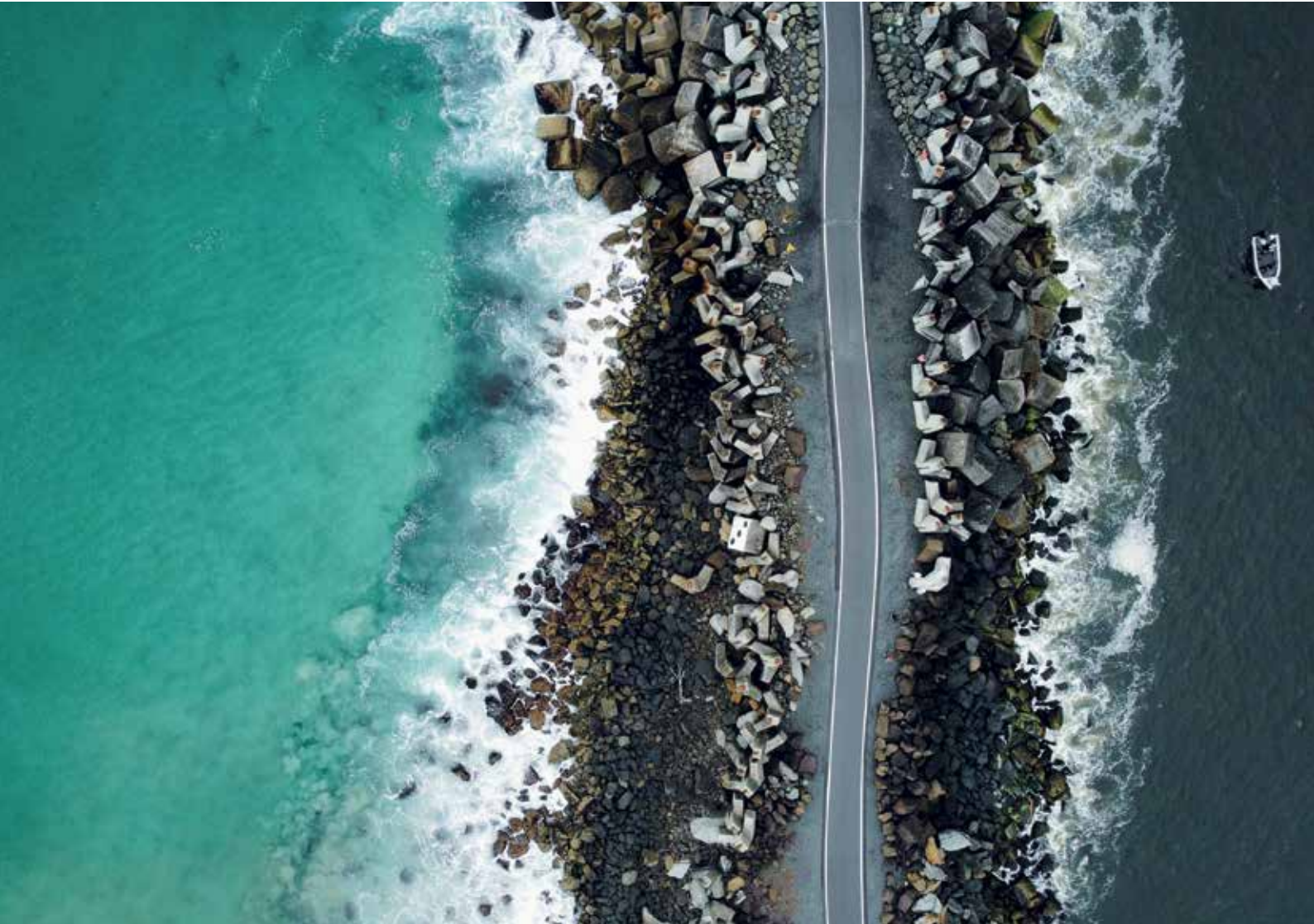


the ballina wave

theballinawave.com.au

Community news for Ballina and The Plateau

Issue 41 | March 2025

A photograph of a family of four smiling together outdoors at night. In the foreground, a young boy with blonde hair is smiling, and next to him is an older man with a white beard and glasses. To the right, a young girl with brown hair is also smiling. A man's face is partially visible on the far left. The background is softly lit with warm, out-of-focus lights, suggesting an outdoor evening setting.

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March is a month of energy and community here in the Northern Rivers, and this edition of *The Ballina Wave* is a reflection of just that.

The next four weeks offer a vast array of events and activities from bull riding to markets, and plenty of opportunity to join one of the many local groups which are doing good across the region.

March also brings International Women's Day, a time to celebrate the incredible contributions of women in our region. In honour of the event, we invited Mayor Sharon Cadwallader to contribute this month's Councillor column and reflect upon the inspiring women shaping our community today, from business leaders to volunteers making a difference (pg 10).

For history lovers, our story on local weddings through the decades takes a nostalgic look at the gowns, traditions and stories that have played a part in our region's history (pg 25).

And finally, an important new service has arrived, headspace Ballina, offering vital mental health support for young people. In a time when mental well-being is more important than ever, this is a welcome addition to our town. Read all about it in this month's In Focus story (pp 28-29).

Until next month,
Kate Parry, Managing Editor.

Contact us

Got a story? Get in touch.
Phone: 0424 610 732
Email: editor@theballinawave.com.au

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The fine print

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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.



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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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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What: International Women's Day Lunch
When: Friday 7 March, 12pm to 2.30pm
Where: Ballina RSL Auditorium

Celebrate International Women's Day with the Ballina Chamber of Commerce. Enjoy a delicious two-course lunch, and an inspiring lineup featuring keynote speakers. Tickets and more info: ballinachamber.com.au



What: Bulls, Broncs and Barrels
When: Saturday 8 March, 4pm
Where: Alstonville Showground

Experience the adrenaline of rodeo action as top cowboys and cowgirls from NSW and QLD compete in bull riding, bronc busting, and barrel racing. For more info, see page 16.



What: Wendy Matthews Live in Concert
When: Saturday 8 March, 8pm
Where: Ballina RSL

Enjoy the timeless voice and captivating artistry of Wendy Matthews, as she brings her extraordinary talent to Ballina for an intimate evening of music. Tickets at: ballinarsl.com.au



What: Byron Bay Fabulous Ladies Wine Soiree
When: Thursday 13 March, 6.30pm to 10pm
Where: Capiche Restaurant, Ballina

One of Australia's best organic wine producers, Bosworth Wines, shares three of its finest alongside a bespoke menu created to match the wines. More info: fabulousladieswinesociety.com



What: Ballina Night Markets
When: Friday 21 and Saturday 22 March
Where: Missingham Park, Ballina

A great afternoon and evening with lots of entertainment, food stalls, games and rides.

For more information, visit: facebook.com/events/s/ballina-summer-fair



What: Pub Markets at the Broadwater Hotel
When: Sunday 23 March, 12pm
Where: Broadwater Hotel

Featuring food trucks, market stalls, fresh produce, and car boot sales, this monthly market has something for everyone. Stall setup is completely free. For more info call the Hotel ph: 0493 844 683.

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
Saturday	Bangalow Uki Blue Knob Gallery Lismore Markets
Sunday	Ballina

For more information visit
discoverballina.com.au

Council prioritise CCTV installation



Pictured: Prime Minister Anthony Albanese recently visited the Ballina Shire to announce a funding commitment for CCTV. Source: Facebook/Justine Elliot MP.

Ballina Shire Council has confirmed that the installation of CCTV cameras is a key priority, following its December Ordinary Meeting. The decision comes after a scoping report by Matryx Consulting highlighted

the benefits of CCTV and outlined a framework for implementation across the Shire.

Following the meeting, Council resolved to seek funding from State and Federal Governments, with letters to be sent to relevant ministers and local MPs requesting financial support. The General Manager has also been authorised to apply for grants to help fund the project.

To ensure the initiative remains a focus, Council will include the CCTV rollout in its annual Non-recurrent Community Infrastructure report. This report, typically reviewed at the April Finance and Facilities Committee meeting, assists in determining funding priorities for the upcoming Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The motion received unanimous support from Councillors, but the next steps will depend on securing funding. A major boost could come from the Federal Government's recent commitment to crime prevention in the region.

During a February visit to the North Coast, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced that a re-elected Labor Government will invest \$3 million into a North Coast Crime Prevention Infrastructure Action Plan - allocating \$1 million each to Ballina, Byron, and Tweed Shire Councils.

Local MP Justine Elliot stated that the funds will support a range of safety measures, including CCTV, improved lighting, bollards, fencing, and landscaping - all designed to enhance community security.



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Improved access to Lighthouse Beach

Construction has commenced on a new beach access ramp and improved emergency vehicle access at Lighthouse Beach, East Ballina. The works which aim to ensure people of all abilities can enjoy Ballina's coastline, will include:

- a concrete ramp with stainless steel handrails and tactile surface indicators to provide universal access to the beach
- an extension of the existing emergency vehicle concrete ramp
- a concrete block retaining wall with stairs leading up to the beach showers.

During construction, alternative beach access will be available via the front of the Lighthouse Beach Surf Life Saving Club slab. Lifeguard operations and the kiosk located under the Surf Club building will remain open throughout the works.

Works are expected to be completed mid-April, weather permitting.

The project is funded by the both the Australian and New South Wales Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

\$573.3m boost for women's healthcare

North Coast women will benefit from a \$573.3 million investment by the Government to improve healthcare access and affordability.

Local MP Justine Elliot announced key measures, including the first PBS listing of new contraceptive pills in 30 years, saving 50,000 women hundreds annually. Medicare payments for IUDs and implants will also increase, reducing costs by up to \$400 for 300,000 women.

Menopause support will expand with a new Medicare rebate, health professional training, and updated clinical guidelines. Additionally, new menopausal hormone therapies will be PBS-listed for the first time in 20 years, benefiting 150,000 women. Endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics will grow, while pharmacy trials will allow concession cardholders to access contraceptives and UTI treatments at no extra cost.

Some measures will take effect almost immediately, like the PBS listing of new contraceptive pills, and the menopausal hormone therapies. Other measures will be delivered by a re-elected Albanese Labor Government.



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Councillor column

by Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Ballina Shire Mayor



International Women's Day provides a moment to reflect on the remarkable progress women have made and acknowledges the challenges that still lie ahead.

I have been fortunate to have strong women as role models in my life - none more so than my mother and grandmother. Their determination, wisdom, and compassion helped shape who I am today. They taught me the value of family and the importance of being involved in and supporting the community around us.

True equality means recognising that women should be supported in every avenue they choose - whether that's dressing up for the Ballina Cup, stepping into a boardroom, or pulling on steel cap boots on a construction site.

I am incredibly lucky in my role as Mayor to engage with so many inspiring women, who make significant contributions across every sector and work tirelessly for the betterment of our community.

From business to volunteering, healthcare to education, trades to emergency services, or agriculture, women are helping shape our Shire with their diverse skills, dedication, and leadership. It is also important to acknowledge the vital contributions of women who continue to take on traditional roles in raising families, as caregivers and mothers with multiskilling part of their everyday lives.

Celebrating women means celebrating their choices, their strengths, and their right to thrive in any environment.

However, achieving gender equality requires more than celebration, it calls for action. One of the most pressing issues that I am a strong advocate for is domestic and family violence. Too many women remain trapped in dangerous situations due to inadequate support systems.

Federal policies must do more to provide real pathways for women to escape violence and ensure there is sufficient after-care to rebuild their lives with dignity and security.

This includes increased funding for crisis services, stronger protections for those at risk, and more education on healthy relationships. Change requires policies that match the current situation, along with a collective effort. As a community, we must remain committed to creating a future where no one lives in fear.

By fostering respect, safety, and equality, we can create an environment where every person, regardless of gender, can succeed and contribute to a better, more inclusive Shire.

To all the amazing women, stand tall, be heard and celebrate being a woman.

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Stay safe this storm season and support the SES

by Tamara Smith, Member for Ballina



The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) reminds us that we are still in storm season and that storms can strike at any time, bringing damaging winds, heavy rain, hail, and flash flooding. While we can't fully predict or prevent storms, there are simple actions we can take to reduce their impact.

The SES advises a three-step approach: Prepare, Respond, and Recover. This includes knowing the safest place to be during a storm - under sturdy shelter and away from powerlines, trees and low-lying areas if possible; understanding warning signs by checking the Bureau of Meteorology is a great way to keep up to date about a storm event; and creating an emergency plan for your household. Simple tasks like securing loose items outdoors, clearing gutters, cutting back branches overhanging your home, and checking your roof for leaks can make a big difference.

Power outages will continue to be a major challenge for our communities. I'm very focused this year on more resourcing of community owned solar



Picture source: Facebook/NSW SES Ballina.

batteries, and for household stand-alone systems so that we can adapt to the global warming and climate fuelled extreme weather events.

During the past year, SES volunteers responded to over 29,000 storm incidents, with fallen trees and leaking roofs being the most common issues. We are deeply grateful for their hard work, and we can support them by following safety advice and preparing in advance.


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Cumbalum Residents Association

by Kay Oxley



Pictured, left: Councillors Erin Karsten and Damian Loone, with Marshall Chang (CRA President). Pictured, right: Basketball hoop competition participants.

The Cumbalum Residents Association started the year with a Community Gathering and BBQ held on Sunday 5 February.

Councillors Damian Loone and Erin Karsten accepted our invitation to meet and provide the community with updates on issues that are important to us. The Development Consent for the shopping centre is imminent, however the battle with State Government for the upgrade to the Cumbalum Interchange is proving to be a hard one.

The community also had an opportunity to learn about our evolving Cumbalum Community Circle (wetlands) Project.

A Draft Plan of Management has been compiled to facilitate discussions with Ballina Shire Council and the landowner of the wetlands. For more information, visit: cumbalum.wixsite.com/residents/blog. This is an opportunity for you to have your say, and the Association is keen to seek feedback and comments from the community.

