

HERALD

The Bangalow

FREE May 2018

The race that stops a town



Ready, set, go cart!

The countdown to derby day is on for Bangalow Public School students. Photo: Larissa Polak

It's one of the biggest days on the town's social calendar and preparations are well underway for the Bangalow Billycart Derby on Sunday 20 May, with event organisers, Bangalow Public School parents and billycart enthusiasts all hard at work getting race-ready.

The skill, creativity and expertise of (mainly!) local dads will be on display when

billycarts of all shapes, sizes and styles hurtle down Byron Street during this thrilling annual event. And with the influx of tree changers into the historically rural community, some are benefiting from a friendly helping hand.

(continued page 2)

**Connecting
koalas
P10**



From the editor

This year marks the 20th since Bangalow's first community newsletter was born. It seems serendipitous, as 1998 was also the year I began my career in journalism. I was just starting out as a cadet subeditor when Colin Cook – also new to the town – published a single Roneoed sheet of green paper that over the years has become a Bangalow institution.

Fast-forward to 2016, when the milestone 201st 'odyssey' issue of the magazine noted that "it has matched the changes and appearance of Bangalow. It has survived from the last century into the new one."

This still holds true today; the evolution of this publication continues, perhaps reflecting more than ever the town's subtle transformation in character and composition. Yes, the times may be a-changin', but one thing will stay the same: the *Herald's* time-honoured commitment to the community it serves.

'Community' features heavily in our stories this month, from the Shire's heroic attempts to protect our vulnerable koala populations (pages 10-11) to the compassionate care provided by the Amitayus Home Hospice Service (page 16). And let's not forget the communal effort that goes into staging one of the biggest events of the year – the bang-up Billycart Derby (pages 1-3).

While I'm too green to be considered a 'local', I have received the warmest of Bangalow welcomes, from neighbours, new friends and the team at the *Herald*.

It would be remiss not to thank former editor Digby Hildreth and 'pop-up' editor Stephanie King, both of whom continue to contribute to the magazine – Digby as a roving reporter and Stephanie as a writer and our able production coordinator.

I must also acknowledge the inimitable Kirsten Galliot, who has taught me more than she knows.

As ever, we welcome your feedback, suggestions, story ideas and contributions. Please email them to editor@bangalowherald.com.au (note the new address, without the pluralised 's').

We hope you enjoy the read.

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COVER STORY

Ready, set, go cart!

Kimberley Lipschus, a mother of two boys who moved to the area from Sydney, saw an opportunity to partner with the Bangalow Men's Shed and, together with Andy Milton-Brown, coordinated billycart-building workshops in anticipation of the 2018 derby.

Her husband, Matt Leedham, who participated in the workshops, said: "I had never been taught anything much by my father, least of all woodwork. To visit the men's shed on a weekly basis and have men teach me, so that I could teach my son, was really inspiring."

As well as the mentoring opportunity for the older men, the workshops were a success for the kids who stayed the distance. "I loved helping my dad. And my billycart is so cool," said Isaac Pieper, aged seven.

Distractions got the better of others. "Sometimes I tried to help and sometimes I got a bit bored, so we played and made things in the mud instead," said eight-year-old Milo Lipschus-Leedham.

Father-of-two Steve Milsom also knows a thing or two about making billycarts. He helped his neighbour, Tony Lea, build one for Tony's young son, James. This was back in the heady days, when crashes were common and the objective was to keep the cart low, straight and balanced so it crossed the line in one piece.

Steve also built the legendary Flower Power when his daughter, Kiara, was ready to race in 2005. Kiara, then aged seven, was keen for speed and together they set about designing a winning billycart. After much tweaking and testing, Steve realised "it was all in the wheels – and the skill of the driver, of course!"

Kiara and Flower Power were unbeatable in their category for years. "Our family has such great memories, thanks to the Billycart Derby," said Kiara's mum, Lisa Hambling.

The original Flower Power, now raced by the Hall girls from Bangalow, was reborn as The Flying Pig a few years ago. Keep an eye out for the cart when it flies past the finish line...

Rebecca Sargeant
Volunteers are always needed on derby day. Details can be found on the event's website (bangalowbillycart.com.au) and Facebook page, or contact Richard Millyard on 0428 573 511.

Welcome to our new editor

The Bangalow Herald is delighted to introduce our new editor, Vanessa Frey. The long-time journalist, her photographer husband and their two rescue cats moved to Bangalow from Sydney in December, fulfilling a long-held dream.

"We fell in love with the town about five years ago," she explains. "It's beautiful in a bucolic sense, but we were also drawn to its creative and entrepreneurial spirit. We felt Bangalow was the right fit for us."

A country girl at heart, Vanessa says phase two of the relocation plan is to buy land and raise happy chooks. "Animal welfare and ethically produced food is important to me. It's another reason why we were attracted to this produce-rich farming region."

The 'position vacant' at the *Herald* was an unexpected bonus, however. "I saw it as a great opportunity to learn more about, and become involved in, the community," she says. "It's the close-knit group of people who make living in a small town so special and I wanted to contribute to it in some small way."

Vanessa recognised that *The Bangalow Herald* was "a labour of love" for its long-serving team of volunteers. Her vision for the magazine is to continue its well-established tradition of being the voice of the 2479 community – "to keep locals informed and entertained, to cover issues that are important to them and advocate for their interests but also to represent this area's unique charms to visitors so they can fall in love with the place, too".

Welcome to Bangalow, Vanessa.

Jenny Bird (President)



Build me a billycart: Milo Lipschus-Leedham (left) and Isaac Pieper with the blue racer made by Isaac and his dad, Quentin, at the Bangalow Men's Shed workshops.

All the Pit Stop action

Bangalow Public School is inviting spectators to "meet us at the finish line" for its rebranded annual fundraiser The Pit Stop (previously known as The Mad Hatter's Tea Party). The family-friendly event will feature all the fun of a billycart-themed fair within the school grounds. There will be games, art and craft activities and carnival rides for the kids, as well as food and coffee stalls. All monies raised will go towards funding resources at the school.

New derby sponsor

The Bangalow Lions Club is excited to announce a new two-year sponsorship deal that will see the iconic event renamed the Summerland Credit Union Bangalow Billycart Derby in 2018-19.



The formidable Kiara Milsom steering Flower Power to victory in 2008.

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Council matters

Heritage House upgrades

Bangalow Heritage House is set to get some fantastic upgrades, thanks to a successful grant submitted by Byron Shire Council to the Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF). A reading and display room will be built to extend Heritage House. The new room will include computing space and wi-fi access for researchers, creating opportunities to explore the local history collection. The project will also improve disability access, reconfigure the bathroom and kitchen to facilitate best use of the new extension and ensure the temperature is kept stable in the museum's display rooms.

Next round of community funding

A number of community groups in Bangalow have jumped at the opportunity to submit applications for the second round of funding from the Stronger Country Communities Fund. The focus is on sporting and community infrastructure. The SCCF was established by the NSW Government to support regional communities to deliver local infrastructure projects. The money (commonly known as 'poles and wires' money) comes from the sale of the State Government's electricity assets. Byron Shire Council, which will assess applications and allocate the funds, has been allocated \$1.7 million.

Guidance group progress

The Bangalow Village Plan Guidance Group met twice in April as progress towards a final draft of the Bangalow Village Plan draws to a close. The *Bangalow Movement Strategy: Final Draft Report* was discussed at length with the consultant from Melbourne, Council planners and councillors Alan Hunter and Basil Cameron. The overall thrust of the strategy, with its focus on people, walkability and connecting the various parts of the town, was welcomed. Issues that required discussion included parking (time limits, loss of parking spaces, signage for peripheral parking, paid parking); location of pedestrian crossings; the top of Station Street/forecourt of the A&I Hall ('town square' or 'shared zone'); streetscape treatment in Byron Street; pathways and bridges connected to and through the Showground; and town structure. Should this report include medium-density housing? Comments and feedback will inform the final draft of this strategy.

