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Byron Writers Festival
New format and hot picks

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From the Editor

Change rarely arrives all at once. More often, it reveals itself in small but significant moments.

This month's *Herald* is full of those moments.

Our stunning collection of colourised photographs, (an example of AI being used for creative good), reminds us that Bangalow has never stood still. The faces, buildings and streets of more than a century ago, previously only seen in black and white, are suddenly more familiar. These coloured images collapse time and the past seems more like a memory than history.

Byron Writers Festival, formerly a jewel in Bangalow's festival crown, is embracing change too, celebrating its 30th anniversary this month with a bold new precinct that spreads events throughout Byron Bay.

Not all change is planned. We hear how the closure of the Bangalow Bowlo has forced our netball club to adapt to training away from home – a reminder of just how important local sporting facilities are to community life. Their story is yet another thread in the complicated conversation about protecting community assets.

Byron Shire Council's latest flood study is another reminder of change, as our landscape, climate and relationship with water and the land continue to evolve. Preparing for that future will require thoughtful planning, informed decisions and a willingness to adapt. As our understanding of the subtropics deepens, so too does the way we think about designing homes that work with our climate rather than against it.

Change is inevitable but how we respond to it is a choice. Keeping informed, having important conversations, sharing ideas and participating in planning, advocacy and action are the most powerful tools we each have.

As always, thank you for being part of this ever-changing community publication. Finally, we are thrilled to unveil a fresh new look for our website bangalowherald.com.au. Find out more on page 31. We'd love to hear what you think.

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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Joshua Sasse, from London to Bangalow



Sexing up Shakespeare for a modern audience



Encouraging young actors and audiences
Photos supplied

Pucking around with Shakespeare

Bangalow resident **Joshua Sasse**, founder of The Darling Company Theatre, is on a mission to create productions that are fast-paced, engaging and accessible to contemporary audiences, luring them away from small screens and into local theatres.

Growing up near Stratford-upon-Avon, Joshua says he was "one handshake away from Richard Burton and Peter O'Toole" and other actors who returned to regional theatre throughout their careers, helping establish companies like the Royal Shakespeare Company and Bristol's renowned Old Vic Theatre as enduring creative hubs.

Like many involved in thespian pursuits, the dazzle of Hollywood beckoned Joshua who lived in Los Angeles for several years before a short, somewhat unsatisfying jaunt in Sydney. Coming from a farming background: "I knew I was always going to end up in the countryside," Joshua says, acknowledging the sense of connection and community was something lacking in the city. "When I found Byron and Bangalow, it just felt like home."

The Darling Company is part drama school, part theatre company, with actors honing their skills through workshops before progressing into productions.

While developing actors and encouraging an ensemble ethic in students and company members, Joshua is equally passionate about transforming audiences.

"I want to put on something that someone who's never been to the theatre can really enjoy and not look at their watch," he says. "After COVID everyone absorbed so much more media than ever before. Theatre has to work harder to keep people engaged," Joshua says of our always-on media culture.

That is the philosophy at the heart of The Darling Company's latest production, *Thrust Issues*, a saucy reimagining, written by Joshua, and inspired by Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Familiar characters like the impish, mischievous Puck and Peaseblossom repeatedly break the "fourth wall" effectively pausing the action to comment directly to the audience. The technique echoes the direct-to-camera style popularised by TikTok, drawing audiences into the story rather than leaving them as passive observers.

Accessibility and contemporary comedy, Joshua says, has always been part of Shakespeare's appeal. One of his favourite examples comes from *Much Ado About Nothing*. Today the title sounds perfectly respectable, but Elizabethan audiences understood it very differently. In Shakespeare's England 'nothing' was slang for female genitalia, while 'something' referred to male anatomy.

"The title would have been absolutely riotous," Joshua says. "People would have been tearing posters down because of it, and now most of us completely miss the joke."

It's a reminder that Shakespeare's comedies weren't always the dense, dusty classics we encountered in high school. In his day, they were witty social commentary and crowd-pleasing entertainment.

To encourage the next generation of theatre goers off their screens and into the theatre, the company is offering \$30 tickets for people under 30 for the Wednesday matinee performance of *Thrust Issues*, along with a 6 for \$66 each group ticket offer for evening performance, making a night at the theatre an affordable outing with friends.

Sally Schofield

Byron Writers Festival



Richard Flanagan
Antoinette Lattouf
Bob Carr
Geetanjali Shree (IND)
Roman Krznaric (UK)
Thammika Songkaeo (SGP)
Rafael Frumkin (USA)
Kerry O'Brien
Robert Forster
Evelyn Araluen

Meg Mason
Trent Dalton
Osher Günsberg
Siang Lu
Amy Remeikis
Steve Toltz
Micaela Sahhar
Melissa Lucashenko
Tasma Walton
Luke Bateman

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14—16 August

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byronwritersfestival.com



Karena capturing the essence of the story with author Hannah Moloney Photo Michael Sharmon

Award-winning artist gives books a second life

Northern Rivers artist, Bangalow resident **Karena Wynn-Moylan**, recently won Best Special Interest Programming at the National Australian Audio Awards, a project built around an idea she believes could change the way people discover books.

Her series, *The Narratives Library*, syndicated through her acclaimed BayFM program Arts Canvass, triumphed over productions from major commercial broadcasters at the awards.

The concept behind the award-winning project is simple: give people five minutes with a book before asking them to commit to reading it. For anyone who has wandered through a bookshop unsure what to choose, *The Narratives Library* is an elegant and effective solution. Instead of reviews or recommendations, listeners hear five-minute excerpts read by the authors themselves.

"Everybody loves stories," says Karena. "It's so easy to sit there and have somebody read to you, and it's even better when it's the actual voice of the author not an actor, but the person who wrote the words."

The library features hundreds of authors reading extracts from their works, including

Markus Zusak, Jane Harper, Kate Grenville, Graeme Base, Morris Gleitzman, Bruce Pascoe, Chris Hammer, Pip Williams and Suzie Miller, inviting readers to discover both celebrated names and emerging voices.

For Karena, the project is also about extending the life of books in an industry where new titles can vanish almost as quickly as they arrive. "So many books are published, become popular for a few months and then disappear," she says. "This is a way to help those stories continue to find new readers."

Born in Sale, Victoria, Karena grew up in a creative family. Her father was a cartoonist, nurturing her appreciation of storytelling and the arts from an early age. Today she is recognised throughout the Northern Rivers as an accomplished visual artist, broadcaster and passionate advocate for literature.

"The biggest thing we're lacking is education about the arts," she says. "If we paid as much attention to the arts as we do to sport, we'd realise just how neglectful we've become. That's true right across the board."

Ironically, it was her experience as an artist that inspired her to create a platform for writers. "It's incredibly difficult to get a book published, seen and sold in this country," she says. "I didn't think there was much I could do for visual artists. Other art forms already have opportunities to connect with

audiences through exhibitions, performances and screenings. Books needed another place where readers could simply discover them."

Karena says reading and storytelling occupy unique places in our culture. "I truly believe books are where people learn things and get ideas," she says. "So, I thought, maybe I could come up with something that helps a book live on a little longer."

The Narratives Library has been programmed at a number of writers' festivals, and the recent national award provides further recognition that audiences are eager to engage with literature in fresh ways.

At this year's Byron Writers Festival, Karena will not only be onsite expanding *The Narratives Library's* already extensive catalogue but will also chair a session for the first time.

On Friday 14 August, from 10.30-11.30am at the Haven Gallery, she will be in conversation with internationally acclaimed poet Julio Carrasco to explore the relationship between poetry, art and activism. Julio is renowned for his extraordinary 'poem bombing' projects, in which poetry is distributed throughout communities affected by conflict, replacing messages of destruction with words of hope.

narrativeslibrary.com

Michael Sharmon



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NEW PROPRIETORS





Jessica Alice seeking sanctuary in a good book Photo Yutaro Fukuhara

Behind the scenes at Byron Writers Festival 2026

Christobel Munson asks Byron Writers Festival Artistic Director and CEO, **Jessica Alice**, about the challenges faced in relocating the festival from Bangalow Showgrounds to Byron Bay.

Last year's event was a devastating washout – was there ever a fear the festival would not survive another year?

It was absolutely heartbreaking. And there were certainly moments when we weren't sure if the festival could get through it. Most

of the festival team works year-round to put on the once-a-year event, so it was really hard for all of us. But we know it was devastating for everyone who poured so much love into it, from our volunteers, to the ticketholders, to the artists themselves, and all the people we collaborate and partner with. So we're really grateful to be here and putting on the first festival in this new format in our 30th anniversary year.

The financial loss would have been enormous – how have supporters and sponsors rallied to make this year's event possible?

It was important to us to offer refunds after the cancellation and to let ticketholders know that as soon as possible, to make sure that no one was left out-of-pocket. We know how hard the region has been hit, so that was a priority. We're so thankful that a significant number of people donated their refunds back to us, and that, in combination with some inspiring support from our partners, helped us get through a really difficult period.

Re-inventing the whole festival concept for 2026 must have taken a huge amount of brainpower. At what point did you decide to go ahead with the new format - and was there any resistance?

It took a couple of months of modelling and site visits across the Shire, and feedback and advice from people connected to the festival since inception. With climate change, and the logistics of large-scale events - there are increasingly limited options for outdoor sites – and interestingly, the summer festivals are dealing with the challenge of extreme heat. There's a lot of excitement about the Byron town precinct, but we know some people aren't sure how it's going to work. So we're inviting those people to come with us this year and help us test a new concept so that we can refine it next year, and every year to come. It's always a village effort!

At what point this year did you switch from 'freak out' mode to 'I've got this'?

Once we had all the venues locked in, especially the outdoor marquees on the foreshore and off Jonson Street, it started to 'feel like a festival'. It had the right mix of outdoor and indoor elements, and spaces that could host bigger sessions – like American politics and the ABC's Top 100 Books. We're also inspired by being close to the water, so the fun experiences in the program like the Poetry Walk, the Saltwater Cleanse swim, and yoga, plus Coffee and News at the Beachy, show the amazing benefits of the new site.