Ballina Social Sport facilitated our basketball hoops competition which proved to be a big success. Lucky winners received prizes, and congratulations to the two participants who won a coaching session with Hoop Lab from the Gold Coast. A lucky draw was also conducted with awesome prizes handed out to the winners. The Association would like to thank all our sponsors and volunteers. Without your assistance and generous donations, this event would not have been possible.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 18 March, commencing at 6pm at the Cumbalum Sports Complex. Join us if you can. Register your attendance on our website, through the events page: cumbalum.wixsite.com/residents/events

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Ballina RSL sub-Branch youth programs



Pictured: Ballina RSL sub-Branch 2024-25 Youth Ambassadors.

The Ballina RSL sub-Branch is looking to create connections between generations through its two youth programs.

Youth Ambassador Program

Launched in February 2024, the Youth Ambassador Program was created to keep ANZAC traditions alive and ensure young people play a meaningful role in commemorations. Open to students (Yr4 - Yr12) residing in the Ballina Shire LGA, applicants submitted short video entries addressing a specific question about remembrance and legacy. Three outstanding students were then selected as the 2024-25 Youth Ambassadors:

- Olivia Flanagan - Xavier Catholic College
- Ava Cribb - Holy Family Catholic Primary School
- Nixon Egan - Teven-Tintenbar Public School.

These ambassadors actively participated in major 2024 commemorations, taking on prominent roles in ceremonies, marches, and wreath-laying. They also attended official luncheons and met dignitaries, including Ballina Shire Mayor Sharon Cadwallader.

Applications for new ambassadors opened in February 2025, with details available via local schools or by emailing: youthcoordinator@ballinasubbranch.org

Youth Drum Corps and Marching Band

Inspired by a dedicated group of students who formed a Drum Corps for the 2024 ANZAC Day March, the Ballina RSL sub-Branch has committed funding to establish a full youth marching band. Young musicians who play percussion, brass or woodwind instruments are encouraged to join and participate in upcoming ANZAC Day commemorations.

Rehearsals will commence soon, and interested musicians can inquire via email: youthcoordinator@ballinasubbranch.org

Community wants crime prevention

Community meetings across the Northern Rivers in recent months have been clear they want to see causes addressed, as part of the response to the youth crime wave. At meetings in Ballina, Lennox Head, Suffolk Park, Goonellabah and elsewhere people have been coming together to share concerns about crime and look for positive solutions.

‘This is a compassionate community,’ says Mandy Nolan, the Greens candidate for the Northern Rivers seat of Richmond. ‘People don’t want their houses broken into, but people also want to see solutions that prevent crime.’

Nolan is ambassador for the local non-profit Human Nature, a group working with 14 to 18-year-olds struggling in the Northern Rivers, offering physical challenges in the natural environment, such as hiking and surfing, with the aim of helping young people to re-engage with school and work.

‘Clearly there are complex causes, including the devastation from the 2022 floods, and the crisis of unaffordable housing,’ says Mandy. ‘But all the evidence suggests it’s much more cost-effective to break the cycles that cause offending, through programs that prevent or divert people from the justice system, rather than spend a million dollars a year locking a young person up.’

One group repeatedly championed by police and others at recent community crime meetings is BackTrack, which helps keep young people out of jail by offering skills and employment opportunities.

Another popular local initiative - running for more than a decade from Grafton to the Tweed - was the Aboriginal Alternative Learning Program, designed to keep kids educated and out of detention. The program was closed abruptly in August last year, cutting loose many at-risk youth, and teachers and parents involved see a direct connection with the local rise of car theft and break and enters since then.

‘Parents, teachers, legal experts, senior police and community leaders all know we need to fully fund diversionary programs that keep young kids out of jail, not close them down, if we want to support at-risk kids and keep our communities safe,’ concludes Mandy.



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Rotary back in full swing

by Jodie Shelley, Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond



Our members are back in full swing, doing what they do best - volunteering and making a positive impact in our community and beyond. After a busy 2024, we're not slowing down.



Over the past two months, we've fired up the BBQs to raise funds for our projects and had a fantastic day at the Ballina Cup Races, managing parking and running the Club's annual raffle. A huge thank you to our incredible community for your ongoing support - we couldn't do it without you.

Late last year, we proudly funded the installation of a new defibrillator outside IGA in Lennox Head. This life-saving device is accessible 24/7 to the Lennox community, made possible through

funds raised from our Charity Barefoot Bowls Day at Cherry Street Sports. We're grateful for their support in helping us provide this vital piece of equipment.

As we continue our regular volunteering at Ballina Public School's breakfast club twice a week, our Recycle and Reuse team is hard at work collecting equipment and supplies to send overseas - saving a mountain of landfill while supporting communities in need.

Belonging to Rotary means embracing endless opportunities to give back. If you'd like to be part of something meaningful, we'd love to hear from you. Call ph: 0427 287 627 and join us in making a difference.


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March 28 - April 6

Inner Wheel's Tea Party



Pictured: Rachael Beck. Source: Supplied.

The Alstonville Inner Wheel Club is going 'all out' to welcome new and younger members by hosting a special tea party.

The family-friendly event will feature a performance by Rachael Beck, a locally raised and nationally renowned actor, who will present segments from her show, *Rachael Beck - In Her Own Words*, celebrating the achievements of remarkable Australian women - perfectly aligning with Inner Wheel's mission. There will also be games, prizes for the best and most outlandish 'mad hat' and teacup, and other fun activities.

Inner Wheel is inviting women, particularly those with young children, to come and discover what the Club is all about. With a safe play area for kids, finger food, and tea included in the \$10 entry fee (children free), it's a perfect way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Guests will also learn about Inner Wheel's National Cord Blood Project and how the Club supports local families in need.

When: Saturday 22 March, 11am to 2pm

Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports Club

More info: Facebook/Inner Wheel Club - Alstonville NSW



Rafiki Royale: a night of glamour with purpose



Ballina - the glam event of the year is going to be just up the road. Lennox Head will be hosting *Rafiki Royale*, a spectacular fundraising event supporting Rafiki Mwema, a locally-based charity dedicated to providing safe homes, therapy, and education for vulnerable children in Kenya. With a Las Vegas-inspired theme, this dazzling evening, on Saturday 17 May, promises to be the social event of the year, all for a truly life-changing cause. Get your tickets, book your cab and dig out the sequins, you don't want to miss this.

An unmissable night for a worthy cause

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.

Why Rafiki Mwema needs your support

Rafiki Mwema provides a safe haven for 65 children and employs 45 dedicated staff, including Maasai guards and trained German Shepherds to ensure their security. Their work extends to a vital street program in Kenya, offering safety, education, and a daily meal to 100 homeless children.

With no government funding, the charity relies on fundraising and donations to cover their \$55,000 monthly operating costs. Due to the rising cost of living, donations have significantly declined, placing their essential services at risk.

Founding Board Member Claire Harding shares, 'People are struggling to feed their families, and we understand why they need to pause donations. Unfortunately, this means we are losing donors daily. It breaks my heart to think that without enough funds, we may not be able to provide the only meal these street children receive each day.'

How you can help

- Become an event sponsor: Exclusive sponsorship packages are now available, providing businesses with premium brand exposure while supporting a meaningful cause. Industry-exclusive sponsorships are offered on a first-come basis.
- Buy your tickets: Gather friends, family, colleagues and clients for an incredible night out.
- Donate and share: Spread the word about Rafiki Mwema and contribute to their mission.

For sponsorship enquiries, email: claire@rafikimwema.com

To purchase tickets or make a donation, visit: rafikimwema.com

Follow Rafiki Mwema on Facebook and Instagram.

About Rafiki Mwema

Rafiki Mwema, Swahili for Loyal Friend, is an Australian-registered charity founded in 2012 by three Lennox Head women who wanted to make a difference. What started as a small rental home for 22 young girls has now grown into a 14-acre farm providing care, therapy, and education to 65 children, some as young as 18 months, who have endured unimaginable abuse. Rafiki Mwema is committed to healing these children and reintegrating them into safe and loving communities.

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Alstonville Bulls, Broncs and Barrels



Get ready for an action-packed night as the Alstonville Agricultural Society brings Alstonville Bulls, Broncs and Barrels to the main show ring on Saturday 8 March.

Following the success of the annual show's bull ride, this expanded rodeo event will showcase bucking broncs, barrel racing, and thrilling bull rides, promising non-stop excitement for spectators. Run under the National Rodeo Association, the competition will feature top cowboys and cowgirls from NSW and QLD, all vying for championship points.

Gates open at 4pm, with the main event kicking off at 5pm. There'll be a bar, BBQ, and a variety of food trucks to enjoy.

Discounted tickets are available online at: alstonvilleshow.com or grab your ticket at the gate on the day.

Volunteers needed to brighten lives



Pictured: George (L) with John Welch, volunteer (R). Source: Supplied.

Are you looking for a way to make a positive impact in your community? St Andrew's Village is calling on volunteers to help bring joy to the lives of its residents in Ballina and Byron Bay.

The COVID pandemic left many feeling isolated and led to a decline

in active volunteer numbers. Volunteering, however, provides a valuable opportunity to reconnect, build new friendships, and enhance mental well-being for volunteers and those they support.

'As our population ages, the need for community support grows,' says Kim Thomas, Retirement Village Manager. 'Volunteering is more than just an act of kindness - it's about creating meaningful connections that enrich everyone involved.'

At St Andrew's Village, there's a role for everyone. From leading craft activities and playing games to helping

in the garden or taking residents on outdoor walks, volunteers have the opportunity to make a big difference. Age is no barrier - John, the Village's oldest volunteer at 84, has been spreading smiles since 1988.

Volunteering can also fulfill Centrelink obligations for those over 55 and unemployed, providing a sense of purpose during life transitions like retirement.

If you or someone you know would love to get involved, contact Kim on ph: 6620 5841 or Kellie ph: 6620 5942.

A little time can make a big difference.



t: 02 6686 7522 | w: tamarasmith.org.au | e: ballina@parliament.nsw.gov.au | f: Tamara Smith MP

TAMARA SMITH MP

MEMBER FOR BALLINA

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Authorised by Tamara Smith MP, Member for Ballina. Funded using parliamentary entitlements.



JP Services at the Library

by Robert Hutton, Ballina Library



Pictured: Volunteer Justice of the Peace, Narelle Warren, at the Ballina Library.

In this modern age of email, electronic documents and digital signatures, many people find they need a Justice of the Peace to verify their identity or to witness their signature on important legal documents. As a result, one of the most common inquiries we get here at the Library is whether we have a Justice of the Peace present - right now, if possible.

The short answer to this question is 'yes', we do have a Justice of the Peace at all our Ballina Area branches, but only on certain days and select times.

Ballina Library has a JP on Wednesdays from 10am to 11am and from 1pm to 2pm, Thursdays from 1pm to 2pm and on Fridays from 1pm to 2pm. At **Lennox Head Library**, there is a JP every Wednesday from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. It should be noted, that JP services at these branches are provided by unpaid volunteers and are subject to the volunteers being available on the day. For this reason, we recommend patrons call before coming in, preferably a few minutes after the advertised starting time. At **Alstonville Library**, the JP is a staff member (Branch Technician,

Jo Chaffey) who is available most weekdays from 9am to 12.30pm and from 1.30pm to 5pm. There may, however, be various reasons why Jo is not available on a particular day or time, so again, call the Library first.

At all branches, JP services are free of charge and bookings are not required.

It is also important to note that the primary roles of a JP are to witness a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit, and to certify copies of original documents. They do not give legal advice or deal with more complicated issues.

For more information call your branch: Ballina, ph: 6686 2831
Lennox Head, ph: 6687 639
Alstonville, ph: 6628 5527.

Our Timeless Threads

Bringing fashion and dignity to aged care



Pictured (L-R): Judith, owning the runway of her life alongside Maia. Credit: Anthony Ong.

A new community initiative, Our Timeless Threads, is transforming the lives of aged care residents across the Northern Rivers by blending fashion with meaningful connection. Founded by nurse and fashion designer Maia Willow, the initiative brings immersive pop-up fashion experiences into aged care homes, allowing residents to rediscover the joy of self-expression through clothing.

'Reclaiming the joy of self-expression is vital at any age,'

says Maia. 'At Our Timeless Threads, we provide dignity, confidence, and a sense of being celebrated.'

Each event is designed to be a fully sensory experience, with themed décor, music, and nostalgic-inspired fashion that encourages engagement. Residents can touch, try on, and choose their own fabrics, restoring autonomy and pride in their appearance. For those living with dementia, familiar sights, sounds, and textures can help spark cherished memories, creating moments of connection and joy.

In addition to supporting aged care residents, Our Timeless Threads tackles fashion waste through a collaboration with RYCL. Donations of pre-loved garments are either repurposed into stylish, comfortable clothing for residents or transformed into new yarn, helping reduce Australia's staggering 200,000 tonnes of textile waste each year.

Now, Maia is calling for community support - whether through clothing donations, volunteering at events, or fundraising - to ensure the project continues to grow. Donations can be dropped at Global Ripple Charity in Byron Bay, or collected within 10km of the Byron Bay Industrial Estate.

'Together, we can bring dignity and delight to our elders while caring for the planet,' Maia says.

To learn more or get involved, visit: ourtimelessthreads.com.au



Community in brief

Alstonville Probus Club

The year commenced with exciting events and members flying over to Norfolk Island - an utterly delightful island, with its people, history, local produce and seafood resonating with each and every visitor.

As is customary for the first general meeting, recently joined members enlightened the group with tales of their livelihoods, namely Peter, Sue and John - what better way to introduce themselves to their new-found friends. It's always quite remarkable as to what comes out of a conversation - places, people, things that happen along the way are quite similar in many ways to those also in the room.

