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Community news for Ballina and The Plateau

Issue 42 | April 2025



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What a few weeks we've had.

Whilst Tropical Cyclone Alfred may have largely sidestepped the region, its impact was still felt by all. The build up and preparation as the community sprung into action; followed by the waiting and oscillating nature of the old fella as he made his way towards the coast - building, stalling, building, downgrading and relocating his predicted landfall location.

Incredibly, this all occurred almost exactly three years from the catastrophic floods of 2022, from which many are still recovering. There is no doubt that anxieties have been high, and many individuals across the shire have had a tough few weeks. Despite these testing times, what has emerged is an undeniably resilient and caring community spirit. Neighbours were quick to help neighbours, strangers also stepping up to help each other - sandbagging, meal prepping, checking in. What an awesome place we live in.

Thankfully, Alfred left without too much trouble, and all that was left to re-establish was our sanity (families who had kids stuck inside at home for the week - I'm looking at you).

So here we are, once again on the other side. April is looking much more pleasant with lots of local fun, and Easter Bunny due to stop on by to share his sugary cheer. Relax, take it easy and enjoy some chocolate (if you can afford it).



Until next month,
Kate Parry, Managing Editor.

Contact us

Got a story? Get in touch.
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Acknowledgement of Country

The Ballina Wave acknowledges that we are here on the land of the Bundjalung people. The Bundjalung are the traditional owners of this land and are part of the oldest surviving continuous culture in the world.





From the Editor 3

This issue 4

Around town 7

News 8

Community 10

Finance 21

People 22

Historic Ballina 25

In focus 26

Lifestyle 28

Travel 33

Family 34

Education 38

Health and wellbeing 40

Arts 42

Pets and animals 44

Gardening 46

Environment 48

Sport 50

Entertainment 52

Horoscopes 55



13 ANZAC Day across the Shire



26 Orange Sky's community of hope



48 Brush up on op shop etiquette

Robyn Hunt | @realty
Real Estate



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These heartfelt words straight from a very happy seller perfectly summarise sales agent Robyn Hunt and a real estate career that now spans more than three decades.

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Justine Elliot and Labor will fund CCTV and crime prevention infrastructure for Ballina and Lennox Head!

Dear Resident

I've been working with police, councillors and locals to improve community safety. **Now, I've secured a \$3 million commitment to deliver CCTV and other much needed security upgrades for our area.**

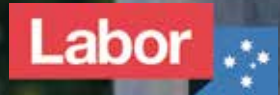
As a former frontline police officer, community safety is my main priority, and this is part of **my plan to keep our community safe**. Full details at:

www.justineelliott.com.au/communitysafety

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JUSTINE ELLIOT

Thank you to everyone who has shared their views with me through my *Community Crime Report*. Have your say at www.justineelliott.com.au/crimereport



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FRIDAY 25 APRIL 2025

0530hrs	Dawn Service
0600hrs	Ballina RSL Breakfast Following the dawn service, you can join us for our \$5 plated breakfast at the Ballina RSL Club.
1030hrs	ANZAC March Commences The March will proceed down River Street, Ballina starting at the Courthouse and finishing at the RSL and Memorial Park.
1100hrs	ANZAC Day Service The main service will be held at Memorial Park adjacent to the Ballina RSL Club.
1200hrs	Ballina RSL Lunch Join us for lunch at the conclusion of the ANZAC Day service at The Ballina RSL Club.
1300hrs	Brownie's Two-Up Join us on Level 1 at the ballina RSL Club.

2025 Anzac Day Poppy Project - Ballina NSW



As ANZAC Day approaches, join us in honouring our veterans through the annual Poppy Project, presented by the Rotary Satellite Club of Ballina Lifestyle, Ballina RSL Sub-Branch, and Ballina RSL.

Starting March 25, purchase a \$5 poppy at the Ballina RSL Sub-Branch or throughout the Club and pin it to the ANZAC letter structure in our foyer. This poignant memorial will be displayed by the river during ANZAC Day Services, symbolizing our collective remembrance.

We also encourage local businesses to either allow a participating school to decorate their shopfronts with an ANZAC theme or design their own display, enhancing the town's commemorative atmosphere. The most creative display will be recognized on ANZAC Day.

Proceeds from poppy sales support the War Widows Program, aiding families of service members.

For more details or to participate, visit the Ballina RSL or Ballina RSL Sub-Branch websites. This ANZAC Day, let's wear our poppies with pride and remember the sacrifices made for our freedom.



What: Daylight Savings ends
When: Sunday 6 April, 3am
Where: Australia

Daylight saving time will end at 3am, at which time, clocks will be moved back one hour to 2am. This will give you more daylight in the morning. Remember, smart devices will change automatically.



What: *Thrillfest - Battle Of The Bands*
When: Friday 11 April, 5pm – 8:30pm
Where: Lennox Head Cultural Centre

An epic night of live music, prizes, and entertainment, exclusively for young people aged 12–18, so bring your friends and enjoy a night of fun. For more info see page 14.



What: *Bluesfest*
When: Thursday 17 - Sunday 20 April
Where: Byron Events Farm, Tyagarah

Join *Bluesfest* as it takes its final bow. There'll be world-class music, epic vibes, and unforgettable performances.

For more information visit page 15.



What: ANZAC Day
When: Friday 25 April
Where: Alstonville and Ballina

ANZAC Day is an opportunity to honour our veterans and service members with dawn services, marches, and moments of reflection.

For local service information, visit page 13.



What: Byron Bay Triathlon
When: Sunday 27 April
Where: Byron Bay Surf Club

Swim, cycle, and run through paradise at the Byron Bay Triathlon - where fitness meets one of Australia's most breathtaking coastal courses.

For more information visit: byrontri.org



What: Tom Burlinson and his Big Band
When: Sunday 27 April, 2.30pm
Where: Ballina RSL

Presenting Australian star of stage and screen, Tom Burlinson, in a sensational salute to the masters vocal Swing.

For more information visit: ballinarsl.sales.ticketsearch.com

Monthly Markets

1st Saturday	Brunswick Heads
1st Sunday	Byron Bay Pottsville Beach
2nd Saturday	Woodburn
2nd Sunday	The Channon Tabulam Hall Coolangatta
3rd Saturday	Alstonville Mullumbimby Murwillumbah Salt Village, Casuarina
3rd Sunday	Federal Uki Pottsville Beach
4th Saturday	Byron YAC Flea Market Wilson Creek Kyogle Bazaar
4th Sunday	Bangalow Nimbin Coolangatta Murwillumbah Yamba
5th Sunday	Nimbin

Weekly Farmers Markets

Tuesday	New Brighton Organic Lismore
Wednesday	Murwillumbah Nimbin Newrybar Hall
Thursday	Byron Bay Lismore
Friday	Mullumbimby Evans Head
Saturday	Bangalow Uki Blue Knob Gallery Lismore Markets
Sunday	Ballina

For more information visit
discoverballina.com.au

Council in brief

At its February Ordinary Meeting, Ballina Shire Council approved a number of motions, some key ones as follows:

Alstonville Library relocation: Council authorised the General Manager to negotiate a lease for a temporary library space in Alstonville while the Alstonville Cultural Centre undergoes redevelopment.

Pool admission pricing review: Council has voted to review swimming pool entry fees, including potential options like single-entry tickets for larger families, to improve accessibility at Ballina and Alstonville pools.

Accommodation for rough sleepers: Council will investigate offering unpowered campsites to rough sleepers during off-peak seasons, for a reduced fee. Sites will be allocated via a referral system, not direct booking and compensation for Park Managers may be negotiated if needed. Council staff will investigate any potential sites in the Shire and report back to Councillors in the coming weeks.

For more information on each of the above, visit: ballina.nsw.gov.au

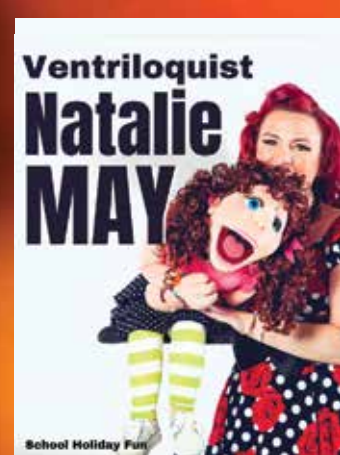

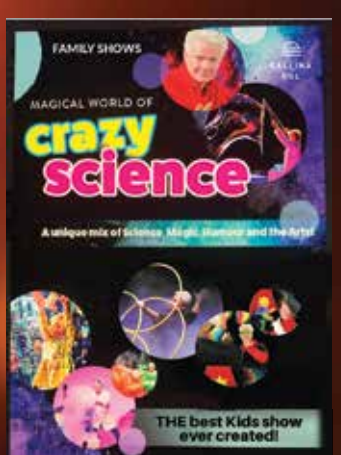




BWF Early Bird tickets



Early Bird three-day passes for the 2025 Byron Writers Festival will be available starting Wednesday 2 April, offering a discounted rate until Wednesday 9 April.

This year's festival promises a stellar lineup of authors and speakers, with the first wave of announcements featuring local talents like Denise Alison from Lismore, showcasing her community-focused project *Humans of Lismore*. Also, Northern Rivers author Naima Brown will discuss her novel *Mother Tongue*, and world surfing champion turned author Pauline Menczer will share insights from her autobiography *Surf Like a Woman*.

The event will be held at Bangalow Showground, Friday 8 to Sunday 10 August. Visit: byronwritersfestival.com

 <p>Ventriloquist Natalie MAY</p> <p>School Holiday Fun</p>	 <p>SUPER PARTY WITH LISA HUNT</p>	 <p>FAMILY SHOWS MAGICAL WORLD OF crazy science A unique mix of Science, Magic, Stunts and the Arts! THE best Kids show ever created!</p>	 <p>TOM BURLINSON INCLUDES THE MASTERS OF TONGUE <i>Still Swingin'</i> FEATURING FULL 12 PIECE BIG BAND</p>
<p>Tuesday 15 April Doors: 3.30pm Show: 4pm Free Kids Show Join us for a fabulous show with Australia's leading ventriloquist Natalie May as she lets her funny little friends loose on the audience for a holiday event.</p>	<p>Good Friday, 18 April Doors : 7.30pm Show Time: 8pm Free 18+ Event Soul diva Lisa Hunt and her Forever Soul band are back to create another fantastic night of soul, disco, boogie and Motown.</p>	<p>Tuesday 22 April Doors: 10.30am Show: 11.00am All Ages Event \$15 Crazy Science Show is full of Amazing and Fun Science Demonstrations, Incredible Magic from an Australian 'MO' award winner, Richard Scholes.</p>	<p>Sunday 27 April Doors: 2pm Show: 2.30pm Tickets: \$54 18+ Event Enjoy swing classics made famous by the great superstars from Dean Marting and Frank Sinatra to Harry Connick Jr and Michael Bubl�.</p>
<p>P. 02 6681 9500 ballinarsl.com.au</p>  <p>BALLINA RSL</p> <p>  ballinarsl</p>			



Shipwreck unearthed at Shelly Beach



Tropical Cyclone Alfred unearthed a fascinating relic from Ballina’s maritime past, revealing what is believed to be the remains of the 1890s paddle steamer *The Comet* along the shoreline of Shelly Beach. While this historic wreck has been sighted before, locals say it has never been so fully exposed.

First appearing in October last year before being reburied by shifting sands, the wreck re-emerged during recent storms, raising both excitement and safety concerns. Experts believe the exposed structure is part of the hull, with intact wooden planks, large nails, and copper sheeting clearly visible. Another section, resembling a keel, has also been revealed, featuring similar pegged construction.

In NSW, shipwrecks are protected under law, with severe penalties of up to \$1 million for anyone caught disturbing or damaging them.

Pictured: Remains from the shipwreck. Credit: Drew Mountford.

Support available for cyclone impacted

In response to the aftermath of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, the Albanese Federal Government and the Minns State Government have launched the **Personal Hardship Assistance Grant**, aimed at aiding individuals and families in declared affected areas. The grant offers emergency financial relief, providing \$180 per individual or up to \$900 per family to cover essential expenses like food, clothing, medicines, and emergency accommodation.

Residents residing in the specified Local Government Areas, including Armidale, Ballina, Byron, and more,

who faced evacuation orders or prolonged power outages exceeding 48 hours are eligible to apply. Applicants must demonstrate the impact of the disaster on their ability to meet immediate needs.

Applications for the grant will remain open until Tuesday 8 April.

The Albanese Government has also activated the **Disaster Recovery Allowance** to provide financial support to individuals in 17 declared Local Government Areas affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. This allowance offers up to 13 weeks of income support for eligible workers and sole

traders who have suffered income loss due to the disaster.

Residents of areas such as Ballina, Lismore, and Tweed, among others, are eligible to apply if their income has fallen below the average Australian weekly income as a direct result of the floods.

For eligibility checks and to apply for either of these supports, individuals are encouraged to visit the Services Australia website or use myGov. Assistance with applications is available via the Australian Government Emergency Information Line, ph: 180 22 66



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Councillor column

with Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Mayor



Pictured: Mayor Sharon Cadwallader (centre), with Dave and Lorraine from Orange Sky at Ballina's Evacuation Centre. Source: Facebook.

March was another big month for our Ballina Shire community and Council.

Tropical Cyclone Alfred caused widespread damage and disruption, with flooded roads, fallen trees, and power outages. Our emergency services, Council crews, and supporting partners worked tirelessly to respond and assist in the recovery.

While the impacts were severe, we are grateful the situation wasn't worse. Sadly, many of our neighbouring Northern Rivers councils, as well as parts of the Gold Coast and Brisbane, faced even greater challenges. Our thoughts are with them as they recover.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who played a role in the emergency response, including our emergency services, Council staff, ADF, SES, RFS, Essential Energy, all levels of government, and the many volunteers who stepped up when it mattered most.

And of course, thank you to our community for taking the necessary steps to prepare, heeding SES warnings and guidance, and looking out for one another. Your resilience and community spirit made a real difference in keeping our region safe.

As we prepared for the worst-case scenarios, our Emergency Services agencies, Essential Energy workers and our Council staff were put to the test. A huge shout-out to everyone who worked around the clock to keep people safe and restore services.

Through improved coordination and proactive resource planning, we met this challenge head-on. While there is always room to strengthen our response, this event demonstrated our growing resilience.

One key step forward is the new SES Headquarters in Ballina. Plans are now complete for the facility at Angels Beach Drive, and I recently shared these with the Premier, the SES Commissioner, and Emergency Services Minister Jihad Dib. Council has allocated some funding, and construction can begin once additional government funding is secured.