The concept of the Festival has been completely revamped – multiple venues, a shuttle bus, etc. What's your biggest hope and, if you like, biggest fear for this new format?

The new format is all about ensuring the longevity of the festival by being weather resilient. So we hope the community comes out to support the festival and try out the new format and then help us refine it because we're all on this journey together. I hope the new format gives the town a great sense of pride in the creativity we foster in the Shire, and a boost to business by bringing in the type of significant event that's in danger of being lost in our region.

Have costs – and complexity – increased because of holding it in Byron? Is it more expensive to hold this way?

It's always complex doing something new for the first time and we're investing in different elements to see what makes it work best –

and that might change over time. It's not too dissimilar in terms of costs but certainly different! It's great to be able to support local venues and businesses in this new way because we know how much the town needs it.

How big is this year's event team, and how have they adapted to meet the demands of your first as a multi-site event?

We have seven amazing year-round staff and then we bring on a very skilled group of contractors, plus an enormous group of volunteers. Our production and volunteer managers are incredible logistical problem-solvers, so it's been inspiring to see their expertise making everything super smooth.

The FREE events are a new addition – what's the rationale behind offering them?

It's brilliant to be able to offer free programming for the first time. This means that there is no cost barrier and also allows new people who have never been before to try it out and discover how entertaining and enriching the conversations and performances are. The Kids Program is free, too, so we love being able to offer something to families at a time when everything is costing more.

Are festivals like this an indulgence in a world of climate change, war, and crashing economy – or do they represent hope?

Festival audiences are the best people. Festivals are one of the few remaining spaces where we can have informed, hopeful and challenging discussions about big issues like climate and war. I love festivals because they are that democratic space where we encourage everyone to participate in these discussions. And it's through good people working for positive change that we fix the problems of our world. So I find festivals enormously important and hopeful spaces.

Which sessions, authors or books are you personally most excited to have on the program?

We're so lucky to have Richard Flanagan with his new book *Heresies*, the big political minds like Sean Kelly and Amy Remeikis, and I love that we're premiering new books from wonderful authors like Kris Kneen and Meg Mason, plus people travelling from remote places like Arrernte Warlpiri woman Marie Elena Ellis who is such a superstar. I also love the global outlook with this program, with writers from seven countries including Raf Frumkin from the US, Roman Krznaric from the UK, Geetanjali Shree from India, Thai writer Thammika Songkhaeo from Singapore plus two Chilean poets Julio Carrasco and Faumelisa Manquepillan.

What have you learned about yourself as a result of last year's event or the pivoting process?

It was immensely difficult because I love and believe in this community and the necessity of our festival so strongly, but I also found inspiration and motivation in the challenge of needing to do things differently. I think we all have great wells of fortitude and creativity within us, and I've had a fair bit of opportunity to test those!

How do advance bookings look?

Sales are looking good and we hope that everyone, even those who are a bit unsure about the new site, come out and be curious, and support the event that is such a testament to the community's uniqueness and creativity, and exists solely for the community.

“

I also found inspiration and motivation in the challenge of needing to do things differently...

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Bangalow junior netballers long to return to their Bangalow home. Photo Moira Ryan

Netballers need to come home

"How can we call ourselves a Bangalow team when we practise in Byron?"

It's a question from one of Bangalow Netball Club's junior players, but one that reflects a much bigger issue facing the town. Bangalow's sporting clubs are used to working with limited facilities. Fields have been shared, training times adjusted and volunteers have found creative ways to keep local sport alive. But when Bangalow Netball Club lost access to training at The Bowlo earlier this year, the situation became impossible to ignore. Suddenly, one of the town's largest junior sporting clubs had no home ground, begging the bigger question: is Bangalow's sporting infrastructure keeping pace with the community it serves?

Finding a place to train – and a permanent home – in Bangalow has long been a challenge for its netball club. After years of searching, in 2013 the club partnered with The Bowlo transforming a section of the grounds into a community training space. Situated in the heart of town, it allowed players to walk from school, families to gather after work and parents to stay for dinner while training unfolded. It wasn't a purpose-built facility, but it became even more important – a place where sport and community naturally came together.

When that chapter came to an abrupt end when The Bowlo closed in October 2025. Behind the scenes, committee members scrambled to find available courts before the season began, knowing that without a venue the club risked losing players, volunteers and even its independence.

"We were genuinely worried about losing players during the pre-season," club vice-president Carolyn Hannah says. Families questioned whether the club would survive, while committee members faced the difficult task of reassuring players and approaching potential sponsors despite having no permanent home to offer.

The Cavanbah Centre on Ewingsdale Road, Byron Bay ultimately provided a lifeline to the club allowing the season to continue. Families and committee members say they are incredibly grateful to the Centre.

Training on purpose-built hard courts has been a bonus with players now training on the same surface they compete on each weekend. Coaches no longer have to contend with muddy grass courts after rain or poor lighting during evening sessions. "More than anything, it has highlighted just how much Bangalow needs purpose-built netball facilities," says Carolyn.

Nine-year-old Lotte is one player who has noticed the difference. "I like training at the Cav because of the hard courts," she says. "It helps us get ready for juniors next year. It isn't muddy and slippery like The Bowlo."

Yet even with those improvements, many players say something has been left behind.

For 16-year-old Sophie Scott, that loss is difficult to describe because the Bangalow Bowlo is tied to identity rather than convenience.

"We belong at the Bowlo. It's the heart of our town, surrounded by the community. That

is home for us," she says. "We belong in Bangalow."

For younger players, the change has altered simple routines that once made training feel like part of everyday life. Twelve-year-old Naomi says she misses walking from school with her teammates, chatting along the way. "It made us feel like a team before training had even started," she says.

Now, training requires families to organise transport to Byron Bay, co-ordinate carpools and fit another journey into already busy weekly schedules. While the sporting experience itself has improved, the sense of belonging that came with training in Bangalow has become harder to recreate.

But the change in location and training day didn't suit all teams. Now one team trains in their coach Jess's backyard. She mows, lines and lights the yard in the attempt to get a sufficient training session in each week. This sacrifice is just one of the many the club has had to make over the years.

The move has also affected the club's representative players. Since Bangalow was forced to change its training night, representative athletes often miss club training because it clashes with Brunswick Byron representative sessions. Carolyn says those players play a crucial role within the club.

"Our representative players are important role models for our younger athletes," she says. "They bring back new skills, knowledge and ideas from representative training that lift the standard of our club training and benefit their teammates."

The lack of sporting infrastructure extends well beyond any one sporting code. As participation across junior sport continues to increase, clubs are competing for limited space, and when facilities disappear there are few alternatives within the town itself.

For Bangalow Netball Club committee member Alicia, finding a long-term solution has become a community effort. Volunteers have spent more than a decade preparing grant applications, gathering letters of support and advocating for dedicated courts. They have produced funding submissions, sought assistance from Netball NSW and worked with local organisations, yet the club is still waiting for permanent facilities. Two proposed netball courts have now been identified in the Bangalow Sports Field Master Plan, offering hope that progress is finally possible, but without the grants the future of these plans is still unknown.

Byron Shire Council's Acting Manager of Works, Malcolm Robertson, said the need for additional hard court facilities had been recognised through the 2023 Bangalow Sports Fields Plan of Management and Landscape Master Plan. The plan identifies two new multi-purpose hard courts as a high priority project within the Bangalow Sports Precinct, adjoining the existing tennis courts.

Designed to support netball, basketball, tennis, wheelchair sports and community recreation, the proposal would create a shared hard court precinct rather than facilities for a single sport. While concept plans have been completed, the project is not yet funded or scheduled for construction, with Council continuing to pursue external grant opportunities.

Coach Jess, a key figure in attempting to gain grants from the Council, said the proposed courts would benefit far more than just netball players.

"We're not just asking for funding to build courts – we're asking the community to invest in a shared space that will benefit everyone," she says "These courts will be a lasting legacy for Bangalow, giving local children the chance to play where they live and creating a vibrant, inclusive space for sport and recreation for years to come."

Alicia believes the next step belongs to the community. "Speaking to our local council, fundraising and signing a petition supporting the need for Bangalow courts are all ways the community can help," she says.

The conversation sparked by The Bowlo's closure is no longer simply about where one club trains each week. It has become a broader discussion about the future of community sport in Bangalow and whether the town's facilities are growing alongside its population. "It wasn't just a training venue, it was a community hub," says Carolyn.

Charlotte Burns

Player spotlight

After months of training, teamwork and commitment, three Bangalow Netball Club players represented the Brunswick Byron Netball Association at the 2026 Netball NSW State Titles. The three day carnival brings together the best representative players from across New South Wales, playing between 19–21 games across the three-day span, making it a fantastic achievement to wear the black and pink while proudly representing our local club.

Under 13s: Miranda and Ivy played an outstanding tournament, helping their team finish tied second before officially placing third on goal percentage in Division 4.

Under 14s: Charlotte and her teammates claimed the Division 4 title, an amazing achievement that reflects the team's hard work and dedication to training this season.

Congratulations to Miranda, Ivy and Charlotte on their achievements!



From left, Miranda, Charlotte and Ivy Photo supplied



Draft Bangalow Flood Study

The Draft Bangalow Flood Study is on exhibition.

The study looks at flooding from Byron Creek, Paddys Creek and Maori Creek as well as flooding from heavy rain overwhelming the drains and stormwater systems.

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02 6626 7000

**Submissions close
12 August 2026.**



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Film fans at the Federal Film Society All photos supplied

The hills have films

In our region, we are lucky to have several film societies regularly showing fantastic films to enthusiastic film fans. The three featured here all operate in old community halls, traditionally places for locals to gather and enjoy themselves. Each venue has been renovated and improved with fundraising efforts and sometimes grants, and are lovingly tended by teams of dedicated local volunteers.