A very interesting presentation from Dr Richard Arnott in February, had all ears attuned. Briefly, Richard was born in South Africa, trained in medicine in the UK then did his first surgical posting in Saudi Arabia. Without divulging too much, Richard found himself interned in gaol for quite some time, something he will never forget. Now retired, Richard devotes his time volunteering with the Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital. This is a remarkable story of survival in a foreign land, courage and determination with his end story depicting the use of his skills in saving precious injured wildlife.

Traditionally, March is the month for the Annual General Meeting following the general monthly meeting. All positions are declared vacant save for that of the Incoming President and Vice

President that are already decided the previous year. In between these two important meetings, well-known local poet Lyndon Lochrey will entertain members with his sparkling wit.

Also this month, St Patrick's Day will take the form of a Mystery Bus tour and a Changeover lunch will be held at Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club. For meeting details, see pg 21.

Alstonville RSL Day Club

Known locally as the Tibouchina Day Club, the group meets each Wednesday at the Rous Mill Hall to offer senior members of the community a setting in which to develop friendships and social support networks and a sense of belonging. It is an opportunity for members to be involved in a varied program of activities that enhance health and wellbeing. Meetings begin with a welcome and morning tea which is usually followed by a gentle exercise program, and a mental stimulation activity. Lunch is served at 12pm, followed by musical entertainment from 1pm-2pm. There are also theme days, an occasional guest speaker and bus outings.

Current contribution fees are \$10 per day, fees are extra for the occasional bus outing. There's a monthly newsletter which keeps members informed of Club activities. 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 has vacancies and new members are welcome. They are also seeking volunteers. Please contact group co-ordinator, Marette, on ph: 0421 272 643.

Ballina Community Men's Shed

The year has begun on a high note, with 92 members and lots of interest from prospective members.

The group continues with the monthly BBQ the third Wednesday of the month. Upcoming BBQ speaker is Graeme Eggins.

On Tuesday 4 March the Ballina Shed will be host to the Zone 12 Cluster meeting with a 9.30am smoko at the Shed, followed by an 11am meeting at the Anzac Room at the Ballina RSL where representatives of Sheds in our district will present their reports.

Ballina CWA Branch

Remember two dates this month. Wednesday 5 March will be the 'in rooms' market stall, with cakes, slices, preserves and craft for sale to the public from 9.30am to 11.30am.

Then on Wednesday 19 March the group will be holding a card making class from 9am to 11.30am. The cost is \$5 and \$3 for morning tea. To reserve your place please call Gai (President), ph: 0433 129 339.

Mahjong is held every Wednesday in the rooms from 12.30pm to 4pm. Phone Helen on ph: 0431 819 790 for more information.



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Ballina Ladies Probus

The group's Friendship and Coffee gathering at Swish was well attended by members who enjoyed a delicious morning tea in great company.

Members are invited to the Club's AGM at Crowley Activity Centre on Wednesday 5 March. All positions are declared vacant and the traditional Changeover Luncheon will be held afterward at the same location.

Planning is going ahead for some very interesting guest speakers and outings for the forthcoming year. Ladies are welcome to join the group for general meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at Ballina RSL at 10am. Enquiries to Beryl ph: 0409 285 282.

Probus Club of Ballina Waters

At the Club's March Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 19 March, all committee positions will fall vacant and a new committee elected. Although many of the existing office bearers will stand again, new faces are welcome. A luncheon to celebrate the changeover will immediately follow.

On the social front, the first activity in March will be Happy Hour on the second Friday of the month, where members meet to enjoy a twilight gathering of snacks and drinks. This will be the last one for some months as the event is only held over daylight saving. Next there will be a mystery bus trip on Wednesday 12 March.

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

Regular monthly meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, where there is usually a guest speaker - there will be a guest speaker on the day of the AGM.

Probus is a social club for fun, friendship and fellowship, and it does not involve any service work or fund-raising activities. All welcome, see page 21 for details.

Quota Alstonville

Members have been busy creating all sorts of bags to support the community. There are Dignity Bags filled with a range of personal care items for disadvantaged women, and 1,000 orange bags which the ladies sponsored for

Our House clients. These are used to carry personal items between treatments. At Christmas the group adopted five families through the Adopt a Family program, with over 17 children involved. Besides gift vouchers to help them through the festive season, they also gave each family a Fun Day Bag, filled with beach balls, sunscreen, bubble wands, towels and items for an inexpensive day out.

For the new school year, the group has filled 40 school backpacks with all the necessities for back to school. These were distributed through the Family Support Network.

These are all small projects in our community, but have such an important role bringing relief and pleasure to many.

The Club's President, Diane Parker, was honoured at the Ballina Shire Australia Day awards, receiving the Volunteer of the Year award. With over 30 years in Quota Alstonville, Diane has instigated many of the programs in which Quota has been active. Funds raised at the annual Craft and Garden Fair have improved countless lives; her involvement in Quota in a Regional and District capacity gave the group the opportunity to distribute large amounts of funds donated from other clubs around Australia during the 2017 and 2022 floods.

It's back to work with a new year and the first item on the calendar is the Friendship High Tea in March. This event celebrates the many women in our community who contribute in so many ways. For more details visit: quotaalstonville.com or see meeting details on page 21.

Wollongbar Probus

January's lunch at Wollongbar Tavern had 25 members and one visitor which was an encouraging start to the year. There was lots of friendly chatter whilst awaiting the meals, and it was an enjoyable time for all.

On Monday 20 February the first general meeting was held for the year, and notice went out regarding the Annual General Meeting which will be held on Thursday 20 March - directly after the general meeting at 10.30am. This will then be followed by a changeover lunch.

The group is hoping to welcome new members this year to enjoy friendship, fellowship and fun - the three main aims of all Probus Clubs. You will find the details of the Club meetings on page 21.

BALLINA BRIDGE DUPLICATION *building a more resilient road network*

Plans are progressing to duplicate Fishery Creek and Canal bridges to improve evacuation options during floods and build a more resilient road network. The project also involves investigations into raising key road sections. Construction is set to begin late 2025, with pre-construction work already underway, including underground service relocations and earthworks.

→ For more information visit ballina.nsw.gov.au/major-projects

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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: Bob Costello, ph: 0410 598 523

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



Plateau markets a success for local economy

by Market Manager/Chamber President, Jemma Coulter

The monthly Alstonville Community Markets are back, offering residents and visitors an exciting opportunity to shop for great food and produce, artisan crafts, unique handmade items, and one-of-a-kind local creations.

The next market will take place at the Alstonville Showgrounds on Saturday 15 March, from 8.30am to 1pm, and then every third Saturday through to December.

A joint project of the Alstonville Agricultural Society and the Alstonville Wollongbar Chamber of Commerce, the monthly event aims to support local producers, provide a platform for new/up-and-coming businesses and celebrate the rich culture and talent within the community. Through the markets, we're able to highlight the best of what the Plateau has to offer

while supporting our local economy and creating an event that everyone can enjoy.

With each market, attendees can expect a diverse and changing range of stalls showcasing everything from fresh fruits and vegetables, a wide assortment of international foods, locally crafted fashion and jewellery, and unique art pieces. The markets also provide a space for stall holders to sell directly to the community, cutting out the middlemen and keeping profits here.

Beyond just a shopping experience, the Alstonville Community Markets are also a social event, offering a place for locals to connect with one another and share in the spirit of community. They are sure to become a staple of the town's cultural calendar, attracting longtime residents and visitors.

We know from our trial run in 2024 that our promotion is attracting people to visit the Plateau from up to 100km away and we are using our promotions this year to encourage visitors to spend more time here and spend more dollars with local shops and cafes when they come.

We are also partnering with local service clubs and charities to offer them a fundraising opportunity at each market via a gold coin gate donation. Our 2024 markets raised thousands of dollars already.

The Alstonville Chamber of Commerce and the Agricultural Society are excited about the impact the markets will have, ensuring that they continue to evolve into an event that supports and strengthens the local economy while providing an enjoyable outing.

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Women Up North: training to tackle violence



Women Up North in partnership with Family Support Network, is hosting free, face-to-face training to enhance workforce responses to sexual violence across Northern NSW. The training, which will take place at venues from Grafton to Tweed, through to June 2025, is funded by the Department of Communities and Justice in response to some alarming statistics: over 2 million women in Australia have experienced sexual assault since the age of 15, including many women in Northern NSW. Worryingly, reports of new forms of sexual violence are increasing.

Elena Manning, Learning and Development Manager for Women Up North said, ‘This is a crisis and that is not an exaggeration, we have to take action and make people aware of the facts. 90% of young women expect to be sexually assaulted in their lifetime, and that is absolutely unacceptable in our society in 2025 - it has to stop. This training will help people respond to disclosures of sexual violence. We had such positive feedback from the training we ran last year and are looking forward to making it available to more people in the workforce.’

The training is facilitated by experts with extensive experience in gendered violence response and is delivered in a trauma-informed, safe, and inclusive environment, with catering provided at accessible venues across Northern NSW. It is designed for professionals across the community sector, including domestic violence services, healthcare, community agencies, non-government organisations, and legal services.

All genders are welcome to attend.

Please note, the training content is not aimed at those with advanced expertise in sexual violence response, or clinicians specialising in this field.

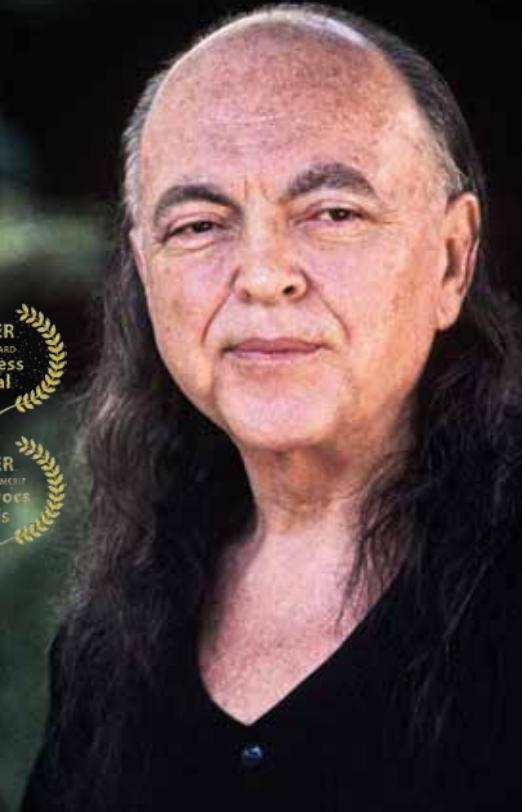
Upcoming training dates:

- Tuesday 4 March and Wednesday 2nd April - Lismore
- Wednesday 12 March - Grafton
- Tuesday 18 March - Tweed
- Tuesday 25 March - Byron
- Tuesday 8 April - Ballina

Each session runs from 9.15am to 3pm, with morning tea and lunch provided.

To book, visit: events.humanitix.com/host/womenupnorth

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Weddings over the years

by John Sim and Cathy Cohen, Alstonville Plateau Historical Society



Pictured (L-R): Rishworth wedding party leaving Wollongbar church 1905; Verlie Crawford wearing her sister Dulcie's dress at her 1949 wedding; Dulcie Crawford at her 1948 wedding. Source: Supplied.

A new exhibition is opening this month at Crawford House Museum in Alstonville - *As Time Goes By: Weddings Over the Years*. The event will feature a cavalcade of wedding dresses from the laced-up discipline and handiwork of the Edwardian times, to the post-war freedom of movement in the 1920s and onwards, through decades of decoration and styles that reflect our cultural changes.

The display will take people back to a bygone era when newspapers regularly featured lengthy stories about local weddings. These stories helped contribute to community cohesion and provide evidence of the time-honoured skills involved, from engagements and glory boxes, through to kitchen teas, weddings, wedding breakfasts and even tin-kettling - the tradition of making a great deal of noise as the newly-weds headed off into the future. Originally done with things like saucepans and wooden spoons, it was often a job for the best man to organise. Later versions involved tying empty cans to the back bumper bar of the groom's car.

Frequently such articles began with the statement, 'The bride entered the church on the arm of her father.' Then followed often very detailed descriptions of the bride's gown, the veil and the floral bouquet. Similar detail was also provided for the dresses of the bridesmaids and mothers of the newly-weds.

Wedding gifts were often described as 'numerous and costly'. In some cases, the descriptions were quite explicit. For example, for a 1919 wedding a gift from the archdeacon was 'a beautiful white Morocco-bound prayer book.' Some actual gifts from this era will form part of the exhibition.

Old gowns

The display will reflect changing fashions, fabrics and technology. The oldest wedding gown was worn by Isabella Cooke, who made it herself. The skirt includes a bustle and a heavy satin long-sleeved jacket that uses whale bones. It is gold in colour, despite Queen Victoria's 1840 wedding to Prince Albert starting a long-running preference for white wedding gowns. This gown is actually listed on the National Dress Register.

Like Isabella's gown, another very early gown that is rarely seen on public display is the one in ivory silk worn by Olive White for her marriage to Ambrose Crawford in 1910. Featuring an incredibly small waistline, it has a swathed bodice with long sleeves cut in a Magyar style. The very traditional framed, studio wedding photo (he's seated and she's standing) hangs permanently above the fireplace in Crawford House.

Recycling wedding gowns

Two of Olive's daughters were married in the years just after World War II, when many items were rationed, especially fabrics. Dulcie was able to wear a new gown in 1948 when she married Ian Watt at the Methodist Church in Alstonville. However, when Verlie married Robert Dudgeon at the same church in 1949, she wore her sister's gown. As was common, a change in veil or head-dress was all that was required. Verlie's was in fluted, embroidered tulle and featured orange blossom.