We are also committed to improving our road network's resilience to future weather events. Projects include duplication of Ballina's bridges to improve evacuation options during flooding events and flood resilience improvements on Ross Lane - the final stage of the Ross Lane/Byron Bay Road upgrades. You can read more about these projects on Council's website: ballina.nsw.gov.au

Once again, Ballina Shire has shown incredible community spirit. It was inspiring to see businesses reopen quickly to support residents. Let's continue to support them by shopping locally and using local services.



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April, a time of reflection

by Tamara Smith



April is a month with two quite diverse dates in the calendar.

One is Easter, a time for relaxing with the family, devouring chocolate and,

for some, celebrating the miracle at the heart of their religious faith, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The other is of course ANZAC Day, when we commemorate, as a nation, those we lost in World War I and the conflicts since. As the daughter of a Vietnam war era U.S veteran who served in the Middle East, I have seen the stark difference between the significant support and recognition that American Veterans and their families receive, compared to the appalling system that fails Veterans in Australia

The interim findings of the Royal Commission into Veteran suicides in Australia has revealed the shocking

after effects of war and the failure of our system to nurture and support returned soldiers. Between 1997 and 2021, 1,677 serving and ex-serving members of the armed forces took their lives, though the actual number is estimated to be twice as high. This cannot continue, and as the Greens NSW Veterans Spokesperson, I will continue to raise the failure of our system to honour our Veterans on the floor of parliament.

A growing number of young people are attending Anzac Day ceremonies, and I applaud their recognition of the sacrifices of those men and women who serve and have served our country, and those that gave the ultimate sacrifice. Let us not forget.



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A word from Ballina SES

by John Brown JP, Chief Inspector



*Pictured: Some of the crew and support team during Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
Source: Facebook.*

The Ballina Unit of the SES would like to thank the community for their preparation for TC Alfred (without knowing what exactly to be prepared for) and also their patience while we worked through all of the incidents that were called in.

We know some people had to wait awhile, but at times it just wasn't safe for our volunteers to be outside.

Despite this, the teams were here waiting for the opportunity to get out and help you (including teams sleeping at the Unit awaiting rescue calls).

While we don't have comprehensive stats on the hundreds of hours that our volunteers have contributed, we are certain that we've used tens of thousands of sandbags, and many, many tonnes of sand in Ballina Shire.

We've attended 569 incidents this month, from filling and delivering sandbags, to trees down, roofs blown off and flood rescues. We didn't do it alone though. We've had support from a lot of Emergency Service Partners, Australian Defence Force and internal support from various SES units around Sydney and even Dubbo.

Amongst this, we've had visits from various levels of Government, from the NSW Premier and Minister for Emergency Services, through to our very own Ballina Shire Mayor Cr Sharon Cadwallader and the recently appointed NSW SES Commissioner. We've also had many visits and donations of food from the community and businesses to help keep us going (and putting on weight).

Locally, we are transitioning back to our business as usual position by restocking and clearing up. We've had a number of new membership applications too, and we'll get back to them soon. If your interested in joining, visit: ses.nsw.gov.au for more information.



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ANZAC Day, honouring service and sacrifice



Pictured: The red poppy, a symbol of remembrance of those who died or suffered in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Source: Pexels.

ANZAC Day, is a time for the community to honour the courage and sacrifice of Australian and New Zealand service members. Across the nation, commemorations will bring people together to reflect on the ANZAC spirit of mateship, resilience, and remembrance.

The date, 25 April, marks the anniversary of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps' landing at Gallipoli in 1915 during World War I. The campaign was intended to secure a strategic victory against the Ottoman Empire but resulted in heavy casualties. Despite the hardship, the ANZAC soldiers displayed remarkable courage, endurance, and mateship - qualities that became deeply embedded in both nations' identities.

Over time, ANZAC Day has evolved to honour all Australians and New Zealanders who have served in wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping missions.

Commemoration services will be held across the Ballina Shire, with the community welcome to pay their respects.

Alstonville RSL sub-Branch schedule

- 5:40am Dawn Service , Elizabeth Ann Brown (EAB) Park, Daley St, Alstonville
- 6:30am Veteran's Breakfast, RSL Hall
- 9:30am Wreath laying Paddy Bugden Memorial, Bugden Avenue, Alstonville
- 9:40am March commences RSL Hall along Main Road to EAB Park, Daley Street
- 10:00am Commemorative Service War Memorial, EAB Park, Alstonville.

Announcement and reading of the winning Primary School entry in the ANZAC Essay competition during the service.

For more information, visit: alstonvillersubbranch.org.au

Ballina RSL sub-Branch schedule

- 5:00am Reveille
- 5:30am Dawn Service, Ballina RSL Memorial Park
- 7:00am ANZAC Breakfast, Level 1 Auditorium, Ballina RSL Members, veteran's and veteran families only.
- 10:15am March assembly, River Street, Ballina from Woolworths to Court House
- 10:30am March commences proceeds down River Street to Ballina RSL Memorial
- 10:55am Commemorative Service
- 12:30pm ANZAC Lunch, Level 1 Auditorium, Ballina RSL Members, veteran's and veteran families only.

For more information, visit: ballinarlsbranch.org.au

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Thrillfest returns, bigger and better



Picture credit: Thibault Trillet/Pexels.

Returning for its second year, Ballina's youth festival, *Thrillfest*, is set to be even bigger and more exciting. Taking place during Youth Week, this free event for 12 to 18-year-olds will offer an action-packed night of entertainment.

A major highlight is the Battle of the Bands, where eight talented groups will take the stage to compete for incredible prizes.

Up for grabs is a professional recording session and industry mentorship from SAE University College, through which the winning band will produce a radio ready track - a crucial stepping stone for any young artist ready to take their music to the next level. Additional prizes include a \$1,000 Ticketek voucher, a \$500 music store voucher, and more. The competition will be judged by SAE University College (Byron Bay) students, making it an exciting opportunity for emerging artists to shine.

Last year's *Thrillfest* saw over 250 young people attend, and with a larger venue, an even bigger turnout is expected. The event is hosted by Ballina Youth Network and supported by NSW Government Youth Week and Ballina Shire Council, along with key sponsors.

Alongside the music, attendees can enjoy complimentary food vans, non-alcoholic drinks, lucky door prizes, and fun activities. As a drug, alcohol, vape, and tobacco-free event, security will be present, and no pass-outs will be allowed.

Kiara McBeath, Program Manager at Social Futures, says, '*Thrillfest* is about celebrating young people's strengths, creativity, and passion for music. Grab your mates, cheer on your favourite bands, and enjoy an unforgettable night of fun and entertainment.'

When Friday 11 April 2025
5pm – 8:30pm

When Lennox Head Cultural Centre

Reserve your free ticket now via [Eventbrite / Thrillfest 2025](#).

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Bluesfest bows out: the final chapter



Australia's beloved *Bluesfest* is set to make history one last time over the Easter long weekend, from Thursday 17 to Sunday 20 April. Held on the picturesque Byron Events Farm in Tyagarah, this legendary festival will bid farewell after more than three decades of world-class music, culture, and community.

Since its humble beginnings in 1990, when just 6,000 attendees gathered to celebrate blues and roots music, *Bluesfest* has grown into one of Australia's most prestigious festivals, regularly drawing crowds of 100,000 people. Despite its enduring popularity, organisers have confirmed

that 2025 will mark the festival's final edition, making this year's event an unmissable farewell.

The 2025 lineup features an all-star roster of artists, including Crowded House, Vance Joy, Xavier Rudd, The Cat Empire, Kasey Chambers, John Butler, and Missy Higgins. With many more acts set to take the stage and plenty of kids and family activities on offer, attendees can expect a grand send-off worthy of *Bluesfest's* incredible legacy.

Tickets are selling fast for this historic farewell event. For more details and to secure your spot at the last-ever *Bluesfest*, visit: bluesfest.com.au

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Community spirit shines across Ballina

by Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond



Congratulations to everyone involved in the **North Coast Show N Shine**. This incredible event showcased an impressive collection of stunning vehicles, drawing a fantastic crowd and creating an electric atmosphere. Our Rotary team had a great time

flipping burgers and soaking up the excitement. A special thank you to Michelle and Martin Bailey and the Lennox Head Machinery Club for their outstanding efforts in bringing the event to life. This year more than \$35,000 was raised with all proceeds donated to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

We're proud to share that Ballina Library was one of the recipients of funds raised from our recent **Duck Race**. Thanks to the generosity of our community, the Library has been able to purchase welcome packs for children, encouraging a love of reading from an early age.

The recent **Community Connections Expo** was a fantastic opportunity to bring together local organisations, sporting groups, and engaged community members. Our Rotary Club members, Col and Dave, thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many passionate individuals and sharing the impact of Rotary's work. A big thank you to everyone who stopped by for a chat. Special appreciation goes to B Ward Councillors for organising such a well-run event featuring 40 organisations.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for the **Side by Side Fundraising Walk** in support of Cambodian children's education. Some of our dedicated walkers travelled from Brisbane and the Gold Coast, arriving bright and early at 6.30am to take part in this meaningful cause. The walk from Ballina RSL to Shaw's Bay and back helped raise funds to cover a year of education for children, including English and skill set courses, school supplies, nutrition, and essential resources.

Once again, Ballina Shire has shown its incredible strength and unity in the wake of **Tropical Cyclone Alfred**. Neighbours supported neighbours, volunteers stepped up, and local businesses lent a hand. It's in these moments we see the true heart of our community. We're incredibly grateful to be part of such a caring and resilient region.

Don't forget - Col Lee is on *Paradise FM* on the last Thursday of each month at 8.30am, sharing the latest updates on our projects and events. Tune in and have a listen. And if you're curious to learn more, reach out - we'd love to welcome you to one of our events or gatherings.



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For the diary



Our Kids Day Out

Coming up early next month is the much loved Our Kids Day Out, Sunday 4 May.

The annual event is always a great family day full of festivities and fun. The day will be focused on children, especially those who have been in Children's Ward and Special Care Nursery over the years. Clowns, children's shows, and food will be there as well as the emergency services for the children to visit. This event is free and open to all.

When: Sunday 4 May, 9.30am

Where: Ballina Amphitheatre, Missingham Park

Info: ourkids.org.au/events.php

May the 4th be with you

Getting in on the action is the crew from North Coast Riders. Dressed in their finest super hero and character costumes members will be riding their motorbikes from Westower Tavern, along River Street to the event. The ride is open to anyone who'd like to join and show their support for Our Kids - just be prepared to make lots of noise.

When: Sunday 4 May, meeting at 9am

Where: Ride commences Westower Tavern

Info: Jillian, ph: 0419 211 661.

Facebook/May the 4th Be With You...

Our Kids Big Day Out - Heros Ride Bikes



Rafiki Royale

On Saturday 17 May, Lennox Head will be turned into the Vegas strip for one night only. No, it's not the filming of the next Hollywood blockbuster, but close... Lennox based charity Rafiki Mwema is hosting a glitzy evening of fundraising fun for a very worthy cause.

Rafiki Royale will be a spectacular Vegas-themed event to support a life-changing initiative at Rafiki Mwema - building a self-sufficient farm that will provide fresh, nutritious food for the 100+ children they care for every day. With the funds raised, they will purchase cows, cows in calf, and chickens, allowing them to produce their own meat, milk, yoghurt, and eggs. This will significantly reduce reliance on donations for food, making the charity more sustainable for the future.

Hosted by Mandy Nolan, guests will enjoy an unforgettable evening featuring real casino tables with professional croupiers, live music, entertainment, delicious food, a cash bar, and the chance to win amazing prizes through raffles and auctions. Every ticket sold and every dollar raised will go directly towards helping the children of Rafiki Mwema.

When: Saturday 17 May, commences at 6pm

Where: Lennox Head Cultural Centre

Tickets and info: rafikimwema.com

Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Contact Claire Harding, via email: claire@rafikimwema.com



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Community in brief

Alstonville Probus Club

The Club has held its Annual General Meeting and are happy to report that Arthur, formerly the Secretary, has stepped into the role of President for 2025/26. Early indications promise another interesting and varied year. Outgoing President, Margaret, inducted two new members, Jane and Julie, and presented them with their welcome packs.

Dr Richard Arnot recently regaled the group with his life story as a surgeon internationally and within Australia. Flying and boating have been passions in Richard's life and the anecdotes from these had him flying small aircraft to far flung towns in Australia to serve patients in his new homeland. Richard is currently volunteering with NSW Marine Rescue at Ballina, providing instruction to vessels crossing the tricky Richmond River bar, and giving location, time and destination of arrival and departure. Before coming to the Club for his talk, Richard recognised a boat coming in as one he co-owned some 15 years previous and then arranged to have a cup of tea with the owners on their safe arrival before coming onto Alstonville Probus Club.

Members recently farewelled their bus driver of many years, Bill Burnett, who led them on one more mystery bus trip. The destination was Casino Military Museum followed by lunch with Casino Probus Club members at the Charcoal Inn. As the day had a military flavour, members were treated to afternoon tea at the 41st Army Battalion in Lismore under the command of Major Warren Walsh.

Local man, Lyn Lockrey, presented renditions of his own, plus loved poetry at March's meeting.

Cause for celebration in early April was a luncheon at the Bowlo in order to welcome the new committee. The Senior Vice President steps into the President's role while the Junior Vice President climbs the ladder to Senior Vice President.

ANZAC Day is always recognised with the Club's monthly meeting held as close as possible to the date of

commemoration. So it was that this year's meeting will fall on 24 April to honour all who served. Club member Arthur Burnett will be sharing the story of his father, a London based Lancaster bomber pilot, who was shot down while trying to prevent German forces reaching the coast. Arthur's story continues next issue.

Alstonville RSL Day Club

Known locally as the Tibouchina Day Club, the group meet each Wednesday at the Rous Mill Hall. They offer senior members of the community a setting in which to develop friendships and social support networks and a sense of belonging. Members have the opportunity to be involved in a varied program of activities that enhance health and wellbeing.

Each meeting begins with a welcome and morning tea which is usually followed by gentle exercise and a mental stimulation activity, then lunch and musical entertainment. The group enjoy theme days, an occasional guest speaker and bus outings. Free return transport can be provided to and from Rous Mill Hall for those living within Alstonville and Wollongbar areas. The Rous Mill Hall has concreted access and can be accessed via a ramp.

The group now have vacancies and new members are welcome. Details on page 20, or contact Murette ph: 0421 272 643.