Federal Hall

Federal Film Society

Federal Film Society has been bringing people together through film for 25 years. Based in Federal Hall, which has been at the heart of village life since 1882, it is run entirely by volunteers and is a proud member of the Australian Film Societies Federation. Every three months the hall fills with locals and visitors who come not only for the carefully chosen films, but also for the wonderful sense of community that has grown around each screening.

One of the lovely traditions is that dinner is prepared by a different local community group for each screening. Federal Landcare, Goonengerry Landcare, Federal Loves Refugees, the Federal Community Centre and local schools have all taken turns in the kitchen over the years, raising valuable funds for their own projects while creating a warm, social evening. Local musician Gaby Borgardt (designer of this very publication!) often provides live music before the film and the menu changes to suit the theme of the evening. It's very much 'dinner and a movie' with a distinctly Federal flavour.

The committee has developed a reputation for selecting outstanding films from Australia and around the world, including many award winners from festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Sundance and Venice. It's the sort of program you might expect in a city arthouse cinema, presented instead in the warmth of a village hall. Annual membership for six screenings is \$50 or you can purchase a single screening membership for \$10 at the door.

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The Drill Hall

Drill Hall Film Society

This society was formed to fill the gap left when Michael and Rebecca Lines Kelly, who ran Left Bank Film Society, returned to Victoria. A dedicated group of film buffs with impressive backgrounds in film and production got together and since 2019 have been sharing their expertise and passion with us.

Films are preceded by a talk, sometimes by someone involved with the production including the late Tony Barry, Kim Mourdant and Nell Schofield.

Seventy-three films have been shown so far with some favourites being *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Bicycle Thieves* and *Ladies in Black*. Members are invited to submit suggestions for screening and the list is extremely varied. Each film is something of a revelation, especially seen many years after first viewing. There is a Q&A session following the film and often the audience expresses great surprise after seeing old classics revived on the big screen.

The Drill Hall is a cleverly repurposed hall, home not only to the Drill Hall Theatre crew but many other community activities. It now has tiered comfortable seating, is air-conditioned and has a new screen and projector.

Refreshments are available before the screening with doors opened at 6.30pm for the monthly films. Memberships are now due, and as with all film societies, you must be a member to attend regular screenings. Eleven films cost \$75 which also includes membership of the Theatre Company. Guests may attend to try before joining for \$10 per film.

The Drill Hall
4 Jubilee Avenue, Mullumbimby
drillhalltheatre.org.au/films



Coorabell Hall

Coorabell Hall Film Club

The most recent film society is in the wonderful old Coorabell Hall, the second School of the Arts building which replaces the original that burnt down in 1919. It has undergone many improvements over the years thanks to a great deal of fundraising, some grant assistance from the Byron Shire Council and a generous (anonymous) local who offered a loan so that extensions could be made to enable even greater use of the hall.

The Rocket was the first screening and was made by local Byron man, Kim Mourdant. Films, shown on the first Wednesday of every month, are varied and chosen from around the world for their timeless brilliance. Some classics, some newer releases.

The Committee which runs the society is headed up by Lissa Coote who has had an extensive career in film set design and film making, as well as previously leasing a large cinema (seating 1400) in Manly, The Manly Silver Screen.

The hall is comfortable and warm with a great new projector and sound system. As a bonus the bar is open prior to the film, and delicious Japanese food is available so also offers 'dinner and a show'. A great night out and well worth the slightly daunting nighttime trip on our rustic roads.

To attend, you must become a member in line with the rules of the Australian Film Societies Federation, and you can join at the door. Membership is \$30 for four films.

Coorabell Hall
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coorabellhall.net/regular-happenings/film-club

Carole Gamble

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Festival news



Byron Writers Festival celebrates 30 years

For three days in August, Byron Bay will once again become a meeting place for readers, writers and big ideas as the Byron Writers Festival marks its 30th anniversary. Under the theme Sanctuary, the 2026 festival brings together more than 150 Australian and international writers, poets, journalists and thinkers for a program of conversations, storytelling, workshops and performances. This year also introduces a new festival precinct spread across Byron Bay's town centre, with sessions at venues including the Byron Theatre, Beach Hotel, Surf Club and outdoor stages, alongside markets, live music and free community events. Whether you're an avid reader or simply curious to hear fresh perspectives, there's something to inspire across the weekend.

Byron Writers Festival

When Friday 14 – Sunday 16 August
Where Festival precinct, Byron Bay
Tickets/info byronwritersfestival.com

A celebrating of ceramics – North Coast Mud Trail

This month, ceramic artists across the Northern Rivers open their studio doors for the 14th annual North Coast Mud Trail, inviting visitors to discover the people, processes and stories behind handmade clay. This year's event expands into a four-day celebration, with the much-loved self-guided open studio weekend joined by two new workshop days where visitors can learn directly from participating artists. Along the trail, expect demonstrations, artist talks, exhibitions and the chance to purchase unique works while exploring studios across the Byron, Ballina and Lismore shires. Whether you're a dedicated collector, an aspiring potter or simply curious about the region's thriving ceramics community, the Mud Trail offers an inspiring weekend immersed in creativity.

North Coast Mud Trail 2026

When Friday 21 – Monday 24 August
Where Studios across the Byron, Ballina and Lismore shires
Info northcoastceramics.com/mud-trail

Tyalgum Music Festival returns for a weekend of world-class music

Now in its 34th year, the Tyalgum Music Festival held in September, presents three days of exceptional music in the picturesque Tweed Valley village. The festival brings together acclaimed Australian and international musicians for a program spanning opera, chamber music, jazz and baroque favourites. Highlights include Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Schubert's beloved *The Trout Quintet*, pianist Konstantin Shamray performing *The Magic Piano*, harpist Emily Granger and a lively jazz finale with Swing Central and vocalist Brad Leaver. A free Nature Therapy Walk is also part of the program, designed to quieten the mind before indulging in a weekend of diverse music. Festival Gold Passes and individual concert tickets are available, with free admission for under 18s.

Tyalgum Music Festival

When Friday 25 – Sunday 27 September
Where Tyalgum Community Hall
Tickets/info tyalgumfestival.com.au

DINGO Music & Arts Festival arrives in Bangalow

A new festival is set to transform Bangalow and Byron Bay this October, bringing together an eclectic mix of internationally acclaimed musicians, DJs, artists and performers. Anchored in jazz but programmed through a contemporary lens, the inaugural DINGO Music & Arts Festival will unfold across halls, galleries, record stores and public spaces, encouraging audiences to wander between venues and discover unexpected performances and collaborations. The line-up includes Hiatus Kaiyote, Kokoroko, Miss Kaniinna, Nai Palm, Rich Medina, Harry James Angus and more than 40 artists spanning jazz, soul, hip hop, electronic music and experimental performance. Created by a collective of Northern Rivers music organisations, the festival aims to celebrate creativity, community and the unique character of Bangalow itself.

DINGO Music & Arts Festival

When Thursday 8 – Sunday 11 October
Where Venues throughout Bangalow and Byron Bay
Tickets/info dingofestival.com

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Bangalow Koalas is branching out. Photo supplied

Koalas in Mongolia

Bangalow Koalas turns 10 this year, so it is timely that its work has been recognised on the world stage – with an invitation to attend the Conference of the Parties (COP17) at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

COP17 will to be held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 17-28 August, and Bangalow Koalas co-founder and president Linda Sparrow is getting ready to attend, alongside vice-president Saul Goodwin.

"This whole experience is going to be a huge learning curve for us," Linda says. "We are so proud and humbled as a small community

group punching well above our weight to be recognised for our work and the importance of it on a global level."

The invitation came as a result of Bangalow Koalas' membership of the Restor.eco hub, an online platform that supports hundreds of thousands of community-led restoration projects around the world. Developed by British ecologist Thomas Crowther through the Crowther Lab at the Swiss university ETH Zurich, Restor connects conservation efforts, provides ecological insights and high-resolution satellite imagery for global nature restoration.

Last August Restor suggested the koala group, part of its Early Adopter program, to apply for accreditation with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

In February they were notified as being a provisionally accredited organisation, pending a final decision to be taken during COP17.

As part of the preparation for COP17, Bangalow Koalas has taken part in Zoom meetings run by the Civil Society Organisations (CSO) panel, "with guest speakers covering topics from communications, understanding policy engagement, lobbying strategies, advocacy, pitching our cause", Linda says. There are 203 CSOs across the globe, including the local group.

CSOs play a broad and institutionalised role at UNCCD COP17, Linda says – "operating as official observers and active stakeholders, shaping negotiations, policy and field-level implementation. And as primary liaison with the UNCCD secretariat".

The door is open for further exposure within the international entity. There are two zones within COP events: The Blue Zone is the official UN negotiation area, where the official work happens; the Green Zone is for public engagement and exhibition. "Events and accredited organisations participate in official negotiations in the Blue Zone and host exhibits or side events in the Green Zone," Linda says. "We will be taking particular interest in how these are run so in two years' time at the next UNCCD COP meeting we will apply to have an exhibit."

She is also hopeful of meeting Professor Crowther as well as CSO colleagues from across the globe.

Since its founding in 2016, Bangalow Koalas has planted more than half a million koala habitat trees across the Northern Rivers, work made possible by the volunteers from the community, from schoolchildren to pensioners.

The group has a goal of 850,000 trees planted by 2030.

Digby Hildreth



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Connecting Generations recognised for community building

Connecting Generations Bangalow recognised by the NSW Legislative Assembly - could the FIFA World Cup be next? Photo supplied

Connecting Generations Bangalow has received special recognition in the NSW Legislative Assembly, with local MP Tamara Smith presenting a Legislative Assembly citation acknowledging the initiative's work in bringing people of all ages together and strengthening community connections.

The citation recognised Connecting Generations as a model for fostering belonging and reducing social isolation by creating opportunities for meaningful relationships across generations – an approach that continues to grow in Bangalow.

