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From the Editor

One of the joys of living in this part of the world is the sheer abundance of homegrown creativity and vision around us, often built from the spark of an idea, a conversation and the willingness to have a go.

This month's edition is filled with people making opportunities for themselves and for others. We see filmmakers, musicians and artists bringing international-standard work to tiny village halls and local festivals. Writers, illustrators, curators, photographers and performers continue to shape lives that blend creativity with community in ways that feel uniquely Northern Rivers.

What stands out is that very few people here seem willing to wait for permission. If the venue doesn't exist, someone opens a workshop. If the audience isn't there yet, people build one. If traditional pathways seem closed, locals simply invent new ones.

This spirit of initiative also runs through Michael Poland's work on the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative and reminds us that globally significant ideas and advocacy can emerge from small communities like ours. Carole Gamble writes about growing your own vegetables, encouraging us to rethink how we live, consume and respond to increasingly uncertain times.

Elsewhere, we see communities continuing to advocate for change and inclusion. The local CWA branch is pushing for stronger protections for children, while teenager Charlotte Burns offers a thoughtful perspective on how young people themselves are navigating social media restrictions, peer pressure and online life. It's encouraging to see younger voices contributing directly to conversations often dominated by adults.

In 2479, creativity spills down the main street, into green spaces, historic halls, school programs, farms and businesses. In a time when the wider world can feel fast-moving and disconnected, there is something heartening about seeing those around us continue to make things happen here with good intentions, by hand, together, for each other.

Sally Schofield

We acknowledge the original storytellers of the land on which we live and work, the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung Nation.

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Festival founder Christian Pazzaglia and local film maker Mark Lewis Photo Digby Hildreth

Festival films on everyone's lips

This month's Bangalow Film Festival will be something of a family affair, with a father and daughter filling two key, but very different, roles, reports **Digby Hildreth**.

Dad is local filmmaker Mark Lewis, a 40-year industry veteran who is acclaimed for his witty, off-the-wall documentaries, most famously his 1988 study of cane toads that highlighted the more cuddly qualities of the reviled amphibian.

His daughter is Los Angeles-based Molly Lewis, perhaps the world's most famous whistler, a winner of international competitions, who has performed alongside musicians from Dr Dre to Jackson Browne, and is a recording artist in her own right. She opened for Beck on his recent American tour, collaborated with Mark Ronson and Andrew Wyatt on the *Barbie* soundtrack, whistling Billie Eilish's *What Was I Made For?*, and fronts lavish gala dinners for the likes of Hermes, Chanel and Gucci. In 2017, by

special request, she whistled *Danny Boy* and *Just a Closer Walk with Thee* for Harry Dean Stanton as he lay on his deathbed.

Mark is a member of the judging panel for the festival's inaugural Green Frame Nature Documentary Award – Australia's first prize dedicated exclusively to environmentally aware films; Molly will play a more visible part, both onscreen, in the opening night film, *Whistle*, and in a live demonstration of her spellbinding skills.

Watching, or rather, hearing her perform – evoking the haunting soundtracks in the spaghetti westerns of Ennio Morricone – will alone be worth the price of a ticket.

The presence of the two at the festival was purely coincidental, taking even director Christian Pazzaglia by surprise – and delighting him.

"I'm a big believer in this kind of serendipity," he says. "I love it when things like this happen. It's a beautiful thing."

Mark is a Northern Rivers local of more than 30 years standing, and three-time Emmy

winner. Many of his myriad documentary films are about nature: his first, *Cane Toads: An Unnatural History*, was nominated for a BAFTA Film Award for Best Short Film and was for years one of Australia's top grossing documentaries. It established his international reputation and ushered in a rich and productive career, but its success has also been something of a burden.

Displaying the irony and understatement that characterises his films, Mark says: "Unfortunately, 'Cane Toads' is now my middle name." He has made many films since then, he reports, but it's the toads everyone remembers.

Despite his output, he is uncomfortable with the description 'documentary filmmaker': "You know, my documentaries are fairly different. Nature films have tended to be very conventional, and mine are not conventional in any respect, including the fact that they're mostly about the human-animal connection. A few of them are from the point of view of the animal."

Cane Toads used cameras that were mostly on the ground, looking up at the human interview subjects, and straight on at the toad, giving the species a lot of respect. Yet, despite supposedly being about cane toads, it is really about people, including plenty who admire and even love the animal; their stories are endearing and at times hilarious.

High-brow commentator Elizabeth Farrelly said the film's approach revealed a filmmaker who loved Australianness "but could also, without slapstick or condescension, take the piss".

The opening night film, *Whistle*, made by Aussie Christopher Nelius, shares the same uniquely Australian flavour, both funny and generous spirited.

Christian says when he saw the film last year he thought it would be perfect for opening night at the Bangalow festival, "because I wanted something uplifting, something light.

"I think we're all quite stressed out these days, and to be honest, people don't want to see more of it.

"We want to start on a high note, and to close on one," (with *Gaucha Gaucho*, a romantic celebration of the cowboys and girls of the pampas).

Whistle is in the vein of *Best in Show*, documenting an eccentric group of international whistlers, Molly Lewis among them, as they descend on Hollywood to compete in the Masters of Musical Whistling, the world's most prestigious whistling competition.

Molly is now perhaps the most successful among them. Mark says proudly of his daughter, "she's a genre of one. Extraordinarily successful. She's a professional whistler, and maybe the only one".



Molly Lewis in *Whistle* Photo supplied

Molly's ability is all her own, Mark says: "I can't whistle to save myself, I've got two left feet, can't dance, can't sing, can't play any instruments. But she was the opposite." At a very young age she was astonishing dinner guests with her ability.

Christian has an idea to have a whistling competition during the festival, and have Bangalow residents whistling for days during and after the event. Naturally, Molly would be the judge: a panel of one.

The Green Frame Award has been a couple of years in the making, Christian says – and was inspired by the fact that Bangalow has proved "a good home" for environmental and nature films over the festival's history.

"And we just wanted to go a step further, not only in terms of showing them or giving a bit of money to a winner, but really as a method of getting more people to make these kind of films. Nature docs, environmental films, are really magical in the way that they empower viewers; they bring you closer to nature and you feel emphatically motivated to do something about these issues. The award gives them a spotlight."

Next year he wants to double the impact, with a three-day industry forum, where "filmmakers, producers, philanthropists, government bodies, everyone, can come and help grow the genre" and help put Bangalow on the national map.

"We're so lucky around here, that in the hills and on the coast there's so many amazing filmmakers, photographers, producers that are already producing some of the best work we make in Australia, but there's no connection. We don't know they're there. So this is a way also to bring everything together."

One of these amazing artists he also learned about serendipitously, through chatting to a friend who happened to mention his brother was Jono Allen.

"Jono Allen! who just won the biggest prize in the world for nature photography (the 2026 World Nature Photographer of the Year Gold Prize and Grand Jury Prize). I couldn't believe it. And he lives in Byron!" Jono is now on the Green Frame jury alongside filmmaker Molly Reynolds (*My Name is Gulpilil*), long-time Sir David Attenborough collaborator Chadden Hunter, and screen academic Anne Chesher.

In choosing the five nature films, Christian says he wanted to give a sense of how diverse both nature and the style of making nature documentaries can be.

As a judge, Mark will be looking closely at how the filmmakers use all the different elements at their disposal: the soundtrack, the music, the direction, the camera work. And, of course, an approach that shuns conventionality.

Bangalow Film Festival runs from June 11-21 at the A&I Hall
bangalowfilmfestival.com.au

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Opening night of the festival features *Whistle* and a whistling competition
Photo supplied

Herald picks of the film festival

Bangalow Film Festival returns this June with a thoughtfully curated program of 26 feature films and screen-based performances, bringing together award-winning international cinema, live music events and visiting industry guests. This year's program explores themes of activism, resistance, creativity and the human condition, while continuing the festival's reputation for artful and emotionally resonant storytelling.

Alongside opening night documentary *Whistle*, and closing night black and white cowboy culture documentary *Gaucha Gaucha*, there are several standout selections in this year's program.

Two original film concerts will be presented exclusively at the festival. *Home of the Blizzard – A Film Concert for Antarctica* pairs Frank Hurley's iconic silent film documenting Douglas Mawson's 1911 Antarctic expedition with a newly composed live score performed by Romano Crivici, Carla Thackrah, guests and the Syrnix Vocal Ensemble. Another ambitious multimedia event, *Sounds of the Ocean*, combines poetic ocean imagery with a live score by internationally renowned Māori sonic artist WHAIA.

Food lovers may gravitate towards *Shelf Life*, a quietly philosophical and unexpectedly funny documentary exploring parallels between the ageing of cheese and the ageing process itself.

Sports fans are well catered for too in this year's program, from the uplifting *Cricket Dreams*, which explores belonging, courage and opportunity through the game of cricket, and New Zealand documentary *No Tears on the Field*, an intimate look at the fierce early years of women's rugby where resilience, camaraderie and determination take centre stage.

Surf and music fans are also likely to be drawn to the NSW premiere of *Jack Johnson SURFILMMUSIC*, tracing the musician's path from surfer and filmmaker to globally recognised performer.

And for lovers of cult Australian cinema, a special screening of *Bad Boy Bobby* includes appearances from director Rolf de Heer and actor Nicholas Hope, followed by a Q&A celebrating one of Australia's most original films.

The Bangalow Herald

Business news

Wednesday lunches at Coorabell Hall

Midweek lunches have returned to Coorabell Hall with the launch of Juzzy's Lunchbox, a new food offering focused on seasonal produce and comforting favourites. Operating each Wednesday from 11am to 2.30pm, the rotating menu includes warming bowls, vibrant plates and freshly made toasties, paired with homemade drinks including kombucha, iced teas and turmeric shots. Set against sweeping Hinterland views, the venture aims to create a relaxed local meeting place centred around good food and community connection.