Australian Independent Retirees

The group's monthly meetings are held on the first Friday of each month at the Ballina RSL Club, from 9.30am. All retirees are invited to attend prior to joining the group to enjoy some friendship and socialising. Morning tea is available prior to hearing from the guest speaker and a meeting fee of \$5 is charged which covers this expense.

Guest speakers for this year have already been Patricia Wilson, accompanied by Lynne Pramana who discussed the workings of Pimlico Ballina District Museum. This follows last month's speaker Vicki Evans, who spoke about genealogy and family history around the Ballina area.

All enquiries please contact President, Jill Huxley, on ph: 6686 8958.

Ballina East Lions Club

Ballina East Lions Club is a not for profit organisation that is committed to helping the local Ballina community. The Club would like to thank all those who supported them through 2024 and will hopefully continue the support throughout this year.

The recent Christmas raffle raised over \$2,200 - thank you to everyone who bought tickets and congratulations to the winners. Currently the main fundraiser is the monthly BBQ outside Forty Winks at the Homemaker Centre in Ballina - held on the fourth Saturday of each month from around 9am to 1.30pm.

In 2024 donations totalled around \$12,000, with all funds raised given back to the local community. Recipients included local schools, Wardell Community Sports Organisation, Meals on Wheels, Ballina Hot Meal Centre, Ballina Men's Shed, Wesley Mission Ballina, Ballina Shire Concert Band, Our Kids, Ballina Surf Club and also to Childhood Cancer, Prostate Cancer Foundation, the Heart Foundation and Lions Hearing Dogs. Additionally, the Club have provided funds to local junior sports representatives by way of uniforms and equipment and assistance with travel for their chosen sports. In past years the group have assisted with and donated to local disaster relief including the 2019/2020 bushfires and 2022 floods.

Ballina East Lions Club is a small Club of only five members currently and are helped and supported in their fundraising efforts by past members and local community members.

If you would like to find out more about the Club or join as a member or supporter call President, Wayne Thomas, on ph: 0439 605 654 or Secretary, Meriel Barlow, on ph: 0419 756 404, or email: ballinaeast.nsw@lions.org.au.

Ballina Community Men's Shed

It has been a busy start to 2025 with four new members, and the group hosting the Zone 12 Cluster Meeting in March.



About 60 men attended the meeting, which started with the traditional smoko at the Shed at 9.30am. Proceedings then moved to the Ballina RSL Club where representatives of Sheds from the Far North Coast and Hinterland gave their reports, followed by a light lunch.

At the recent Veteran's Classic Motorcycle Show and Tell meeting in Alstonville, a Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to The Ballina Community Men's Shed for its continued support of the United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW.

If anyone is interested to find out more about the Ballina Community Men's Shed, they can be contacted via email at: ballinamensshed2478@gmail.com or directly at 44 Fisheries Creek Road on weekday mornings.

Ballina Ladies Probus

It is with great excitement the group welcome their new committee. It has been rumored that President, Jeanette, has some secret, interesting ideas for the year ahead - all will be revealed soon.

Pamela has arranged lunch on Wednesday 9 April, 12pm, at the Westower Tavern, at own cost.

Ballina Ladies Probus welcome any interested ladies to join their monthly meetings. Details on page 20.

Wollongbar Probus

The first General Meeting for 2025 was held in February. Therese Crollick, President of the Alstonville Rotary Club, was welcomed as guest speaker, and shared on a recent trip to Timor Leste where she was part of a Rotary Work Party. On this particular occasion the group managed to improve the living standards for students with disabilities by doing up their accommodation. Additionally, they joined forces with a few other Clubs to bring a laboratory up to a much higher standard. Therese also outlined a lot of the other work Rotary had been doing and, being their parent club, the Probus group are proud of what they are achieving in these poorer countries.

The outing for February was something new - a games morning in the U/C Hall together with morning tea. There was a table playing Bridge, Mahjong, Scrabble and cards, and all in attendance seemed to enjoy the relaxed morning of fellowship and fun.

March was the AGM and Changeover lunch - the group are looking forward to another year of interesting speakers and outings.

Probus Club of Ballina Waters

A new Probus year starts from the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting in March, and the Club is looking forward to an active and fun filled year. The incoming Committee is very similar to the last year, with the addition of Annamaree Reisch to help with obtaining guest speakers for meetings. Margaret Ball continues as President.

On the social front, March saw the last of the Happy Hour functions until daylight saving time resumes later this year. There was also a successful mystery bus trip, a change of Office Bearers' lunch and the regular end of month luncheon at an Italian restaurant.

The lunch will continue to be on the last Friday of each month where members enjoy sampling a variety of cuisines at different locations.

The regular monthly meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, where there is usually a guest speaker. The April speaker will be Jan Aitken talking about some of our region's history.

Men and women are invited to join the Club for a range of social activities. Probus is a social club for fun, friendship and fellowship, and it does not involve any service work or fund-raising activities. Details on page 20.

Wollongbar Community Action Network (WCAN)

WCAN had a great turn out of locals who assisted with turning the weedy beds into a thriving garden with plants and herbs. The soil, plants and mulch were generously donated by Loida's Nursery, Plateau Landscape Supplies, and Parkers Place Nursery. Committee member, Veronica, said, 'We are excited for the momentum surrounding our hall and the flow on effect this is having within the community'.

The hall is soon to be internally painted by Ballina Shire Council and there are new hirers using the space most evenings. Stay tuned for upcoming events throughout 2025 at Facebook/Wollongbar Hall and Community.



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Alstonville Plateau Historical Society

When: 2pm, third Sunday of each month
Where: Crawford House Museum, 10 Wardell Road, Alstonville
Contact: aphs2477@yahoo.co.au

Alstonville Probus Club

When: 10am, last Thursday each month
Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club
Contact: Margaret, President, ph: 0422 647 762

Alstonville Quota Club

When: 6.30pm, first Tuesday of each month
Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club
Contact: Diane Parker, ph: 0416 214 012

Alstonville RSL Day Club

When: 10am - 2pm, every Wednesday
Where: Rous Mill Hall, Rous Mill Road, Rous Mill (bus available)
Contact: Murette Davison, ph: 0421 272 643

Australians in Retirement, Far North Coast Branch

When: 10am, first Friday of each month
Where: Ballina RSL Club
Contact: Jill Huxley, ph: 6686 8958

Ballina CWA

When: 9am, third Monday of each month
Where: CWA Rooms, next to Ballina RSL
Contact: Lyn Davidson, President, ph: 0404 034 654

Ballina East Lions Club

When: 2pm, first Tuesday of each month
Where: Cherry Street Sports
Contact: Wayne, ph: 0439 605 604

Ballina Evening VIEW Club

When: 6.30pm, second Wednesday of each month
Where: Ballina RSL Club
Contact: Julie, President, ph: 0434 988 770

Ballina Hospital Auxiliary

When: 1.30pm, third Tuesday of each month
Where: The Solarium, Ballina Hospital
Contact: ballina.uha.secretary@gmail.com

Ballina Ladies Probus

When: 10am, first Wednesday of each month
Where: Ballina RSL Club
Contact: Beryl, ph: 6681 6360 or ph: 0409 285 282

Ballina Lighthouse RSL Day Club

When: 10am-2pm, every Thursday
Where: Richmond Room, Regatta Avenue, Ballina
Contact: Lorraine Fox, ph: 6687 4350 or ph: 0439 301 249

Ballina Lions Club

When: 6:30pm second and fourth Tuesday of each month
Where: 2nd Tuesday: Richmond Room 5 Regatta Ave, Ballina
4th Tuesday: Slipway Hotel, 56 River Street, Ballina
Contact: Mary Smith 0417 412 533

Ballina Waters Probus Club

When: 10am, third Wednesday of each month
Where: Cherry Street Sports, back deck
Contact: Brian Lewis, Secretary, ph: 0432 277 170

Crowley Care Auxiliary

When: 3pm-4pm, fourth Monday of each month
Where: Crowley Care Education Centre
Contact: Helen, President, ph: 0467 445 377

Inner Wheel Club of Alstonville

When: 11am, Third Wednesday of each month
Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club
Contact: Julie Lee, ph: 0414 396 520

Inner Wheel Club of Ballina

When: 1130am, first Wednesday of each month
Where: Location provided each month by contacting Club
Contact: Joan Hetherington, President, ph: 0402 885 091

Rotary Club of Alstonville

When: 6pm, second and fourth Tuesday each month
Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club
Contact: Therese Crollick, President, ph. 040 307 0063

Rotary Club of Ballina-On-Richmond

When: 6pm, first three Thursdays of each month
Where: Ballina RSL
Contact: Jodie, ph: 0427 287 627

Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc

When: 2pm-4pm, first Saturday of each month
Where: Ballina Players Theatre, 24 Swift Street, Ballina
Contact: secretaryrtfhs1@yahoo.com

Scope Club of Ballina

When: 7pm, first Monday of each month
Where: Ballina RSL
Contact: Leonie Dahl, President, ph: 0429 813 493

Wardell Red Cross

When: 10am, first Wednesday of each month
Where: Wardell & District Memorial Hall, 49 Richmond Street
Contact: Jeannee, ph: 6686 3172

Wollongbar Community Action Network (CAN)

When: 6pm, fourth Thursday each month.
Where: Wollongbar Community Hall (off Simpson Ave)
Contact: Josh, President, ph 0403 820 584

Wollongbar Probus

When: 10am, third Thursday of each month
Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club
Contact: Lorraine Hunt, ph: 6628 0542

Zonta Club of Northern Rivers

When: 6pm, third Wednesday of the month
Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club
Contact: Bobbi Crane, President, 0409 980 729



Tips to combat rising costs

by Zain Peart, ZEP Finance



Picture credit: Pexels / Karolina-Grabowska.

In February, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) implemented the first official interest rate cut since 2020, reducing rates by 0.25% on most Australian home loans. While some households have experienced relief and confidence has gradually returned to the market, this reaction may be somewhat premature. A 0.25% rate reduction on a \$500,000 home loan equates to a savings of only \$80 per month. Although any savings can benefit households, it does not represent the level of relief needed. It remains crucial to monitor budgets, focus on spending habits, and seek savings on any possible bills.

The cost of living continues to rise, with increasing electricity bills and higher costs for various services as businesses pass on their rising expenses. A significant concern for many households is the escalating cost of insurance. Due to numerous claims in the region over recent years, insurance premiums have soared. Although Tropical Cyclone Alfred did not cause the anticipated level of destruction, the associated cleanup costs and damage have further strained insurers, contributing to the pressure to raise premiums in the coming year.

What can we do to help combat some of these rising costs?

Contact your lender and request a lower interest rate - a reduction of 0.25% could potentially save you an additional \$80 per month.

Consider installing solar panels to mitigate electricity costs - many installers offer interest-free loans to finance the installation (if the repayment matches the anticipated reduction in your energy bill, this should not affect your budget).

If you already have solar panels, maximise your energy usage during daylight hours - since feed-in tariffs have decreased substantially, it is more advantageous to utilise all the power you generate.

Verify your current electricity plan with your provider to ensure it aligns with your household's needs.

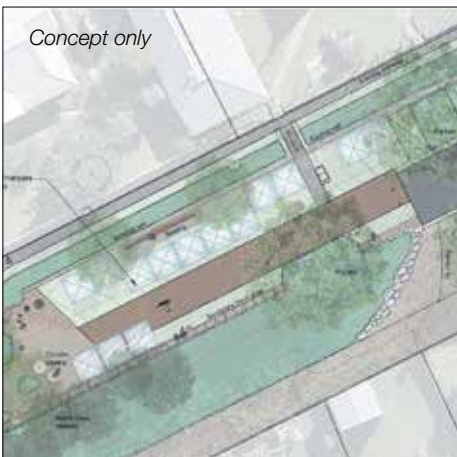
Review your home insurance policy and explore potential changes or reductions. Assess your excess amount and compare offers from other insurers or consult an insurance broker.

Establish a budget and consistently monitor your expenses. Resources such as moneysmart.gov.au offer numerous free tools to assist you.

Examine weekly specials when shopping, particularly for significant items that provide substantial savings, such as dishwashing tablets and washing powder. Identify the high-cost items your household regularly purchases.

Evaluate other household bills to determine if better deals are available. Instead of addressing all at once, document the direct debits and prioritise one bill per week. This approach prevents feeling overwhelmed.

Interest rates are anticipated to continue declining this year, potentially easing living cost pressures. Utilising some of the mentioned tips and the reduction in rates may assist in better preparing financially for 2025.



Concept only

WARDELL *revitalisation*

The Wardell Community Green Space is expected to open by mid April 2025. Ballina Shire Council are nearing completion of the works, that include an improved intersection, new paving, street furniture, interpretative signage, parking, improved drainage, public art and landscaping. This project is part of the Wardell Village Centre Revitalisation Master Plan.

Jointly funded by Ballina Shire Council and NSW Government's Local Government Recovery Program.



ballina.nsw.gov.au/major-projects

ballina shire council



Vale Ken Hardwicke - a true gentleman

by St Andrew's Aged Care



It was with a sense of deep sadness that we at St Andrew's Aged Care saw the passing of Mr Ken Hardwicke on 5 February 2025.

Ken was a member of the original committee created in 1975 to consider the establishment of an aged care facility in Ballina. The committee consisted of five Anglicans and five Presbyterians who pooled their resources to begin the process of establishing a new residential facility to care for the aged within our community, which they subsequently named Saint Andrew's Village, Ballina.

The committee faced a formidable task in gaining approval from the

Hospitals' Commission (now NSW Health) to have land set aside for the purpose of building a modern nursing home. At different stages, Ken acted as Secretary and Treasurer, and needed to write as many as 25 letters a month to the Commission seeking this approval. He was deeply involved in the financial management and establishment of St Andrew's, with some of the obstacles being related to negotiating the lease with NSW Health for the site adjacent to Ballina Hospital, complications in obtaining funding via grants and subsidies from the Department of Social Security, difficulties with accessing bequest funds, and finalising approvals of the tendering and building processes to keep moving forward with the construction.

The persistence of Ken and the committee in raising the necessary funds eventually paid off, and the Bentinck Street site was officially opened in February 1983 – 10 years after the original idea of building a facility had been introduced in 1973.

Ken and his wife, Rosemary, ran their accountancy firm in River Street. For many years, Rosemary was the contact for the sale of the original self-care units in Cherry Street, constructed in 1978, and met with prospective residents to arrange their entry into St Andrew's. She also collected the resident fees at their office and at the Village library.

In 1996, upon their retirement as volunteers at St Andrew's, appreciation of their major contribution to the establishment and operations of St Andrew's Nursing Home was shown by naming the original apartments The Ken and Rosemary Hardwicke Wing – this was changed later to Hardwicke House.