That spirit was on full display at the group's joyful recent gathering at Bangalow Heritage House & Museum, which embraced a bush theme. Families enjoyed a homemade wooden horse obstacle course, damper making, bush craft with a local Indigenous leader, and an energetic bush dance accompanied by local musicians.

The Connecting Generations and GenConnect

winter gathering will be held on 9 August, 3-5.30pm at Hertiage House, Bangalow, with another afternoon designed to bring young and old together. Activities include lantern making, FIFA World Cup family soccer, flag drawing on homemade drums, face painting, damper making and a cosy story corner with elders. Gunter's Flammkuchen pizza van will also return.

GenConnect was founded by Nicole and Sandro Voegeli, with a vision to help rebuild the village by making it easier for people to find, share and create community. Designed as a platform for meaningful, real-life connections beyond the fast-paced nature of traditional social media, GenConnect encourages people to share their skills, time and gifts, from community events and local initiatives to practical support and intergenerational learning. Through a shared vision with Ruth Winton-Brown, GenConnect proudly joined forces with Connecting Generations to strengthen community and

create spaces where children, families and older generations can connect, contribute and belong.

Behind these gatherings, however, is an even bigger shift in thinking. Working alongside GenConnect founder Nicole, organisers are placing less emphasis on filling every moment with activities and more on creating opportunities for conversation, friendship and belonging.

The hope is that people come not simply because there's something happening, but because they feel part of a community where children, parents, grandparents and elders know one another and share life together. In many ways, it is about rebuilding the village – and as the recent parliamentary citation suggests, it is an approach with the potential to inspire communities well beyond Bangalow.

@ConnectingGenerationsBangalow on Facebook

The Bangalow Herald

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Noonan's Tin and Ironworks, c1900-1909



Builders at work at St Kevins Catholic Church



Bullock team, Possum Creek

These images are drawn from a 278-page photographic documentary chronicling the evolution of the village of Bangalow between 1900 to 1960. Called *A Splash of Colour*, the book to be launched on 28 August at Ninbella Gallery, and is an ideal keepsake.

Images from the Bangalow Historical Society's archives were selected by local filmmaker and photographer, Terry Bleakley – who restored and coloured them to make the past more vivid and accessible to a modern audience – in a collaboration with Heather West.

"Above all, this publication seeks to move history beyond glass cabinets and museum walls", say the book's authors. "It invites readers to see the past not as something distant or untouchable, but as a living thread connecting old residents and new, past and present.

"In breathing colour and life back into these archival photographs, the Bangalow Historical Society hopes to inspire a deeper appreciation for the stories, people and heritage integrity that continue to define Bangalow and the surrounding region today."

The museum, 16 local businesses, families and individuals met the significant production costs.

After the launch, *A Splash of Colour* will be on sale in Bangalow at Wax Jambu, Our Corner Store, The General Store and Bangalow Museum, and in Byron Bay at The Book Room.

Proceeds will support Bangalow Historical Society.

Christobel Munson



Swimming carnival 1920s, Bangalow Pool



Benny Hall at Francis's Garage, Station Street



Bangalow's main street, Byron Street, back in the day



Cream van, Possum Creek 1910



Mrs Ernie McNiven in the doorway of the Central Cafe, Byron Street

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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Jarrold Taylor, centre, observing local Hapkiyusul practioners in action in Korea Photo supplied

Local Hapkiyusul members travel to Korea

A tour group, led by Jarrod Taylor, of five locals and some Germans, recently made the journey to Korea for a week-long seminar and workshop with Korean practitioners at a Hapkiyusul Global Dojang training facility in Korea. The group of locals was made up of Bill Taylor, Adele Smout and her partner Michael from Coorabell, as well as Claire and Hamish Brace, members of the Murwillumbah Hapkiyusul club.

Hapkiyusul Global was first founded by Jarrod Taylor in the Byron Bay region back in October 2023, after he had spent over 20

years learning Hapkiyusul from Dojunim Kim Yun Sang. Jarrod has conducted regular seminars in South Korea and the USA.

The owner of the Dojang, Mr Hwang Euidok, specifically built the Dojang at his bathroom supply distribution warehouse for the primary purpose of keeping his staff healthy and happy. They arrive at work at 6.30am, practice for 90 minutes, then he provides them with breakfast, which they eat together at a dining area attached to the Dojang, then discuss that day's scheduled business activities.

Initially, the staff were far from impressed when they had to start work so early to do Hapkiyusul, but after a period of time, Mr Hwang started to notice a growing enthusiasm as the staff members' body aches and pains started to diminish and the vibe at work became more harmonious.

Mr Hwang has decided to follow the Hapkiyusul Global practice method and style because he has found it provides safe low impact on the body and joints, stress-free, completely holistic practice method, while preserving the highly effective self-defence aspects. He has been really impressed with how the regular practice has improved the overall wellbeing of his staff. The effects have been so well noticed that even some of his clients join the morning sessions. These benefits include being much better able to handle stressful situations, body maintenance, strengthening the lower back and joints, increased muscle tone while increasing joint mobility, increased stamina and vitality, increased appetite, particularly in the morning, improvement in digestion, weight loss, and a general increase in satisfaction with life and their working environment. The practitioners in Korea range from their early 20s to their early 50s in age.

For Adele, who has been training in Hapkiyusul for about 18 months, the trip was very rewarding. She says "Before going I was a bit concerned about practicing twice daily but it wasn't too bad, although I did need a nap during the day. Training with the Korean workers was fun but their approach was different to ours. We tend to be a bit casual, but they are very precise with their movements. It wasn't all training as we managed to get out and do a bit of exploring such as visiting the grave of Kim Yun Sang, one of the three founders of Hapkiyusul."

Murray Hand



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Tropical delight

Dombeya wallichii commonly known as a tropical hydrangea Photo Carole Gamble

The unusual always catches a gardener's eye especially in drab winter, says **Carole Gamble**.

At this time of year, a neighbour's fabulous *Dombeya wallichii* is a welcome sight. This large evergreen, vase-shaped plant is currently covered in scores of enormous blooms and even more tightly furred buds, crowding the ends of each cane.

Sometimes known as a tropical hydrangea, it is part of the family *Malvaceae*. It originated in Madagascar although it has been introduced to parts of South America where it's naturalised.

It was named for Dr Joseph Dombey, an 18th century botanist and collector of exotic

plants, a great fan of the Wardian chest that enabled more successful transportation of specimens by sailing ships to their destinations.

Its size determines placement, as it can grow to many metres high. It has a multi-caned, spreading form although it can respond well to pruning and shaping after flowering.

Dombeya requires full sun and some protection from strong winds as the slender canes with their heavy foliage are quite susceptible to breaking. The flower heads and the large leaves are aromatic and are soft, heart-shaped and quite lovely.

Flowering occurs between autumn and spring and the large – up to 15cm across – flower heads are spectacular.



In dry times, *Dombeya* should be watered as consistent moisture is vital and a balanced fertiliser, applied during the growing season, will ensure strong canes and flowering.

Propagation is not easy! Cuttings taken have not been successful; seed propagation is apparently lengthy but also not often successful so my neighbour has just gifted me a plant she raised by clever *marcotting* – also sometimes known as air layering.

For those of you who haven't tried this, *marcotting* is definitely not easy nor is it for the impatient plantsperson. I will write about this technique next month and encourage you to try it as we gardeners love a challenge.

DO YOU HAVE A COMMUNITY EVENT COMING UP?

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MEMBER FOR BALLINA



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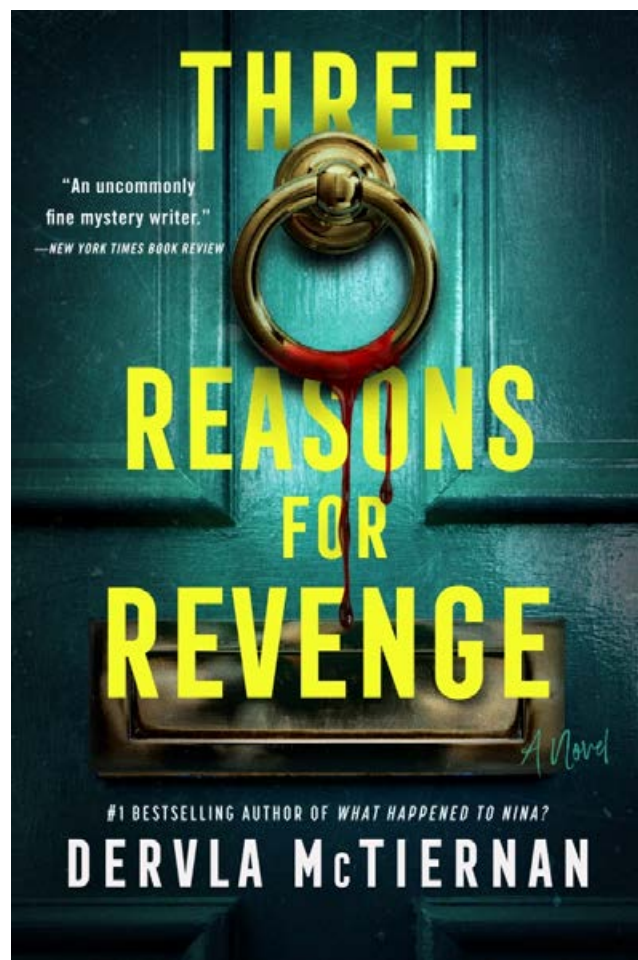
Three Reasons for Revenge

by Dervla McTiernan

Who doesn't love a good whodunnit? I think that Irish-Australian author, Dervla McTiernan, is competing for the crown of queen of murder mystery. She is churning out one, sometimes two, a year. Honestly, her books just keep me enthralled – and there is no feeling that she is following a formula to the point that it becomes tedious. A natural talent.