The Bangalow Guidance Group joined its Byron Bay and Mullumbimby counterparts and Byron Shire Council staff to discuss how the groups can best work with Council to manage and govern the projects that have been identified in the respective master plans. To this end, Council put forward a draft Place Governance Framework for discussion and feedback from all three groups. The Byron Bay group is further down the track than Bangalow and Mullumbimby and are already implementing projects and working within this framework's implementation phase.

Jenny Bird



Barry Stanford sounds the Last Post.

Photo: Mike Frey

Bangalow remembers

War heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice are honoured during Anzac Day commemorations.

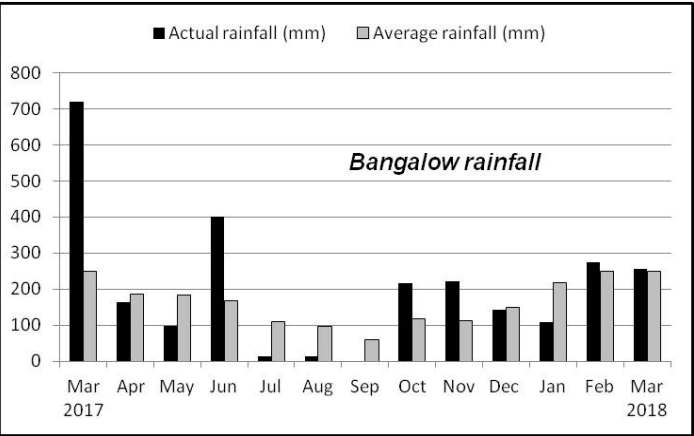
Another big turnout of marchers and spectators marked Anzac Day in Bangalow on 25 April. As well as veterans and those representing departed family members, there were representatives from local schools, sporting clubs and community organisations.

RAAF Group Captain David Scott, a Lismore-based anaesthetist, led the march alongside local Tony Hayward in full naval regalia. They were joined by Dr Ian Elder, who last marched in the town in 1981.

Following the wreath-laying ceremony and Last Post (played for the 58th consecutive year by bugler Barry Stanford), the large crowd was addressed by guest speaker Col Mann, the RSL sub-Branch president.

Secretary Col Draper then warmly welcomed everyone into the RSL Hall to enjoy a cuppa and a barbecue provided by the Bangalow Lions Club. Many gathered at the Bangalow Hotel for a game of two-up later in the afternoon. It was another Anzac Day honoured in the Bangalow tradition.

Murray Hand



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The Show must go on

The Bangalow A&I Society welcomes not one – but two – new office bearers.

For the first time in the Bangalow Show's 121-year history, new people are stepping into the president and Show secretary roles simultaneously.

After 13 years of service as the Bangalow A&I Society president, Michael O'Meara is handing the baton to Ivan Ewert.

Before moving to the Byron Shire five years ago, Ivan spent 30 years volunteering at the Whittlesea Show in Victoria, including a stint as president. From the moment he settled in the Shire, Ivan became a member of the Bangalow Show. He says he loves the traditions, history and community involvement behind it and is looking forward to this new challenge.

Bangalow local Mellissa Madden, who has been volunteering at the Show for the past 12 years – mainly as a steward in the cookery section – has accepted the nomination for the secretary position vacated by veteran Karen Ryan.

Many will recognise Mellissa as the deputy captain of the Bangalow Fire Brigade. She says she is delighted to be serving the community as the new Show secretary and has 17 years of information to extract from Karen's brain before she leaves town in May.

Karen Ryan and Mellissa Madden



Local firey and newly appointed Bangalow Show secretary Mellissa Madden. Photo: Karen Ryan

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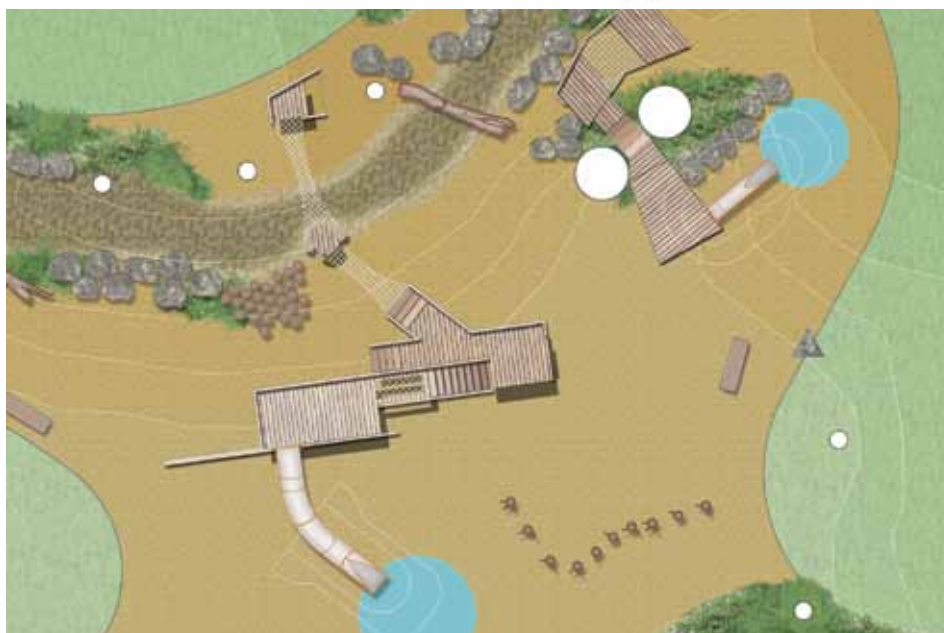
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The Nature Play area will fit among existing trees (left); a bird's-eye view of the new playground (below).



Note: the concept design illustrated in these diagrams may vary from the completed works. Watch as it unfolds...

Popping up at the Parklands

Bangalow's much-loved communal green space is slowly being transformed. **Christobel Munson** reports on work in progress.

In July 2017, Byron Shire Council – in close collaboration with the Bangalow Parklands team – received a \$250,000 Community Development Grant from the Federal Government. The funds are earmarked to create an adventure playground at the park's western end, an additional shelter shed and barbecue area, and a car park on the former cattle-dip site adjoining Heritage House.

The coming months will see significant progress made, initially on the 16-bay car park that must be completed in May. Following that will be the construction of the Nature Play playground designed by experienced local landscape architect Dan Plummer.

According to Lynn Smith from the Bangalow Parklands group, older locals often refer to the simplicity of their lives as children growing up in Bangalow and the freedom they had to explore their natural surroundings. "Things like swimming in the creek, climbing trees, making canoes and building cubbyhouses were all healthy, happy and relatively safe activities,"

says Lynn, who grew up in a house facing the park. "Not everything has to be excessively structured and the new playground will provide just enough to allow children to put aside fake news for a while and immerse themselves in some good old-fashioned exploration and fun."

In the words of Malcolm Robertson, Byron Shire Council's team leader, Open Space: "The new play space is intended to activate the western end of the playground, which currently does not get much use. It is aimed at older children and designed for exploration, education and creative play. The playground on the northern side of the park will remain for younger children. The existing hillside, mature camphor laurel trees and palm groves will be incorporated into the play space, together with a nearby picnic shelter and barbecue." Work on the Nature Play area will be completed by September, he confirmed.

In March 2017, the small but perfectly formed Bangalow Parklands team submitted a proposed three-year Plan of Management to

Council. The aim of the plan is "to work with Byron Shire Council, the community and community groups to improve and maintain existing facilities, and to build new infrastructure to ensure the park is accessible, welcoming and attractive".

Much of what was proposed last year has already manifested. Thanks to grants the group has received, the broken weir wall has been repaired. The Waterfront bandstand has been built and is in constant use, maintained by the Parklands team. The amenities building receives ongoing maintenance and repairs, while its mural (due to an earlier grant) delights visitors and locals alike. More well-used park benches and tables have been installed around the park's 2.67 hectares, due to the team's ongoing fundraising efforts.

The Parklands team believes the construction of a new shelter shed, barbecue and Nature Play area will not only open up the western end but also "bring new life and energy into this treasured public green-space".

Uncommon ground

Forget the garden-variety subtropical plants and try these cultivars instead.