Juzzy's Lunchbox

When Wednesdays, 11am–2.30pm

Where Coorabell Hall, 565 Coolamon Scenic Drive, Coorabell

High Tea back at Heritage House

The Bangalow Historical Society is reviving High Tea events at Heritage House this winter, responding to ongoing community interest in the museum's much-loved atmosphere. While the café itself will not reopen permanently, the volunteer team plans to host occasional High Tea gatherings to raise funds for new equipment, including a computer and printer. Guests can expect sweet and savoury offerings served on newly acquired vintage-style crockery inside the historic Queenslander building beside Piccabeen Park. With only 40 seats available, organisers expect bookings to fill quickly.

High Tea at Heritage House

When Friday 19 June, 11am

Where Heritage House Museum, Bangalow

Bookings Trisha Bleakley 0429 882 525

Tickets \$40 or \$45 gluten free

Circus skills return these school holidays

Spaghetti Circus is once again transforming its Mullumbimby training space into a circus playground these school holidays, with workshops running across Tuesday 14 to Thursday 16 July. Children can explore trapeze, tightrope, juggling, hula hoops, German wheel and acro balance under the guidance of the organisation's experienced coaching team. Families can book single days or the full program, with **early bird pricing available until 30 June**.

Half-day (4-6 years ~ 9:30am–12:30pm):
\$50/day or \$135 for all three days.

Full-day (7-14 years ~ 9:30am–3:30pm):
\$75/day or \$220 for all three days.

Spaghetti Circus Holiday Workshops

When 14–16 July

Where Spaghetti Circus, Mullumbimby

Tickets Bookings and info events.humanitix.com/july-2026-holiday-workshops



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An illustration from *We Live on a Boat* courtesy of the artist

Drawing on the world

Somewhere between a hand-drawn sketchbook, a travelling bus and an Oasis lyric, **Dave Petzold** found his way into children's publishing.

Born in Adelaide and now living in Newrybar with his partner Anna Swain on her family farm, the illustrator, designer and author is building a distinctive body of work that blends playful storytelling with richly textured illustrations inspired by nature, travel and alternative ways of living.

Although Dave works professionally as a graphic and web designer, it is his increasingly celebrated children's books that are attracting attention, including award recognition for his beautifully offbeat visual style and imaginative narratives.

The stories themselves emerged from a period of life spent on the road.

For almost three years, Dave and Anna travelled on and off around Australia in a bus before eventually returning to the Northern Rivers. That travelling life became the inspiration for *We Live on a Bus*, a picture book that celebrates unconventional living, freedom, curiosity and connection to the natural world.

"The book kind of came out of the adventures we went on with the bus," Dave explains.

The follow-up, *We Live on a Boat*, expanded the concept further, drawing partly on Dave's own past experiences living aboard boats, scenes in the book were inspired by moments gathered during those travels.

"A little bit is made-up, and a little bit is from my own experience," he says. "The stingrays flying out of the water are real, I saw them in Mexico," Dave says. "And the whale song coming through the hull of the boat, that was real too."

Dave's illustration style is layered, combining the looseness of hand-drawn sketching with soothing colour palettes.

Characters stretch and tumble through scenes filled with swirling skies, oversized moons, curious animals with exaggerated personalities and sprawling natural landscapes.

At times the illustrations resemble old printmaking techniques or vintage screenprints. Elsewhere they drift into collage-like compositions, with ink textures, charcoal marks and fragments of layered



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Dave now calls Newrybar home Photo supplied



Illustration from *The Kindness Club* illustrated by Dave Petzold Photo supplied

patterning sitting alongside bold digital colour.

There is a sense of imperfection to the work that feels intentional and deeply human.

"I start with pens, pencils, ink, all that kind of stuff," Dave says. "Everything is drawn traditionally by hand first."

He creates linework and textures by hand before scanning the artwork into Photoshop where the images are digitally assembled, coloured and layered into finished spreads. Dave describes it as a "bit of a cobbled, random process", where illustrations are constantly being shifted, flipped, recoloured and rearranged as the pages slowly evolve.

That flexibility allows his books to retain the spontaneity and warmth of hand drawing while benefiting from the compositional possibilities of a digital design production process.

The result is work that feels both nostalgic and contemporary.

"I'd say my influences are probably mostly nature," Dave says. "Birds, lizards, swimming in the ocean."

Children enter these stories through the depictions of wonder and adventure, while adults often notice deeper themes around belonging, imagination, community and alternative ways of living.

"I like to leave things a little bit unsaid so people can fill in the blanks," he explains. Illustrations in *The Kindness Club*, written by Kate Bullen-Casanova, depict diversity and inclusion with compassion and warmth.

Dave only began writing his own books seriously around five or six years ago. Like many creatives, he drifted into more conventional work, spending years in the corporate world as a designer.

His first manuscript was *Seven Seas of Fleas*, has an unconventional origin story. Dave wrote it after being inspired by the opening lines of *Live Forever* by British supergroup Oasis.

*"Maybe I don't really want to know
How your garden grows
'Cause I just want to fly"*

"Those lines sparked something in me, a feeling of wild abandon and adventure and with those words whirring through my head, the first lines of the poem were written."

Since then, his work has steadily gained recognition, including shortlistings and awards that have helped establish him as a distinctive new voice in Australian picture books.

In an era increasingly dominated by polished digital imagery and AI-generated visuals, there is something refreshing about the handmade quality of his work.

We Live on a Boat is out now.

davepetzold.com.au
[@dave_petzold](https://twitter.com/dave_petzold)

The Bangalow Herald



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Form, function and fish

The Caretaker and the Fish - oil on canvas - 60x100cm by Camille Wiseman Photo supplied

After a decade down south studying and establishing her career as a prosthetist-orthotist, Camille Wiseman, 28, returned home to Bangalow earlier this year – via a 12-month sabbatical in Italy honing her formidable skills as a painter. **Georgia Fox** found out more.

For most kids, tagging along with your dad to Friday beers at his best mate's place might have been pretty boring – but not if, like Camille Wiseman, your dad's best mate happened to be a prosthetist with a shed

full of arms and legs amid cows, chickens and sheep. "A wonderland of spare human parts," laughs Camille of her child's-eye view of Peter Farrand's workshop on his Broken Head farm.

While her dad was inadvertently imprinting a future in prosthetics, her art-loving mum was nurturing her creative side. Recognising Camille's natural talent – no doubt inherited from her own mother, an accomplished abstract painter back in her hometown of New Orleans – she enrolled Camille in Sue Holm's after-school art classes at the Scout Hall.

"Sue was just incredible," Camille says. "She taught art classes that weren't just a novelty.

Even though we were only primary school kids, there were no colouring sheets or mindless activities – it was very much about understanding how different mediums work."

While painting remained a constant, Camille's priorities were more academic. After graduating from Byron High, she moved to Melbourne and completed a Bachelor of Biomedicine with a view to pursuing medicine. But something didn't feel quite right. "It's such a competitive and expensive degree, you want to be really sure about it," she says.

A career as a prosthetist-orthotist (P&O) had always been in the mix – especially after her dad joined the managerial side of Peter's business years earlier and, ironically, lost two of his own fingers in a circular saw incident at the Broken Head shed. But armed with the clinical experience gained during her biomedicine degree, she knew for certain it was the right fit.

Working at the intersection of healthcare, biomechanics, custom fabrication and rehabilitation, P&Os occupy one of the most multidisciplinary roles in allied health. It was exactly this breadth of practice that appealed to Camille: "It allowed me to still be a clinician working in hospitals and helping people, but I also got to use my hands and make stuff."

Freshly minted from her two-year Master of Clinical Prosthetics and Orthotics, Camille moved to Wollongong to work for one of the larger clinics in NSW, joining the astonishingly small ranks of just 550 P&Os nationwide. In a country as vast as Australia, that can mean a substantial amount of time on the road servicing sprawling regional catchments.

During her two years in Wollongong, her paintings became increasingly preoccupied with water. "Not just the ocean," she explains, "but rivers and clouds and the flow of water in every form." The 'blue humanities' – an emerging interdisciplinary field exploring our relationship with water – resonated deeply, and fish began to feature prominently in her work, culminating in her first solo show in late 2024, 'We Devour the Ocean'.

As well as using fish symbolically, Camille explains she simply likes the way they look. "They're fun to paint," she laughs. "You can do anything with them. I love to make up pretend fish. They come in all shapes and sizes, so they're a very useful artistic element."

When her partner Marcus was accepted into a program at the University of Trento in Northern Italy as part of his master's in mechatronics engineering, Camille seized the opportunity to embark on her own European painting sabbatical. Taking 12 months off with the blessing of her employer, the pair arrived in the picturesque alpine city in early 2025.



Prosthetist-orthotist, Camille Wiseman Photo Georgia Fox

Setting up a studio in their lounge room, Camille continued her solo practice and sought out atelier-style training – her first formal classes since afternoons at the Scout Hall with Sue. Over the course of the year, she attended three six-week intensives: figure painting in regional France, portrait painting in New York, and fresco painting in Florence.

“I feel like I learned more in those three courses than an entire life of trying to figure it out on my own,” she says. “I think there’s something to be said for being self-taught and working things out

yourself, but sometimes it’s really lovely to have somebody point you in the right direction.”

Between intensives, life in Trento was idyllic, with Camille and Marcus becoming engaged, and Camille working on one of her largest and most challenging pieces to date, *The Fish and the Caretaker*. Rich in symbolism and steeped in the European tradition, the work distills Camille’s time in Italy onto the canvas, documenting her technical evolution in real time.

The work was recognised with two international prizes – coming second in the Emerging Artist Award in the 2025 Beautiful Bizarre Art Prize, and third in the TOSEE Art Competition. Its later inclusion in a group show in Milan brought an extraordinary year abroad to a fittingly wonderful close.