It was fitting and right that Ken spent the last eight months of his life being cared for within Hardwicke House. His 21 years of dedicated, persistent, calm and professional commitment as an original member of the Board of St Andrew's has been an immeasurable contribution to the establishment of aged care services in Ballina.



In Loving Memory

Stephen John Leslie

29 November 1968 - 19 February 2025

Late of Eltham.

Passed away unexpectedly aged 56 years.

Dearly loved Husband of Natalie.

Much loved Father of Jessica, Keira and Harry.

Cherished Son of John (dec'd) & Beryl.

Loved Brother of Julie-Anne, Kim, Paul and John (dec'd).

Stephen's family take comfort in knowing that he was with the love of his life.

in his favourite place on earth in his final moments.

A man who taught his children everything it is to be alive.



Nancie Josephine (Costello) Swan

by Colleen Wills - as told by Nancie and taken from other records



Nancie Josephine Costello was born on 5 March 1923 at Lake Cargelligo, on the Lachlan River, South Western NSW - a small country town, with a population of approximately 1,200 people. Surrounding area was mostly farming, with the Costello family living on a wheat/sheep farm.

Aged 12, Nan contracted Polio and was unable to walk for several weeks. However, luck was on her side. A young doctor had recently arrived and was collaborating with Sister Kenny, a bush nurse renowned for her work with Polio sufferers. The doctor's advice was: 'exercise, exercise, exercise'. As a result of this regime, good faith and many prayers, Nan was eventually able to walk.

Nan went to Lake Cargelligo Catholic School which was conducted by St Joseph's nuns. While at high school, she was taught commercial subjects such as shorthand and typing, in addition to the usual mainstream subjects. In high school, Nan gained her Intermediate Certificate (current equivalent, Yr10).

The family moved from the farm to Shepparton where Nan helped her mother with home duties, in addition to caring for seven younger children. Nan was the third oldest child, with two older brothers. She loved life at Shepparton, and spent much time exploring the area with her best friend, Maria. When the Costello family decided to return to Lake Cargelligo, Nan stayed in Shepparton where she lived with Maria and Maria's family.

In 1943 there was a call for enlistments - medical staff were urgently required to support the army. Nan and Maria thought this would be a great an adventure that provided excitement, varied travel and meeting new people. They enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Women's Services.

Upon signing, Nan did not inform the authorities that she had Polio as a child. Rookies (a group of new recruits) were trained for about four weeks at Bacchus Marsh, approximately 50km from Melbourne. The living quarters were huts which had camp stretchers and housed about six women. They rose at 6am and it was so cold they would wear their heavy greatcoats to walk through a donga (ravine created by the action of water) to the showers. After breakfast at the mess, the day was spent marching, working on the switchboard, exercising and then more marching. It was so cold sleeping on those camp stretchers that they either slept in their greatcoat or under it. Maria and Nan worked and trained hard. During their free time they visited many churches in Melbourne. They enjoyed that activity as they were strong in their Faith.

There was a period when the Officer was unsure on how to engage Nan. She could not do nursing because of her Polio so was instead allocated the task of delivering mail around the Base. Nan was later posted as a switchboard operator, to the 13th General Medical Hospital, in Heidelberg, Melbourne. Because it was Army Headquarters the switchboard was fully automatic.

A week after the War's end, Nan was transferred to Concord Hospital in Sydney. The switchboard was not automatic and there were 10 women in a row. Her job was to put the plugs in to connect the caller that was required. Mostly it was to a doctor telling him the Ward where he was next needed.

It was at Concord that Nan met her husband, William James Swan - a champion tennis player. A mutual friend told Jim, 'I've got a girl for you'. This friend also told Nan, 'I've got a bloke for you'. The rest is history.

Nan was discharged from the Army in 1946 after which she worked for another four years at Concord Hospital. Nan and Jim were married at Bankstown, Sydney, on 27 November 1947. In 1958, Jim was posted to Australia House in London. They travelled to England with their small children - two girls and one boy. Nan loved living in Kent and after a three year stay, the family returned to Australia.

In 1961 Jim was discharged from the RAAF with the rank of Warrant Officer. The family lived in Blaxland for some years, then moved over to Western Australia for a while before heading back to NSW. In 1979, Nan and Jim came to Ballina to assist their daughter Celia, who had a business in the area.

In 1999, after 52 years marriage, Jim passed away. Nan moved to a unit on Swift Street, Ballina, where she resided until 2023 when she moved to live with Celia.

Nan worked tirelessly for St Francis Xavier Church. Of note, was that Nan provided a 'home away from home' for the many young clergy who were far from their homeland. Nan's door was always open to provide them with a warm welcome. Nan was also involved with the Ballina and District Ex Service Women's Association.

In 2022 Nan was featured in an ANZAC display at Hyde Park Sydney Cenotaph where 31 women from all parts of NSW, who had served in WWII Defence Forces, were commemorated.

On 5 March 2023, Nan's 100th birthday was celebrated with a wonderful afternoon tea held at Lighthouse Beach Surf Lifesaving Club. Nan received acknowledgments from Pope Francis, King Charles, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Minister for Veteran Affairs, Mr Mat Keough, MP Justine Elliott and the Parish of St. Francis Xavier, plus many more.

Nan's story is a testament to her character. She never complains, never speaks unkindly of anyone, has a deep sense of humour, and displays a strong belief in her faith. Nan's love of, and for, people make her a privilege to know.

Nan recently celebrated her 102nd birthday.

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Training the river

by Patricia Wilson (Editor) and Lynne Pramana (Researcher)



Pictured: Aerial of training walls, 1925. Source: Bagot Bros.

When the first white settlers arrived to what we now call Ballina, it was immediately evident that water transport would be the only option. At the time, boats were a common form of transport and already familiar to them. They chose to settle on the hills on the eastern side of North Creek, now Shaws Bay, which seemed to roll away to the north. Ships were moving further up the Richmond River and settlers were choosing land along the banks and river flats. It soon became clear that being near the river and creek was beneficial.

The *Robertson Land Act* of 1861 gave settlers an opportunity to set down more permanent roots. The blocks along the banks of what was then West Ballina, now Ballina Island, were a favourite. Boats and rafts were crossing North Creek from Shaws Bay and trekking along the west bank. It was not long before a strong wharf was needed. In July 1881, a petition was sent to the Department of Public Works for a wharf to be built on North Creek, at the northern end of Norton Street. In June 1884, the Department approved the public wharf at North Creek being handed over to Council.

This made transport much safer as larger boats could be used. Wharves were also being built along the banks of the Richmond River as the number and size of villages increased.

The whole estuary, with constantly shifting sandbanks and shoals, was a great challenge for shipping, many vessels having been wrecked whilst trying to find the channel, which also moved. It was decided that training walls were necessary. The work commenced using basalt from Riley's Hill Quarry, for the South Wall. It was brought down river by punts and, as the wall grew, railway lines were laid to move the large rocks along. Rock from the quarry in Shaws Bay was used for the North Wall. The local rock, also basalt, was not strong enough to resist rough seas and it was decided that better rock was needed. The idea was to bring the rock down from Riley's Hill.

The plan was described as follows: 'A railway (will be built) from the wharf near the foot of Martin Street, where the stone is unloaded from punts, drawn round the front of Ballina, to Pilot Point, Shaws Bay. Having been completed, this will enable the work of running out the stone on to the breakwater with the aid of a locomotive, to be carried on with expedition and without further interruption.'

Mr Kerle gained authority to construct the line, and the wall affords a protection to the town and carries the line across. The bridge over North Creek, near what is now Missingham Bridge, was an expensive item, costing upwards of £2,000.

When these walls, which were designed by Sir John Coode, were partially completed, the rock from Rileys Hill was able to be rolled out to increase the length by 822 feet. The plan was for another 200 feet but this did not occur until the 1950s.

The section of wall forming a bridge across North Creek prevented further shipping along that waterway. A group of farmers, mainly cane growers from Teven and Upper North Creek, approached Mr Lyne. They needed a canal built from North Creek to Fishery Creek to expedite the transport of their crops being taken to Broadwater Sugar Mill for crushing. I imagine they had been planning this approach for some time and had thought through to a solution.

He clearly agreed, as the dredging works proceeded. Two dredges were used, one working from North Creek and the other from Fishery Creek where it enters the Richmond River.



Above is a photo of the dredge at work from the North Creek end. The side benefit of the work was, that the soil being moved was able to raise the height of the banks providing additional land for development and creating what is now known as The Island.

The land where Ballina Fair now stands, was a wetland which was covered at high tide until the 1950s or 1960s.

Ballina District Historical Museum

Visit the museum at 580 Pimlico Rd, Pimlico, open Friday and Sunday from 10am to 2pm. It is a beautiful 15-minute drive from Ballina through the cane fields and emerging macadamia plantations.

Entry is \$5 for adults, free for those under 18 years and includes free tea/coffee and biscuits. Morning tea by appointment is available for groups between 10 to 20 persons. Cost is \$10 per person for entry and Devonshire tea.

Enquiries, call ph: 0493 549 902 or ph: 0427 291 772.



Orange Sky's community of hope

by Kate Parry

In 2014, Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett had an idea that seemed simple but turned out to be revolutionary - providing free laundry services to people experiencing homelessness. Inspired by their time volunteering at a food van in Brisbane, where they witnessed firsthand the struggles of those doing it tough, Nic and Lucas decided to take action. They converted an old van - Sudsy - into a mobile laundry service, equipped with two washing machines and two dryers, and set out to make a difference.

Over the years, Orange Sky has evolved far beyond its humble beginnings. The organisation now operates 63 services across 40 locations in Australia, with additional services in New Zealand. Over the years, the initiative has expanded to include not just laundry, but also shower facilities and community connection initiatives, and while clean clothes made a difference, it quickly became apparent it was the conversations shared during the washing cycle that truly mattered.

'When Orange Sky first started, our mission and goal was to improve hygiene standards for people experiencing

homelessness, however, our service grew into much more,' explains Lucas Patchett, Orange Sky CEO. 'From the conversations and connections we have built with our friends whilst the washing is on, we know isolation and not feeling like you belong is a major factor impacting people experiencing homelessness. There is no doubt that clean clothes and a warm shower make a positive difference, but we believe our biggest impact in the community is through the hours of conversation and genuine connection that take place on our iconic, six orange chairs.'

It is this power of human connection which sits at the heart of Orange Sky's mission. The organisation refers to those who use their services as 'friends' rather than clients. Many people return week after week, not just for clean clothes or a hot shower, but for the companionship and non-judgmental support they find while using the service. 'Some of our friends don't even need to wash their clothes,' says Lucas. 'They come just to chat, to feel heard, and to be part of a community.'

Orange Sky has also expanded its services to meet the



Mark Law
Chief Geek

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www.mygeekmate.com.au

1/53 Tamar St, Ballina

Personal tech support for bamboozled bipeds



growing needs of communities. Their innovative approach includes solar-powered remote laundry trucks, laundry pods, laundromats, and pick-up/drop-off services for crisis accommodation sites. 'We're constantly looking for ways to improve and expand our reach,' Lucas shares. 'The demand for our services has grown by 21% in the last year alone, and we want to be there for as many people as possible.'

When deciding where services are to be deployed to the Orange Sky team carefully assess areas based on a combination of need, accessibility, and potential community support. This involves analyzing data on homelessness and disadvantage, working closely with local support services, and listening to feedback from the community. The aim is to ensure our services meet real needs and complement existing efforts in the area.

One of the most significant expansions has been into the Northern Rivers region, including the Ballina Shire. Following the devastating floods of early 2022, Orange Sky recognised the need for support and set up services to help those affected. 'The response has been incredible,' Lucas says. 'Local volunteers have stepped up in amazing ways, and the people we serve have expressed so much gratitude. We're committed to staying in the Shire for as long as we're needed.'

As Orange Sky celebrates its 10th anniversary, the organisation remains focused on the future. With a mission to continue positively connecting communities, they are actively recruiting volunteers and expanding services to reach more people in need. 'Our goal for the next decade is to deepen our impact,' Lucas states. 'We're not just about washing clothes - we're about restoring dignity, fostering human connection, and making sure no one feels invisible.'



From a single van in Brisbane to an international movement, Orange Sky has proven that something as simple as clean clothes and a heartfelt conversation can transform lives. As they look ahead, one thing remains clear: their six orange chairs will always be a place where everyone is welcome.

For those interested in volunteering or supporting Orange Sky's mission, visit: orangesky.org.au to learn more and get involved.





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-  **Put dental and mental health into Medicare**, make GP visits free
-  **Take real action on climate change**, protect the environment



mandy4richmond.com

Authorised by A. Croft for The Greens NSW. 19a/1 Hordern Place Camperdown NSW 2050.





Discover your family history

by Richmond-Tweed Family History Society



Step 4 - death certificates

Much information can be obtained from a death certificate, which provides the date, name, and place a person died, the cause of death, age of the deceased person and name of the informant. It also records the deceased person's spouse, the age and place when married, and parent's names. The certificate will additionally show if an ancestor died of an illness, an accident or any other unusual circumstance.

The duration of an illness is usually recorded, often with the name of the attending doctor. In NSW, the children of the deceased, and the age they were at the time of the parent's death, are recorded. A death certificate can give you a picture of the family, particularly if a parent died young, or left a number of children. It can also show if there is a pattern of the same illness in several family members.

You can search for a death certificate on the NSW Registry Office website

(nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/births-deaths-marriages), and once you have found and obtained the reference number, order a transcription of the certificate. Burials can also be searched online at some cemeteries. Many, including Rookwood Cemetery at Lidcombe in Sydney, have online indexes, which give details of the position of the grave or ashes placement. You might also find burials on the *Find A Grave* website (findagrave.com) or the *Australian Cemeteries Index* (austcemindex.com). In the UK there is *Deceased Online* (deceasedonline.com).

Keep in mind that sometimes the information on death certificates can be inaccurate and should not be totally relied upon. Remember this information is usually given at times of emotional upheaval and stress, and often the informant is one of the children who may not know all the details of the parent's background. One way around this is to talk to your children about your childhood, your parent's names and where they were from.

Talking is the most active ingredient in family history. Talk to your parents and other relatives. Ask them about their lives, where they lived, what they did as an occupation. You would be surprised at the information most people are prepared to give. They often are just waiting to be asked.

Next month: Step 5 - resources

About the Richmond-Tweed Family History Society

The Society's research centre provides guidance and assistance in all family history matters for a \$5 contribution, or yearly membership is \$40 single and \$50 joint/family.

