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From the Editor

There's a certain kind of brain that examines an issue or a process or an idea and thinks: 'there might be another way to do this.'

Blessed are the problem-solvers and the innovators – where would we be without them?

Sometimes enterprise begins simply by noticing what's missing. Our story about Support for New Mums traces a service created in response to something many new mothers need but don't always have: practical help and human connection.

For the Bangalow Blue Dogs, a wet soccer season gave ample opportunity to reflect on improving the home ground, their community connection and participation with the club, laying the groundwork for a strong 2027 season.

Si Jay Gould, director of the upcoming DINGO Festival, reveals how the event is improvising around the standard festival model, using Bangalow's halls, streets and unexpected spaces to create something that belongs as much to the town as to the performers.

Even our resident gardener Carole Gamble is getting inventive. Why accept that a favourite plant stubbornly refuses to grow from a cutting when you can try marcotting and persuade it to grow roots of its own?

Innovation doesn't have to mean starting a business or inventing something revolutionary (although two mates, bonding over beer and deciding to open a chicken shop is a pretty great example).

Often, it's about curiosity, recognising an opportunity, responding to change and being prepared to try something different.

Having trouble pushing through a creative blockage or burdened with an unhelpful Inner Critic? Hypnosis (page 8-9) might be the answer to moving forward.

Communities, businesses, clubs, gardens – and (hopefully) people – all evolve. Perhaps the trick to success is knowing when to hold onto what matters and when it's time to reinvent?

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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DINGO comes to town

London-based septet Kokoroko bring Afrobeat, Highlife and jazzy vibes to the DINGO Festival next month Photo Delali Ayivi

This October, a new music and arts festival will take over halls, streets and unexpected spaces across Bangalow and Byron Bay. But for **Si Jay Gould**, DINGO Festival Director, the ambition goes well beyond putting on another festival, writes **Sally Schofield**.

When DINGO Music & Arts Festival arrives in Bangalow this October, don't expect a fenced-off festival site with a main stage, food trucks and thousands of people converging on a single paddock.

Instead, audiences will move through the village, discovering performances in the A&I Hall, the RSL Hall, the Scout Hall, the Moller Pavilion, The Lumber Yard and smaller spaces, with free entertainment happening around the ticketed events. On Sunday, Station Street joins the action with a parade, outdoor stage and a free program designed particularly for families and the wider community. For Si, that's very much the point.

The idea for DINGO began to take shape after he attended the Regional and Remote Music Summit in Byron Bay in 2025, hearing from people behind festivals that transform small regional towns by using the places and spaces already there. It prompted a question. Could something similar happen in Bangalow?

The original suggestion was to consider the Showground, but subsequent events highlighted the vulnerability of that model. The Byron Writers Festival had experienced flooding and the unexpected closure of the Bangalow Bowlo removed another significant indoor venue from the village.

Rather than abandon the idea, the DINGO team began thinking differently, asking: "How do we program for an area like this, given that the weather could change on a dime?"

The solution has become one of the festival's defining features. Almost everything ticketed on Friday and Saturday will take place inside existing venues in Bangalow and Byron, with Sunday's free community program occupying the Station Street precinct in Bangalow. In many ways the village becomes part of the festival. Si describes the idea as "playing Bangalow as an instrument", with audiences moving between different buildings, performances and experiences.

The festival is 'anchored in jazz', but that description only tells part of the story. Its program stretches across soul, hip hop, electronic music, experimental performance and other forms, with improvisation providing a thread between them. In fact, the name of the festival itself is partly inspired by *Dingo*, the 1991 Australian film featuring Miles Davis in his first and only feature film speaking role. The film opening imagines Davis arriving by plane in the Australian outback and playing wild, unexpected jazz to

an astonished country-town audience. Si was drawn to that image of adventurous music suddenly appearing in an unlikely place and transforming the people who encounter it. The dingo itself adds another layer: an animal that lives alongside humans but can never be completely domesticated. It's a fitting symbol for a festival that seeks to be both familiar and unexpected.

While larger opening and closing events will be staged in Byron Bay, Bangalow's component has deliberately been kept smaller. Venues range from spaces holding around 30 people to the A&I Hall at around 400.

"We don't want to overload Bangalow, make it feel like it's bottlenecking by any means," Si says.

Around 80 volunteers are expected to help before, during and after the festival. Students from SAE are undertaking work experience and internships across event management, design, photography and documentation. Emerging producers and community organisers are being encouraged to develop and present their own ideas, while children are involved in creating festival decorations. Si estimates the people contributing range in age from about eight to their 80s, an impressively diverse range of the community.

Participation and activation are some of the wider questions that the festival seeks to address. Venues are expensive to operate,



Festival founder Si Jay Gould plans to activate the community, 'playing Bangalow like an instrument.' Photo supplied

property costs are high and businesses reliant on alcohol sales are competing with a world of entertainment available at home. Si ponders what a new model of community arts could look like. Rather than viewing culture purely as a commercial activity, he wonders whether community arts could be treated more like community sport. At a sporting club, participation isn't limited to the players. Parents run canteens, volunteers coach teams, committees raise money and communities collectively maintain organisations because they believe those organisations have value.

"There's a community obligation to be involved, to protect, to fundraise, to do your part," he says. It's a philosophy that inevitably brings the conversation back to the Bowlo. Its sudden closure removed one of Bangalow's few large, accessible, multigenerational community spaces at the same time DINGO was considering how cultural spaces might survive. Si points to overseas models where communities have collectively purchased threatened music venues and protected their cultural purpose, rather than expecting them to survive indefinitely as conventional commercial businesses.

Si hopes DINGO might one day operate as a social enterprise, creating activity beyond one weekend of performances. That could mean opportunities for emerging producers, cultural exchanges, workshops, discussions and events spread more widely across the Northern Rivers. DINGO's longer-term ambitions include connecting visitors with creative communities and unusual venues in places such as Lismore and Murwillumbah rather than concentrating everything in one destination.

It's ambitious, particularly for a festival being assembled for the first time. But perhaps the most interesting thing about DINGO is that, like jazz itself, there's room for improvisation and experimentation with the festival.

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Why the Bowlo legal action matters

The sporting and cultural hub of the village, the Bangalow Bowlo Photo Saul Goodwin

With the Expression of Interest process over and the future of the Bowlo still unresolved, **Save Bangalow Bowlo** explains why legal action is being considered and how it could help create a pathway back to community ownership.

The formal Expression of Interest process for the Bangalow Bowlo has now closed, without any publicly announced outcome. That raises an obvious question: what happens now?

We want the community to understand why legal action is being considered and what we ultimately hope it can achieve. The objective is not simply to take Norths to Court. The objective is to hold Norths to their promises and, ultimately, to return the Bangalow Bowlo to the community.

Norths took control of the Bangalow Bowlo following the 2022 amalgamation, which was supported by members on the basis of an Amalgamation Agreement (the MOU) and a prospectus setting out commitments concerning the future of the club.

The Bowlo suddenly closed in October 2025. Since then, a number of different pathways for its future have been discussed, including de-amalgamation, community ownership proposals and, most recently, an Expression of Interest process. That EOI period has now ended without Norths publicly announcing a successful outcome. As owner of the Bangalow Bowlo, Norths cannot simply leave the question unresolved forever.

In broad terms, its choices would appear to include:

- retaining the property and allowing volunteers to continue to maintain the greens and grounds
- negotiating an approved, valid agreement for de-amalgamation and community ownership
- undertaking another sale process
- selling privately to another party, or
- pursuing another future for the site.

There may be other possibilities and ultimately Norths will determine its position, but it cannot do so in a vacuum ignoring the members' rights and interests. Each option needs to be considered against the history of how Norths came to own the Bowlo, the commitments made when the amalgamation occurred, and Norths' treatment of the members and wider community since the club's closure in October 2025.

So why legal action?

This is where the legal process becomes important. There are significant questions about what occurred between amalgamation and closure, including the operation and maintenance of the club, expenditure on the property, its financial performance, the circumstances surrounding its closure and the subsequent handling of proposals for its future.

Our legal representatives are pursuing avenues available to former members in relation to the Amalgamation Agreement and the conduct surrounding the Bowlo.

We cannot publicly discuss the strategy behind that work. Nor would it be appropriate to speculate about what documents or evidence may ultimately establish. We can say, however, that legal letters have requested Norths provide specific, relevant documents which, at the time of writing, they have declined to do.

But the purpose of the legal proceedings can be explained very simply:

We want to properly examine whether or not Norths has honoured the commitments it made to the Bangalow community. If the documents show that Norths has failed to do that, we want to hold Norths to its commitments and obligations as the operator of the Bangalow Bowlo and, ultimately, create a fair pathway back to community ownership.

Legal leverage, not litigation for its own sake. There is an important distinction here. A legal process does not necessarily need to end with a lengthy trial to achieve something useful. It can clarify rights and obligations. It can require positions to be explained. It can

potentially provide access to information that helps the parties to understand whether or not they have a legal course of action. And it can change the circumstances in which a commercial settlement is negotiated.

