

Tears, anger and joy at 2026 Byron Writers Fest



Kerry O'Brien and Richard Flanagan at the 2026 Byron Writers Festival. Photo Jeff Dawson

David Lowe

There was a lot less mud and a lot more walking at this year's glorious celebration of words, the Byron Writers Festival, which took place in a series of venues around Byron Bay over last weekend.

Such a cornucopia is impossible to distil to a few paragraphs, so what follows are a few highlights, in vaguely chronological order. One highlight was Kerry O'Brien's Thea Astley, Address 'Lessons from History', where he shared the stage with Booker-winner Richard Flanagan.

Most venues across the festival were packed to enthusiastic capacity, with the general consensus that the move into town was a great success, especially as the rain started falling across the weekend.

On Friday, Radio National's Richard Fidler gave an interviewing masterclass in his conversation with publishing legend Louise Adler, covering everything from her family's Holocaust history up to the recent dramas surrounding Adler's attempt to bring a Palestinian perspective to the last Adelaide Writers' Week, which led to political

interference and ultimately the destruction of the event after a boycott from 180 authors in support of Adler.

New writers were well supported at the Byron festival, with a series of events focusing on the fast-changing world of self-publishing, which has gone from being the poor relation of the publishing world to the main event, in some cases.

Back in the big tent, an event honouring the mighty contributions of Mungo MacCallum to the craft of journalism saw a conversation between Sean Kelly and Antoinette

Lattouf, and Mandy Nolan stepping in as chair at short notice.

After idealistic beginnings as a young journalist, Lattouf later found herself cancelled by the ABC after daring to report a Human Rights Watch post on local radio, then won against her former employer when the case went to court.

In an era where politics has become more about performance than policy, and many journalists have become embedded in one way or another, the panel remembered Mungo's ability to cut through political nonsense.

His widow Jenny Garrett spoke about his fury about the large space created for lobbyists when the federal parliament moved up the hill.

The blurring of commentary and reporting was lamented, along with the loss of experienced rounds reporters and the way breaking news and commentary have replaced in-depth investigation as newsroom budgets have been cut. Mandy Nolan spoke up for publications like *The Echo*, as regional media increasingly goes the way of the dodo across Australia.

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Lynda Dean leaves with grace in peace

Lynda Dean OAM. Photo Suzie Deyris

Lynda Dean OAM passed away on Sunday afternoon surrounded by family.

‘Lynda left her body completely naturally this afternoon in absolute clarity, with grace and complete acceptance, and with no fear. She timed it perfectly

with the golden light coming through our beautiful garden and the most gorgeous birds arrived outside her window for the first time. Her whole family, including grandkids were around the bed as she left, and she left us with such serenity and grace,’ said her

husband Christopher Dean.

‘It was truly a very sacred moment and my heart is full to bursting with tears but relief and happiness that she didn’t suffer in the end.’

There will be a memorial in about two weeks for her friends and family.

Room to roam for Byron’s famous koalas

Some of Byron Bay’s most-photographed residents are getting a little more room to move, with more than 2,000 trees planted to create new habitat for koalas living around The Pass, Byron Bay.

The community planting in Arakwal National Park aims to extend koala habitat south from the Cape Byron headland, where the local population is confined to a relatively small patch of heavily-browsed forest.

The planting brought together Arakwal National Park rangers, Byron Bay High School students, community volunteers, and representatives from Australia Post and WWF-Australia.

Bangalow Koalas President Linda Sparrow said the trees would give koalas somewhere to go beyond the busy headland.



Left to right: Nicole Forrester, WWF-Australia; Margaret Lama, Australia Post; Tanya Pritchard, WWF-Australia; and Nicky Tracey, Australia Post. Photo Patrick Hamilton WWF-Australia

‘Their trees are over-browsed; they’re under the constant threat of car strikes and getting harassed by tourists and people in general,’ Ms Sparrow said.

‘So we wanted to create habitat to give them a corridor to spread out away from those risks.’

Arakwal-Bundjalung man and parks ranger Norm

Graham said koalas were already known to move through this area.

‘These plantings will help future survival by providing a valuable food source in their journey across Country,’ Mr Graham said.

■ Read full story in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au.

Students walk out on Hanson



Mullumbimby High School students protesting against Hanson’s ‘racist’, ‘sexist’, and ‘anti-queer’ stance. Photo Aslan Shand

Natalie Archibald

In response to the growing support of far-right political movements, on Thursday, 13 August students across Australia walked out of their schools to protest against Pauline Hanson and her One Nation party.

‘I participated in the walk-out with many other students from my school because we stand against Pauline Hanson and her beliefs about multiculturalism, climate change, and the cost of living,’ Xavier Kane told *The Echo*.

‘We want our voices to be heard, and we hope to express to the rest of the nation that the entire of Australia cares, even a little town in the Northern Rivers.’

The protest was led by the National Students Union, and Yasmine Johnson of the Socialists Alternative, explained that young people ‘want a system that smashes racism’.

‘We want a system that smashes homophobia. We want a system that smashes sexism.’

‘Say No to Pauline’

Posters, flyers, and information spread online with the text ‘Say No to Pauline’ in the weeks approaching the protest, with the majority aware and a few students learning about the event just hours prior.

A recent Roy Morgan Poll found One Nation’s primary vote was 26 per cent, with Labor at 25.5 per cent. One Nation has been participating in politics for 30 years, but as the party grows more popular, Australian youth fear for their future.

Schools based in major cities had large-scale protests with thousands of participants from universities and high schools.

Smaller rural towns, including Mullumbimby High School students, participated in the protest. Mullumbimby High had a notable portion of the student body walk out at 1pm, and 2pm.

‘Hanson shouldn’t have the say to control anything that goes on in this country if she’s going to be disrespectful to everyone that lives here,’ explained one student.

Many mentioned being in fear of living within a future where she, or others with similar views, held greater power in parliament. Students shared sentiments against her policies regarding immigration, education, birth control, taxing, and climate change. Whilst being too young to vote against One Nation, protesters often described her as ‘racist’, ‘sexist’, and ‘antiqueer’.

When asked about the reasons for the protest, another student remarked, ‘Australia is stronger when we stand together, not when we are taught to hate each other.’

Greens candidate for the seat of Ballina, Mandy Nolan, told *The Echo*. ‘I am so proud of our young people! Mullum High can be proud of its critical thinkers standing up to racism, showing the future is in good hands! Go Mullum!’

Throughout the country students left their classrooms with fervour to voice concern, and reprimand the state of Australian politics and where it’s headed.

■ Natalie is a year ten student at Mullumbimby High School.

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1,500 object to Mullumbimby’s 57 Station Street car park DA

Aslan Shand

People concerned about the future of Mullumbimby as a town and community have been out on the street educating and talking to their fellow residents about the potential impacts of the Byron Shire Council (BSC) development application (DA) for the car park at 57 Station Street, Mullumbimby.

This culminated in the presentation of 1,504 written submissions against the amended DA to Council last Friday, 14 August. This does not include the electronic submissions and follows a 2,411 signature petition against the previous DA.

‘From the initial 743 submissions in the first round of the DA we wanted to achieve half that again – instead we doubled it,’ local resident Bronwyn Morris told *The Echo*.

Councillors listen

‘We want to show our councillors that the community is frustrated and angry that they still don’t seem to be listening. Council is making out that we are against affordable housing – that is definitely not the case. We support genuinely affordable housing in places like the hospital site. We are willing to work with Council cooperatively to find alternative sites. There’s been no honest community consultation and therefore this project has no community support.’

Transparency and height concerns

A lack of transparency over how the site was chosen, the way the proposal has gone from housing above a car park to a massive DA which breaches height, bulk, and floor ratios, to the sale of the site for \$1, and what the future replacement



Mullumbimby residents and ratepayers gathered to hand over 1,504 objections to Byron Shire Council’s 57 Station Street, Mullumbimby development . Photo Jeff ‘This Is Fucking Ridiculous’ Dawson

costs of the car park and public toilets in town will cost the ratepayers are among the many issues raised repeatedly by the community.

Eva Polo-Angeli, owner of The Other Joint Cafe told *The Echo* that, ‘The new DA still doesn’t allow access for trucks to empty adjacent shops’ grease traps and deliver gas.’

‘It is 3m wide going down to 2m – it isn’t possible for a truck to reverse down that to supply us. They have given us a bit of token space in the DA that achieves nothing.

‘And during construction, which will take years, how will we access our businesses? As we’ve been saying from the start, this just doesn’t work. It just doesn’t add up. Physically losing access to the rear of our buildings will destroy our businesses and we won’t be able to trade.’

Significant cost to ratepayers

Former councillor Duncan Dey pointed out that, ‘the entire proposal is a waste of ratepayers’ and taxpayers’ money.’

‘It has just been illustrated by David Brown that an equivalent private developer in Stuart Street

can accommodate people at half the cost per capita. So why is Council demanding that we pay the other half with public money for 57 Station Street?

‘Namely, we are gifting up a block of land valued at about \$1m, a sealed car park that would cost about \$1m to rebuild, and a set of toilets that are critical infrastructure right in the CBD. The state government is then donating several million dollars through the NSW Reconstruction Authority, and we’ve already donated many hundreds of thousands of dollars of Council staff time. There will be more public costs revealed.

‘Why are our councillors persisting? If they had put the same energy into Mullumbimby’s ex-hospital site, which is free from all the impediments of 57 Station Street, they’d have the community on side.

‘And why are Councillors wasting our money, then asking for more in a rate rise? It’s insane.’

Local residents Nicky Turner and Tim Winton-Brown have both highlighted the significant impact that the project will have on traffic in the town during and after the development has been built.

Future of the town

‘I don’t think people realise what will happen to the town,’ said Ms Turner.

‘There will be a significant impact on local businesses and people will stop coming in. There are alternative sites.’

‘We cannot afford for our businesses to go under,’ said another local Louise Gordon. ‘They are the lifeblood and backbone of this town.’

Steve Bellerby said, ‘It is still the wrong car park. There are lots of other sites where they can do this better with less disruption and provide more housing.’

Affordable housing supported

Again, and again, residents said they supported genuinely affordable housing and wanted to work with Council to find the right sites for it in the town.

‘I absolutely support affordable housing, but there are more suitable sites, including the hospital site,’ said Sharon McGrath.

‘I also want Council’s Resolution 26-104 upheld – affordable housing in perpetuity, with rents capped at 30 per cent of household income or 80 per cent of market rent, whichever is less,’ she said.

■ *The Echo* office is located adjacent to the car park.

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Chamber and businesses support Byron Hospital



EODN Daniel O'Flynn, nurses Kimberly Stanford, Lucy O'Connor, MCCC's Jenelle Stanford, hospital staff head nurse Emily Duval, 2IC Rebecca Stanton, and Paul Prior from First National and MMCCC. Photo Aslan Shand

Aslan Shand

The Mullumbimby Chamber of Commerce and Community (MCCC) with First National Real Estate have stepped up and provided \$1,000 of equipment for the new 20-bed Care Awaiting Placement (CAP) ward at Byron Central Hospital that opened in June.

The new ward opened ahead of the busy winter period to help meet increased demand for healthcare services across the region.

'We have seen an increase of 16 per cent in presentations to the Emergency Department at Byron Hospital this season,' explained Daniel O'Flynn, Executive Officer, Director of Nursing (EODN).

'Having this facility enables patients to be seen quicker as it takes the pressure off acute beds. We

provide care for people from across the Northern Rivers region's network of hospitals so that it not only frees up acute beds across the network but also helps us get our patients into the right place at the right time.'

Community support

Jenelle Stanford from the MCCC told *The Echo*, 'The Byron Hospital asked us to help them buy a range of products including educational aids and toys to assist staff working with patients.'

'We bought \$1,000 worth of equipment to assist the hospital set up the facility.'

The CAP ward is staffed by a multidisciplinary team focused on maintaining patients' health, wellbeing, mobility, and independence while placement arrangements are being completed. By caring for patients who no longer require acute hospital treatment in a dedicated

ward, acute care beds can be made available for patients who need higher levels of clinical care and emergency admissions.

'Patients continue to receive high-quality clinical care, allied health support and discharge planning tailored to their individual circumstances,' said Mr O'Flynn.

'The initiative reflects Northern NSW Local Health District's commitment to finding innovative ways to improve patient flow, reduce pressure on hospitals and enhance the patient experience.'

Paul Prior from First National Real Estate said, 'We are a big supporter of community and the chamber.'

'At these important times, when our local hospital needs support, we think it is important to step up for our local community.'

Achieving excellence at the Opera House

Students from The Pocket Public School hit a high note at the Sydney Opera House, taking the stage with hundreds of NSW public school students as part of the Combined Schools Choir.

'Performing arts teacher Holly Stanton called it an unforgettable experience that inspires the students to keep striving for excellence,' said Principal Will Glasson.

'The performance reflects the school's commitment to nurturing gifted students through the creative and performing arts, helping them build confidence, and collaborate with peers statewide.'



Students from The Pocket School at the Sydney Opera House in Sydney. Photo supplied

'It was a proud moment for the whole school community, with students representing The Pocket Public School through teamwork

and outstanding musician-ship – underscoring the value of arts education in building creativity, resilience and a lifelong love of music,' he said.

More than a spoonful of talent

Paul Bibby

Street urchins, chimney sweeps and a magic umbrella will descend on Murwillumbah later this month when students from across the North Coast come together to stage *Mary Poppins JR.*

The much-loved musical, based on the classic Disney story of the magical nanny who transforms the lives of the Banks family, will be brought to life by young performers from more than a dozen public schools in a landmark collaboration celebrating music, theatre, and public education.

The Combined Schools Musical will bring together students from primary and secondary schools stretching across the region, for four days of rehearsals before public performances from

24 August until 27 August at Murwillumbah High School.

'This is the first time ever that the Combined Schools Musical initiative has been offered outside of Sydney, and we are thrilled that so many of our North Coast students, teachers and schools get to share in this memorable experience,' a Department of Education spokesperson said.

Cast drawn from local public schools

Lead cast members have been drawn from schools including Byron Bay High School, Ballina Coast High School, Casino High School, Evans River K-12 School, Nambucca Heads High School, Pottsville Beach Public School and Narranga Public School, while dozens more students from schools

across the Northern Rivers and North Coast will perform as part of ensemble groups.

The production will culminate in two public performances at Murwillumbah High School at 5pm and 7pm on Thursday, 27 August.

Organisers say the musical is not only an opportunity for talented young performers to take the stage, but also a showcase of public education at its best, bringing together students, teachers and school communities from across the region to create a large-scale production that would be beyond the reach of any one school.

Tickets are available through Humanitix at: <https://events.humanitix.com/csm26-mhs>, with families encouraged to book early.



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Byron Council maps out plan to revive local economy

Paul Bibby

After five bruising years of Covid, floods, and global economic headwinds, Byron Council has unveiled a suite of plans aimed at getting more local dollars circulating through the Shire and reshaping its relationship with tourism and events.

Three draft action plans covering Business and Industry, Destination Management and the Visitor Economy and Events are now on public exhibition, putting some practical flesh on Council's ten-year economic strategy.

The plans were developed with Council's new Economic Activation Group and include measures to strengthen local supply chains and encourage residents and businesses to buy locally, support micro-businesses, tackle workforce and skills shortages, and attract investment considered compatible with the Shire's character.

Tourism remains a major part of the equation, but Council wants to spread visitors and their spending more widely across the Shire, while developing better measures of both the economic benefits and costs they bring.

Events would similarly be encouraged across different towns and quieter periods of the year, with greater support for homegrown events, Aboriginal cultural events, and activation of underused spaces.

Keeping local dollars local

The plans come against a difficult economic backdrop.

'The last five years have had an incredible impact on our local economy in ways that no one could have imagined,' Mayor Sarah Ndiaye said last year as Council was developing its new economic strategy.

'We recognise that we need to not only reflect on the impacts of Covid, floods, and economic factors on our businesses and our community, but we need to set the direction for what we want our economy to look like in the future.'

The Shire's tourism industry is still rebuilding, while cost-of-living pressures and the broader economic downturn have continued to bite.

And it seems the pain is far from over. In June, the owners of two longstanding

family businesses in Byron Bay said sales were down 45 to 50 per cent compared with the same period last year, although CBD drainage works were also blamed for the dramatic fall.

The economic challenge is also tied closely to housing. Council's own research has warned that unaffordable housing and low vacancy rates can restrict business growth by making it difficult to find workers, while the Shire continues to rely heavily on employees commuting from surrounding areas.

Against that backdrop, Council says the new plans are intended to build an economy that isn't simply bigger, but more resilient and locally focused.

'This strategy is about shaping the kind of economy we want for the future,' Cr Ndiaye said.

'One that is creative, sustainable, and grounded in the wellbeing of our community and environment.'

The three plans follow a lengthy rethink of Council's economic policy.

The draft plans are now open at: <https://yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/economic-action-plans> for public feedback until 6 September.

Cape Byron Steiner School students from classes 6 to 10 are off on tour this September.

Ensemble Della Mar, the Cape Byron Steiner Strings Ensemble, will make its way down the east coast to Canberra, playing a repertoire that spans world music, popular classics and even a few originals.

The ensemble will be performing at schools and doing a special concert at the renowned music venue in Canberra, Smiths Alternative Cafe. They also plan to do some busking and to visit the Australian National University's School of Music and attend student rehearsals.

The tour is a wonderful opportunity for this talented group of students to showcase their skills on cello, violin, guitar, piano and percussion, complemented by stunning vocal harmonies. It is also a great chance to gain performance experience, to have fun and build connections within the group.

Music at Cape Byron Steiner School begins in the early years and string instruction is woven into the curriculum from Class 3.

The show promises audiences a chance to experience the excellent musicianship and dedication of the students and teachers from Cape Byron Steiner School. They continue to celebrate the rich musical program that the school offers. Many ex-students continue to have music as a rich part of their lives and many have gone on to have wonderful careers in music. The Ensemble Della Mar will be playing locally this Spring.



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Lennox-to-Byron cycle link back on the agenda

Queer Family on the brink of finding new home

A long-held dream of creating a coastal cycleway between Lennox Head and Byron Bay has moved a step closer, with \$173,000 in state funding secured to work out whether it can be done.

Ballina Shire Council has received the money through the NSW government's Get NSW Active program for a feasibility and route-options study into a proposed 19.7km shared path between the two towns.

The study will examine potential routes, environmental constraints, and engineering requirements before any future construction funding is considered.

Previous proposals for a path through environmentally sensitive areas around Lennox had proved controversial.

Cr Cadwallader said the new funding was an important step towards finally identifying a viable route.

Ballina Council has already constructed a shared path from Lennox Head village to the Ross Lane roundabout, with the new study expected to investigate options for continuing north towards Suffolk Park and Byron Bay.

Rail trail connection

She said a Lennox-Byron connection could eventually form part of a much larger Northern Rivers cycling and e-bike network linking Ballina, Byron Bay, the Tweed, Alstonville, Lismore and Casino.

'Shared pathways are no longer simply recreational infrastructure,' Cr Cadwallader said.

'They are becoming an important transport option while also supporting tourism, local businesses and healthier lifestyles.'

But cyclists shouldn't start pumping up their tyres just yet. The \$173,000 is strictly for the feasibility and route assessment. Any actual cycleway would require further planning, approvals and a considerably larger funding commitment before construction could begin.

Paul Bibby

After four years of bouncing between temporary and unsuitable premises, Northern Rivers LGBTQIA+ support service Queer Family Inc may finally have somewhere more secure to hang its hat.