Hitting the ground running, within days of returning to Australia earlier this year, Camille exhibited her overseas work in a group surrealist show in Sydney. Asked if she would categorise herself as a surrealist, Camille reflects, “I would say I’m surreal-leaning – drawing on ideas of dreams, the subconscious, symbolism and allegory. I like work that has some sort of meaning.”

Before the show had even opened, Camille was back in her childhood bedroom in Bangalow and immediately reporting for work in Ballina – to none other than Peter Farrand, who long ago outgrew the shed at Broken Head to build a network of prosthetic clinics that recently merged with Spao Ottobock Care, conveniently encompassing Camille’s former clinic in Wollongong.

Her dad’s there too – when he’s not somewhere on the road between Brisbane and Nowra helping run the newly expanded network.

Camille continues to put all the technical gains of the last year into practice, working towards her next solo show – albeit with smaller canvases at the moment. Between full-time work, recently becoming an aunty, ducking down to Melbourne to see Marcus as he finishes his degree, and planning their January wedding, life is a bit less Trento-paced for now.

She’s unsure where they’ll settle after Marcus graduates, given his equally niche but less transferable career in mechatronics. But with only one P&O for every 14,000 square kilometres of Australia, Camille’s happy to just go with the flow. Like a fish.

@camillekathryn

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Community news

Preparing for winter storms

In the Northern Rivers region, East Coast Lows peak in winter (especially June), generating destructive winds and heavy rainfall. The SES suggests preparing for these events in the following ways:

Mitigate flooding: Clear home gutters and private drains. Properties prone to flooding (e.g. near the Byron Creek catchment, Deacon Street or Ashton Street) should elevate valuables early.

Plan for isolation: Stock 72 hours of food, water and medicines. Bridge and causeway crossings like Raftons Road and Friday Hut Road can get cut off quickly.

Relocate farm assets: Shift livestock and heavy machinery away from low creek flats. Secure loose equipment against gale-force wind gusts.

Manage outages: Charge backup power banks, as falling hinterland trees regularly snap local power lines. Keep a battery-powered radio ready for emergency broadcasts on 720 AM or 94.5 FM.

Never drive through floodwaters. Monitor hazards via Live Traffic NSW and track warnings with the SES at ses.nsw.gov.au

The next quarterly meeting of the Bangalow Resilience Network (BRN) will be held at Bangalow Heritage House Museum on Tuesday, 2 June, from 5.30–6.30pm. For more information, contact bangalowresiliencenetwork@gmail.com

Claire McLisky
Bangalow Resilience Network

125 years of The Bangalow Show

This year's Show, to be held on November 13-14, will reflect on the many highlights of its history – the Good, the Bad and the Ugly! It's sure to be a calendar highlight.

The local, largely, community event has had some incredible memories and milestones throughout its tenure. From celebrating 100 years of poultry to showcasing camels, it's all happened at some time in our amazing town.

You may remember the time when horses weren't able to make it to the arena due to hendra virus restrictions, your Grandma battling it out for the prize scone-making title, or your uncle (now in his 80s) talking of the Mad Milking Contest. Raj Singh is on record saying that when he was younger the Mad Milking was always the highlight. "It was no bull event. The crowd found it utterly hilarious. It's a legend-dairy part of the show!"

Or perhaps you may remember being an entrant in the prestigious Show Girl competition. There's something for everyone to reflect back on across the generations. Rosemary Hill, who is also coordinator of Young Woman of the Year, talks of her show highlights as "always stewarding the dairy section alongside my family as we have done for 80 plus years".

To celebrate this iconic event, the Bangalow Show Society is hosting a **Country Glamour Gala Dinner Dance** to be held on **Saturday 1 August** at the Bangalow A&I Hall. The evening's 'Country Formal' theme is the perfect excuse to bring out your suits and gowns.

Tickets are \$140 and include canapés from 6pm, a sit-down dinner, dessert, plus tea and coffee. There will also be a bar available, offering a selection of beer, champagne and wine. Entertainment for the evening will be the popular Northern Rivers band Sonic FX.

An exciting array of photos and Bangalow Show memorabilia will be on display during the evening. Lively conversation is sure to be sparked by these images and stories, so make sure you get your ticket to be part of this trip down memory lane. The organising committee welcomes contributions from anyone who would like to add to this exhibition. To contribute, please email the Show office at bangalowshow@outlook.com

Danielle Mathie

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Zoe Gameau and Mandy Nolan take the CWA AGM by storm Photo supplied

CWA advocating for children

At their 104th annual general meeting, held in Forster from 4–7 May, the CWA of NSW made it policy to advocate that the NSW Government lead national legislative reform to ensure children are protected by law from any form of physical assault, including in the home, as is the case for adults. Members also voted to advocate for all parents to have access to evidence-based parenting programs to support safer families.

The motion was proposed by the Bangalow CWA as part of the Far North Coast Group. Spokesperson Zoe Gameau of the Bangalow CWA told the meeting that the motion was in response to attending a talk by Jess Hill earlier this year, one of Australia’s leading researchers on domestic abuse.

“She told us that right now in Australia children have fewer legal rights than our pets,” says Zoe.

Currently in Australia, children can be hit, slapped, pinched, forced to kneel or assume uncomfortable positions, and have their mouths washed out with soap by their own parents in their own homes – and it’s considered totally legal. Do any of those things to an adult and it’s rightly called assault. Do it to an animal and you can be fined significantly,

even imprisoned. However, do it to a little child and it’s considered perfectly legal under something called the “reasonable chastisement” defence.

Evidence shows that children who are physically chastised are more likely to either become victims or perpetrators of violence later in life.

“The CWA has shown its commitment to ending violence against women and children,” says Zoe, “because advocating for children to have the same legal rights as any adult in the home has been shown to be one part of the puzzle in addressing this national epidemic.

“Breaking the cycle of violence is about responding to the evidence and making the change. Now we know better, we must do better,” says Zoe.

NSW has been a leader in legislative reform in the area of coercive control. This state now has the chance to lead change for greater protection of children’s safety at home.

The Enormous Morning Tea

The Bangalow CWA would like to thank the community support for their attendance and generosity at the Biggest Morning Tea on Thursday.

It was, as it turns out, the biggest morning tea literally with just over 200 people attending! And yes there were enough tea and cakes for all! The Cancer council’s Cate Feldman was delighted with the turn out.

A special thank you to the Bangalow Quilters for their beautiful donated quilts, which raised lots of money on the day!

Mandy Nolan
Bangalow CWA

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Teens brave new world

Local teens express mixed opinions about Government's social media ban for under 16s Photo Lesli Whitecotton

The Herald's newest - and youngest recruit - 14-year-old **Charlotte Burns**, chats with local young teens about the effects of the Federal Government's social media age restrictions for under 16s.

A few months ago, the "ping" of a TikTok notification or a Snapchat streak was the heartbeat of our social lives. Since the Federal Government's ban on under-16s accessing certain social media platforms hit the headlines, the adults have done most of the talking.

But what about the people actually living through it? As someone who falls into this age bracket, I wanted to go beyond politics

and see how the ban is changing the day-to-day lives of my peers. Did teenage life really change? Have the so-called "addictive" apps become non-existent for everyone under the age of 16, or are adults imagining a bigger shift than what is actually happening? I caught up with 10 of my contemporaries to talk about their "old" habits, their first reaction to the news, and what they've gained or lost since the ban came into effect.

For some students, the ban barely registered as a major change. Jake (15) explained that social media was never central to his routine. He mainly used his phone for communicating with his friends, learning gym routines and looking at recipes, and said he "didn't really care" when the ban was introduced because he didn't use any

of the restricted apps. Jake continues to communicate through WhatsApp and normal messaging, demonstrating that for some teenagers, friendships were never dependent on traditional social media platforms in the first place.

Others experienced the ban more negatively. Brooke (15) said she "spent quite a lot of time" on Instagram before the restrictions began, originally using it to stay connected with friends before becoming absorbed in trends and entertainment. Although she felt "shocked" when she heard the news, she also stated that she "completely understood why it was being enforced". She believes the policy fell flat in its implementation, explaining that "most people my age found easy ways around it".

Banjo (14) offered a more positive perspective. Before the ban, he mainly used WhatsApp and YouTube to organise plans and stay included socially. Unlike expectations that teenagers would strongly resist the change, Banjo said he was “pretty happy” when he first heard about the restrictions because he believed they could help people step away from social media addiction and participate more in real life. While his own routine did not change dramatically, he noticed friends spending less time scrolling and more time communicating through group chats instead of social media.

Despite the intention of the ban, several teenagers said enforcement had been difficult. Some had created new accounts or moved to different platforms. Banjo supported this idea, noting that “people are leaving Snapchat and TikTok etc. and participating more in real life”, but added that “the ban isn’t working as effectively as it should, and many kids are still on social media from my experience”. Similarly, Brooke suggested the policy had changed access rather than stopped usage.

Sadie (14) described a very different experience. As a frequent social media user, using the platforms “every chance I could get”, Sadie relied on TikTok, YouTube and Instagram for entertainment and connection. She said she felt “very annoyed” when the restrictions were announced, worried about missing out socially. Although she sometimes felt on the “outside” of friend groups after losing complete access to shared trends, she also noticed unexpected positives. Like Willow (13), who supports the ban despite never having social media, Sadie observed friends communicating more face to face and found herself watching more shows and even reading more books,

something she “would never expect” from herself.

Koa (13) and Tyrese (13) revealed how varied teenage experiences have been at the younger end of the age bracket. Koa had not engaged with social media before the ban due to parental rules but said it made him “more determined to get on social media” after his friends demonstrated ways around it, arguing the policy was “not well thought through”. In contrast, for Tyrese, who uses Snapchat and TikTok to talk to friends, the ban made little difference. He said that “nothing happened to me” when it came into effect. Their experiences show that for some the ban backfired by fuelling curiosity, while others simply didn’t care about the age restrictions.

