hands-on experiences for all ages. This January, we are launching our first school holiday art workshop, running from January 5 for one full week, offering a fun, engaging and creative environment to entertain and inspire children. Places are limited and bookings are essential. We warmly invite the community to visit, participate and support this new creative venture as it grows into a shared space for imagination, conversation and joy.

SHOP 5, 90-96 Jonson Street

byronartcollective.com

Simple and delicious



Yoflo, Byron's iconic frozen yoghurt and dessert bar, since 2011.

Located in Lawson Street, just moments from the beach.



Byron Art Collective

Get creative this holidays with BAC! Kids can paint, craft and make new friends in our joyful art workshops!

☀ Kids Creative Holiday Camp

January 5-9

9 am - 12 pm | Ages 6-12

A week of colour, imagination, and fun! Each morning explores a new creative theme

Bookings essential

Made with heart in Byron Bay

SHOP 5, 90-96 JONSON STREET

byronartcollective.com

Hello summer

Byron Photo Magic

Byron Photo Magic, your trusted local camera store, is here to help you capture the magic of summer holidays. Whether you're heading to the golden beaches, hiking to Cape Byron Lighthouse, or enjoying family picnics under the Norfolk pines, they have everything you need to preserve those unforgettable moments.

From the latest cameras and accessories to expert advice on getting the perfect shot, Byron Photo Magic ensures you're ready for every adventure. Their friendly team is passionate about photography and helping you turn summer memories into lasting keepsakes.

Visit them in-store for great deals, tips and inspiration. This summer, make every click count with Byron Photo Magic - because the best moments deserve to be captured.

Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-2pm (Closed Sun & Public Holidays)

Shop 20, Mercato on Byron
108-114 Jonson St, Byron Bay
02 6685 5877
photomagic.com.au

Byron Bay Camping & Disposals

Your one-stop shop for Christmas and your next outdoor adventure.

If you need sleeping bags, tents, workboots, knives, lighting, kitchenware, stoves, mattresses, rainwear, snorkelling and fishing gear - they have it!

Byron Bay Camping & Disposals is a locally-owned-and-operated family business of over 40 years. Located in the Byron Bay Arts and Industry Estate, with plenty of parking available.

Come in and meet the team. Their staff will give you friendly, expert advice, no matter whether your next adventure is a campout, bush school, fishing trip, multi-day hike, or you need Christmas present inspiration.

1/1 Tasman Way, Byron Bay
0439 212 153
www.byron-camping.com.au
theteam@byron-camping.com.au



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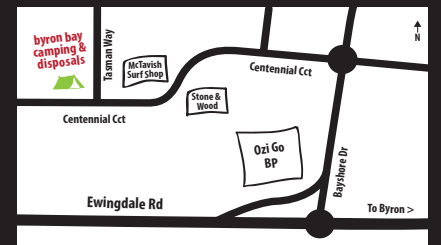


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Summer Holidays



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Byron Bay NSW 2481 - Ph 0266855877

Hello Summer



Stonekin Store is now here in Byron

Stonekin's first store is officially open. Discover their full collection of organic cotton underwear, now available to explore in person. Try on the pieces, feel the fabrics, and explore the fits that have shaped our brand. Visit in store for 10% off your first purchase.

The space reflects their ethos: thoughtful design, natural materials, and comfort without compromise.

Stonekin Store is open and the team looks forward to welcoming you in store soon.

Mon to Fri: 10am to 4pm

Sat: 10am to 1pm

**2/97 Centennial Circuit, Arts & Industry Estate
02 6680 7667**

Hello summer, hello learning at Byron Community College

This summer, make it all about you! Byron Community College is offering a fantastic chance to explore new skills and passions with courses starting early 2026. Applications are closing soon for nationally recognised Certificate courses including Community Services,

Individual Support, Mental Health, Massage Therapy, Permaculture and Visual Arts, with limited places, subsidised places available.

Whether you want to kickstart a career, grow your confidence, or simply do something inspiring for yourself, the College has you covered. From RSA, First Aid, White Card, Barista training and Digital Skills for Work.

www.byroncollege.org.au or call (02) 6684 3374 for more details. Limited fee free and subsidised places available for eligible students. This training is subsidised by the NSW Government. RTO 90013

Vae Medical Aesthetics

This summer season get event-ready with Vae Medical Aesthetics in Newrybar. Vae offers Broad-Band Light and Moxi Laser, cosmetic injectables, bioremodelling/biostimulating treatments, Rejuran (salmon facial), SkinPen Microneedling, PRP treatments, and Healite LED packages. Vae is a doctor-led-and-owned clinic offering considered and evidence-based skin treatments and rejuvenation in the beautiful Byron Bay hinterland.

Book in today with one of their lovely female GPs; Dr Jemma Buultjens, Dr Kate Allan and RN Emma Walker.

**www.vaemedicalaesthetics.com
@vaemedicalaesthetics
16 Old Pacific Highway, Newrybar
0422 639 013**

Son of Drum

Head into Son of Drum in Mullumbimby and get some music into your life in 2026! Their latest range includes all sorts of folk and world instruments, tribal percussion, beautiful chimes and sound healing items, and plenty of fun stuff for the kids, so they've got everyone covered, from grommets to grannies! And if you're no muso, no problem; get moving instead with some fun toys such as glo poi, fire staff, juggling balls and more. And of course they've got all the strings, accessories, onstage and recording gear you need, so get down to 31 Burringbar Street, Mullumbimby and sort yourself out!

**(02) 6684 1742
Shop 1/31 Burringbar St, Mullumbimby
sonofdrum.com.au**



2026 Certificate courses

Limited subsidised places available

Apply now!



CHC33021 - Certificate III in Individual Support



AHC33882 - Certificate III in Permaculture



CUA31125 - Certificate III in Visual Arts



CHC43315 - Certificate IV in Mental Health



CHC42021 - Certificate IV in Community Services



HLT42021 - Certificate IV in Massage Therapy



byroncollege.org.au

RTO: 90013
02 6684 3374

customer@byroncollege.org.au

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We offer Broad Band Light and Moxi Laser, cosmetic injectables including volume, bio-remodelling / bio-stimulating, anti-wrinkle, PRP treatments, hydrafacial, chemical peels and Healite LED packages.

We are offering complimentary skin consultations for the month of December!

Book in today with one of our lovely female practitioners; Dr Jemma Buultjens, Dr Kate Allan and Emma Walker RN.

**0422 639 013 • info@vaemedicalaesthetics.com
www.vaemedicalaesthetics.com @vaemedicalaesthetics
The Harvest Precinct, 16 Old Pacific Highway, Newrybar.**

Hello summer



Mullumbimby Pools in Mullum and Bangalow

Looking for an unforgettable adventure this school holiday break? Welcome to Mullumbimby Pools, a family-owned-and-operated business led by the dynamic duo, Jake and Natalie O'Brien. With over three decades of combined experience in the industry, they take pride in being a local establishment that has successfully delivered some of the largest and most intricate pool projects across the region.

At Mullumbimby Pools they are not only award-winning pool builders and technicians, they are your partners in creating aquatic havens.

Their pool technicians are ready to visit your property throughout the Byron Shire. Whether it's maintenance, leak detection, repairs, or renovations, our skilled team is dedicated to ensuring the longevity and vitality of your pool. Or, you can visit their shops in Mullumbimby and Bangalow, providing convenient destinations for supplies and parts.