Old stories

A *Northern Star* report on 8 December 1905 about the marriage of William Hepburn and Florence Amy Rishworth noted that it was the first wedding in the new St Paul's Church at Wollongbar. The detailed description stated that there was an arch of ferns and flowers in the chancel from which was suspended a floral wedding bell. What the paper did not record was the fact that when it came time for the verger to open the church, the key could not be found. Plans were quickly formulated for the couple to be married under the trees. Fortunately, the keys were located and a more traditional ceremony ensued. Florence's gown of cream silk muslin bedecked with guipure lace and ruched ribbon will be on display at the exhibition.

Crawford House Museum

The exhibition will run from Friday 7 March until Sunday 22 June (closed over Easter). The museum is at 10 Wardell Road, Alstonville and is open Fridays 10am-4pm and Sundays 1pm-4pm or at other times by appointment for groups. Enquiries ph: 6628 1829, or email: info@aphsmuseum.org.au



Meet the producer: Pulp Burger

by Kylie McGregor, Ballina Farmers and Producers Market



Pulp Burger has become a Sunday morning sensation at the Ballina Farmers and Producers Market, serving up hand-crafted, American-style cheeseburgers made with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Meet Garry and Kerri, the passionate pair behind the grill.

Where are you based and what do you produce?

We are based in Ballina and we provide hand-made burgers that are made fresh to order every Sunday morning. We try to source our ingredients locally and use as many products from Ballina Farmers and Producers Market as we can. Like everyone, the challenge at the moment is eggs, however luckily we have a great supplier at the market.

How did you come to start Pulp Burger and what attracted you to having a stall at the market?

We started Pulp during COVID after moving up from Sydney. The idea came from the desire to eat an authentic American-style cheeseburger. The decision to start at the farmers' market was originally to test our product and to see the demand and how popular they would be with the locals, with our intention to eventually open a shop. Luckily, the markets have been busier than we expected so we are happy where we are for now. We chose the name after watching *Pulp Fiction* – we realised how many burger references there are in the movie, and it also provided an easy branding and marketing spin.

Your burgers have a bit of a cult following at the market. What is it that makes them so special?

Our burgers are made from scratch with fresh produce, we trim the beef/pork, grind it ourselves and then hand roll each patty, cooking to order to ensure a juicy burger every time. I think they are special because of the love that goes into each burger from the preparation right through to the careful placement of the pickles, to the way it is wrapped and presented.

What is your connection to the region?

I (Garry) grew up in this area from a teenager surfing and had a cafe in Byron in the 90s. My family are all here and it

seemed like a good place to come back to for a more laidback lifestyle.

What do you love most about the area?

The beaches, rivers and all the amazing produce grown and produced in the area.

How important is it for our community to be able to shop at the farmers market and buy directly from the people who grow/produce their food?

Shopping at a farmers' market you know where your food has come from, how far it has travelled; you can talk to the farmer/producer about it; when it was picked; how best to keep it or eat it. You are also supporting your community and the area in general.

What's the secret to a great burger?

Fresh produce. And each item of a burger is important from the bun to the sauce to the patty itself – each component and proportion has to be just right.

What do you enjoy most about being able to feed people at the farmers' market (rather than a café)?

You couldn't ask for a better spot next to the river and the choices of exceptional food appeal to all tastes.

Ballina Farmers and Producers Market runs every Sunday from 7-11am at Commemoration Park, Ballina.



WARDELL *revitalisation*

The Wardell Community Green Space is expected to open by the end of March 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



Vicki Kelly: NRAS' biggest foster carer

by Jo Parker



'Fostering can be one of the most rewarding roles with NRAS,' says long-time volunteer, Vicki Kelly. And she should know. Vicki is arguably the most dedicated and prolific foster carer in the 23-year history of the Northern Rivers Animal Services (NRAS). Since joining in 2015, Vicki has fostered over 200 dogs and puppies. But for her, the number isn't what matters - it's about the animals.

The role of a foster carer is undoubtedly rewarding, but it comes with its challenges. It's not about 'borrowing' a cute puppy or kitten for the weekend - it's a commitment, one which can last days, weeks, or even months, requiring patience, dedication, and a whole lot of love.

Vicki's journey into fostering started when she volunteered at the NRAS office before there was an active shelter. Seeing the long waitlist for animals needing temporary homes pulled at her heartstrings. She and her husband decided to open their home, and since then, fostering has become one of the most rewarding experiences of her life. 'Most of them 'know' you have saved them and give so much love and appreciation in return,' she explains.

Letting go of foster animals can be difficult, but Vicki takes solace in knowing that another dog or litter will soon need her help. 'Sometimes it's hard to let them go, but then I know it may be only days before I get the call that another dog is in need of a place to stay,' she says. 'And to see the dogs excited and happy meeting their new family - that's what it's all about. Sending them off to live their best lives. Much to my husband's eye rolls, I'm usually knocking at the shelter manager's door after a foster leaves... 'Who's next?'" she laughs.

Until early last year, Vicki shared her commitment with her beloved Chocolate Labrador, Charlie. Charlie was the ultimate foster brother - patient, kind, and a natural teacher. He helped puppies learn manners and showed them how to behave before they moved on to their forever families. His absence is deeply felt by Vicki, but his legacy lives on in the many dogs he helped prepare for adoption.

Some rescues have been especially memorable. One was a heartbroken Staffy who had to be surrendered by her owner due to rental restrictions. Having been with the family since puppyhood, she was devastated when they walked away.

After weeks in Vicki's care, she found a new, loving home - but Vicki still wonders if she misses her original family. 'Landlords, please reconsider,' she pleads.

Then there was the time she had to rescue a puppy from a snake's grip in her backyard. 'When I had Charlie, the puppies were safe from snakes. Now they're a little more confident and hungry,' she says. Thankfully, the puppy was unharmed.

For anyone considering fostering, Vicki's advice is simple: 'Just think of it as looking after someone else's pet for a while. Share the love and fun with them - just try not to fall in love. It can be challenging at times - puppy messes, barking, and digging - but most of them are great. And when it's time to say goodbye, remember there's another animal waiting for a temporary home. Adopting saves a life, but fostering saves many lives.'

If you can share your home and your heart, consider becoming a foster carer with NRAS. All food, bedding, and veterinary care are provided, and the NRAS team offers full support. Visit: nras.org.au or call ph: 6681 1860 to learn more about fostering and how you can make a difference.

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headspace Ballina supporting local youth



Young people aged 12 to 25 now have greater access to mental health support with the opening of a new headspace centre in Ballina. Operated by not-for-profit Social Futures, headspace Ballina builds on existing early intervention mental health services offered through outreach from headspace Lismore.

Healthy North Coast CEO, Monika Wheeler, helps set the scene: 'The North Coast region has a higher level of mental health, suicidality and substance use challenges

in comparison with the rest of NSW. Locally, we have a third more mental health-related emergency department presentations than the rest of NSW.'

In the Ballina Shire young people face a range of challenges, including anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, bullying, and difficulties in relationships with peers or family.

Senior Manager of headspace Ballina, Tweed and Lismore, Simone Balzer, said, 'Since the COVID pandemic, and 2022 floods, there has been an increase in social isolation and stressors for youth in the region. We have seen growing numbers reaching out for support.

'Seeking help for your mental health can feel overwhelming, but we want young people to know that we're here to listen, without judgment, and to go at their pace,' continued Ms Balzer.

Part of a national network of over 150 centres, headspace Ballina aims to connect young people with the right care at the right time and provides free and confidential assistance. Staff at the new service include health workers and mental health professionals who can help with issues such as stress, anxiety, managing relationships with family and friends, alcohol and other drugs, questions about romantic relationships, sex and gender, bullying, anger, finding a job or getting into study, and more.

Culturally safe services are available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, who now have options to connect with identified workers.

Beyond mental health services, the team is committed to fostering connection and belonging. The centre will host social and emotional wellbeing groups, offering a welcoming space to meet, build confidence, and find support among peers.

Working together to provide support

Mental health is a community effort and as part of a consortium, headspace Ballina partners with many services, working collaboratively on projects and providing supports. Working closely with schools, families, and local organisations, the community engagement teams are out and

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about most days, helping to build awareness and encourage help seeking behaviours among Ballina’s youth.

The team believes that everyone has a role to play in supporting young people’s wellbeing, whether it’s by encouraging a young person to seek help, simply listening, or providing education.

Ms Balzer said, ‘Our hope is to foster a community where accessing mental health supports is simple and help seeking is encouraged and supported.’

No reason is too small or too big to reach out

‘When you’re in the middle of something challenging, sometimes it doesn’t feel like anyone would understand or be able to help,’ continued Ms Balzer.

‘We understand that taking that first step can be hard, but you don’t have to go through it alone. Your wellbeing matters, and we’re here to help in a way that works for you.’

These sentiments are reinforced by Sam, a young individual who has previously sought out the services offered at headspace: ‘I think society, with the constant comparison, where you are told there are people who are worse off, puts that barrier in to seeking support, invalidating your experience.

‘I feel that stops a lot of people from seeking help - they think ‘there are people who need it more than me’, or ‘my issues aren’t enough’. Even connecting in when things aren’t going on, it’s OK to have those conversations at any time. You don’t have to be in a bad space to seek out support.’

headspace Ballina

This new centre was made possible through funding from Healthy North Coast through the Australian Government’s Primary Mental Health Network program.

headspace Ballina is located at 32 Swift Street, Ballina.

Now open to the community 10am-6pm, Monday-Thursday, young people and families are encouraged to visit and learn more about the range of services available.

For more information call ph: 6625 0200, drop in, or visit headspace.org.au

Pictured, left: headspace Ballina.

Pictured, right (L-R): Ribbon cutting with Tony Davies, CEO Social Futures; Donna Burns, headspace Board Member; Monika Wheeler, CEO Healthy North Coast; The Hon. Justine Elliot MP; Leon McCann, Chair of headspace Lismore’s Young Peoples Advisory Committee; The Hon. Emma McBride MP; Jason Trethowan, CEO headspace.

Source: Supplied.



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Discover your family history

by Richmond-Tweed Family History Society



Step 3 - Marriage Certificates

Following on from last month's tip on research with birth certificates, you should be well on the way to creating your family tree.

From your grandparents' birth certificates you will have obtained the names of your great-grandparents (including your great-grandmother's maiden name), as well as details of their places of birth and occupations. Now you can search for their marriage certificate. You may have to search a few years back from the birth of your grandparent.

It can be harder to assess when a great-grandparent's marriage may have taken place as your grandparent may be the first child or the last in a long line of children. For example, if

your grandparent was born in 1899 and is the fourth child, your great-grandparents may have married around 1882 or earlier. To cover your options, you could do a search between 1876 and 1892. Dates were very flexible years ago, especially before registration of births, deaths, and marriages became law.

What we imagine took place isn't always what really happened. However marriage certificates provide us with so many more details to add to your tree. They record the names and ages of the bride and groom, the date and place of the marriage, their occupations, where they lived at the time of the marriage, their parent's names and their father's occupations - occasionally in early marriage records, some information is missing, eg. age, place of birth, parents' names. The ages of the bride and groom may show as the actual figure, or in the case of United Kingdom marriage certificates, may show as 'full age' which means they were over 21 years. A copy of the marriage certificate usually shows the names of the witnesses as well, which can be helpful to your searching as many witnesses were siblings of the bride and/or groom.

Next month: Step 4 - Death Certificates.

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 on the first Saturday of each month, 2pm, at the Ballina Players Theatre, 24 Swift Street. Visitors are welcome and attendance is free.

Upcoming meetings

The topic for the group's next meetings are:

- Saturday 1 March, *In the Steps of My Ancestor - What might I learn?* Zoom presentation by Brisbane-based genealogist, Eric Kopittke, on how to visit the places your ancestors inhabited and what insights they might give us into their lives.
- Saturday 5 April, *For King and Country - stories about our ancestors' military service.*

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

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The golden years

by Graeme Eggins



AI is coming to help you, like it or not

Two years ago, most of us knew nothing about artificial intelligence. But now we read that AI robots are going to rule over us or alternatively they are going to bring us all a healthier, happier future. Which prediction is most likely to be true? A few weeks ago Las Vegas hosted what is regarded as the world's largest technology trade show, CES.

One of the outstanding trends at CES was in AgeTech - technology designed to help older people live more independently and improve their quality of life. For example, glasses for people hard of hearing. AI detects what a person is saying to you and shows it as words on the inside of your glasses, exactly like seeing subtitles on a foreign film. Or a three-quarter length mirror that takes a 360° body scan, noting your weight, heart and lung health. An in-built voice assistant may tell you to get in more steps or schedule a medical appointment. Such devices can detect early signs of illness, which can be particularly beneficial for older people living alone, enabling them to seek timely medical help and maintain their independence.

Voice assistance and smart home devices can make everyday tasks easier for older people dodgy on their feet or suffering mental confusion. AI-based home assistants like Alexa and Google Home are projected to become more helpful this year. Such assistants can increasingly provide personalised companionship and mental stimulation, combating loneliness.

A 2024 study by the University of Cambridge suggested that 'social AI companions' can reduce feelings of loneliness by nearly 30% in older adults who live alone. These digital 'friends' can talk to you, share stories and play games.

AI's impact on our mobility is growing. New at CES this year was MO/GO pants - short for Mountain Goat. Clip-on battery powered carbon fibre arms boost your leg power by 40% when going uphill and supports your knees when going downhill.

The Strutt EV personal mobility vehicle looks like a powered wheelchair but uses sensors to automatically navigate around obstacles, just like a self-driving car.

Worried about your indoor plants? The LeafyPod planter is capable of adjusting water uptake from an inbuilt reservoir to prevent overwatering. It will also tell you how much sunlight plants need. The planter holds up to four weeks of water so you could go away on holidays.

But what about the dark side of AI? American ethicist Dr. Timnit Gebru warns, 'AI systems are only as good as the data we feed them. Inaccurate or biased data can lead to discrimination and injustice, especially in critical areas like healthcare and law enforcement.'