Family history websites such as *Ancestry*, *Find My Past* and *Family Search Affiliate* are available to use, along with many other resources. The library is open Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday from 10am-4pm.

The Society meets from February to November at 2pm on the first Saturday of each month at the Ballina Players Theatre, 24 Swift Street. Visitors are welcome and attendance is free.

Upcoming meetings

- Saturday 5 April: *For King and Country - stories about our ancestors' military service.*
- Saturday 3 May: *For better or for worse - show your ancestor's (or your own) wedding photos, dress or memorabilia and tell their story.*

For any enquiries, please call ph: 0490 903 066.

For more information, visit: rtfhs.net.au



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The golden years

by Graeme Eggins



Time to update your web searches?

In the old days - say last year - if you asked a tech savvy friend a question they would probably say, 'Just Google it'. These days ask the same person the same question and they might say, 'Try ChatGPT.' Why? Because search engines powered by artificial intelligence are already proving to be easier to use than traditional search engines while offering special advantages.

On the other hand, AI bots may show bias depending on how they were trained, they may collect personal information and can sometimes give answers that don't make sense.

Nonetheless, AI powered search engines like ChatGPT are being used more and more because you can talk to them, just like you would to a librarian.

AI search engines typically give direct answers rather than offering you a host of websites for you to read through. For example, a traditional Google search for 'exercises for people with arthritis' will give you lots of links to different fitness websites. You may have to read each one to find your answers.

Ask an AI search engine the same question and it will usually outline a summary of the best exercises for arthritis. You can get more specific exercises by asking AI a follow-up question such as: provide specific exercises for knees.

AI searches give personal assistance because, unlike ordinary traditional search engines, they remember your previous question. For example, a person looking to learn basic French might ask a traditional search engine like Google: what is the best way to learn French? Traditional Google will give you links to various language learning websites. But an AI engine such as ChatGPT will go a step further. It might ask a follow-up question like: do you prefer audio lessons, written exercises or conversations?

AI can go beyond answering factual questions to generate new content. For example, you can ask AI to write personalised bedtime stories for your grandchildren in which they and their friends are mentioned by name. Or use AI to

create poems (humorous or otherwise) for Christmas and other greetings emails.

Other popular uses for AI chatbots include asking for a menu and recipes for a meal using only ingredients you have at hand or an easy-to-understand summary of a complex document.

AI search engines are always learning. Every search, click, and question helps the AI understand user behaviour and what you want. So, by analysing all the data, AI search engines can generally provide more specific results over time. In contrast, traditional search engines rely on key word searches and fixed algorithms updated occasionally. Such systems are slower to adapt to new trends.

At the time of writing, you could access 17 AI assisted search engines, free and paid. Of the free searchers ChatGPT is the world's most popular with an estimated 400 million monthly visits. Running second is China's DeepSeek with 288 million visits followed by Google's Gemini with 268 million monthly visits. Other free AI agents include Claude AI, Microsoft's Copilot and Perplexity AI. You will find them all online; some also as phone apps.

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Tech tip: go native

by Mark Law, Chief Geek, My Geek Mate



Picture credit: Pexels / Karolina Grabowska.

Usually, it's best to use the native functionality of the operating system your device is using.

For instance, don't install a torch, cleaning or a QR code scanner app on smartphones as they are already on your phone (unless it's from 2016 or earlier). This especially holds for Android phones - on a Samsung phone, you can use the device maintenance function (found in settings).

Most third-party cleaning apps are malicious and try to take over your phone and scam you. Sometimes they can be very tricky to remove as the app name changes or is hidden from your list of apps. If this occurs reboot your Android phone in safe mode and uninstall it.

The same goes for computer operating systems. In the case of Windows 10 and 11, there are great security features already there and most likely up and running. Don't be fooled by salespeople using your fears against you to sell you a security subscription you don't need.

Apple has gone a few steps further and will pay you a significant amount if you can demonstrate to them how you've hacked into any of their devices or systems. This means installing security apps on your Apple devices is unnecessary. Often these apps break critical functionality such as your data connection.

So the moral of the story is to 'go native' wherever possible with your devices.

April Tide Times, Ballina

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Wheels of the month



If you ever spot Blue Bayou tearing down the strip, you won't forget it. This 1947 Austin A40 gasser, owned by Cumbalum's Shane Lucas, is loud, proud, and built for one thing - pure, old-school drag racing fun.

For Shane, the love of speed started in New Zealand, where he built and raced cars. 'I've been out of the drag racing scene for years, but I wanted one last splurge at it,' he says. 'My first car was an Austin A40 pickup, and I'd always dreamed of building a gasser. I could see it in my head - the name, the colour, everything.'

That vision became reality in 2018 when Shane found a disassembled A40 in Tamworth. 'It was literally in bits - parts spread across two farms. I had no idea if everything was there, but after a 14-hour road trip, it was mine.'

The build wasn't easy. 'Ballina is a long way from the parts we needed,' Shane said. 'We got to know our mail depot really well - especially when things went missing. The car was built in my garage with a tape measure, a lot of Google searching, and parts bought as we could afford them.'

Under the hood, Blue Bayou originally roared with a 355ci small-block Chevy. 'Stand next to it running without ear protection, and you'll hear ringing for awhile,' Shane jokes. Since then, it's been upgraded to a 383 with nitrous - because why not?

First time out in February 2023 at Old School Drags in Carralbyn, Queensland, Blue Bayou ran straight and strong - strong enough to win Best Gasser. By June, Shane took her to Sydney's Day of the Drags for her first timed quarter-mile, clocking an impressive 11.3 seconds.

Now a regular in the Warwick Gasser series, Blue Bayou turns heads wherever she goes. 'People love to tell me about their first A40s. Kids climb in for photos. Cars pass us on the highway, filming and giving thumbs up - it's awesome.'

Shane hopes to show her at a local Show and Shine soon. Until then, you'll find Blue Bayou doing what she was built for - blazing down the track in a cloud of tyre smoke.

Follow along with Blue Bayou at: Instagram/ bluebayouracing



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MONDAY-THURSDAY FEED THE CREW \$59

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Cooking with CWA

Toad-in-the-hole with red onions and thyme butter



Ingredients

- 1 red onion, cut into wedges, layers separated
- 8 thick pork sausages
- 1 teaspoon olive oil

For the batter:

- 100g plain flour
- 2 medium eggs

- 300ml milk
- 2 teaspoons wholegrain mustard
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
- salt and pepper

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C.
2. Tip the onions into a small shallow non-stick tin. Arrange the sausages on top of the onions, then trickle over the oil and roast for 20 minutes.
3. While the sausages are roasting, make the batter. Sift the flour into a bowl, drop the egg into the centre and beat in the milk a little at a time until it makes a smooth batter. Stir in the mustard and thyme and season. Let the batter sit whilst the sausages cook.
4. Then pour the batter quickly into the tin and return to the oven for 40 minutes until the batter has risen and is golden.
5. Serve with steamed carrots and cabbage.

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Frequent flyer programs: maximise your rewards

by Milt Barlow



Australian frequent flyer programs have become a cornerstone of consumer engagement, with millions of Australians actively participating to earn rewards and benefits. The loyalty programs of Qantas and Virgin Australia stand out as highly popular, offering members opportunities to accumulate points through flights, everyday spending, and partnerships with various businesses. Understanding how to best leverage these points can significantly enhance travel experiences and provide substantial value.

The popularity of loyalty in the skies

Loyalty programs are widespread in Australia, with a vast majority of consumers belonging to at least one. Supermarket programs lead in popularity, but airline frequent flyer programs like Qantas Frequent Flyer and Velocity Frequent Flyer hold significant appeal. Qantas Frequent Flyer boasts over 16.4 million members, while Velocity Frequent Flyer has reached a substantial 12 million members, making them key players in the Australian loyalty landscape. This high level of engagement underscores the value Australians place on travel-related rewards and the effectiveness of these programs in fostering customer loyalty.

Flights vs shopping: where your points go further

When it comes to redeeming frequent flyer points, members often face a choice between using them for shopping or flights. While the allure of immediate gratification through merchandise or gift cards is understandable, the true value of frequent flyer points is typically realised when redeemed for flights and upgrades. Experts consistently recommend prioritising flight redemptions, especially for long-haul travel and premium cabin upgrades, as this often yields a significantly higher return per point.

For example, Qantas Economy Classic Reward flights can offer a value of around two cents per point, while Business Classic Rewards can reach approximately eight cents. Similarly, Velocity economy reward flights range from one to two cents per point, and business reward flights can be worth two to four cents. In contrast, non-flight redemptions generally provide less than 1 cent per point for both programs. Upgrading a paid flight with points can also present an excellent value proposition, allowing travellers to experience premium cabins without the full cost.

Strategic international redemptions

To maximise the value of your Qantas and Virgin points for international travel, understanding their partner airline networks is crucial.

Qantas Frequent Flyer: As part of the oneworld Alliance and with numerous other partnerships, Qantas offers access to over 1,300 destinations worldwide. For long-haul economy flights, particularly to Europe and North America, exploring partners like Finnair (no carrier charges), Japan Airlines (consistent reward seat releases), and China Airlines can be beneficial. Emirates, a non-oneworld partner, offers extensive routes but may have higher redemption rates and surcharges, which are set to increase from August 2025. Searching for reward seats on partner airline websites like British Airways Executive Club and American Airlines AAdvantage can sometimes yield better results than the Qantas website.

Velocity Frequent Flyer: While not part of an alliance, Velocity partners with airlines like Singapore Airlines, United Airlines, Air Canada, Qatar Airways, and Etihad Airways. Singapore Airlines is a particularly valuable partner, with the option to transfer Velocity Points to their KrisFlyer program for potentially wider reward seat availability, including First Class Suites. United Airlines and Air Canada provide access to North America, while Qatar Airways offers routes to Europe and the Middle East. Be aware of recent changes to Qantas and Virgin redemption points calculators.

Decoding point value

The value of a single frequent flyer point is not fixed and depends on how it's used. As previously mentioned, flight redemptions generally offer the best value. Aiming for a redemption value of at least \$20 for every 1,000 points (two cents per point) is a good benchmark. Redemptions for shopping or using points to offset cash fares typically provide lower value.

The journey to Los Angeles: a domestic flight tally

For Qantas Frequent Flyer members, a one-way economy flight from Australia to Los Angeles typically requires around 41,900 points. Assuming an average earning rate of 1,000 points per domestic economy flight, approximately 42 such flights would be needed to accrue enough points. Velocity Frequent Flyer members would generally need about 44,800 points for a similar flight, often on partner United Airlines. With an estimated earning rate of 800 points per domestic economy flight, around 56 flights would be required. These figures are estimates and can vary based on fare class, distance, and promotions.

Conclusion: fly smarter, not just more

Maximising the benefits of Australian frequent flyer programs involves a strategic approach to earning and redeeming points. Prioritising flight redemptions, especially for upgrades and international travel, generally offers the best value. By understanding the partner airline networks, staying informed about program changes, and diversifying earning strategies, members can effectively leverage their points to unlock rewarding travel experiences.



Check in with your children

Cyberbullying on the rise



With the school year now well underway, it's the perfect time for parents to check in with their children about their online experiences. Cyberbullying is a growing concern, particularly for young teens, and new data from eSafety highlights just how prevalent the issue has become.

In 2024, eSafety received nearly 3,000 valid cyberbullying complaints - an increase of 25% compared to the

previous year. Even more concerning, children aged 12 and 13 accounted for 35% of all reports, with girls reporting cyberbullying at twice the rate of boys. Over the past five years, reports of online bullying have surged by an alarming 450%, indicating that this issue is far from slowing down.

Julie Inman Grant, Australia's eSafety Commissioner, notes that cyberbullying reports tend to spike during the school term, as online bullying is often an extension of bullying behaviour in the playground or classroom. 'We know the real-world consequences of cyberbullying can be devastating, particularly for young people,' she explains.

For parents, open and honest conversations about online safety are crucial. Inman Grant urges parents to reassure their children that they can always turn to them if something makes the child feel uncomfortable online.

Cyberbullying is more than just a statistic - it affects real children who may be struggling in silence. As a parent, there are proactive steps you can take to help make the internet a safer place for your child.

1. Be kind. Encourage your child to practise respect, empathy, and kindness online.
2. Be mindful. Teach them to balance their time online and engage with factual, respectful content.
3. Speak up. If they encounter online abuse, help them collect evidence and report harmful content.
4. Start the conversation. Talk openly about online safety with your children, their friends, and their schools.
5. Share resources. Promote online safety tools and tips with your networks to spread awareness.

It's never too early - or too late - to start these conversations. By fostering a culture of kindness, awareness, and digital responsibility, parents can play a key role in protecting their children from cyberbullying.

Attending eSafety's free webinars can also provide parents with valuable tools to navigate these discussions and better understand their child's digital world.

For more information and resources, visit eSafety's website: esafety.gov.au

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Kids corner

Q. What is the Easter Bunny's favourite kind of music?

A. Hip hop.

Q. What kind of stories does the Easter Bunny like best?

A. The ones with hoppy endings.

Q. What do you call an Easter egg from outer space?

A. Egg-stra terrestrial.

Q. Why did the Easter egg hide?

A. Because he was a little chicken.

Knock, knock... *Who's there?*

Heidi. *Heidi who?*

Heidi the eggs around the house.

Can you find me in the pages of this magazine?



Easter craft

How to DIY decorative eggs



1. Wash your fresh eggs in warm water and pat dry.
2. Make small holes on either end of your egg by poking each end with a pin.
3. Break the yolk inside the egg with the pin or a toothpick - this will make blowing out the egg easier.
4. Empty the egg by blowing through the top hole - make sure you catch the egg whites and yolks in a bowl - you may want to save these to bake something later. If you're having trouble, make your hole a little bigger.
5. Rinse then dry your eggs and decorate.