We know the community does not have an open cheque book.

If the legal process strengthens the community's negotiating position and creates the conditions for a realistic commercial agreement with Norths, that would be a meaningful outcome.

We are still seeking a negotiated solution. Legal action and negotiation are not mutually exclusive.

The community does not need a courtroom victory for the Bowlo to serve the community and come home.

Norths can still choose to negotiate. It can still agree to a model for transparent and fair community involvement and ownership. And both sides can still potentially reach an outcome that avoids further dispute and expense.

That is why the legal work matters now. It gives the community another means of seeking answers and protecting its position while the future of the property remains unresolved.

The end game hasn't changed. There have been many twists in this story since the Bowlo closed, but the objective remains quite simple.

We want our Bowlo back.

Not at any price and not by ignoring what has happened since amalgamation.

We want a fair outcome that recognises the commitments made to the members and the Bangalow community, that establishes a sustainable pathway to local ownership and gives the Bowlo the opportunity to once again become the community and sporting hub it was meant to remain.

That is the end game.

And that is why the legal campaign continues.

Join us on Saturday 19 September at the Lions Kiosk in the Bangalow Showgrounds for a community information session, music, food, fundraising and more as we RALLY to save our Bowlo. More details available in What's On (page 31 of this edition).

Find out more on our Facebook page @savebangalowbowlo, email savebangalowbowlo@gmail.com or donate to our legal costs fundraiser on GoFundMe gofund.me/f44fa4ff7

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Lucas Olmas Photo supplied



Chez Olmas Photo supplied

Sally Schofield chats with **Chez and Lucas Olmas** about hypnotherapy – and is now feeling very sleepy.

What is clinical hypnosis really like?

Chez: Some people say it feels like an internal massage. It's being very relaxed and deeply focused at the same time. Others describe it as that in-between place of being awake and asleep – the way you feel just before you drift off, or just as you're waking up.

Lucas: It's a unique experience for everyone, but there are some commonalities: deep relaxation, your conscious mind going quiet while you stay aware, becoming absorbed in imagination, losing track of time.

What surprises most people is how ordinary it feels. Nearly everyone has a moment afterwards of saying, "Was I actually hypnotised? I could hear everything you said." Yes – that's exactly what it's like. It's related to what's called the 'everyday trance', a natural mental gear your brain drops into all the time.

You mention 'everyday trance' – what does that mean?

Lucas: Have you ever been driving home and all of a sudden you're there, but you can't remember the last part of the trip? People say "I was spacing out" or "I was daydreaming" – that's the 'everyday trance'. It's the same with getting lost in a book or a film, or being so absorbed in a hobby that two hours disappear.

Chez: Your brain goes there naturally, because that's where it does a lot of its processing, repairing and consolidating. It's why children are in that state so often – everything is new and vivid for them, and there's so much to process.

It's also why people who've been through trauma often find themselves spacing out. Their brain is trying to do its job.

Lucas: In hypnotherapy we're simply inviting someone into that same state, on purpose, for a therapeutic reason.

Can a hypnotist really make someone do something they don't want to do?

Lucas: Unfortunately, most of what people think about hypnosis comes from stage shows and TV. You see someone clucking like a chicken, so it's natural to assume it's mind control.

What's actually happening is a lot closer to an improvised play. The stage hypnotist often does a great deal of hidden filtering of the audience first, testing subconscious willingness to play along. They might take someone by the shoulders and move them slightly, feeling for resistance, or run a few small suggestions to see who responds readily. The people on stage are the ones who are responsive and willing, and hypnosis helps them get thoroughly absorbed in what's happening. It's like an actor getting so far into a role that for one scene they are Macbeth – or a chicken in this case.

Stage hypnotists benefit from it looking mysterious. Clinically, we know this state is powerful for healing.

Can you give us an example of how hypnosis could help someone like me?

Lucas: A fear of public speaking is an easy example.

Before hypnotherapy a client will see themselves failing. For weeks before a meeting or speech, they'll rehearse and they'll see their failure and tell themselves, "I'll freeze and everyone will see". Their filter would scan the room for the one bored face in the room.

But what we do is to help them to experience success in a hypnotic state. Their body gets used to being in front of others. The program that signalled danger before, is now signalling safety.

Chez: I have a big heart for clients with anxiety. They come in hyper aware of what's wrong in their lives, how they have failed or might fail. They're seeing so many things wrong it's hard to know where to even start. To see them confident and strengthened after working together is so rewarding.

Are there people or circumstances where you wouldn't recommend hypnosis?

Chez: It's definitely not for people who want a quick fix. That idea that we can swing a watch in front of you and all of a sudden you don't have problems comes from the stage show idea of hypnosis as mind control. It can definitely be a lot faster and smoother than other therapies in many instances, but it's not a miracle pill.

Lucas: It's also not suitable for people who've had issues with psychosis or are on certain drugs like anti-psychotics.



Hypnosis may be effective at helping conquering fears or managing anxiety Photo Fred Moon

What qualifications, professional memberships or clinical experience should someone check before making an appointment?

Lucas: Look for substantial training rather than a weekend or online certificate. Ask whether they're a member of a recognised professional association – the Australian Hypnotherapists Association, the Australian Society of Clinical Hypnotherapists and the Hypnotherapy Council of Australia are the main bodies, and membership usually means a minimum training standard, a code of ethics, ongoing professional development and requirements for clinical supervision.

Be wary of anyone promising a guaranteed cure, or if they're claiming one session fixes everything.

Chez: Finally, trust your gut on the person. This work depends on feeling safe enough to relax with someone. Most clinical hypnotherapists will be happy to have an initial conversation before you book where you can ask questions and get a sense of the person. That call will tell you a lot.

You've been practising for around 20 years. What originally drew you to hypnotherapy and psychotherapy, and what brought your practice to Bangalow?

Lucas: We've both had a passion for people all our lives. Before we got married Chez had done a lot of counselling and helping people in crisis. I studied psychology at university in the late 90s and learned hypnosis back then. I also did crisis counselling. When Chez and I got married we wanted to work together and so we created a business that was focussed on people at work. Chez did a lot of executive coaching and added hypnotherapy to her toolkit, and eventually we transitioned to a private practice.

Chez: For me, coming to Bangalow was like coming back home. I lived in the area during the 80s when I was on the hippy trail. For over 20 years I had been telling Lucas about this region, and we finally came up on a holiday. Within three weeks we had moved here and have not looked back.

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The Curious Case of the Disappearing Committee

Something is afoot at the Bangalow Showground. After generations of local management, Council is changing the rules. **The Sleuth** heads out on a dark and stormy night in search of the real story.

I arrived on the scene late that night.
 Heavy rain drenched the grounds, maybe five acres of it.
 Winter winds blew bitterly through the tall gums.
 Cattle had recently been through, pock-marking the arena with their hooves.
 The smell of fresh horse muck lingered in the night air, but no-one was lurking in the shadows that I could see. Yet.
 What had I been called out to see?
 What's the story?
 Way back, this land had been Big Scrub. Untouched rainforest.
 Then, in 1881, 33-year-old early settler Robert Campbell rocks up. Enterprising! Selects 640 acres – one square mile (of what will become Bangalow) from the government. Subdivides most of it; donates some of it to

the community for the Catholic Church, the cemetery, shops...
 Once the railway arrived in 1894, Bangalow grew fast. Dairying was the biggest game in town. The Bangalow Agricultural and Industrial Society (A&I) was set up in 1897. Bought land for the Showground from Campbell for £725 (says Historical Society research). Held its first show here in 1897. Built the bandstand in 1906. Then farmers had a place where they could meet to boast about the big, beautiful beasts they were breeding.
 Over the years, the town expanded. The Showground grew. Owned by Crown Lands since 1947, though it's not real clear who sold it to them...
 Expanding over the years in fits and starts, the grounds were always run by locals. Volunteers. Council liked it that way. Saved them the headache of hands-on running yet another community asset.
 BUT there's movement at the station.
 That's why I'm here.
 Trying to sniff out the Real Story.
 Council is 'retiring' Byron Shire's '355 Committees'. They're the groups of volunteers who run 11 community halls

and spaces. And that includes Bangalow Showground.
 Why? "No longer sustainable for legal, operational and risk management reasons", says Council. Meaning what? "What will change is that the Showgrounds will no longer be managed by the volunteer committee," announces BSC last month.
 So, let me get this straight.
 Campbell sells the land to the community.
 Somehow, not too clear how exactly, State Government gets hold of it in 1947.
 The volunteer Bangalow Park Trust runs it for generations. All hunky-dory.
 But as of 5 August, here come 'the winds of change'.
 Council announces it's taking over the running of it.
 Says somehow 'week-to-week operations will remain the same'.
 How, exactly, is that going to work?
 That's the mystery I'm hoping to solve.
 Meanwhile, just quietly, people are spitting chips.
 Stay tuned...