Another major concern is about privacy. As AI systems become increasingly integrated into homes and healthcare, they gather more of our data. A cybersecurity expert cautions, 'The more data AI systems collect, the more they become a target for hackers and surveillance.'

So stay alert. But no need to worry about your houseplants. Just get a smart pot.



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Tech tip: secure your accounts

by Mark Law, Chief Geek, My Geek Mate



Picture credit: Taryn Elliott.
Source: Pexels.

In today's digital age, our online accounts are more valuable than ever. They hold sensitive information, financial data, and even our digital identities. This makes it crucial to secure these accounts, especially primary email accounts, with multiple, verified, and up-to-date recovery methods.

Why is this so important? Imagine losing access to your primary email. You'd be locked out of other accounts, miss important communications, and potentially lose access to valuable data. Having alternative recovery options acts as a safety net, ensuring you can regain access even if you forget your password or lose access to your primary phone number.

So, what recovery methods should you prioritise? Start with a strong, unique password and enable two-factor authentication (2FA). This adds an extra layer of security, requiring a second verification method, like a code from your phone, in addition to your password. Then, add a recovery email address, a trusted phone number, and

security questions that are difficult for others to guess.

But simply adding these methods isn't enough. You need to verify them to ensure they work when you need them most. Many services require you to confirm your recovery email or phone number through a verification link or code. It's also essential to keep these methods up to date. If you change your phone number or email address, update them in your account settings immediately.

By taking these steps, you're significantly reducing the risk of losing access to your critical online accounts. It's a small investment of time that can save you from a major headache down the road.





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-  **Tackle the cost of living**, make supermarket price-gouging illegal
-  **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.





Wheels of the month



If ever a car could share stories, Mat Stenner's 1973 Holden LJ GTR would have a few tales to tell. Bought 30 years ago from an old fella in Port Macquarie, this Torana has lived a life of speed, road trips, and show-stopping moments.

'It has won a few trophies over the years at different car shows,' Mat says, 'but these days, I'm too busy with my workshop to take it out much.' That workshop is Chincogan Mechanical in Mullumbimby, where Mat spends most of his time keeping other people's rides in top shape.

Back in its heyday, the GTR saw plenty of action - drag racing and coastal runs with the boys. These days, it enjoys a quieter life, waiting for a sunny day.

'I basically just keep it clean and drive it every now and then,' Mat says. And really, what better way to treat a classic? With its timeless lines and legendary Holden spirit, this Torana doesn't need a trophy to turn heads - it just needs a stretch of open road.



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Cooking with CWA

Blueberry and Lemon Yoghurt Cake



Picture credit: Sofya Zakharova. Source: Pexels.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup virgin olive oil
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 1 lemon zested and juiced
- 2 teaspoons vanilla paste
- 2 cups natural Greek yoghurt
- 1 3/4 cups self-raising flour
- 250 g punnet blueberries
- 2 tablespoons honey

Directions

1. Preheat oven 180°C/160°C fan forced. Grease and line a loaf pan (8cm x 29cm) with baking paper; allow to overhang long sides.
2. Combine oil, sugar, zest, juice, vanilla, eggs, and 1 cup of the yoghurt in a bowl. Add flour and stir to combine. Fold in half of the blueberries.
3. Pour into the prepared loaf tin, smooth surface. Bake for 55 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.
4. Stand in tin 5 minutes before turning out onto a wire rack to cool.
5. Place on a plate and serve topped with remaining yoghurt, blueberries and honey.

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Pictured: Lighthouse Beach, Ballina. Image credit: @discoverballina

Stay and play in your own backyard

by Kate Parry

As the cost of living rises, many of us are looking a bit closer to home for entertainment. And given we live in one of the most sought after destinations in the world, the Northern Rivers is the perfect place to stay put and explore.

From moving your body to creative pursuits there's something for everyone, so grab the family and head out to discover what's on offer in your own backyard.

Get moving

Ride

Love the feeling of the wind in your hair? The Northern Rivers is a cyclist's paradise. For a scenic ride, take on the **Ballina Island Loop**, an 11.5km journey with stunning views of the river, ocean, and creeks. There are plenty of cafés along the way for a quick breather, and if the kids are in tow, a pit stop at the Pop Denison Playground is a must. For those looking for a longer ride, check out the **Northern Rivers Rail Trail**. This award-winning trail takes you through lush countryside, charming towns, historic bridges, and tunnels alight with glow worms. Currently, two sections are open: Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek (24km) and Casino to Lismore (30km).

Hike

Prefer to explore on foot? The Northern Rivers is home to some breathtaking **National Parks** with trails to suit all fitness levels. Whether you want a short bushwalk or a challenging full-day trek, pop online for a full list of trails, distances, and estimated times: nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do

Skate

If the kids are bursting with energy or you're keen to get on some wheels yourself, consider carving up some of the region's skateparks. The **Ballina Skatepark** features three bowls, rails, ledges, and river views - plus shaded seating for parents to relax. If you're heading further north, check out the new **Byron Bay Skatepark**, a \$2.6 million facility

boasting two bowls, mini ramps with a spine, and an open-flow street section. Just down the road, the **Suffolk Park Pump Track** is a hit with BMX riders, skateboarders, and scooter enthusiasts. It's an asphalt circuit designed for speed, skill, and loads of fun.

Walk

For a touch of whimsy, follow the **Brunswick Heads Fairy Trail**. Scattered throughout the town are tiny fairy houses - beautiful little sculptures made from recycled and found objects. Each fairy has a message of kindness, simplicity, and love for nature. It's a delightful adventure for kids and adults alike. Need help finding them? Stop by the Brunswick Heads Visitors Centre for a clue sheet.

Get inspired

Offering a change of pace are the region's many museums and galleries. A visit to the **Ballina Maritime Museum** uncovers the region's seafaring past or take a trip to the **Evans Head Heritage Aviation Museum** which offers a dedicated tribute to the legacy of Australia's largest WWII RAAF base through carefully curated exhibits, preserved aircraft, and interactive displays.

If art is more your thing, explore the **Northern Rivers Community Gallery** in Ballina, showcasing incredible local talent and fresh exhibitions every few months. And if you're up for a scenic drive, the **Tweed Regional Gallery** is well worth the trip, featuring rotating exhibitions and a stunning Margaret Olley Art Centre.

What's not to love?

The Northern Rivers is a playground of free and low cost activities just waiting to be explored. Whether you're cycling along scenic trails, skating at world-class parks, uncovering fairy magic, or diving into history and art, there's something for everyone - without breaking the bank. So grab your gear and get adventuring.



Explore Ballina Coast High School

by Belinda Parkes



Pictured: BCHS Yr7 students enjoying their first swimming carnival. Source: Supplied.

While our new Yr7 students have begun making firm friendships and embracing the new and exciting experiences high school offers, we're already planning for the arrival of next year's high schoolers.

We have a strong Yr6 transition program running throughout this year, starting

with an opportunity to take a close up look at our facilities during our upcoming School Tour and Information Evening.

Check out our innovative research-based learning street, visit our gymnasium, take a peek inside our recording studio, music rooms, commercial kitchen, tech workshops, aquaculture facility, library and science labs.

The evening is also an opportunity to find out more about the wide variety of subjects and programs available for our students including several new initiatives we're excited to introduce this year.

These include an extra-curricular TAP program for our talented and passionate art, music and drama students,

a holistic Middle School program to transition students smoothly between primary school and their more senior high school years and a Big Picture program for students who prefer to do their learning differently to the traditional school model.

We are also offering programs to accelerate those students with a thirst for knowledge or flair for academic excellence through our strong record of providing exceptional learning, wellbeing and cultural support.

There's a lot to love about Ballina Coast High School and we welcome everyone along to our Information Evening on Wednesday 5 March from 5.30pm - 7pm.

Ballina Public School

by Angela Wraight, Principal (Relieving)



It has been a smooth start to the 2025 year of learning for students and families at Ballina Public School. We have welcomed back a sea of smiling faces and we are excited to have many new families join our school community.

For our new Kindergarten students it is a very exciting time. They have navigated their first few weeks of school well, settling into a big school routine and making many new friends. I would like to congratulate our Kindergarten parents on preparing their children so well for the beginning of a lifelong journey of learning. Saying goodbye on that first day is a moment in time they will remember forever.

We are looking forward to an amazing year of fun, laughter, learning and growth and having the opportunity to share this with our community.

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APS' Spectacular Girls

by Miss Johnstone, Dance Teacher



To finish the year in spectacular form, Alstonville Public School's (APS) dance girls - Aiya, Immi, Fleur, Nya, Jasmin, Alexis, Pippi, Margot and Charli - travelled to Sydney for the Schools Spectacular, *All 4 One*. This event showcases more than 5,500 students from public schools across NSW. From our successful audition, the girls were placed in the Regional Combined Dance ensemble, with choreographers choosing to create a tribute to ABBA for their segment.

The girls spent almost every recess and some afternoons in the event lead-up, perfecting their choreography to the ABBA songs *Waterloo* and *Mamma Mia*. They also went to Kingscliff Public and Bogangar Public to meet one of their choreographers and learn the majority of their dances with other students in this segment. They then also had to learn a third dance for the finale.

After their arrival in Sydney, the girls had a massive day of rehearsals on Thursday before show time on Friday and Saturday. The girls pushed their nerves aside and graced the stage with the other students for a matinee and evening performance - each time their passion and love of dance shone.

APS is very proud of the girls' dedication to dance and the way they represented the school in the live shows and also in the Channel 7 broadcast. Their success wouldn't have been achieved without the support of the community, parents/carers, Miss Johnstone, Mrs Christensen and Mr Flannery who supported their entire journey.

Lastly a big thank you to Nathan Crake Roof Plumbing who so generously paid for the girls' costumes.

Kids corner

Q. Why did the tomato blush?

A. Because it saw the salad dressing.

Q. What did one plate whisper to the other plate?

A. Dinner is on me.

Q. Why did the bicycle fall over?

A. It was two tired.

Q. What are the strongest days of the week?

A. Saturday and Sunday. All the others are weekdays.

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

Howard. *Howard who?*

Howard I know?

Can you find me in the pages of this magazine?



Hi, I'm **Zali Hill** the owner of **The Beauty Boutique Alstonville**. A Diploma qualified Beauty Therapist with over 5 years industry experience. I'm a young passionate Beauty Therapist with a love for all things beauty & skincare.

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Bopping boosts the brain

by Julia Dayhew, Occupational Therapist, Rock Steady For Life



Picture credit: cottonbro/pexels.

Moving helps your brain. Perhaps like me you know that a walk can wake up the brain when struggling to concentrate. I just need to remember to go for that walk. According to a recent article in *The Lancet* (Lancet Public Health 2023; 8: e717–25) physical activity can help prevent dementia. So physical activity wins again - good for health, mood and cognition.

When I worked with adolescents with early psychosis (an experience which significantly impacts on cognition), there was a 14-year-old who changed dramatically after we helped her access the gym. We could identify whether she had been based on her level of alertness, attention, engagement with others and speed in completing tasks. She was almost a different person after exercising.

Physical activity includes vacuuming, mopping, and mowing but why not have a bit of fun? Why is it we act as though fun must stop when we leave childhood? At the 2024 Ballina Ageing Symposium, I had the pleasure of presenting on Physical Activity and Cognition. Eighty people danced to a kid’s action song with smiles on their faces. The room filled with laughter as adults became kids again.

So, turn on your favourite rock, blues, soul or pop song and dance around the house. Do this for three or four songs and there’s 20 minutes already. Dancing is great because it challenges balance, strength, coordination, proprioception, motor planning, step control, reaction time, concentration, visuospatial awareness and more. These things are important throughout our life from childhood to our senior years.

Physical activity:

- helps blood flow and oxygen supply to the brain, stimulates brain cell growth and protects the brain later in life
- includes walking, dancing, yoga, exercise class, running, sports, gym work, housework, gardening, exergaming, home apps (eg. *StandingTall* designed by Neuroscience Research Australia and due for release in 2025)
- is easier when fun, easy, accessible, affordable, convenient, and often with others
- can help prevent obesity, hypertension, depression, social isolation – all of which are risks for dementia.

So, no matter your age, get off the phone or couch and do something physical. If planning to commence exercise, start small and build. Get some tips from a health professional regarding the best exercise for you. See a GP if you are over 40, have a health condition/injury, or haven’t exercised for a while.

Get going, stay moving, stay strong, stay upright and do your brain a favour - now and for the future.



JULIA DAYHEW
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST



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Also at Northern Rivers Health, Alstonville
(6628 0453)



Five simple solutions for lower back pain

by Grant Sinclair, Principle Osteopath, Northern Rivers Health



Lower back pain is a common issue that can interfere with daily life, whether caused by long hours at a desk, heavy lifting, an old injury or general musculoskeletal imbalances. While persistent pain may require professional support, there are simple, effective ways to ease discomfort and prevent further issues.

1. Move more, sit less

Prolonged sitting tightens muscles and places pressure on the lower back. Regular movement, such as

standing up every 30 to 60 minutes, taking short walks, or stretching, can help prevent stiffness and improve circulation. If sitting for long periods is unavoidable, ensuring proper ergonomic support can reduce strain. Set an alarm to move around so you don't get sidetracked.

2. Keep your back and hips strong

The muscles in the lower back, hips, and legs provide essential support for the spine. Gentle strengthening exercises like bridges, squats, and standing leg movements can help maintain stability and reduce the risk of strain. Engaging in activities like swimming or pilates at many of our great local studios, may also improve overall muscle function and mobility.

3. Maintain good posture

Poor posture is a significant contributor to back pain. Sitting with feet flat on the floor, keeping the spine supported, and avoiding prolonged slouching can reduce unnecessary pressure on the lower back. Small adjustments, such as adjusting desk or screen height, or using a lumbar support cushion, can make a big difference.