Byron councillors will consider granting the organisation a 12-month licence over the former Station Master's Cottage at 80 Jonson Street, Byron Bay, at a peppercorn rent, together with \$32,000 worth of Council support, at Thursday's Byron Shire Council meeting.

Staff are recommending councillors approve a \$25,000 rent subsidy and a further \$7,000 to cover rates and fixed charges, while Queer Family would remain responsible for costs such as water and waste services.

It would provide some breathing space for an organisation that has struggled to find a stable base since losing its premises in the 2022 floods. In 2023, Queer Family secured 12 months rent-free at The Farmhouse in Mullumbimby, but by last year it was again warning that high rents and unsuitable temporary premises were threatening its survival.

Last September, *The Echo* reported that Queer Family had identified the former Mullumbimby sewage treatment plant site at Casuarina Street as a potential long-term home, possibly using a flood buyback house supplied through the Reconstruction Authority. Council staff subsequently identified significant constraints at that site, including flood, bushfire, and environmental issues.

Community support

In May this year councillors voted 5-4 to offer Queer Family temporary use of an unnamed Council property while longer-term options were explored, following an impassioned debate about governance, fairness and the allocation of public assets. The site was subsequently revealed as the former Station Master's Cottage.

The proposal has since attracted overwhelming public support.

Of 88 submissions received during consultation, 84 supported the licence and four objected. The objections focused largely on governance, financial impacts, fairness to other community organisations, heritage and whether the highly visible CBD site was appropriate. Three of the four objectors nevertheless expressed support for Queer Family's work.

Supporters repeatedly described the importance of having a safe, dedicated LGBTQIA+ community space.

'Most importantly, Queer Family has given my child opportunities to meet and connect with other children ... build friendships, develop confidence and feel less alone,' one local community member said.

Another local member of the LGBTQIA+ community described the impact more starkly: 'In short they saved my life!'

Council staff say the property has limited commercial earning potential under its current zoning and approvals, and note that rent and rates were previously subsidised when the building housed the Byron Visitor Centre.

The arrangement remains temporary. A permanent community use of the site may ultimately require rezoning and further planning approvals.

Man seriously injured in Byron's Railway Park

A 55-year-old man was taken to hospital in a serious condition after allegedly being set upon by a group of people in the centre of Byron Bay in the early hours of Saturday, 8 August.

Police were called to Railway Park, on Jonson Street, at around 2.30am on 8 August following reports of an assault.

A NSW Police spokesperson said officers were told the man had been walking through the park when he was approached by a group of people unknown to him.

An altercation followed, during which several members of the group allegedly assaulted the man before leaving the scene.

NSW Ambulance paramedics treated the 55-year-old at the park before taking him to Tweed Valley Hospital in a serious but stable condition.

The incident comes two months after another serious assault in Railway Park left a 28-year-old Canadian tourist with a fractured skull and bleeding on the brain.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

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YOUR SAY
BYRON SHIRE

We'd like your feedback on the draft designs for Denning and Apex Park play spaces

Council is currently seeking feedback on the design of two play spaces along the Byron Bay foreshore.

Together they aim to provide diverse play experiences for the whole community.

Come along to information sessions and see the designs at Apex Park:

- Thursday 20 August 3 – 5pm
- Friday 21 August 9 – 11am

Feedback is open until Monday 14 September.

More information

For more info visit

yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/Apex-Denning
02 6626 7000



02 6626 7000 • www.byron.nsw.gov.au

Sex Drugs and Handrails



Join the cast of *Sex Drugs and Handrails* for a hilarious night as they explore ageing for those who also got to enjoy the wild '70s. Photo Jeff Dawson

The near sell-out show *Sex Drugs and Handrails* (Stiff in all the wrong places!) has added an extra show for Sunday, 23 August that will raise funds for refugee settlement in the Northern Rivers.

The exuberant musical, at Mullumbimby's Drill

Hall Theatre, takes a light-hearted look at what ageing means for those who were lucky enough to be young in the '70s and are now in their 70s.

Audiences will enjoy the '70s-inspired music that has been composed for this

show and the cast promise that you will leave humming the tunes.

There are also some tickets left for Saturday, 22 August. Tickets at: <https://events.humanitix.com/sex-drugs-and-handrails/tickets>.

Byron mayor takes aim at Northern Rivers flood dam plan

Paul Bibby

Plans for a network of massive flood detention basins across the Richmond River catchment have drawn opposition from Byron's mayor, who wants governments to instead investigate nature-based alternatives to reduce the impact of future floods.

Mayor Sarah Ndiaye will take a mayoral minute to next week's Byron Council meeting calling for Council to formally oppose further progression of the large-scale basins until their potential impacts, costs, and locations are publicly disclosed and affected communities consulted.

10 detention basins

The proposal follows the release of the final CSIRO *Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative* report in June, four years after the catastrophic 2022 floods.

CSIRO modelled two bundles of flood mitigation measures across the Richmond catchment, with the larger package incorporating ten detention basins alongside other works.

The results were significant. CSIRO found the larger package could have reduced Lismore's February 2022 flood peak by up to 2.07 metres, with substantial reductions also modelled for

Casino and benefits extending downstream to Coraki, Woodburn and Ballina.

However, CSIRO stresses that the modelling does not mean the basins will be built. Detailed business cases, cost-benefit analysis, environmental and geotechnical investigations, design work, government approvals and funding would all be required first.

The federal and state governments have committed a further \$3 million to investigate flood resilience options following the report.

Cr Ndiaye argues that money should instead be used to investigate nature-based measures and other scientifically supported alternatives.

'Large-scale dams have the potential to significantly alter rural landscapes, affect farming enterprises, disrupt transport networks and impact communities that have existed for generations,' she says in her background notes.

'Important questions remain regarding land acquisition, loss of productive farmland, effects on roads and bridges, biodiversity and native habitat, cultural and historical values, compensation, funding, project costs and long-term impacts.'

The mayor also argues that nature-based approaches were not

investigated as viable options in the CSIRO modelling, despite evidence that measures which slow, store and absorb water can provide broader environmental benefits.

Equity vital

The issue has already attracted political scrutiny. Questions were raised in NSW parliamentary budget estimates last year over the absence of nature-based measures from the options presented during community consultation. The NSW government responded that broader environmental impacts would need to be assessed through subsequent disaster adaptation planning.

Cr Ndiaye's motion also highlights Byron's own flood vulnerability, noting that the Brunswick River catchment was excluded from the CSIRO modelling. It calls for previously identified local works, including Jonson Street flood protection and drainage upgrades, to proceed urgently.

'Regional collaboration must be equitable,' Cr Ndiaye says. 'It should not result in one community bearing disproportionate impacts for the benefit of another.'

■ Read more on the retention dams in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au.

Swain puts hand up for seat of Ballina

Byron Labor Councillor Janet Swain has put her hand up for state politics, announcing she will seek Labor preselection for the seat of Ballina at the March 2027 NSW election.

Cr Swain, who was elected to Byron Council in 2024, said she had decided ‘after much consideration’ to seek endorsement from local Labor branch members.

‘I believe in politics. I believe that creative people should be involved in politics, and they have been sorely lacking in the past few years,’ Cr Swain said.

‘As a local councillor, I’ve seen first-hand the work that we can do when we work with state and federal



Byron Labor Councillor Janet Swain. Photo Janet Swain

governments, and I’m running to be part of the positive change that Labor can bring to our communities.

‘We need a voice at the table – and I hope to be that voice.’

■ Read full story in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au.

Slow down: Byron school takes traffic concerns to Council

Parents, staff and residents around Byron Community School are calling for traffic to slow down on Ruskin Street, with a 99-signature petition asking Council to install two speed humps near the school.

The petition will come before next Thursday’s Byron Council meeting, with staff recommending that Council investigate traffic and road safety concerns and report back.

Petitioners want one speed hump near the school-zone sign and another further up Ruskin Street, between Cowper Street and the give-way sign.

Council staff acknowledge concerns about vehicle speeds and the safety of ‘vulnerable road users’, but the speed humps themselves aren’t yet a done deal.

Council considered similar measures in 2020 but found speed humps at the eastern end of Ruskin Street unsuitable because of the road’s gradient, lighting and other safety issues.

The most recent traffic data is even older. Counts from 2018 recorded an average 960 vehicles using the street each day, with the speed below which 85 per cent of vehicles travelled sitting at 51km/h.

Staff say that data is now dated and renewed community concern, school-related traffic and a recent development application at 47 Tennyson Street warrant another look.

They’re recommending fresh traffic counts and a road safety assessment before deciding what, if anything, should be installed.

Ruskin Street has also previously been identified in Council’s long-term cycling plans. Council’s adopted ‘Byron Bay bike network’ plan proposed sections of Ruskin Street as low-speed ‘cycle streets’, including new crossings at the Cowper Street intersection.

The 99-name petition will be formally considered at Council’s ordinary meeting on Thursday, 20 August.

\$1m boost to make Byron safer

Byron Council has secured a \$1 million grant from Transport for NSW through the second round of its ‘Safer Cities: Her Way’ program.

The million-dollar makeover is aimed at making Byron Bay safer and more welcoming for women and girls, with young local women helping to shape what the improvements will look like.

Importantly, the project won’t simply be designed for young women. Council says they will be directly involved in helping design

the improvements through a co-design process.

The grant follows earlier work with local teenage girls exploring their experiences of public spaces in Byron Bay and identifying ways those spaces could be made safer and more welcoming.

The broader Safer Cities: Her Way program focuses on relatively practical changes to public spaces, including lighting, landscaping, pedestrian connections and other design elements that can influence whether people feel comfortable using an area.

Making community-led resilience ordinary

Unspeakable: Facing up to the climate catastrophe and its consequences in Australia by authors Professor Richard Hil and Dr Jean Renouf, both of whom live and work in the Northern Rivers, launches on Wednesday, 26 August at The Regent Cinema, Murwillumbah from 5pm.

Hil and Renouf will be in conversation with regenerative futures practitioner Carmen Stewart of Imagine Northern Rivers.

The community resilience charity Dr Renouf founded in 2019 will share Plan C’s new three-year strategy and explore how its community-led approach to resilience connects with the themes of the book.

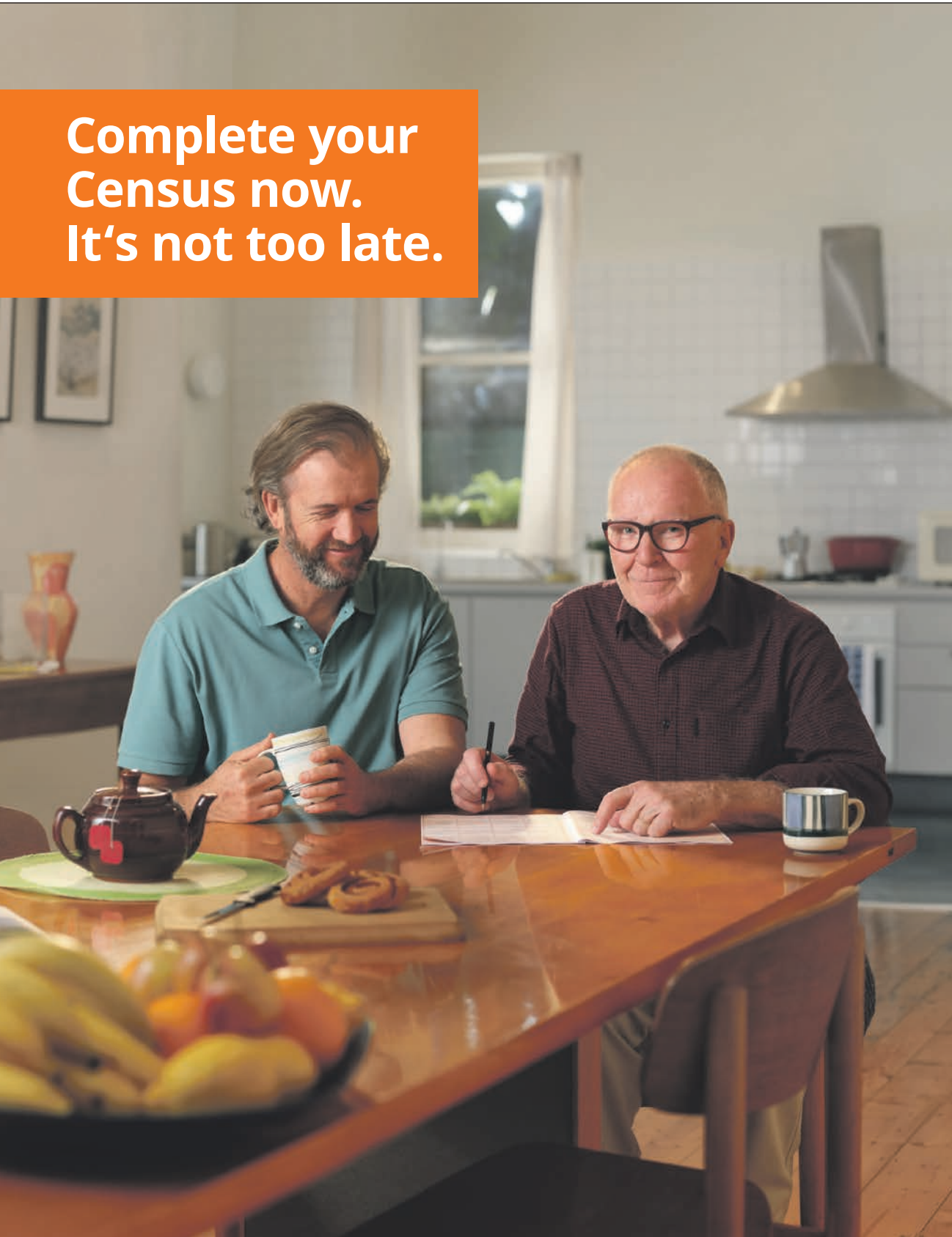
‘We wrote this book a few kilometres from where we will launch it, in a region that has already lived through what much of the country still imagines as a future event,’ said Renouf.

‘The 2022 floods showed us how quickly the systems we rely on can be overwhelmed, and they showed us how much capacity sits in ordinary neighbourhoods when people decide to act together. Launching at home first felt right, because this community taught us a lot of what the book discusses.’

Former Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner Greg Mullins AO calls *Unspeakable* ‘a must read’ that ‘provides hope rather than despair and throws us a lifeline.’

Mel Bloor, founder and president of Resilient Uki, said, ‘for an exhausted community leader, this book has both fanned my activist flame and reminded me of the deep still pool that I can be, for both myself and my community.’

Entry \$5 at the door with the discussion from 6pm to 7.30pm.



Census night was Tuesday 11 August.

It’s compulsory for each household to complete the Census to help plan for Australia’s future.

For help, visit census.abs.gov.au or call 1800 181 227.

Every answer matters.



Census

Authorised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra

Call on Janelle Saffin to save koalas

The North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) says it's outrageous that the Forestry Corporation began logging the homes of another koala population in the proposed Richmond River Koala Parks on Monday, 17 August.

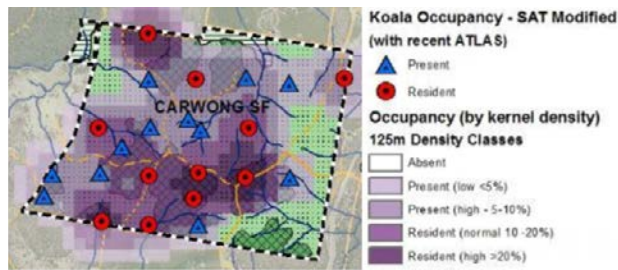
'Carwong State Forest has been recognised as a Nationally Important Koala Area, part of NSW's Banyabba Area of Regional Koala Significance, and for protection as a Koala Hub,' NEFA spokesperson Dailan Pugh said.

'The 2019 fires killed most of this colony, and while it struggles to recover, now logging is removing most of their mature feed trees. Our requests to Janelle Saffin, as Minister for the North Coast, to intervene have been in vain, despite her Lismore branch supporting immediate protection of core koala habitat in the proposed Richmond River Koala Parks.

Stop logging core koala habitat

'We are calling on the public to contact Janelle and tell her to stop logging core koala habitat,' said Mr Pugh.

'In 2015 the EPA undertook extensive assessments of four state forests known



2016 EPA habitat map showing koala density in the area being logged.

to have important koala habitat, identifying Carwong State Forest as being the most important, with 80 per cent of the forest occupied by koalas.

'In 2017 the NSW government identified 20,000ha of Koala Hubs across NSW's state forests "to delineate highly significant local scale areas of koala occupancy currently known for protection". There are 223ha of Koala Hubs in Carwong State Forest. Now the Forestry Corporation are intending to log 177ha of them.

'Just for the proposed Great Koala National Park, in 2023 Minister Penny Sharpe required all Koala Hubs be protected because they are "critical multi-generational resident koala populations and their habitats".

'She has refused our requests to protect them

in the proposed Richmond River Koala Parks.

'Regrettably, Carwong was all burnt in the 2019 wildfires, killing most koalas and many feed trees. We were

pleased to find some koalas survived, and now they are halfway to recovery, so soon they can again function as a critical source colony for the long-term viability of the Richmond River Koala Parks.

'The Forestry Corporation are intent on logging over 15,000 of the mature koala feed trees (>30cm diameter) that survived, which will decimate this colony.

'They are systematically logging their way through the best koala habitat in the proposed Richmond River Koala Parks, and by taking out the source colonies, jeopardising the future of the estimated population of 3,000 koalas,' Mr Pugh said.

From climbing buoys to parkour: new play plans for Byron foreshore



Concept design for Byron Bay's Apex Park featuring imaginative nature play, swings, climbing nets and buoys, a slide and water play for younger children. Image supplied



Concept design for Byron Bay's Denning Park featuring larger-scale adventure play, challenging climbing, swinging and jumping for wider range of ages. Image supplied

Climbing buoys, trampolines, water play and parkour could soon be part of a trip to the Byron Bay foreshore, with designs unveiled for two new playgrounds at Apex and Denning parks.

Byron Council has placed the two concept designs on public exhibition, proposing distinctly different play spaces just 350 metres apart and connected by the existing shared path.

At Apex Park, the emphasis is on younger children and imaginative, nature-based play, with an ocean theme inspired by Main Beach and Nguthungulli (Julian Rocks).

Plans include wave-inspired canopies, suspended climbing buoys, fishing-net scramble zones, driftwood climbing

structures, a slide built into natural stone and four ocean-facing swings, including an all-abilities swing. There would also be low-volume water play and a new picnic lawn near the Byron Bay Surf Life Saving Club.

Kids fun parks

Down the path at Denning Park, things get a little more adventurous.

The proposed playground includes boulder climbing, ropes and climbing nets, monkey bars, chin-up bars and parkour-style fitness challenges, along with slides, an accessible spinner and swing, a junior see-saw and a motion-play zone featuring trampolines and bouncing spaces.

Byron Shire Mayor Sarah Ndiaye said the idea was to

create 'two distinct but connected play destinations'.

'With input from local families, community members, school students and kindergarten children, and with help from playground design experts, we've developed two exciting concepts that celebrate the character of the foreshore,' Cr Ndiaye said.

Both designs also include seating, picnic lawns, shade and landscaping.

The plans are on exhibition until 14 September, with feedback available through Council's www.yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/Apex-Denning page.

Council will also hold drop-in sessions at Apex Park from 3pm to 5pm on 20 August and 9am to 11am on 21 August.



Opportunity to help create a safer Byron Bay

We're inviting women, girls and gender diverse people from the Byron Shire to join an important consultation for the Safer Cities: Her Way project.