Three Reasons for Revenge is set in Melbourne (the others which I have read have been set in Ireland) and the book's conclusion certainly suggests that there might be a sequel – perhaps another series? The main character is a female detective sergeant called Judith Lee; she's tough, savvy, experienced, and she has the backing of her Senior Sergeant, Rocky Jansen, who has known and mentored her since she was a teenager. She has a fairly tight group of colleagues at the station but there is always someone who upsets the applecart. In this instance it is Luke Fraser who is a spoiled, macho, misogynist with a cocaine habit and a history of domestic violence. Unfortunately, Luke has the protection of his father, the Assistant Commissioner Eddie Fraser.

The story starts with DS Judith Lee being called to reception to speak with a young woman, Alexis Turner, who has asked for her specifically and won't speak to anyone else. She is at the police station to make a sexual assault complaint against her psychologist – the very same psychologist that DS Lee had been unable to get a conviction against 10 years earlier. I'm not going to share much more of the story, but there are multiple characters and several murders, and it is unclear if there is any link between them except for the identical gift boxes which get delivered to the victims. Pretty little boxes, the size of a shoebox, wrapped in embossed black paper with crimson velvet ribbon and a handwritten card in beautiful, flowing calligraphy.



If you enjoy this book, you will be sure to enjoy Dervla McTiernan's first book, *The Ruin*, which introduces the detective Cormac Reilly. Published in 2018 she has written a series featuring Cormac Reilly and I can recommend them all.

Goodreads rating 4.1 stars, Publisher: Harper Collins

Carolyn Adams



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Author Claire Thomas is ready to launch Photo supplied

Launch party

A book launch or an appearance at a literary festival is a major coup for an author, providing them with a dynamic platform to introduce and promote a new title to a highly engaged audience. Festival programmers look ahead to new releases as a framework for curating sessions that explore resonant themes and issues, allowing authors to speak not only about their work but the world it was born from.

The audience, packed with book club members, avid readers, teachers, librarians and lovers of the arts, are like sponges, soaking up the backstory, the conflict, and the process and practice behind each book as the authors discuss its creation.

Readers have a parasocial relationship with writers, and creators of

all kinds, really. That is, a one-sided acquaintance where we know more about them than they know about us, yet we feel bonded to them in an inexplicable way. Engaging with the audience from the stage, authors are often unguarded and accessible in a way that readers find authentic and fascinating. It's a thrill to hear the voice of a writer whose words we've only ever seen on the page. Better still, you can stand in line to have a brief – sometimes starstruck – chat as they sign your copy of their book after the session.

There's something intoxicating about hearing about a book, seeing the author speak, perhaps meeting them, and then holding their book in your hands. It's a sequence that enriches the reading experience when the time comes to turn the first page.

Appearing at this year's Byron Writers Festival is Meg Mason, whose novel, *Sorrow and Bliss*, was one of my favourite reads in recent years. Her new novel, *Sophie, Standing There*, puts the *meta* in metafiction. It's the story of Sophie – divorced, seemingly comfortable alone with her books, but secretly craving connection. A twist of fate sees her literary obsession appearing at a writers' festival where Sophie is working. What will become of Sophie's limerence? Will she break the barrier between fan and author, or simply break her own heart?

And speaking of love, also debuting at this year's Festival is Zoe Terakes, whose *Eros: Queer Myths for Lovers* refocuses ancient Greek myths through a queer lens, one the author says has been erased over time. Born in Crete, Zoe, an Australian trans author, actor and activist, assembles a mosaic of intimacy, exploring the realities of transphobia and homophobia while celebrating the power of diversity, pride and visibility in a sensual, spicy ode to ancient mythology and queer joy.

Also making her festival debut is Claire Thomas with her third novel, *On Not Climbing Mountains* (the title alone appeals to me as someone who 'lied about being The Outdoor Type'). The mountains traversed by the narrator are both literal and figurative. The jagged contours of the natural world mirror the inner landscape of her grief and memory. Claire fortifies these connections with cultural references to artists, authors and explorers to create something more akin to a literary collage than a traditional linear narrative. And that's a good thing.

See you at the Festival!

byronwritersfestival.com

Sally Schofield



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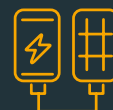
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Arts and about

Off Broadway

Step into the magic of musical theatre as Off Broadway brings some of the world's most beloved show tunes to the Star Court Theatre. Rather than telling a single story, this vibrant production celebrates the evolution of Broadway through unforgettable songs and scenes from classics including *Singin' in the Rain*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Grease*, *Wicked*, *Chicago* and *Sweet Charity*. Created by the team behind *Celtic Illusion*, *Ballroom Blitz* and *The Greatest Christmas Show*, the performance is a joyful tribute to the composers, choreographers and performers who have shaped musical theatre across the decades.

Thursday 6 August, 7.30pm

Star Court Theatre, Lismore

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The Wedding Singer

Get ready for big hair, shoulder pads and a soundtrack packed with 1980s hits as Ballina Players presents *The Wedding Singer*. Based on the much-loved Adam Sandler film, this feel-good musical follows wedding singer Robbie Hart, whose own heartbreak threatens to derail his life until he finds an unexpected connection with waitress Julia. Featuring infectious songs, lively choreography and plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, the production captures the nostalgia, romance and exuberance of the decade while celebrating the courage it takes to follow your heart.

21 August–6 September

Ballina Players Theatre, Ballina

ballinaplayers.com.au

Hot Shorts 2026

The Northern Rivers' newest voices take centre stage as the Drill Hall Theatre Company presents *Hot Shorts 2026*, its popular biennial festival of original 10-minute plays. Showcasing fresh writing from local playwrights, each short work offers a unique story, from comedy and drama to unexpected twists and thought-provoking theatre. With multiple plays performed in a single evening, *Hot Shorts* celebrates the creativity, diversity and talent of the region's theatre-makers while giving audiences the chance to discover tomorrow's playwrights today. Adult themes and coarse language may apply.

17–27 September

The Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby

drillhalltheatre.org.au

Agape Comedy Night

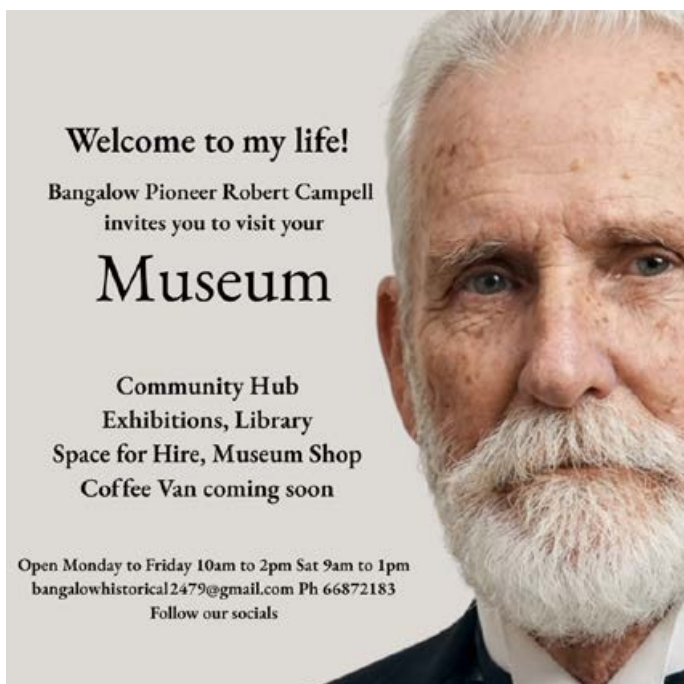
Two of Australia's funniest comedians join forces for an evening of laughter with a purpose as Mandy Nolan and Jackie Loeb headline Agape Comedy Night. Presented as part of Homelessness Week, the fundraiser combines top-class stand-up with raffles, auctions and community spirit, raising vital funds for Agape Outreach's work supporting people experiencing homelessness across the Northern Rivers and Gold Coast. Expect plenty of laughs while helping to make a genuine difference.

Thursday 6 August, 7.30pm

Jacana Room, Seagulls Club, Tweed Heads West

events.humanitix.com/agape-comedy-night

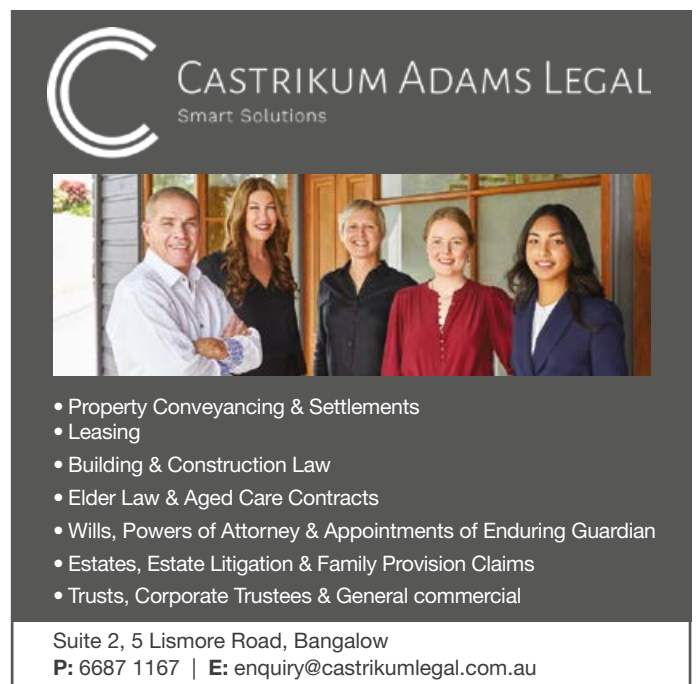
Michael Sharmon



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Apple, date and caramelised coconut lumberjack cake

This cake usually has pineapple included, along with generous amounts of butter and sugar. My somewhat 'healthier' version includes maple syrup and olive oil. Dates and apples keep the cake moist.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large apples, coarsely grated
- About 10 large Medjool dates, finely chopped
- 1 tsp bi-carb soda
- ½ cup boiling water
- ¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup maple syrup
- 1 tbsp vanilla paste or extract
- 1 egg
- 1¾ cups plain flour
- Pinch of salt

Topping

- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- ½ cup milk of your choice
- 1 cup shredded coconut
- 1 tbsp vanilla bean paste or extract
- Pinch of salt

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line loaf tin with greaseproof paper.
2. In a bowl, combine the apples and dates. Add the bi-carb soda and boiling water. Allow to sit for 10 minutes.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together the olive oil, maple syrup, egg and vanilla.
4. Fold the apple and date mixture into the wet ingredients.
5. Fold in the flour and salt. Mix until just combined.
6. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf tin and bake for 40 minutes at 180°C.
7. Prepare the topping. In a small saucepan, combine all topping ingredients and simmer for 2–3 minutes.
8. After 40 minutes, remove the cake from the oven. Pour the topping over the cake, spreading it evenly.
9. Return the cake to the oven and bake for a further 20 minutes.
10. Remove the cake from the oven and allow it to rest in the tin for 10 minutes before turning out.