One interesting pattern that became evident from the interviews was that many teenagers had restrictions in place at home before the official ban. Several respondents said their parents had already had a big influence on their activity, setting rules around phone use, app downloads and device access. As Jake says: “I didn’t lose anything because I only recently got a phone at 14,” which indicates that some teens were only just beginning to build phone habits anyway. Across the board, it seemed that younger teens were receiving phones later than their older siblings. Overall, it appears that parental control, specifically monitoring phone access, has shaped teens’ experiences more than the legislation itself.

Since the ban came into effect, it’s clear that social media was more than just an assortment of apps on a phone; it shaped how we stayed connected, shared our lives and filled in the gaps of everyday conversation. Across all interviews, a clear pattern emerged. While adults often described the ban as a dramatic shift in teenage culture, many young people simply

adapted. For some, the change has felt frustrating and sudden, while for others it has brought unexpected positives such as more face-to-face time and less pressure online. Meanwhile, many teens were unaffected due to parental policies already in place.

From the data, it’s clear the teens who have lost access do want it back. However, what is more telling is that parents are more alert, aware and protective of their children. So the question arises: was the ban for the benefit of teenagers, or was it more of an educational wake-up call to parents?

Charlotte Burns

The Social Media Minimum Age (SMMA) specifies a minimum age of 16 years for access to age-restricted social media platforms – there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that by 16, young Australians are beyond the most vulnerable stage of adolescence.

A UK study published in 2022, which examined longitudinal data from more than 17,400 participants, found adolescent social media use is predictive of a subsequent decrease in life satisfaction for certain developmental stages including for girls aged 11 to 13 years old and boys 14 to 15 years old.

The SMMA puts the onus on social media platforms, not parents or young people, to take steps to ensure fundamental protections are in place.

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The image shows a kitchen shelf with various items: a stack of white and blue bowls, a blue cup, a pink cup, a white box of BEAM LUNCH BLEND, a yellow pitcher, a green frog-shaped object, a yellow lemon, a white butter dish, and a white cake stand with a yellow cake.



Everyday crowns

Up close with Hilary Herrmann Photos Adele Scaysbrook

Bangalow-based artist **Hilary Herrmann** explores the beauty and complexities of life through her enchanting paintings, which first mesmerise viewers and then draw them into deeper exploration, writes **Adele Scaysbrook**.

Ethereal. Fantastical. Spellbinding. While wandering through the Bangalow home and studio of artist Hilary Herrmann, I feel as though I have stepped into the very same enchanting world that her paintings inhabit. Eclectic artworks decorate the walls; finished canvases line the floors and sit on chairs; books of all kinds spill out of shelves; and paint-stained brushes, palette knives and tins

cover the outdoor studio table, ready to be used. It's as if, turning the corner, one of the whimsical characters Hilary paints might be floating through the lush garden or peacefully mixing paints on the verandah – and I would not be surprised.

With an utterly distinct visual style and an expansive imagination, Hilary uses her brush to build whimsical worlds that transport the viewer into a surreal reality and invite them to dream, play and reflect. I had the pleasure of asking Hilary about her art, creative process and influences as she worked on her latest piece.

How would you describe your artistic style and the meaning behind your work?

I paint narratives of spooky little white figures that float through the sky. I think they are emotional landscapes, where you can enter into the world and bring in your own stories. [My work] is very ephemeral and enigmatic, and I like that other people find their own story within it.

They're about the everyday. It's about hope, it's about trust, and also about the menace that approach our worlds. A lot of my work is just about hope and kindness. We don't know what's around any corner, or who we will be, and what will happen to us.

It's about whatever enters my world. If it's music or poetry, birds in my bird bath, my dog, a bunch of flowers, reading, from the news... whatever I can appropriate from others, I will take. I think the intimacy of being at home, home life and domesticity is really important. Rituals and routines make us sane. So, it's about the everyday and finding beauty in it to protect ourselves and feel safe.

Crowns seem to be a motif in your work. Can you explain the significance and symbolism behind this creative choice?

You don't want to be dismissed as a human. We all need to be appreciated, and I think the gold crowns represent that we've all got something to offer and are all a bit special. The crowns represent that we all just need to be part of the world and allowed.

The idea has developed and they don't feel dressed without a crown now. I think everyone needs a little crown to feel like they exist in the world. We shouldn't be diminished – we should be part of the world.

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"We all need to be appreciated" – Hilary in her studio



A work in progress

Not the show pony, not the most important person in the room, just that people acknowledge us. Just to make us feel a wee bit important.

Now, even when they don't need one, I still put it on because they don't feel dressed without it.

Where do you find inspiration, and what influences you creatively?

Everywhere. It's walking along the road and seeing the colour of a leaf. Every day I walk on the beach, and the horizons remind me of Rothko. I admire that work. This morning the clouds looked like Turner's paintings – absolutely beautiful.

I look at art books every day. I am always flicking through and being inspired by so many other people in the world. I just find things that amuse me or disgust me and they become part of the story that I want to communicate to others and myself.

I really like Clarice Beckett, Idris Murphy, Rembrandt, Cy Twombly, Chagall... there are hundreds of people I'm inspired by – a multitude of people. It's lovely going into galleries, because I live regionally. When I go to Sydney and Melbourne or to

Europe, you see what exists out there. Art is a communication. Either of beauty or of politics, story, or talent. It's just communication.

Take us into your creative process.

There are some people that "grid up" and they've got an image of what they want to do from when they begin, and they've got the skills to do that. Whereas I don't have those skills, so I've always got to find an aesthetic to make things work on a different level.

I start with a feeling, a word, or an emotion. As soon as I make the first mark, I have faith in just responding to what happens. I think it's about just reaching an aesthetic for me at the end.

This painting that I'm working on now, I really like it at this point. It's interesting. I don't know where it's going but I like the beginning of it...until I don't!

So it's about risk for me. A lot of people don't have that ability to take risks. You have to let go of stuff to make it work.

I like the intelligence of paint. I really like that you spend time, and it's communicating, and you're working out all the time where it's going, what to do with it, how to finish it,

and when it's finished. There are just a lot of conversations.

What has your artistic journey been like? Have you always created art?

I used to do a lot more cartoons and sort of funny little drawings. The skills had never been there technically, but it has always been something I've played with since I was in my 20s, I guess.

I have always played – even when I worked and wasn't producing work to put in galleries. I had textas, pencils, paints. But it wasn't until I was probably 40, when my daughter was at school and I had more time, and I decided if I actually wanted to put my art into the world then I had to actually do it all the time.

It's a discipline. You have to do it. You can't talk about it, you actually have to do it. Things develop because you make mistakes and you learn...hopefully.

Find Hilary's work at Ninbella (Bangalow), AK Bellinger Gallery (Inverell), Grainger Gallery (Fyshwick), and OTOMYS (Pahran).

@hilaryherrmann

Established in 2019, Kindred Women Together continues to connect women within our community through social gatherings and events. Join one of our KWT Clubs to meet other like-minded women. Visit our website to see what is coming up. New women are always welcome!

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Community-building in action at La Plazita Photos Guillermo Viti

Playing in the plaza

La Plazita Collective brings Latin-inspired community gatherings to the Bangalow Industrial Estate, writes **Sally Schofield**.

On any given evening in Latin America, a plaza can become the centre of community life. Children weave through tables while grandparents talk politics, musicians drift between groups, friends stop for a quick coffee that somehow stretches into hours, and artists, performers and neighbours all occupy the same shared public space.

For photographer Karla Conroy, that sense of spontaneous connection and creativity is something she missed after moving to the Northern Rivers.

Now, together with a growing group of local creatives, migrants, artists and musicians, a little of that atmosphere is being created in an unexpected location: the Bangalow Industrial Estate.

The project is called La Plazita Collective, and while the gatherings are still small (around 100 people attended the last one) and evolving, the intention behind them is ambitious. Rather than staging polished commercial events, the collective is focused on creating accessible grassroots cultural experiences where people can gather, share stories, eat food, watch films, perform music and simply spend time together.

"We just realised there were stories to tell," Karla says.

For the past two years, Karla has been producing a podcast alongside a Colombian friend, exploring the experiences of migrants living in the region. Through those conversations, patterns began to emerge.

"There was this need of getting together and sharing our experiences and how we feel," she says. "How we find a sense of identity away

from home and reconnect with some sort of art again to feel that we belong somewhere."

The conversations revealed something else too: many people living in the Northern Rivers, particularly those who had arrived from overseas or interstate, were craving opportunities for connection that felt informal, creative and community-driven.

"So we started gathering with people and just getting ideas on what would be something that they need or they lack here," Karla explains. "And one of the things was art."

The collective's first events emerged organically. One early performance centred around a play touching on themes of migration, political upheaval and displacement in Uruguay.

What surprised the organisers was not just the emotional response to the event, but how eager people were for more.

A circus-themed gathering followed a few months later, complete with performers, music, food stalls and local makers selling ceramics, clothing and handmade jewellery. Another event is now planned for early June, transforming part of the industrial estate into an outdoor short film screening.

The collective itself has become a major part of the story. Andres Pérez first had the idea to bring his workshop space to life and has helped provide a home for the gatherings in the industrial estate.

Another founding member, Manuel Cardozo, helps shape the creative direction of the events and has been heavily involved in bringing the ideas to life.

Karla herself has naturally become a central figure in the collective, connecting people, ideas and opportunities and helping build a strong sense of community around the project.

Sarah Del Piano also plays a key role. Connected to both the Argentinian and artistic communities, she brings broad creative experience and helps shape and organise the collective's projects.

Juan Rodriguez brings a background in kitchens and hospitality to the collective, curating the menus for the events and helping create the relaxed, communal atmosphere around the food.

The industrial estate itself has become part of the story.

At first glance, it may seem like an unlikely location for community arts gatherings. But Karla says the rough-around-the-edges atmosphere actually adds to the charm.

"There's something really nice about bringing life into these industrial spaces," she says.