MULLUMBIMBY

12 Smith St
02 6684 4846
Mon to Fri: 8.30am to 5pm
Saturday: 8:30am to 12pm

BANGALOW

Shop 1, 5 Lismore Road
02 6683 4494
Mon to Fri: 8.30am to 5pm
Saturday: 8.30am to 12pm

info@mullumpools.com

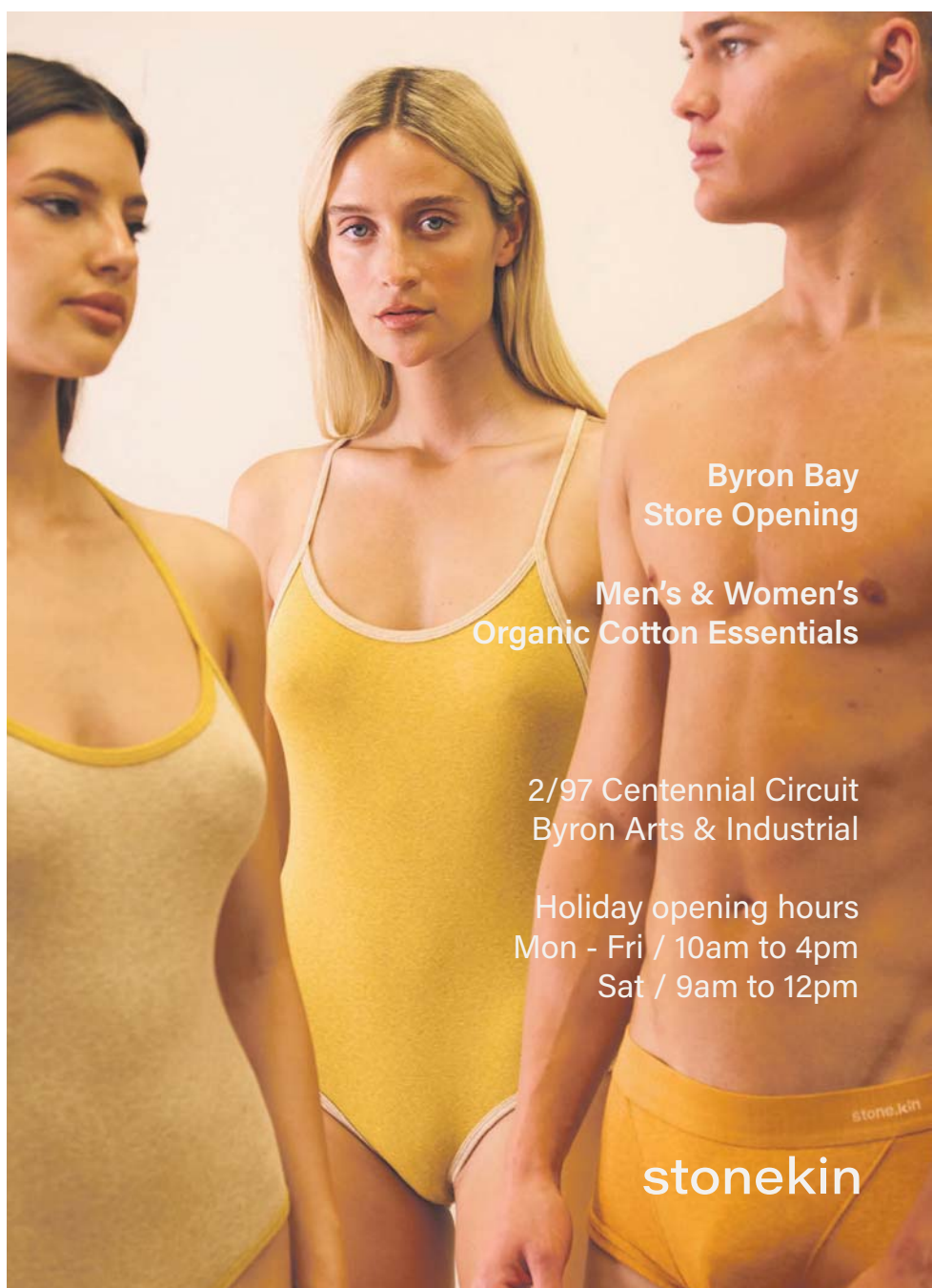
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(02) 6684 4846

Bangalow

Shop 1, 5 Lismore Road
(02) 6683 4494

M-F: 8:30am-5pm, Sat: 8:30am-12pm
info@mullumpools.com



mullumbimbypools.com.au



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 Advertising: adcopy@echo.net.au
 P: 02 6684 1777
 W: echo.net.au/entertainment

Eclectic Selection

What's on this week



Sensory Blender presents **Rhythms of Resolution (NYD)** – an exceptional day and evening of world class DJs including **Phil Perry** (Full Circle UK), **Iain Ha Yes**, **Xuja**, **Monsieur Diop**, **Afrodisea**, **Lord Sut**, **Mr Nice**, **Taz Miller**, as well as **Gabriel Otu** (Happy Africa) live.

Thursday from 2pm at North Byron Hotel. Tickets \$45 + bf from eventbrite.com.au.

Bring your friends and family and come into the heart of Byron Bay this New Year's Eve with live music, outdoor dining, face-painting, a silent disco, a lighting installation, circus workshops, kids entertainment and live music.

Wednesday from 4pm at Jonson Street and Main Beach, Byron Bay. Free family event.



The king of the ad lib, **Austen Tayshus** has never written material: 'I write it when I'm on the stage. I come up with ideas, and then I build on a particular notion, and turn it into whatever.' He's coming up north and he wants you to know it!

Friday at 7pm at The Lennox Hotel, Lennox Head. Tickets \$30 at thelennox.com.au.

Sunday at 7.30 at Club Iluka. More info: ilukabowls.com.au.

This New Year's Eve, the **Beach Hotel** is throwing the kind of party that defines a summer, serving up a huge night of live music, electrifying energy, and that unmistakable Beachy buzz kicking off with **Jam Hot Live**.

Wednesday from 6pm at the Beach Hotel, Byron Bay. Tickets from \$99.90 +bf at beachhotel.com.au.



Lisa Hunt wants you to shake your bootie on New Year's Day so get ready to ride the soul train – Lisa Hunt's **Forever Soul** is rolling into town for your dose of

powerhouse vocals, feel-good funk, and the kind of energy only Lisa can deliver.

Thursday from 3pm at the Shaws Bay Hotel, East Ballina. Free show.



Sylvie Millard is marking her first album launch by releasing two albums at once in the starry wok of Lis Vegas. The band will play slowly, decolonising white country folk tunes and originals, followed by **Vic** from Trusted Friends, on vinyl, with food and friends.

Saturday from 6pm at Timbré, Lismore. Tickets \$15/Conc. \$0 on the door.



Charley Castle and the Boys in the Well are not your granddad's bluegrass. Connecting elements of bygone country and folk with modern sensibilities, their fast-paced, infectious, dynamic, and equally catchy songs make for a holler-inducing show.

Sunday from 4pm at Pearce's Creek Hall. Tickets from \$17 on the door.



DAVE SEAMAN

Get into the flow with electronic storytelling

Flow Music opens the new year with an event dedicated to progressive mastery, bringing together three generations of refined electronic storytelling.

On Friday, Haven Byron Bay becomes the meeting point for deep, driving, and forward-thinking sounds as two global pioneers – **Dave Seaman** and **Kasey Taylor** – take the controls.

Few artists have shaped the progressive house landscape as profoundly as Dave Seaman. With a career spanning more than three decades, Seaman's influence runs deep through the foundations of modern electronic music. From his iconic Renaissance compilations, to world tours, and a catalogue of chart-topping releases, his sound has always balanced emotion, precision, and timeless groove. Seaman remains a benchmark for what progressive music can be when craft and intuition align.

Joining him is Australian underground icon Kasey Taylor, a name synonymous with quality, consistency, and vision. As the founder of Vapour Recordings, Taylor has played a pivotal role in shaping Australia's progressive and melodic house movement, championing artists and sounds that resonate far beyond local borders.