Tips

- If your dates are dry, soak them in hot water to soften.
- You could use gluten-free flour or spelt flour instead.
- This cake freezes well.

Recipe and illustration Lyn Hand



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Will Burke at work on his shavehorse Photos Adele Scaysbrook



A Windsor chair in the making

The charm of chairmaking

For **Will Burke**, a chair is just more than somewhere to sit. From his first time on a shavehorse, Will felt a connection to the art, process, and heritage of Windsor chairmaking. **Adele Scaysbrook** sat down with Will to find out more.

Born and raised in the Northern Rivers, Will works from his Myocum workshop crafting chairs with both traditional knowledge and his own contemporary flair. Bangalow

residents and visitors may recognise Will's chairs from his six-month pop-up last year in the Main Street or from the Bangalow markets.

What led you towards becoming a chairmaker?

I had loved woodworking since high school so naturally went into carpentry. After about seven years in the carpentry industry, I had this yearning to go back to something more around furniture and woodworking. My brother had made a couple of Windsor chairs

before and the guy he learnt from, Glen Rundell, offered for us to do his rocking chair class.

Within the first few hours on a shavehorse making spindles, I realised this was what I was looking for. I ended up going back down to Victoria for about two months to continue learning. Glen saw the passion that I had so he was more than happy to keep teaching me. Every new step, different stage, and every finished product made me more and more excited.

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It took me six months to a year to slowly merge into chairmaking. First more for fun and then a few orders came in, mainly from word of mouth, which led me to take it even more seriously. That catapulted me into the craft. It's a slow process so it felt right to just take it very slowly, and things have just happened naturally.

From a piece of wood to the final chair, can you briefly describe the process?

I start with splitting wood straight from the log. It's usually a green log, so there's still moisture. There are at least two or three different species of timber in a chair because of their different applications. What I can use for spindles and steam-bent parts is usually not what I can use for legs or the seat.

So, I split spindles and steam bend parts from the log. It's the first step because I need to get those shaped, steamed, bent, and then put in the dry box for a few days to set. While they're setting, I'm turning the legs and setting out, drilling, and shaping the seat. Once the bends and the spindles are dry, I can finish those and implement them into the chair.

Once you have your parts, you hop on the shavehorse to shape the spindles. That's what gives Windsors their strength. It's a fun juggle because it's not an exact ABC process.

What made you specialise in Windsor chairs?

A feeling. It's a super enjoyable technique that can't be rushed. There's only a certain speed you can go. If I'm going to be working and making things for the rest of my life, I want to be doing it in a way that I can enjoy every day which doesn't get boring. It keeps me on my toes and allows me to explore a tradition that has been around for 300 years and add my own touch to it. That feels like a really great way to express myself. Like in Japanese culture with the idea of mastery and devoting yourself to something, that really appeals to me. Play with it. Enjoy it. Really see what you can do with it. There's always been the traditional designs, but what can a Windsor look like in the 21st century?

Another reason is to help people slow down, because when you sit on them, I want you to feel rested and relaxed straight away. I play around with other styles and techniques, but there's always going to be a 'Windsor taste' to it because of their strength, durability, timelessness, and history.

What are the benefits of having a chair made bespoke and by hand?

Longevity mainly. Windsor chairs have been around since the early 1700s and are designed to last a long time. Most makers really put a lot of themselves into their work and that has a lot of value and translates into the quality of it. It's the way that makers design and craft things that assures you're getting a quality product. Things feel different when they are made by hand. Once you purchase or have handmade things in your home, you'll notice a very different feeling and relationship to those pieces.

When something is so closely worked on by a person, they are making sure every step is exactly how they want it. Whereas with machines, there's a lot that can go wrong along the way quality-wise, especially depending on the materials used. The quality of the wood in more industrial, mass-produced furniture is actually not wood – it's MDF or chipboard with a much shorter time limit.

What makes your business and process stand apart from the rest?

Being one of only a few Windsor chairmakers in Australia, my work is driven by passion rather than profit.

In a world where things made by hand are becoming increasingly rare, I make each chair entirely by hand, using traditional hand tools with only minimal use of simple machinery. My process draws on both traditional and contemporary methods that can't quite be replicated in a conventional joinery shop, and certainly can't be rushed or scaled up without losing what makes them special.

I embrace the evidence of the maker. Not only do maker's marks show that each chair has been made by a human, but every tool mark left behind adds warmth and texture, telling the story of something that has been brought to life by the hands of a passionate craftsman.

The timbers I use are sourced locally wherever possible and are selected consciously to do justice to both the tree and the environment from which they came.

I believe what sets my work apart is that my chairs don't follow trends or fleeting

styles. They are designed and made with timelessness, quality, and comfort in mind, creating pieces that are intended to be used, appreciated, and passed down through generations.

You did a six-month pop-up in the old newsagent space in Bangalow last year. What do you think makes this area special from a creative point of view?

This area allows us to be who we want to be and explore less ordinary things. There are lots of other makers and such generosity among people with their knowledge. There's a certain encouragement and energy that comes with a lot of creatives in one place, so you're more likely to have enthusiasm about your own work and bring that to the community table.

Bangalow definitely has a certain feeling about it where everyone really appreciates well-made things and heritage which goes with the idea of quality. By having the chairs there [the old newsagent shop front], I had a lot of really positive feedback. One of the best things about markets and demonstrating on the shavehorse is that people get drawn in. We end up having deep conversations about consumerism and why these trades are important. I think it's valuable to have someone, especially younger, in the community provoking these conversations and the Bangalow market is always very receptive to that.

Why is it important to pass on the knowledge of this trade?

With any trade, it's the opportunity for people to find something that really resonates. Most people are always craving to slow down in such a fast-paced world. People really feel this yearning for creating, and working with your hands is an amazing feeling. A lot of people in this area realise that. These trades get them creating with their hands, out of their heads, and more into their body.

Some of our creativity lies in places we don't know yet exist. I didn't know Windsor chairmaking was what I wanted to devote myself to until I found it. So, if these trades are still alive you may stumble across them. If you find it, you're instantly going to have a happier life.

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Welcome to the subtropics – let's build like we live here

Mercedes Mambort is an architect working at the intersection of architecture, building science, healthy homes and advocacy. This edition, she writes about why building science, healthy homes and climate-responsive design are becoming essential for life in the subtropics.

Something remarkable is happening in Australian architecture and building.

A growing movement of architects, builders, building physicists and homeowners are beginning to ask questions that should have been addressed decades ago.

Why don't we build homes that are designed for the climate we actually live in? Not just aesthetically, not just structurally, not simply to satisfy the National Construction Code. But scientifically.

For decades we've accepted things that, in hindsight, seem extraordinary. Condensation on windows. Mould in wardrobes. Living rooms that are too cold in winter and

bedrooms that never quite cool down in summer. Families living with asthma, allergies and poor indoor air quality while assuming that's simply part of life in the subtropics.

Our homes influence our health, our sleep, our resilience, our energy bills, our mental wellbeing and our capacity to adapt to a changing climate. As an architect, I've gradually realised that my role is no longer simply to design buildings, but to advocate for better ones.

Working alongside flood-affected communities throughout the Northern Rivers only strengthened that conviction. I met families whose homes had never experienced mould before the floods, yet years later continue to struggle with persistent dampness and poor indoor air quality. The damage isn't just to plasterboard or flooring. It affects people's health, finances and sense of safety in their own homes.

The explanation I hear repeatedly is: "That's just living in the subtropics."

Technology has transformed almost every aspect of modern life. For example, cars are safer and more efficient than ever before. When we buy a car, we compare safety

ratings, fuel efficiency and running costs. Yet when we build a home, a far larger investment, and the place we spend 90% of our time, we often spend more time discussing benchtops, tapware and paint colours than asking how the building will actually perform.

Australia has made important progress. BASIX in New South Wales, NatHERS and the National Construction Code have all helped improve the energy performance of our housing stock, and these systems continue to evolve. They represent an important shift in the right direction, but they are only part of the picture.

Somewhere along the way we've confused compliance with appropriateness.

Building science has made great advances in understanding moisture, indoor air quality, durability and the invisible forces that determine whether a building supports our lives or quietly works against them over time.

For years we've been operating under the assumption that if a house has good cross-ventilation it will stay healthy. Yet moving air that is already carrying 70-80% humidity through a building doesn't remove moisture, it can introduce more. Building physics teaches

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us that heat, air and moisture all behave according to predictable scientific principles, and when we start to understand the risks of this we stop seeing walls and begin seeing moisture pathways, heat loss, thermal bridges and condensation risk. Invisible decisions that will shape the health and comfort of a family for decades.

For me, this isn't about making architecture more technical. It's about making it more human. Architecture has always shaped the way we live. We're only just beginning to understand how profoundly it shapes the way we feel, heal, sleep, breathe and age.