The events are being held at a workshop space belonging to Peracles Footwear's Andres Pérez, with strong support from precinct owner Chris Lawson.

Chris built the Bangalow Working Space with his own hands, one of the first buildings in the Bangalow Industrial Estate, making him one of the early pioneers in the development of this important part of town. Over the years, the space has become home to makers, small businesses and local characters, including shoemaker Rachel Ayland, a bit of a local legend who has been repairing and making shoes for the community for almost 30 years.

"We're very grateful to Chris for opening the space and supporting these gatherings," Karla says.

That sense of activation feels particularly important in a town where many cultural activities can sometimes feel polished, curated or inaccessible.

La Plazita's events, by contrast, are intentionally loose, eclectic and community-focused.



Franco bringing the fire



Young ones gather around the chess board

“The intention is to recreate those plazas we have in Latin America and Spain,” Karla explains. “It’s somewhere people gather and things just happen all the time. It doesn’t necessarily have to be with any motive. It’s somewhere you catch up and have a coffee and then there’s a juggler or a musician or something happening.”

Alongside migrant families and Spanish speakers, the events are attracting local creatives, musicians, filmmakers, performers and curious neighbours keen to experience something different.

Food also plays a major role.

At previous events, guests lined up for handmade empanadas. Upcoming gatherings will feature food inspired by different countries depending on the event theme, and with organisers hailing from Chile, Argentina, Colombia and Mexico, there’s sure to be something delicious on the menu.

“We want it to feel relaxed,” Karla says. “Food you can hold in your hand while you’re watching a film or talking to someone.”

There is no grand business plan, no slick branding strategy and no pressure for the events to become anything larger than they naturally evolve into.

Instead, the project feels more like an experiment in community-making.

In many ways, it reflects a broader shift happening across the Northern Rivers, where people are increasingly creating their own grassroots cultural spaces rather than waiting for formal institutions to provide them.

Small cabaret nights, pop-up art events, community choirs, independent film screenings and creative workshops are quietly flourishing across the region. La Plazita Collective slots naturally into that ecosystem, adding another layer of cultural exchange and connection.

Karla believes those opportunities matter, particularly for people navigating the complicated emotional terrain of migration.

“There’s always this process of reinventing yourself when you move somewhere else,” she

says. “You adapt so you fit in, but at the same time you also miss who you were before.”

People are not simply turning up to watch something. They are participating in the slow building of a shared cultural space.

Children wander between workshops, strangers strike up conversations over food, artists swap ideas, musicians jump into impromptu performances, and for a few hours an industrial shed in Bangalow starts to resemble the plazas Karla remembers from overseas.

“It’s just about making things accessible and letting people connect with other creatives,” she says.

The next La Plazita Collective event, an outdoor short film night, takes place on **6 June** in the **Bangalow Industrial Estate**.

For Karla and the collective, in a small corner of Bangalow, there is hope that people will continue to gather, share stories and food, and that community life will thrive in unexpected ways.

TAMARA SMITH MP

MEMBER FOR BALLINA

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Arts and about



Rosie and Stu combine music and storytelling in their new dad and daughter show
Photo Lyn McCarthy Niche Pictures

Dad and Daughter Ukulele

Mullumbimby's Stukulele and Rosie bring their heartfelt live show 'Dad Daughter Ukulele' to audiences ahead of a performance season at Bondi Pavilion in Sydney. Blending original music with storytelling, the father and daughter duo explore family connection, growing up and the role music can play in strengthening relationships across generations. What began as making music together at home has evolved into an intimate and deeply personal performance filled with warmth, humour and shared memories. Before heading to Sydney, they'll present a special hometown preview for local audiences.

When Friday 6 June, 7pm
Where Top Pub, Mullumbimby
Tickets/Info events.humanitix.com/dad-daughter-ukulele-preview

Byron Community Market

The Byron Community Market returns to the Main Beach foreshore with another full day of local makers, music, food and coastal atmosphere. Long established as one of the region's favourite community events, the market brings together artisan stalls, handmade goods, vintage finds and local designers, all set against Byron Bay's iconic beachfront backdrop. Whether browsing for gifts, catching up with friends or simply wandering with a coffee in hand, the market remains a relaxed and distinctly local way to spend a Sunday by the sea.

When Sunday 7 June, 8am–3pm
Where Main Beach Foreshore, Byron Bay

Pearces Creek Winter Series

As winter approaches the Hinterland, Pearces Creek Hall is once again opening its doors for a season of intimate live music performances in a warm historic hall decked out with sparkling fairy lights. The Pearces Creek Winter Series brings together 16 artists across four events, spanning dark folk, candlelit chamber arrangements, country and bluegrass. With performers including Karl S Williams, Ashleigh Bo, Mandy Hawkes and ME Baird, the series continues the hall's growing reputation as a listening room known for warm acoustics, homemade food and an atmosphere that feels more gathering than gig.

When Throughout June and July
Where Pearces Creek Hall
Tickets/Info linktr.ee/PearcesCreekHall

Byron Theatre Company's Tirra Lirra by the River

Byron Theatre Company brings Jessica Anderson's celebrated novel *Tirra Lirra by the River* to the stage in a striking new adaptation starring Toni Scanlan. Blending immersive audio visual design with layered storytelling, the production follows a woman's search for identity, freedom and belonging across decades, from jazz age Sydney to post-war London. Exploring memory, reinvention and the lingering pull of home, the work balances emotional intimacy with theatrical ambition in a production designed to draw audiences deeply into its shifting worlds.

When 5–13 June
Where Byron Theatre, 69 Jonson Street, Byron Bay
Tickets/Info byron.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/156975

Phoebe Go

Ahead of the release of her forthcoming album *Marmalade*, indie songwriter Phoebe Go heads north for a run of intimate solo performances, including a stop at the Eltham Hotel. Performing stripped back and up close, the Melbourne-born, Sydney-based artist brings new songs to life alongside stories about their creation, exploring themes of honesty, vulnerability and creative tension. Known for her haunting blend of alt-pop and acoustic folk, Phoebe Go first emerged as the vocalist for indie favourites Snakadaktal before forming electronic project Two People. Her solo work continues to build a reputation for emotionally resonant songwriting and understated, captivating live performances.

When Thursday 18 June, 7pm
Where Eltham Hotel, Eltham
Tickets/Info elthampub.com.au/music

Byron Spaces Gallery winter exhibition

'Ocean Blue', the latest exhibition at Byron Spaces Gallery, showcases a new body of work by local artist Christine Taylor inspired by the movement, colour and atmosphere of the ocean. The exhibition explores coastal moods and textures through a series of contemporary works that reflect a deep connection to place. Located within the Byron Community Centre, the gallery continues to provide an accessible platform for regional artists while offering visitors a quiet moment of reflection in the middle of town.

When Weekdays throughout June, 9am–4pm
Where Byron Community Centre, 69 Jonson Street, Byron Bay



River Tweed by Melody Popple Photo supplied



Get roasted with Melia in her one-woman musical comedy show Photo Carlie Sings Photography

'Balun Gawarima – River Story' by Melody Popple

Lone Goat Gallery presents 'Balun Gawarima – River Story', a new exhibition by local artist Melody Popple exploring the cultural significance of water on Bundjalung Country. Using bush dyeing, natural pigments and visual story-mapping, the works reflect on memory, disruption, healing and renewal in the aftermath of flood events across Bundjalung Jagun. Created in close relationship with waterways and Country, the exhibition is a grounded response to landscape, history and connection. Opening night includes a Welcome to Country by Auntie Danza Deacon and a performance by the Doobai Dancers.

When Opening event Friday 12 June, 5–7pm
Regular hours Wednesday to Saturday, 10am-3pm

Where Lone Goat Gallery, Byron Bay

Info lonegoatgallery.com/exhibitions/balun-gawarima-river-story

Amalfi Roast – rare and juicy

After selling out in record time last October, Melia Naughton returns to Byron Theatre with two encore performances of Amalfi Roast, her sharp, funny and musically driven one-woman show. Described as 'the female Tim Minchin', Melia blends original songs, quick-fire observations and fearless storytelling (unfortunate underwear, family breakfast chaos and brief flirtation with a helicopter pilot) into a performance that constantly shifts between comedy, vulnerability and chaos. The show has continued to evolve since its first season in 2025, with new material and unexpected moments adding fresh energy to an already wildly entertaining night.

When 26–27 June, 7.30pm

Where Byron Theatre, 69 Jonson Street, Byron Bay

Tickets/Info byron.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/164180

Byron Writers Festival

Celebrating 30 years in 2026, Byron Writers Festival returns with a new town-wide format transforming Byron Bay into an immersive literary precinct. Across three days, audiences can experience author conversations, feature events, book signings and free community activations at venues throughout town. The first author announcement includes International Booker Prize winner Geetanjali Shree, bestselling author Trent Dalton, poet Evelyn Araluen, Miles Franklin winner Siang Lu, novelist Steve Toltz, Bundjalung writer Melissa Lucashenko, actor and writer Zoe Terakes, and economist Richard Denniss. The full program for the new format festival is released this month.

When 14–16 August

Where Multiple venues across central Byron Bay

Tickets/Info byronwritersfestival.com

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One Hundred Years of Betty

by Debra Oswald

Debra Oswald, for those who don't know, is an Australian author of novels, plays and TV dramas, the most notable being the very popular *Offspring series*.

She has written several books, but this is the second one I have read, and I enjoyed it immensely.

Betty, the book's protagonist, is about to celebrate her 100th birthday and narrates the story of her life. She is a fabulously feisty, potty-mouthed, adventurous dame and I really liked her.