Your insights will shape ideas and solutions to improve sense of safety and inclusivity in the Byron Bay CBD, during the day and at night.

We need people who can take part in a series of 'walk shops' and a co-design workshop between **14 and 25 September 2026**.

Participants will receive a small fee for their time.

This project is proudly funded by the NSW Government through a \$1 million grant from the Safer Cities: Her Way 2 grant program to deliver safer, more welcoming and activated walking routes connecting the Byron Bay Bus Interchange with the CBD, Apex Park and the foreshore over the next two years.

More information

Register at
yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/Her-Way
by **31 August**.



Proudly funded by



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Learn about rainfall, water, and floods

Find out more about the science around modelling of waterways and flooding scenarios in clear, practical terms.

Science in the Pub will bring experts from Macquarie and Southern Cross universities to the Federal Hotel, Alstonville on Thursday, 3 September to explain how models turn rainfall, landscape topography, and water-flow data into flood scenarios, and what those

scenarios can reveal.

Ask questions, test assumptions, and leave with a clearer understanding of what hydrodynamic models can tell us about flood behaviour. Doors open at 5.30pm with nibbles, followed by presentations and discussion from 6-8.30pm. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased here: <https://events.humanitix.com/science-in-the-pub-hydrodynamic-modelling>.

Federation Bridge

Work is being carried out on Mullumbimby's Federation Bridge for essential maintenance between 6pm and 5am, until Thursday, 20 August, weather permitting. There will be a lane closure and reduced speed limit of 40 km/h in place.

Oversize, and over mass vehicles more than 4.6 metres wide, should call the project team on 0429 037 023 at least 24 hours prior to travel.

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2026 MUD TRAIL

Open Studio Weekend
August 22nd & 23rd

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4 Galleries - 20 Ticketed Workshops

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Workshops | Pottery Sales**



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map scan the QR code



Pick up your copy of the Mud Trail booklet from Mullum IGA, local cafes and galleries in the region as well as all participating studios.

FREE ENTRY - All Welcome!

- 1 **Luke Atkinson Ceramics**
Luke Atkinson
- 2 **The Hill Pottery**
Rosemary Powell
- 3 **Northern Rivers Pottery Supplies**
Raven Esque
Jessica Hart
- 4 **Hoof Print Pottery**
Janet Fraser
Elaine Richter
Sue Fraser
- 5 **Muckware Ceramics**
Grace Chaplin
Blanche Alexander
- 6 **Lorr.De Ceramics**
Lorraine Dean
Victoria Keesing
- 7 **Satya Ceramics**
Rachel Varela
- 8 **Rainforest Ceramics**
Richard Jones
- 9 **La Casa Clay**
Natalia Torres Negreira
Lucy Be
Rachael Meader
- 10 **Sasa Ceramic Studio**
Sasa Scheiner
- 11 **Mud on my Hands**
Cara Asherovitch
- 12 **Hayden Youlley Design**
Hayden Youlley
- 13 **Coe Studio**
Carly Pascoe
- 14 **Samantha Robinson Porcelain**
Samantha Robinson
- 15 **Belle Époque Studio**
Heather Tulloh
- 16 **Koonyum Clayworks**
Gudrun Klix
- 17 **Studio Suvira**
Suvira McDonald
- 18 **ML Ceramics**
Melissa Lellouche
- 19 **Jay Ceramics**
Jay Richardson
- 20 **Keramika**
Tali Cohen-Flantz
- 21 **Safir Studio**
Kat Shapiro Wood
- 22 **SOS Ceramics**
Jacqui Sosnowski
- 23 **Jenn Johnston Ceramics**
Jenn Johnston
- 24 **Ochre**
Lauren Siemonsma
- 25 **Wild Nature Clay**
Benjamin Ruble
- 26 **Middle Pocket Pottery**
Jo Norton
Sara Gonzalez
Venessa Skye



The Byron Shire Echo
Volume 41 #10 • August 19, 2026

The cost of climate conspiracy

‘A simple conclusion: the benefits of strong and early action far outweigh the economic costs of not acting.’

This was the conclusion of the *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review* by Nicholas Stern in 2006.

But some of our community seek to delay action on climate change by claiming that ‘climate change’ is some sort of left-wing conspiracy. Shame on them. The science clearly shows the economic costs of climate change are enormous, and growing the longer we wait to take serious action.

In 2006 *The Stern Review* estimated the cost of action on climate change would be the equivalent of investing one per cent of global annual GDP. In 2008 Stern warned that the cost had doubled to two per cent of global GDP. ‘Failure to do this would lead to damage costing much more, the report warned – at least five per cent and perhaps more than 20 per cent of global GDP,’ *The Guardian* reported at the time.

As we see fires rage around the world the European Space Agency (ESA) is clear that, ‘Extreme wild-fires are no longer rare anomalies but recurring climate-driven disasters reshaping global carbon cycles.’

The science shows that climate change is reshaping our world and we have squandered much of the time we had to implement real and lasting change to mitigate the impacts of greenhouse gases on the world’s climate.

In the last week Reuters reported that, ‘The heatwaves that have hit France in recent months could result in €10 billion to €15 billion [\$24AUS billion] in direct and indirect costs,’ according to the French environment minister Monique Barbut.

The drought is also impacting Germany’s economy as the waters of the Danube and Rhine rivers have lowered. This is significantly impacting the cost of movement of freight along the river.

‘A prolonged disruption of navigability on the Rhine could completely stifle the tiny seed of growth we have,’ warned economist Thilo Schäfer in an interview with *Bild* newspaper,’ reported www.dw.com.

The record-low waters in the Danube River have led to Romania closing its last working nuclear reactor that supplies 20 per cent of the country’s electricity.

‘Romania has declared a state of energy emergency throughout August and asked companies and households to reduce consumption during peak hours,’ reported *The Guardian*.

According to the MIT climate portal ‘Some estimate that 3°C of warming would bring GDP losses over 10, 20, or even 30%, with at least one model projecting that the world stands to lose over 50% of GDP. These numbers would make even the Great Depression of the 1920s and 30s seem mild.’

Action is needed on climate change and people need to look at ways they can instigate change. Denial will not serve anyone except those people and companies that seek short term benefit at the cost of all our futures. Make your voice heard, choose where your dollars go – from the supermarket to the stock market, make sure your votes count, go electric whenever you can. And don’t buy into the ‘there’s no climate change’ conspiracy.

Aslan Shand, editor
News tips are welcome:
editor@echo.net.au

Getting the balance right

Have you noticed how often Anthony Albanese and his ministers talk about ‘getting the balance right’? It has become a mantra used repeatedly to explain why reforms they are proposing go only a fraction of the way to solving serious problems.

We have seen this recently with the gambling issue.

Australians overwhelmingly want action on the gambling epidemic plaguing our nation. The average Australian adult loses \$1,635 each year, for a total of \$36 billion, more per head than any other country.

About half of this loss is from poker machines in pubs and clubs and now online betting is gaining fast in popularity. Advertising infests the airways, sporting events and pops up on our devices.

Gambling has become a pernicious family-destroying addiction, and governments have failed in their duty to rein it in to protect people from its devastating impacts.

It has all happened rather suddenly. Who remembers the one-armed bandits in pubs when you inserted coins and pulled the lever? There was a clatter of coinage and a whoop of joy when someone occasionally won.

I witnessed this in the Las Vegas gambling mecca in 1965 on my first visit to the US. They used real silver dollars in poker machines.

I pulled out my camera and started taking photographs of the action in the Stardust Casino and was immediately detained at gunpoint by uniformed guards and taken to a small room where they grilled me about my motives.

The main questioner, lying back in his chair, feet on the desk, said he wasn’t allowed into England on his last attempt to enter. I told him I wasn’t surprised, the way he treated people. They made me expose my film and escorted me out of the casino, guns drawn.

I walked to the next casino up the road and after sitting at the roulette table for a while, playing ‘my winning system’, I was told



‘Striking the “right balance” currently means accommodating the interests of corporations whilst appearing to act.’
Richard Jones

to cash in my chips and get out. They only wanted losers.

These days every town in Australia is virtually a mini-Las Vegas. Not only that, but you can also bet online, anywhere, anytime – sitting in the park, in bed, on the veranda.

Gambling is as addictive as heroin or tobacco, but not quite so deadly.

Public pressure has obliged the government to finally do something about gambling advertising, but the legislative proposals go nowhere near the total ban recommended by the Murphy Review, which delivered 31 unanimous recommendations to treat gambling addiction as a public health issue.

The main proposal in the legislation is to cap gambling ads to three per hour between 6am and 8.30pm.

Neither the Greens nor the opposition support this weak legislation, but the government may need to work out a slightly tougher version with the Liberals to get it passed.

Government spokespeople wheeled out the ‘getting the balance right’ mantra, between protecting children and adults right to gamble. Adults are at risk as much as children.

As a former advertising copy-writer, I’m fully aware of the power of advertising. It works, otherwise corporations would not waste their money.

We all know it’s pressure from the media losing advertising, clubs losing revenue, and the governments’ own addiction to the tax revenue.

We elect members of parliament to represent us, the interests of ordinary people. This once happened and still does when we elect community independents and members of parties such as the

Greens not beholden to corporate donations and pressure.

Striking the ‘right balance’ currently means accommodating the interests of corporations whilst appearing to act.

Fossil fuel corporations invariably have priority over climate action.

Heroic Senator David Pocock and others have been pushing hard for a 25 per cent tax on Australia’s LNG exports, but this has fallen on deaf ears. This would raise \$17 billion annually to improve health services, build social housing, and develop more resilience to increasing climate chaos. It would pay for more water bombers, for example, which may be needed in great numbers in a few months.

The Rural Fire Service called on our home phone the other day asking for funds. Why on earth would they need to do that? A tax on gas would flood their coffers with much needed cash.

We are watching Europe burn; rivers dry up and crops turned to dust. This is the face of the climate crisis. Are we ready and prepared for it? Will we have enough water bombers? Will evacuation plans be drawn up? It all needs serious pre-planning.

Our local federal member Justine Elliot will be held to account if her government fails to prepare adequately for what may be coming next summer.

If the Albanese government fumbles this after having been given so much warning, the people will turn on them. They risk losing their balance and being tossed out of office.

■ Richard Jones is a former NSW MLC, and is now a ceramist.



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Nicholas Shand
1948–1996
Founding Editor



David Lovejoy
1944–2024
Co-founder

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.

Disclaimer: The *Echo* is committed to providing a voice for our whole community. The views of advertisers, letter writers, and opinion writers are not necessarily those of the owners or staff of this publication.

‘The job of a newspaper is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.’ – Finley Peter Dunne 1867–1936

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'I'm sure we parked our yurt near here somewhere?' Linda Sparrow and Saul Goodwin in Mongolia for the UN COP 17 conference in Mongolia. Photo supplied

Bottoms up

I think *The Echo* made a terrible error with last week's printing. I found it incredibly difficult to read. The whole paper was printed upside down except for one ad on the back page. Please be more careful.

Raphael Lee Cass
Byron Bay

Threatened rate rise

If councillors are unable to put a viable business plan to the general manager using the rate base collected in Byron Shire then Council needs to be restructured.

Threatening ratepayers with no services, services we should already have in place, is unethical in my opinion.

How much do salaries and wages cost Byron Shire ratepayers? How much do ongoing repetitive studies cost ratepayers? How much do private consultants (unnecessary if staff and management had the appropriate qualifications) cost ratepayers?

Byron Shire has one of the most expensive rate bases in the nation per annum – how much does it cost ratepayers to subsidise tourism in Byron Bay?

Please explain Byron Shire Council.

Sharon Kelly
Ocean Shores

SRV: no promises

No promises come with a Special Rate Variation (SRV). Council's approach in seeking a community-sanctioned SRV as outlined in last week's *Echo* has been used before. The promise of improved services if an SRV is agreed to is a hollow promise.

Rates have increased in the past with the promise

of improved 'roads, bridges, stormwater infrastructure, and other community assets' and yet we still have severely degraded infrastructure throughout Byron Shire. Potholes are everywhere, sewage treatment is severely stretched, maintenance of parks and gardens is nothing to boast about.

One has to ask the question 'what difference did past rate increases make?'. I suggest the extra money has been funnelled into projects that all too often fall flat! Who remembers the folly of the Myocum solar farm, the failed attempt to utilise the floodplain that is Lot 22, the dream of a \$50m aquatic centre opposite the newly upgraded Petria Thomas pool? All these failures soaked up many thousands of dollars in consultants rather than improve matters for ratepayers. At the same time as seeking more money we are asked to consider if ratepayers should foot the bill for legal costs of BSC councillors and staff! How much would that cost?

A 35.3 per cent increase over three years is a VERY significant impost on all residents, and we can't be certain an improvement in services and asset maintenance will ever materialise; history suggests it won't.

Have Your Say: <https://yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/srv/SRV-change>

Steve Bellerby
Mullumbimby

Byron height limits

Byron Shire Council (BSC) has received a DA from Jobern P/L for the partial demolition of 109 Jonson Street, (above Red Ginger to the butcher), which includes two additional storeys with a rooftop pool.

It also requests a rooftop structure, comprising a 'predominantly open-sided 153m² roofed area', that has a maximum roof height of

14.562m, resulting in a height increase of 3.062m (or 26.6 per cent) plus lift overrun. The LEP allows for 11.5m.

In a letter to the applicant on 5 March, 2026 following a design review, BSC wrote: 'The swimming pool could potentially be relocated to Level 3' and follows 'This then removes the need for a variation to the height controls and largely (if not completely) brings the development into compliance with Clause 4.3 of the Byron LEP 2014.'

The consultant for the developer replies under: 'Comment: The above development option would make the project financially untenable.' Does this mean, if we obey the rules we can't make enough money?

I am yet to meet anyone who has walked down Jonson Street lately (without

a profit motive) who has anything good to say about recent developments. The low-rise character of Byron is under attack and we need to fight back hard... NOW!

Tim Mack
Byron Bay

Rail trail

When AI's taken over all our jobs, what might come in handy? A rail trail.

Sandy Loyall
Bangalow

Jonson Street appeal

The Bonobo hasn't impressed Byron Bay locals with its uninviting facade and brutal contribution to one of our primary streetscapes. Comments include 'eyesore', 'looks like a prison', and 'Blotobo'.

It might be illuminating to hear from the developers
► Continued on next page

Letters to the Editor

Send 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 13**
and architects about their rationale for creating a building that focuses inward without offering any aesthetic relief to the town. Maybe they had no intention, or saw no responsibility, to consider the character of our pleasantly-scaled and fast-disappearing village. Others have dealt much better with fire hydrant boosters, carpark access, and a welcoming retail frontage.

We'd expect our Shire Council to be more attuned to preserving a modicum of our famed village ambience; they should look to strengthening their input.

But it's there now and not looking much like the DA's artistic impressions. Perhaps a splash of paint on those grey concrete blocks would help; it could be 'Mondrian-ised' – that would be a little more Byron Bay.

Jeff Harrison
Byron Bay

Aerate the lake

Baywood Chase Lake, commonly known as Bird Lake, is a Council stormwater asset and it is time we treated it that way.

A recent Notice of Motion (NoM) to Byron Shire Council (BSC) has brought the long-running water-quality problems into focus.

Bird Lake was constructed as an end-of-pipe stormwater detention basin. Council's own report has identified it as the highest-priority water-quality pollution source entering the Tallow Creek.

Historical concentrations have reached approximately 200 times the amber alert level and 20 times the red alert level. The report also recommended mechanical recirculation/aeration as a management strategy.

A management plan was first drafted in 2018 and reviewed in 2024. Yet the problem remains unresolved and also impacts the downstream catchment and coastal environment.

There are practical, nature-positive solutions available now: public-health warning signage, transparent publication of water-quality results, regular monitoring, scoping a pilot aeration project, addressing major stormwater inflows, basic asset maintenance and assessing the bird-island issue as part of overall lake management. These measures can begin while the longer-term Tallow Creek Coastal Management Program progresses.

Council knows this is a problem. Council owns the stormwater asset. Council's own investigation identified

it as the priority pollution source. Practical solutions have already been identified.

This is an opportunity for Council to demonstrate environmental leadership: protect waterways, biodiversity, and Country; use nature-based solutions wherever possible; prevent pollution at its source.

Bird Lake has been in the 'too hard' basket for decades. That is no longer acceptable. We need Council to act now.

Kelly Minahan
Suffolk Park

Be berry careful

The policy of the Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW is to support the work of the NSW Anti-slavery Commissioner, to actively oppose all forms of modern slavery.

The scourge of modern slavery in the agriculture industry has been in the spotlight with the release of a NSW parliamentary report on temporary migrant workers in regional NSW, and comments by the state's Anti-slavery Commissioner featured in the *Four Corners* report into food security.

The blueberry industry, among others, came under scrutiny. The report throws light on the exploitation that

vulnerable migrant workers face with illegally low wages, extortionate 'costs' taken from their pay for sub-standard accommodation and other fees. They also face the threat of visa cancellation for speaking out. Unscrupulous labour hire operators are at the core of the abuse experienced by these vital and underappreciated workers.

Queensland and Victoria have addressed the problem with a licensing system. NSW is lagging, and this opens the door to mistreatment.

Currently, the Anti-slavery Commissioner in NSW is an advisory position – not a regulator. We hope this changes. We, as consumers, can do something – check where those blueberries, other fruit and vegetables come from next time you're at a supermarket or farmers' market, ask who is employed to pick them, the conditions they live under and whether they earn a Horticulture Worker 2000 Award or similar wage. The power is in your pocket.

Michelle Wallace
CWA, Bangalow

Political comment

Great article by Jo Immig (*Echo* 6 August). But whether we're feeling hopeful or fearful, it doesn't matter,

because neither is telling us what's actually going to happen, or even what's actually true right now, just what we think is true.

Seeing that, is what frees us to take the wisest action in the moment, which is the most important thing.

Sandy Loyall
Bangalow

Scan merchants?

Regarding theft from local supermarkets, this issue can cut both ways. Recently I went to a supermarket and bought six random items, and I always memorise prices.

At the checkout one item came up above the shelf price, then another, at which point I demanded to see the manager, to whom I pointed out that if two out of six items are not priced correctly, by how much are you ripping off the public with the thousands of items in the store?

When price-scanning came in, the deal was through a supermarket code of practice, that items would be free that scanned over the shelf price. Supermarkets have now walked away from this code.

The code, now it seems, is we will rip you off unless you catch us out, and I have a number of times caught them

out and insisted they give the items to me free so they tidy up their pricing practice.

Anton Vanderbyl
Main Arm

David Brown's article

What an interesting article by David Brown in last week's *Echo*. Well-researched and full of numbers. Here are a few more numbers. Did you recoil in horror at someone having a meagre 18 square metres to live in? Here's some more numbers. 18 square metres is certainly more than the average small caravan, starting at 11 square metres. You can cook, shower, sleep in a bed, and use the toilet. You can get your things off the street. You can have some space to get yourself together. Any home-less singles interested?

Sandra Heilpern
Ballina

Mandy and listening

Just looking at Mandy's Soapbox of last week, which I think is so 'on-target' and excellently written. To paraphrase her, 'to open your heart you first have to open your ears and receive. Trust me it's worth it.'

To my mind today we are witnessing less listening to each other – less than

► **Continued on page 17**

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annual Shop Local campaign before Christmas.

The Chamber also supports Brunswick Valley Historical Society, Mullumbimby Community Gardens, GateWay Landcare, Spaghetti Circus and many other community organisations.