Completing the lineup is Byron Bay's own **Jason Lewis**, a respected local favourite whose warm, melodic approach and seamless flow make him the perfect complement to the night's narrative.

Flow Music invites you to step into the new year with intention – guided by world-class selectors and a shared love for music that moves both body and mind. **Friday from 7pm sharp at Haven, 102 Jonson Street Byron Bay. Tickets available on Humanitix.**

THE GREAT NORTHERN HOTEL
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THUR 1 JAN	Front Bar: Erin Shay Duo 6pm DJs 9pm Duelling Piano Bar 8pm BACKROOM: 90S GRUNGE
FRI 2 JAN	Front Bar: Kane Muir Duo 7pm + Dj Andy V 10pm Duelling Piano Bar 8pm BACKROOM: BRUK OUT FT. 420 SOUND
SAT 3 JAN	Front Matt Armitage Duo 7pm + Dj Billy Bailey 10pm Duelling Piano Bar 8pm BACKROOM: SEASIDE
SUN 4 JAN	Front Bar: Dan Hannaford 6pm + Vinyl Sundays ft. Jimmy Trash 9pm \$15 MARGIS & SPRITZERS ALL DAY Duelling Piano Bar 6pm
MON 5 JAN	BACKPACKER MONDAYS Front Bar: Lachie Dwyer 6pm + Dj Renee Simone 9pm Duelling Piano Bar 8pm
TUES 6 JAN	Front Bar: Marshall OKell 6pm Dj Davi Bangma 9pm Duelling Piano Bar 8pm
WED 7 JAN	Front Bar: Inc Pio 6pm Dj Alice Quiddinton 9pm Duelling Piano Bar 8pm

SUN: \$15 MARGIS & SPRITZERS ALL DAY

INTERVIEW

They have performed alongside some of the biggest names in music – but you probably wouldn't recognise any of these musicians if you passed them on the street. Such is the nature of being a 'sideman' (or sidewoman) – a musician who is integral to a performance but tends to avoid, or be left out of, the limelight.

Bringing these performers out of the shadows is Steve Banks who says he came up with the idea for the show many years ago to shine a light on, and celebrate, the amazing achievements of the sidemen of rock and roll. 'You wouldn't recognise most of these artists if you fell over 'em.'

In what is becoming a new year tradition, episode eight of Steve Banks and The Sidemen will perform in January at the Byron Theatre.

THE RIGHT SIDE(MEN) OF THE TRACKS

What's new and interesting with the Sidemen this year?

The Sidemen show continues to evolve as new members join. There's about 15 of us now, all players are session guys and many still tour which means we chop and change as commitments allow. This show we are playing a few more songs we 'wished we'd written' to add to our cache of staples. A contemporary tune from The National, for example, plus Steve Miller, Dire Straits and John Mayall to name a few, and then there's our beloved Jo Jo Zep/Black Sorrow tracks as we have our very own Black Sorrow (Jeff Burstin) on guitar as always.

Who's new on the bill?

We are an eight-piece on stage, our newest member – Alex McLeod – who's a super guitarist (The Sea Benz) will play alongside Jeff and that's a pairing I'm looking forward to!

How will this show be different from the others?

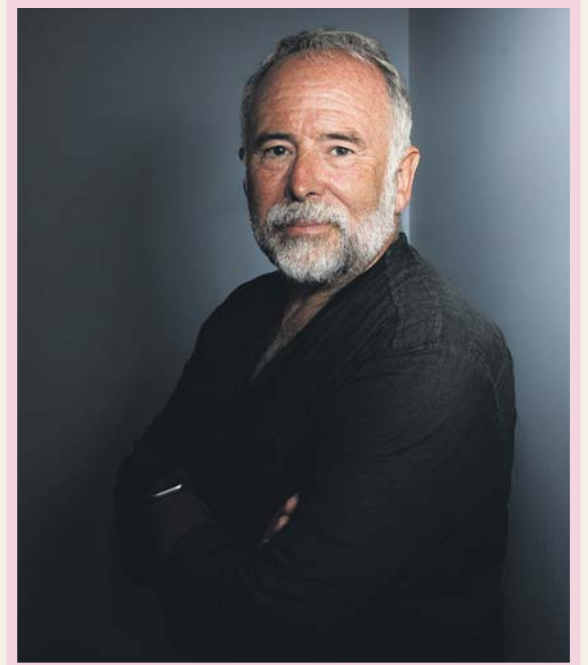
This show is different in that we've added songs we wished we'd written instead of those we either wrote or helped to make famous. Might be a tribute to Brian Wilson in there too. It's a cracking set list with lots of new tunes and a new face.

What's the most exciting thing for you about this year's show?

The most exciting thing about this show is the pairing of Alex and Jeff on guitar, and to sing with Amy Stuart and Chloe West again – and then there's Brendan St Ledger on Keys (Wendy Mathews) – and, and, lol, not forgetting Grant and Mike – or Jeff...

What's inspiring you?

My inspiration remains constant and that is to keep live music alive and to champion the support of musicians out there, and in this region particularly, who deserve material support for their craft.



What is your current earworm?

Current earworm/s vacillate between 'Bloodbuzz Ohio' (The National) and the 'Bluey Theme Song' courtesy of my beloved grandson Remy.

Steve, are you having enough fun?

I'm always having fun in multiple areas. As a muso for sure, but also loving grandpappiness as I call it. Plus, we were in the studio with the Sidemen recently and that's always a blast.

Steve Banks and The Sidemen will perform their show on Friday, January 16, at 7.30 in the Byron Theatre.

More information and tickets can be found at: byroncentre.com.au.



The sparkling Seaside

Emerging from the sparkling local waters, indie-rock band **Seaside** is touring their debut album *Desiderata*. A sun-soaked 11-tracks filled with punchy riffs, dreamy melodies, and heartfelt storytelling, that crystallises the band's signature high-energy sound, blending an alt rock edge with introspective lyricism, as they explore themes of love, longing, and self-discovery.

Fans can expect a brand new show packed with new tracks from the album like the anthemic 'Rebels' and hard-hitting 'Sick', and fan favourites from their earlier releases, delivered with the band's infectious energy and raw charisma, led by front-woman Darcy Dexter's commanding stage presence.

See them on Saturday from 8pm at The Northern, with special guests Vinted Vineer and Lune to the Moon. Tickets \$22.44 +bf at Moshtix.

www.echo.net.au

*Of all the things I've lost,
I miss my mind the most.*

– Ozzy Osbourne

Putting The Fondue Back Into Rock And Roll!

A Trip Through The 70s

Alive 70s
In The 70s

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Saturday 17th January

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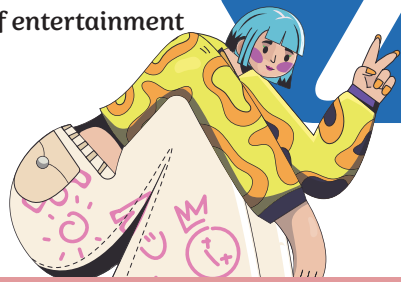
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Trains and pets - what more could kids want?

As the festive season of films for kids gets underway, you can't go wrong with ridiculous anthropomorphism. **Pets on a Train**, is a film whose story follows pets trapped on a speeding train trying to stop the plans of a vengeful badger.

Falcon is a raccoon who steals food from various bins and carts to feed his friends on the streets, having been 'raised' by Rico, a pigeon, since he was young.

Falcon accepts an offer from a badger named Hans to collaborate on a train robbery, intending to take the food from the train so that he and his friends can have a Christmas feast. Once on board the train, Falcon can hack into the train carriages and allow Hans remote access. Hans broadcasts a pre-recorded message ordering all humans to leave the train, and then sets it into motion while the only living things on the train are the pets in the final carriage.