Persian shield's (*Strobilanthes dyerianus*) stunning foliage has a silver or pewter sheen. Photos: Patrick Regnault

Thanks to this region's soil and climate, we have the opportunity to grow rare and unusual subtropical plants. Yet, we tend to grow the same old genera and species, missing out on the opportunity to create a very special horticultural profile in this area.

Let's take the popular frangipani (*Plumeria* sp.), which bears clusters of colourful scented flowers. While 'Fragrant White' is the most commonly seen, occasionally we encounter the yellow 'Canary', the 'Pink Beauty', the 'Starburst Red' or the multicoloured 'Yellow Rainbow'. There are more unusual frangipani, however: the delicate pink 'Zoe' has a strong fragrance; the eye-catching 'Lei Rainbow' is a beautiful blend of pink, yellow and red; 'Salmon Pink' boasts a unique shape and hue; and 'Bali Whirl' has citrus-scented yellow blooms.

Cordylines are also a common sight in gardens, but for something different you could try: 'Miss Andrea', a relatively compact, bushy and lush plant with variegated foliage of green, cream, white, purple and burgundy; the tough

'Benaraby White'; or the weird and wonderful 'New Guinea Fan' with glossy, fanned leaves.

Let's not forget hibiscus, which creates a wonderful tropical feel. 'True Blue' has a pretty purplish-blue bloom, while 'Eye Do' features large, showy flowers that graduate from orange on the outside to maroon in the centre. 'Rose Flake' and 'Snowflake' are both grown for their variegated foliage and accompanying red flowers.

Finally, a couple of my personal favourites... *Quisqualis falcata* var. *mussaendiflora* features vibrant crimson bracts. This is a semi-climber, which can be semi- to fully deciduous in winter. *Strobilanthes dyerianus*, also known as Persian shield, has thick, purple leaves with a metallic iridescence. It does well in full sun or partial shade.

All these plants, while uncommon, can be found in nurseries or sourced from landscape gardeners, so there's no excuse for not planting these subtropical gems – they're the same but different, really. *Patrick Regnault*



The decorative red *Quisqualis falcata* var. *mussaendiflora* is well suited to our region.

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On the Bangalow beat

Two generations of the Force – long-retired sergeant **Brian Shultz** and Senior Constable **Peta Erickson** – have a yarn about policing now and then.



Bangalow lacks serious crime, say Brian Shultz and Peta Erickson.

Photo: Murray Hand

After a distinguished career in the NSW Police Force, Brian Shultz, 80, retired in town. Senior Constable Peta Erickson, 40, arrived in 2012.

Brian: I was in charge of Bangalow station from 1974 until 1981. Back then it was a rather different job. For example, we had a lot of non-policing duties, such as work for the motor registry – including vehicle registrations and testing for drivers' licences. We even had to check local halls to ensure that their fire procedures were up to date.

Peta: That must have given you a lot of opportunities to get to know the community well.

Brian: Yes, I even knew everyone's birthdays.

Peta: When I first came [to Bangalow], I had to do a check of registered gun owners. It got me out meeting people, which was great. I think it's

important to get involved in the local community, especially when you're new to the area. Brian, what were your main policing duties?

Brian: Motor vehicle accidents were the single biggest issue. There were a lot of fatalities, especially on Lismore Road and the old Pacific Highway, which in those days went through the middle of town. There were accidents every time it rained. There wasn't a lot of serious crime – maybe some petty theft. Drugs were just coming on the scene but they weren't much of a problem in town. Byron Bay got bad very quickly.

Back in 1974, Bangalow's population was only about 600, most of whom were older people. There was hardly any domestic violence. There were two of us at the station

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The police residence (left) was built in 1905, with the adjacent courthouse following four years later.

and only six officers in Byron Bay. The latest we ever worked was about 1am – unlike now in Byron Bay, which is manned 24 hours a day.

Peta: Road accidents are still a big issue, especially on the Lismore Road. There isn't a lot of crime around Bangalow. Neighbourhood disputes and domestic issues occur but they aren't as bad as other places in the Shire. There is still petty theft, mainly from farms, and a small amount of motor vehicle theft in town. Dealing with people who have mental health issues is another policing matter. The wide variety of work keeps things interesting.

Brian: If we had a break and enter, we pretty much knew who it was, as there were a few families who caused most of the problems around town – including fighting among

themselves. At the time, Bangalow had a manual telephone exchange. If an emergency call came through, the operators would organise the ambulance and fire brigade, then contact me. I might have been at the pub, but they knew where to find me.

Peta: Bangalow, Mullumbimby and Brunswick Heads police stations are encouraged to work together, so we cover each other's territory. If I'm called out to an incident, I meet up with someone from another station before attending.

Brian: Speaking of incidents, are you going to drive a billycart this year?

Peta: No way! Not unless I can build my own cart with added safety measures. I only did it the first year I came here and I got the death wobbles really badly.

Murray Hand



Brian manned the station from 1974 to 1981.

Photos courtesy of Bangalow Historical Society

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Slow down, look up... and you might just spot one.

Photo: Mike Frey

Connecting our koalas

Koalas are one of the world's most iconic animals and the Shire is on a plant-or-perish mission to save them.

Byron Shire Council, landowners and the Bangalow Koalas community group are engaged in a desperate but exciting bid to create safe habitats for our dwindling koalas. The effort is snowballing in every direction across the Shire, with Bangalow at the heart.

In the past 20 years, the North Coast has seen a 50 per cent decline in koala numbers, caused primarily by residential development and the construction of roads and highways – leaving koala populations fragmented, isolated and stranded.

In response, interest is escalating in creating corridors and 'stepping stones' to connect these koala populations. According to Bangalow Koalas, there are currently 25 landholders in Byron Shire lining up to plant koala/wildlife corridors on their properties. About 65 per cent of them are farmers – mainly cattle or macadamias.

What started out as a small project in and around Rifle Range Road has now exploded, with enquiries coming from Talofa, Federal, Binna Burra, Nashua, Broken Head, Myocum, Possum Creek, Corndale and Coopers Shoot. Bangalow Koalas is coordinating with Lismore City Council to create movement corridors that link fragmented populations across the Shire.

"It's Bangalow and beyond now," says Bangalow Koalas president Linda Sparrow (aka Blinky or The Koala Lady). "Every day there are more enquiries."

One concern about koala corridors is that habitat and feed trees for the marsupials are not indigenous to the Big Scrub rainforest that once covered the plateau. "It's true that on some sites we can only plant koala-friendly species. But in the future, the majority of corridors will be a mixture of rainforest and koala species – making the corridors for all wildlife, not just koalas, and contributing to the regeneration of our rainforest."

Another issue is where the corridors are located in relation to roads. "We don't do corridors on the road," explains Linda. "We are trying to take them away from roads as much as possible. Where there are farms we go around the fence line, away from cattle and existing macadamia plantations."

The projects are partnered with Byron Shire Council, which employs a Koala Connections project officer one day a week. Funds to support plantings come via donations to Bangalow Koalas and from government grants. In one recent project in Bangalow, Council contributed 800 of the 1200 trees planted and the community planted them out!



Expanding existing safe habitats by planting new corridors and stepping stones will help connect fragmented koala populations.

Illustration: Lyn Hand

Rous Water, the Bangalow Lions Club, Bangalow Community Children's Centre and Bangalow Land and Rivercare also support local planting days.