If you have a business in Mullumbimby area or are a resident of the Mullumbimby area, you are welcome to join the Mullumbimby Chamber of Commerce.



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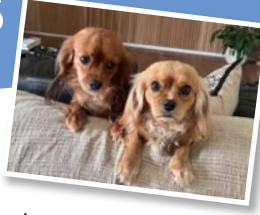
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Traditional owners vs Adani’s mining operations

Michele Grant

Adrian Burragubba, a Wangan and Jagalingou (W&J) Elder visited Brunswick Picture House in August to provide an update on their long running campaign to protect their lands and sacred Doongmabulla Springs in the Galilee basin impacted by Adani’s open-cut coal mine. Adani’s contentious project was initially approved by the Federal Environment Minister in 2014. The Stop Adani direct-action campaign lobbied local and international banks and insurers targeting 145 companies to discourage involvement in the project. Conservation groups instigated court actions objecting to impacts on the environment and biodiversity, water usage, and carbon emissions.

Permits allowing new port facilities including sea-bed dredging at Abbot Point and dumping of spoil in Caley Valley wetlands were challenged in three separate court action in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The permits were withdrawn after federal legislation banned dumping within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in June 2015.

Objections to using public funds to bankroll infrastructure led to the proposed new rail line being abandoned. A 200km extension to the existing narrow-gauge railway was completed in 2021. A new airport for fly in/fly out workers became an upgrade of an existing airfield on a nearby property.

Funding difficulties and court action resulted in delays and downsizing from 60 million tonnes of coal per year to 10 million. The lifespan was reduced from 90 to 60 years with estimates of 200 million tonnes of carbon



Adrian Burragubba at the Brunswick Picture House. Photo Mark Seiffert

dioxide to be generated over the timeframe. Work commenced in 2019 and the mine has been operating since 2021.

W&J rejected the Indigenous Land Use agreement (ILUA) presented by Adani in October 2014 claiming it would destroy their ancestral lands and cultural heritage.

A ‘Defence of Country Declaration’ presented to Queensland parliament claiming their rights under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People were not being recognised or enforced fell on deaf ears.

In 2016 the Queensland Native Title Tribunal overrode the objections of traditional owners and granted two mining licences to Adani on the basis the project is in the public interest.

Bankrupted by Adani

Adrian Burragubba lodged W&J’s appeal against the tribunal decision, but in August 2016 the Federal Court dismissed the challenge.

The community split over the ILUA offered by Adani in 2017 with seven of 12 representatives accepting the take it or get nothing deal. An appeal by the five dissenting representatives was dismissed by the Federal Court with Adani seeking \$680,000 in court costs, bankrupting Adrian Burragubba who led the action.

In August 2019 the Queensland government intervened and extinguished native title over 1,385 hectares of W&J country including their camping area used for cultural ceremonies, granting Adani exclusive freehold title.

The mining company took action in the Queensland Supreme Court to have the W&J campers charged with trespass and a restraining order was issued so they couldn’t return. When the Burragubba family returned to conduct ceremonies the police were called and forcibly removed them from their land.

Human rights

Disgruntled Traditional Owner groups united under the Clermont-Belyando Native Title Claim. In 2021, after 17 years of legal wrangling the Federal Court dismissed their claim, removing their right to consultation or compensation in future mines after concluding they did not establish sufficient legal connection to their land under the *Native Title Act*.

W&J turned to the new Queensland Human Rights Commission. Section 28 of the *Queensland Human Rights Act (HRA)*, adopted in 2019, recognises the distinct cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their special

connection to land and sea. Action resulted in the Queensland police issuing a letter of regret for evicting the Burragubba family – a first for police!

In April 2023 the Queensland Environment Department received advice from CSIRO and Geoscience Australia which identified ‘several major issues’ with Adani’s groundwater modelling and the threat of ‘environmental harm’ to the Doongmabulla Springs.

In Feb 2024 W&J pursued a judicial review in Queensland Supreme Court seeking an injunction to stop mining and provide ‘scientific certainty’ the Springs were not under threat.

In January 2026 the full bench of Queensland Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the cultural custodians. The court held that the refusal to issue an Environmental Protection Order can affect Aboriginal cultural rights and that inaction can affect the practical enjoyment of cultural rights.

The decision doesn’t stop mining near the springs but it clears a pathway to trial. It’s a significant breakthrough and confirms Aboriginal cultural rights are enforceable under Queensland law.

The Queensland government didn’t appeal the decision. Its role in providing scientific certainty and protection of sacred springs will proceed to trial in the Supreme Court. A trial date is yet to be set.

Challenging and defending Adani’s project has cost the community millions of dollars, while the profits for Australia are minimal and the risks for the Galilee Basin remain unacceptable. A review of the public interest is long overdue.

► Continued from page 14
we have ever seen. The adherence to the idea that 'you are right' seems to me to create people who don't actually want to listen. They want to feel secure. Safe. Right. Smart.

To me it's because they are actually in fear – and without getting into any ideas or conspiracy theories or 'dark state' ideas, it does appear to me personally that it is the marketers that have taken us to this point.

Nobody else.
It's the marketers – who have to keep us in a state of fear to maintain our consumption. Without us as willing or unwilling consumers of their stories, it all falls in a heap.

Listening is very hard. I have done deep listening courses and seen little or no result from anyone around me – except getting worse, not better.

So these days my listening involves three parts:

- 1. Listen as well as I am able.
- 2. Allow what I hear to take up temporary residence in my head.
- 3. Wait and see what happens. Don't allow any opinion to settle.
- 4. Hold onto the belief that it is possible that something completely different may arise.

If we are listening to detect what we don't want to hear, we are not deep listening. If we are listening to simply allow that, which is to sit in our mind and allow a possible alteration of perspective, then that, to me, is deep listening.

Ian Blair Hamilton
Myocum

Gas stinks

Backlash last week noted that 88 per cent of Victorian homes use mains gas for heating. We all know they think minor gas is cool too: but *Echo* readers know they both stink.

Sapoty Brook
Main Arm

2022 Council: ill-informed or foolish

New councillors may not be aware that the councillors on the previous Council seem to have been misinformed about 57 Station Street as a suitable site for building affordable housing.

A snapshot history... In February 2020, Council resolved to 'support, in principle, facilitating the establishment of diverse, lower cost, and accessible housing on Council owned carparks, without decreasing the current number of available car parking spaces.'

It was noted at the time that: 'Currently Council holds quite a few parcels of land utilised for car parking. Some of these include the Council Administration building carpark, the Cavanbah Centre, North and South Lawson St Byron Bay, and Station St Bangalow.' (Note the mention of the Council carpark but no mention of 57 Station Street).

The first that councillors heard about 57 Station Street was in April 2022, when a staff report from Shannon Burt sought Council endorsement of an agreement with Landcom to work on affordable housing projects on 'suitable Council lands, including Council-owned carparks.'

The staff report stated, 'The carpark on 57 Station Street was identified as a potential project site. Its land use zoning, town centre location, and size made it the most suitable of carpark sites for discussion.'

Councillors were obviously not made aware of the fact that 57 Station Street had in fact a limited zoning that allowed only shop-top housing, whereas the Council carpark which had been suggested did not have that limitation.

Councillors were also obviously not made aware

of the fact that the size of 57 Station Street was less than half the size of the Council carpark. Nor were they made aware that building on 57 Station Street would be very constrained (and therefore very costly) owing to being hemmed in by buildings, whereas the Council carpark had no such constraints.

I say councillors were obviously not made aware of these facts because I can see no other reason why they agreed to choose 57 Station Street instead of the Council carpark, which even uninformed Mullum residents can see makes no sense.

The endorsement of that ill-informed staff report by those 2022 councillors has resulted in the current Landcom DA for a massively overdeveloped three-storey block of units right at the entrance to Mullum, which removes, permanently, the only public carpark and toilet in the town centre.

The councillors who made that decision might move on, but the residents of this town are left with the legacy of their ill-informed decision. We implore the new councillors not to compound that flawed decision by sticking to it.

R MacMillan
Mullumbimby

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Mullum Farmers Market's new stallholder: Daphne's Pantry

Allie Godfrey

A love of growing, herbs and traditional plant preparations is behind Daphne's Pantry, a new stall bringing an interesting mix of fresh produce, herbal teas, botanical balms, handmade soaps and bath products to the market.

Daphne grows and harvests herbs and botanicals on her property, while also using ingredients sourced from other local growers and producers. Her passion for herbalism has developed into a range that

celebrates plants in all their forms – from fresh roots and vegetables, to teas, infused oils, soaps and balms.

The fresh produce is well worth exploring. Depending on the harvest, you might find taro, yacon, choko, purple yam, tamarillo, cassava, daikon and fresh burdock, along with other seasonal produce. It's a great chance to discover some of the less-common vegetables and root crops grown in our region.

Daphne's herbal teas include blends created for relaxation, digestion and

general wellbeing, as well as her 'Lung Loving' blend featuring mullein and other herbs. She also incorporates locally grown ingredients, including ginger from Toby's farm, and harvests plants such as milky oats herself.

Another highlight is her range of botanical tallow balms. Daphne carefully renders grass-fed tallow before infusing it with calendula flowers for 24 to 36 hours. She also incorporates calendula-infused macadamia oil and chamomile, choosing not to add essential oils to the balms.

Home-grown botanicals feature in her handmade soaps too. Lemon myrtle grows abundantly on the property and is infused into coconut oil, while powdered lemon myrtle adds texture to some of the soaps. Daphne even grows her own loofahs, incorporating the natural sponge into some bars for gentle exfoliation.

There's more on the way, with Daphne experimenting with new creations including a nettle and chamomile face cream and a comfrey balm inspired by a special recipe passed down to her.

Daphne's Pantry brings together unusual fresh produce, home-grown botanicals, locally sourced ingredients and handmade products in

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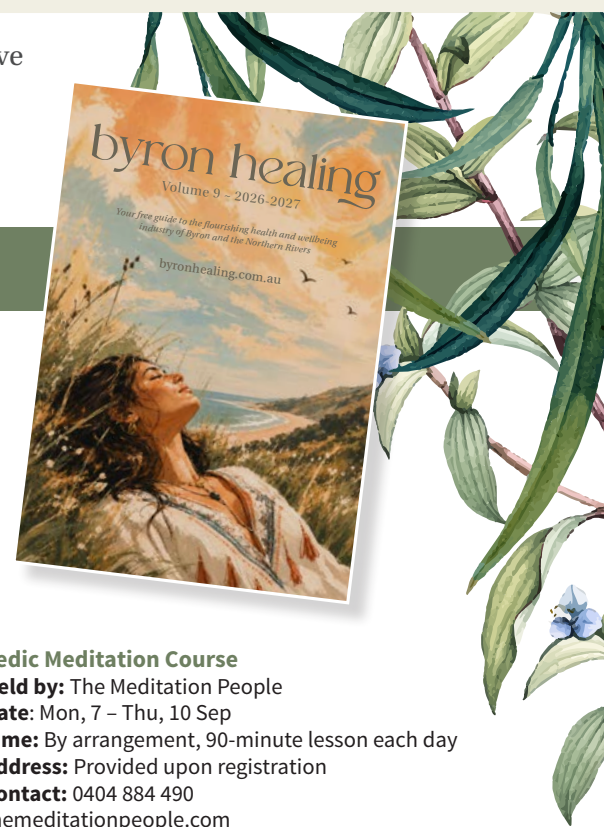
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info@byronwellnessfestival.com
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Bali Yoga and Culture Retreat

Held by: Flo Fenton's Intouch Yoga
Date: Sun, 15 Nov – Sat, 21 Nov
Time: Begins 5.30pm Sun, ends Sat morning
Address: The Shala Bali, Ubud, Bali
Contact: 0418 441 437
flo@intouchyogabyronbay.com
intouchyogabyronbay.com/bali-yoga-retreat-2026/

Stress, Trauma & Nervous System Regulation Workshop

Held by: Dorine Siccama
Date: Fri, 21 – Sun, 23 Aug
Time: From 9.30am Fri; finishes 4.30pm Sun
Address: Krishna Village, 525 Tyalgum Rd, Eungella
Contact: krishnavillage-retreat.com/courses/nervous-system-regulation-workshop/

Vedic Fire Ceremony: Bhumi Yagna

Held by: Narahari
Date: Sat, 22 Aug
Time: 4pm
Address: Krishna Village, 525 Tyalgum Rd, Eungella
Contact: krishnavillage-retreat.com/courses/yagna/

ThaiVedic Yoga Therapy Training

Held by: Kimmana Nichols
Date: Wed, 26 – Mon, 31 Aug
Address: Krishna Village, 525 Tyalgum Rd, Eungella
Contact: krishnavillage-retreat.com/courses/thaivedic-yoga-therapy-training/

Vedic Meditation Course

Held by: The Meditation People
Date: Mon, 7 – Thu, 10 Sep
Time: By arrangement, 90-minute lesson each day
Address: Provided upon registration
Contact: 0404 884 490
themeditationpeople.com

Weekly classes

Qigong Classes

Held by: Shirsha Marie
Address: Anglican Church Hall, 38 Stuart St, Mullumbimby
Contact: heartmindcentre.com.au/classes/

Tai Chi Classes

Held by: Shirsha Marie
Address: Anglican Church Hall, 38 Stuart St, Mullumbimby
Contact: heartmindcentre.com.au/classes/

Yoga Flow with Flo – Community Yoga Class

Held by: Flo Fenton's Intouch Yoga
Address: Suffolk Park Community Hall, 145 Alcorn St
Contact: 0418 441 437
flo@intouchyogabyronbay.com
intouchyogabyronbay.com/community-class/

Community steps up for NAIDOC – now local kids need the same support

More foster carers are urgently needed across the Northern Rivers, and local out-of-home care providers CASPA and Ngunya Jarjum are asking the community to consider whether they could help.

The call comes just weeks after more than 7,000 people gathered for Big Deadly Day during NAIDOC Week. The event, delivered by CASPA, Ngunya Jarjum, Lismore City Council, Yarn2Connect and REDInc's Jarjum Mirr Bulaangii, showcased what can happen when a community comes together around a common purpose.

Now, both organisations hope that same community spirit can be extended to children in care.

Ngunya Jarjum is an Aboriginal

community controlled organisation that specialises in placements for Aboriginal children and family preservation services while maintaining a strong focus on culture, identity and connection and community. CASPA is a not-for-profit organisation providing therapeutic out-of-home care, NDIS and family support services. The organisations are different, but they share the same goal: helping children grow up with the love and support they need to thrive.

Many people dismiss foster care because they assume it requires a full-time commitment. In reality, respite carers can provide care for as little as one weekend a month.

Current respite carers James and Danni say that mindset is what first held them back.



The Big Deadly Day media launch. Photo supplied

'We can't do everything, but surely we can do something,' they said.

That simple hope led them to become respite carers, supporting children while helping full-time

carers take a break and continue the important work they do.

Most families don't do it alone. There are grandparents, neighbours, family friends and other trusted adults who step in when needed. Foster care works best when children and carers have that same village around them.

Training, accreditation, ongoing support and a carer allowance are all provided.

The Northern Rivers knows how to show up for its community, and the success of Big Deadly Day is proof of that. The question now is whether there might be room at your table for a child who needs it.

■ To find out more contact CASPA on 1300 227 722 or Ngunya Jarjum on (02) 6621 5389

AI is here. How do we actually want to use it?

Michelle Williams

We have been handed something as significant as electricity and, for the moment, many of us are using it to write better emails. Which is very human, really.

When electricity first arrived in factories, many swapped the old power source for an electric motor and carried on much as before. New technology, old factory.

Early refrigeration was used to make ice. We invented a new way of controlling temperature and thought, excellent, now we can make the old thing more efficiently. It took a while to realise we could skip the ice.

I think we are doing exactly this with AI.

More emails. More reports. More social posts.

More images. More content. More slop.

I'm hugely optimistic about what AI can do. But if every productivity gain means producing more, we need to question the way we work too. There is an environmental question in that. These systems use energy, water and physical infrastructure. 'Can we generate this?' cannot be the only question. Sometimes 'do we need to?' is more useful.

And we can already feel the generic. So much of it is fine. Perfectly fine. And completely forgettable. The more AI can make that kind of stuff for us, the more our own taste, experience, weirdness and point of view matter.

This is a lot of what I'm doing through The Signal Studio: sitting with



Photo supplied

businesses and working out where AI could actually help, and what needs sorting out before it will.

I don't start with the shiny tool. I start with the business. What's not working? Where are people losing time? Where is the useful knowledge

sitting? What could AI take off people's plates, and what needs to stay human?

The answer is different every time. It might mean redesigning a workflow, organising business knowledge, building team capability, putting guardrails

around what is already happening, or finding the right technology and people to build something.

I stay tool and model agnostic because the technology is moving too quickly to build a strategy around whatever is leading this week.

Over the weekend I had one of those moments where I realised, oh, this has properly changed, again! With the new ChatGPT 'Work' capability, I could connect AI directly to the business apps and systems I use. It was auditing and updating SEO and AEO across my sites, working across live business information, and building web pages while I watched and directed the work.

A few weeks ago, I was mostly talking to AI about the

work. Now it can increasingly work inside the business with me. I could use that because I'd already done the boring groundwork.

So for businesses, the useful question is less 'which AI should we use?' It is: 'What could AI take off people's plates, what could it help us do better, and what do we want to make more room for?'