These include Anna, an anaconda who belongs to a rapper, police dog Rex, Maggie the spotted cat, influencer animals (Candy and Randy), a rabbit couple (Jimi and Janis), a pair of parrots (Croquette / Coco and Judy), a pompous greyhound (Victor), a hamster who's lost his mate, a duck, a turtle (Leo), and a clownfish (Momo).

The animals learn that Hans' target is Rex, as Rex was apparently responsible for Hans being sent to the pound after he was caught - and the plot thickens...

Will Maggie, who regularly travels with her owner Lisa, tell them the train's final destination would see them crash into another city? Will Falcon release the animals from their cages before their untimely end?

Pets on a Train is screening at **Palace Cinemas, Byron Bay** - palacecinemas.com.au.

WEDNESDAY 31

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, PAPERLANE
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM JAM HOT LIVE + ANIMAL VENTURA + ERIN SHAY BAND + DJ CHARLES OLIVER
- BYRON BAY GOLF CLUB 6.30PM RENEE SIMONE + DJ FREDDY FLYINGAZ
- NORTH BYRON HOTEL 5PM DJ MR NICE + DJ NAT WHITE
- BYRON BAY SERVICES CLUB 5.30PM BACK TRACKIN'
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 8PM DUELLING PIANOS - BODHI ACTON & MICK BUCKLEY + JIMMY GOODWIN & JON SHORTER
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 6PM TIJUANA CARTEL + ANDY V, XUJA & JORDAN MAC
- MULLUMBIMBY EX-SERVICES CLUB 8.30PM THE RECORD BREAKERS
- SHAW'S BAY HOTEL, BALLINA, 5PM PUSH + DJ DANNY B
- BALLINA RSL LEVEL ONE 7PM THE BIG GIGGLE
- CHERRY STREET SPORTS CLUB, BALLINA, 9PM PINK ZINC
- KINGSCLIFF BEACH HOTEL 6PM DJ PAYDAY + DJ JESSE MOFFATT
- SALTBAR, KINGSCLIFF, 9PM JON J BRADLEY DUO
- CLUB TWEED 7.30PM LIVING IN THE 70S
- SEAGULLS, TWEED HEADS, 7.30PM HIGH VOLTAGE - THE AC/DC EXPERIENCE + BONGO BOYS
- CLUB LENNOX 6PM LUKE YEAMAN + SURVEY STREET
- LENNOX HOTEL 3PM OLE FALCOR & PISTOL WHIP
- COOLANGATTA HOTEL 5PM SMASHED CRABS + RADIOSTAR
- CHINDERAH TAVERN 9PM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINDERAH

THURSDAY 1

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, FELICITY LAWLESS
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 4.20PM THE FERAMONES + DJ REIFLEX
- NORTH BYRON HOTEL 2PM PHIL PERRY, IAIN HA YES, XUJA, MONSIEUR DIOP, LORD SUT, AFRODISEA, MR NICE AND TAZ MILLE + GABRIEL OTU
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM ERIN SHAY DUO 8PM 90S GRUNGE 9PM DUELLING PIANO BAR
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 4.30PM LIVING IN THE 80S
- SAINT MARIES, BRUNSWICK HEADS, 6PM MONDO HUM
- BILLINUDGEL HOTEL 1PM MANDY HAWKES DUO
- LENNOX HOTEL 8PM THURSDAY JAM NIGHT
- SHAW'S BAY HOTEL, BALLINA, 3PM LISA HUNT + MISTER BENNETTS
- LISMORE CITY BOWLO 7PM THE SUPPER CLUB SOUL BAND
- SALTBAR, KINGSCLIFF, 3PM FAT ALBERT
- COOLANGATTA HOTEL 3PM THE 42 BAND + BERST

FRIDAY 2

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, CASSIE ROSE & THE SOL GARDEN
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 4PM MARSHALL O'KELL + FOLAMOUR, TEED, MILLIE & JESSIE BELTERS
- NORTH BYRON HOTEL 5PM DR JR DYNAMITE
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 7PM KANE MUIR DUO, 9PM DUELLING PIANO BAR + 420 SOUND, 10PM DJ ANDY V
- HAVEN, BYRON BAY, 7PM DAVE SEAMAN, KASEY TAYLOR AND JASON LEWIS
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 4.30PM BULLETPROOF
- BRUNSWICK HEADS PICTURE HOUSE 7PM BRUNS DOES BURLESQUE
- WANDANA BREWING CO., MULLUMBIMBY, 4.30PM DJ SALVE JORGE
- MIDDLE PUB, MULLUMBIMBY, 8PM KRAPPYKEE WITH JESS
- LENNOX HOTEL 7PM AUSTEN TAYSHUS
- CLUB LENNOX 7PM DJ WHO'S WHO
- BALLINA RSL BOARDWALK 6PM ANDY V
- CHERRY STREET SPORTS CLUB, BALLINA, 7PM INO PIO
- KINGSCLIFF BEACH HOTEL 8PM THE TEMPER TRAP

SATURDAY 3

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, TANDIA JAY & THE SHENANIGATORS
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 3PM DAVE MCCREDIE + BROOK CHIVELL DUO + BELTERS ONLY + JAMIE LOWE
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 4.30PM THE FERAMONES
- BRUNSWICK HEADS PICTURE HOUSE 7PM BRUNS DOES BURLESQUE
- NORTH BYRON HOTEL 1.30PM DANI QUAYLE MUSIC + DJ NAT WHITE
- HAVEN, BYRON BAY, 4PM NARCISS B2B MORPHENA, ANATOLE SERRET B2B JAI PICCONE, BLADEXC, KERRYFM, ZAC & JOE
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 7PM MATT ARMITAGE DUO 8PM DUELLING PIANO BAR, SEASIDE, 10PM DJ BILLY BAILEY
- WANDANA BREWING CO., MULLUMBIMBY, 4.30PM DJ LAINIE GODIVA
- BALLINA RSL BOARDWALK 6PM ANDY MCLEOD
- CHERRY STREET SPORTS CLUB, BALLINA, 8PM WEAR THE FOX HAT
- TIMBRÉ, LISMORE, 6PM SYLVIE MILLARD
- KINGSCLIFF BEACH HOTEL 5PM PETE MURRAY
- SALTBAR, KINGSCLIFF, 5PM ISAAC FRANKHAM
- CLUB LENNOX 7PM LUKE YEAMAN
- WANDANA BREWING CO., MULLUMBIMBY, 4.30PM DJ MONSIEUR DIOP
- ST JOHN'S SCHOOL HALL, MULLUMBIMBY, 6PM TENZIN CHOEGYAL
- BILLINUDGEL HOTEL 1PM ROO FRIEND TRIO
- ELTHAM HOTEL 4PM MATTHEW ARMITAGE
- PEARCES CREEK HALL 4PM CHARLEY CASTLE AND THE BOYS IN THE WELL
- BALLINA RSL BOARDWALK 2.30PM BALLINA BLUES CLUB FEAT IMPERIAL BLUES REVIEW
- SHAW'S BAY HOTEL, BALLINA, 3PM THE FERAMONES