Before establishing my own practice, I worked in architectural offices where clients would ask questions about improving the performance of their homes. Double glazing was often one of those questions. The response was usually immediate: "You don't need that here, that's really for Europe." When conversations turned to ventilation strategy the response was often similar. "Just open the windows." "Just open the louvres." As I immersed myself in building physics I realised clients weren't always being given the full picture.

One of the greatest challenges facing homeowners today is that genuine expertise has become difficult to distinguish from good marketing. Almost everyone describes themselves as sustainable, healthy, eco-conscious or high-performance. Those words have become so common they're in danger of losing all meaning. I've seen builders regarded as experts in building science because they specify a premium European building wrap. Those products are often excellent, but products are not knowledge. Knowing which membrane to use is very different from understanding why it belongs in a particular wall assembly, in a particular climate, under particular moisture conditions.

Building science is not a collection of products. It is a scientific study of how heat, air and moisture move through buildings over time to understand why buildings fail before they fail.

Frameworks such as Passive House don't simply specify products but nor do these frameworks encompass every aspect of a

healthy building. Material toxicity, building biology, circadian lighting, biophilic design and water quality all contribute to genuinely healthy homes. Passive House (which is different from Passive Solar Design) provides a rigorous, measurable methodology for designing, constructing and verifying building performance, tested at the end of the build to ensure their standard is proven.

We tolerate mould as though it's a feature of the climate. We accept uncomfortable temperatures, rising energy bills and poor indoor air quality as part of everyday life. We spend hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions, of dollars building homes, yet often know very little about how they'll actually perform once we move in.

I think we've become accustomed to asking too little of our homes.

Removing the idea of high-performance building being different from standard building creates a bigger gap in understanding. We can take lessons from the medical industry here; they never specify a high-performance heart valve or a high-performance cataract operation; you get one which works. Buildings are the same. They simply need to work.

Education is key to the understanding of what is required in buildings". "Schools are changing the way they teach architecture, building and public awareness and it is up to the professionals to facilitate the need to implement systems which have been tested, measured and refined internationally for decades.

We're seeing this and it gives me enormous optimism. Optimism that the comfort in buildings is no longer theoretical. Across Australia, and particularly here in the Northern Rivers, there's a growing community of builders investing time and money into additional training in building physics, moisture-safe detailing, healthy materials and internationally recognised certification systems. They're attending workshops, learning from international practitioners and testing their buildings rather than assuming they perform. They aren't waiting for regulation to catch up. They're quietly reshaping what Australian construction could become.

The Northern Rivers has become a place where architects, builders, building physicists, building biologists and homeowners are beginning to work together rather than in silos. Not because one discipline has all the answers, but because each contributes a different piece of the puzzle. This is bigger than a conversation about energy efficiency, it's about health, comfort, resilience and longevity.

At a time of rising construction costs, increasing climate uncertainty and growing pressure on household budgets, investing in better buildings can seem like a luxury. I understand why. For many families here, especially those still rebuilding after the floods, "build better" can feel like a judgement from someone who isn't the one paying the bill. But a home that consumes less energy, lasts longer and doesn't grow mould is one less recurring cost on a household that's already stretched. The real cost of a home isn't simply what it costs to build. It's what it costs to live in, year after year. The science exists. The tools exist. The builders exist. The knowledge exist. Now it's time for our expectations to align.

Welcome to the subtropics. Let's build like we live here.

Over the coming year, a series of public conversations exploring healthy buildings and the future of architecture in the Northern Rivers will be taking place. Stay tuned to *The Bangalow Herald* for more information.

“

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Al-Anon (2pm Fri)		1300 252 666
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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
George the snake man	George	0407 965 092
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
Lions Club (6pm 2nd/4th Tues)	Nashy	0418 440 545
Men's Shed	John	0427 130 177
Op Shop (M-F 10am-2pm, Sat 9.30am-12.30pm)		6687 2228
Piccabeen Park	Lynn	0429 644 659
Park Trust Committee	Shane	0475 732 551
Police - DCI Matt Kehoe		6629 7500
Pool Trust	Jo	6687 1297
Community Association	Ian	0414 959 936
Poultry Club	Hector	6687 1322
Quilters (2nd/4th Thur)	Karen	0413 621 224
Red Cross (1st Fri)	Liz	0409 832 001
Show Society		6687 1033

Sport

Bowls men (1pm Wed & Sat)	Gerry	6687 1142
Bowls women (9.30am Wed)	Frances	6687 1339
Cricket	Anthony	0429 306 529
Karate self-defence	Jean	0458 245 123
Netball (3.30pm Wed)	Ellie	0429 855 399
Pony Club	Rebecca	0410 706 959
Rugby Union (Rebels)	Dave	0412 080 614
Soccer (Blue dogs)		0434 559 700
Tennis court hire	Bernie	0433 970 800

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All Souls' Anglican Hall		6684 3552
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Coorabell Hall		coorabellhall@gmail.com
Heritage House	Trisha	0429 882 525
Lions Club Kiosk	Nashy	0418 440 545
Moller Pavilion		6687 1035
Newrybar Hall	Kerry	0414 560 119
Scout Hall	Shane	0475 732 551
St Kevin's Catholic Hall	Russell	0423 089 684

A fresh new home for local stories

Since November 2016, *The Bangalow Herald* has celebrated the people, places and stories that make the 2479 community unique. We're now excited to launch a brand-new website, creating a richer and more accessible online home for local storytelling and community.

Developed by local digital agency Lion and Lamb as part of *The Herald's* Regional Media Grant Fund (RFMG) project, the new website has been designed to complement our monthly print magazine while giving readers access to fresh content delivered digitally.

The new site features a modern layout that's easy to navigate across computers, tablets and mobile phones. It meets contemporary W3 accessibility standards, making it easier for more people to enjoy *The Herald*, while integrated social sharing allows readers to share stories with family and friends at the click of a button.

Readers will also notice several new features, including expanded author biographies that celebrate the people behind our stories, improved navigation across topics such as Local, People, Lifestyle and Places, and a growing archive that makes it easier to rediscover stories from previous editions.

The website also reflects the growth of *The Herald* itself. Over the past year we've welcomed six new writers through our RFMG project, expanding the range of voices, experiences and perspectives represented in our pages. Together with new photographers, professional development workshops and writing scholarships, these initiatives are helping ensure *The Herald* continues to grow while remaining true to its community roots.

Since the start of the funding period, our website visitors have increased by around 180%, while website views have grown by more than 150%, demonstrating a growing appetite for independent local stories and the people who share them.

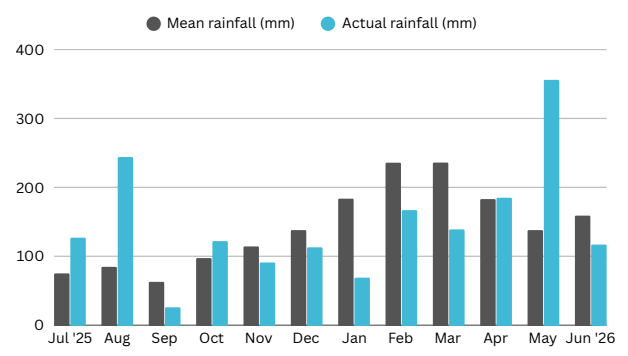
Our new website also creates fresh opportunities for local businesses to connect with readers. Alongside our popular print advertising, carefully designed website advertising placements allow businesses to build their profile throughout the month while supporting our dedicated regional publication.

Whether you're looking for the latest local news, discovering an event, exploring Bangalow's history, branching out to the wider Northern Rivers precincts, or simply catching up with your favourite columnists, we invite you to explore the new site and help us continue telling the stories that matter to our community.

Head over to bangalowherald.com.au
We'd love to hear what you think.

Sally Schofield
editor@bangalowherald.com.au

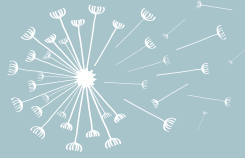
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The waiting room

The unspoken rule of waiting room etiquette Photo Zac Teo

A chance encounter in a waiting room prompts **Dr Airdre Grant** to reflect on the small acts of kindness, thoughtlessness and civility that shape how we live together.

Waiting rooms are liminal spaces. Everybody in a waiting room, particularly for a health service of some kind, is there for a specific reason, and not for a social chat. So, people sit, reading, playing on their phones, staring into space and above all, keeping to themselves.

From time to time, somebody breaks this mutually agreed code of polite disengagement.

I was in the waiting room for the exercise physiologist, quietly doing crossword, when an older woman limped in, supporting herself with a Zimmer frame. A man sitting across the room called out: "You're not going far with that limp! Har! Har! Har!" The woman sitting next to him snickered.

The older woman, looking startled, did not reply and sat down. Shortly after she was summoned by the attendant to go in for her consultation. The man cheerfully called out after her, "Make sure they don't make you worse" and again laughed at his hilarious wit. His companion giggled.

This was a clear breach of the mutually understood code which is that we don't comment on other people's bodies.

When I was young and said cruel things, my mother said to me: "It's cruel to mock the afflicted." Which is a way of saying, mind your own business.

As I pondered this breach of human codes, I remembered when my daughter was in hospital after having her tonsils out. She was in a recovery ward with three other women. The lady in the bed opposite her said: "Had your tonsils out?"

My daughter, post op and grey, nodded. The woman said, with relish, "I knew somebody your age, who had their tonsils out. Dead within a week!" My daughter shrank down and I pulled the curtains around her bed.

Lordy. How we casually trespass and hurt each other. I thought how being in community relies a lot on civility and basic courtesies. These are the conventions that allow us to co-exist, relatively peacefully.

Emboldened by my awareness, I went to a café to meet a friend. He leapt up as I arrived and graciously pulled out a chair. This, I thought, is civility. Then he smiled broadly and said, "What happened to you! You look like a homeless person with that mad beanie on."

I cheerfully punched him on the arm.

This was civility working well.