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Likely lads Colm and George are spreading their wings with a new hot chicken shop venture in Bangalow Photo supplied

involved in the early days of the community Steering Committee formed following the Bowlo's closure. The pair had met previously, but working together on the Bowlo campaign strengthened the friendship and conversations soon turned to something else they felt Bangalow was missing: a good, affordable chicken shop.

The idea wasn't entirely fanciful banter over a cold beer. It had legs, and as it turns out, wings. George runs a chicken wing business in Sydney, and brings 20 years of hospitality and food experience to the venture, while his new business partner fondly remembers the neighbourhood chicken shops his family regularly visited while living in Sydney.

Then came an opportunity. Tuckshop owner Sam Campbell was increasingly busy with his catering business and ready to move on from the Byron Street premises. Through a family connection with Sam, the pair heard the site might become available and struck a deal to take over the premises.

Bangalow Chicken Shop will get the keys to the former Tuckshop on 14 September, with a cosmetic renovation planned ahead of an anticipated early November opening.

The concept is deliberately simple: quality hot chicken, the best chips and a changing selection of freshly made salads and sides, with an emphasis on affordable family meals. There'll be takeaway, but it won't be a takeaway shop. The premises will be licensed, with customers able to sit down for a meal and share a whole chicken and sides with a beer or glass of wine for a deliciously casual dining experience with family and friends.

Big and little kids will delight in the news that a soft serve ice cream machine is also on the way.

The pair hope the shop will become a genuinely local meeting place, supporting community events and sporting clubs and offering an easy dinner option for families who don't feel like cooking. They're also planning local discounts and hope to employ and train young people from the area.

"We want people to come once a week because that's what I used to do in Sydney. Our family used to go to a chicken shop at least once a week," Colm says.

After the loss of one Bangalow gathering place, it's rather nice to see a new one being cooked up, and after months of planning, it seems like the chickens are finally coming home to roost.

The Bangalow Herald

Winner winner, chicken dinner

An unexpected, good thing to emerge from the turmoil surrounding the Bangalow Bowlo has been a new friendship and, now, a new local business.

Two relatively recent arrivals to Bangalow, Colm Dolan (hailing from Ireland) and George Williams (from England) were both

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Bangalow Bluedogs women's team in action Photos Maralyn Hanigan

Off-field goals for the Bluedogs

A former Bluedogs junior player, who returned to Bangalow after years away, Gigi Curley (Tsang) stepped into the club's presidency this season, the first time in the club's history that there has been an all-women executive.

For a club with around 400 playing members, from MiniRoos under 5s through to senior teams, keeping everything running requires an enormous effort. Add registered coaches and volunteers and the Bluedogs community grows to almost 500 people, making it one of the larger football clubs in the region.

"I don't think people realise how big the club actually is," Gigi says. "It's a lot of games, a lot of people, a lot of parents, a lot of communication and then a lot of juggling resources as well." Luckily, her experience in managing operations – not to mention parenting two young children – gives Gigi the perfect skill set for coordinating the efforts of one of the biggest soccer clubs in the region. "It's definitely been a learning curve," she says. "I didn't realise how much work there is involved."

But in true Bangalow style, Gigi hasn't been working alone. Running the club has really been a team effort, she says. One of the highlights of her first year has been the support of a very active club committee, with members (65% of whom are women) bringing skills and experiences to the running of the club. "It's a really good mix of people from different backgrounds and we can all contribute in different ways," she says. That support has been particularly important in a season Gigi describes as one of change and transition.

For a number of reasons, this year is the first time in recent times, the Bluedogs did not field teams in the upper tiers of the men's competition, while the women's team endured a difficult start to the season following injuries, player changes and a disrupted coaching arrangement. Things came good towards the end of the season, however, with consecutive wins for the women in August.

The executive is taking a longer view, developing strategies to nurture players and

reinforce the club's culture. "It's a period of change, transition, rebuilding that culture of the club, working with our juniors and bringing them through into the seniors," she says. "We're looking at a three-to-five-year plan."

Central to that rebuilding is a goal to make soccer accessible across ages, abilities and levels of competitiveness. The recent World Cup has reignited a love of soccer in people of all ages, and while Gigi would like to see Bluedogs teams competing at the highest levels again, she is equally enthusiastic about social and lower-grade football. "I'd love to field a women's lower grade team of beginners who just want to play and have fun," she says.

The season has presented challenges off the pitch too. Bangalow's fields sit beside Byron Creek, making wet weather an ever-present issue. The March flash flooding damaged the club's main goals, which the Bluedogs are now raising money to replace. Despite a particularly wet season across the Northern Rivers, Gigi says careful management helped

Bangalow keep its grounds available more often than many clubs in the region.

Even when the ground is playable, there is work to be done. Line marking becomes difficult when the grass is too wet, while mowing schedules and repeated rain create a constant juggling act.

But the maintenance doesn't stop in the off-season. Gigi reels off a long list of volunteer tasks that need to be completed in the spring and summer, in the lead-up to player registrations opening again in February. The goalmouths need topsoil and dressing, equipment must be returned, a stocktake is done, the grounds need attention and the list goes on. But it's not all work and no fun. The junior presentations happen on the fields in September, while the seniors get to celebrate at the Bangalow Pub, which this year came on board as a sponsor of the club. "The hotel has been really great stepping in this year and supporting us," she says, adding that the club was also indebted to support from The Myofunctional Space, HPS Plumbing, McGrath Northern Rivers, Jarrett Excavations, Butcher Baker, Bangalow Cellars, Jamesons Strata and The General Store, Bangalow.

Longer term, Gigi hopes to work with Byron Shire Council to improve facilities at the grounds, including the ageing change rooms and canteen. "They haven't changed since I was a junior! They're exactly the same," she laughs.

This year, the club also worked with sponsor Black Cockatoo Retreat to assist families who might otherwise struggle with children's registration fees. The initiative, led by club secretary India Reynolds is something Gigi would like to develop into an ongoing community fund: "We want to keep the fees as low as we can so that everyone can participate," she says.



The 2026 all-women executive refocused the club on community connection Photo Maralyn Hanigan

"The Blue Dogs have always been a big part of this community," she says. "We really want to have the community involved, coming down to games on the weekends, but also giving back as well and supporting the people who live here."

Gigi knows firsthand what the club can mean to local kids and families. "I grew up in Bangalow. Soccer was everything," she says. "I've been fortunate enough to go away,

have a great career, come back and be able to move back to Bangalow and live here. I want to give back to my community."

While the club had a mixed season on the field, for Gigi, strengthening the connection between the Blue Dogs club and the community of Bangalow has been the winning goal.

The Bangalow Herald

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A lifesaver and a true blessing



Deb Hunt, CEO of Support for New Mums Photo supplied

Gabby Le Brun sits down with **Deb Hunt**, founder of Support for New Mums, a volunteer-led service providing free at-home support for new mums.

I meet Deb at the Modern Grocer in Murwillumbah, where she's a regular. When I offer to buy her a coffee, she smiles and says, "They know my order." It is here that Deb recounts a story that perfectly captures what Support for New Mums means to so many mothers. "One of the brilliant mums we looked after came up to me while I was sitting right here with a table of friends, including some men, and said, 'Guess what, Deb? I shaved my legs!'" The men at the table

were indifferent. But Deb was thrilled and immediately understood what a milestone this was.

For a new mum, there are so many things that can seem impossible. Opening a tin of dog food with a can opener while supporting the floppy neck of a screaming newborn is one of them.

I know, I've tried.

Common advice like "just put the baby down" sounds simple but ignores the biological hardwiring between a mother and her baby – the escalating cries of a newborn who needs to be held act as an alarm designed for an immediate response.

That's where Support for New Mums comes

in. Another pair of hands for two hours a week during the first year of motherhood can make all the difference, and it's free.

One mum describes the support simply as: "From taking the baby to the library or park while I attend appointments, to offering guidance and reassurance when parenting feels overwhelming."

The organisation's values are connection, empowerment and empathy. "We don't judge. We don't care if you're in your pyjamas at 12 o'clock. We don't look at the mess."

That understanding came from Deb's own experience. "I hadn't had this support when I had my kids," she says. Deb and her husband raised three children while living in three different regional towns during his career as a police officer. With him working shifts, no daycare available and no family nearby to lean on, the early years were particularly challenging. As a primary-trained teacher, Deb couldn't even accept relief teaching work when opportunities arose. "I was done!" she recalls.

Determined to improve things for other families, she helped establish a childcare centre in one of those communities. "I found a block of land and we, the community, built a childcare centre for babies all the way up to school."

Twenty-six years ago, Deb and her family moved to Murwillumbah, where she returned to university to complete her early childhood qualifications, including a master's degree. She later taught in the tertiary sector in Brisbane before spending time at TAFE closer to home.

The idea for Support for New Mums had been percolating for some time. "I was very passionate about the early childhood years," Deb says. But it was supporting a family member through postnatal depression that became the catalyst. Watching someone close to her struggle without their usual coping strategies finally convinced her that she had to do something.

Eight years ago, Support for New Mums was born in Murwillumbah, with six volunteers responding to a call-out in the local paper.