SUNDAY 4

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, FAT ALBERT
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 4.30PM FLEETWOOD NICKS + DJ LONGTIME + FISH56OCTAGON + LILY STEEL
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 7PM DAN HANNAFORD 9PM VINYL SUNDAYS FT JIMMY TRASH + DUELLING PIANO BAR
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 4PM HAYLEY GRACE & THE BAY COLLECTIVE
- BRUNSWICK HEADS PICTURE HOUSE 6PM BRUNS DOES BURLESQUE
- MULLUMBIMBY EX-SERVICES CLUB 3PM KIDS KARAOKE
- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, STEPHEN LOVELIGHT
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM INO PIO
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM LACHIE DWYER, 8PM DUELLING PIANO BAR, 9PM DJ RENEE SIMONE
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 6PM DAN HANNAFORD
- BILLINUDGEL HOTEL 1PM HENRY WEST
- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, CINNAMON SUN
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 8PM IZAEAH MARSH + GOOD NEIGHBOURS + JACK GRAY
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM MARSHALL OKELL, 8PM DUELLING PIANO BAR, 9PM DJ DAVI BANGMA
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 6PM BENNY D WILLIAMS

MONDAY 5

TUESDAY 6

WEDNESDAY 7

PALACE CINEMAS
BYRON BAY · BALLINA FAIR

HOLIDAY FILM SELECTION

SCAN TO BOOK ONLINE

FOR BOOKINGS AND SESSION TIMES PALACECINEMAS.COM.AU 6686 9600 BALLINA FAIR · 6680 8555 BYRON BAY

It's Free! to post your gig in the Echo Gig Guide

It will appear in the paper, the online gig guide and on Bay FM
email gigs@echo.net.au with the details

ECHO CLASSIFIEDS – 6684 1777

CLASSIFIED AD BOOKINGS

PHONE ADS

Ads may be taken by phone on **6684 1777**

AT THE ECHO HEAD OFFICE

Ads can be lodged in person at the Mullum Echo office:

Village Way, Stuart St, Mullumbimby

EMAIL ADS

Display (box ads) and line classifieds, email:
classifieds@echo.net.au

Ad bookings only taken during business hours: Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm. Ads can't be taken on the weekend. Account enquiries phone 6684 1777.

DEADLINE TUES 12PM

Publication day is Wednesday, booking deadlines are the day before publication.

RATES & PAYMENT

LINE ADS:

\$17.00 for the first two lines

\$5.00 for each extra line

\$17 for two lines is the minimum charge.

DISPLAY ADS (with a border): \$14 per column centimetre

These prices include GST.

Cash, cheque, Mastercard or Visa
Prepayment is required for all ads.

CLASSIFIEDS THAT WORK ALL WEEK!

Echo Classies also appear online:
www.echo.net.au/classified-ads

TO LET

LOCAL REMOVAL

& backloads to Brisbane. Friendly, with 10 years local exp. 0409917646

BALLINA SELF-STORAGE UNITS
Secure. From \$22p/w. Ranging from 10–44 m3. Across 3 locations. 66867011

POSITIONS VACANT

PART-TIME SUPPORT WORKER

required for 88-year-old woman for two hours in the morning and one hour in afternoon every Friday and Sat. Duties are: dog walking, light house work, light assistance around house and garden and occasional errands, but she can manage cooking and personal care herself without assistance. Call 0410540592

SCT LOGISTICS TRUCK WASHERS

Temporary opportunity. We're looking for truck washers at our SCT Logistics depot, 117 Baraang Drive Broadwater NSW 2472 (sugar mill site). Mon to Fri, 38-hour week, weather dependant. Starts in December and runs through to the end of January. Full training provided. Please send brief resume to Wendy.Keel@sctlogistics.com.au or during office hours call 0409568795

THE OTHER JOINT is seeking a front of house allrounder. mullum@otherjoint.com

LADIES WANTED, MUST BE 18+ Work available in busy adult parlour. Travellers welcome. 66816038 for details.

TAXI DRIVERS WANTED

Flexible work hours – perfect 2nd income
Email operations@byronbaytaxi.com



Nurse Practitioner
Grafton, Coffs Harbour & North Coast NSW

Nursing – General Medical & Surgical (Healthcare & Medical)

Full time
\$100,000 – \$150,000 per year

Apply now with:
kelly.onley@trecruitment.com.au
0411 641 919

And take the next step in your career as a Nurse Practitioner with Tier One Recruitment

SUN, MOON & TIDES – TIMES FOR NEXT 2 WEEKS

DATE (Dec/Jan)	DAY, MOON PHASE	SUN RISE / SET	MOON RISE / SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)
31	W	5:50 / 19:46	16:29 / 2:09	06:29 1.62; 18:24 1.16	12:52 0.49
1	TH	5:51 / 19:47	17:41 / 2:57	07:28 1.76; 19:31 1.15	00:21 0.22; 14:01 0.40
2	F	5:52 / 19:47	18:52 / 3:55	08:22 1.86; 20:30 1.16	01:15 0.17; 15:00 0.31
3	SA	5:52 / 19:47	19:55 / 4:51	09:15 1.94; 21:24 1.17	02:06 0.14; 15:51 0.25
4	SU	5:53 / 19:47	20:48 / 5:42	10:04 1.96; 22:15 1.19	02:58 0.13; 16:38 0.23
5	M	5:54 / 19:47	21:33 / 6:24	10:51 1.94; 23:02 1.20	03:46 0.14; 17:23 0.24
6	TU	5:55 / 19:48	22:10 / 7:01	11:34 1.87; 23:49 1.20	04:35 0.19; 18:05 0.27
7	W	5:55 / 19:48	22:43 / 7:36	12:15 1.76; 9:36	05:23 0.28; 18:45 0.32
8	TH	5:56 / 19:48	23:12 / 8:06	00:36 1.20; 10:36	06:11 0.39; 19:22 0.36
9	F	5:57 / 19:48	23:40 / 8:33	01:27 1.19; 11:33	07:01 0.52; 20:00 0.40
10	SA	5:58 / 19:48	00:08 / 9:01	02:24 1.20; 12:28	08:00 0.63; 20:38 0.43
11	SU	5:58 / 19:48	00:36 / 9:36	03:30 1.23; 13:22	09:13 0.72; 21:23 0.45
12	M	5:59 / 19:48	01:03 / 10:01	04:38 1.29; 14:17	10:40 0.75; 22:14 0.46
13	TU	6:00 / 19:48	1:10 / 10:36	05:40 1.36; 15:13	12:03 0.71; 23:09 0.46
14	W	6:01 / 19:48	1:46 / 11:01	06:31 1.45; 16:10	13:09 0.64

Data sourced from Bureau of Meteorology. Times adjusted for Daylight Savings when applicable.

DISCLAIMER

Advertisements placed in *The Byron Shire Echo* do not reflect the views or opinions of the editorial staff. *The Byron Shire Echo* does not make any representations as to the accuracy or suitability of any content or information contained in advertising material nor does publication constitute in any way an endorsement by *The Byron Shire Echo* of the content or representations contained therein. *The Byron Shire Echo* does not accept any liability for the representations or promises made in paid advertisements or for any loss or damage arising from reliance on such content, representations or promises.

PUBLIC NOTICES

WHERE TO GET THE ECHO
If you live in Newrybar, Lennox Head or Ballina, but outside our current home delivery area, you can pick up an Echo from many locations, including: Newrybar Providore Newrybar; Richies IGA Ballina, Ballina RSL, One Stop Shop Ballina, Ballina Golf Club East Ballina, Brighton St Takeaway near the Shawsy, Seagrass Lennox, Lennox pub drive-through, Station St Grocer Lennox

DEATH NOTICES

JOANNE MARIA PALMER (nee baker)

10/11/1963 – 24/11/2025
Aged 62 years



It is with heartbroken sadness and deep sorrow that we share with you the sudden loss of our beautiful loving Jo.

Loving and caring mother to Rick and Daniel partner to Kevin, daughter to Joan and Colin Baker (both dec) sister to Tim, Serina, Kerry and Kim, aunty and great aunty to all her nephews and nieces and beautiful loving dear friend to so many people.