■ Michelle Williams, based in Byron, founded The Remix, a learning community helping people make sense of AI through events, workshops and practical pathways; and The Signal Studio, where she helps businesses work out where AI can genuinely create value and redesign how work gets done. www.theremix.au



byron healing

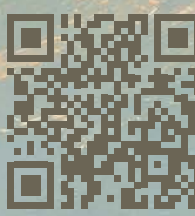
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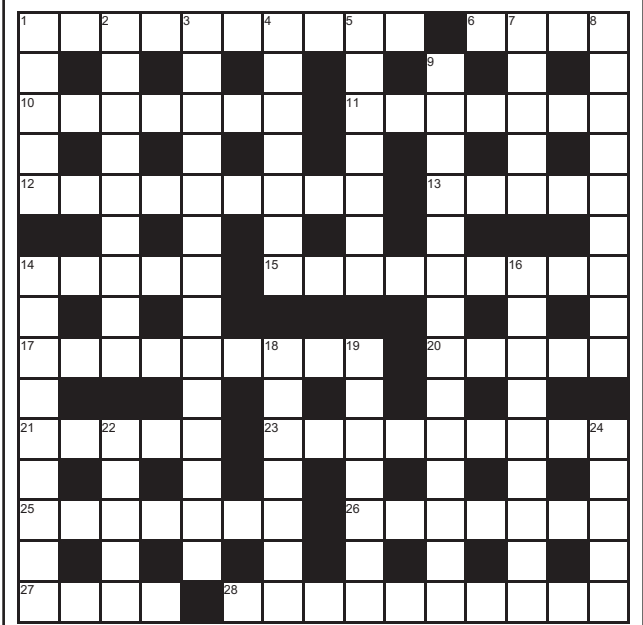
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Cryptic Clues

ACROSS

1. Tilted precariously, but about finished – sign here (6,4)

6. Explosive smell – get a doctor (4)

10. Greek hero from Florida or thereabouts !? (7)

11. Looking after Gunga in the dynasty (7)

12. Roguish with heroin – horse – all around. Proverbially mad (5,4)

13. Lifeless in the east, right? (5)

14. Quarry working – climbing aid needed (5)

15. The bottom, with nothing covering back account. That’s poisonous (9)

17. Addict with Gore and stomach upset – inject hydrogen peroxide (9)

20. Palin’s quarry in a low quarter (5)

21. Sadly, a mark of fate (5)

23. Bring in a worker – it matters (9)

25. Half a sign over can – what a scene! (7)

26. Time for bats in evil turn around New Guinea (7)

27. Part for queen, and cheer (4)

28. Mad peers reign like birds of prey (10)

DOWN

1. Greek letter, a little backward but provides information... (5)

2. ...for article, or quote back; but it’s hypothetical (9)

3. E, like Ganesha (8-6)

4. Los Angeles’s state, a place to sing? (2,5)

5. Book whose components will put you to sleep (7)

7. Nothing turns bad with the gift of Athena (5)

8. Beauty holds a gun, but it’s nothing to worry about (9)

9. Bird killer who interrupted a wedding, we read. (7,7)

14. Offensive with good man comes in for every practical joker (9)

16. Sing about molten rock, cut off for our ancient ancestor (3-6)

18. We hear, Mr Patterson, you are on holiday... (7)

19. ...and we hear police are in the woods! (7)

22. Dance around the bay, and rise up (5)

24. Ottomans trade radium for sulphur, a feature of 3 down (5)

Quick Clues

ACROSS

1. What you sign on (6,4)

6. Clapped out car (4)

10. Greek hero, king of Athens (7)

11. Looking after, caring for (7)

12. Mad animal from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (5,4)

13. Lifeless, unmoving (5)

14. Spike used in mountaineering (5)

15. Relating to a poisonous metal (9)

17. Addicted to booze (9)

20. American elk (5)

21. Fate, retribution (5)

23. Of things that matter (9)

25. Picture (French) (7)

26. Period of a cricket match (7)

27. Part in a play or film (4)

28. Types of falcon (10)

DOWN

1. Piece of information, input (5)

2. Not proven, hypothetical (9)

3. With an animal transplant like the god Ganesha (8-6)

4. Opera house of Milan (2,5)

5. Digits, book of the Old Testament (7)

7. Fruit cultivated for its oil (5)

8. Trifle, insignificant item (9)

9. Poem by S T Coleridge (7,7)

14. Practical joker, trickster (9)

16. First known type of homo sapiens (3-6)

18. Free time, holiday (7)

19. Woods, clump or row of trees (7)

22. Insurgent, freedom fighter (5)

23. Ivory features of 3 down (5)

Last week’s solution #21

L	A	T	I	T	U	D	E	A	B	I	D	E	S
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■ Crossword circa 2008

I Am Home

We are in a housing crisis. But does that adequately describe where we are right now? The last census told us there are lots of houses. A million empty ones in fact. So if we’re building enough houses, is it in fact less a housing crisis, and more a homing crisis? It’s clear, when we started using houses as wealth building, instead of community building, it transformed homes into houses. We became commodities not communities. Maybe instead of talking about housing, we need to start talking about what it means to have a home. What it means to have neighbourhoods full of people you know.

So, what is a home? I was thinking of that on the weekend, as I drove up my driveway and parked out front. I sat for a moment and looked at my house and felt this sense of gratitude and relief. Of course we don’t use the garage to park. No one does anymore, every bit of interior space is used. That’s my husband’s office. Maybe one day if one of the kids moves home with a baby we could convert it into a studio. Or maybe my parents could live there.

I have only ever owned one house. This one. I have no intention of selling up and moving on. This isn’t an investment. This is our home. I am not going anywhere. As someone who rented until my early 40s, being able to stay in place has been life changing. That’s what having housing security – a home of your own – means. It means being able to send your roots deep into the earth.

It changes you. You might wake with the once weekly anxiety of ‘shit, is it bin day?’ Or can I pay the mortgage this month? But you don’t wake at 3am wondering about renewing your lease that expires in a few months. You don’t panic about whether you’ll find somewhere that can take five kids and a dog. And a cat. You don’t have a stranger walking around your house with a folder marking boxes about your ability to perform tenancy to an adequate standard. You aren’t facing homelessness because of a lack of available rentals.

Staying in place has meant I have had a fixed address now for well over a decade. When I filled in the census last week I didn’t have to think about where I lived five years ago. I was here. This is the place my kids can call home. It’s where they moved out from, and where they come back to for their ‘re-set’. This is where I



You might wake with the once weekly anxiety of ‘shit, is it bin day?’ Or can I pay the mortgage this month? But you don’t wake at 3am wondering about renewing your lease that expires in a few months.

hosted my eldest daughter’s 18th birthday party and where I sat with her on Saturday night for her 31st. This is home.

And having it has allowed me to thrive. I have somewhere safe to sleep. I have paintings on every wall. I can hammer nails wherever I like. I can paint rooms in weird colours. I can pencil my kid’s height on a door frame and I can have my dog inside. I can have friends for dinner. I can have my extended family come and stay. I can plan Christmas.

I have a community. Local schools. Local shops. Local cafes. Local beaches. Local sporting clubs. It’s the architecture of belonging. Belonging is key to human happiness. Individuals who report having a sense of belonging to a group or community have fewer chronic diseases, live longer, and are happier.

Having a home has helped nourish my sense of belonging. I know the faces on the streets of my town. We say hi. Some hug. Some stop and chat. I don’t just belong, I am involved. Having a secure home has put me in relationship with

my community. When I need something, I can ask for help. When someone needs something, I can step up. That’s meaningful social connection.

This isn’t advertised in real estate ads. This isn’t something you can photograph for a *Home Beautiful* magazine. But it’s the most beautiful thing of all. Home isn’t just about the actual property where you live. It’s about you and your community. It’s about finding the home not just on your street, in your town, but inside of you.

So when we don’t give people access to long-term secure housing – we deny them this vital part of the human experience. And that just doesn’t seem right.

Everyone deserves a home. Just one. For everyone.

■ Mandy Nolan’s column has appeared in *The Echo* for almost 25 years. She is a writer, comedian and artist, is the preselected Greens candidate for Ballina and was the Greens candidate at the past two federal elections.

STARS BY LILITH

Fiery Mars in Cancer, the zodiac’s sign of home, family and emotional comfort, warms this week’s winter of discontent as it draws towards glorious spring...



LEO THE LION

ARIES: If your ruler Mars stirs up unrest in your base of operations, remember that Mars works best with movement, so get out and about and look for a fresh perspective. On the plus side, this go-for-it cycle could inspire reno projects or a new work-from-home initiative.

TAURUS: If this week’s Sun/Mercury meetup in a fellow fixed sign has you in stubborn, non-budgeable mode, your current star scenario suggests that it’s worth your while to consider a more flexible attitude. And in your own best interests to relax and give a little to ease communication and proceedings.

GEMINI: Geminis are likely to quite enjoy this week’s humorous histrionics and amusing antics as all part of life’s moving show. Though best resist invitations to get involved in interpersonal dynamics unless, as one of the zodiac’s mutable signs, you’re confident that you’re able to lighten up a difficult situation.

CANCER: With motivating Mars directing its energy to your home zone and operational base, this week favours domestic activities including cooking, gardening, housework, decluttering and family gatherings to maintain or restore a sense of kinship and connection. Also for celebrating a subsequent sense of achievement with unexpected guests.

LEO: With a trio of planets in your vibrant sign, passion’s in fashion and you’re appropriately enthusiastic. Also probably pretty insistent, but don’t sabotage promising possibilities by being too pushy. When you sense others withdraw, back off a notch and let this peak week work its magic for you.

VIRGO: With the Sun, Jupiter and your ruler Mercury in the sign of authentic self-expression, others are likely to be expressing themselves all over the place this week. As a Virgo, your personal style and highway to a healthy mindset is being of benefit to others, this and every other week.

LIBRA: Yes, people could be over the top self-absorbed this week, taking up all available air space, and that can be annoying. On the other hand (favourite Libran phrase), if you simply flatter them and sing their praises they’ll be much more inclined to do what you want them to.

SCORPIO: This week’s quarter moon in Scorpio on 20 August calls for a backstage reality check, a deeper audit of what’s really motivating you – passion, ethics, insecurity, the need to prove something? – so you’re fully and confidently equipped to meet the end of month lunar eclipse with honesty, clarity and purpose.

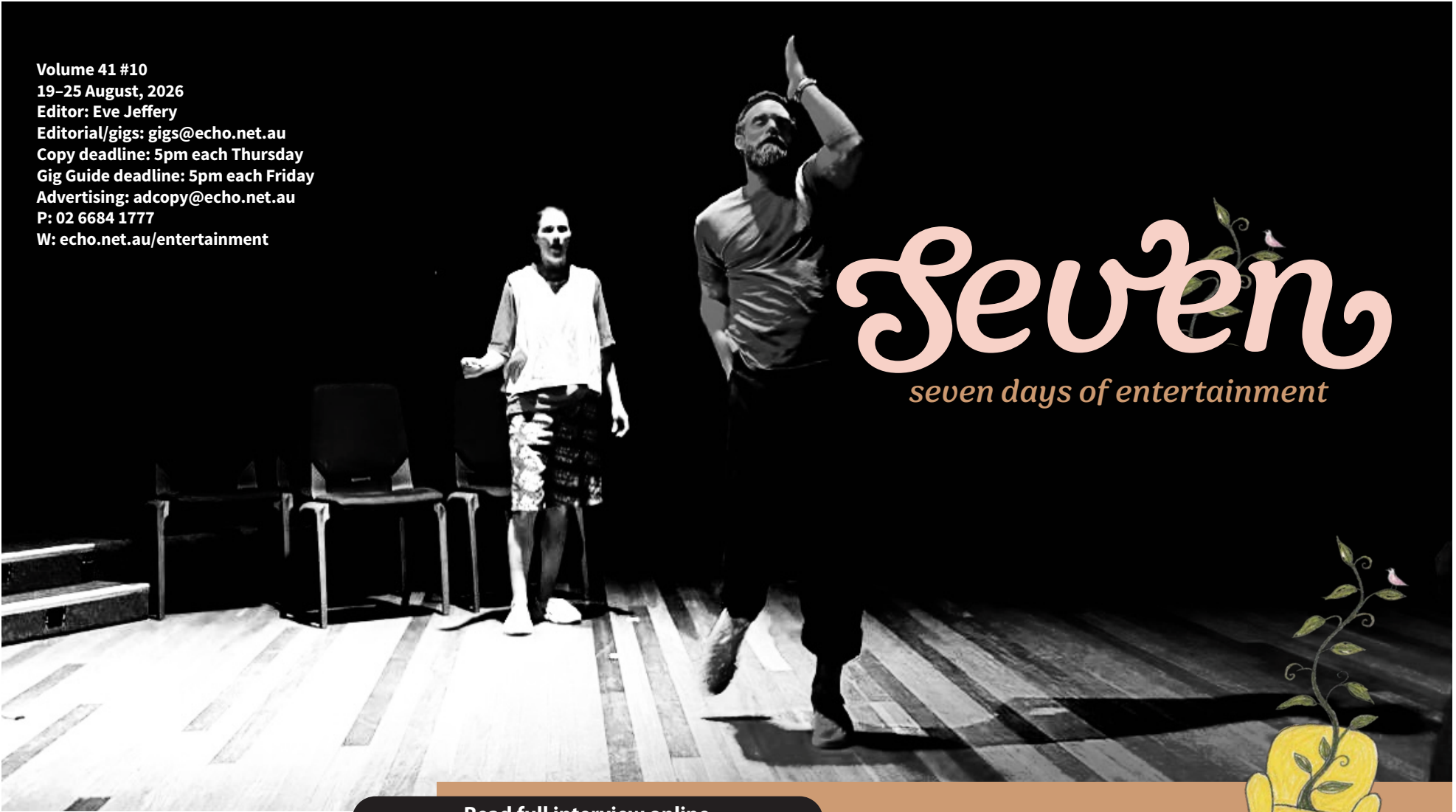
SAGITTARIUS: Objectivity can be difficult when people are being rigidly opiniated. The infamous Sagittarian sense of humour could come in handy this week to deflate a tense standoff, though be warned that jokes made to, or about, someone who’s taking themselves seriously could backfire spectacularly, so read the room.

CAPRICORN: This is an excellent week for you sensible sensualists to explore your romantic nature and natural talents. Don’t overlook the fun factor, because it’s an essential ingredient in what lasts and what doesn’t. You like order and control, but loosening the reins a little could work wonders for your creative ability.

AQUARIUS: Although individualistic expression’s rife this week, Aquarians are more likely to benefit from group associations and achieve more being part of a team than flying solo. But amongst the shared pleasures, congenial connections and mood-elevating entertainments, quiet time to yourself continues to be good medicine.

PISCES: This week’s turbulence, disturbances, disruptions and eruptions are likely to be a bit more dramatic than usual, though not worth getting upset over. Sensitive Pisceans are affected by moods and feelings, but don’t take current happenings too seriously, because they’ll blow over. Try to find the funny side.

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INTERVIEW

JOSHUA SASSE

What happens when a quiet book club opens more than just a book? Where does fantasy end and reality begin? What secret desires have been waiting to escape the page? And how do things pan out when you are the writer, producer, director, and acting coach for a show that's about to debut in Byron Bay?

Seven spoke to multi-hyphenate Joshua Sasse about this week's performances of *Thrust Issues*.

You've got less than a week to go. How are you feeling?
I'm feeling fantastic. We've got a wonderful team, and we've got a really great group of actors who are all pitching together, and it's been such a great adventure.

You're rehearsing in the theatre. That's a bit of a that's a bit of a luxury.
Yes, lovely luxury. We're there twice a week, all day Sunday and every Tuesday evening, and it's been fantastic – it's nice. The luxury of being able to rehearse within your set has been amazing.

Tell me about the players.
The performers are all local actors

who I've been working with in some capacity for the last couple of years, they've all done classes with me for multiple terms – if you complete one term's worth of class, then you get to audition for the company, and I think nearly half of them have now got agents as a consequence of doing those classes, which is really great. We have a really good relationship and we know each other really well. It makes rehearsing much easier when you've got a really good established relationship.

Have you had anyone who's moved on to do anything exciting?
Well, there are two actors who couldn't be part of this play because they were both filming TV shows in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. So that was really exciting, and you know, that's the goal – teaching people to the point that they get agents and they're out working. There are some students who get to a point where I say, 'look, I don't think you need to come back'. The goal isn't just

to have persistent full classes of actors coming back. I mean, I think it's really important that people keep stretching their muscles, but the goal is for them to be out as working actors.

***Thrust Issues* has 13 people in it – are there much larger roles and much smaller roles, or are they fairly even?**
No, I've tried to write it like a symphony, so everybody works together. There are some central characters, but in terms of work, it's a really even pace, and I think that's been really important for the company as a whole, to not feel like they were being eclipsed or overshadowed by anyone, and that gives a better company atmosphere as well.

And you're in the play yourself? How hard is it to direct yourself?
I'm in the play myself. So, I have an artistic partner, Gabrielle Miller, who runs the Hot Mess Theater Company, who is also in the play. I step out and have her give me critique.

I have other people critiquing me heavily, as do my actors. It's an open book. Yes, we all have a say.

What are the audiences going to love about the play?
It is truly raucous. What I've tried to do is write the way that people think in their heads without speaking. It's about a ladies' book club who start reading fairy fantasy novels, and as they read the book, their imaginations come alive, and these fairies appear and make commentary on the world, a bit like *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

It is highly silly, and very provocative and fun, and light-hearted at the same time. It's my sense of humour, really.

Joshua, are you having enough fun?
If I had any more fun, I think I'd burst into a ball of glitter.

***Thrust Issues* in on this week from Wednesday to Saturday – two show have already sold out. You can find tickets at byroncentre.com.au.**

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THUR 20 AUG	Izzy Day 6pm DJ Quendo 9.15pm Duelling Piano Bar 9pm
FRI 21 AUG	Felcity Lawless Band 7pm Harry Nichols Band 10.15pm Duelling Piano Bar 8pm
SAT 22 AUG	Matt Armitage Trio 7pm DJ Bad Boy Billy 10.15pm Duelling Piano Bar 8pm
SUN 23 AUG	Animal Ventura 5pm Vinyl Sundays ft. Dave Dog of Resin Dogs 8.15pm
MON 24 AUG	Lachy Dwyer 6pm Duelling Piano Bar 9pm
TUES 25 AUG	Marshall Okell 6pm Duelling Piano Bar 9pm
WED 26 AUG	Lachlan Jaques 6pm Duelling Piano Bar 9pm



Women Who Dared

Australia's internationally acclaimed **Streeton Trio** returns to Byron Theatre with **Women Who Dared**, a powerful chamber music concert celebrating four extraordinary female composers whose creativity, resilience and determination helped shape the classical music world.

Spanning nearly two centuries of composition, the program shines a light on women whose remarkable contributions were often overlooked in their own time. Audiences will experience the lyrical brilliance of Fanny Mendelssohn's 'Piano Trio in D minor', the fiery intensity of Canadian composer Kelly-Marie Murphy's 'Give Me Phoenix Wings to Fly', Elena Kats-Chernin's evocative 'Spirit and the Maiden', and Clara Schumann's deeply expressive 'Piano Trio in G minor'.

Founded in Geneva in 2008, the Streeton Trio has established itself as one of Australia's leading chamber ensembles, performing at prestigious venues including London's Wigmore Hall, Shanghai Oriental Arts Centre and Het Loo Royal Palace in the Netherlands. Their recordings are regularly featured on ABC Classic and Classic FM, with *The Age* praising their 'crisp, gutsy' performances.

The ensemble for this performance features violinist Emma Jardine, internationally recognised cellist Minah Choe and acclaimed pianist Ying Ho, bringing together three exceptional musicians for an afternoon of artistry, passion and musical storytelling.

More than a concert, *Women Who Dared* is a celebration of women whose voices continue to resonate through generations, reminding us that great music has the power to challenge conventions, inspire change and endure long after it is written.

Streeton Trio: Women Who Dared is on Saturday, 29 August at 2pm at the Byron Theatre. Tickets from www.byroncentre.com.au.

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An iconic Australian sound at the Beachy

Few Australian bands have carved out a sound quite like **The Cruel Sea**. More than three decades after forming in Sydney, the indie rock icons continue to deliver music that feels unmistakably Australian: dark, bluesy, swaggering and effortlessly cool.

Now, The Cruel Sea are heading to Byron Bay for a special live show at the Beach Hotel on Friday, bringing their legendary sound to the **Beachy** stage with **Tex Perkins** front and centre.

From their early days, blending swampy blues and roots with surf, country, spaghetti western and rock influences, The Cruel Sea developed a sound entirely their own. The arrival of Perkins' unmistakable, deep and gravelly vocals took that sound to another level, helping establish the band as one of Australia's most respected and enduring live acts.

Their catalogue is packed with songs that have become part of the Australian musical landscape, from 'The Honeymoon Is Over' and 'Better Get a Lawyer' to 'Black Stick'. But this isn't simply a night of nostalgia. With their acclaimed new album *Straight Into the Sun*, The Cruel Sea continue to evolve while retaining the raw, soulful energy that has defined them from the beginning.

Expect a set that moves effortlessly between moody blues, rock 'n' roll swagger and the unmistakable sound of one of Australia's great live bands, with support from Jez Mead and Vandalism Angel.

Adding another layer to the night, the Beach Hotel will be donating profits from ticket sales to the Northern

Rivers Community Foundation (NRCF), helping move towards the launch of the NRCF Beachy Fund, an initiative designed to create lasting support for young people and the broader Northern Rivers community.