During the COVID lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, the service grew exponentially. "We had mums from all over the world who found us through social media." Volunteers continued visiting wherever possible under strict health protocols, switching to regular phone calls whenever face-to-face visits weren't an option.

Today the organisation has expanded across the Tweed and Ballina shires and into the Gold Coast, with 100 volunteers, seven area coordinators and around 80 families receiving support. A recent



When parenting is more than a handful, Support for New Mums can help

information session has also been held in Lismore.

The mums who use the service come from many different backgrounds: single mums by choice or circumstance, mums with FIFO partners, mums whose partners work shifts, as Deb's husband did, and many women who have stepped away from successful professional careers to have children in their mid-to-late 30s, only to find the transition unexpectedly difficult.

"One of our mums travelled the world by herself. She had her own home. Wonderful job. And then thought: 'Now I've got this baby, and I don't know what to do,'" says Deb.

Mums are referred by GPs, friends and family, or they can self-refer. They are matched with a volunteer for two hours each week throughout their baby's first year, with support extended for subsequent babies if volunteers are available.

Support for New Mums fills a gap that is not currently addressed by government programs. Although the organisation recently received funding through the Women's Giving Circle via the Northern Rivers Community Foundation, it receives no ongoing government funding. Deb still coordinates the entire organisation from a desk in her bedroom.

Deb believes one reason the service is in such high demand is the nature of the Northern Rivers itself. "People move here because it is beautiful, but in doing so can become isolated from their networks and family support."

Even if their background is in a caring profession, volunteer support is intentionally non-clinical. One volunteer reflects: "Sometimes the biggest difference was simply being there consistently and reminding a mum that she wasn't alone."

Support for New Mums is not a treatment service for postnatal depression but training may help volunteers recognise when a mum may not be coping.

Another volunteer says: "It's wonderful to see a mum who was initially anxious begin to enjoy parenting and feel more confident in herself."

For the mothers, the impact can be profound: "This organisation saved my life," says one new mum.

"I was sleep deprived and overwhelmed when I reached out to Support for New Mums. I didn't expect that one call would lead me to one of the most positive parts of my journey into new motherhood," says another.

Support for New Mums is currently seeking more volunteers. The volunteers themselves often gain just as much from the experience. "Volunteering has given me a renewed sense of purpose while allowing me to contribute to my local community."

Deb tells me some of the first volunteers are still in contact with the first mums and babies they supported eight years ago. Some now celebrate Christmas together.

One mother sums it up beautifully: "She is more than just a volunteer; she's become a treasured friend."

supportfornewmums.com.au



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Cracking a home- grown success story



Nuts about macas Photo supplied

From the 'supermarket' of the Big Scrub to a global agricultural industry, the edible macadamia nut (*Macadamia integrifolia* and *M. tetraphylla*) has travelled a remarkable path. Clunes-based farmer Graham Wessling is part of a new chapter for a native nut that has experienced both boom and bust in its own backyard.

Drive the hinterland roads between Bangalow, Clunes and Alstonville and rows of macadamia trees are such a familiar sight that it's easy to think of them simply as another agricultural crop. Their roots here go much deeper.

Before European settlement, much of this district was covered by the vast subtropical rainforest we now call the Big Scrub. In a

previous *Herald* story, Jenny Bird described it as a giant 'Big Scrub supermarket', rich with pademelons, wallabies, pigeons, scrub turkeys, fish, figs, wild cherries, finger limes, black beans, wild dates and macadamias. For thousands of years, Bundjalung people gathered food from and actively managed this landscape. Peak body, Australian Macadamias, records macadamias (*M. tetraphylla*) as a prized food, known by Aboriginal names including Kindal Kindal, Boombera, Jindill and Baupal. Nuts were collected, roasted, traded, planted and given as ceremonial gifts.

Then the landscape changed dramatically with the arrival of Europeans. Much of the Big Scrub was cleared – originally for timber,

then agriculture, ushering in successive eras of dairying, pigs, bananas and beef. By the 1980s, what Jenny called the century-long 'butter-bacon-bananas-beef' agricultural era was largely over.

One of the foods of the old rainforest, however, was becoming an industry in its own right.

Australian Macadamias traces the commercial story of the nut back to Australia's first macadamia orchard, established near Lismore in the 1880s. Commercial production of *M. integrifolia* began in earnest in the 1960s following advances in grafting and mechanical processing. Today, orchards stretch along Australia's eastern seaboard, but the Northern Rivers remains one of the industry's major growing regions.



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Macadamia grower Graham Wessling Photo Australian Macadamias

For farmer Graham Wessling, the connection began much more simply, with a macadamia tree in his childhood backyard. "I didn't realise that humble tree had the potential that it did," he recalls. Today, Graham lives on a small farm near Clunes with his wife Katie and their children Hayden and Brylee, alongside the family's beef cattle. Introduced to the macadamia industry by his father-in-law, Graham has spent around two decades working in the sector and is now General Manager, Farming at CL Macs, overseeing operations from the Northern Rivers to Gympie and Bundaberg. It's a geographical spread that also reflects how much the Australian industry itself has changed.

Only a few years ago, the outlook for local growers was considerably bleaker. Writing for *The Herald* during a severe industry downturn, in 2023, Brian Sundstrom reported mature macadamia trees being removed from farms around postcode 2479. Prices that had once been around \$5 per kilogram of nut-in-shell had fallen to approximately \$1.50, which, Brian wrote, was below the cost of

production. Increasing production from Queensland and overseas, together with weaker consumption during COVID, as factors behind the oversupply. Brian also identified particular challenges for Northern Rivers growers, where orchards were often older, smaller and on more difficult terrain, while newer Queensland operations could be larger, flatter and cheaper to farm.

While the immediate crisis passed, the industry that has emerged from it continues to face challenges, and Australian Macadamias reported 2025 as an exceptionally difficult season. Prolonged heavy rainfall damaged crops, restricted access to orchards and extended the harvest well beyond its usual end point. Many growers in NSW and Queensland recorded their lowest crops in more than a decade. Bundaberg bucked the trend, recording its largest crop to date at close to 30,000 tonnes, driven largely by younger plantings approaching full production. There are more encouraging signs in 2026.

Graham's own philosophy seems well suited to an industry accustomed to adapting. "We have to be better every year," he says. "It's about never settling and always looking for ways to improve." For Graham and the CL Macs team, improvement isn't simply about producing more nuts. Their environmental work includes creating fish habitat, stabilising riverbanks and installing owl boxes to encourage natural pest control. Graham describes sustainability as a long-term commitment and an important part of farming responsibly for future generations.

For Graham, harvest remains the moment when all that work becomes tangible. As trailers filled with macadamias arrive at the shed, the season's efforts can finally be seen, bringing what he describes as a shared sense of pride and energy among the team. And despite spending his working life surrounded by them, he hasn't lost his appetite for the product.

Graham admits to eating macadamias "copiously", particularly roasted and salted.

He hopes people eating macadamias experience "a sense of place and pride", knowing that the macadamia is "an Australian native success story."

From a food gathered in the Big Scrub to Australia's first commercial orchard near Lismore, through the industry's boom years, a painful downturn and the challenges of increasingly unpredictable seasons, the macadamia's story is inseparable from the changing agricultural landscape of the Northern Rivers. And after millions of years, it's still growing on home ground.

The Bangalow Herald

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Christobel Munson, Carole Gamble, Jenny Bird and Digby Hildreth representing *The Bangalow Herald*, media sponsors of the Byron Writers Festival

Why we read

Byron Writers Festival returned this year with a new home, a new format and plenty of conversation about the value of books. **Four Herald writers** reflect on what they heard, what they read and the ideas they brought home.

On the surface, reading looks like a passive, peaceful pastime: one person, usually sitting still, looking at marks on a page or screen. But the seeming 'nothingness' of the act of reading belies its power to transport us into another person's life, culture, gender, generation or experience. It can entertain and educate, but its more interesting power may be its ability to allow us to temporarily inhabit a consciousness other than our own. And how can we not be somehow transformed by that?

It's an idea that emerged in different shapes and through different voices at this year's Byron Writers Festival (BWF).

It appeared when ex-NRL player Luke Bateman tackled the Manosphere, citing former US President Barack Obama's devotion to fiction and his belief in its capacity to cultivate empathy. Fellow panellist, Paul Callaghan, suggested that getting more boys and men reading could even play a part in addressing the rise of toxic masculinity.

These are big claims for something as simple opening a book, and they beg the question – what does reading actually do to us?

The 30th Byron Writers Festival occupied Byron town centre, spreading more than 100 sessions across indoor venues and outdoor marquees, over a precinct of some 650

metres (yes, my step count was an all-time high!). And while the new format changed how patrons moved between sessions, each panel, each presenter, and almost every conversation returned to the deeply personal and private relationship between a reader and a book.

Reading invites us to see the world through somebody else's senses. Fiction in particular puts us inside that territory, where for perhaps hundreds of pages we inhabit the world of someone whose lived experience is in no way similar to our own. We might find connection and comfort, we might be revolted or repelled. We don't have to like a character – they exist on the page as a prompt for challenging our own beliefs. We might even form a 'parasocial' relationship with the character or author.