We will never forget your huge smile, your beautiful, loving, caring, helpful and giving nature and attitude towards life

and the abundance of love and positivity that radiated from you everywhere that you went.

We love you so much Jo. Until we're all together again be free with the Angels, swim with the dolphins and soar wherever the four winds may take you.

For all who knew and loved our Angel Jo, a funeral service will be held in her home town Byron Bay and those details will follow at a later date.

LOCALS SPECIAL!

BRUNSWICK HEADS CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL BANNER PARK

Any Sunday until 25th Jan 2026 from 6.30pm

BUY 1 RIDE
GET 1 FREE

IN MEMORIAM

KEITH BROWN

Dad, your passion for life and enthusiasm in friendships will always remain our most cherished memories. Forever close to our hearts. Love Shane & Liz



LIFE CELEBRATIONS

JOYCE MONA RANKIN

12/11/1923 – 13/12/2025



Privately cremated
Joyce died peacefully at home
We invite you to celebrate her life with us at the Ocean Shores Country Club, Saturday, 10/1/3026 from 11am - 2pm.
RSVP Judie Corr
walker2thecorr@live.com.au

HEALTH

TIME FOR A NEW YEAR RESET?
Restore your body and nervous system with professional massage therapy in a peaceful Upper Main Arm forest sanctuary. Trusted local practitioner. Private, safe and professional space. Justin 0490 132 697

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Simple and effective solutions. Anxiety, Cravings, Fears & Trauma. **Maureen Bracken 0402205352**

COMMUNITY HOT BRUNCH



FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH

• Sausage sizzle • Hot dogs • Sandwiches
• Coffee & tea • Fruit Salad

EVERYONE WELCOME

Come one come all and join us in a meal or just a chat. Takeaway most welcome: COVID safe rules apply. Frozen takeaway meals now available.

10am to 12pm
In the Ballina Presbyterian Hall

Corner of Cherry & Crane. Just behind the Presbyterian Church.



BEAUTIFUL RELAXING
Professional deep tissue massage
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www.katemessengerkinesiology.com.au

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BSc MScSoc GDPsych DH
0474 179 111

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Bring greater focus, clarity and calm into your workplace.
Certified Mindfulness Educator Paul Bibby
0401 926 090

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Somatic Practice
Julie Wells
Anne Goslett (nee Mannix)
Dip.Som.Psych, Clinical PACFA Reg. Individual and Couple Therapy Supervision and Coaching
(02) 6685 5185
9 Fletcher St, Byron Bay

WANTED
TREE FERNS
Any shape, size. Royalties paid. Ongoing supply needed. 0414904396

LP RECORDS: good condition, no op shop crap! Matt 0401955052

TRADEWORK

Septic Waste Removal Summerland Environmental
The Liquid Waste Specialists!
• Septic tank cleaning
• Grease trap servicing
• Oily Liquids
• Portable toilet hire
• 24 hour service
6687 2880

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LEAF IT TO US - Tree Care Specialists
Local, qualified, insured, free quotes. Big to small we enjoy it all - 0402487213

SUMMERLAND TREE SERVICES
• Arborist • 15" Wood Chipper • Stump Grinder • Fully Insured
Byron Bay & Surrounding Areas
6681 3140
Mobile 0417 698 227

HART TREE SERVICES
20 years local experience
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• Cherry picker • Crane truck • Bob Cat
Fully insured • Free quotes
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CARAVANS
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2 FREE STANDING HOUSES ON ONE BLOCK IN GOONELLABAH. <https://www.domain.com.au/8a-8b-jennifer-place-gooneellabah-nsw-2480-2019800564>
OR mobile 0429023402

GARAGE SALES

Tip Runs & Rubbish Removal
0408 210 772

TO LEASE

OFFICE/WORKSPACE 42sqm \$350pw
Billinudgel. Ph Lifestyle Group 66851206



On The Horizon

DEADLINE NOON FRIDAY

Email copy marked 'On The Horizon' to editor@echo.net.au.

Free bushwalk to Unicorn Falls

Join us for a relaxing bushwalk down to the beautiful Unicorn Falls! This Grade 3 walk, approximately 5km return, takes you through scenic bushland to the falls, where you can enjoy the views and the tranquil surroundings. Swimming is optional, so bring your swimmers. A morning tea will be provided at the falls. Call Di on 0427 026 935 to carpool. When: Saturday January 3, 2026 from 9am - 12pm. Where: Start at Manns Road Carpark (approx. 3.5km from Rowlands Creek Road or Main Arm/Skyline Roads intersection - Google 'Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk Carpark'). The event is run by Together She Thrives, a not-for-profit charity that creates free events for women and teen girls. For more visit www.togethershethrives.org.au.

Free Trivia Night

Join us for a fun and relaxed night of trivia! No need to worry if you're not

a trivia expert - it's all about having fun, connecting, and enjoying a night out with the girls. When: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 from 6pm till 8pm. Where: Brunswick Heads Bowling Club, 107 Tweed Street, Brunswick Heads. The event is run by Together She Thrives. For more visit www.togethershethrives.org.au.

Free Macrame Workshop - Make a Plant Hanger

Get creative at our hands-on macrame workshop! You'll learn to make your own plant hanger, guided step by step - no experience needed and everything is provided. When: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 from 1.30pm till 4pm. Where: Mullumbimby RSL. This workshop is open to everyone, but spaces are limited, so we'll have a waiting list once spots are filled. Email jyotiwindshuttle60@gmail.com. The event is run by Together She Thrives. For more visit www.togethershethrives.org.au.

Regular As Clockwork

DEADLINE NOON FRIDAY

Please note that, owing to space restrictions, not all entries may be included each week. Email copy marked 'Regular As Clockwork' to editor@echo.net.au.

Tech-savvy seniors

Free, fun tech lessons are on at Byron Bay Library. Join our friendly training sessions where library staff help you to get online and build your digital skills. The 40-minute Friday sessions offer a broad range of topics to choose from that will help you gain confidence and stay connected. Bookings essential at: www.rtril.nsw.gov.au or phone the Byron Bay branch 6685 8540.

lunch Tuesday-Thursday 12.30-1.30pm.
Financial counselling Staying Home, Leaving Violence program: Information, referral, and advocacy.
Gulgani affordable pantry shop: located at 3 Bridgeland Lane.
Orange Sky: free laundry service Mon morning & Wed afternoon. To enquire about accessing any of these services call reception 6684 1286, check our website www.mdncc.org.au, or follow us on Facebook or Instagram. @mullumbimbyneighbourhoodcentre.

Brunswick backgammon

The Brunswick Backgammon Club meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at the CWA Hall in Brunswick Heads, from 5.30pm till 7pm. It's a relaxed, social evening open to all skill levels - newcomers are always welcome!

Sing and play along

Free weekly sing along sessions for over 70s in Mullumbimby, on Wednesdays from 10.30 to 11.30am. Feel free to bring your ukulele and/or guitar and enjoy singing the songs of your youth. Limited spaces. Contact Magenta on 0447 844 215.

Free baby clothes

Free baby clothes are available each Friday morning (during school terms) from 10-12am at Mullumbimby CWA Hall, corner of Tincogan and Gordon sts. And if you like hanging out with mums and bubs and have a penchant for folding tiny clothes, we're always keen for more volunteers to join our happy team! More info: www.pbbmedia.org/outreachhub. Contact: hello@pbbmedia.org.