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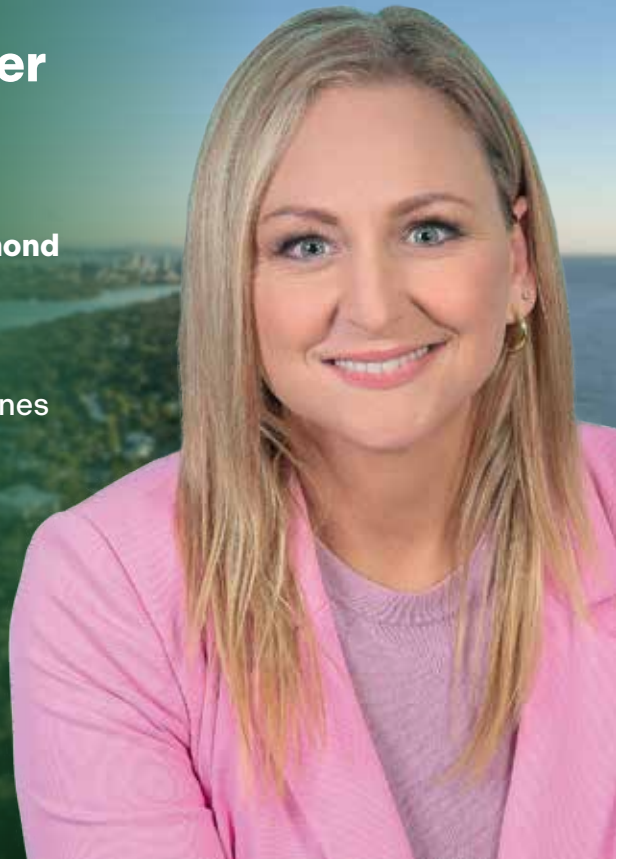
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- ✓ Build infrastructure to protect our fragile coastlines
- ✓ Strengthen emergency and public health telecommunications

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Authorised by V Menschelyi, National Party of Australia – NSW, Suite 3, Level 7, 50 Pitt Street, Sydney 2000



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Veterans' Care
Meal Service

Easter holiday top picks



The Easter school holidays are upon us, with most schools in the region taking a break from Monday 14 to Friday 25 April. Keeping the kids entertained over this time without breaking the bank can be a challenge, but luckily, the Ballina Shire offers plenty of fun and affordable options. From live performances and creative workshops to outdoor adventures and hands-on activities, there's something for everyone.

For some inspiration, check out the Ballina Information Centre's handy activities guide at: discoverballina.com.au

Here are two of our top picks:

Ventriloquist Natalie May

The whole family will love this all ages show with Australia's leading ventriloquist Natalie May as she lets her funny little friends loose on the audience for a family friendly school holiday show. This is a free event.

When: Tuesday 15 April, doors 3.30pm / show 4pm

Where: Ballina RSL

Info: ballinarsl.com.au/event/ventriloquist-natalie-may/

Magical World of Crazy Science

Crazy Science Show is full of amazing and fun science demonstrations, incredible magic from an Australian 'MO' award winner, incredible bubbles, gut busting laughter and audience participation. Tickets are \$15 per person.

When: Tuesday 22 April, doors 10.30am / show: 11am

Where: Ballina RSL

Info: ballinarsl.com.au/event/magical-world-of-crazy-science

Holiday fun at your local Library

by Robert Hutton



Pictured: Head into Ballina Library these school holidays and enjoy the pirate-themed scavenger hunt.

School holidays sound great in theory but if you're a parent or grandparent left with entertaining a bored child for two weeks, you can easily find yourself pulling your hair out after just a few days. Fortunately, your local Library is here to help.

All branches of the Richmond Tweed Regional Library offer a wide range of school holiday activities for children of every age. These may vary from organised science or craft workshops to more general activities such as scavenger hunts, Lego, big games,

DIY craft and colouring-in. Libraries also offer a huge range of children's books, graphic novels, audiobooks and DVDs for patrons to borrow. Particularly popular during the school holidays are our binge boxes which offer all the books in a particular series in one convenient boxed set. Kids can also access a variety of comic books online, including Disney and Marvel titles, through the Libby App (All Access Comics).

These school holidays, Ballina Library is offering a **Squishy Science** workshop on Tuesday 15 April, at 10.30am (for children aged five to 10 years) where participants will learn how to make squishy playdough and slime using common household ingredients. Ballina will also have a fun **scavenger hunt** available in the Library at any time. There are two levels of difficulty: an easier, pirate-themed hunt for younger children and the more challenging Ocean Expedition Adventure Passport for older children. A do-it-yourself **Easter Hat craft** will also be available from 12 to 17 April.

Lennox Head Library is holding a **Make Your Own Dream-Catcher** workshop on Wednesday 16 April, at 10.30am. Places are limited for this event and bookings are essential. Other fun activities will also be on offer at the Lennox and Alstonville branches throughout the holidays.

All our children's activities are free of charge with materials provided. Most workshops have age restrictions and places are limited - bookings may be made through the Events tab of the Richmond Tweed Regional Library website at: rtl.nsw.gov.au. Scavenger hunts and other do-it-yourself activities are available at any time during opening hours.

So, visit your local Library these school holidays and let us entertain your child or children, if only for a few hours. Come-in, relax and enjoy our air-conditioned facilities. It won't cost you a cent. For more information, please call the relevant branch:

Ballina, ph: 6686 2831

Lennox Head, ph:6687 6398

Alstonville, ph: 6628 5527.



Children and families unite for Clean Up Australia Day

by Peter Glennie, Alstonville Community Preschool



This Clean Up Australia Day, Lighthouse Beach became a hub of community spirit as preschool children and their families from Alstonville Community Preschool gathered for a morning of environmental care and connection. Under the bright sun, families worked together to pick up litter, leaving the beach cleaner and more beautiful than they found it.

It was a heartwarming sight to see young children, hands small but determined, joining their parents and caregivers in making a real difference to the environment. This event not only contributed to the health of our local beach but also highlighted the vital role of early education in fostering a sense of responsibility, respect for nature and caring for Country.

The significance of Clean Up Australia Day is not just about cleaning the environment, but also about teaching future generations the importance of sustainable practices. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the act of caring for Country has deep cultural meaning. Participation in this event highlighted to the children the importance of looking after the land and sea for the generations that follow.

For the families involved, the morning was a perfect opportunity to bond and build lasting memories while contributing to something greater than themselves. As the preschoolers eagerly picked up plastic wrappers, lids and fishing line, they learned firsthand about the impact of waste on our ecosystems. Families worked side by side, creating connections within the community, all while nurturing their children's understanding of caring for the environment. It was a reminder that even the smallest hands can make a big difference when it comes to protecting the places we love.

Special thanks go to staff member Natalie Young for organising such a meaningful event for our children and their families.

The future of female rugby is here

by Belinda Parkes, Ballina Coast High School



Ballina Coast High School is excited to become home of the region's first high-performance Rugby 7s Academy for females, giving our athletes unprecedented access to a structured rugby training program delivered entirely on school grounds.

The groundbreaking partnership between Ballina Coast High School, NSW Rugby Union and the Ballina Seahorses Rugby Club, gives our talented young sportswomen the opportunity to develop skills and gameplay with a focus on enhancing their individual representative pathways into rugby, rugby league and touch football.

Our students also receive nutrition education, tailored specifically for female athletes, insights into what it takes to be a high-performing female athlete, and World Rugby education courses that empower our older students to mentor younger players and contribute to community rugby clubs.

The Academy will compete in 7s tournaments across NSW and Southeast Queensland, as well as local school competitions. The future of female rugby is here.





Ballina Public School

by Angela Wraight, Principal (Relieving)



Students at Ballina Public School have had a very busy and exciting start to the year. They've been incredibly lucky to have several events occurring already, and Term 1 has been packed full of action.

All of our students from Kindergarten to Yr6 participated in an NRL School Blitz Program. Younger students learnt basic skills such as holding the ball and running, and older students learnt some of the more complex skills used in the game. Everyone had a lot of fun and got their bodies moving.

In Week 5 we held our Meet the Teacher evening. It is always a highlight at the start of each year getting to know new families and connect with those who have been a part of the school community for many years. Families enjoyed a complimentary sausage sizzle which took care of dinner for the night.

We look forward to sharing next month's adventures with you.

Alstonville Public School

by Chris Duley, Principal (Relieving)



A visit to The Farm

Stage 3 students recently visited The Farm in Byron Bay as part of our Science unit on sustainability. The tour included talks on sustainability, multi-generational farming, and regenerative practices. It was interesting to see how The Farm use their land for many independent farmers to include a wide range of produce and products.

Feeding the chickens, roosters and geese was one of the highlights for students. The animals certainly were hungry and guzzled the chicken feed. Some students were fortunate enough to gently hold the baby chickens that were only two days old.

The bee talk was informative, learning about bees being able to fly up to 5km per day to find needed flowers for pollination, and hives holding approximately 1,000 bees each.

With lovely weather to walk and explore The Farm and have a picnic lunch, we were very fortunate to experience the educational farm tour.

Northern Rivers Zone Swimming

Sixteen students represented APS at the Zone Swimming Carnival in Casino on Thursday 27 February, with quite a few students swimming personal best times.

Congratulations to Georgia, Maeve, Indianna, Joan and Alexis for qualifying to represent Northern Rivers at the North Coast Carnival to be held in Kempsey.



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Meetings: wellbeing support

Ballina Breast Cancer Support

When: 10am-12pm, third Thursday of each month
Where: Kentwell Community Centre Meeting Room 2
Contact: Deborah, ph: 0401 301 413

Dementia Inclusive Ballina Alliance

When: 7.30am-9am, second Thursday of each month
Where: Education Centre, Crowley Care
Contact: dementiainclusiveballina@gmail.com

Dementia Inclusive Ballina Alliance Activity Group

When: 10.30am-12.30pm, every Wednesday
Where: Ballina Aero Club
Contact: dementiainclusiveballina@gmail.com

Northern Rivers Day Prostate Cancer Support Group

When: 10am - 12pm, second Wednesday of each month
Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club
Contact: Robert Corney, ph: 0400 747 630

Northern Rivers Evening Prostate Cancer Support Group

When: 7pm, first Wednesday of each month
Where: Workers Sports Club at Goonellabah
Contact: Bob Johnson, ph: 6622 5792

Northern Rivers Younger Onset Dementia Carers Group

When: 10am-12pm, first Friday of each month
Where: Summerland Farm, 253 Wardell Road, Alstonville
Contact: Dr Sabrina Pit, 0429 455 720

The Death Cafe, end of life preparation

When: 10.30am, first Saturday of each month
Where: Ballina, venue provided upon registration
Contact: Kerry Johnston, email: kerrymj@ymail.com

Wayahead Anxiety Support Group

When: 11am - 1pm, second Saturday of each month
Where: CWA Hall, 236 River Street, Ballina
Contact: ph: 1300 794 992

Ballina Bosom Buddies



Supporting women through their breast cancer journey

A local support group, Ballina Bosom Buddies, is making a significant impact in the lives of women experiencing breast cancer. By fostering a caring and understanding community, the group provides vital emotional and practical support to those navigating the challenges of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

Working closely with the local Cancer Council and the McGrath Breast Care Nurse, Ballina Bosom Buddies offers a safe space for women to share their experiences, gain knowledge, and build friendships. The group hosts regular monthly meetings, featuring guest speakers on topics such as exercise, nutrition, and advancements in treatment options.

Beyond in-person meetings, the group runs a Facebook community with over 100 members, allowing women to connect and receive support online. Recognising the financial burden of treatment-related travel, Ballina Bosom Buddies has also begun providing petrol vouchers to assist women in reaching their medical appointments.

A key initiative of the group is its sponsorship of a specialised yoga program designed for women recovering from breast cancer. Held every Tuesday from 11am to 12pm at Northlakes Community Hall, classes include breathing exercises, gentle yoga, Pilates, and Qi Gong, followed by relaxation. Led by a teacher trained in breast cancer yoga and trauma yoga, the program offers physical and emotional benefits. Women attending the classes contribute a \$10 donation to support the initiative.

Community support has been instrumental in sustaining Ballina Bosom Buddies. The Scope Club of Ballina and Ballina Council have backed the group, while LJ Signs recently donated a banner to help raise awareness of their services.

Deborah Jones, a representative of Ballina Bosom Buddies, emphasised the importance of community support in the breast cancer journey. 'It is well documented that community support plays a vital role in a woman's experience with breast cancer,' she said.

The group meets on the third Thursday of each month at the Kentwell Centre, Meeting Room 2, from 10am to 12pm.

For women in the Ballina area facing breast cancer, Ballina Bosom Buddies continues to be a beacon of hope, proving that no one has to face the journey alone.

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Is your jaw contributing to your headaches?

by Grant Sinclair BClinSc, MOstMed, Northern Rivers Health



Headaches can have a wide range of triggers such as stress, poor posture, dehydration, lack of sleep or even food intolerances. But one often overlooked culprit is the jaw. The connection between the jaw and headaches lies in the complex network of muscles, joints, and nerves that run through the head, face, and neck.

The temporomandibular joint (TMJ), which connects your jaw to your skull, plays a crucial role in chewing, speaking, and even breathing. When this joint is under strain due to teeth grinding (bruxism), clenching or misalignment, it can create a ripple effect of tension through the surrounding muscles and nerves. This tension can radiate into the head and neck and cause painful headaches and migraines.

Stress is a common contributor to jaw tension. When we're stressed, we often subconsciously clench our jaw or grind our teeth, particularly at night. Over time, this can lead to muscle fatigue and inflammation around the jaw and temple area, resulting in persistent headaches. If you're doing this in your sleep, often you don't even realise you're doing it.

Posture can also play a role. Forward head posture, where the head sits out in front of the body, increases strain on the neck and jaw muscles, contributing to restrictions and tension. Even everyday habits such as staring down at a screen or resting your chin on your hand can add to this strain. An increase in screen usage such as looking down at a phone for long periods or having your screen at a desk not placed at the correct height adds tension to the jaw and has meant

we are seeing many more patients in clinic recently, complaining of headaches. Try it yourself, look down and notice your jaw closing.

If you suffer from frequent headaches and have noticed jaw tension, clicking or discomfort, it may be worth exploring the connection. Jaw related headaches are treatable once the underlying muscle tension and joint dysfunction are addressed, often with environmental adaptations.

Self massage of the jaw externally is a great way to start at home and easy to do, both with the jaw closed and then with it open. Seeking professional advice is a great idea if headaches persist, to have a thorough assessment to ascertain what may be causing your headaches and to rule out anything serious.

Manual therapy approaches including osteopathy, can help release muscle tension, improve joint restriction and restore balanced function to the jaw and surrounding structures. You can also be shown some further techniques you can safely do at home. By addressing the root cause rather than just the symptoms, it's possible to reduce headache frequency and improve overall comfort.

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Sisters of tragedy: the Brontës and their works



Step into the dramatic world of the Brontë sisters with acclaimed literary expert Susannah Fullerton as she presents *Sisters of Tragedy: The Brontës and Their Works*. Discover how Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, despite their isolated upbringing in a Yorkshire parsonage, crafted some of the most passionate and groundbreaking novels in English literature.