4. Stretching

Tight hamstrings, hip flexors, and lower back muscles can increase discomfort. Simple daily stretches

such as knee to chest holds or seated hamstring stretches can relieve tension and promote flexibility. Incorporating gentle movement, such as yoga or mobility exercises, may also help prevent stiffness. These can even form part of your regular movement breaks through the day.

5. Use heat, cold or infrared therapy

Applying heat can help relax muscles, while cold therapy can reduce inflammation, particularly after an acute strain. Infrared saunas are beneficial for their deep, penetrating warmth, which promotes circulation, reduces inflammation, and supports the body's natural healing processes. Finding the right balance between heat and cold therapy can be beneficial depending on the cause of pain and how long you've had it.

While these simple strategies can help alleviate minor discomfort, persistent or worsening pain may require further assessment to identify and address the underlying cause. Seeking support from a qualified allied health professional can provide tailored treatment options and long term solutions for back pain management.

Picture credit: Karolina Grabowska.
Source: Pexels.



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March against Melanoma



Melanoma is the deadliest type of skin cancer, developing in pigment-producing melanocytes. It spreads via the blood and lymphatic system to organs like the lungs, liver, and brain.

Australia has the highest melanoma rates globally, with one person diagnosed every 30 minutes and one death every six hours. It is the most common cancer among Australians aged 20-39.

Causes and prevention

UV radiation causes 95% of melanomas. Risk factors include excessive sun exposure, numerous or atypical moles, fair skin, family history, and genetic predisposition.

To reduce risk, follow the five Sun Safe Rules.

1. Seek shade during peak sun hours.
2. Wear sun-protective clothing.
3. Wear a broad-brimmed hat.
4. Use wrap-around sunglasses.
5. Apply SPF 50+ sunscreen regularly.

Early detection saves lives

Early detection leads to a 90% cure rate. Regularly check your skin for new or changing spots, and get professional skin checks if at high risk.

Join the Melanoma March

The annual Melanoma March raises awareness and funds for research while focusing on the psychological impact of melanoma. Join Ballina Shire's local event to show support.

When: Sunday 9 March, 7.30am

Where: Missingham Park, Ballina

Distance: 4.4km (pram/wheelchair friendly, dogs welcome)

Register: ballina.melanomamarch.org.au

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What's on at NRCG

The Northern Rivers Community Gallery (NRCG) is a hub of creativity and cultural connection, offering a platform for local and regional artists to showcase their talents. Running from Thursday 6 March to Sunday 27 April, the gallery presents an exciting lineup of exhibitions that promise to inspire, challenge, and spark conversation.

NEAR ENOUGH (IS GOOD ENOUGH) | Aaron Butt



NEAR ENOUGH (IS GOOD ENOUGH) is a body of work that explores Frank Hurley's images of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-17 through a series of experimental paintings. Critiquing the colonial and patriarchal goals of expeditions and using unexpected colours and patterns responsive to Hurley's photographic images, the works in this exhibition play with techniques, pigments and substrates.

Pushing Up Daisies | Emma Lyn Winkler



Emma Lyn Winkler's experimental, multi-media exhibition delves into death and the absurd using collage, painting, animation and ceramics. Her work examines the way we respond to our own mortality, confronting the futility of attempting to ward off death. Through fractured layers and theatrical characters, Emma explores embracing death as a means to confront anxiety and existential dread.

Where the Light Gets In | Sam and Jacqui Sosnowski



This joint exhibition showcases the artist's talents in printmaking and ceramics. Based on the Leonard Cohen song, *Anthem*, Sam's prints investigate the play of light and shadow while Jacqui's (mainly raku) ceramics explore the preceding line of the song - there's a crack in everything.

Worlds Within Worlds | Emily Imeson



An immersive installation that explores human and nonhuman worlds to re-imagine a more compassionate, coexistent way of being in and of the world. Combining divergent methods of art-making, including batik, painting, soil staining, burying, collage, sewing, embroidery and recycling, it exhibition features patch-worked paintings and soft sculptures that fuse natural pigments on canvas and cotton.

View them at: NRCG, 44 Cherry Street, Ballina.



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Artist spotlight



Janet McMullen

For Janet, art has always been a part of her life, even when it took an unconventional form. 'I loved art at school, but once I started hairdressing, I didn't have time for it,' she says. However, her creative spirit found an outlet in avant-garde hair competitions. 'One year, I made a hat shaped like a basket full of flowers, entirely out of hair, and won first place.'

Originally from the UK, Janet moved to Australia in 1963 and later settled on the North Coast in 1994. It wasn't until 2009 that she returned to painting, taking lessons with Maria Heaton and other teachers. 'I was asked to do a feature for *Artist Palette Magazine*, including a 'follow the steps' demonstration - it was a challenge at the time, but I'm glad I did it.'

Mainly working in oils and watercolours, Janet enjoys painting portraits, landscapes, and flowers. 'I love creating flowers in watercolour - it gives a delicate, soft effect,' she explains. Her talent has been recognised in exhibitions, where she won first place for a portrait of an orangutan, along with two People's Choice Awards and a Highly Commended.

Constantly exploring new techniques, Janet finds painting both inspiring and therapeutic. 'I love trying different types of art and find it very relaxing when I'm painting.' Whether through hairdressing or fine art, her passion for colour and creativity continues to shine.

Janet is a member of Ballina Arts & Crafts Centre Inc (BACCI). For more information visit: BACCI.com.au

Helen Mary Dunn

As a young girl growing up in North Queensland, Helen accompanied her aunt to CWA where she learnt various crafts. Influenced by the surrounding environment, her love of colour, tropical fauna and flora grew. This appreciation was then incorporated into various handmade crafts.

Over the years she developed talents ranging from macrame, sewing, creating greeting cards and jewellery, silversmithing and gem cutting. Helen went on to enter her creations in Art and Craft shows, also selling at markets in Queensland and New South Wales.

After moving to Ballina in 2010, Helen experimented more with mixed media using many different materials she had collected over the years. Creating new projects gave her a great reason to unearth hidden treasures, try new techniques and allow serendipity to work its magic.

Helen has now refined her skills to create wire-worked suncatchers and small sculptures using copper wire, with Swarovski crystals, Czech Republic glass beads, semi-precious gemstones, Japanese seed beads and unique handmade beads. She also creates themed greeting cards to complement her wire and bead creations, using various techniques and materials for a unique fun look.

To view Helen's work, visit the Creative Artisans Gallery, Wigmore Arcade, 145 River Street, Ballina. For opening hours and more information visit: creativeartisans.org.au



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ArtsNational launches 2025 lecture series



*Pictured: The Estate of Hans Feibusch/Bridgeman.
Image credit: Gallant House Gallery, Chichester (supplied).*

ArtsNational Northern Rivers is kicking off its 2025 lecture program with an insightful talk on Hans Feibusch, a German-Jewish artist who fled Nazi persecution to become one of Britain's most renowned muralists. Presented by international lecturer Marc Allum, the event will explore Feibusch's luminous works and remarkable journey.

The lecture takes place on Monday 24 March, at the A&E Hall, Station Street, Bangalow. Pre-lecture drinks begin at 6pm, with the lecture at 6.30pm. Guests are welcome, with a non-member fee of \$25.

For details, contact Susan Anderson, ph: 0416 185 952.

Beyond Reasonable Doubt with Ballina Players



Pictured (L-R): Peter Harding, Allen Ennew, Ashley Sargent.

Ballina Players are set to bring Jeffrey Archer's gripping courtroom drama, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, to the stage from Friday 28 March to Sunday 6 April, under the direction of Mike Sheehan.

Sir David Metcalfe (Peter Harding) stands accused of the willful murder of his terminally ill wife, Lady Metcalfe (Kasadevi Curtis), leading to a tense legal showdown with his longtime rival, Anthony Blair-Booth QC (Ashley Sargent). The courtroom comes alive with compelling performances from Inspector Travers (Scott Cantrill), Dr Weeden (Peter Crowley), Mrs Rogers - the maid - (Di Ennew), Lionel Hamilton (Alun Probert), and Sir David himself, who faces questioning from his Junior Counsel, Robert Pierson (Jordan Stotter), all under the watchful eye of Justice Treadwell (Allen Ennew).

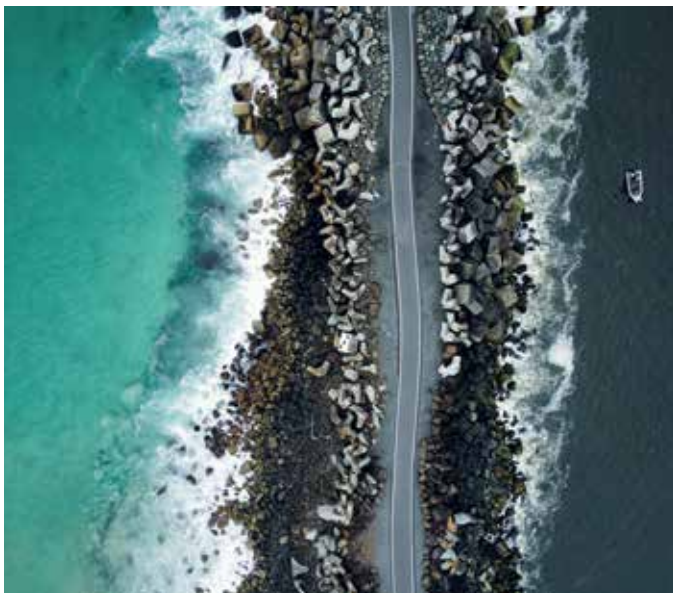
Act I builds suspense right up to the jury's verdict - before the story takes an unexpected turn. Act II then rewinds to the night of Lady Metcalfe's death, revealing new layers to the case and culminating in a dramatic twist.

One reviewer summed it up best: 'I loved it... it's much more than a courtroom drama. It's a compelling love story, packed with laughter, tears, and tension.'

Tickets

Tickets are available at: ballinaplayers.com.au or via Ballina Colour Copy Shop 19 Moon Street, Ballina.

On the cover



This month's cover artist, Amy Ireland, divides her time between Ballina, the Northern Beaches, Jindabyne, and Colorado, USA, due to her work as a full-time snow ski instructor. Photography has been part of her life for 20 years, evolving from a childhood passion into a deep love of storytelling through images. In the past three years, she has embraced aerial photography, finding new ways to capture the landscapes she adores.

One of her favourite locations is North Wall, Ballina, a place with which she feels deeply connected. 'I find it beautiful how it opens Ballina to the ocean but also creates a divide to the river mouth and the beaches, especially at low tide with the colour changes in the water,' says Amy.

'I wanted the composition of this image to represent something that would capture the meandering essence of walking along the North Wall while having the contrast of Ballina's lifestyles of surfing and fishing on either side of you.'

Follow along with Amy's journey at: [Instagram/amy_ireland](https://www.instagram.com/amy_ireland)



Jojo the pelican and avian botulism

by Steve Whalan, General Manager, Australian Seabird and Turtle Rescue (ASTR)

Sometimes figuring out what is happening with our rescued birds and turtles can be challenging. Physical trauma and entanglement are readily identifiable, as are the solutions. Other times, establishing what has gone wrong requires a little detective work.

Recently, we rescued a pelican that presented as very weak and appeared to have lost strength in her neck and head, to the point where her head was dragging on the ground. We have seen this before and immediately suspected a case of avian botulism.

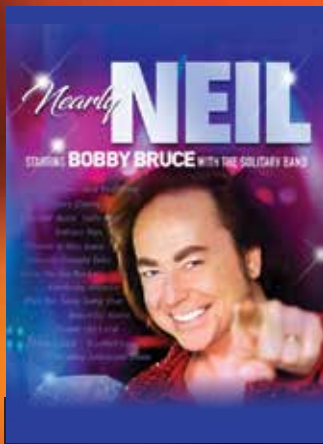
Botulism is an illness developed after exposure to the toxin produced by the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum*. The toxin causes neuro muscular illness, that essentially paralyses the victim;

it can be fatal. We've known about avian botulism in Australia since the late 1930s, and from time-to-time it can cause significant impacts to bird populations. The bacteria are commonly found in soils around water bodies, so water birds are usually implicated in the illness. The bacteria produce spores, which can lie dormant for years in the soil surrounding wetlands. The right environmental conditions (eg. warm temperatures/nutrients from decaying vegetation) can germinate the spores, leading to bacterial growth and provide an infection risk to water birds who might incidentally ingest bacteria (toxin).

With dedicated care from ASTR and Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital, and copious IV-delivered fluids to flush the

toxin, the pelican, who we named Jojo, went from a floppy, prostate mess, to a proud standing, active pelican, with a very respectful and feisty attitude towards her carers. We released Jojo at Lennox Head and it took all of two minutes to find her feet on the beach, taking to the water and then the air, doing what pelicans do best.

We expect to see more cases of avian botulism; warm temperatures provide ideal conditions for this bacterium to proliferate around and within water bodies. If you see a bird that looks inactive, exhibiting a poorly supported head and neck please do not touch them. Rather, call the ASTR hotline on ph: 0428 862 852 - our expert bird rescuers will assess how to best handle and rescue the bird.



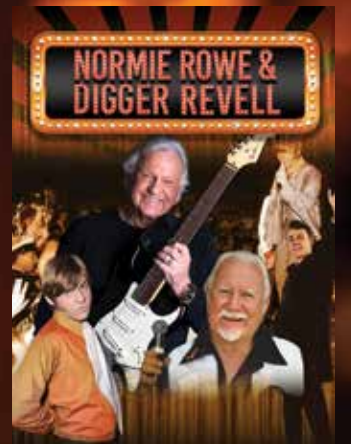
Friday 7 March
Tickets: \$40
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Show: 7.30pm
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Friday 14 March
Doors: 9.30am
Show: 10am
Tickets: \$17.50
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Sunday 30 March
Tickets: \$42
Doors: 3pm
Show: 3.30pm
All ages event
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Pet of the month

Olive's five year journey home



After five long years, Olive the cat has miraculously been reunited with her owner, India - and it's the kind of story that proves cats really do have nine lives.