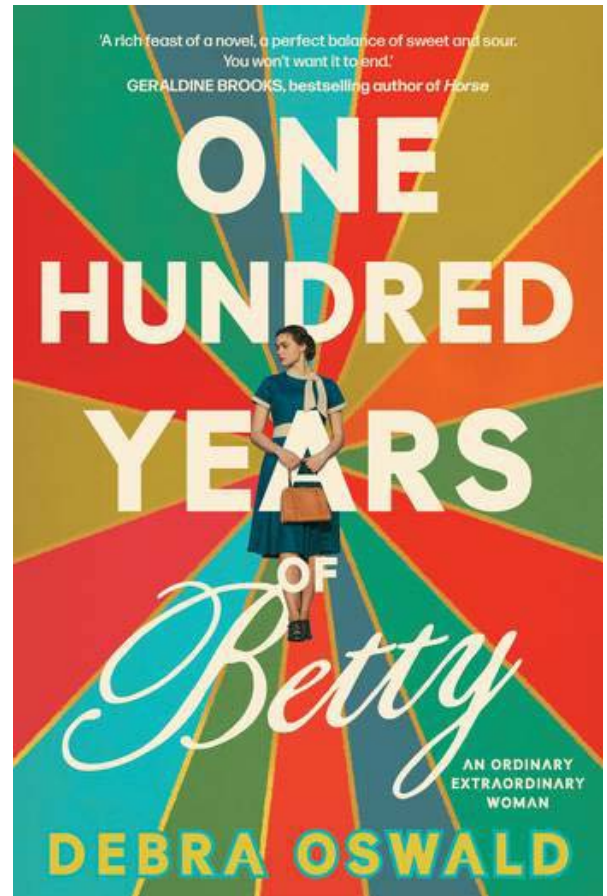
Legend has it that her life began in the family kitchen, "whooshing out at speed and so slick with waxy vernix, that I shot off the edge of the table into the precarious air", on 12 April 1928. There are 10 children in the family and Betty is number seven, narrowly escaping brain damage as she is caught by her older brother, Michael, with whom she is very close.

The novel follows Betty's life and is a wonderful synopsis of the past 100 years, and the incredible things that have occurred during this time, as well as the amazing changes and inventions that anyone of significant age has seen and/or experienced.

Born in London into an impoverished family with an alcoholic father, she suffers the humiliations of poverty stoically and doesn't hold any ill feeling towards her mother for the gender injustice inflicted on the females of the species.

Shortly after giving birth to her tenth child, Betty's mother dies and four years later WWII begins. Betty is evacuated north to safety – a time that she remembers with great affection – where she is nurtured by a couple whose own children have grown up and left home. There is a lot of sweet and sour in this novel and it captures many major events and movements, particularly the feminist movement, which a feisty dame like Betty was inevitably going to discover and embrace.

There is a wonderful cast of characters, unrequited love, terrible marriages and fabulous lifelong friendships – many of them started on



the SS Asturias when Betty travels to Australia on the 'Ten Pound Pom' scheme.

"Honey, you bellyache and cry all you need. There's no hierarchy of suffering. One variety of misfortune doesn't invalidate another."

– Debra Oswald, *One Hundred Years of Betty*

Goodreads rating: 4.2 stars

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

Carolyn Adams



Bangalow Market,
simply stunning



Bangalow Showgrounds
4th Sunday of each month
8am ~ 2.30pm

Parking is available for \$2 in the Showgrounds at the Market.



Pistachio Feta Spanakopita Roulade

I love spinach pie. This is a twist on the classic Greek pie. In a roulade form it cooks quickly and looks spectacular with pistachios. It can be enjoyed any time of the year.

Phyllo pastry, also known as filo, is a paper-thin dough used widely in Greek and Middle Eastern cooking. The name comes from the Greek word for “leaf”, reflecting the pastry’s delicate structure. When baking with it, each sheet is brushed with butter or oil before layering, creating the crisp, flaky texture that makes dishes like spanakopita, baklava and börek so irresistible.

Amazingly phyllo was traditionally made by hand, with dough stretched carefully across large tables until almost transparent. Thankfully ready-made versions are now common and convenient, but the pastry still requires a gentle touch, as the sheets dry out quickly and can tear easily. Keeping unused sheets covered with a damp tea towel while working.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 cup feta cheese
- 1/2 cup shelled pistachios, roughly chopped, plus extra for sprinkling
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh dill
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 3 spring onions, finely sliced
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1/4 tsp grated nutmeg
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 8 sheets phyllo dough, fresh or thawed
- 80g butter, melted

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 190°C. Line a baking tray with baking paper.
 2. In a large bowl, combine spinach, feta, pistachios, dill, parsley, spring onions, egg, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Mix well, mashing the feta as you go.
 3. Lay one sheet of phyllo on a clean surface and brush with melted butter. Repeat with the remaining sheets, stacking and buttering as you go.
 4. Spread the spinach and feta mixture evenly over the phyllo stack, leaving a 3-5cm border around the edges.
 5. Starting from one long edge, roll the phyllo and filling into a tight log. Place seam-side down on the prepared baking tray and curl into a spiral, like a snail shell, tucking the log closely. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with extra pistachios.
 6. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the roulade is golden brown and crisp. Let cool for 5 minutes before slicing and serving.
- Tip: Don’t overfill the pastry. Keep the filling even for easier rolling and shaping.

Illustration and recipe by Lyn Hand



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Live local, act global

When campaigning to end fossil fuels, Michael likes to walk and run in the mountains. Photos supplied

Jenny Bird caught up with Binna Burra's **Michael Poland**, head of an international alliance working towards a global treaty to phase out fossil fuels.

Michael Poland lives in the bucolic hinterland of 2479, but his workplace and reach are global – a local who is quietly moving and shaking the world. Michael is the Campaign Director for the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, an international alliance working towards a fast and fair phase-out of fossil fuels. Plus, he has two kids, River and Kipp, and loves running up mountains in his spare time.

It was the Bangalow Runners who enticed Michael and his family to move “up the hill” from Suffolk Park to Binna Burra in 2024. “I fell in love with Bangalow, its beautiful community and the richness of the countryside. I grew up in Tasmania and my wife Claire in Margaret River, so we both love nature, beaches and forests.” Claire works from home with another climate organisation. The family have both their roots

in the 2479 community and their work around the world.

“I try to stay at home as much as I can, but from Binna Burra I do work across 40 countries. Managing the time zones is crazy. On a typical day I spend early mornings (like 5am) talking to our teams in the Americas, and then late at night with Africa and Europe. Luckily, a lot of our work is with Pacific countries, who are leaders in this field. They're closer and I can work with them during the day.”

The Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative is a coalition of 18 nation-states supported by a network of over 195 cities and sub-national governments, more than 400 health institutions, the World Council of Churches and other faith communities, Indigenous nations and communities, youth activists, trade unions, parliamentarians, 101 Nobel Laureates, more than 3,000 scientists and academics, 4,000 civil society organisations and over one million individuals.

Michael has been involved with the Treaty

Initiative since its inception – helping co-ordinate its global launch in 2019. The back story to the Treaty Initiative dates to the Paris Agreement in 2015. “Whilst the Paris Agreement was, and continues to be, a critical and essential response to climate change, it does not mention the words ‘fossil fuels’. Because these processes work on a consensus model, countries like the US, Russia and Saudi Arabia have successfully blocked any substantial or detailed global plan to manage a transition away from fossil fuels, with the topic frequently blocked at the annual COP negotiations. Since the negotiation of the Paris Agreement, Pacific nation-states, academics, lawyers and leaders in climate policy started work on a second and complementary treaty. Working outside consensus-based UN processes, the aim was a Treaty that explicitly addressed the phase-out of fossil fuels and broke the deadlock this issue has faced for decades.”

As Michael emphasises, “the Fossil Fuel Treaty is not a discussion on if we should transition away from fossil fuels, but how to do it fast and fairly, so no one is left behind.”



With Kumi Naidoo, human rights activist and President of the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative



Michael and son River at Killen Falls

In late April this year, the Treaty Initiative helped convene the first international conference on transitioning away from fossil fuels. Held in the coal port city of Santa Marta in Colombia, “it was a symbolically powerful location,” says Michael. Over 4,000 people attended, including government representatives from 60 nation-states, 30 cities and many Indigenous nations.

“The conference was a historic breakthrough. The US-Israel war on Iran has brought into sharp relief the fact that our dependence on fossil fuels impacts not just climate but economies and national security. Obviously, we didn’t plan the coincidence, but the war is turbo-charging political intent to end our dependence on fossil fuels. Countries are realising that leaving the phasing out of fossil fuels ‘to the market’ is not working. We need global frameworks to help countries

develop roadmaps away from fossil fuels and towards other, safer, cheaper sources of energy.

“There was a feeling of hope and urgency at the conference, a momentum and energy to move things along,” reflects Michael. Countries are getting down to concrete plans. France, for example, launched its national roadmap to end its use of coal by 2030, oil by 2045 and gas by 2050. “But many countries can’t plan roadmaps on their own,” says Michael. “They need support so that they can plan domestically but be co-ordinated globally.”

The next conference will be held in 2027 in the Pacific nation of Tuvalu, one of the most vulnerable nation-states in the world to the impacts of fossil fuels. “Colombia was not a one-off event,” points out Michael. “We aim

to secure a formal mandate to negotiate a fossil fuel treaty at the Tuvalu conference.”

“It would be great to see local councils in the Northern Rivers endorse the Treaty proposal,” says Michael. So far, about 200 councils or cities have signed their support, including major cities like London, Paris, Kolkata and Lima. In Australia, the cities of Sydney, Newcastle, Hobart and Yarra, as well as the ACT, have endorsed the proposal, along with Nillumbik Shire Council in Melbourne.

Michael described how, around the world, citizen action is proving most effective in engaging councils and politicians in the Treaty network.

To learn more about the Treaty, or register your endorsement, go to fossilfueltreaty.org



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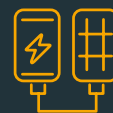
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A planting of mixed hydrangea cuttings produces a colourful effect Photo Carole Gamble

Carole Gamble shares a great tip for growing multicoloured pastel hydrangea.