When: Monday 28 April, 6pm
Where: A & I Hall, Station St, Bangalow

Susannah Fullerton, a celebrated author, lecturer, and Order of Australia Medal recipient, brings her expertise to this fascinating illustrated presentation. Don't miss this unique opportunity to explore the lives and works of these extraordinary sisters.

Guests welcome, non-member fee: \$25.

Book via TryBooking:
trybooking.com/CWFJA

Pictured: The Bronte sisters. Source: Supplied.

Creative Artisans Gallery supports young artists



Creative Artisans Gallery in Ballina is launching a new initiative to provide young artists and artisans with affordable opportunities to exhibit their work locally. As a not-for-profit group, the gallery remains committed to supporting artists in the Northern Rivers by fostering creativity and promoting high-quality, handcrafted art and craft.

This new program will offer emerging artists a dedicated exhibition space in the centre of the gallery, along with prime shop window exposure. The showcase will accommodate up to 20 A3-sized paintings, giving young creators a valuable platform to display their talent. In addition, featured artists will be profiled in *The Ballina Wave*, on Paradise FM, and the Ballina Visitor Centre calendar.

Creative Artisans Gallery invites young artists to take advantage of this exciting opportunity. For more information, contact Pauline at the Creative Artisans Gallery, on ph: 0435 941 591.

Introduction to Painting with Natural Materials



What environmental impact do artists have? Can we step lightly on the earth in our practice? Explore the fundamentals of painting with a focus on natural pigments, non-toxic, plastic free mediums, and an ecologically sensitive approach to art making with Northern Rivers Community Gallery exhibiting artist, Emily Imeson.

This workshop is ticketed and has a limited capacity - open to those 18 years and over. Tools and materials are provided. For more information or to book a place visit nrcgballina.com.au or phone the Gallery on ph: 6682 0530.

When: Saturday 26 - Sunday 27 April, 9am - 3pm both days
Where: Ignite Studios, 60 Crane Street, Ballina
Cost: \$280 (incl GST) - tools and materials provided

BACCI Autumn Show



The Ballina Arts and Crafts Group (BACCI) invites you to their annual Autumn Art and Craft Show, a vibrant showcase of local talent. The event will offer the perfect opportunity to find a unique Mother's Day gift while supporting local artists and craftspeople.

BACCI members create a diverse range of handcrafted treasures, including paintings, limited edition prints, woven textiles, ceramics, jewellery, fabric dye painting, natural paper dyeing, postcards, woodwork, and even bee hives.

Meet the makers, hear the stories behind their work, and vote for your favourite piece in the People's Choice Award.

You'll also have the chance to win exciting prizes.

Take a break and enjoy homemade treats at the pop-up café, making it a truly enjoyable day out for everyone.

When: Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 May, 9am-3pm

Where: The Masonic Centre, 56 Cherry Street, Ballina.

Cost: Entry is free.

BACCI is a registered charity, with proceeds from this event helping to support local charities in the Ballina area.

Pop it in the diary and head along to celebrate the incredible creativity of our community.

For more information visit: Facebook/ BACCI Ballina Arts and Crafts Centre inc



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A busy time for baby seabirds and turtles

by Steve Whalan, PhD, Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue

Recent Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue (ASTR) patients have included numerous babies - there must be something in the water. Seagulls, herons, cormorants, terns, and newly hatched turtles have needed our help over recent months. Undeniably cute, they usually present to us due to poor choices that have resulted in displacement from nests - or in the case of the turtle - just didn't make it past the breakers and was washed back up on a Tweed beach.

The good news is that we are rescuing patients not impacted by the usual culprits that see wildlife needing care, such as fishing line entanglement. The not-so-good-news is that babies require a dedicated and intense amount of help, usually around feeding. At ASTR we have the experience and an army of volunteers who help us meet this schedule of caring for baby birds and turtles.

When we care for baby birds, we essentially take on the role of mum. We often ask ourselves if there is any imprinting by these chicks (viewing humans as mum), and flow on risk of humanising baby wildlife?



Pictured: A baby cormorant in care at ASTR. Source: Supplied.



OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Weekday shifts 9:30am – 4:00pm
- Dealing with phone & email enquiries
- Completing adoption paperwork
- Friendly team
- WORD & EXCEL experience preferred
- Good organisational skills
- An eye for detail
- Based at the NRAS Rescue Shelter, Ballina

Email: secretary@nras.org.au for details

Cormorants are one bird that quickly humanises in care. So, we take extraordinary measures to reduce this risk, including dressing up like ghosts (with bed sheets) to mask our humanness and gloves/socks to cover our feeding hand. Getting birds out as quickly as possible is also key. Our biggest success is raising seagulls. They are a delight to rehabilitate due to a capacity to quickly self-feed and to grow to juveniles within weeks. I like to think that their innate, sassy attitude, also helps when we release them into large, wild flocks. They fit in almost immediately.

Turtle hatchlings are easier. We don't worry about dressing up to feed them, despite the availability of ready made ninja turtle costumes around. At release, a turtle hatchling is independent and provisioned to swim using internal reserves. They enter what is known as a 'swimming frenzy' for 24-48 hours, meaning they swim like Michael Phelps for the first few days presumably to get them out and away from coastal waters where lots of 'feeding-mouths' live. Hatchlings gradually reduce their frenzied swimming effort and start to feed on plankton.

The turtle hatchling we have at present will be with us until we can establish it is feeding and swimming adequately. The hatchling will then be released out to sea to provide a fair chance of making it - one hatchling in 1,000 survives to adulthood.

If you do find a stranded baby seabird or sea turtle please contact us on our rescue hotline, ph: 0428 862 852. We will send our rescue truck to provide the best chance of it making it to have babies of its own.



Pet of the month

Name: Bobbi

Age: Seven months

Breed: Bull Mastiff x Bull Arab

Favourite toy: Anything squeaky or the kids socks

Favourite food: Fresh steak

Favourite thing to do: Playing catch and doing zoomies on the farm. Walking up Lennox Headland from the Boat Channel to Boulders, and definitely school pick up because she totally thinks everyone is there to see her and she loves kids.

'Bobbi loves to come along for basically anything we do,' says owner Gemma. 'After school drop we love to walk along the Headland on quieter days. During work hours she loves to lay right underneath the desk, kind of in the way but kind of too cute to move.'

'Bobbi is incredibly smart but she's also a very gentle and loving dog, and never misses night-time snuggles with the kids for bedtime reading. We are so super grateful that we found her, it feels like she was meant to complete our family.'

Looking to foster or adopt a companion animal? Drop into the regular Adoption Days at the NRAS Rescue Shelter on the first Saturday of the month, 10am- 1pm.



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Refresh your outdoor space

by Plateau Landscapes



A thoughtfully designed outdoor area can be transformative, connecting your home to the outside and providing an extra space for you to enjoy with family and friends. In addition to adding to the aesthetic appeal of your home and garden, landscaping can add considerable value to your property.

Sandstone

Sandstone is durable and elegant - a multi-purpose material that can enhance your space in multiple ways.

Use pavers in courtyards and patios or to build walkways. Sandstone blocks build striking retaining walls that will last forever. They also make a great garden bench seat that termites won't eat.

Garden edging

Corten steel garden edging is becoming a popular solution for homeowners and gardening enthusiasts who want to elevate their outdoor spaces. This durable, stylish material combines functionality with aesthetics, making it a fantastic choice for landscaping projects. Whether you are planning to create clean borders for your flower beds or solve common garden issues, corten steel edging offers versatility and appeal. It is also available in larger sizes that can double as a retaining wall.

Water features

Rippling or running water features and soft sprays add a soothing, cooling dimension to your garden. Fountains, bubblers, and ponds can also be focal points in the smallest spaces. Blend your water feature with the outdoor elements for a more natural finish.

Riverstone

Add an organic feel to your outdoor space with river rock. From small pea gravel to stones and larger rocks and boulders, river rocks get their smooth, rounded edges from the movement of water in natural riverbeds. This material will add a natural element to outdoor features such as walkways, edging, garden beds or containers, gravel patios, and more.

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A Northern Rivers Media publication



Build a bird tripod

by Jennie Goeldner, Wollongbar Garden Club



Pictured: A Fairy Wren. Image credit: Walter Coppola

You've probably noticed the lack of small birds in your garden. This is partly due to the removal of tight thickets of scrubby growth that they need to hide in, often cleaned up in our desire for a tidy garden.

To recreate this environment you could build a bird attracting tripod. Select several sturdy sticks, straight-ish prunings from your trees or tomato stakes from the nursery are perfect too.

Tie them together at the top, then spread the legs out to form a tripod. This can be whatever height or width you choose, whichever suits the selected site in your garden.

Now, the idea is, to create a hiding place for small birds to feel safe from predators. You can do this by securing further branches around the tripod and planting beneath the shelter.

What to plant

A grevillea will grow up through the sticks, attracting the birds with it's abundant flowers brimming with nectar.

A collistamen will fill out and provide thick foliage for nesting.

Varied grasses planted around the base will give hiding places for little birds and beneficial wildlife, like lizards.

If you're creating in a rented or temporary garden, simply leave the plants in pots and the whole structure can be simply folded up and moved to a new location.

Join us

The Club's next gathering will be an outdoor meeting and BBQ. All welcome.

When: Tuesday 8 April, 10am

Where: Meldrum Park, Cnr Norton and Fox Streets, Ballina.

Contact: Lee, ph: 0401 763 163



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Ask a waste expert: op shop etiquette

with Justine Rowe, Ballina Council

Op shops play a pivotal role in our community and in the circular economy, keeping items and goods in circulation. Let's refresh our op shop donation etiquette and learn some tips to rein in overconsumption.

Remember the two golden rules of op shops:

1. if you'd proudly give it to a mate, it's good to donate
2. don't dump on op shops; donate clean, quality items during donating hours only.

Be aware that poor quality, damaged or dumped donations are taken to the Resource Recovery Centre by op shop staff or volunteers, usually to be landfilled.

How to donate

- Ring the op shop and check they accept the items you plan on donating. Not all op shops can take electrical items, large furniture or mattresses.
- Don't store items like clothing or textiles for months before donating as they get musty.
- Bring in a few items at a time rather than multiple bags.

Even following these guidelines exactly, op shops are still overrun with donations, many poor quality or damaged.

We can resist overconsumption and wasting our money and resources by making a few changes. Follow these tips when shopping.

- First, do you really need what you plan to buy? Can you borrow or rent instead?
- Buy for longevity, not for landfill. For example, a quality toaster or piece of clothing costs a bit more than the cheapest versions, but last longer. Quality items may come with a warranty to repair or replace an item.
- Shop secondhand, at a local Ballina business, or try a local buy/swap/sell group.



Picture credit: RDNE Stock project

When you no longer want or need an item, follow the two golden rules above if you plan on donating. Consider if a simple repair may prolong the life of your item. Op shop staff tell us they receive countless textiles that simply need a new button or a minor hole repaired (or just to be properly cleaned).

Many items can be brought to the Resource Recovery Centre to be properly disposed of or recycled for free, including:

- laptops, computers, phones and accessories
- most other e-waste items (household appliances).

Good quality, larger pieces of furniture or building supplies can be brought to the Salvage Shed (167 Southern Cross Drive, Ballina) which has space to store and sell them.

Together, we can normalise a culture that avoids unnecessary waste is avoided and supports reuse and repair.

Got a question? Email it to: Justine.Rowe@ballina.nsw.gov.au

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MEMBER FOR BALLINA

THE GREENS

TAKING ACTION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

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Approved by Tamara Smith MP, Member for Ballina, 2019-2025. Environment Australia



End of native forest logging in sight



Pictured: Mandy Nolan at anti-logging protest, Little Newry Forest, near Coffs Harbour.

With the environment a key issue in the Federal election campaign, an end to native forest logging in New South Wales may soon be in sight.

Recent polling reveals a big majority of people in the Northern Rivers support an end to logging in native forests. The polling, from pollster Pyxis, occurred in the federal electorate of Richmond, which runs from Ballina to Tweed Heads.

It found over 70% of voters in Richmond want to see an end to native forest logging, and timber sourced

only from plantations. For those who intend to vote Labor, the figure was over 80%.

'Ending native forest logging has been a Greens policy since 2023, and it will be a key priority if I'm elected,' says Greens candidate Mandy Nolan, who only needs a 1.8% swing to win Richmond.

Logging native forests is already banned in Victoria and Western Australia, and the movement for a national ban is intensifying.

The high-profile March for Forests took place across Australia on 23 March, including in Sydney, Canberra and Byron Bay, organised by the Bob Brown Foundation.

'Saving what is left of our forests and wildlife is an urgent task,' says veteran environmentalist Bob Brown. 'Like whaling in 1978, this election should

see the logging of our native forests brought to an end.'

Bob Brown is strongly backing Mandy Nolan, including helping fund her 'Better is Possible' billboards, and offering tips on how to navigate a shared-power parliament, where Greens and Independents will be pushing hard for a national ban on logging. Such a ban would finally end logging in koala habitat in NSW forests, still underway as recently as December, within the slated boundaries of the long-awaited Great Koala National Park.

The idea for the koala park came originally from the community, and four years ago the Greens introduced a bill in the NSW Parliament to create it. Once operational it will attract domestic and international tourists, bringing many new jobs in ecotourism.

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Ballina Bridge Club

by Robert Eldridge



Pictured: Players from Ballina at the Gold Coast Congress. Source: Supplied.

One of our members, John Fraser, has achieved the status of Australian Grand Master. He joins a select number of players in the Club, and Australia, who have achieved this status - he had already also achieved being a member of the 1,000 Club. John has made a very significant contribution

to the establishment and operation of our Club over many years as a former President, Director and a Life Member of Ballina Bridge Club.

Club Mixed Pairs Champions

Paul Smith and Vicki Ivosevac were victorious in the Harvey Norman mixed pairs championships held over two weeks. Judy Crafti and Clive Klugman were runners up. Thirty pairs participated in the event.

Gold Coast Congress

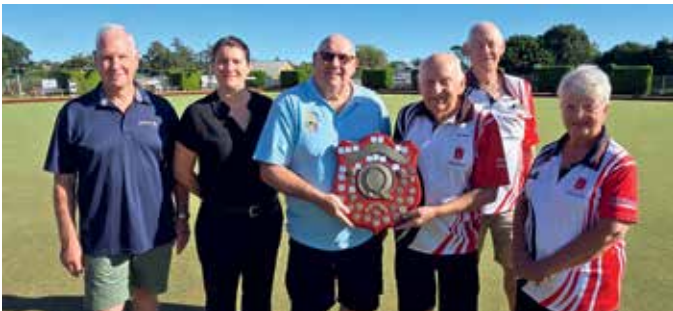
A large number of players from Ballina participated in the week long 63rd Gold Coast Congress. The event has

become a fixture on the international bridge calendar, with players attending from many countries, as well as most of Australia's top players. The scale is enormous with over 400 tables of players at any one time.