Olive, a domestic short-haired cat with adorable white socks, was adopted as a kitten from a rescue centre in Billinudgel. India fell in love with her timid but sweet nature and unique coat. The two quickly became inseparable, with Olive making herself at home in India's bedroom.

In 2020, India temporarily moved to her father's home, just 7km away, while their house was rented out, taking Olive with her. During this time India left for a short trip to Yamba, slightly opening the shutters before she left. When she returned, Olive was gone. India and her family searched tirelessly, but Olive had vanished without a trace. After a few months, they were resigned to the idea she was lost.

Time passed, and India eventually moved to Melbourne. Missing Olive dearly, she was recently considering adopting another cat - until January when she got an unexpected call from her mother. 'I was instantly worried,' India says. 'Mum sounded upset.' But instead, the news was astonishing.

India's brother had spotted a Facebook post about a found cat in the Northern Rivers area - one with familiar markings. Incredibly, Olive had been discovered in Federal, just two houses away from their old home.

Five years had passed since she first disappeared and now, Olive was finally back where she belonged, with her family - happy, healthy and purr-fectly fine. What adventures had she been on? We will never know.

Olive has now relocated to Melbourne to be with India.

Feature your pet

Calling all animal lovers

Do you have a furry, feathered, or scaly friend who deserves the spotlight? We're looking for our next Pet of the Month, and your beloved companion could be featured.

Whether it's a playful pup, a charming cat, a chatty bird, or even a quirky reptile, we want to hear their story. Tell us what makes your pet special - funny habits, heartwarming moments, or a unique talent.

To get involved is easy. Simply email us with:

- your pet's name, age and breed
- a short description of their personality, how they came to be a part of your family and any quirky stories you'd like to share
- a favourite photo.

Each month, one lucky pet will be featured, sharing their adorable antics with our readers. So, if your pet loves attention (and let's be honest, they all do), we'd love to hear from you.

Contact: editor@theballinawave.com.au

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Autumn colours

by Jennie Goeldner, Wollongbar Garden Club



Last autumn I was driving through the New England region, marvelling at the amazing trees dressed in their best autumn colours. I began to wonder why some turn red while others turn yellow, orange and even purple.

This phenomenon is called senescence, which is the term for ageing or part death of a plant.

During the growing season, tree leaves produce chlorophyll, which gives them their green colour. As the season

changes, the weather cools and the days get shorter, which signals the tree to stop production of chlorophyll. Other chemicals in the leaves that have been protecting the chlorophyll from bright light and excessive heat then take over. The colour the leaves will turn is dependent on what chemicals are present - different trees have an abundance of different chemicals, hence the colour variations.

These changes, and the vibrancy of the colours, are dependent on perfect climatic conditions. Very cold nights, dry weather and even bright sunlight can affect the display - sometimes even forcing the trees to bypass their autumn colour and go straight to brown.

You can select your autumn colours by choosing trees carefully, but you

will need a nice cool spot if you live in the Northern Rivers, maybe down in a gully. Parkers Place Nursery on Lindendale Road, Wollongbar, have a wonderful example of this in their extensive gardens. Unfortunately this nursery is strictly wholesale only so mostly closed to the public, however they do have Open Days, and a visit is well worthwhile. For dates visit: Facebook/Parkers Place Nursery.

Join us

The Garden Club's next meeting is Tuesday 11 March, 9.45am to 12pm, at Rous Hill Hall. The guest speaker will be Nancy Casson, from Workforce who will discuss basic CPR.

For more information, visit: Facebook/ Wollongbar Garden Club

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Ask a waste expert

with Justine Rowe, Ballina Council



Picture credit: Sarah Chai. Source: Pexels.

Keen to find a simple way to save money and lessen your impact on the environment? Join us to take a bite out of food waste.

Every year 7.6 million tonnes of food is wasted in Australia across the food chain - the weight of 152 Sydney Harbour bridges. In NSW, wasted food costs the average household \$50 per week. Not only does it waste money, but wasting food represents the loss of all the land, water, resources and effort that went into growing, harvesting, transporting and packaging that food. Reducing food waste is also one of the most impactful actions individuals can take to help the environment - more impactful than flying or driving less. Here are some tips for starters.

- Be a smart shopper
 - Check the fridge, freezer and pantry before you shop (while you're at it, make sure your fridge is set between 3°C and 4°C degrees and your freezer at -18°C).
 - Make a list and stick to it - this will be your weapon against wasted food and time.
- Storage superhero
 - Store fruit, veg, meat and other foods correctly.
 - Freeze what you won't use right away (bread is one of the most wasted foods - simply slice a loaf, wrap it and freeze it and you've got toast anytime).

- Dedicate a use-it-up shelf in the fridge with food that needs to be eaten first at the front.
- Know the difference between 'best before' and 'use by' dates: 'use by' dates are for foods that must be eaten before a certain time for health or safety reasons, 'best before' means the food is still safe to eat after the date, but it may have lost some quality.
- Eat every edible part of the food
 - Stop wasting time and food by peeling foods like carrots, potatoes and apples - peeling isn't necessary and it peels back the nutrients you get from your food too.
 - Stems are also edible - think broccoli, parsley and coriander. Remove any tough bits and chop the stem finely - no one will taste the difference.
 - Let people serve themselves - uneaten food on the plate is often wasted. If it stays in the serving dish, it's more likely to get packed up as leftovers.
- Love leftovers
 - Dedicate one or two nights a week as Unwaste Nights. Master a few go-to meals where you can mix and match ingredients based on what needs using. Our favourites include curry, pasta bake, tacos, soup, stir fry and frittatas.

Find more tips at foodwise.com.au, thegreatunwaste.com.au and Council's socials.

Ready to turn small changes into big wins? Join Ballina Shire Council's 6-Week Unwasting Challenge and discover simple ways to save more, waste less, and make every bite count. With weekly tips and support, it's your step-by-step guide to a more sustainable kitchen. The challenge kicks off Sunday 16 March. To register your interest, email: justine.rowe@ballina.nsw.gov.au.

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Shirley White recognised as eco-warrior

by Dr Hedy Bryant, Ballina Coastcare



*Pictured: Ross White, Shirley's son, receiving the award from Mayor Cadwallader.
Source: Supplied.*

Shirley White was posthumously nominated in the Environmental Award category for the 2025 Ballina Shire Australia Day Awards and was announced joint winner. This category acknowledges the eco-warriors among us - those who are dedicated to protecting our precious wildlife and natural environment.

Citation from Award Ceremony

The late Shirley White was the founder of Angels Beach Dune Care, now known as Ballina Coastcare.

Between 1989 and 2002 Shirley led an outstanding effort to regenerate and restore the severely degraded coastal reserve along Ballina's beaches.

During Shirley's tenure as President of Ballina Coastcare, and in the years following, over \$250,000 has been awarded through State and Federal government agencies towards the restoration of Angels Beach and East Ballina's urban forest reserves.

Through her dedication, innovation and leadership, Shirley became a well-known figure in the local community, and highly respected throughout NSW in coastal regeneration circles.

Join us

We are proud to be continuing the work of Shirley, and other eco-warriors of Ballina Coastcare's 36-year history.

If you would like to volunteer, please join us at our planting site between Sharpes Beach and Flat Rock on the first Sunday of each month (this month is 9 March), 8am-11am. Just walk along the path and you'll see the sign. Start and finish as suits you.

Or come along from 8am-11am on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, working between Flat Rock to Shelly Beach.

For more information please email: BallinaCoastcare@gmail.com

To find out more about what we do, our history and our calendar of events visit: ballinacoastcare.org

Let's get it sorted



Did you know that nearly half of the waste in school landfill bins can be recycled or composted?

Ballina Shire Council is calling on local schools to become Waste Wise in 2025 by joining the Let's Get it Sorted Schools Challenge. This engaging program is designed to reduce waste sent to landfill, improve resource recovery, and inspire positive environmental change in schools and the wider community.

Open to primary and secondary schools, the program runs throughout the year and provides participating schools with free resources, visits from Council's Resource Recovery

Education Officer, and funding of up to \$500 for approved waste reduction initiatives.

Why participate?

By embracing the challenge, schools can save money on waste services, protect the environment, and empower students to lead sustainable practices. It's also a unique opportunity for students to engage in hands-on learning while making a real difference.

What's involved?

Championing the project - schools can choose a class or form a team to lead the challenge.

Waste audits - Council will conduct or assist with a school-wide waste audit to identify areas for improvement.

Action plans - schools will develop tailored plans focussing on initiatives such as implementing the three-bin system, promoting nude food lunches, or establishing composting programs.

Community engagement - activities like poster competitions, waste-to-art projects, and school swaps encourage involvement.

Evaluation and celebration - schools will measure their progress through follow-up audits, celebrate their achievements, and share success stories with the community.

Join the Challenge today

To register visit: ballina.nsw.gov.au/school-programs



Asbestos – from miracle to menace

by Karen Rudkin, NE Waste



Australia has a long and complicated history with asbestos dating back to the early 1900s when it became known as the ‘miracle mineral’. This was thanks to its remarkable heat and fire resistance, durability, and low cost, resulting in its use in many building materials including roofing, wall and floor sheeting, plumbing, fencing, guttering, insulation, decorative coatings, lino and much more.

It was discovered in its natural form in Australia in the 1930s and mined in WA and NSW. It was those mine and mill workers who, having been exposed to high levels of airborne asbestos fibres, later experienced the first wave of asbestos related diseases.

From the 1940s to 1980s asbestos use grew, eventually making Australia the highest consumer of asbestos per capita, in the world.

Despite the dangers of inhaling asbestos fibres being known about since the 1950s, regulations to control its use only began in the late 1970s. A nationwide ban took effect in December 2003, making it illegal to make, use, sell or import asbestos into Australia.

The problem we continue to face, is in dealing safely with the enormous legacy of asbestos from the past. Safework NSW estimates one in three homes still contain asbestos and if your house was built before 1990, it’s likely to be present somewhere. Spotting asbestos is near impossible for the average householder. Laboratory testing is the only way to be sure.

If you’re looking to renovate, planning is essential to keep safe and avoid delays and unexpected costs. Start by contacting a licensed asbestos professional if you aren’t trained to locate, manage, or remove it yourself.

As part of an ongoing regional scheme aimed at reducing the unsafe removal of asbestos by homeowners, Ballina Shire Council offers subsidised household asbestos testing kits. Results are sent directly to homeowners. If asbestos is identified and requires removal, residents are urged to use a licensed removal contractor.

For further information on household testing kits, contact Ballina Shire Council on ph: 6686 1287 or visit: ballina.nsw.gov.au/asbestos. For information on all aspects of asbestos safety, visit: asbestos.nsw.gov.au

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Ballina Bridge Club

by Robert Eldridge

National Bridge Events

A number of our players travelled to Canberra to participate in the Summer Festival of Bridge, a major event on the Bridge calendar. Two newer players, Rhonda Khong and Margaret Cusack, did our Club well by winning the under 100 masterpoint division of this National Event.

Australia Day teams

Australia Day is always well celebrated by our Club as an all-day event, this year with the theme of picnic. Fifty-six players attended and played in 14 teams. The Ivosevac team, consisting of Vicki Ivosevac, Kay Pearson, Winston Guymer and Paul Smith, was victorious on the day. The picnic lunch proved a great success, and members enjoyed an exceptional lunch.

Lessons for beginners

The first set of lessons for new players commenced in February. Two streams of lessons are being held, one during the day, the other in the evenings. There has been a lot of interest in learning the basics of Bridge, and the Club continues to welcome new players. Contact the Club for more information, ph: 6681 5533.

New novice session

A new session has been added to the Club's weekly program for novice players. This is on Saturday afternoons and will be run alongside the regular Saturday session.

Octogenarians

Two members, Gillian Baker and Gary Lyn, recently celebrated their 80th birthdays. We wish them both all the best.

Ballina Croquet Club

by Wendy Fryer



Pictured: Mike Gidding receiving the CNSW AC 3 and under trophy from Susie Linge, Canberra Croquet Club. On the left is the runner up Trevor Bassett.

Source: Supplied.

Ballina Croquet Club's Mike Gidding competed in the state event CNSW AC 3 held in Canberra, from Friday 31 January to Sunday 2 February. The competition consisted of four blocks of five players. Each block played a round robin ie. the competitors played against the other four players in their block. The top two players from each block progressed to the knockout stage which consisted of quarter finals, semi-finals and the final, then to the next stage if they won.

Mike played seven games – four round robin, the quarter final, semifinal and the final. He only lost one game, the first game played on Friday. It was a competitive field - including a former Australian captain and numerous current NSW state players - and Mike also had to come to grips with unfamiliar courts in Canberra. Croquet courts are grass so they have individual characteristics, even different lawns at the same venue have their own idiosyncrasies.

Mike has been selected in the NSW State team based on his performance over the last year. The state team is playing the Eire Cup in Adelaide in early March - an interstate tournament comprising the best male and female players available to compete from each state. NSW is the holder of the cup and all the other states are keen to best the current champs.



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Cherry Street Croquet Club

by Greg Porter



The Northern Rivers Area Croquet Association will host two NSW Championship meetings this year, a welcome bonus to the area after hosting one event for the past four years. Club Committees from Cherry Street, Byron Bay and Lismore banded together to apply and were successful in gaining State Championships for the area.

Division 3 NSW Ricochet Singles Championships will be held at the Byron Bay Club, 25-27 May.

