

FREE

THE Bundy LOCAL

plus ... **THE Bundy Book** TOURIST GUIDE



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Bundaberg's FREE Newspaper

Edition 2-2026.

From Bundaberg to the roof of Africa: local woman conquers Kilimanjaro

By Mellissa Harney

What drives a Bundaberg local to climb one of the world's most famous mountains?

For Carolyn Hoffmann, the answer lies in a love of challenges, adventure, and the great outdoors.

For most travellers, a safari in Africa would be the adventure of a lifetime, for Carolyn, it was just the first step.

She travelled to Africa in June last year with members of the Rotary Sunrise Club, visiting an orphanage and experiencing the wildlife and landscapes of Kenya on safari.

When the organised trip ended, many travellers would have headed home, but Carolyn had something bigger in mind.



Carolyn Hoffmann stands before Mount Kilimanjaro.

After farewelling her husband, Glenn, putting him on a plane to Morocco, she set off on a solo journey. Travelling from Kenya

to Tanzania to attempt the climb of Mt Kilimanjaro.

At 5,895 metres above sea level, Mt Kilimanjaro summit is the highest peak in Africa and often referred to as the "Roof of Africa".

"It's not a technical climb," she explained. "You trek to the summit along a trail, no axe or ropes. But the real challenge is the altitude and the lack of oxygen."

Carolyn joined a small group of five trekkers aged between 32 and 73, supported by experienced guides, a chef and a team of 15 porters along the Marangu Route.

Altitude - the greatest test

Over six days, the group trekked through five distinct climate zones, from hot cultivated farmland and lush rainforest to heather moorland, dry alpine desert and finally the icy summit.

"The landscape constantly changes," Carolyn recalls. "One day you're walking through dense jungle with moss hanging from the trees, and a few days later it feels like you're on the moon."

The altitude, however, proved to be the mountain's greatest test.

Guides monitored trekkers twice daily with oxygen and heart rate checks to watch for signs of altitude sickness. One member of the group had to descend early after his oxygen levels dropped dangerously low.

The summit attempt began at midnight from Kibo Hut, with trekkers climbing slowly through freezing temperatures using headlamps to light the path.

In the darkness, Carolyn focused on a simple rhythm to keep moving.

"It became one step, two steps, plant the walking pole. One step, two steps, plant the walking pole," she said.

Although taking medication, altitude sickness brought waves of exhaustion and nausea, and she found herself falling asleep whenever the group stopped to rest.

"I could feel my body struggling, but I remembered what our guide had told us, that reaching the summit is 25 per cent physical fitness and 75 per cent mental toughness."

Thigh deep in snow, rounding the last corner with the Mount Kilimanjaro summit sign in sight, she stopped and groaned, "That's it, I've had enough!"

The top of Africa

With plenty of encouragement, Carolyn resolved, "Ok - let's finish it then," turning to march off until remembering that she needed to move ever so slowly to be able to breathe properly.

After nearly eight hours of climbing, she reached Gilman's Point on the rim of the volcano before continuing along the crater to the summit.

At 10.24am on June 27, she stood at the top of Africa.

"We were there for less than five minutes," she said. "Just long enough for a few photos before beginning the long descent."

While Kilimanjaro was her most recent adventure, she is no stranger to demanding treks.

In 2010 she completed the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea, a challenging 96-kilometre trail known for its steep terrain and deep historical significance.

On another occasion, she and her husband tackled England's famous Wainwright's Coast to Coast Walk, a renowned 309-kilometre long-distance trail stretching from the Irish Sea to the North Sea across some of the country's most scenic and rugged landscapes.

But even with that experience behind her, the mountain still tested every ounce of determination.

"I discovered a mental strength I didn't know I had," she said.

"Climbing Kilimanjaro was the most challenging thing I've ever done, and I'm incredibly proud that the mountain chose me."

INSIDE THIS EDITION



IMAGE: MATT WILLIAMS

WE GO TO THE OUTBACK ... Camel Races and more

BUNDABERG'S LUCK CONTINUES IN 2026 WITH BIG KENO WIN!



FROM CLASSROOM TO MOVIE SET... Former Bundaberg teacher now teaching movie stars

ROCK LEGEND ROSS WILSON from Daddy Cool talks music, memories and staying fit

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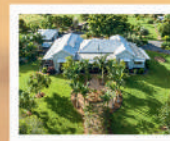
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From the Editor.



Michael McRae
Editor / Publisher.



The Bundy Local Newspaper is Bundaberg's free newspaper covering Bundaberg, the coastal towns Bargara, Burnett Heads, Childers, Gin Gin and Mount Perry.

We wish to thank the more than 50 businesses who sponsored this newspaper and we invite our readers to support them.

Local Volunteer Wins Dream Family Getaway

A BUNDABERG volunteer has been rewarded for her dedication to the community, taking out a recent giveaway celebrating local heroes.

The competition in the New Year edition of the Bundy Local was open to all volunteers in Bundaberg.