So come down, settle in and experience The Cruel Sea where they belong, live, loud and in Byron Bay.

The Cruel Sea are supported by Jez Mead and Vandalism Angel on Friday at the Beachy. Tickets: moshtix.com.au



Concrete Surfers return

National circuit mainstays **Concrete Surfers** have spent the last decade touring the country, selling out shows, supporting major artists and continuously releasing ever-more refined music, and their debut self-titled album was released earlier this month, with a return to the road for a large national tour.

Concrete Surfers have been meticulously working on this record for the past few years. The album is a culmination of everything that makes Concrete Surfers so loved. It's full of punchy lyrics, driving guitars and the band's signature sound of raw punk.

They spent a lot of time making sure the writing was spot on so they could rehearse as much as possible before going into the studio. Recording everything live in the room together really worked for them and they wanted to make sure it was as tight as possible.

Recorded with Colby Robertson in 2025, the band spent time away at Airlock Studios and on a farm at Swanpond Studios – isolation from the city forged ideas that became some of the band's most refined songs to date.

With teasers of the record already released – 'Growing Pains', 'Fallout' and 'You Said', audiences have been anticipating a full release from the band for some time. After over a decade of playing shows, this collection of songs represents a defining point in their career.

You can see the entire *Concrete Surfers* album on Thursday, 27 August at The Northern, Byron Bay. This is a free event.

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INTERVIEW

PETER HUNT

A BIG KOOII FOR MUSIC IN THE VALLEY

Music in the Valley is almost here, and the festival crew cannot wait to welcome you back to beautiful Upper Main Arm for a day of incredible live music, family fun and community.

Live music features Kooii, Versace Boys, Trouble of the Good, Club Chaos, the Neighbourhood Choir and a ton more – and there is also Spaghetti Circus, a jumping castle, the mini Olympics, as well as amazing local food and drinks.

Seven spoke to Peter Hunt from Kooii in the lead-up to this fabulous event.

Is there anything new happening for Kooii at the moment?
Yeah, we're going into the studio to make a start on recording a new album, actually, after this weekend of gigs.

So it's actually like, this gig at the festival, kind of seeded a weekend of gigs for us, and sort of helped make the decision to go into the studio because there's lots of factors affecting the alignment, putting everyone together.

Have you written all the songs for the album, or is that going to happen when you're in the studio?
Yes, we've written a lot of stuff, but you know, it's a big process. I'm actually just kind of, grounding in with the path towards that because there's so much



Read full interview online
www.echo.net.au/entertainment

we could do and so many ways we could approach it. There's a couple of songs which I'm sure about.

I think having a plan is a good thing for us, but then also being open to what comes of us being together in the studio. It could be really good, but I think having a plan, a vision of those songs is good, then we can open up to what comes in the moment of us being together in the studio.

How long do you imagine you'll be in the studio for? And when are you planning a release?
Well, this time we've just got three days and would probably have, like a single at least, or a song to share. You know, by the end of the year, and the full album, we're probably looking at mid next year.

Will the new tracks get an outing at the festival?

Yeah, we'll play them.
Peter, are you having enough fun?
Well, yes. In this moment? I'm not having enough fun. What would enough fun mean? Like, what is enough fun? Is there such thing? It's entwined to something, isn't it? What makes things fun? I think things that make me feel really alive, like that's really vital for me. Fun for me is usually accompanied by some other things as well. You know. Joy. I'm up for fun if it's not distracting me from doing what brings joy.

It's on this weekend – grab your crew, pack a picnic rug, and come celebrate the music, creativity and community that make the hills of Byron Shire so special. This Sunday from 11am to 4pm at the Upper Main Arm Public School. Entry is free!



Time to chill out

Join the incredible vocal talents of Judah Kelly, Asabi Goodman and ensemble as they bring you the story of the feature film *The Big Chill*.

Motown is synonymous with The Temptations, Marvin Gaye and Aretha Franklin in changing how movies were made with original musical recordings used in soundtracks. *The Big Chill Out* brings to audiences the music of the film live on stage with the winner of *The Voice* 2017 **Judah Kelly** and the American-born, Australian singer **Asabi Goodman**, the acclaimed star of the musicals *Chicago* and *Hairspray*.

The Big Chill Out invites you to revisit the music of the feature film *The Big Chill* which burst onto screens in 1983. Not only did the film launch careers for its cast, including Glen Close, Kevin Kline, Jeff Goldblum, William Hurt, Tom Berenger and Meg Tilly, it also soft-launched Kevin Costner who plays the corpse in the opening scenes! With universal themes of idealism of youth, and the complications of adulthood, the film became a fan favourite, resonating with audiences. The soundtrack was key in communicating the bonds that people share, and the power of music to define a moment, break tension, spark joy and remind you of a time in your life when

things were different. It spent a staggering 161 weeks on the charts, reaching number 17 on *Billboard* magazine's top 200 in 1983.
Enter stage left *The Big Chill Out*, a stage show dedicated to sharing the music of the film and telling the story of the soundtrack. The show is a joyous, soul-stirring celebration of the legendary soundtrack which enjoyed multiple releases in different versions and sparked the Motown revival. The powerful live show brings to life timeless classics, huge songs performed by a world-class ten-piece band fronted by the two powerhouse vocalists – Judah Kelly and Asabi Goodman.
The show is split into two acts, with the first featuring smash-hits from the original soundtrack. The second act is packed with the deluxe edition highlights and Motown's biggest hits. *The Big Chillout* is a heartwarming celebration of soul, connection, and the classic songs that continue to unite generations. Whether you're a lifelong fan or discovering these iconic tracks for the first time, this show is an invitation to sing, dance, and chill out like never before.

The Big Chill Out will play at the Ballina RSL on 10 October. For more information visit www.bigchillout.com.au.

The Cruel Sea

JEZ MEAD

VANDALISM ANGEL

FRI 21 AUGUST

GIG GUIDE

**IT'S FREE TO LIST YOUR
GIGS IN THE GIG GUIDE
e: gigs@echo.net.au
w: echo.net.au/gig-guide.
DEADLINE 5PM ON FRIDAYS**

WEDNESDAY 19

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **DAN HANNAFORD**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM **STELLA**
- BYRON THEATRE 4PM+7.30PM **THRUST ISSUES THE PLAY,**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM **DIZZY J + DUELING PIANOS**
- BANGALOW HOTEL 7PM **OPEN MIC WITH SLIM PICKENS**
- THE PADDOCK PROJECT, MULLUMBIMBY, 4PM **CURRY JAM**
- OTTILIES, MULLUMBIMBY, 6PM **MONDO HUM JAZZ ENSEMBLE**
- MO'S DESERT CLUBHOUSE, GOLD COAST, 8PM **DZ DEATHRAVS**

THURSDAY 20

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **MARSHALL OKELL DUO**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM **MANDY HAWKES**
- BYRON THEATRE 7.30PM **THRUST ISSUES THE PLAY**
- NORTH BYRON HOTEL 5.30PM **OPEN MIC**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM **IZZY DAY + DJ QUENDO + DUELING PIANOS**
- GARDEN BAR, BYRON BAY, 7.30PM **TEMPLE OF FIRE**
- FOXY LUU'S @ COORABELL HALL 5.30PM **DJ DAKINI**
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 6PM **NATHAN KAYE**
- SAINT MARGARET, BRUNSWICK HEADS, 6PM **MONDO HUM JAZZ ENSEMBLE**
- LISMORE CITY BOWLO 7PM **THE SUPPER CLUB SOUL BAND**
- THE CITADEL, MURWILLUMBAH, 6PM **SINGER SONGWRITER**
- BROADWATER HOTEL 5PM **OPEN MIC FT. PING**
- MO'S DESERT CLUBHOUSE, GOLD COAST, 7PM **MONTAIGNE**

FRIDAY 21

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **EPIC**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 8PM **THE CRUEL SEA**
- BYRON THEATRE 7.30PM **THRUST ISSUES THE PLAY**
- ELEMENTS OF BYRON 5PM **ANDREW MORRIS**
- NORTH BYRON HOTEL 5PM **DJ NAT WHITE**

- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 7PM **FELICITY LAWLESS BAND + HARRY NICHOLS BAND + DUELING PIANOS**
- THE PARK HOTEL, SUFFOLK PARK, 6PM **ISAAC FRANKHAM**
- BRUNSWICK HEADS PICTURE HOUSE 7PM **THE GRUNGE SHOW PRESENTS MTV UNPLUGGED LIVE**
- MIDDLE PUB, MULLUMBIMBY, 5.30PM **BALCONY BEATS + KRAPPYKEE WITH JESS**
- MULLUMBIMBY EX-SERVICES CLUB 6PM **MULLUM OPEN MIC WITH STEPHEN LOVELIGHT**
- MULLUMBIMBY CIVIC HALL 7PM **ENTRE DOS MARES FLAMENCO**
- ST JOHN'S SCHOOL HALL, MULLUMBIMBY, 7.30PM **ECSTATIC DANCE MULLUM WITH DJ PEACH**
- HOTEL LISMORE 5.30PM **LUKE VASSELLA + DJ MUDCRAB**
- CLUB LENNOX 7PM **HAYLEY GRACE**
- LENNOX HOTEL 9PM **PINK ZINC**
- RIVERVIEW HOTEL, MURWILLUMBAH, 8PM **DAN GRACE**
- SALTBAR, KINGSCLIFF, 5.30PM **BROOK CHIVELL**
- CLUB TWEED 7.30PM **RAFF DE BAND**
- TWIN TOWNS, TWEED HEADS, 8PM **HERMAN'S HERMITS**
- COOLANGATTA HOTEL 6PM **RAW ORDIO**

SATURDAY 22

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **JB'S BLUES BREAKERS**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 3PM **JORDY QUINN + ERIN SHAY DUO**
- BYRON THEATRE 1PM **THRUST ISSUES THE PLAY**, 7.30PM **JIMEOIN**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 7PM **MATT ARMITAGE TRIO + DJ BAD BOY BILLY + DUELING PIANOS**
- THE PARK HOTEL, SUFFOLK PARK, 6PM **JASON DELPHIN**
- BANGALOW HOTEL 4PM **KANE MUIR**
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 4.30PM **SELVE**
- BRUNSWICK HEADS PICTURE HOUSE 2PM **TOP DOG FILM FESTIVAL 2026**, 7PM **GUTSY GIRLS ADVENTURE FILM TOUR 2026**

- MIDDLE PUB, MULLUMBIMBY, 6PM **PIANO BAR WITH JOHN HILL**
- CRABBES CREEK HALL 5PM **SCREENING: SONG SUNG BLUE**
- LENNOX HOTEL 9PM **DJ FROTHA**
- CLUB LENNOX 7PM **PINK ZINC DUO**
- WILLIAMS STREET KITCHEN & BAR, LENNOX HEAD, 5.30PM **PELICAN HIGHWAY**
- BALLINA RSL 6PM **TIM STOKES**, 7PM **THE EVERLY BROTHERS & FRIENDS**
- CHERRY STREET SPORTS CLUB, BALLINA, 8PM **WEAR THE FOX HAT**
- NORTHERN RIVERS CONSERVATORIUM, LISMORE, 12PM **EAT THE STREET**
- HOTEL LISMORE 9.30PM **ALL GONE BAND**
- ALSTONVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL 7PM **DUCK CREEK FILM SOCIETY - 'I SWEAR'**
- MURWILLUMBAH SERVICES CLUB 6PM **MR TROY**
- RIVERVIEW HOTEL, MURWILLUMBAH, 7.30PM **KARAOKE**
- KINGSCLIFF BEACH BOWLS 1PM **SWEET TONES**
- SALTBAR, KINGSCLIFF, 5.30PM **LUKE BENNETT**
- SALT & STONE, FINGAL HEAD 6PM **FELICITY LAWLESS**
- CLUB TWEED 7.30PM **CAUGHT IN THE ACT**
- TWIN TOWNS, TWEED HEADS, 8PM **MELINDA SCHNEIDER**
- SOUNDLOUNGE, CURRUMBIN, 7PM **THE KILLER QUEEN EXPERIENCE**
- BROADWATER HOTEL 5PM **SWAMPMOSS & RED ROCKITZ**
- MO'S DESERT CLUBHOUSE, GOLD COAST, 7PM **DICE**
- COOLANGATTA HOTEL 7.30PM **BRIAN MANNIX + SCOTT CARNE**

SUNDAY 23

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **A BAND CALLED TWANG + SMOKIN FIREBIRDS**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 4PM **GOODRICH + DJ LONGTIME**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 5PM **ANIMAL VENTURA + VINYL SUNDAYS FT. DAVE DOG OF RESIN DOGS**

- THE PARK HOTEL, SUFFOLK PARK, 5.30PM **ANDY JANS-BROWN**
- BANGALOW HOTEL 2PM **EVAN AND DION**
- MIDDLE PUB, MULLUMBIMBY, 6.30PM **MATTHEW ARMITAGE**
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 4PM **SALMONELLA DUB SOUNDSYSTEM**
- BILLINUDGEL HOTEL 1PM **MICKA SCENE**
- LENNOX HOTEL 4PM **JASON DELPHIN**
- BALLINA RSL 2.30PM **BALLINA BLUES CLUB FEAT HARRY NICHOLS BLUES BAND**
- SHAW'S BAY HOTEL, BALLINA, 3PM **JOE CONROY**
- RIVERVIEW HOTEL, MURWILLUMBAH, 2PM **HUNTER**
- CLUB TWEED 1PM **MARK REDMAYNE + CORY HARGREAVES**
- MO'S DESERT CLUBHOUSE, GOLD COAST, 2PM **SMACKED YOUTH, WHITT'S END, SPACE & AGES, DOC FOWLER, WHIPLASH & OLLIE TWOHILL**

MONDAY 24

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, CINNAMON SUN
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM JOE CONROY
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM LACHY DWYER + DUELING PIANO BAR
- CLUB LENNOX 7PM INO PIO

TUESDAY 25

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **TIM STOKES**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM **HAYLEY GRACE**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM **MARSHALL OKELL + DUELING PIANO BAR**

WEDNESDAY 26

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **GUY KACHEL**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM **ALLY PALMER**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM **LACHLAN JAQUES + DUELING PIANO BAR**
- THE PADDOCK PROJECT, MULLUMBIMBY, 4PM **CURRY JAM**



CYCLE OF LOVE

Sydney Film Festival highlights in Lismore

Following the highest selling film festival in its history, **Sydney Film Festival (SFF)** is taking highlights from its June program to Lismore Cinemas this September. The **Travelling Film Festival (TFF)** returns to the newly refurbished cinema for the first time since it re-opened after the devastating floods. This epic celebration of cinema features the year's most acclaimed films from around the world, including acclaimed films direct from Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Sydney film festivals.

TFF Manager **Beatrix Brady** asks why should Sydney have all the fun? 'These films help whip up a palpable celebration of cinema when they screened at SFF in June, and we can't wait to keep that feeling going and bring them to audiences all over NSW.'

'The breadth of stories being screened is an extraordinary opportunity for audiences to take a step into another world – worlds that are illuminating, inspiring, challenging, hilarious, entertaining, and at times all of those things at once. We all remember those movies that left an impact long after we left the cinema – this is a whole program of those experiences.'



YESTERDAY ISLAND

The opening night film at most venues is the must-see hit, Aussie-made documentary **Whistle** which follows all the quirks, egos and soaring notes of the World Whistling Championships.

TFF audiences will be some of the first in the world to see some of the biggest films of the year including the **2026 Palme d'Or winner at Cannes, *Fjord*** starring Oscar nominees **Renate Reinsve** and **Sebastian Stan**. Another recent Cannes winner joining the lineup is the **Camera d'Or winner *Ben'lmana*** – the deeply moving drama from Rwanda.

Audiences can explore the world from their cinema seat, with award-winning films from all corners of the globe: the witty and illuminating rom-com ***No Good Men from Afghanistan***, and the moving, yet sparkling Korean smash hit ***The World of Love***. And from Europe, the beautiful tribute to the natural world ***Silent Friend*** from Hungarian filmmaker **Ildikó Enyedi**, starring **Tony Leung Chiu-wai**.

Australian stories and filmmaking talent will also be on show, including the quirky time-loop comedy ***Yesterday Island*** filmed in Tasmania, and a range of Aussie-made short films will also accompany select screenings.

Tickets are already on sale and selling fast for a packed weekend of brilliant cinema. With a Flexipass or a full subscription, patrons can watch the whole program and save up to 30 per cent!

The Travelling Film Festival is on 3-6 September and is supported by Screen Australia, Screen NSW, and GIO. More info at www.sff.org.au/tff.



PALACE CINEMAS
BYRON BAY • BALLINA FAIR

SESSION TIMES
THURSDAY AUGUST 20 TO
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 26



COMING SOON



NOW SHOWING



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SPECIAL SCREENINGS

& SONS ^(M)
Wed: 1:00PM – Golden Club Preview

I WANT YOUR SEX ^(12C)
Fri: 6:30PM – MC Preview

MULHOLLAND DRIVE ^(MA15+)
Mon: 6:30PM – Cult Vault

FAMILY FILMS

MOANA ^(PG)
Daily: 2:00PM

**TOM AND JERRY:
FORBIDDEN COMPASS** ^(PG)
Daily: 11:00AM

TOY STORY 5 ^(G)
Daily: 11:15AM

ALL FILMS

CASE 137 ^(M)
Daily except Sun: 11:00AM

NO SCREENING SUN

HOLY DAYS ^(PG)
Daily: 1:10PM

**INSIDIOUS:
OUT OF THE FURTHER** ^{(M) NFT}
Daily: 2:45PM, 5:00PM, 8:00PM

MUTINY ^{(MA15+) NFT}
Daily except Wed: 12:50PM,
3:50PM, 6:00PM. Wed: 1:45PM,
3:50PM, 6:00PM

ONE NIGHT ONLY ^(M)
Thurs, Fri, Sat, Tues: 10:45AM,
8:30PM. Sun: 10:45AM, 8:10PM.
Mon: 10:45AM. Wed: 10:50AM,
8:30PM

SPA WEEKEND ^{(M) NFT}
Daily: 10:45AM, 4:10PM, 6:20PM,
8:30PM

SPIDER-MAN: BRAND NEW DAY ^(M)
Daily: 11:00AM, 1:30PM, 4:30PM,
5:30PM, 7:30PM

THE END OF OAK STREET ^(M)
Daily: 3:20PM, 8:30PM

THE INVITE ^(MA15+)
Thurs, Sat, Sun, Tues: 1:30PM,
6:15PM. Fri, Mon: 1:30PM, 8:15PM.
Wed: 6:15PM

THE ODYSSEY ^(M)
Daily except Wed: 11:20AM,
12:50PM, 2:50PM, 7:15PM. Wed:
11:20AM, 12:50PM, 7:15PM

THE RIVALS OF AMZIAH KING ^{(M) NFT}
Thurs, Sun, Tues, Wed: 10:45AM,
4:30PM, 7:15PM, 8:10PM. Fri, Mon:
10:45AM, 4:30PM, 7:15PM. Sat:
10:30AM, 4:30PM, 7:15PM, 8:10PM

TONY ^{(12C) NFT}
Daily: 11:15AM, 1:30PM, 3:45PM,
6:00PM, 8:30PM

BALLINA FAIR CINEMAS

**INSIDIOUS:
OUT OF THE FURTHER** ^{(M) NFT}
Daily: 4:30PM, 7:30PM

MUTINY ^{(MA15+) NFT}
Daily: 2:15PM, 5:30PM

ONE NIGHT ONLY ^(M)
Daily except Sat, Sun: 10:00AM

SPA WEEKEND ^{(M) NFT}
Daily: 10:15AM, 3:20PM, 7:30PM

SPIDER-MAN: BRAND NEW DAY ^(M)
Daily: 10:10AM, 12:20PM, 6:45PM

THE END OF OAK STREET ^(M)
Daily: 12:10PM

THE ODYSSEY ^(M)
Daily: 1:10PM, 4:15PM

**TOM AND JERRY:
FORBIDDEN COMPASS** ^(PG)
Sat, Sun: 10:00AM

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Kerry O'Brien says what he really thinks

David Lowe

This year's Byron Writers Festival witnessed a remarkable lecture from the legendary and much-loved journalist Kerry O'Brien on 'Lessons From History', for the 2026 Thea Astley Address.