Division 2 NSW Singles and Doubles Golf Croquet Championships, hosted by Cherry Street, Lismore and Byron Bay clubs, will be held 11-15 June.

This is wonderful news for the many local players, especially the smaller local Clubs - Casino, Alstonville, Lismore and Byron Bay - as it will give players a much needed opportunity to showcase their talent. With Ricochet and Golf Croquet very strong in the Northern Rivers local players will certainly make their presence felt.

Our Australia Day gathering was attended by many members, dressed in colourful attire to celebrate our

wonderful country. It was a day to respect and reflect being part of a diverse and multicultural nation.

Tournament results

Association Croquet NSW 3 and Under Championships

- Mike Gidding Ballina 1st
- Trevor Bassett Cooks River 2nd
- Stephen Pearce Canberra 3rd
- Callum Hyland Canberra 4th.

Plate Division

- Ted Woodley Chateswood 1st
- Kate McLoughlin Canberra 2nd
- Janelle Wilson Canberra 3rd.

North Coast Indigenous Cricket Challenge

by Ballina Bears Cricket Club



The North Coast Indigenous Cricket Challenge in Ballina was a fantastic showcase of skill, sportsmanship, and cultural pride. The competition, which featured talented Indigenous cricketers from across the region, came down to the wire, with the Lismore Boomerangs claiming victory based on points. Teams from Ballina and Cabbage Tree Island also put in strong performances, making for an exciting day of cricket.

Beyond the on-field action, the event played a crucial role in fostering pathways for Indigenous players to develop their talent. The Ballina Bears are now looking to build on this momentum by expanding the competition into a North Coast Indigenous cricket league. The proposed league would feature up to 13 teams, each representing a Local Aboriginal Land Council, providing more opportunities for junior players in remote communities to engage in structured competition.

The success of this year's challenge highlights the importance of events like these in promoting both sport and cultural connection. With plans for expansion already in motion, there is great optimism for the future of Indigenous cricket in the region, ensuring more young players can showcase their abilities and grow their love for the game.

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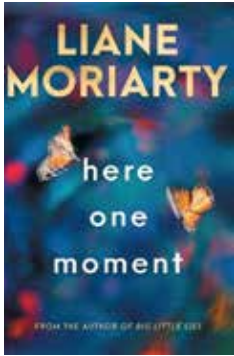
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Book review



Here One Moment by Liane Moriarty

It all begins on a flight from Hobart to Sydney. The flight will be smooth. It will land safely. Everyone who gets on the plane will get off the plane.

But almost all of them will be changed forever.

Because on this ordinary flight, something extraordinary happens. A lady, unremarkable until she isn't, predicts how and when many of the passengers are going to die. For some, death is far in the future; for others, it is very close.

Review by Amy Lynch


This was my first taste of Liane Moriarty's books and I quickly found myself invested in each of the characters, their lives and journeys.

Here One Moment centres around Cherry, the 'death lady', - a woman who walks down a crowded plane aisle and predicts age at which passengers will die, and the cause. The narrative then follows the lives of these characters in alternating chapters and timelines, as they navigate a world in which they face so much uncertainty as a result of their newly discovered mortality. Interspersed across the pages is also the story of Cherry, revealing her journey from childhood to the plane, and the fall out from the predictions.

Questions are raised and explored: If you were told you only had a certain amount of time left to live, would you do things differently? Would you try to dodge your destiny? Readers are invited to reflect upon concepts such as free will, destiny and control.

I would definitely recommend this book to everyone, it was an easy read but one that had me truly hooked.


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BALLINA COAST
DENTAL



This month

with Milt Barlow

At the movies

March brings quite an eclectic range of movies to the cinema, with something for everyone.

Opening 3 March is *Mickey 17*. This sci-fi flick is directed by Bong Joon Ho (*Parasite*) and has an all-star cast of Robert Pattinson, Toni Collette and Mark Ruffalo. The story tells of 'expendable' people who are sent on the most dangerous, even suicidal, jobs. When an expendable dies, a new body is regenerated with most of the memories intact. It's a good watch with plenty of action.

It has been a while since I have watched a good Aussie comedy at the movies so it's great to see *Spit* has turned up for a few laughs (6 March). When ex-junkie, Johnny (Spit) Spiteri comes back to Australia on a false passport he is quickly locked up in an Immigration Detention Centre. But this is the least of his troubles as gangsters Chicka Martin and Arne Deviers are also hot on his trail. David Wenham is excellent in the lead role with great support from Gary Sweet and David Field. An Oscar winner it's not, but it is a fun way to take a break for 90 minutes.

The big movie of the month is *The Alto Knights* (20 March). If you want to make a top gangster movie who are you going to ask to play the lead role? Robert DeNiro of course. Based on a true story and masterfully directed by Barry Levinson, DeNiro plays a dual role as 1950s mob bosses Vito Genovese and Frank Costello. As you would expect, it's non-stop Mafia violence - I lost count of the number of killings. Don't wait for this to come to streaming - go see it on the big screen.

On the couch

My favourite watch for the month would have to be *Apple Cider Vinegar* (Netflix). Based on the book *The Woman Who Fooled the World*, this true story follows the Australian wellness guru Belle Gibson who, using social media, cons the world with her fake cancer diagnosis and uses her platform to promote alternative medicine as the cure for all. The series is beautifully produced, and you can see why in its opening release it was #1 on Netflix. American actress Kaitlyn Denver nails the Aussie accent in the lead role with a great supporting cast. The six-part series was all filmed in Australia and it was cool to see Netflix had taken out huge billboards in New York's Times Square and on Sunset Boulevard in LA to promote it.

The other big watch for the month is *White Lotus, Season 3* (Binge). Everyone loves this series, and the new season does not disappoint. The only downside is Binge drops an episode a week which is a pain for those of us who like to do the whole lot over a weekend. This time around the show is set at a luxury resort in Thailand with, as you would expect, intrigue and plot twists all over the place.

Tricky trivia

Questions

1. Relative to the internet, what does 'URL' stand for?
2. What is the largest mammal in the world?
3. Which planet has the most volcanoes?
4. Who is Barbie's little sister?
5. In which year did Serena Williams win her first Grand Slam singles title?

Answers

1. Uniform resource locator.
2. Blue whale.
3. Venus.
4. Skipper.
5. 1999 (US Open).



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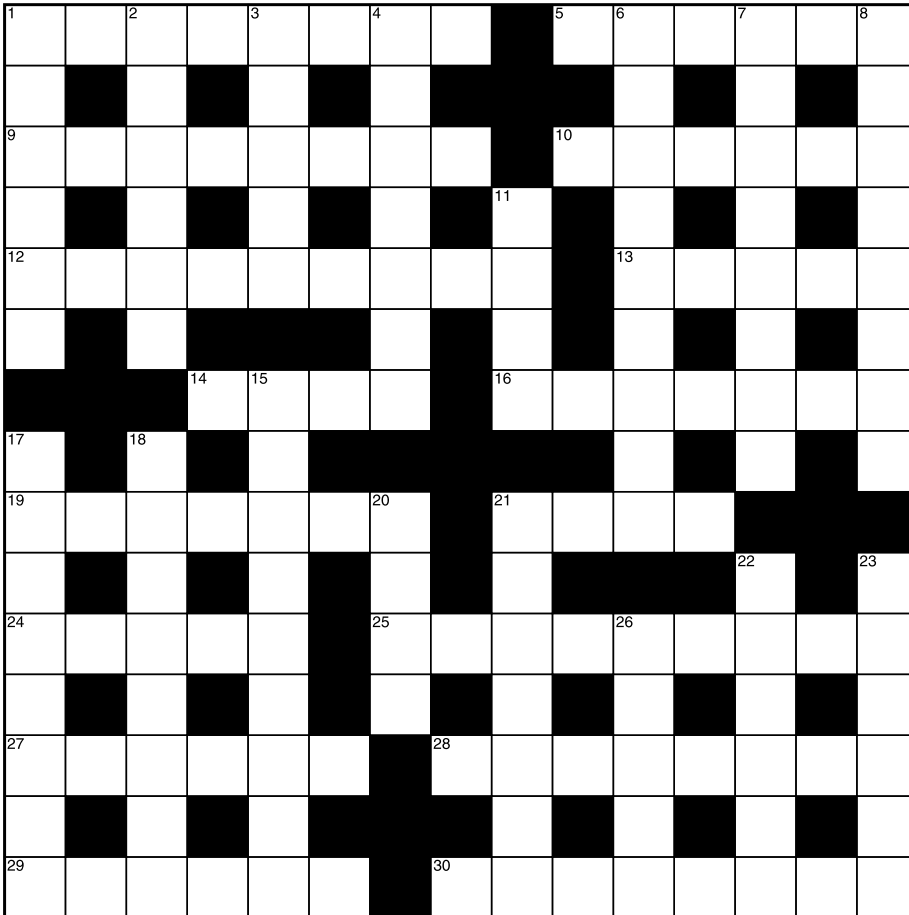
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March crossword

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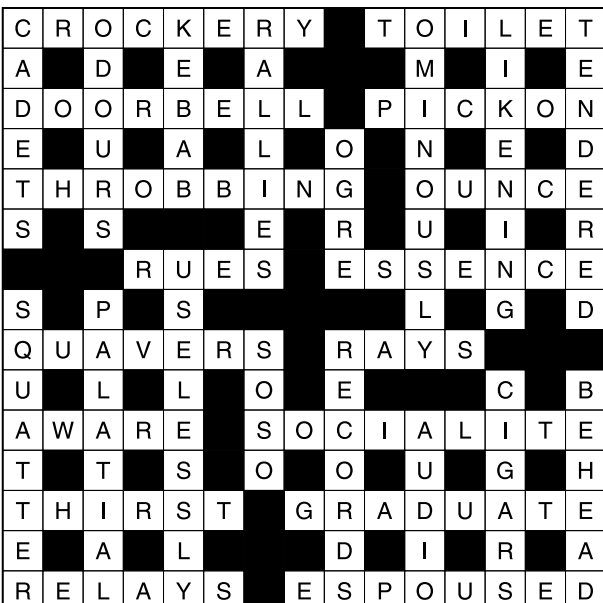
Across

- 1. Crowing (over)
- 5. Levels
- 9. Poppycock
- 10. Llama relative
- 12. Excusing
- 13. Backcomb (hair)
- 14. Rank, ... admiral
- 16. Gunman
- 19. Deficiency
- 21. Soviet Union (1,1,1,1)
- 24. Scratch out
- 25. Peach variety
- 27. Weather map line
- 28. Powerless
- 29. Salutes
- 30. Unmerited

Down

- 1. Sacred Indian river
- 2. Weight measures
- 3. Tether (3,2)
- 4. Not as nice
- 6. TV charity appeals
- 7. From the menu (1,2,5)
- 8. Hobbyists
- 11. Encourages, ... on
- 15. Full of high spirits
- 17. Tendering
- 18. Sleeveless overdress
- 20. Universal ages
- 21. Insanitary
- 22. Homing bird
- 23. Discontinued
- 26. First Greek letter

February solution





March horoscopes

by Patsy Bennett - patsybennett.com



Aries

Venus retrograde from the 3rd will bring a retrospective quality this March. You may even be tempted to make choices based on nostalgia alone, so be prepared to push forward towards the new as a fresh daily routine begins mid-month. Try to have key paperwork signed before then.



Taurus

You'll appreciate the chance to revitalise your social life and personal life - and even which organisations you associate with, to create more variety and spice. You may be drawn to out of the ordinary activities, and will appreciate the change of pace, but must maintain a sense of direction.



Gemini

As Jupiter gains pace in Gemini, your energy levels will improve, but you must avoid distractions. Remain clear about your goals. You may go over old ground in your career and direction, so you'll need to pay extra attention to your long-term goals. Finances could improve so be positive.



Cancer

This is an excellent month to make things happen, both in your career and love life. This is one of your best months in your romantic life – as long as you take the initiative! You must be prepared to let the past go as otherwise this month could be frustrating as feelings of being stuck increase.



Leo

Be prepared to make a commitment to a fresh agreement or person. The lunar eclipse on the 14th encourages you to take a fresh look at your finances. For some Leos, developments will allow you to move forward from past financial circumstances, so be innovative, but be sure to obtain advice.



Virgo

The total lunar eclipse on the 14th will be in Virgo and signals a fresh chapter in your personal life. You may find a situation that appears to be fated needs to be acted upon, but you must be your usual circumspect self to remain grounded. It's a month of new beginnings, so choose wisely!



Libra

You'll gain the chance to enter fresh territory, especially at work and health-wise. The lunar eclipse on the 14th will spotlight aspects of your work and health you are ready to leave behind, and the solar eclipse on the 29th will encourage fresh growth, even if a degree of upheaval is involved.



Scorpio

You'll gain the opportunity to enter fresh and even ideal-looking circumstances in your personal life, so if you're single, be sure to socialise, and couples find excellent ways to deepen your relationship, especially from the 14th. It's a passionate time, so be sure to maintain perspective.



Sagittarius

Domestic, property and family matters will be a focus in March, and you may find you need to go over old ground to gain momentum moving forward. It's an excellent time for discussions and contracts, but you must try to get agreements on the table before the 14th for best results.



Capricorn

This is an eclipse month, which generally opens doors. In the process, some doors will close. For you, this will be principally in the areas of career, favourite activities and learning. As a result, you may be drawn to make changes at home, with family or property. Think long term and be positive.



Aquarius

If 2025 has already brought change, be prepared to shift a little more now. The March eclipses will fall in your personal, financial and self-developmental zones, the message being that finances and income are important factors to focus on for now, and are a part of your self-development.



Pisces

This month crystallises a fresh chapter which will focus attention on a seemingly predestined relationship. Be careful with communications and refresh financial and personal goals. The lunar eclipse on the 14th will spotlight long-term changes in your personal and collaborative priorities.

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