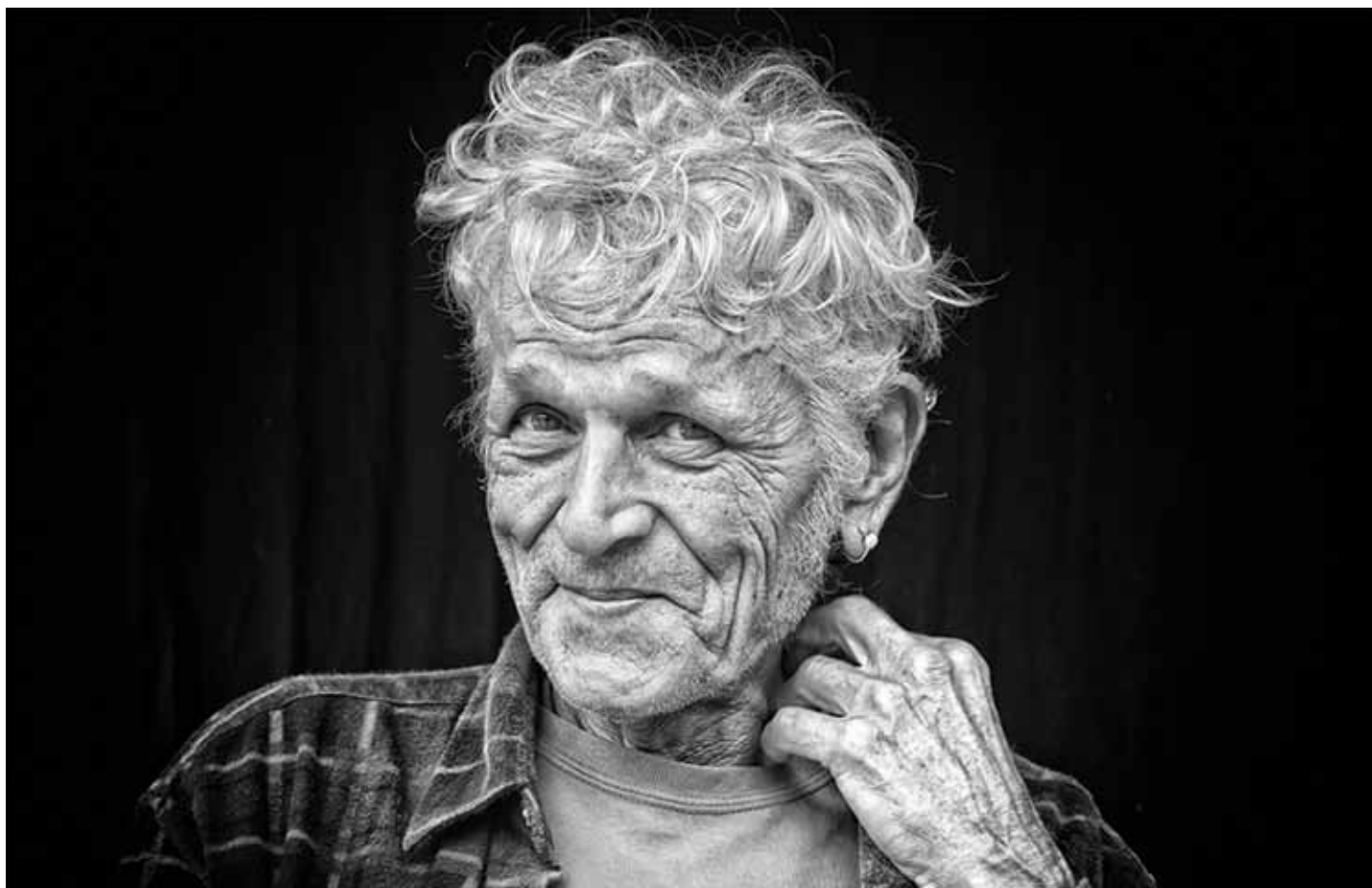
Most interested local landowners are willing to contribute to the cost of trees and the hiring of bush regenerators who clear and dig holes. Then it's over to volunteers to plant. "People are saying to me, 'When's the next planting? I'll come'," says Linda.

Bangalow Koalas is involved with a CSIRO mapping project called Atlas of Living Australia. If you do happen to spot a koala, report the sighting via phone (0411 491 991), email (twodogsmedia@optusnet.com.au) or Facebook message (Bangalow Koalas). For more information or to donate, go to bangalowkoalas.com.au.

The best place to see and learn about these native marsupials is at Macadamia Castle on the Hinterland Way in Knockrow. Why not visit on Wild Koala Day on May 3, a national day to celebrate koalas in the wild. The park has two 'Meet the koalas' sessions daily. *Jenny Bird*



(From left) Landowner Hilary Herrmann, Bangalow Koalas' Linda Sparrow, Greens member for Ballina Tamara Smith (front) and Joanne Green from Byron Shire Council planting trees. Photo: Digby Hildreth



Hiding in plain sight

Is homelessness a hidden issue around Bangalow?
Vivienne Pearson reports.

Most people tend to think of homelessness as living 'rough' on the street, but the issue is as diverse as the people who experience it. Living in cars, couch surfing or occupying unreasonably crowded and unstable housing also meet the criteria for homelessness, which affects more than 115,000 Australians.

Statistical and anecdotal evidence suggests Bangalow is not immune. According to 2016 Census data released by the Australian Bureau

of Statistics in March, about 30 people are living homeless in Bangalow, although they are not highly visible in the town. There are more hidden types of homelessness, such as women who move from one spare room to another.

The Byron Shire has a high rate of people living homeless, with 20 per cent of rough sleepers in NSW found on the North Coast. It seems that people find themselves drawn

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(From far left) Fro, Brunswick Heads; the book putting a human face on homelessness; Silver Lotus, Byron Bay. Photos: Drew Rogers

to this area for the same reasons we all choose to live here: kindness of weather, beauty in nature and care within the community.

There are common experiences among those living without a home – including hunger, ill health and a lack of safety – but even these are not universal. Not all those living homeless identify with the term and not all are unhappy; some choose this way of life and are skilled and resourceful in how they look after their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Awareness about homelessness is increasing and the topic is no longer off the radar of mainstream media. But without experiencing homelessness yourself, it is difficult to understand what it's truly like and empathise with the people affected by it. This was the

motivation behind *No Fixed Abode*, a book of personal stories from people living homeless around the Shire.

The book was conceived as a way of adding individual experiences to discussion and debate around homelessness. The stories, told as first-person narratives, are crafted from conversations between individuals and local volunteer writers. Exquisite black-and-white photographs accompany the words.

While not everyone has a photo and not everyone has used their real name, connecting faces to individual's stories is one of the many delights of this book.

A joint project between Byron Community Centre and Byron Writers Festival, the book was created using largely volunteer labour,

with profits going to the Byron Community Centre Benefit Fund.

Though Bangalow doesn't directly feature, stories are gathered from around Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby as well as the township of Byron Bay. Women, a far less visible group, are included and those telling their stories range in age from 18 to 68.

If you are interested in 'meeting' 24 people living homeless around our region, delve into the stories and photographs in *No Fixed Abode*.

No Fixed Abode: Stories from the Streets Around Byron Bay (\$29.95) is now available at *Bookworms & Papermites in Bangalow*. Vivienne Pearson was one of the book's volunteer writers.





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Dr Nigel Cluer
B.D.Sc (Hons), Principal



There's a story to tell...

How coming home helped turn local children's author **Zanni Louise** into a household name.

It is both ironic and a happy accident that a move back to the Northern Rivers to become a mother was the beginning of the journey that led to Zanni Louise becoming a world-renowned children's author.

Born in Lismore to a family of storytellers and raised on a farm in Inverell, Zanni grew up writing – at school, university and in the public eye. She entered writing competitions and even wrote and performed in local plays.

After studying art history at university in Melbourne and working in that industry for many years, she met future husband Gregor in Sydney while doing an art installation.

When it was time to start a family, the couple decided to raise their children closer to home and made the move back to northern NSW. Not content to sit idly by, waiting for the baby to arrive, Zanni started writing educational and training material for an Australian publisher. Motherhood arrived around the same time that she began blogging... about babies, sleep deprivation, parenting and life changes among other things.

As her blog grew in popularity, she started reviewing books, interviewing authors and writing her own stories where she could –

something she used to do as a little girl. Her first children's picture book, *Too Busy Sleeping*, was published in 2015. It received tremendous reviews and went on to be longlisted for the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards, which have been promoting "Australian books of high literary and artistic quality" since the mid-1940s. Not bad for a first book, you might say.

Her follow-up, *Archie and the Bear*, was released in 2017 and this year she published her first chapter book for kids based on a school-aged girl called Tiggy (see review at right). Today, her books are sold in 19 countries around the world.