This year was possibly the last year of the event so it was with mixed emotion that many attended, and dressed in black on the Wednesday to grieve its loss.

A team consisting of two of our players, Rhonda Khong and Margaret Cusak, along with players from another Club was victorious in the novice teams event.

Battle it out for the Beacom Shield



Pictured: Graham Gooding (Ballina Legacy), Marisa Poptie (Alstonville Plateau Bowls and Sports General Manager), John Porter (Alstonville RSL Sub Branch President), Russ Green, David Gallagher and Kerrie Howard (Alstonville Bowling Club players).

The annual Beacom Shield Bowls Challenge will be held on Wednesday 16 April at the Alstonville Bowls and Sports Club.

The shield was donated in the mid 1930s by Jack Beacom. He was a WW1 veteran, and a member of the Alstonville RSL sub-Branch and the Alstonville Bowls Club, and today, the Shield is competed for between the two organisations. The competition went into recess for a few years but other than this short hiatus, it has been run for the last 20 years.

The Alstonville RSL sub-Branch invites anyone across the area with an ex-service background to join them for a great morning of social bowls. Non-bowlers are also welcome, and all proceeds from the day go to Legacy.

Registrations commence from 9am. The cost for the day is \$35 including lunch.

For registration and enquiries please contact the Alstonville Bowls and Sports Club on ph: 6628 0497.

Cherry Street Croquet

by Greg Porter



In February the Club hosted nine players from the Kokoda Retirement Village, Ballina. The group (pictured above) enjoyed learning the finer points of croquet under the watchful eyes of Club Coach, Debbie Jones, assisted by helpers Wendy Gilmore, Christine Edlund, Helen Young, and Lorraine Whiteman. Even though serious competition croquet exists, accessibility is part of its charm. It's easy to learn and is a low impact, low strenuous activity, thus ideal for over 50s.

The area has recently gained two new golf croquet referees, Max Donati and Dennise Simmons (Byron Bay). Both sat and completed their exams and were successful in gaining their badges - a welcome bonus for the area to gain two more whistle blowers, as the area has been low on numbers for the past few years.

Tournaments

Darling Downs Golf Croquet Singles and Doubles

- Werner Borkhardt and Dennise Simmons 2nd in the Doubles
- Dennise 4th in the Singles.

Monthly Club Badge Winners

- Bev Bill, David Scott, Wendy Gilmore, Robyn Poynting, Joan Saunders, Rossie Offley, Jim Hannigan, Marlene Rennie, Debbie Jones, Penny Scott, Sue Hume and Peter Hume.
- Most hoops: Bev Bill.

Netball season set to commence



Registrations open

Ballina Netball Association's LJ Hooker Saturday competition is now open for registration, and they're gearing up for another exciting season.

Things will kick off with a grading and gala day on Saturday 5 April, followed by round 1 on Saturday 3 May. Age groups range from U8 to Seniors, ensuring there is a competition level suitable for everyone.

Join the Ballina Bombers



If you are looking for a new fun activity for the young ones, or have a keen footy fan wanting to give AFL a go, now is the time to join Ballina Bombers. They are a fun, family friendly Club supportive of all ages and abilities.

The Club is currently running an Auskick program in combination with AFLQ, offering an introduction to the game and allowing kids between 5-12 years

the chance to give AFL footy a go, learn new skills and have fun with friends. The program, which commenced on 19 March, will run for six weeks and participants can join at any time during this period.

Junior teams from U9s to U11s are looking for new players to join them for the season starting in Term 2, from Sunday 27 April. Training is on Wednesdays and games are played on Sunday mornings. Any players new to AFL are welcome to join - boys and girls.

The youth teams are also seeking players from 13 to 17 years old,

There are three local Clubs to choose from and register with:

- Lennox Head Netball Club
- Headlands Netball Club
- All Saints Netball Club.

For our youngest netballers, The Net program is available for ages five to six. This skill-based program is a fantastic introduction to the game, focussing on fundamental movement and co-ordination in a fun, supportive environment.

In addition there is an indoor competition that runs each term at BISC, catering for competitive and non competitive teams, with mixed teams as an option and ages varying from 14-55.

For more information or to register, visit: ballinanetball.com.au or contact your local Club.

Other news

Representative teams are in full swing, training hard in preparation for Senior State Titles in June and Junior State Titles in July, when all teams will travel to Sydney. If you see these teams out in public training, be sure to give some encouragement.

For news and upcoming clinics follow Facebook/Ballina Netball.

whether they have played AFL before or are coming from soccer, rugby or basketball and wanting to give AFL a go. Pre-season training has kicked off on Mondays and Wednesday from 4.45pm to 6pm at Fripp Oval in Ballina.

Registration comes with a free Gold Suns membership, with access to four home games during the season.

Go to playhq.com to register for Ballina Bombers Auskick or the Junior/ Youth Football season.

Find out more at: ballinabombersjafc.com.au or email: ballinajuniorafl.com.au



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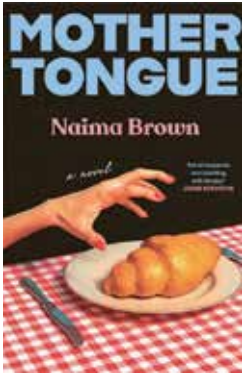
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Book review

Mother Tongue by Naima Brown



Brynn is a claustrophobic suburban mother on the brink. Eric, her husband, is transforming in dark, dangerous ways. Their daughter, Jenny, can't fathom the storm barreling towards her.

When Brynn awakes from a coma speaking fluent French, she seizes the opportunity to start a new life in Paris, a seismic personal transformation that leaves a slew of shattered lives in its wake.

Mother Tongue has been compared to novels in a similar vein to those by Liane Moriarty, and the comparisons of writing style are definitely noticeable. Whilst an easy read, it was also captivating - full of all aspects of family life, love and the relationships we form as we grow.

There are many references to modern day America and the existence of polarising political viewpoints, however, it also explores the way love and family can influence these views, sometimes even causing them to change. The characters of Brynn and Eric are faced with a great deal of prejudice within their relationship and contrasting world views. Readers are able to follow the journey and the strength it takes for Brynn to escape from her old life.

Mother Tongue challenges our expectations of motherhood and our beliefs about women's lives. It is at once an exhilarating tale of escape and a warning about the cost of renewal.

Review by Amy Lynch

This was a really great read and one which will have you completely hooked right from the start. It has been written by a fantastic local author from the Ballina area and is sure to be a smash.



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This month

with Milt Barlow

At the movies

Reflecting the quiet US season prior to the big summer releases, April is a bit lackluster for blockbusters but still has some interesting viewing.

Opening 10 April is critically acclaimed *Small Things Like These*, an historical drama starring the wonderful Cillian Murphy (*Peaky Blinders*). Set in 1985, this confronting film has Murphy playing a devoted father who discovers disturbing secrets being kept by the local convent, along the way discovering some shocking truths of his own. It's riveting, although at times confronting, cinema.

Fans of Neil Young will not want to miss *Neil Young Coastal* (17 April), a fascinating behind-the-scenes documentary following Young's

recent solo tour. Directed by his wife, Daryl Hannah, the film captures this legendary performer for his first shows post COVID. It's a great nostalgic trip.

Also opening 17 April is *The Penguin Lessons*. If you're looking for something light and easy to put a smile on your face, then this is it. Starring Steve Coogan (*The Reckoning*), it follows the story of a British teacher who takes up a job in Argentina and finds his life transformed when he rescues an orphaned penguin from the beach. No Oscar winner but it's cute.

And it must be the month for music nostalgia as 24 April sees the release of *Pink Floyd At Pompei*. This original 1972 concert film has been completely remastered in 4K. The band performs a typical live set from the era but there is no audience apart from the basic film crew. It was shot in the ancient Roman amphitheatre in Pompei, Italy.

On the couch

My favourite watch over the past

month would have to be *Fargo* Season 5 (Stan). I missed this on its 2023 release, so with nothing much I wanted to watch this month it was a great catch up. I've always been a *Fargo* fan with its quirky storylines, great cast and superb direction, and this season doesn't disappoint. Midwestern housewife Dorothy 'Dot' Lyon (Juno Temple) faces a never-ending series of life threatening dramas as North Dakota Sheriff Roy Tillman (Jon Hamm) and his loyal but out-of-control son, Gator (Joe Keery), set out to track her down. Endless mayhem ensues along the way. A word of warning - this, like all *Fargos*, is not for the faint hearted.

The other great watch is the second sequel to *Yellowstone* – *1923* (Apple TV+). With Helen Mirren and Harrison Ford continuing their roles, it's a great watch. The only downside is that one episode is released per week, however given it started 23 February, they should all be available and ready to binge by the time you read this.

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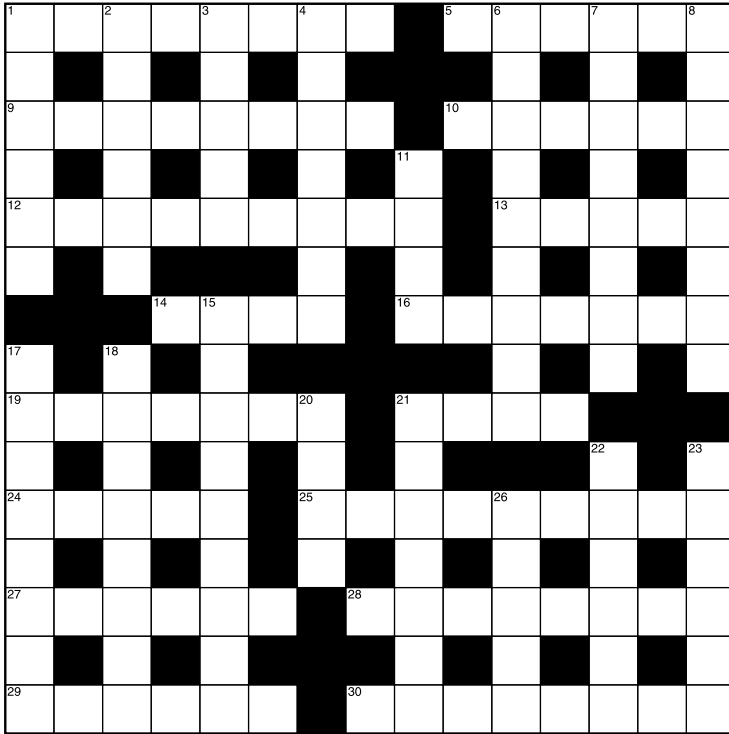
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March 28 – April 6



April crossword

© Lovatts Puzzles



March solution

G	L	O	A	T	I	N	G		S	T	R	A	T	A					
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Across

- 1. Instructed
- 5. Feathered
- 9. Much-travelled (4-4)
- 10. Recovery (in economy)
- 12. Shirt shoulder strap
- 13. Nervous
- 14. Cat communication
- 16. Real
- 19. Great joy
- 21. Circuit-breaker
- 24. UAE state, Abu ...
- 25. Kitbags
- 27. Golfer's assistant
- 28. Abandoned
- 29. Brutality
- 30. End results

Down

- 1. Actor, Robert ... Jr
- 2. Insert more bullets
- 3. Savage
- 4. Polling booth occupant
- 6. Cosmetics
- 7. Sad
- 8. Writer, ... Steel
- 11. First person
- 15. Public services
- 17. Legal determinations
- 18. Ventured (guess)
- 20. Brand of sneakers
- 21. Butter up
- 22. Sharp-tasting
- 23. Throwing lines
- 26. Get to feet

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April horoscopes

by Patsy Bennett - patsybennett.com

Aries

The recent eclipse season kick-started a fresh chapter in your personal life if you were born in March, and a fresh work or health schedule if you were born in April. Your home life and creativity will also be a focus in April, and your usual zest and vitality will return – all a reason to be positive.

Taurus

If you experienced an intense March, you'll be pleased to hear that in April, as long as you are careful with communications until at least the 8th, interactions can become less stressful. You'll enjoy a trip or get-together around Easter and an increasing sense of progress.

Gemini

Your long-term domestic and career direction will benefit from fresh initiative, which will help you to improve finances, so be sure to be proactive and bold with your projects. But if you found communications challenging in March, be careful this month; be clear and avoid over analysis.

Cancer

April is a good month for negotiations, travel and adventure. Just ensure you base your decisions on facts and not suppositions. Mars continues to provide you with the energy you need to succeed in your career and love life but if you're finding life stressful, it's time to find ways to unwind.

Leo

Mars enters Leo on the 18th, providing a boost in energy and even an ideal development for some. Be prepared to take the initiative, especially with passion projects and your personal life. Be patient with communications and strategic with finances to stimulate positive long-term outcomes.

Virgo

This month will be excellent for revitalising your health as your efforts are likely to succeed. The full moon on the 13th will spotlight which aspect of your health will benefit from most focus. The end of April brings the chance to anchor your projects, but be careful with talks towards the 27th.

Libra

This is a romantic month, so be sure to take advantage of this phase. However, you must avoid seeing someone idealistically, as this could bring disappointment. Be realistic. It's a busy time, so find ways to be practical with scheduling to avoid frustration, delays and misunderstandings.

Scorpio

A fresh chapter in a key personal or business relationship will proceed, but you must be careful this month, as otherwise a rash word spoken out of turn could cause unnecessary ripples. Adventure beckons towards the end of the month, and a fun venture could materialise.

Sagittarius

You may enjoy a memorable upturn in domestic matters so be sure to take the initiative. Your career and finances could progress, but you must avoid being idealistic and gambling, financially and emotionally. Mid-month, travel and fun ventures will appeal, so plan ahead.

Capricorn

Where do you mostly derive a sense of purpose and direction? You'll gain the opportunity to invest in activities that lead to a feeling of achievement, but you must avoid simply making changes now due to boredom or frustration. You may be drawn to a new social or work circle as you grow.

Aquarius

You'll be attracted to something new in April. However, if delays arise, be patient and diligent as you'll see progress by the end of the month. In the meantime, avoid pressuring yourself or others to achieve a set outcome; you may be more pleased by an unexpected path that opens as a result.

Pisces

You'll notice a shift in your focus so be prepared to leave behind aspects of your past that no longer resonate. For some, there will be a degree of frustration, so pace yourself where needed. The new moon on the 27th will help you to anchor ventures that require financial or personal attention.



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