As we de-briefed from the Festival, I asked some of The Herald team a few questions.

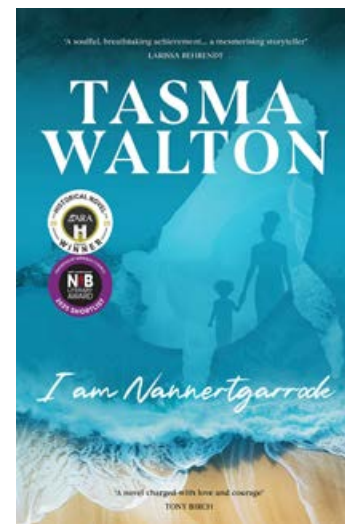
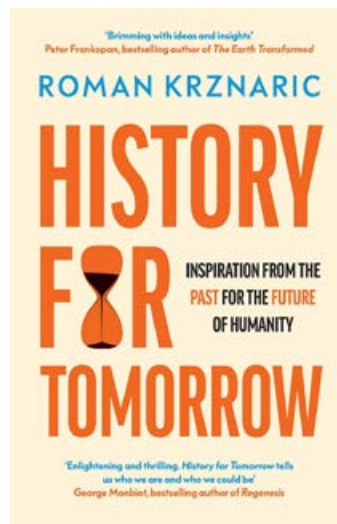


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From the tale of a man who transforms into the family pet to anthropomorphic Australian flora and learning about the future by remembering the past, reading is the remedy for a world lacking peace, empathy, and sometimes, hope.

Digby, do you think reading can make better men?

I would wager that Elon Musk has never read a novel – a deficiency of curiosity that makes his contempt for empathy inevitable. Reading invites us into others' lives; we're led to understand, to accept. Without empathy we are lost. Men like Musk are emotional neanderthals whose rage and narcissism threaten the planet. But at BWF this year Michael Winkler talked about his novel *Griefdog*, a funny, profound, wholly original work. Bob Carr shared his heart-wrenching experience of bereavement with Mick O'Regan and a packed, hushed, tent. The theme arose throughout: Kerry O'Brien, in a roar of righteous indignation, reminded us about our collective loss of freedom and democratic rights; Micaela Sahar's Palestinian family lost their home in Jerusalem; Tasma Walton's ancestor had her birthright, and even her name, ripped away.

Their writing is educational, both historically and emotionally; reading it makes us 'better' humans. The work of Winkler, Trent Dalton, Richard Flanagan, the poet Ender Baskan, Antoun Issa and Robert Forster express and encourages a moral rigour – honesty, humility, masculine decency. They provide bulwarks for boys against the barbarism of 'the bros', and beacons of hope.

Carole, what have you been thinking about since the Festival?

I am still feeling very full of ideas after the BBWF with all of the opportunities to hear authors telling us how, why and where they read and write and I find that this doesn't vary much from my own experiences.

Ever since I was given my first book – *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* by May Gibb – I have been a 'bookworm' and I still have the first book that I bought with a voucher – *We of the Never Never* by Mrs Aeneas Gunn.

Being a bookworm was sometimes admired, sometimes denigrated ("she's always got her head in a book!") but I still am and proud to be so.

I can't imagine not reading and neither can I get my head around why and how some people don't. How else could I travel the world encountering different cultures, seeing so many wonders and entering into other relationships (vicariously) without books? It's all brain food and it extends my world.

I share books, enjoy book groups and literary events and learn, learn, learn. The written word (and world) is so important that if in the end when I'm *really* old, my activities are limited, I hope that I can always hold a real book in my hands (screens are a pale thing by comparison).

Christobel, did you find any 'new writers' at the Festival?

I stumbled out of the rain to hear the ABC's Natasha Mitchell interview Roman Krznaric. Having no idea what a social philosopher did, I was curious. Turns out he's the founder of the world's first Empathy Museum and Senior Research Fellow at Oxford University's Centre for Eudaimonia and Human Flourishing.

Their conversation hit the ground running. Lively and interesting, Natasha led him back through 1000 years of world history, to uncover how societies have 'risen up to tackle challenges'. Roman calls it 'looking backwards to help chart a way forwards.'

Thoroughly researched, he tossed out examples of nurturing tolerance in a Medieval Islamic kingdom; how past rebel movements might break the fossil fuel addiction; in what ways pre-industrial Japan could inspire us to 'kick the consumer habit'. Or how civilisation breakdown could be averted by checking out how past nations and empires have survived crises and change.

Millions of people are fascinated by history: how about channelling this 'passion for the past' into 'helping tackle the multiple dilemmas facing humankind'.

I bought the book.

Jenny, did a particular story allow you to understand an experience outside your own?

I found four stories at the BWF spellbinding. They transported me around the world – to India, Palestine, Singapore and the Mornington Peninsula and I am still reflecting deeply on each and all of them. Stories about ordinary families living their ordinary lives ripped apart by circumstances beyond their control – the Nakbar in Palestine in 1948, the Partition of India in 1947, the theft of indigenous women by sealers in the 1800s in southern Australian, the migration policies in Singapore that can entrap expatriate women in lives of privileged misery and powerlessness.

It wasn't just the stories though; the authors themselves entered my being. Tasma Walton, Micaela Sahar, Geetanjali Shree and Thammika Songkaeo. Four women of clarity and intelligence, grace and dignity, gently requiring us to meet their family stories with our hearts not our heads. For some families there is no going home, history shuts the door, the fabric of the family torn to pieces. These authors have sewn their family histories together, given voice and shape to them, between the covers of a book.

Reading is magical.

The Bangalow Herald was a proud media partner of the 2026 Byron Writers Festival.

Sally Schofield

Tipping Point

by Dinuka McKenzie

Who doesn't love a good whodunnit? I started my book review in July with those same words and since then I have discovered Dinuka McKenzie, an Australian writer with several books to her name and heavily endorsed by Dervla McTiernan and Michael Robotham.

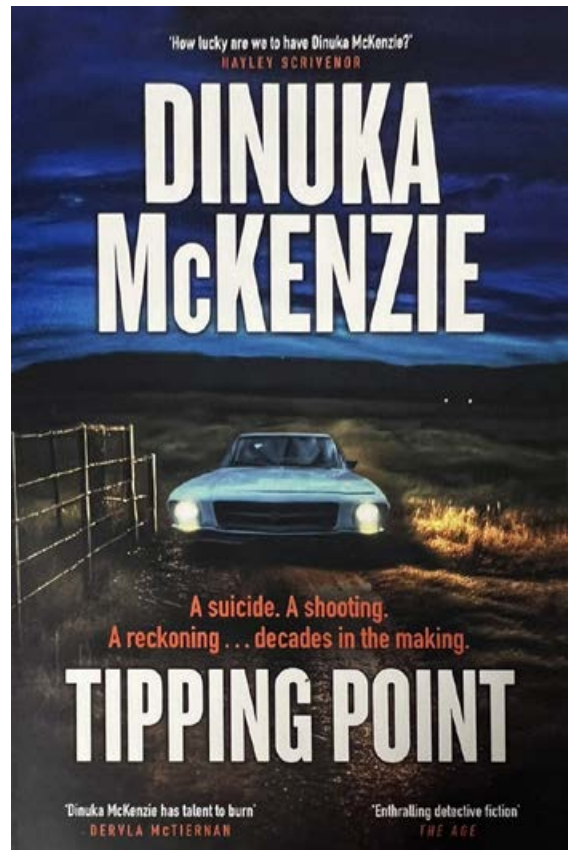
I think that she must be familiar with our local area because this novel, *Tipping Point*, is set in Esserton, a fictional town in the Northern Rivers, which is referred to being close to Uki and Murwillumbah.

Detective Kate Miles has two young children and an architect husband, Geoff, who is currently looking for employment. Geoff's a decent bloke and very supportive of the fluctuating nature of Kate's employment. Her dad lives locally with his partner and is enjoying his retirement from the police force.

The book begins on the 22nd level of a skyscraper overlooking Hyde Park, Sydney, where Kate's brother Luke is being dismissed from his job with the high-profile firm Hull-Hayward Financial. What he has done to get the sack is not revealed to the reader until much later in the book, but it sends him spiralling into self-pity and self-medication for a period.

Within the same week, Luke's childhood friend Anthony is found dead by suicide in Brisbane and Luke travels home to Esserton to attend the funeral. Visits to his hometown are usually fleeting due to the tension which exists between father and son. But this visit is extended when, shortly after the funeral, another of Luke's childhood friends, Marcus, is discovered dead from a gunshot wound in suspicious circumstances.

Dinuka creates a great plot, linking past storylines with the current unfolding drama. The teenage friendship of the three boys, Anthony, Marcus and Luke, provides a wealth of subsidiary characters in the shape of wives and children in the current day.



I've since discovered that this is the third book in the Detective Kate Miles series and I look forward to locating and reading the two earlier books.