Despite all this, she remains a very grounded person. As well as raising two girls and giving to her local community whenever she can, Zanni is now a full-time writer and works with the Byron Writers Festival's StoryBoard project. She also tours schools around the country and runs writing workshops at festivals and writers' centres.

She is happiest when sharing her love of writing with kids and adults alike – helping them to tell their own compelling stories and achieve their writing dreams. *Mary Nelson*

Zanni Louise shares her love of books with kids at Heritage House (left); the writer and her newly released *Tiggy* series (above).

Tiggy and the Magic Paintbrush by Zanni Louise

They are really great books. I liked the paintbrush and how she only used it to do good things, like helping her pet dragon or getting used to a new school. Tiggy is a creative girl with a great imagination. I liked the pictures and the colours of the magic paintbrush – they looked cool. I would like a magic paintbrush!

Evelyn Stocks, 8

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Illustration: Lyn Hand

Davidson's plum panna cotta

Native fruit adds wow factor to this classic creamy dessert.

A bombshell of colour and intense, clean, tangy flavour, Davidson's plum (*Davidsonia jerseyana*) – also known as Mullumbimby plum – is in season now.

Like many rainforest species, it is rather alien-looking; a Dr Seuss-like tree of dark purple fruit sprouting in clusters from a straight, narrow trunk.

The flesh is blood red, soft and juicy. It's also one of the most nutritionally powerful native Australian fruits. Rich in antioxidants and packed with 100 times the vitamin C of oranges, it's also a source of lutein, magnesium, zinc, calcium, potassium and manganese.

Although this fruit is too tart to eat on its own, a little will add flavour and that oh-so-gorgeous colour to ice cream, cordials, sauces and jams, both sweet and savoury. If you're lucky enough to have a tree in your garden (they'll grow tall in the smallest of spaces), you can freeze any excess fruit for future use.

This panna cotta recipe yields a creamy dessert that's not too sweet and looks spectacular. The finger limes add extra texture and wow factor.

I bought my plums from Rebecca of Playing with Fire Native Foods at the monthly Bangalow Market.

Ingredients

250g Davidson's plums, deseeded
 ½ cup sugar, plus ½ extra
 370ml cream
 1 vanilla pod
 3 tsp powdered gelatine
 250ml buttermilk
 6 finger limes (optional)

Method

1. Using a stick or regular blender, purée the deseeded plums and ½ cup caster sugar. Set aside.
2. Spray or rub 6 ramekins with oil and then set aside.
3. Put the cream and remaining ½ cup caster sugar into a small saucepan. Cut the vanilla bean in half, lengthways, and scrape out the seeds. Put the seeds and scraped pod into the same saucepan and turn the heat onto low.
4. Stir occasionally as the cream heats and the sugar dissolves. Just before it simmers, whisk in the gelatine and continue whisking gently for 2 minutes.
5. Add the buttermilk and plum purée and stir for 5 minutes. Pour the mixture through a sieve and then evenly pour the sieved mixture into the prepared ramekins. Place the ramekins onto a small tray and refrigerate overnight to set.

For charred finger limes, lightly spray the limes with a little oil, then simply toss onto a chargrill or griddle pan and turn them from time to time. After a few minutes they'll get a bit of colour on the skin. Remove them from the heat to cool then simply cut a slit down the side and squeeze out the pulp. Discard any seeds.

Serve the panna cotta in the ramekins if you wish or carefully invert them onto a plate. Garnish with some charred finger lime and edible flowers.

Lyn Hand

Recipe courtesy of heneedsfood.com

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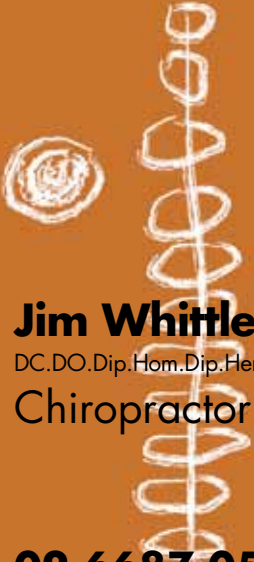
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HOSPICE SERVICE

Caring when it counts

The not-for-profit Amitayus provides care, compassion and comfort for people who choose to die at home.

On this perfect autumn day, with the sun high in a cloudless cerulean sky, I'm at James Cowan's house in Bangalow to discuss the Amitayus Home Hospice Service, along with volunteer carer Don Hansen. But the conversation twists and turns like the fantastical plot of one of the internationally acclaimed writer's many novels and we find ourselves talking mostly about literature – which is how these like-minded souls forged their friendship.

The pair met close to a year ago, when James became ill and reached out to Amitayus for a carer who could relieve his wife, Wendy, for a few hours each week so she could get out and about without the worry of leaving her husband at home alone.

James' health has since improved through treatment, but his weekly sessions with Don continue. Having bonded over books, they while away their Thursday mornings reading James' magnum opus, a soon-to-be-published trilogy he's been working on for 15 years.

"Don has come into my life and enriched it enormously. We just enjoy one another's company. We have a cup of coffee and draw pleasure from the books," says James. "And it's had a tremendous effect on me, health wise. We're both on a [natural] high."

Adds Don, "The paradox of it is that it's healing and enlivening for both of us."

Their relationship is testament to the spirit of care and compassion upon which the hospice service is built. Established in Mullumbimby in 1994 and named by Buddhist monks, Amitayus (formerly the Byron Hospice Service) provides a range of support services for people with a terminal illness who wish to be cared for at home at the end of life.

Trained carers, who visit clients' homes across the Byron Shire, help in practical and emotional ways, leaving the medical treatment to community nurses, the palliative

care team and other healthcare providers. "We focus on the emotional and spiritual issues that can come up when you're in that sort of care situation," explains Don. "It's really about helping clients in a way that focuses totally on their needs and enables the person, despite physical impairments and their illness, to maintain their dignity and live their lives as independently as possible."

Whether it's fetching a glass of water, moving the person to avoid pressure sores or just sitting by their bedside and being there for them, the comfort and support that Amitayus carers provide can help alleviate the enormous emotional and physical demands placed on family and friends when caring for someone with a debilitating illness.

The hospice service is volunteer-run and free of charge, with Amitayus relying solely on donations and fundraising activities for its work. "Many of our clients will say, 'You guys do this for nothing? How come?'" The motivation is simple, says Don. "Everybody should have the right to die at home if that's what they wish and to die with dignity..."

Death is a deeply human experience and "it's a privilege to be with people in their last days", says Don. "We may care for those whom some call 'dying people' and they may be at the end stage of their life, but guess what? They're still very much alive. That's what I found with James as soon as I met him. Not knowing at all how much time he had left – we still don't know – it's the sharing, the relationship that happens."

During our conversation, we touch on the healing power of books, Buddhist philosophy and, inevitably, caring for others at the end of a well-lived life. "Amitayus is a wonderful community project," concludes James. "It does your heart good to know that people like Don are out there helping us." *Vanessa Frey*
Visit byronhospice.org.au.



Don Hansen, volunteer carer and training coordinator with the Amitayus Home Hospice Service. Photo: Mike Frey



Bangalow's holistic dentist, Nigel Cluer.

Photo: Digby Hildreth

Smiles all round

So, what is holistic dentistry and how can it improve your oral hygiene and general health?

Dr Nigel Cluer set up his biomimetic dentistry practice smack in the middle of town – surrounded by shiny, happy coffee drinkers and diners, clothes and homewares boutiques and galleries that reflect Bangalow's affluence and appeal as a shopping destination.

We should all have shiny, happy teeth, too. But in Nigel's experience in the Northern Rivers, the situation goes deeper than mere appearance. "I'm finding more gum disease than I would like to see and am concerned about this because of the oral-systemic connection," he says.

"The mouth can be one of the main sources of toxicity for people today and this toxicity – depending on age, general health and diet – can lead to severe inflammation throughout the entire body. We now know this can lead to a lot of other systemic diseases."

Nigel started the Brunswick Holistic Dental Centre in 1999 and built it up to a four-chair multidisciplinary practice, but an eye injury meant he couldn't work for 20 months. He swam and meditated his way back to a full recovery and, drawn to the small, tight-knit community in Bangalow, he looked for and found suitable premises.