Host Richard Flanagan suggested that what had always set Kerry's work apart was his unusual moral clarity.

Mr Flanagan described the lecture as a cry from Kerry O'Brien's heart. '[This] is a great roar of rage and defiance about our world and where it is and where it needs to go.'

Walking on stilts

Kerry O'Brien began his address humbled by this introduction, saying 'I feel like I'm walking on stilts.'

He said Thea Astley's importance in Australian literature challenged the norms of her time.

'There's a particular fury in the way she wrote about injustice. Thea Ashley once told an aspiring young writer, "To be a writer has nothing to do with pen and paper. To be a writer, you have to have the eyes to see about you what others don't see, the ears to hear what's not said, but most importantly, the bloody heart to cope with the immensity of it all."

O'Brien spoke about the profound impact of digitisation, and the other great disruptor of the last 50 years, 'inelegantly identified as neoliberalism... The ideology that has driven and coerced government as we once knew it to make itself smaller, privatise its services, nobble the trade unions – which have been one of humanity's great civilising forces – and cede the dominant role in determining the kind of society we want to be to the free market and the alleged freedom of the individual, rather than the imperative of the common good.'

He suggested that democracy was being fundamentally corrupted before our eyes, and the government response over time has 'often been acquiescent, often inconsistent, and often inadequate.'

'Have we really reached the point in our democracies where people are driven to vote for a Trump, a Farage, or a Hanson, all using the same shallow right-wing populist formula: fear, prejudice, playing loose with the truth, and resentment? Too many people, driven by frustration, powerlessness, and blind anger, just want to punish mainstream politicians,

even if they're going to blow themselves up in the process.'

O'Brien said that while neoliberalism might have 'crept up on us' here in Australia, he had been reporting on the digital transformation since 1972, when he did a five-part series on where computers were taking society.

'It was called neoliberalism, but was really just a dressed-up version of the old laissez-faire capitalism. Give us, the people of money and power... a free hand to make ourselves richer, with as little regulation as possible, sitting on trade unions, no bleeding heart politicians to get in the way, and magically everyone will benefit.'

'Their idea of democracy largely meant democracy for them. Their idea of freedom meant freedom for them. When they railed against elites, they meant the elites who didn't agree with them, not the elitism they practised themselves. State welfare was anathema to their idea of democracy because they said it would inevitably lead to communism.'

So what are the chances Australia could reverse this trend and breathe fresh life into its democracy? Where does hope lie?

O'Brien suggested we could take heart in the fact that we are not American – not yet.

'We may have turned our back on the idea of a republic and signed up to war, but we still have some chance of forging our own path in our own region in our own way. Unlike America, the structure of our democracy is more robust.'

As for the media, O'Brien said we should 'look hard at the people and organisations that attack the ABC and SBS. Call out their motives. Don't give up on the politicians. Don't rely on them, but don't give up on them. And when they let us down, don't underestimate our capacity within communities to change the landscape for ourselves.'

'I refuse point blank to believe that we have no hope,' he said. 'I think it would be utterly tragic if we surrendered to a sense of defeatism. I think defeatism is just about the worst enemy of all.'

'I think it's shallow in the extreme for people of the generations represented in this room to say, "I have faith in our children to fix it, or in our grandchildren to fix it. The problem is here and now, and it is here and now that we should be fixing it.'

■ Read full story in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au.



Kerry O'Brien

All photos Jeff (it's written in the picture) Dawson



Bob Carr



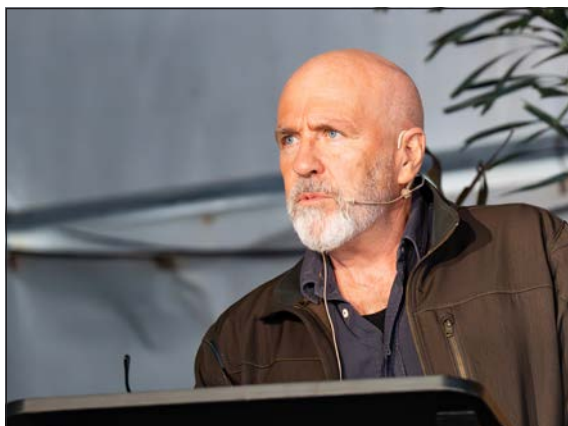
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PUBLIC NOTICES

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NARNIA NURSERY CLOSING DOWN & HOUSEHOLD GARAGE SALE

Everything must go! Huge variety of items including plants, pots, tools, irrigation and nursery equipment, furniture, books and household items.

Plenty of bargains to be had!

SALE DATES:

Saturday 22 August 8am-1pm
Saturday 29 August 8am-1pm
Sunday 30 August 8am-1pm

ADDRESS:

598 Myocum Rd, Myocum.

BYRON BAY HERB NURSERY

NURSERY TEAM LEADER

Casual 3 days per week
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday (22 Hours).
Salary packaging available.

Work with a dynamic team that has a positive impact on clients and communities.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

Cert III in Horticulture or higher

For the full list of selection criteria and how to apply go to: www.byronherbs.com.au/jobs
Applications close 9am Monday 31 August.

TO LET

LOCAL REMOVAL

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

TO LEASE

STUDIO WITH AMENITIES

Upstairs, Billinudgel \$402pw
Ph Lifestyle Group 66851206

POSITIONS VACANT

EXPERIENCED KITCHENHAND NEEDED AT

The Other Joint cafe
Email 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

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

BANGALOW LIONS INTERNATIONAL

"WE SERVE"

Volunteer at the many Bangalow Lions Club community events!
A fun, busy Not-For-Profit Club with all funds raised going to worthy causes.
All welcome!

Contact President John Singh 0418 662781 or punjab@byronbaypork.com.au

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for Bush regen work

0431 636 608

regen@reforestnow.org.au

TUITION

Adobe Tutoring

Experienced Professional Trainer

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contact@thinkblinkdesign.com
www.thinkblinkdesign.com

BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to the Legendary Saffron!

Love, your fans!

Happy birthday beautiful Tams!

Lots of love from the Echo crew xxx

Happy Birthday Lorry!

Love the Echo crew.

PETS

PET SITTER AVAILABLE

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

FREDDIE


Freddie is part cat, part hippo, part potato perhaps? Larger than life & with very unusual markings, he definitely stands out from the rest. Freddie loves his food & everyone else's it would appear! He's a little socially awkward & would be best as a solo cat. He may be larger but he's not overly confident. With lots of TLC, we are sure he'll not only become a slimmer version of his current self, but he'll become 100 % love bug.
To meet Freddie, 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

Byron Dog Rescue (CAWI)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

CAN YOU SPARE 3 HOURS ONCE A WEEK OR ONCE A MONTH?

Every minute of your time helps towards re-homing dogs, desexing dogs, and helping people in desperate situations with housing and difficult home lives.
Please call Astro (shop manager) at 0492 861 905 or visit the shop to chat about helping us to help dogs in need

BYRON DOG RESCUE

www.byrondogrescue.org

WILLA


Willie is a 8 month old, Belgium Shepherd X. She is a clever girl with a lot of love to give. She would thrive with a family committed to giving her the training, enrichment and exercise she needs.
M/C #978142001364159
Location: Murwillumbah
For more information contact Yvette on 0421 831 128.
Please complete our online adoption expression of interest. friendsofthepound.com/adoption-expression-of-interest/
Visit friendsofthepound.com to view other dogs and cats looking for a home.
ABN 83 126 970 338

COLBY

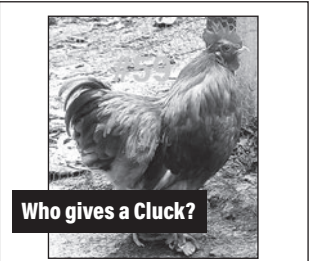

Colby is a handsome 5½-year-old Greyhound with a calm, affectionate nature. A true gentleman, he's happy, low-maintenance and super chill—the perfect easy-going companion. He enjoys short daily walks but is equally happy relaxing at home. Colby loves people, greets them with an adorable happy dance, and is well-mannered and terrific with kids. He prefers slow introductions to other dogs but settles once acquainted. Affectionate yet independent, Colby is lovely.
Rehoming #R251 00 00 60
NRAS Northern Rivers Animal Services
T: 6681 1860 E: shelter@nras.org.au
W: www.nras.org.au



Tricky

Meet **Ricky!** Prepare to be charmed by this stunning Chocolate Point Ragdoll. With his fluffy coat, striking blue eyes and signature Ragdoll personality, he's guaranteed to melt your heart the second you meet him. This mushy man is currently sitting in deep contemplation wondering why he hasn't been whisked away for true love. Ricky is ready to leave la vida loca behind, will you be the one with a cozy lap to flop on forever? Desexed, vaccinated, microchip 900164002313923 D.O.B 27/4/25 | See our socials for more!

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



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We have 18 rescued roosters ready for free adoption to approved homes. All have been health and temperament checked. We guarantee they will be good boys for your flock. Check them all out by this link.

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@whogivesacluck

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SUN, MOON & TIDES
– TIMES FOR NEXT 2 WEEKS

DATE Aug/ Sept	DAY, MOON PHASE	SUN RISE / SET	MOON RISE / SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)
19	W	6:14 17:25	9:47 23:53	13:08 1.36	06:10 0.40 19:23 0.70
20	TH	6:13 17:25	10:24	00:39 1.08 14:14 1.34	06:51 0.46 20:56 0.73
21	F	6:12 17:26	11:07 0:51	01:41 0.97 15:28 1.35	07:47 0.51 22:27 0.69
22	SA	6:11 17:26	11:54 1:46	03:14 0.93 16:36 1.40	09:00 0.54 23:31 0.61
23	SU	6:10 17:27	12:46 2:39	04:40 0.95 17:31 1.47	10:15 0.51
24	M	6:09 17:27	13:42 3:27	05:39 1.02 18:17 1.55	00:17 0.53 11:15 0.46
25	TU	6:08 17:28	14:39 4:10	06:24 1.09 18:58 1.62	00:54 0.45 12:02 0.38
26	W	6:07 17:28	15:38 4:49	07:03 1.16 19:34 1.67	01:27 0.39 12:43 0.32
27	TH	6:06 17:29	16:36 5:24	07:40 1.23 20:09 1.70	01:57 0.33 13:20 0.26
28	F	6:05 17:29	17:34 5:56	08:16 1.30 20:42 1.70	02:26 0.28 13:58 0.23
29	SA	6:04 17:30	18:32 6:26	08:55 1.37 21:14 1.67	02:55 0.24 14:35 0.23
30	SU	6:02 17:30	19:30 6:55	09:33 1.43 21:45 1.61	03:25 0.22 15:15 0.26
31	M	6:01 17:31	20:31 7:25	10:14 1.47 22:19 1.51	03:56 0.21 16:00 0.31
1	TU	6:00 17:31	21:33 7:58	10:56 1.50 22:55 1.38	04:28 0.22 16:47 0.40
2	W	5:59 17:32	22:39 8:34	11:44 1.50 23:36 1.24	05:03 0.26 17:44 0.49

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



The Echo's Market Guide

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

MONTHLY MARKETS:

1st SATURDAY:
Brunswick Heads Markets – 8am–2pm

1st SUNDAY:
Byron Community Market – 8am–3pm
Pottsville Beach Markets – 7am–1pm

2nd SUNDAY:
The Channon Craft Market – 9am–3pm
Chillingham Markets – 8am–1pm
Coolangatta Arts & Craft Markets – 8am–2pm
Tabulam Community Market – 9am–1pm

3rd SATURDAY:
Mullumbimby Community Market – 8am–2pm
Murwillumbah Makers & Finders – 9am–2pm
Salt Beach Markets, 5th Kingscliff/Casuarina – 8am–1pm

3rd SUNDAY:
Federal Village Market – 8am–2pm
Uki Buttery Bazaar Market – 8am–2pm
Pottsville Beach Markets – 7am–1pm
Lismore City Bowlo Markets – 9am–1pm

4th SATURDAY:
Kyogle Bazaar – 9am–2pm

Last SATURDAY:
Evans Head Rotary Market – 8am–1pm

4th SUNDAY:
Bangalow Market – 8am–2.30pm
Nimbin Markets – 9am–3pm
Murwillumbah Showground Market – 8am–1pm

4th SUNDAY (in a 5-Sunday month):
Coolangatta Arts & Crafts Markets – 8am–2pm

5th SUNDAY:
Nimbin Markets – 8.30am–3pm

SEASONAL MARKETS:

Quarterly:
Byron Beachside Market – Jan, Easter, July and Sept

FARMERS/WEEKLY MARKETS:

Each TUESDAY:
New Brighton Farmers Market – 7am–11am
Lismore Organic Market – 7.30am–10.30am

Each WEDNESDAY:
Murwillumbah Farmers Market – 7am–11am
Nimbin Farmers Market – 3pm–6pm
Newrybar Hall Twilight Market – 3pm–7.30pm

Each THURSDAY:
Byron Bay Farmers Market – 7am–11am
Lismore Produce Market – 3pm–6pm

Each FRIDAY:
Mullumbimby Farmers Market – 7am–11am
Evans Head Farmers Market – 2.30pm–6.30pm

Each SATURDAY:
Bangalow Farmers Market – 7am–11am
Duranbah Rd Farmers Mkt (Tropical Fruit World) 8am–11am
Uki Farmers Market – 8am–1pm
Lismore Farmers Market – 7.30am–11.30am
Byron Twilight Market (Oct to Apr) 4pm–9pm

Each SUNDAY:
Ballina Farmers & Producers Mkt – 7am–11am

Markets may change their routine without letting us know. Please get in touch to advise us of any changes.





SALES ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE – PRINT AND ONLINE

4 days per week, some flexibility and work-from-home hours available.

Permanent part-time position paying a salary + super + commission.

Echo Publications publishes *The Byron Shire Echo* (a well-established and popular free weekly community newspaper), a daily news website (echo.net.au) and multiple subsidiary magazines throughout the year.

The role involves selling advertising and creating multi-channel marketing campaigns for clients across the website, newspaper and individual magazines. Work in a friendly and supportive sales team of six, in our Mullumbimby office, handling advertising and publicity for our large local and small interstate client base.

Key requirements:

- Experience in marketing and/or sales, including digital marketing and advertising
- Computer literacy
- Experience with databases and CRM systems
- Friendly telephone manner
- People person
- High level of organisation and time management
- Ability to multitask
- Must own a vehicle and maintain a current driver's licence.

Start date: Immediate

To apply for this role please email a cover letter and resume to the Sales Manager: positions@echo.net.au. For any questions call 6684 1777.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

AMBULANCE, FIRE, POLICE000

AMBULANCE Mullumbimby & Byron Bay131 233

POLICE Brunswick Heads6629 7510

Mullumbimby6629 7570

Byron Bay6685 9499

Bangalow6629 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

LIFELINE131 114

MENSLINE.....1300 789 978

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 24 hours1800 423 431

AL-ANON Help for family and friends of alcoholics1300 252 666

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS Meets daily6680 7280

NORTHERN RIVERS GAMBLING SERVICE.....6687 2520

HIV/AIDS – ACON Confidential testing & information6622 1555

ANIMAL RESCUE (DOGS & CATS).....6622 1881

NORTHERN RIVERS WILDLIFE CARERS.....6628 1866

KOALA HOTLINE6622 1233

WIRES – NSW Wildlife Information & Rescue Service...6628 1898

On The Horizon

DEADLINE NOON FRIDAY

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

Free fire trail and beach walk for women

Join Together She Thrives for a free 5km walk through the Brunswick Heads fire trail and along Tyagarah Beach on Tuesday, 25 August, 9am–10:30am. Enjoy fresh air, movement and connection with other local women. A reasonable level of fitness is required, including being comfortable walking 5km and on sand. Bookings are essential at TogetherSheThrives.org.au. The walk goes ahead rain, hail, or shine. An optional coffee at a local cafe will follow.

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.

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 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.mdnc.org.au, or follow us on Facebook or Instagram. @mullumbimbyneighbourhoodcentre.

Respite Service

Byron Shire Respite Service delivers high-quality respite care to a broad range of clients throughout the Byron, Ballina and Lismore shires. Donations welcome: Ph 6685 1921, email fundraiser@byronrespite.com.au, website: www.byronrespite.com.au.

Alateen meeting

Alateen meeting every Thursday at 5–6pm. Do you have a parent, close friend or relative with a drinking problem? Alateen can help. For 8–16-year-olds meet St Cuthbert’s Anglican Church Hall, 13 Powell Street, corner of Florence Street Tweed Heads. Al-Anon family groups for older members at the same time and place. 1300 ALANON 1300 252 666 www.al-anon.org.au.

Drug support groups

Call **Alcoholics Anonymous** 1800 423 431 or 0401 945 671 – 30 meetings a week in the Shire – www.aa.org.au. Are you experiencing difficulties and challenges because of the alcohol or drug use of someone close to you? Learn coping skills and gain support from others. **Narcotics Anonymous** is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. For information and meetings call 1300 652 820 or text your postcode to 0488 811 247. www.na.org.au. Are you concerned about somebody else’s drinking? **Al-Anon Family Groups** meetings held Fridays at 2pm by Zoom. 1300 252666 www.al-anon.org.au.

Byron Community

The Byron Community Centre provides community services and programs including meals, advocacy and counselling for locals in need. **Fletcher Street Cottage:** A welcoming, safe and respectful space where people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness can come to enjoy practical relief opportunities, find connections and access broader support. **Fletcher Street Cottage services** are open Tuesday–Friday; breakfast 7am–9am; showers and laundry 7am–12pm; office support 9am–12pm. Individual support appointments with community workers and specialist services available please book on (02) 6685 7830. Fletcher Street Cottage, 18 Fletcher St, Byron Bay. More info: www.fletcherstreetcottage.com.au. **Byron Seniors Club:** www.byronseniors.com.au. More info on **Community Services:** www.byroncentre.com.au Phone: (02) 6685 6807.

Support after suicide

StandBy provides support to people who have lost someone to suicide. They provide free face-to-face and telephone support and are accessible 24/7. Follow-up contact is available for up to one year. Find out more at: www.standbysupport.com.au or call 13 11 14. If you, or someone you are with, are in need of immediate support please call an ambulance or police on 000.

Volunteer call out

Support for New Mums Inc. a Northern NSW community program are recruiting volunteers in the Byron Shire. We offer a free of charge, home visiting program for mothers with babies. For more information email debnewmums8@gmail.com.

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. **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.

End-of-Life Choices

Voluntary Euthanasia End-of-Life Choices are discussed at Exit International meetings held quarterly. Meetings are held at Robina, South Tweed and Ballina. Attendees must be Exit Members. For further Information www.exitinternational.net or phone Catherine 0435 228 443 (Robina and South Tweed) or Peter 0429 950 352 (Ballina).