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Sprung in action Photo Kate Holmes Photography

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Sunday Open Doors – Inclusive Dance Workshop

When Sunday 2 August, 10am–4pm

Where Tintenbar Hall

Bookings sprungdance theatre.as.me/schedule/6fb0f085

Info info@sprung.org.au | 0478 879 706

Discover the joy of movement with Sprung Dance Theatre in this welcoming and inclusive workshop led by dance artist Tora Crockford. Designed for beginners and adults with disability or who are d/Deaf, the day encourages participants to explore dance, creativity and self-expression while building confidence and connecting with others in a supportive environment, guided by professional artists and disability support workers.

Bangalow Garden Club

When Wednesday 5 August, 1.30pm

Where Moller Pavilion, Bangalow Showground

Info Diana Harden 0418 288 428
bangalowgardenclub@outlook.com

Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just discovering your green thumb, Bangalow Garden Club offers friendly advice, inspiring guest speakers and plenty of local knowledge. Monthly meetings include a plant auction, flower of the month, Q&A session and afternoon tea, along with information about upcoming garden tours and excursions. New members are always welcome.

Public Information Session – Draft Bangalow Flood Study

When Wednesday 5 August, 5.30–7pm

Where Bangalow Museum/Heritage House

RSVP bangalowresiliencenetwork@gmail.com

The Bangalow Resilience Network is hosting a public information session to assist Byron Shire Council gather community feedback on this important document. Read more about the study here tinyurl.com/bangalowfloodstudy

Coorabell Hall Film Club – Starstruck

When Wednesday 5 August, 7.30pm

Where Coorabell Hall,
565 Coolamon Scenic Drive, Coorabell

Bookings coorabellhall.net/special-events/film-starstruck

The Coorabell Hall Film Club celebrates one of Australia's most colourful cult classics with a screening of Gillian Armstrong's 1982 rock musical *Starstruck*. Adding a special local connection, Coorabell Hall volunteer Lissa Coote worked as the film's set decorator, helping create its iconic visual style. Food and drinks are available from the hall before the screening.

Finders Keepers and Makers Market

When Saturday 8 August, from 8.30am

Where Newrybar Community Hall

Browse vintage finds, handmade goods and locally crafted treasures while supporting a worthwhile cause. This special community market is raising awareness and funds for Homelessness Week in the Northern Rivers, bringing together makers, collectors and shoppers for a morning of creativity, connection and community spirit.

Connecting Generations Winter Event

When Sunday 9 August, 3–5.30pm

Where Bangalow Heritage House & Museum

Info Ruth Winton-Brown 0413 261 011
ruth@reclaimingjoy.com

Young families and older members of the community are invited to enjoy an afternoon of shared activities designed to bring generations together. Make lanterns and flags, enjoy games, face painting and storytelling, then gather with friends over pizza available from Gunter's Flammkuchen. Everyone is welcome.

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The Bangalow Herald's own Murray Hand on the washboard

Diary

August 2026

2	Sunday Open Doors – Inclusive Dance Workshop
5	Bangalow Garden Club Coorabell Hall Film Club – <i>Starstruck</i> Public Information Session – Draft Bangalow Flood Study
8	Finders Keepers and Makers Market
9	Connecting Generations Winter Event
10	ArtsNational Northern Rivers – <i>Pompeii & Herculaneum – Reconstructing the Final Day</i>
28	The High Street Drifters <i>A Splash of Colour</i> Book Launch Bangalow CWA Cake and Produce Stall

ArtsNational Northern Rivers – Pompeii and Herculaneum

When Monday 10 August, welcome drinks 6pm, presentation 6.30pm

Where A&I Hall, Station Street, Bangalow

Tickets \$30 non-members

Bookings trybooking.com/DGEBK

Oxford-educated classicist James Renshaw explores the final hours of Pompeii and Herculaneum through archaeology, volcanology and ancient accounts. This illustrated presentation examines one of history's best-known disasters while revealing what modern research continues to uncover nearly 2000 years later.

Storytime

When Every Wednesday during school term, 9.30–11am

Where Bangalow Uniting Church, 17 Station Street, Bangalow

Bookings luma.com/a0osyy2d

Designed for children under six and their carers, Storytime combines songs, stories and imaginative play in a welcoming community setting. Little ones can enjoy sensory and creative activities, books and toys while parents and carers connect with other local families.

The High Street Drifters

When Friday 28 August, 7.30pm

Where Pearces Creek Hall

Tickets From \$25, children free

Info pearcescreekhall.com.au | 0458 801 941

Regarded as one of Australia's leading bluegrass acts, The High Street Drifters combine rich harmonies, dazzling musicianship and original songwriting with a distinctly Australian flavour. Catch them in the Northern Rivers as they make their way north to the Gympie Music Muster.

A Splash of Colour Book Launch

When Friday 28 August, 4–7pm

Where Ninbella Gallery, Byron Street, Bangalow

Info 0429 882 525

Celebrate the launch of *A Splash of Colour*, showcasing beautifully restored and colourised archival photographs of Bangalow. Meet the creators, watch a short film about the restoration process and browse books and limited-edition prints while enjoying drinks and nibbles in a relaxed gallery setting. See pages 18–19 for a sneak preview.

Bangalow CWA Cake and Produce Stall

When Saturday 28 August, 9am–12pm

Where Bangalow CWA Rooms

Michelle Johnston is the President of the Bangalow CWA and her most popular offering is the Apple and Sour Cream slice her mum used to make. It's why she is affectionately known as the 'slice queen'! If you want to try some of her supply, get in early! Proceeds from sales go to the many charities supporting homeless and at risk of homeless people. So, the cake you buy today can contribute to someone's hot meal tomorrow.

Bangalow Chess Club

When Tuesdays, 6–9pm

Where Bangalow Hotel, 1 Byron Street, Bangalow

Tickets Free, 18+

Info Instagram @bangalowchess

Whether you're learning the basics or looking for a worthy opponent, Bangalow Chess Club offers a relaxed weekly evening of strategy and friendly competition. Players of all skill levels are welcome, with plenty of opportunities to learn, improve and enjoy the social side of the game.

September edition deadlines

What's on 13 August

Copy 13 August

Advertising 13 August



Small Lawns to Large Acreage

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None of us in 2479 will forget the flood disaster of February 2022. And whilst our area did not suffer the devastating impacts of that event like other communities, we were all affected.

But we can't afford to think that 2022 was a 'one-off'. Nor can we become complacent in the 'quiet times'. We need to prepare for future floods and the risks they create. Residents' safety, damage to property and landscape, risks to wildlife, livestock and domestic animals, power outages, telecommunications failures, access to shops and services, the risk list is long and preparation is the key.

After two years in the making, Byron Shire Council is seeking feedback on its Draft Bangalow Flood Study. Many of you may have already contributed stories, photographs, video-recordings or observations to Council from previous flood events in 2016, 2017 and 2022. All that resident-based data was used in the preparation of the draft study to make sure that the flood modelling for Bangalow was as accurate as possible.

Council now needs us to read the Draft Bangalow Flood Study and add any further information we think they should know, particularly about flood events in the last two years that were not captured in the Draft.

The village of Bangalow is surrounded, and cut through, by creeks within the Byron Creek catchment, which sits within the larger Wilsons River Catchment. As part of the sub-tropical rainforest that was the Big Scrub, our creeks have always flooded, pouring down off the plateau to wetlands and rivers and then to the sea.

With climate change, predictions are that the flooding of our creeks will become deeper and more widespread. In the medium term (2041-2060) flood levels may rise by 35 cm, and by 50cm in the long term. Sites adjacent to Byron Creek will be most significantly impacted, with George Street and Market Street demonstrating the greatest sensitivity.

The main risk of flooding to the Bangalow village comes from Byron Creek, Paddys Creek and Maori Creek, but overland water also contributes to pooling water on roads and low-lying areas. Creeks and flooding hotspots in the wider 2479 postcode area (of which there are many) fall outside the scope of this study.

Preparing for floods and other disasters happens at multiple levels. Households, communities, businesses and councils all have roles to play.

Local councils focus on mitigation: infrastructure, planning requirements, mitigation strategies for identified hotspots and emergency management. Hence the development of this study. Once it is finalised and approved Council will take the next step and use it to develop a Bangalow Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan.

So, the Draft Bangalow Flood Study is an important document to get right. Council is interested in any information that residents have on local flooding. Feedback can be provided by:

- completing the online form at yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/draft-bangalow-flood-study
- emailing nbourke@byron.nsw.gov.au
- writing a letter to Bangalow Flood Study Submission, PO Box 219 Mullumbimby NSW 2482
- phoning 02 6626 7000

Submissions close 12 August 2026

NB: Communities and neighbourhoods are usually the first responders helping residents to respond and recover from disasters like floods. The Bangalow Resilience Network is always looking for volunteers. The group is linked to emergency services and other networks to enable a quick response. Contact bangalowresiliencenetwork@gmail.com

Council is keen to hear from residents about any other flood hotspots. For example, in the

Flooding hotspots

The study identified the following hotspots in Bangalow:

Riverine

- East industrial area and Lismore Rd
- Raftons Rd at Paddy's Creek crossing
- Deacon St and Ashton St
- Piccabeen Park
- George St and Market St
- Property adjacent to Bangalow Sports Field

Overland

- Parrot Tree Pl
- Tristania St
- Hanlon Ct/Rankin Dr intersection
- Blackwell Alley to Byron St
- Byron Bay Rd/property adjacent to Bangalow Tennis Court

13 March 2026 flash flood (which happened after this Council study was completed), cars parked in the showground were flooded. And then there was the Byron Writers Festival...

If you have photographs, video footage or observations please submit them to council. If you have photographs, video footage or observations please submit them to Council.

A public information session, hosted by Bangalow Resilience Network will be held Wednesday 5 August, 5.30-7pm at Bangalow Museum/Heritage House.

Jenny Bird, Claire McLisky and Jo Palser