"I am interested in looking after my community and growing with it towards improving everyone's oral health." Take-up has been "exceptionally good – beyond my expectations" and he loves working here, he says.

What does 'holistic' mean exactly? "The word holistic refers to treating mind, body and spirit," says Nigel. "The spirit side is a rather grey area for dentists but it starts with a more holistic environment when designing the surgery. I spent a lot of time on the layout to make the space more relaxing and inviting for my patients; the music chosen is designed to help there, too.

"I always listen very carefully to every word patients say. It's extremely important for patients to feel that they are being heard. I also make sure they're aware that I always put their interests first and that they have complete control over the situation."

The practical aspects refer to "atraumatic extractions", including thorough curettage of the extraction socket; safe amalgam removals, including testing, detox supplementation, oxygen supplies and a mercury-vapour extraction machine. The dentist uses only biocompatible, non-toxic materials that are BPA-free.

He also advises on and supplies nutritional supplements to assist the treatment of gum disease, providing an understanding of how it is connected to many systemic diseases – coronary heart disease, in particular.

Then there's the cost. "I feel that prioritising and staging treatment plans to suit my patients' budgets is a more holistic approach, because this allows them to spread their treatment over a long-enough period for them to cope financially," he says.

But Nigel Cluer considers the most holistic aspect of his practice to be "guiding my patients towards perfect oral health. So, I am very enthusiastic in the preventative area and offer some unique and novel techniques towards achieving perfect oral hygiene, including wet brushing and oil pulling."

Digby Hildreth

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ADFAS Byron Bay

With its high ceilings, timber floors and pressed-tin walls, Bangalow's A&I Hall is a fitting venue for a fine arts lecture. Such lectures became a popular form of entertainment during the late 18th century in the city of Boston, Massachusetts.

Coincidentally, the ADFAS presentation on 16 April by visiting academic Peter McPhee examined the life and work of artist John Singleton Copley, whose formative years were spent in Boston during this time. McPhee's lecture was replete with beautiful reproductions of Copley's portraits of the Bostonian gentry and accompanied by a fascinating account of the historical events of the time.

ADFAS (Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Societies), which has 37 groups across Australia, is all about the arts. Members subscribe to a series of enjoyable and informative lectures across a broad spectrum of fine, decorative and contemporary art forms. Upcoming topics include French landscape painting, the life of Yehudi Menuhin and the creative collaboration of Daphne du Maurier and Alfred Hitchcock.

Chairman John Griffiths is suitably enthusiastic about the community benefits of ADFAS, which he describes as "a window on the world". He adds: "I have always been



(From left) Society chairman John Griffiths, secretary Dianne Stuart, visiting academic Peter McPhee and treasurer Sue Brennan at last month's John Singleton Copley lecture.
Photo: Judy Baker

impressed with the intellectual and cultural depth of our members."

Each ADFAS society is encouraged by the national executive to use excess funds to contribute to a Young Arts program. For the past nine years, in conjunction with Bangalow Lions and Brian Warrick, ADFAS Byron Bay has donated \$500 towards the prize money of the Susie Warrick Young Writer's Award. This is a competition run by the Byron Writers Festival for young writers between the ages of 16 and 25 who live in the Northern Rivers area.

Monday evening's enthusiastic crowd was also treated to quality wines and a delicious supper. There was a good deal of chatter about local topics and a buzz of excitement about the next lecture on Monday 14 May, entitled From Corot to Monet: Developments in French Landscape Painting and presented by Rosalind Whyte from London's Tate Modern.

Annual membership for ADFAS Byron Bay & Districts costs \$140 per person or \$250 per couple. Guests are welcome to attend at \$25 per lecture.
Mery Stevens

WHAT'S THAT NUMBER?

AA	Tues 5.30pm	Richard	0466 885 820	Pool Trust	3rd Wed	Dominic	6687 1425
ADFAS		John	0438 778 055	Poultry Club		Hec	6687 1322
Aussie Rules		Bill	6687 1485	Progress Association		Ian	0414 959 936
Aussie Rules Junior		Greg	6687 1231	Quilters	2nd/4th Thur	Helen	6684 1161
Bangalow Koalas		Linda	0411 491 991	Rainbow Region Dragon Boat Clubs		Monica	0408 776 171
Bangalow Parklands team		Terry	6685 4107	Red Cross	1st Fri month	Dell	6684 7405
Bangalow Market	4th Sun of month	Jeff	6687 1911	Rugby Union		Richard	0415 773 064
Bangalow Bowlo		Shane	6687 2741	S355 C'mtee Heritage House		Don	6687 1897
Bridge	Fri 12pm	Eda	6685 1984	Scouts	Tues 6.30pm/Fri 5.45pm	Jim	0408 546 522
Cancer support	1st Wed 1-4pm	Chris	6687 0004	Show Society		Karen	6687 1033
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Tues	admin@bangalow.biz		Soccer Club	2nd Mon 6pm	Nick	6687 1607
Childcare Centre	7.45am-6pm	Kerry	6687 1552	Social Golf	Every 2nd Sun	Brian	6684 7444
Cricket Club		Anthony	0429 306 529	Sporting Field	Bookings	Nick	6687 1607
Co-dependents Anonymous	Thur 7pm/Sat 4pm	Guy	0421 583 321	Tennis Court Hire			6687 1803
CWA	2nd Wed	Di	6685 4694	Writers Group	1st Thurs	June	6687 1004
Garden Club	1st Wed	Fay	6687 2096	WIRES			6628 1898
George the Snake Man		George	0407 965 092	VENUES			
Historical Society/Museum/Cafe			6687 2183	A&I Hall	Station St	Brian	0427 157 565
Land/RiverCare	1st Sat working bee	Liz	6687 1309	Anglican Hall	Ashton St	Matthew	0488 561 539
Lawn Bowls, Men	Wed & Sat 1pm	Gerry	6687 1142	Bangalow Showgrd	Moller Pavilion	Karina	6687 1035
Lawn Bowls, Women	Wed 9.30am	Dot	6687 1246	Sports/Bowling Club	Byron St	Shane	6687 2741
Lions Club	2nd/4th Tues 7pm	Brian	0408 899 555	Catholic Hall	Deacon St	Russell	0423 089 684
Men's Shed		Brian	0413 679 201	Coorabell Hall	Coolamon Scenic	Ouida	6687 1307
Netball Club	Train 4.15pm Thur	Rachel	6687 0402	Newrybar Hall	Newrybar Village	Tom	0407 189 308
Op Shop	10-3pm, Sat 9.30-12.30		6687 2228	RSL Hall	Station St	Charlotte	6687 2828
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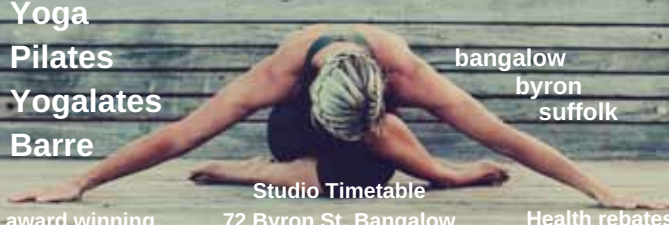