Carers’ support

Mullumbimby Mental Health Carers’ Support Group for family members

Free walking together with loss

This September, Tide Marks, a free monthly community walking practice for people living with loss, starts in Byron Bay. There is no expectation to talk, share, or listen. You can walk fast or slow, quietly or mindfully, or choose to share or not. Tide Marks runs the first day of each month at 7.30am at Clarkes Beach Car Park, Byron Bay. See social media for more information.

and friends who have a loved one with a mental health issue. Meeting on 4th Thursday of each month 9.30am at the Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre. Info: Susanne 0428 716 431.

Rainbow Dragons

Rainbow Dragons Abreast (RDA) welcomes breast cancer survivors for a paddle at Lake Ainsworth, Lennox Head (and sometimes at Ballina) on Sundays 7.30am for 8am start. Contact Marian 6688 4058, mazzerati2010@gmail.com.

Older adult exercise

Chair-based older adults exercise classes run by a qualified instructor, that feel more like fun than exercise, are held every Thursday at 10.15am in the Brunswick Memorial Hall. Cost \$10. All welcome. Just show up or if you have any questions please contact Di on 0427 026 935.

\$5 pilates classes

Pilates for the price of a coffee! Come and join us for \$5 Pilates classes every Thursday at 8.45am in the Memorial Hall, 22 Fingal Street, Brunswick Heads and Monday at 8.45am in Mullumbimby. It doesn’t matter what level you are, as beginner to advanced options are shown. Just bring a mat and water. My goal is to keep the Shire active and feeling great one person at a time. No need to book just show up. For more information contact Di on 0427 026 935.

Pottsville Community Association

Pottsville Community Association meetings are on the last Tuesday of the month at 6.30pm at the Anglican Church in Coronation Drive, Pottsville. Have your say on what is going on in your local area. For details contact secretary@pottsvillecommunityassociation.com or via Facebook.

Language exchange

Byron language exchange club runs every 2nd last Friday of the month from 6pm (alternating Ballina/ Byron). Practise other languages or help someone with your English! Find us on Facebook. Contact byronbaylanguages@gmail.com.

Brunswick Valley Historical Society

The Museum is on the corner of Myocum and Stuart Sts Mullumbimby, open Tuesdays and Fridays 10am–12pm and market Saturdays 9am–1pm. Discover your local history, join our team – 6684 4367.

Library fun

Baby Bounce and Storytime for toddlers and pre-school children are at: **Brunswick Heads** Library, Monday – Story Time 10.30 till 11.30am; Friday – Baby Time 10.30 till 11am. **Mullumbimby** Library, Monday – Story Time 10–11am; Tuesday – Baby Time 10–10.30 am.

Lions Club

Interested in making new friends and helping our community? Lions Club of Brunswick Mullumbimby meets 1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 7pm Ocean Shores Country Club. Info: Joan Towers 0400 484 419.

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 adcopy@echo.net.au



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BUILDING TRADES

• DEPT OF FAIR TRADING: A licence is required for all residential building work where the reasonable market cost of the work to be done (labour and materials) exceeds \$5000 (including GST).



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VIDLER BUILT decks, extensions, bathrooms, kitchens, timber fencing Lic 304237C.....0413 502281

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- Tree Planting
- Native Forest Nursery
- Weed Management

0461 164 911
enquiry@reforestnow.org.au



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Driveways, Paths, Pavers,
Fences, Decks, Patios,
Pool areas.



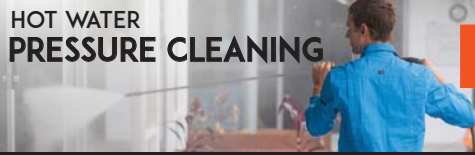
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Palm Lake Resort Yamba Cove's award-winning Maclean home design is big in every sense of the word. Generous in scale, impressive in design and created for sharing, this exceptional residence also made a big impression on the Master Builders' Association, receiving the award for Best Display Home in its category last year.

At an expansive 303.38m², Maclean has been thoughtfully designed for over-50s homeowners who want the freedom of space without compromising on style. It provides room for all the extras that make life enjoyable – whether that means welcoming family and friends for extended stays, creating a dedicated home office, indulging in a new hobby or simply enjoying more space to relax.

A private sanctuary within the resort

Upstairs, three bedrooms are complemented by a spacious multi-purpose room connecting the second and third bedrooms – an ideal retreat for visiting family or

grandchildren. The master suite is a private sanctuary, featuring a generous ensuite, walk-in robe and delightfully private balcony.

Downstairs, entertaining takes centre stage. An expansive island bench anchors the beautifully appointed kitchen, while a built-in wine rack ensures there is always something ready to share when friends drop by. The light-filled living spaces flow seamlessly to the tiled alfresco area, creating effortless indoor-outdoor living perfectly suited to Yamba's enviable coastal climate.

A state-of-the-art, rain-sensitive Vergola roof and outdoor ceiling fan provide year-round climate control, while the well-sized courtyard offers space for gardening, entertaining or simply giving a beloved four-legged companion room to enjoy the outdoors.

But perhaps the biggest luxury of Maclean is what awaits beyond the front door.

The Vantage Country Club

With just 78 homes, Palm Lake



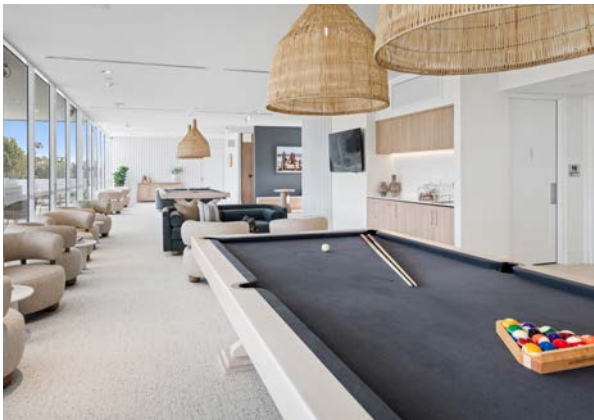
Resort Yamba Cove is intentionally boutique – and that intimate scale is helping create something particularly special. A burgeoning community is taking shape, where neighbours quickly become familiar faces and genuine friendships can flourish.

Rather than feeling like one homeowner among hundreds, residents can enjoy being part of a close-knit circle of like-minded people at a similar stage of life. There is time to stop for a conversation, meet for a coffee, share a meal, enjoy activities together or

simply know there is a friendly face nearby.

At the heart of this growing community is the Vantage Country Club, providing a natural meeting place where homeowners can gather, exercise, relax and socialise. From the magnesium swimming pool and gym to creative spaces, lounge areas and cocktail bar, there are countless opportunities for spontaneous catchups and shared experiences.

It is this combination of an award-winning home, an enviable coastal location and an intimate



community of just 78 residences that makes Yamba Cove so distinctive.

The Maclean may be big on space and architectural impact, but ultimately, it is designed around something even more important: having the room, freedom and friendships to enjoy the next chapter of life exactly as you choose.

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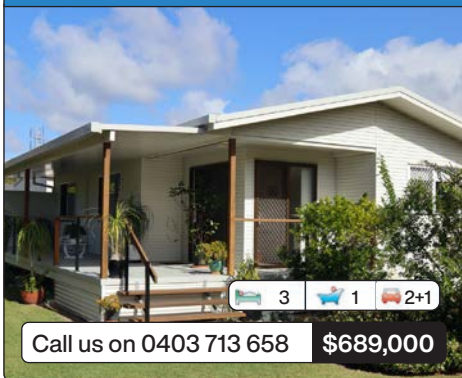
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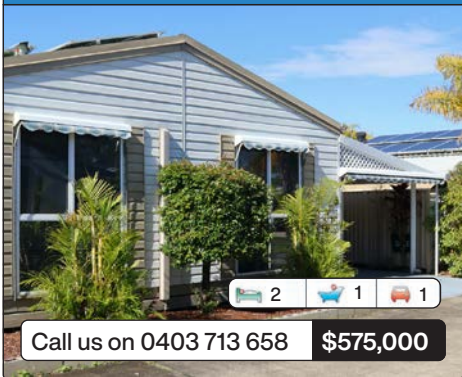
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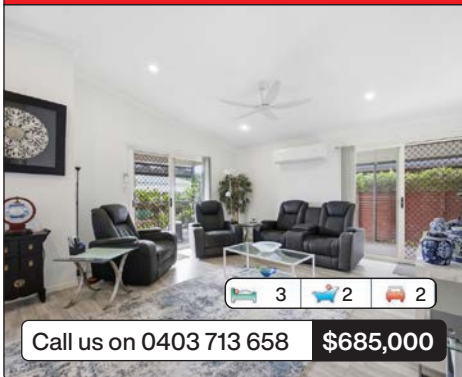
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Today, the property retains many original heritage features, including high ceilings, polished timber floors, wide verandahs, decorative cast-iron lacework and its distinctive grand arched entrance. Adding to its uniqueness are eleven original underground brewery cellars, offering a fascinating glimpse into the building's brewing past. Restored during the late 1970s and recognised by the National Trust of Australia, The Old Clarence Brewery remains one of the Clarence Valley's most significant and recognisable heritage properties.

Located in central Maclean, it presents a rare opportunity to own a significant piece of local history.

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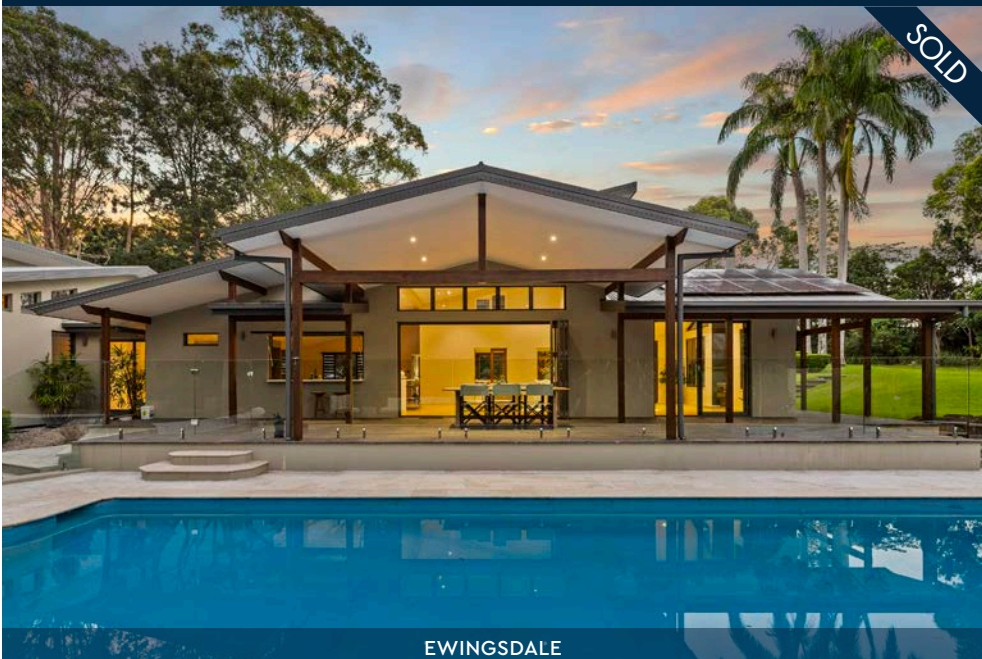
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The strongest indicator of any market isn't speculation - it's successful sales.

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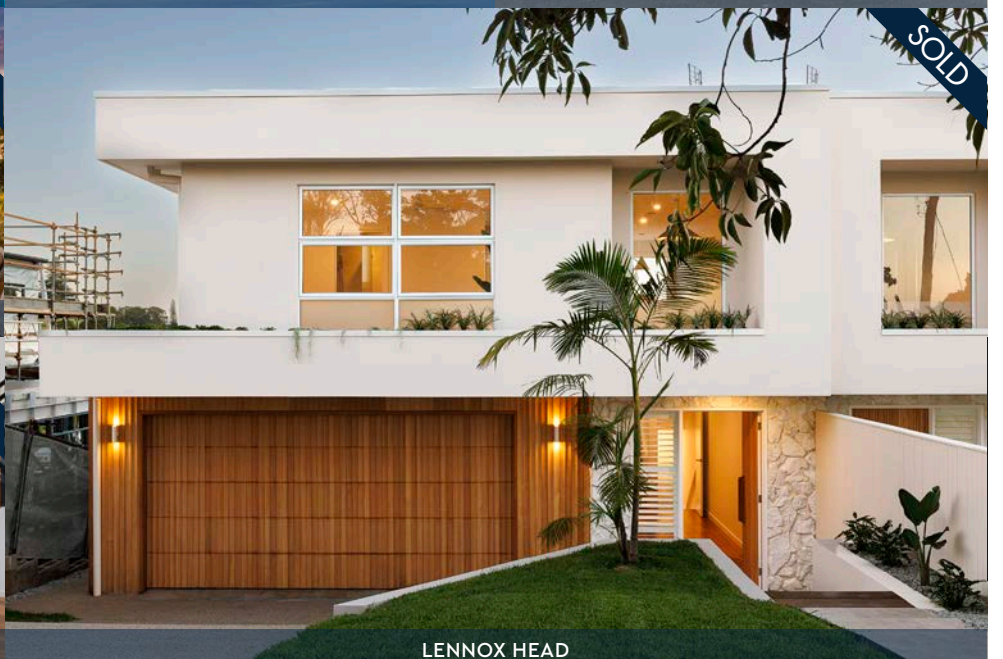
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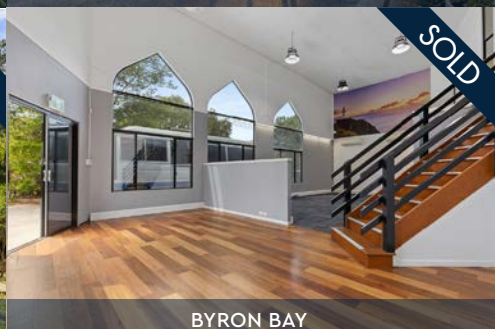
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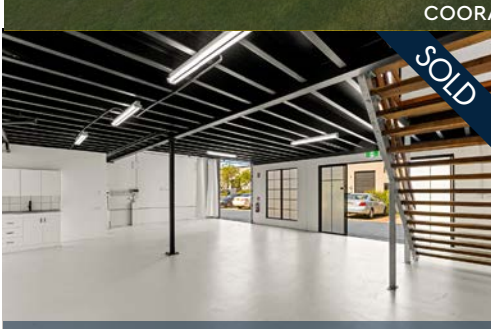
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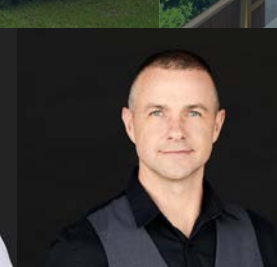
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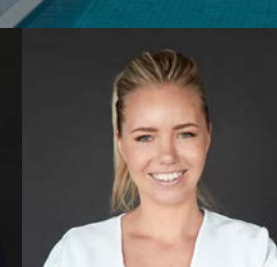
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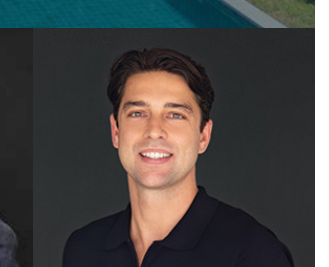
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'Coorabell Springs' A Rare Hinterland Estate of Extraordinary Beauty

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🏠 3.85AC

- Architect-designed, this single-level residence showcases premium finishes and seamless indoor-outdoor living
- Heated infinity-edge pool, landscaped gardens, extensive bush regeneration and stunning views
- DA approval for a two-room artist's studio, bathroom and garage, offering outstanding flexibility
- Spring-fed dam, Coorabell Creek frontage and abundant native wildlife, creating an private sanctuary immersed in nature

EOI | Closing 27th August

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Tara Torkkola
0423 519 698



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- Breathtaking lifestyle and business opportunity
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- Meticulously developed and owner-operated to a high standard
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23A GORDON STREET, BYRON BAY



Private Luxurious Villa - Moments from Byron's Beaches

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- Boutique complex of only two freestanding villas
- Stunning Balinese-style villa offering resort style living
- Zoning allows for holiday letting year round or a permanent home
- Covered alfresco patio and outdoor dining setting
- Heated, mineral pool with a sunken spa nook
- Secure compound villa with 100% privacy
- Private off street parking

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Su Reynolds
0428 888 660



Anna Gilham
0402 128 355



10 GLASGOW STREET, SUFFOLK PARK



Classic Cottage in Beachside Suffolk Park

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🏠 582M²

- Light-filled, 3 bedroom coastal cottage
- Relaxed living, privacy and walk-to-everything convenience
- Backing directly onto a tranquil nature reserve
- Generous pool framed by established greenery
- Flat 600-metre stroll to the sands of Tallow Beach established greenery

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0402 128 355



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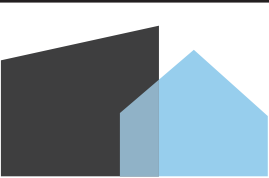
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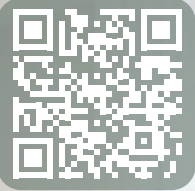
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‘We live in a world where one person’s truth is built on another person’s lie.’ – Kerry O’Brien

Victory for South Africa’s Wild Coast is being celebrated after South Africa’s Constitutional Court ruled against Shell’s plans for offshore seismic exploration along the Wild Coast, ending a five-year legal battle. Coastal communities, fisher people, and environmental defenders had challenged the project over concerns about its potential impact on marine ecosystems, livelihoods, and culturally important areas. The decision is being welcomed as a major victory for communities seeking to protect the region from fossil-fuel exploration and its environmental consequences. Help fight to hold polluters accountable. Sign the petition: <https://act.gp/4cboimm> Protect people. Protect nature. Make polluters pay.

Dog owners are being reminded to keep their dogs leashed around beaches, lakes and rivers as deadly H5 bird flu spreads among wild birds in Australia.

‘Heterosexual culture is the gayest culture.’ – Luke Bateman

SBS reported that Liberal frontbencher and opposition spokesperson for housing and homelessness, Andrew Bragg, said he’d reduce the building code down from 2,000 pages to 80 if he was elected. When asked by ABC Radio National ‘whether his policy means low-income earners should just accept living in substandard



During the Mungo Panel, ‘Journalism Now’, Mungo’s partner, Jenny Garrett (far right), stood to mention that the revered political commentator had quit the press gallery in 1988 and quickly escaped to Byron Shire when he saw that in the new Parliament House lobbyists had been allocated the same space as the press gallery. Canberra’s loss, *The Echo*’s gain. Photo Jeff ‘Mango’ Dawson

housing’, he replied ‘yes, definitely’. This followed comments by his Liberal colleague Tim Wilson who suggested in some cases that Australians could put ‘a jumper on in winter’. Perhaps politicians should be taking a wage cut so the rest of us don’t have to live in sub-standard housing!

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail, that unfortunately hasn’t been built in Byron Shire, is winning gold awards for tourism disability inclusion. If you want to see the rail trail locally you can sign the support petition at: <https://northernriversrail-trailsupporters.org.au>.

‘Earth’s poles are moving. This magnetic reversal of the North and South Pole has happened 171 times in the past 71 million years. We’re overdue a flip. It could come soon, as the North Pole is moving at around

55 kilometres per year, an increase over the 15km

per year up until 1990.’ – www.sciencefocus.com.

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