Mullumbimby District Neighbourhood Centre

Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre is open Monday-Friday 9am-4pm (closed 12.30-1.30pm for lunch). We offer a variety of services. Everyone is welcome. Call reception on 6684 1286. Some of our services include:
Flood recovery support service: personalised, long-term support for those impacted by the floods.
Community support: food parcels, meals, showers, assistance with electricity bills. Work Development Orders.
Listening Space: free counselling.
More Than A Meal: free community

Low-cost or free food

Food Box Thursdays 9.30-11.30am at Uniting Church, Mullumbimby. You may purchase cheap food, obtain free veges, and enjoy a cuppa. We will be closed from December 18 and re-open on February 5, 2026. For all enquiries please phone Gill 0428 846 328. **The Hub** Baptist Church in Ocean Shores has food relief available for anyone doing it tough, please contact us on 0434 677747 if you find yourself doing it tough. No ID or Concession Card required. NILS referral service also available. Check Facebook page The Hub Baptist Ocean Shores for details. **Liberation Larder** Takeaway lunches and groceries Monday and Thursday 12 till 1pm. Fletcher Street end of the Byron Community Centre.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

AMBULANCE, FIRE, POLICE	000
AMBULANCE Mullumbimby & Byron Bay	131 233
POLICE Brunswick Heads	6629 7510
Mullumbimby	6629 7570
Byron Bay	6685 9499
Bangalow	6629 7500
STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE Storm & tempest damage, flooding...	132 500
BRUNSWICK VALLEY RESCUE Primary rescue.....	6685 1999
BRUNSWICK MARINE RADIO TOWER	6685 0148
BYRON CENTRAL HOSPITAL	6639 9400
BYRON COUNCIL: EMERGENCY AFTER HOURS	6622 7022
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE (Mullumbimby).....	6684 1286
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 24 hour crisis line.....	1800 656 463
LIFELINE	131 114
MENSLINE	1300 789 978
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 24 hours.....	1800 423 431
AL-ANON Help for family and friends of alcoholics.....	1300 252 666
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS Meets daily.....	6680 7280
NORTHERN RIVERS GAMBLING SERVICE	6687 2520
HIV/AIDS - ACON Confidential testing & information.....	6622 1555
ANIMAL RESCUE (DOGS & CATS)	6622 1881
NORTHERN RIVERS WILDLIFE CARERS	6628 1866
KOALA HOTLINE	6622 1233
WIRES - NSW Wildlife Information & Rescue Service	6628 1898



Echo
VIGILANT SINCE 1986

The Echo's Market Guide

Find it online: www.echo.net.au/market-guide

MONTHLY MARKETS:

1st SAT:	Brunswick Heads Markets - 8am-2pm
1st SUN:	Byron Community Market - 8am-3pm Pottsville Beach Markets - 7am-1pm
2nd SUN:	The Channon Craft Market - 9am-3pm Chillingham Markets - 8am-1pm Coolangatta Arts & Craft Markets - 8am-2pm Tabulam Community Market - 9am-1pm
3rd SAT:	Mullumbimby Community Market - 8am-2pm Murwillumbah Makers & Finders Market - 9am-2pm Salt Beach Markets , South Kingscliff/Casuarina - 8am-1pm
3rd SUN:	Federal Village Market - 8am-2pm Uki Buttery Bazaar Market - 8am-2pm Pottsville Beach Markets - 7am-1pm Lismore City Bowlo Markets - 9am-1pm
3rd SUN (Dec & Jan):	Byron Community Market - 8am-3pm
4th SAT:	Kyogle Bazaar - 9am-2pm
Last SAT:	Evans Head Rotary Market - 8am-1pm
4th SUN:	Bangalow Market - 8am-2.30pm Nimbin Markets - 9am-3pm Murwillumbah Showground Market - 8am-1pm
4th SUN (in a 5-Sunday month):	Coolangatta Arts & Crafts - 8am-2pm
5th SUN:	Nimbin Markets - 8.30am-3pm

Seasonal: **Byron Beachside Market** - four times a year: Wed 7th Jan 2026, Easter, July and Sept

FARMERS/WEEKLY MARKETS:

Each TUE:	New Brighton Farmers Market - 8am-11am Lismore Organic Market - 7.30am-10.30am
Each WED:	Murwillumbah Farmers Market - 7am-11am Nimbin Farmers Market - 3pm-6pm Newrybar Hall Twilight Market - 3pm-7.30pm
Each THU:	Byron Bay Farmers Market - 7am-11am Lismore Produce Market - 3pm-6pm
Each FRI:	Mullumbimby Farmers Market - 7am-11am Evans Head Farmers Market - 2.30pm-6.30pm
Each SAT:	Bangalow Farmers Market - 7am-11am Duranbah Road Farmers Market (Tropical Fruit World) 8am-11am Uki Farmers Market - 8am-1pm Lismore Farmers Market - 7.30am-11.30am Byron Twilight Market (October to April) 4pm-9pm
Each SUN:	Ballina Farmers & Producers Market - 7am-11am

The Echo updates this guide regularly, however sometimes markets change their routine without letting us know. Please get in touch if you want to advise us of a change.



WORK WANTED

WORDPRESS WEBSITE CREATION
Fair rates info@wordpressit.com.au

1 or 2 MEN + UTE

Furniture and rubbish removals
Over 15 years exp. Jarrod 0415 139 308

VOLUNTEERS WANTED



Mullumbimby & District
Neighbourhood Centre
Connecting the Byron Shire Community

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Kitchen Hands -
- Retail Assistants -
- Drivers and Co-driver -
- Community Support Assistants -

MDNC is in need of dedicated volunteers to be part of a big loving family. All skill sets welcome.

Contact Sylvia - Volunteer Coordinator
Mon-Fri
6684 1286

TUITION

Adobe Tutoring

Experienced Professional Tutor

- Photoshop
- Indesign
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contact@thinkblinkdesign.com
www.thinkblinkdesign.com

BIRTHDAYS



FELIZ CUMPLEAÑOS TO OUR PISCO QUEEN

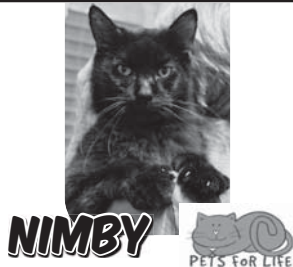
LOST & FOUND

FOUND VOUCHERS
The coupons snipped out of my Echo from last week were luckily published again in this week's Echo!

FOUND
The email address of Royal, (formerly known as Prince) Andrew's alleged pseudonym - The Invisible Man abx17@dial.pipex.com

PETS

PET SITTER AVAILABLE
Kind, confident animal carer available for your four-legged fur baby. References available. Call Pawla on 0415340744



NIMBY PETS FOR LIFE
Nimby, the most gentle and affectionate soul was rescued from the streets of Nimbin looking rather worse for wear! He has improved so much now, and has shown us what a gentle, easy going boy he is, and so full of love! If you would like a quiet, laid back, friendly cat Nimby is the one!
3 yo Microchip 9910039028276652.
See more on our fb page!

To make an appointment
0403 533 589 • Billinudgel
petsforlifeanimalshelter.net



TEVI
Tevi and all at the AWL shelter would like to wish you all a safe & happy Christmas. To everyone who has adopted from us, fostered for us & supported us this year, we really thank you & to those who are thinking of adopting from us in 2026, weeks really hope you do!

To meet Tevi & our other cats & kittens, please visit the Cat Adoption Centre at 124 Dalley Street, Mullumbimby.

OPEN: Tues 2.30-4.30pm
Thurs 3-5pm
Sat 10am-12 noon
Call AWL on 0436 845 542

Like us on Facebook!
AWL NSW Rehoming Organisation
Number: R251000222



KODY
Kody is a 1.5 year old Border Collie X. He would thrive in an active family on a property where he can enjoy plenty of enrichment and stimulation to keep him happy and engaged.

MC #991003002698971
For more information contact
Yvette on 0421 831 128.