(And, if you're wondering why I always include the Goodreads rating, it's my personal go-to indicator to determine if a book is worth reading.)

Goodreads rating 4.0 stars

Publisher HarperCollins

Carolyn Adams



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A close-up look at marcotting, also known as 'air layering', a propagation method for your reproduction resistant plants Photos Carole Gamble



stocking, making sure that it is a really tight parcel, covered well with the thick, clear plastic, tied off at both ends and taped in position.

Sometime later (patience!) you will observe a root ball forming through the plastic. When nicely established, cut the branch off just below the root ball. Carefully remove all of the plastic and the old stocking and plant in good potting mix.

This should be kept somewhere in dappled light and please don't forget to water it, keeping it just damp but not soaking.

Apart from now having another plant, because this is actual cloning, it will be exactly the same as the parent, cost you nothing and be an addition to your garden or a gift for a friend, as there is nothing nicer than sharing special specimens.

The time taken to develop roots will depend upon the time of year, the plant variety and the size of the stem selected. Thicker ones take longer.

Incidentally, if this sounds a bit hard (it isn't), you can buy marcotting boxes from Bunnings and Temu to enclose the marcot, but the principles above still apply.

I'm heading out to try my luck with a lovely lasiandra that I have never found in a nursery but have in my garden. It's possibly a hybrid that has happened here, as I have a white 'Little Baby' and a pale pink and purple 'Noelene' that may have cross-pollinated.

Some gardeners love hunting for rare specimens in nurseries and I do too, but there is nothing, in my opinion, that compares to producing your own by whatever methods you can manage and then sharing them with neighbours and friends.

Marcotting made simple

Have you dreamed of reproducing a favourite plant that refuses to grow from cuttings? **Carole Gamble** discovers the strangely satisfying art of marcotting.

Last month I wrote about the fabulous *Dombeya* and the propagation method used by a friend to produce the new addition to my garden.

The method is 'marcotting', sometimes also known as 'air layering', and it can be used to create new plants from specimens that stubbornly resist attempts at multiplication by cuttings, and are impossibly slow or difficult to grow from seed.

Basically, you can encourage a branch of almost any size to marcot to grow its own roots! Select a healthy, growing branch as this will basically become your new plant.

It DOES work and is simpler than I thought it could be, so I'm sharing what I was shown as clearly as I can.

You will need a very sharp knife, an old stocking, sphagnum moss, thick clear plastic, strong twine or tape and hormone rooting liquid.

Use the sharp knife to cut two rings around the branch (ringbarking it) about an inch apart down to the actual inner cambium layer and remove all the bark in that area. You will now have a squarish bare, scraped patch. Scraping back stops the plant from healing the wound created by removing the outer bark layer.

Dab hormone liquid or powder on the exposed area and cover with a generous amount of damp sphagnum moss.

Next, secure it to the mother plant with the



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Buttery lemon basil chicken

With the weather warming for spring, this chicken dish will ease the transition to lighter meals. Taking just 30 minutes to prepare and cook, it goes very well with new-season asparagus (or honey roasted carrots!)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Flatten chicken with a mallet and season with salt and pepper.
2. Melt one tablespoon of butter in a skillet or frying pan. Add chicken and cook until lightly browned.
3. Set aside chicken and melt remaining tablespoon of butter in pan.
4. Add garlic and cook for 30 seconds.
5. Whisk in the flour.
6. Slowly add lemon juice and stock, stirring the sauce.
7. Add lemon zest.
8. Return chicken to pan and simmer, stirring the sauce until thickened. Sprinkle with chopped basil and season with salt and pepper.
9. Add fresh lemon slices, more garlic cloves or herbs around the chicken while simmering for extra flavour.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 chicken breasts
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2-3 garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 3 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1½ tsp lemon zest
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh basil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Recipe and illustration Lyn Hand



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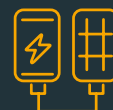
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Honey roasted baby carrots with macadamia topping

Bring warmth and flair to your kitchen table with these honey roasted baby Dutch carrots, finished with a herby topping that stars Australia's own macadamia nuts. It's a dish that balances sweet and savoury, creamy and crunchy – an easy yet elegant addition to Sunday roasts or midweek dinners.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch baby Dutch carrots, peeled and trimmed
- 1 tbsp butter, cubed
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp raw honey
- Flaky sea salt and black pepper

Topping

- ½ cup green carrot tops, rinsed well and finely chopped, or ½ cup flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 1½ tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 100 g marinated goat's cheese
- ½ cup roasted macadamias, roughly chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 180°C. Arrange carrots on a baking tray and top with butter, olive oil, honey, salt and pepper. Place in the oven for 25 minutes, turning or shaking halfway, until carrots are tender and caramelised.

For the topping

Mix chopped carrot tops (or parsley) with the lemon juice, olive oil and a little salt and pepper. When ready to serve, arrange roasted carrots on a serving plate. Spoon over the topping mixture, then add goat's cheese and sprinkle with macadamia nuts.

Note: If baby carrots are unavailable substitute with regular carrots cut in half lengthways.

It's koala breeding season.

Our local koalas are on the move and are looking for some love.

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Charging ahead with EVs

The local EV fleet is ever-expanding Photo Adam Susz

Christobel Munson, owner of likely the oldest EV in Bangalow, if not the Shire (a Hyundai Kona EV bought in April 2019), speaks with local EV owners about making the switch and what it's really like to drive electric.

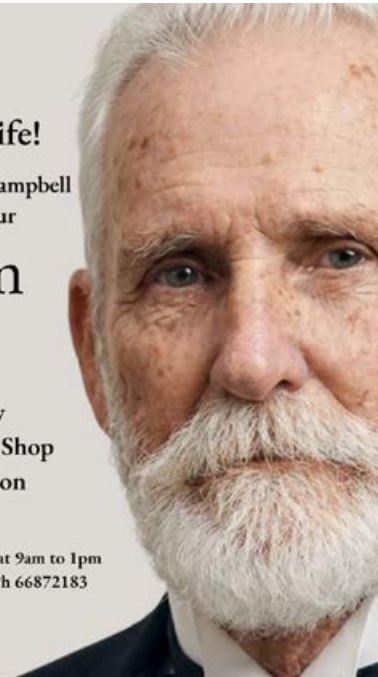
Since the start of Trump's latest war, petrol and diesel prices continue to soar and there's been a massive surge in interest in buying electric vehicles (EVs), with EV sales now being close to 30% of all new vehicle sales in Australia.

Giles Parkinson is founder and editor of EV-focused website TheDriven.io. People really want to find out as much as they can about EVs before they buy, and his website provides comprehensive information. That site averages 750,000 unique visits every month and 12 million page views a year.

A journalist of more than 40 years and a former deputy editor of the *Australian Financial Review*, Giles and partner Anne Delaney bought their first Tesla early in 2019. At the time, he wrote that it was the most expensive car he'd ever bought, more than double what he'd ever paid before. Now, seven years later, they're onto their third EV, the latest being a Polestar 3. In 2022,

they bought a Tesla Model Y, which they are now selling on to his daughter. Why buy a Polestar? "We got a very good deal; the price was slashed!"

Now living in Suffolk Park after years on Coolamon Scenic Drive, they charge their EV from their rooftop solar. The couple have noticed the "big increase" in spotting EVs around the shire. "There's now six to eight more charging places around, too." In June, Tesla opened its 1000th Supercharger site in Byron's Jonson Street with 10 stalls, open to all types of EVs. The NRMA charging station at The Farm was free for several years as an introductory special, but now even the last local free site (underneath Byron Woollies)



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Bridie Schmidt with her EV Photo supplied

requires payment. There's another Tesla site at Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in Knockrow, also open to non-Teslas.

Asked whether he thought that the current surge in interest would decrease if/when the war stops, Giles said: "It might drop slightly – but the longer the war goes on, the quicker the transition to EVs will be. There are now so many good options, for low prices. Even the big car manufacturers, who were holding out – like Honda, Mitsubishi, Toyota – are now all selling EV versions."

Another EV expert in our neighbourhood is Bridie Schmidt, who lives in Lennox Head. Bridie is the NRMA's 'EV Hub Editor'. She's lost count of the number of new EVs she has road-tested since 2018. The NRMA describes Bridie as someone who "champions their role in cutting carbon emissions and relishes the instant torque they deliver".

Bridie drives a Tesla Model Y, which was the top-selling car in Australia for June and July,

with 8000 sales. It's just one of three battery-electric vehicles in the top 10 cars sold in Australia. Chinese manufacturer BYD ('Build Your Dreams') had three vehicles in the top 10: the all-electric BYD Sealion 7, the plug-in hybrid Shark 6 and the all-electric BYD Atto 2. That's according to figures from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) and the Electric Vehicle Council.

Bridie points out that the cheapest electric car available now is the BYD ATTO 1 Essential at \$23,990 – that's in the same price range as Australia's cheapest SUVs and less than the cheapest hybrid. With so many options covering all tastes and budgets, price is no longer a reason NOT to buy.