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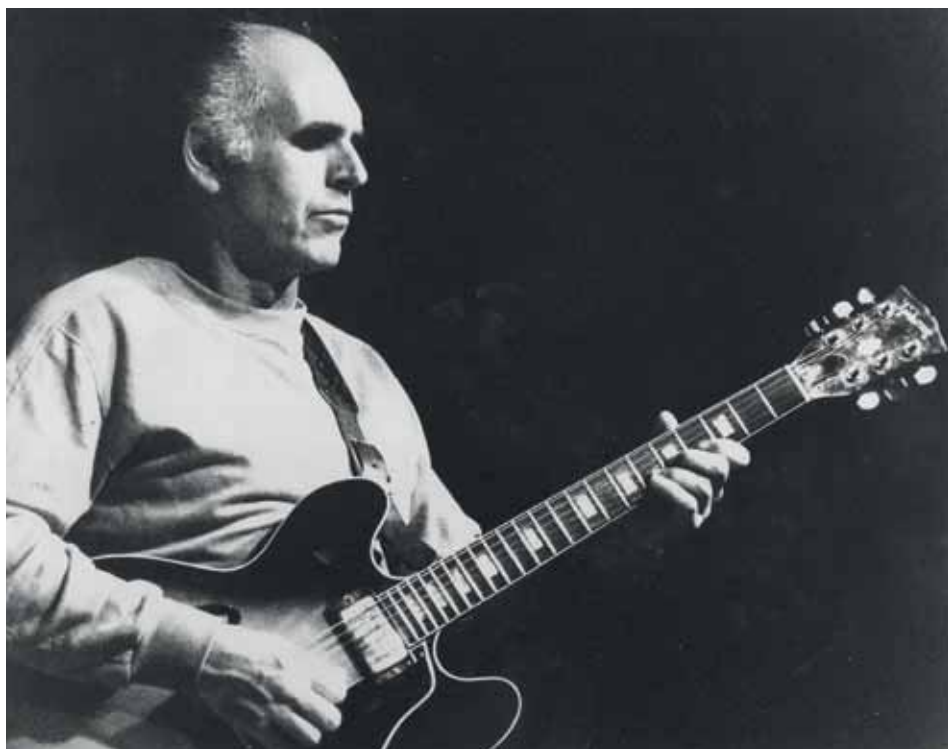
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Neville David Sutherland

07.12.36 – 02.03.2018

Ned. Guitarist extraordinaire, grower of quality macadamias and gentle man.



Ned playing at The Basement in Sydney.

Photos courtesy of the Sutherland family

Born in Te Puke, New Zealand, to Ted and Janet Sutherland, he had a brother, Denis, and a sister, Fiona. He was a charmer with a wicked look in his eye and a joy in the life well lived. He will be remembered for his passion for life and people.

Neddy grew up and went to school in Thames, NZ. He then completed a Diploma in Agriculture at Lincoln College. When he was 21 he moved to Sydney, Australia.

He had met Patricia, or Paddi, in Bondi (she was also from NZ) and they were together for 60 years. Family was always central to their lives together. They had two children: Michael David and Dean Jabez. Michael married Phillippa, Dean married Katie and three beautiful grandchildren – Eleanor, Hamish and Archie – rounded out the family unit. There were many nieces and nephews, too: Michelle, Greg, Megan, Eddie, Grant, Glen, Brett, Mark, Peter, Janine, Emily and Anna.

Ned worked as a professional musician throughout the early '60s until the mid-'80s and played at The Basement and Sydney Opera House; as a session musician for many touring acts; and also on Channel 9's *Midday* show.

He also completed a jazz degree at the Conservatorium of Music. In 1985, after moving to the Bangalow area, he continued to play – most notably with Hip Pocket – and used his agricultural qualification to become a macadamia farmer.

Ned died with Parkinson's disease and was living at Feros Village Bangalow at the time. A service was held for him at Lismore Memorial Gardens and, as guests arrived to Miles Davis' *So What*, his friends were instantly reminded of his love for truly great music.

Many mourners travelled long distances, across Australia and from NZ, to be there. It was clear that a love and appreciation of Ned had united the people he cared about.

The family shared some very special and intimate moments, with Paddi having Michael read out a personal and loving tribute to her husband. His two sons – who formed Skunkhour in the early '90s – revealed the man behind the music. They recounted that he took them to

The Basement in Sydney from a young age so they could hear great music and meet like-minded musicians. His older brother, Denis, spoke with love and humour on the loss, while his friend, Patricia Ellis, wrote a heartwarming poetic tribute.

Moments that were shared included that, as a young man, Ned played rugby and cricket. He loved music, socialising and coaching son Michael's rugby team. His favourite colour was green and he enjoyed writers such as Flann O'Brien, Spike Milligan and Pam Ayres – very funny people. His preferred music was jazz, jazz fusion and rock'n'roll.

Ned was also a talented artist and won first prize in an art exhibition in 2016. He was well travelled and had a high regard for animals and nature.

The service ended with an Irish blessing that summed up for many the comfort gained from the intimate service:

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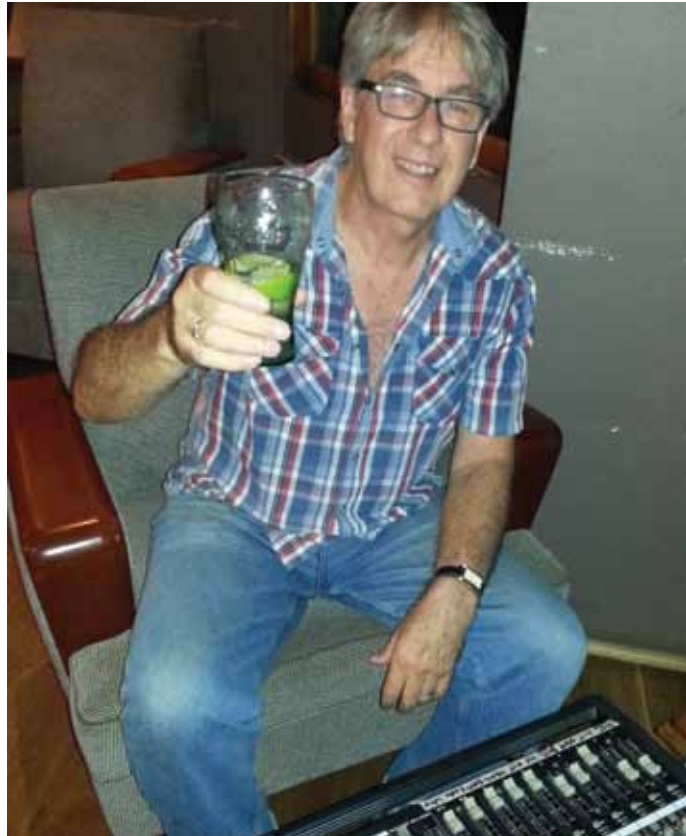


Ned the farmer

*may the wind be ever at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of his hand.*
Mourners left the service to the sound of Ned's much-loved *Honky Tonk* by Bill Doggett.

At the wake, held at the Bangalow Bowlo, a neighbour of Ned's recounted a story he had entertained the locals with one Christmas. He was playing guitar behind Kamahl at a Sydney Opera House concert. After a bracket, Kamahl turned to Ned and suggested that he might like to not play as loudly. When they resumed, Ned let fly with a loud, intricate solo – to Kamahl's chagrin. After he'd finished, he unplugged his guitar and walked off the stage, leaving the singer to find his own way through the rest of the set. A satisfying Neddy moment.

The Sutherland family and friends



Pass the mic

It's the beginning of a new era for the Bangalow Brackets, with local musician Slim Pickens (pictured above) now hosting the popular open mic nights at the Bangalow Hotel on Tuesdays. Peter Woolnough, who ran the gig for more than 20 years, has retired to Casino.

The format remains unchanged: anyone who wants to perform a 20-minute 'bracket' is welcome to have a crack after adding their name to the whiteboard from 7.30pm onwards. Slim provides the microphones, guitar leads and professional sound mixing. The pub has added an incentive – a lucky draw for performers, who can win either a bottle of wine or a meal voucher.

Slim is well known to music-lovers in the area. He has been a professional performer for about 50 years and a resident for 20. He believes the open mic night at the Bangalow pub is the longest-running weekly open mic night in Australia!

Check out the Bangalow Brackets' new Facebook page for more information.

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Check out the latest happenings in and around town.

Bangalow Garden Club

When Wed 2 May, 1.30pm
Where Moller Pavilion, Bangalow Showground
Information Fay 6687 2096 or bangalowgardenclub.com

This month, in-house guest speakers share their gardening experiences and expertise. The Saturday Social Garden Visit on 5 May will be to Fay Bogg's lovely rural property in Brooklet. Many thanks to Chris Cowley, whose garden in Eureka was much admired in April.