The hydrangea pictured is in a friend's beautiful garden, but it was a very unusual specimen. As you can see, the blooms are multicoloured.

Usually the colour depends mostly upon the soil – acidic soils produce blues and alkaline soils are known for their pinks, although these can vary in some gardens, and gardeners often manipulate the pH depending on the colours they favour.

The thing about this one is that my clever friend, who is also, like me, an obsessive propagator, had planted several rooted cuttings together when she planted them!

Fantastic, and I wondered why more of

us haven't stumbled onto this trick. The flowering time has also been extended because of the variation, so it's certainly a creative success.

The family *Hydrangeaceae* has over 70 species, but the originals mostly come from parts of Asia, especially Japan, and parts of the east coast of the USA.

They usually flower from early summer through to autumn and are fairly easy to grow, although I have found that they take a year or more to take off, presumably while the root systems establish in our heavy soils. They do best in dappled shade, mostly morning sun and southerly aspects, and need consistent watering in well-drained, rich soil.

Prune after flowering and before the new growth in spring, and keep well mulched. These plants really do require a balanced

commercial food as, like roses, they are gross feeders.

To propagate, cut the woody stems diagonally, dip into honey and place in good-quality potting mix, then maybe plant several together, which I plan to do.

To change the colours, try coffee grounds, Epsom salts and banana peels dug in around the stems.

Most are deciduous, although there is an evergreen version that produces relatively small flower heads but is very hardy.

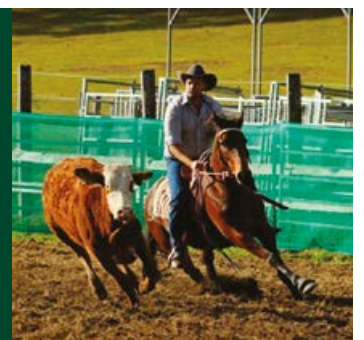


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How does your (veggie) garden grow? Local families share their backyard setups Photos supplied

Carole Gamble contemplates how fuel shortages may affect our commercial fresh food supply – and why it might be time to start your own veggie patch.

Food producers face myriad challenges, but our dependence on imported fuels has produced a crisis situation for them.

When supply chains are disrupted, shortages and price rises continue to impact farmers, who use large amounts of diesel, petrol and fertilisers at all stages of food production and transportation.

Whilst availability and rising prices are obvious concerns, the impacts for everybody are enormous, so in our region it will probably become more attractive – and even imperative – to consider producing more of our own food.

The community gardens are thriving and our local, mostly organic farmers are doing a mighty job. Farmers’ markets are the place to shop for so many reasons, but how about growing more for ourselves?

Summer vegetable growing isn’t easy in our climate, but now that it’s cooler most of us can find a sunny corner to grow a satisfying range of leafy greens, which grow fast and are very nutritious. Local Seed Savers, hardware retailers and even supermarkets have packets of vegetable seeds, and raising your own is even cheaper than buying seedlings – and remarkably satisfying.

Seedlings are available in season at most farmers’ markets and, for a few dollars, even “non-gardeners” can produce fast-growing greens to supplement family meals for very little, knowing that they are fresh and grown without chemicals.

My garden is quite shady, so I squeeze lettuce, parsley, Asian greens and silverbeet into the front of garden beds and anywhere there is direct sun for at least part of the day. They are all attractive and add to the biodiversity, as well as mostly being “cut and come again” varieties, so they can be partially harvested for weeks.

It’s time to rethink the role of our garden spaces. I well remember how, in inner-city Melbourne, our Greek and Italian neighbours had front gardens full of fabulous-looking food-producing trees, vines and plants. It now feels sad that most ordinary Aussies preferred patchy grass and single rose bushes! What were we thinking?

We have been out taking photos to inspire you to plant more food, so hopefully you will get the “grow your own” bug!

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Sun shines on 2026 Derby

All the colour and glory of the Bangalow Billy Cart Derby Photos Maralyn Hanigan

The weather gods must love Bangalow.

It's the only way to explain the miracle that happened at last Sunday's event. After four weeks of daily rain, and much more forecast, Bangalow was blessed with a perfect day for the 33rd running of the much-loved Bangalow Billy Cart Derby.

We had 250 individual competitors in more than 120 billy carts, and the village was flooded with thousands of locals and visitors. What a day it was!

The racing was super competitive and all race categories were run and won. 'Twas right up there with the best of the best.

The Grand Parade was something special too, and the Lismore Pipe Band blowing the roof off the pub at lunchtime was spine-tingling.

The Pit Stop Fair was a roaring success as well, so congratulations to the Bangalow Public School P&C – well done Renee and team for all their hard work on the school's major fundraiser.

The vibe in the village was great and it was a fabulous day for our community. Simply seeing the joy on the faces of the children makes it all worthwhile. Bangalow is a special town.

Bangalow Lions Club would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our generous sponsors, especially Ally and the team at Summerland Bank, who also got into the swing of things by presenting the trophies, along with our many supporters and hard-working volunteers who make all the difference.

Bumping in at 5am and bumping out at 5pm on Byron Street is a massive task, so a big shout-out must go to Bangalow Rebels Rugby Club, special mention to Rebel Ben, and all the local volunteers for showing up with their big smiles and bigger muscles.

Great job everyone. Bangalow Lions are very proud of you. We shall see you all again on Sunday 16 May 2027 for the next Bangalow Billy Cart Derby. Save the date.

Until then, our very best wishes to you all from a very grateful Bangalow Lions Club. Thank you everyone.

Greg 'Nashy' Nash

The Bangalow Herald was a proud major sponsor of the 2026 Bangalow Billy Cart Derby.

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Bangalow Koalas	Linda	0411 491 991
Bridge Club	Brian	0429 311 830
Community Children's Centre	Kerry	6687 1552
Co-dependents Anonymous	Gye	0421 583 321
CWA (Mon-Fri 10am-2pm/Sat 9am-12pm)	Lydia	cwasecbangalow@gmail.com
Garden Club (1st Wed)	Diana	0418 288 428
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Historical Society/Museum	Trisha	0429 882 525
Kindred Women Together	Janice	0401 026 359
Koala rescue line (24 hr)		6622 1233
Land & Rivercare (8.30am Sat)	Noelene	0431 200 638
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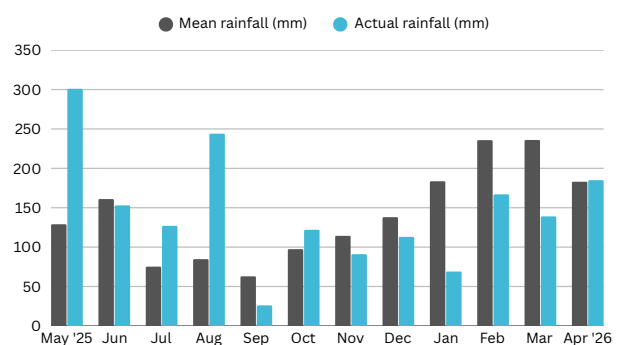
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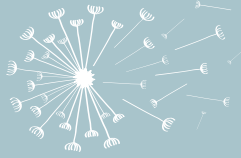
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Active ageing is the key to health and wellbeing Photo supplied

Paula Todd has been a fitness trainer for over 30 years. Here she shares some tips for keeping fit and healthy as we age.

Keep active, keep strong, stay involved and engaged with others, and care for yourself – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually – and you will give yourself the best chance to remain healthy and fit in both mind and body.

The bad news first: there is no quick fix.

The good news is that regular, consistent and persistent exercise will benefit your heart, blood pressure, bones, blood sugar and brain. Exercise – more than any other known factor – promotes neurogenesis, which is the growth of new brain cells (neurones). Through increased blood flow to the brain, physical exercise also triggers biochemical changes that spur neuroplasticity, which is the production of new connections between neurones.

Your exercise program needs to cover each of the following components:

Strength training: Pump some iron! Strength or 'resistance' training builds muscle and has been proven to strengthen bones (thus counteracting osteoporosis), reduce blood pressure, help control diabetes and reduce cholesterol, along with many other benefits.

Cardiovascular training: Elevate your heart rate! This works your heart, lungs and vascular system (also known as 'aerobic exercise'). Brisk walking, jogging, dancing, group exercise, bike riding and swimming all achieve this.

Balance and core stability: Did you know that our balance starts to deteriorate from around age 40? It's a definite case of 'use it or lose it'. Huge improvements in balance can be achieved in a relatively short time, so long as you challenge it appropriately and safely. Strengthening your core musculature will aid both your balance and continence.

Flexibility and mobility: Can you touch your toes easily? Can you turn your head to see behind you when reversing your

car? Keep your muscles long and your joints mobile with a thorough flexibility and mobility program.

Coordination: Ensuring that your brain and body continue to co-operate and work harmoniously and efficiently is critically important. Not only will you move more gracefully, good coordination and reaction times might just save your life one day.

Postural correction: Our bodies are at their most efficient when posture is good. Correct posture – when seated, standing and moving – can even improve blood flow to the brain by straightening the vertebral arteries.

And remember, training with a friend or in a group can provide added motivation and usually a few laughs. Most people enjoy exercising with others far more than going solo.

Find yourself a good trainer with the appropriate qualifications for working with your age group – and go, go, go!



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What's on

Bangalow Resilience Gathering

When Tuesday 2 June, 5.30-7pm
Where Heritage House, Bangalow
Info bangalowresiliencenetwork@gmail.com

Following the flash floods in March, local organisations and residents are invited to gather and discuss how the Bangalow community can better prepare for emergencies and unexpected events. Hosted by the Bangalow Resilience Network, the evening will focus on sharing ideas, strengthening local connections and building practical strategies for future resilience within the 2479 community.