Over in Brooklet, some families are really getting in on the act. Adam Susz bought his first EV, a Tesla, in 2023. Why? "My colleagues at work spoke passionately about their Tesla ownership experiences, eventually my FOMO became unbearable, so I placed a deposit on a Model 3 without even a test

drive." Adam is a Qantas pilot (when he's not being treasurer of *The Bangalow Herald* Inc).

Then what happened? "We loved driving our new Tesla so much that we used to fight over who would get to drive it. To avoid marital conflict, we decided to buy a second Tesla, being a Model Y, for a his-and-hers complement. Then our daughter convinced us to permanently lend her the Model 3, so we started a lease on a third vehicle being the newest Model Y. Therefore, we're a three-Tesla family."

Adam says there are many positives to owning the Teslas, "one being we never need a key. It's one-pedal driving but for the rarest and unexpected need to stop suddenly, it's so quiet and ergonomically just perfect to drive. We regularly drive 360 km return to Brisbane on a single charge, it's a dream especially with the autopilot engaged on the highway."

Like many others, he was concerned about range before he bought. "Range anxiety is a common misconception. Once we bought the cars, started using them extensively and found how easy it was to charge the vehicles at home and on the fly, all feelings of range anxiety disappeared." Adam and family charge from home, most often overnight at very low electricity rates. During the day they charge for free using their rooftop solar.

Want to learn more? Explore these websites:

electricvehiclecouncil.com.au
TheDriven.io
mynrma.com.au/electric-vehicles
aeva.asn.au (Australian Electric Vehicle Association)



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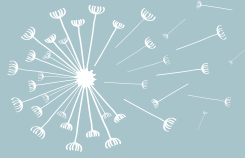
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Magic happens

Coincidence, intuition or something we can't quite explain? **Dr Airdre Grant** wonders whether there's still room for a little magic in how we make sense of the world.

Do you believe that there is mystery in the world? A friend told me how she went to Brisbane, hoping to see her 25-year-old son, with whom she had fallen out of contact for some months. She was worried sick about him. She knew he had played around with some of the darker aspects of life. Ones that start out with the sparkly gloss of fun, like party drugs. She didn't know where he lived or how he was supporting himself. He was lost to her and her anxiety levels were sky high.

Following a persistent nudging from her psyche, she drove to Brisbane. 'I just needed to be closer to him, somehow and I got a great urge to drive up the coast'. She went right into the city and walked down Queen Street Mall. 'It was crazy,' she said. 'I had no idea where he was in the whole of that big city. But I went anyway. I just had to try. The mall was packed with students and shoppers then suddenly, halfway down, the crowds parted and there he was, walking toward me. He was as surprised as I was. We went and had coffee. We talked.'

I'd like to write it all was happily ever after for the two of them. It wasn't, of course. There was so much going on. But hearts were eased and promises were made to stay connected. The interesting part is, why was he in the mall at the exact same time she was? Both confessed they rarely went there.

That is, in my view, a tale about the magical element in life. I related this story to a scientist friend who immediately pooh-poohed the notion of mystery. 'There's no such thing!' he crowed. 'That is all

magical thinking, stuff people make up to make themselves feel better. It's utter twaddle. That wasn't magic! That was a happy coincidence. She made up a story to make herself feel better.'

When somebody dismisses a concept so firmly, I find it wise to reroute the conversation onto safer planes. When a person has a fixed position, there is usually no budging them and that includes me with my belief in the ephemeral aspect of life. But I would hate to live a life with my back turned away from the possibility of enchantment and of higher forces about which we know little.

Why does somebody you've been thinking about ring you, out of the blue? You long for a certain item like a hat or somesuch, and there it is for sale in the window. You dream about getting a new car and you are offered one at a price you can afford. What do the hard-line scientists think of that?

People have different mechanisms they use to understand the world. A Buddhist friend told me how she listens keenly to the pulse of the world. 'When I go out, there are signs. If all the lights are green, the parking is easy, the service is smooth and I complete my tasks easily, then I know I am in the flow. But some days, the toast burns, the milk is sour, I mislay my keys several times, the car won't start, the parking is hard ... then I know this is a day to keep things simple. To not force things. I always observe the signs. I call it taking the pulse of the day.'

The questions are, what mechanisms do you use to help you navigate an uncertain world? Do you believe in magic? Do you take the pulse of the day, consciously or unconsciously? Do you carry talismans, offer prayers, follow data? What are your tools? We all need them to reassure ourselves that we have a tiny measure of control in this mad, beautiful world.

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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Arts and about



The 2025 Street Party Photo Dave Kan

Street Party brings Murwillumbah to life

The Tweed Regional Museum precinct comes alive for its annual Street Party, a free celebration of local culture, creativity and community. Expect an afternoon and evening of live music, art, food and family-friendly entertainment, with the streets around the Museum transformed into a lively pedestrian precinct. The event has quickly become a fixture on the Tweed cultural calendar, bringing together performers, artists, activities and after-hours access to the Museum. This year's Street Party returns on the first Saturday in September, offering plenty of reasons to make an afternoon of it in Murwillumbah.

Street Party

Saturday 5 September

Tweed Regional Museum precinct, Murwillumbah

Italian Film Festival returns to Byron Bay

A taste of contemporary Italian cinema returns to Byron Bay this spring with the 2026 ST. ALi Italian Film Festival. This year's program brings together new Italian drama, comedy and family films, with early highlights including *Three Goodbyes*, starring Alba Rohrwacher and Elio Germano, the provocative thriller *The Eyes of Others* and Rocco Papaleo's bittersweet comedy *The Greater Good*. Before the official festival begins, Byron audiences can also catch a special Prosecco Preview of *Life is Life* on 10 September, an Italian box office hit inspired by the true story of a Sardinian community confronting a proposed luxury development on its coastline.

ST. ALi Italian Film Festival

17 September – 14 October

Palace Cinema, 108 Jonson Street, Byron Bay

italianfilmfestival.com.au

Getting salty in Byron

Life by the ocean leaves its mark in *More Salt Please*, a group exhibition presented by Lone Goat Gallery in collaboration with Ingrid Wilson of IMMI Contemporary. Originally developed to coincide with the Byron Bay Surf Festival, the exhibition has evolved into a broader exploration of coastal life and the many ways the ocean seeps into everyday experience, through reflection, movement, memory, ritual and that inevitable fine layer of salt left on everything. Spanning photography, painting, moving image and sculpture, *More Salt Please* features work by Filippa Edghill, Sean Leonard, Nat McComas, Bri O'Connell, Cassandra Scott-Finn and Sam Steinhauer.

More Salt Please

Until 12 September | Wednesday to Saturday 10am–4pm

Lone Goat Gallery, 28 Lawson Street, Byron Bay

lonegoatgallery.com/exhibitions/more-salt-please

Art and ageing at Lismore Regional Gallery

Art, conversation and connection come together each Friday morning at Lismore Regional Gallery with its award-winning Art and Ageing Enrichment Program. Facilitated by artist River Mueller, whose practice explores social justice, identity and decolonisation, the program is designed to enrich the lives of older people through creative activities and social interaction in an accessible and supportive environment. Each session includes a gallery tour, morning tea and a hands-on art activity, with volunteers Julie, Helen and Colleen helping participants along the way. Morning tea is supplied by the Lismore Country Women's Association, with the Friends of the Gallery also supporting the program. The program is free, although registration is essential, and participants are encouraged to attend all six sessions.

Art and Ageing Enrichment Program

Fridays 18 September – 23 October, 10am–12pm

Lismore Regional Gallery, 11 Rural Street, Lismore

Free, registration essential

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lismoregallery.org

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What's on

Bangalow Garden Club

When Wednesday 2 September, 1.30pm
Where Moller Pavilion, Bangalow Showground
Info bangalowgardenclub.com
Diana Harden 0418 288 428
Membership \$25 per year

Meet like-minded garden lovers at the Bangalow Garden Club's regular monthly meeting. Features flower of the month, a Q&A, guest speaker and plant auction, with plenty of opportunity to swap gardening knowledge and ideas. New members and visitors are welcome, and afternoon tea is provided. Bring your own mug.

Coorabell Hall Film Club presents *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

When Wednesday 2 September, food and drinks from 6pm, film 7.30pm
Where Coorabell Hall, 565 Coolamon Scenic Drive, Coorabell
Tickets \$10 at the door
Info coorabellhall.net | 0407 848 054

Get ready to do the *Time Warp* again as the gloriously outrageous 1975 musical returns to the big screen, complete with Dr Frank-N-Furter, Brad, Janet and a night of strange encounters at the castle. Food and drinks will be available from 6pm, along with a licensed bar, before the film starts at 7.30pm. Costumes and enthusiastic participation seem entirely appropriate.