Northern Rivers Harvest Food Festival

When Thur 3 May-Sun 6 May
Where Various regional venues
Information harvest@northernriversfood.org.au
Tickets harvestfoodfest.org

Experience the best food in the region, with a full range of gastronomic experiences on offer: farmhouse lunches, cocktails, dinners and more. Organised by peak regional industry body Northern Rivers Food, the event includes the inaugural Harvest Food Trail on Sunday 6 May, which connects people with real food on real farms.



Gourmet local cheese at the NRF Harvest Food Festival. Photo: Nelly le Comte

ADFAS lecture

When Mon 14 May, 6pm for 6.30pm
Where Bangalow A&I Hall
Contact byronbay@adf.org.au

In the lecture From Corot to Monet: Developments in French Landscape Painting, art guide and lecturer Rosalind Whyte traces the battles that landscape



Detail of Corot's *Marino, Large Buildings on the Rocks* (1827)

painters fought and won to gain recognition for their subject, culminating at the high point of landscape's popularity with the acceptance of the work of the Impressionists. Afterwards, there is an opportunity to chat with members over a glass of wine and a light snack. Guests are welcome (entry \$25).

Sourdough Workshop

When Thur 10 May
Where Elements of Byron
Contact info@sbp.org.au

Small business owners and employees are invited to attend a subsidised workshop on 'Building your online presence'. Organised by Sourdough Business Pathways, it covers how to use a website and social media as part of a marketing strategy.

Bangalow Networking Breakfast

When Thur 17 May, 7.45am-9am
Where Town Cafe, Bangalow
Contact Rosemarie 0412 475 543

Anna McCormack from Beacon Social Media will talk about the importance of honesty, care and community in our relationships, particularly in the context of the current place of social media in the business world.

Bangalow Billycart Derby

When Sun 20 May
Where Byron Street Bangalow
Information bangalowbillycart.com.au or Facebook

One of the biggest events on Bangalow's annual calendar is on again! The action starts at 9am (registration is at 7am), with loads of fun for everyone. If you're racing, be sure to register, read the rules and bring a helmet.



The Pit Stop

When Sun 20 May
Where Bangalow Public School
Information bangalow-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

Don't miss this massive fete in the school grounds. Organised by the P&C, it's a major fundraiser for the school. The raffle alone is worth going for – first prize is a trip to China and there are 11 other fantastic prizes to be won.

Bangalow Bridge Replacement Program



We are replacing five local bridges:

- 1 Booyong Bridge
- 2 Parkers Bridge
- 3 James Bridge
- 4 O'Mearas Bridge
- 5 Scarrabelottis Bridge

Work on Booyong Bridge started on 16 April and is expected to finish on 10 July.

Need more information?

- Go to www.byron.nsw.gov.au for more details about the timeline for each bridge.
- Email annie.lewis@byron.nsw.gov.au if you would like regular email updates.
- Call us on 6626 7000.



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Bangalow Quilters

When 2nd and 4th Thursdays

of the month, 9.30am-2.30pm

Where All Souls Anglican Church Hall, Ashton Street Bangalow

Contact Elizabeth 0409 599 835

Morning tea provided. Visitors welcome. Help with patchwork, quilting and craft available.

Australia's Biggest Morning Tea

When Thu 24 May, 10am-11.30am

Where All Souls' Anglican Church Hall, Ashton Street Bangalow

Contact Elizabeth 0409 599 835

Get along and support Cancer Council NSW at this event hosted by Bangalow Quilters. The cost is \$5 and all proceeds from this nationwide annual fundraiser go towards cancer research.

Bangalow Poultry Club Annual Exhibition

When Sat 26 May, 8.30am-midday

Where Poultry Pavilion, Bangalow Showground
Contact Hec 6687 1322

Who doesn't love a designer chook? Apart from the annual Bangalow Show, this will be the display of the year. So come along and appreciate these spectacular specimens of the avian world.

National Volunteer Week

When 21-27 May

Let's take our hats off to every volunteer who offers their time and energy to the many community organisations in Bangalow and beyond that help to hold our region together. During the week, thousands of events will be held across Australia to say thank you to the six million people who regularly volunteer their time. Keep your eyes on the local press for any events.

Rail Trail update

Information northernrivers railtrail.org.au

Great news – both the NSW and Federal governments have each committed \$6.5 million



Bangalow station could get an upgrade as part of the Rail Trail project.

towards the first stage of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail for the section from Murwillumbah

May diary

2 Bangalow Garden Club

3 Bangalow Writers Group; Wild Koala Day

3-6 NRF Harvest Food Festival

5 Bangalow Garden Club Saturday visit

5-6 and 12-13 Art Open Studios

6 Harvest Food Trail

10 Sourdough Workshop

12-13 Mother's Day Pop-up Newrybar Hall

14 ADFAS lecture

17 Bangalow Networking Breakfast

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24 Australia's Biggest Morning Tea

26 Bangalow Poultry Club Annual Exhibition

27 Bangalow Market

Bangalow Herald deadlines:

Advertising Friday 11 May

Copy Monday 14 May

Email your event to whatson@bangalowherald.com.au

to Crabbes Creek. Tweed Shire Council is now putting together a 'design and construct' tender. The Northern Rivers Rail Trail team is working closely with Richmond Valley and Lismore councils to further investigate other sections of the corridor for

the preparation of a business case. This is only possible because of the community's contribution to our crowdfunding campaign last year. An environment and heritage study for the corridor from Casino to Bangalow is also underway.

GNF bangalow

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GNF bangalow



Training at the Bowlo is not "a viable long-term solution" for players.
Photo: Judy Baker

Netball's catching on

Netball is thriving in Bangalow, but the local club says a lack of courts and recognition is holding this popular team sport back.

Wednesday afternoons are abuzz at the Bowlo, with netball players taking over 'the cage'. And in the words of Bangalow Netball Club stalwart Helen Spiteri, it's all about "fun, friendship and fancy footwork".

Australia's most popular team sport for women and girls is certainly making its presence felt here. "The club is thriving," says president Ellie Powditch. "We have seen steady growth over a number of years and currently have nine teams with 81 registered players."

And it's clear the kids are loving it. For many of the primary-school-aged players, netball is the highlight of their week. First-year player Maggie Morris says she is enjoying her taste

of competitive team sport. "Netball is great fun, especially for people who are new. I like trying out different on-field positions."

The female role-modelling that netball provides at the local and national levels is so important for girls. Matilda Peacock was lucky enough to see some of the netball action at last month's Commonwealth Games and found the speed and athleticism of the world's best players inspiring to watch.

With the Australian Diamonds' shock loss to England in the Games' gold-medal match, an exciting new era of international rivalry will see the reigning world champions out for revenge at the 2019 Netball World Cup in Liverpool in the United Kingdom. Bring it on!

Netball also provides girls with a supportive environment in which they can hone their leadership skills through umpiring, coaching and mentoring. "Four under-17 players have taken on coaching roles this year and this is a great opportunity for the older girls to mentor the younger players," says Ellie.

Having witnessed the club's growth over the past 10 years as both a player and a coach, long-time club member and new coach Chelsea Matthews is excited for the future of the sport locally but concerned about the lack of netball infrastructure in Bangalow.

"It is very frustrating," says Chelsea. "This has been an issue the whole time I've been involved with the club."

"The Bowlo has been great in providing space for the club to expand, and the social atmosphere has definitely contributed to the club's recent growth," adds Ellie. "However, it is not a viable long-term solution as a training facility."

Chelsea expresses similar concerns: "I can see the potential for these kids to play representative netball, but it is very difficult to coach them with limited space and no proper courts."

The club is actively pursuing opportunities, including preparing a grant submission for the construction of hardcourts in Bangalow. "This is long overdue," according to Chelsea. "Unfortunately... netball has not been prioritised in Bangalow."

Byron Shire Council's website states that the Bangalow Sports Fields are "a popular community facility featuring three football fields, two cricket fields, one rugby field, practice wickets, tennis courts, a family-friendly skate park, playground and amenities" – but netball courts are noticeably absent.

Says Ellie Powditch, "It's time to give netball the recognition it deserves." *Rebecca Sargeant*



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