Please complete an Expression of Interest at: <https://friendsofthepound.com/adoption-expression-of-interest/>

Visit friendsofthepound.com to view other dogs and cats looking for a home.
ABN 83 126 970 338

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Large variety of toys and lingerie
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66856330

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SOCIAL ESCORTS

LOTS OF GORGEOUS LADIES available for your pleasure nearby. Spoil yourself. In-house & outcalls. 7 days. 0266816038.

ECHO SERVICE DIRECTORY RATES, PAYMENT & DEADLINE

Deadline: For additions and changes is **12pm Friday**
Line ads: \$99 for 3 months or \$340 for 1 year prepaid
Display ads: \$70 per week for colour display ad.
 Minimum 8 week booking 4 weeks prepaid.
 Please supply display ads 85mm wide, 38mm high.
 New ads will be placed at end of section.
Contact: 6684 1777 or adcop@echo.net.au



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ACCOUNTANTS & BOOKKEEPERS

BYRON BOOKKEEPING BAS, Payroll, AR/AP, Xero, QB, MYOB..... 0415 639548
BOOKKEEPER Reg BAS provider, payroll, A/P, A/R, Xero & MYOB. Local, reliable. 0410 206627
BLOOMING BOOKKEEPING and BAS Agent..... Ph Leah 0434 121077

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ACUPUNCTURE CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE M Collis..... 0490 022183

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6684 2783

COOLMAN AIR CONDITIONING 23 yrs exp. Lic. 178464C AU30147 0422 291433
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www.echo.net.au

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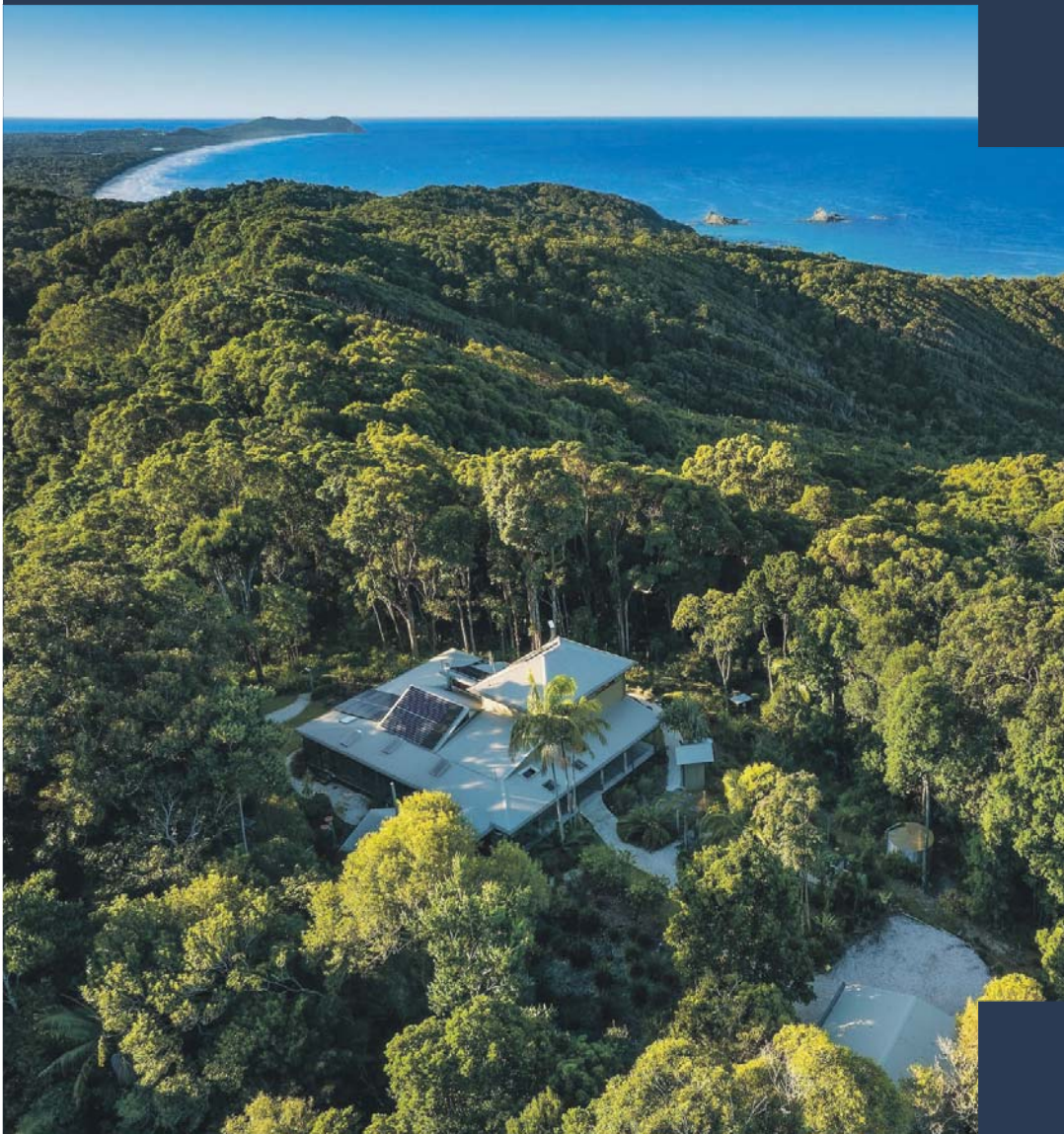
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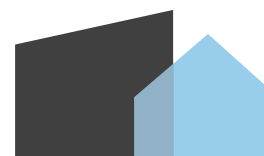
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For the ninth year in a row, Fishheads hosted Christmas lunch for people experiencing homelessness in Byron Bay. This year, they were able to feed around 65 patrons. The event was made possible thanks to the generous support of their suppliers and local community members, many of whom donated money to help cover costs, as well as those who gave up their time on Christmas Day to volunteer and help run the lunch. Fishheads managers wanted to acknowledge their staff in the lead-up to the event, who helped prepare all of the food while continuing to manage their regular duties during an already busy time of year. Photo supplied

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Happy 2026 peeps! Ten years ago, *The Echo* reported that 'Byron Shire generally ushered in the New Year in a well-behaved fashion, with reports of happy crowds at the Falls Festival and at NYE events in Byron Bay. Police said an estimated 10,000 people visited the Soul Street area and the town overall was very well behaved'.

A reminder that all bins will be collected weekly from now until Friday, 9 January 2026 on their normal collection day, including public holidays. Council say that for urban areas, this will include red, yellow, and green bins, and for rural areas this will include red and yellow bins.

Sapoty Brook writes, 'To a young bloke from Upper Main Arm who hitched a ride into Mullum before Christmas and lost \$50 from his back pocket in my car: leave your phone number for me at Main Arm Shop to claim'.

Kudos to Crs Jack Dods and Michael Lyon, who have

adopted Trumpian-like self belief. Council is just tickety-boo under their management, they reckon, and the community is well served by its current communication strategy. See page 3.

The track up Wollumbin (Mount Warning) may be reopened, says the NSW government, but not until at least 30 June 2027. They say there was a 'view to reopening the summit once practical safety and culturally appropriate options are resolved'.

A thought for 2026: 'You will never find justice in a world where the criminals make the rules' – Bob Marley.



'New photos reveal Epstein had a sick fetish for girls with giant black squares for heads' – *The Babylon Bee*

If there is to be a Royal Commission into the Bondi tragedy, the starting point should be why men under ASIO surveillance were allowed to buy so many

weapons. Above all it must be independent, unlike Israel's own investigation into the October 7, 2023 massacre, which will be headed by wanted war criminal, PM Benjamin Netanyahu.

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