Tintenbar Open Doors Performance & Movement Workshop

When Saturday 5 September, 10am–4pm
Where Tintenbar Hall
Tickets sprungdancetheatre.as.me/OpenDoors
Info sprung.org.au | 0478 879 706

Sprung Dance Theatre is a disability-led arts organisation creating opportunities for diverse minds and bodies to make art. Open Doors is its inclusive creative playground for dance, movement, theatre and storytelling, offering participants an opportunity to explore performance in a welcoming environment. Beginners, people with disability, d/Deaf people and carers are welcome. NDIS invoicing is available. Ages 18+.

Dabke and Tatreez in concert

When Saturday 5 September, 7–8.30pm
Where Bangalow A&I Hall, 3 Station Street, Bangalow
Tickets \$50/\$45, children free | trybooking.com
Palestinian performance ensemble Dabke and Tatreez brings together members from Gaza, Sydney and London to share the cultural heritage of the Levant region, including Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. The duo has previously performed at the Sydney Opera House, Woodford Folk Festival and National Folk Festival in Canberra.

La Plazita Theatre Edition

When Saturday 12 September, from 3pm
Where 7 Bugam Place, Bangalow Industrial Estate
Tickets Release coming soon, with tickets also available at the door
Info Instagram @laplazita_collective

La Plazita returns for its third edition and this time the theatre is in town. The event will feature four micro-performances alongside live art, markets, food and music, all packed into a corner of the Bangalow Industrial Estate. La Plazita creates an informal space where different cultures, artists and curious humans can come together, share something and enjoy the magic of live art without too much formality. Bring the kids, the dog, a chair or picnic rug and settle in for the afternoon.

ArtsNational Northern Rivers presents Fabulous Fabergé's Use of Naturalism

When Monday 14 September, doors 6pm for 6.30pm start
Where Bangalow A&I Hall, Station Street, Bangalow
Tickets Members free (annual membership \$160 for nine events), guests \$30
TryBooking.com/DGEBL or at the door

ArtsNational Northern Rivers turns its attention to the extraordinary work of Fabergé, looking beyond the famous imperial eggs to explore the jeweller's lesser-known experiments in Art Nouveau, flower studies and animal representations. Presenter Clare Blatherwick has more than 20 years' experience in the jewellery business, including 10 years as Head of Jewellery for Bonhams in Scotland, a role that saw her travel internationally in search of exceptional jewels for auction.

Bangalow Community Association quarterly general meeting

When Tuesday 15 September, 6pm
Where Heritage House, 4 Ashton Street, Bangalow

All postcode 2479 residents and business owners are invited to attend the Bangalow Community Association's quarterly general meeting. The meeting provides an opportunity to discuss current development and infrastructure matters affecting Bangalow and the surrounding area. The BCA encourages informed feedback from an engaged community to help achieve better outcomes for the village, so come along, find out what's happening and join the conversation.



Dabke and Tatreez photo supplied

Save the Bowlo Town Rally

When Saturday 19 September, 2pm until sunset
Where Bangalow Lions Club Kiosk, Bangalow Showground
Info Facebook @savebangalowbowlo | savebangalowbowlo@gmail.com

Bangalow is coming together for a major community rally in support of the campaign to save the Bangalow Bowlo. Hosted by the Save Bangalow Bowlo Steering Committee and supported by Bangalow Lions Club, the afternoon will feature guest speakers providing a full update and explanations on all things Bowlo. Live music comes from Evan & Dion, Dynamite George & The Detonators, Susie Salvatori and DJ Sally Sound. There'll also be sporting club fun and games, a monster raffle, bar, BBQ, food vans, ice cream and cool drinks, with free ice blocks and lollipops for the kids. The afternoon provides an opportunity to hear the latest on the campaign, show support and help raise funds to save the Bowlo.

Bangalow CWA Annual Tea Cosy Competition

When Entries close Thursday 24 September. Display and People's Choice voting 25 September–8 October
Where Bangalow CWA Rooms, 31 Byron Street, Bangalow

It's time to get the needles out for the Bangalow CWA's Annual Tea Cosy Competition. Knitters and crocheters of all ages and abilities are invited to create a tea cosy, with a \$50 Bangalow Yarn Shop voucher up for grabs. Entries can be dropped into the CWA Rooms (or posted) with your full name, address and phone number. Include whether your creation is pure wool or acrylic and, if you're happy for it to be sold for a good cause, give permission when entering. Anyone can vote, even your three-year-old! Entries approved for sale will also be available to purchase from the CWA.

Shire Choir at Eureka Hall

When Saturday 26 September, food and drinks from 6pm, singing from 7pm
Where Eureka Hall, Eureka
Tickets \$20/\$10 | shirechoir.eventbrite.com
Info shirechoir.com.au | Facebook @shirechoir

Shake off winter and welcome spring with an evening of singing at historic Eureka Hall. Shire Choir returns for a spring fling, bringing people together for the simple pleasure of raising their voices in song. No choir experience is needed, just a willingness to join in and see what a roomful of voices can create. Food and drinks will be available from 6pm, with proceeds supporting the Eureka Hall committee and its ongoing work managing and maintaining this much-loved community hall.

Kris Mizzi and Those Folk

When Wednesday 30 September, 6pm
Where Pearces Creek Hall
Info info@pearcescreekhall.com.au | Pearces Creek Hall socials
 Pearces Creek Hall welcomes Kris Mizzi and Those Folk for an evening of finely crafted songwriting and folk music. Those Folk are husband-and-wife duo Lawrence Menard and Clare Quinn, songwriters and multi-instrumentalists whose music explores love, hope, belonging and the human condition. Their vocal harmonies are accompanied by guitars, mandolin, banjo and accordion. They're joined by Kris Mizzi, a gentle storyteller whose songs have been praised for revealing more with every listen.

Diary

September 2026

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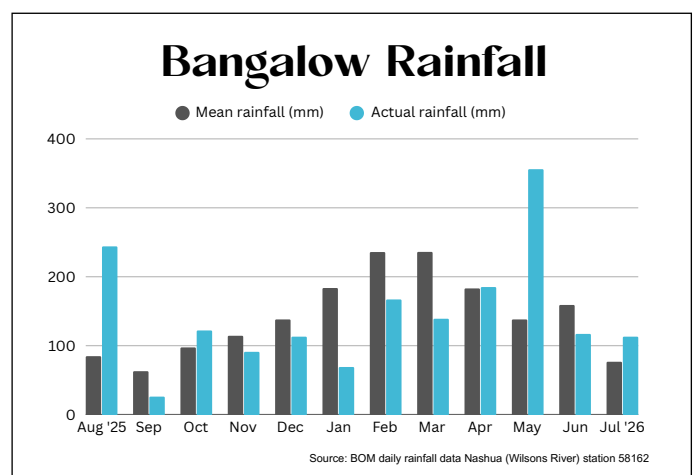


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Magpie feeds her baby Photo supplied



Kim treats a kookaburra Photo Wildlife Hospital

Save our Wildlife Hospital

In its first year, the Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital has treated more than 2000 native animals, giving injured and threatened wildlife a second chance. Now, as the region faces the arrival of avian influenza, **Digby Hildreth** reports on an urgent campaign to secure the hospital's future.

In May, a rare spotted-tailed quoll was brought into the Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital by a WIRES volunteer – just one of the more than 2000 animals treated by the hospital in its first year of operation.

Thanks to the dedication of wildlife rescuers, carers and the hospital's veterinary team, the quoll, which is listed as threatened in NSW and endangered nationally, was given a second chance at life. So too are many other native animals, including those injured in car strikes or dog attacks.

Now the hospital is facing such a financial burden that it may not be able to continue operating.

With bird flu already in Australia, it's only time before it reaches our region. The timing

could not be worse. "We are preparing to respond, but without urgent financial support, the future of our hospital is under threat," a spokesperson says.

"Our purpose-built wildlife hospital at Wollongbar was designed with the foresight that avian influenza would hit our shores eventually. With specially designed ventilation systems, isolations wards and biosecurity protocols in place we are well situated to deal with the disease. But if we cannot afford to pay our highly qualified veterinary staff, we cannot function."

The hospital is a publicly owned not-for-profit enterprise on Crown Land and is supported by a large team of volunteers, but the vet nurses and vets themselves have to be paid.

"It takes approximately \$1.2m annually to staff and operate the hospital," the spokesperson says.

"We are doing everything we can to secure the immediate future of the hospital while we work towards a more sustainable long-term funding model.

"We are grateful for the government support in building the hospital and we will be asking for their support for ongoing operational costs.

"But the bulk of our operational funding has come from generous private donors and our regular giving programs such as Hospital Heroes. Any donation, big or small, will help keep our doors open.

"To see this facility close would be absolutely devastating. We cannot afford to lose our hospital. Not now."

If you can help keep the hospital open, donate via nrwh.com.au/donate or email fundraising@nrwh.com.au if you can help.

What is avian influenza?

Avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu, is a viral disease that mainly affects birds, including wild birds and poultry. The strain currently of particular concern is H5 highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5 HPAI), which can cause severe illness and death in birds and spread rapidly through bird populations.

Wildlife hospitals are preparing for its potential impact on Australian native species.

If you find a sick or dead bird, avoid touching or approaching it but record information on the animal from a safe distance and report to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.