Bangalow Chess Club Coast vs Hinterland Chess Series

When Tuesday 2, 9, 16 June, 6-9pm
Where Bangalow Hotel, 1 Byron Street, Bangalow
Tickets Free entry, 18+
Info @bangalowchess

Bangalow Chess Club continues its weekly gatherings at the Bangalow Hotel, alongside the upcoming Coast vs Hinterland Chess Series running on June 2, 9 and 16. The regional team competition brings together local players in what organisers describe as one of Australia's first regional team chess series events, with spectators welcome to watch high-level local competition.

Coorabell Hall Film Club: Little Shop of Horrors

When Wednesday 3 June, 6pm Japanese food, 7.30pm film
Where 565 Coolamon Scenic Drive, Coorabell
Tickets \$10
Info coorabellhall.net

Coorabell Hall Film Club screens the cult 1986 horror-comedy musical *Little Shop of Horrors*, adapted from Roger Corman's 1960 film. Combining camp humour, horror and memorable songs, the story follows a struggling florist who purchases a mysterious carnivorous plant in the hope of saving his failing business. Japanese food will be available before the screening.

KWT Monthly Social Gathering

When Thursday 4 June, 5.30-7.30pm
Where North Byron Hotel, Bayshore Drive, Byron Bay
Tickets Free, RSVP via website, BYO drinks/dinner
Info kindredwomentogether.com

Kindred Women Together welcomes local women for an informal evening of conversation and connection at the North Byron Hotel. The social group regularly hosts activities and gatherings across the Byron Shire, creating opportunities for friendship and community. Organisers say all women are welcome, whether attending for a quick drink, dinner or simply a chat.

Shire Choir Bangalow

When Thursday 4 June, 7-9.30pm
Where Bangalow Hotel, 1 Byron Street, Bangalow
Tickets \$25/\$20 +bf
Info shirechoir.eventbrite.com

Shire Choir returns with a winter singalong led by choir director Melia Naughton and accompanist Jamie. Audience members become the choir, learning a classic pop-rock song in harmony across the evening. Known for its uplifting and humorous atmosphere, the community event welcomes all voices, regardless of singing experience.

La Plazita short film festival

When Saturday 6 June, 5-9pm
Where Bangalow Industrial Estate
Tickets \$20 via events.humanitix.com/short-films-screening-7cksh8u5/tickets

La Plazita Collective returns with another Latin-inspired community gathering in the Bangalow Industrial Estate. Bringing together music, food, art and performance, the grassroots events draw inspiration from the social plazas of Latin America, creating an informal space for people to gather, connect and share culture within the local creative community. Family-friendly, bring your own chair or something comfy to sit on. BYO drinks.

Bangalow Film Festival

When 11-21 June
Where A&I Hall, Station Street, Bangalow
Info bangalowfilmfestival.com.au

Bangalow Film Festival returns for its sixth year with a curated program of feature films, documentaries, live performances and filmmaker events. This year's festival includes Australian premieres, environmental storytelling, cult classics and the launch of Australia's first award dedicated to nature documentary. Organisers promise a program focused on thoughtful cinema, creativity and conversation. Check out *The Herald* team picks on page 6.

Katie Brooke, Thor and Jasmine Phillips - live

When Sunday 14 June, 2.30pm
Where Pearces Creek Hall
Tickets \$20-\$38
Info pearcescreekhall.com.au

Pearces Creek Hall hosts an afternoon of original music from local singer-songwriters Thor Phillips and Katie Brooke, joined by Jasmine Phillips. Featuring dobro slide guitar, mandolin, banjo and layered harmonies, the performance will include songs from past and upcoming releases. Raised on a cattle property in Northern NSW, Katie Brooke draws strongly on traditional country influences and rural life in her songwriting.

ArtsNational presents: The Space Shuttle – A Butterfly on a Rocket

When Sunday 14 June, drinks 3.30pm, talk 4pm

Where Moller Pavilion, Bangalow Showgrounds

ArtsNational presents award-winning cinematographer Pieter de Vries discussing NASA's Space Shuttle program through rare behind-the-scenes footage filmed during 12 weeks of unprecedented access to the shuttle Endeavour. Originally from the Northern Rivers, de Vries has worked across more than 180 countries, collaborating with organisations including NASA and filmmakers such as James Cameron and David Attenborough. Note: new day, time and venue.

Winter Crafternoon at Bangalow Uniting Church

When Monday 15 June

Where Bangalow Uniting Church,
Station Street, Bangalow

Info Kimberleyr@nswact.uca.org.au |
Jonathanr@nswact.uca.org.au

Bangalow Uniting Church continues its long-running Crafternoon program with an afternoon of songs, games, craft activities and afternoon tea for local children. Running for more than 20 years, the gatherings bring together volunteers and families from the community, with this month's activities centred around themes of warmth and light during winter.

Bangalow Community Association General Meeting

When Tuesday 16 June, 6pm

Where Heritage House Museum,
4 Ashton Street, Bangalow

Info 0414 959 936

Residents and business owners from the 2479 postcode are invited to attend the Bangalow Community Association quarterly general meeting. The evening will focus on active development and infrastructure matters affecting the village, with organisers encouraging informed discussion and collaborative community involvement in shaping local outcomes.

A Night of Dark Folk with M.E. Baird & The Fold

When Saturday 4 July, doors 6pm

Where Pearces Creek Hall

Tickets \$40, \$30 concession/student,
under 16 free

Info humanitix.com

M.E. Baird & The Fold perform a rare local show as part of the Pearces Creek Hall winter sessions program. Following several years away from touring due to illness and the pandemic, Baird returns with songs from TIME, Spinning Man and new material. He will be joined by collaborators including Leroy Who, Ashleigh Bo, Karl S Williams and Darren Bridge for an evening of dark folk and atmospheric live music.



Thor and Jasmine Phillips photo supplied

Newrybar Song Sharing Circle

When Thursdays, 10.30am

Where Newrybar Hall

Tickets Free

Info events.humanitix.com/newrybar-song-sharing-circle

Local songwriters and music lovers are invited to gather for a relaxed and inclusive morning of song sharing and creativity. Open to both novice and experienced musicians, the sessions encourage participants to perform original material, exchange ideas and connect through music. Instruments including guitar, ukulele, keyboard and a small PA system will be available to use.

SAVE THE DATE

Newrybar Bonfire & Fireworks

When Saturday 1 August

Where Newrybar Public School, 10 Broken Head
Road, Newrybar

Tickets \$5 each or \$20 per family, at the gate

Info @newrybarfireworks

Join us for the 38th year of the Newrybar Public School's Bonfire & Fireworks - one of the Northern Rivers' most loved community traditions. Meet us at the school for a giant bonfire, spectacular fireworks, fairground rides, disco, food and pure winter magic. *Local Sponsors still needed*

For events outside of 2479 see Arts and About,
pages 20-21



KWT ladies enjoying their monthly gathering

Diary

June 2026

2	Bangalow Resilience Gathering
3	Coorabell Hall Film Club: <i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>
4	KWT Monthly Social Gathering Shire Choir Bangalow
6	La Plazita short film festival
11-21	Bangalow Film Festival
	Katie Brooke, Thor and Jasmine Phillips - live
14	ArtsNational presents: The Space Shuttle – A Butterfly on a Rocket
15	Winter Crafternoon at Bangalow Uniting Church
16	Bangalow Community Association General Meeting
19	High Tea at Heritage House

Regular events

Tuesdays	Bangalow Chess Club
Thursdays	Song Sharing Circle, Newrybar
first Thursday of the month	Kindred Women Together

July edition deadlines

What's on	13 June
Copy	13 June
Advertising	13 June

Friends of Libraries Byron Shire

4 DAY BOOK FAIR!

Fri 10 - Mon 13 July
9am to 4pm

BYRON BAY SURF CLUB



Upright and moving forward

Dr Airdre Grant explores the importance of euphemistic etiquette for every social occasion.

In the café, the woman and her young companion were ready to order.

The young waitress came to the table with her iPad and waited. The woman placed her order. "A smoked salmon bagel and a latte, please," she said.

The young woman said, "I'll have the same, but is the bagel gluten free? Is the salmon responsibly sourced? Is it wild caught in the Atlantic? Could you replace the cream cheese with a dairy-free option?"

The young waitress looked at her blankly.

"I don't have a button for that," she said.

This, I immediately recognised, is an excellent reply. Just think, when somebody asks you to do something and you quickly realise that it is way more complicated or onerous than you thought, it might be useful to simply say: "I

don't have a button for that."

There are a couple of other phrases which can prove useful when navigating the tricky terrain of human interconnection. For example, when asked about a piece of theatre, writing, art installation or performance of some sort, smile and say: "It's great" ... and, if pressed, say, "It's not for me."

Another handy phrase is "I am at capacity". If somebody says: "Could you please help me with moving house, minding kids or dogs, or pick up a parcel from an obscure address?" – some task which is challenging or awkward for your normally helpful self – you can say: "Sorry, but I'm at capacity just now." This, you will find, is completely acceptable. People will go okay and move on (generally).

Wait, I have more. A friend says "I don't want to talk about it" and closes a subject down, and another, when on a call, will say "I want to go now" and simply hang up. These statements may feel abrupt, disconcerting, but gee they save time. Either that or my friends hate me. (Possible.)

The power of language can never be underestimated. It shows when you have a gloom-laden conversation that leaves you feeling flat or discouraged. Or when you speak with an optimist. A friend of mine in her 80s is a shining example. When I ask how she is, she smiles broadly and says firmly: "Upright and Moving Forward!"

It's impressive.

It is apparent that my outlook on life is shaped by the company I keep and the things that are watched or discussed. It's hard to stay cheerful in a changing world. So the little power I have, I use to keep looking up, not down; forward, not back. This means I have resolved that the next time I am invited into a long conversation about the dismal state of the world, the fickleness of a changing climate or the collapse of democracy, and I am asked what I think about this, I shall say:

"I don't have a button for that!" And, sporting a brand-new T-shirt that says *Upright and Moving Forward!*, I shall go on my way.