We had a draw from all the entries and a visitor to Bundaberg, Paul Makin, drew the lucky winner's entry with the help of his wife Marion.



Paul Makin is an Australian journalist and broadcaster whose media career spans more than 60 years across radio and television.

He is known for his skill as an interviewer and has reported on major events including the Granville train disaster and the America's Cup, where Australia II scored its historic 1983 victory in Newport.

He has also worked on stage and appeared in television acting roles, including Cop Shop and Prisoner. Go to page 10 and meet our winner.

Plastic fish are the scourge of our oceans and waterways



NEXT TIME you enjoy a Sushi for lunch take note if your soy sauce comes in a fish shaped soy sauce dispenser.

South Australia has just voted to ban the plastic fish which is the scourge of oceans worldwide.

It was invented in 1954 and since then billions have been produced and billions have ended up in our waterways and they have largely stayed there.

The South Australian Government hopes that sushi shops will switch to using bottles or dispensers instead of the plastic fish.

Other single use plastic items now banned in SA are plastic cutlery and bowls in pre-packed instant noodle packets.

For Your Useless Trivia Information File



THE VOICE of Paddington Bear in the Ukrainian dubbed versions of the 2014 and 2018 films was Volodymyr Zelensky, who later became the President of Ukraine.

Before entering politics, Zelensky was a well known Ukrainian actor, comedian, and dubbing artist.

His warm, expressive voice performance as Paddington was widely praised and has resurfaced in global media since his presidency.



An early edition of the Coastline newspaper, 1988



The Bundy Book, 2023



First edition of The Bundy Local, 2023

After 40 years, Publisher Michael McRae to retire and sell Coastline Newspaper Group

AFTER FOUR DECADES at the helm of the Coastline Newspaper Group, Michael McRae has announced it is time to step back and offer the business for sale.

A well-known figure in Australian media, McRae's career spans radio, television, and print journalism.

He began as a radio announcer at Radio 4MB in Maryborough, entertaining listeners as a DJ during the golden era of artists like Elvis Presley and Johnny O'Keefe, and hosted evening programs before television became widespread.

His career soon took him to Orange, New South Wales, where he worked at Radio 2GZ before moving into television with CBN Channel 8.

McRae later joined WINTV in Wollongong as a senior news presenter, a role he held for nearly 20 years.

During this period, the station was acquired by Rupert Murdoch, the media magnate known for reshaping Australia's television landscape through strategic programming, including the introduction of American content and strong local productions.

McRae presented the nightly news and compered a wide range of live programs,

becoming a familiar face across the region. In 1986, McRae returned to Bundaberg and founded the Coastline Newspaper Group.

What began as a single monthly publication grew into a diverse media network, including Tourist Queensland, the Coalfields Express, and the widely recognised Bundy Book and Bundy Local Book, publications that have connected communities and supported local businesses for decades.

Beyond his professional achievements, McRae has contributed significantly to community organisations, including Lions Clubs and business groups, and played a key role in local development initiatives.

Now, he is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Jane and their three sons: Robert, a former Lieutenant in the Australian Navy now living in Scotland; Alexander, a pilot with Qantas International; and Christopher, an energy trader based in Brisbane.

The sale of the Coastline Newspaper Group marks the end of an era, but also an exciting opportunity for new ownership to continue its proud legacy.

For expressions of interest
phone 07 4153 1133 or
email michael@coastlinenews.com.au

THE Bundy LOCAL

To view this edition online go to www.coastlinenews.com.au

Some of our best news stories come from tip-offs, contact us...
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Advertising bookings for the Bundy Local September edition are now open.

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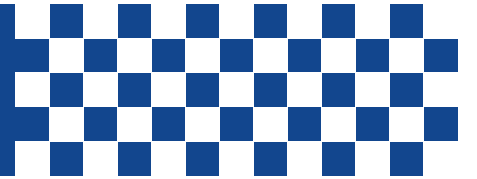
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Gin Gin man on murder charge doesn't appear in Court

MURDER charge mentioned: Gin Gin man James Wood didn't appear when his murder charge was mentioned in the Bundaberg Magistrates Court in March.

He's charged with one count of murder and two counts of interfering with a corpse over the death of Pheobe Bishop.

Fellow housemate Tanika Bromley is also charged with the 17-year-old's murder.

The court heard the prosecution had received the post-mortem report and the matter was adjourned to August to allow the results to be disclosed to the defence.

Mr. Wood remains in custody.

Hit and run appeal, Bundaberg

INVESTIGATORS are appealing for information following a hit and run traffic crash at Qunaba in March.

About 8.15pm, police were called to Burnett Heads Road following reports a blue Holden utility was conducting burnouts before losing control and colliding with a white Holden Spark.

It is believed the utility continued conducting burnouts after the crash and left the scene in a northerly direction towards Burnett Heads.

Anyone with information, CCTV or dashcam vision leading up to or immediately after the crash to contact Policelink.

Investigations are ongoing.

Drugs, gold and weapons seized, Toogoom

THE Wide Bay Tactical Crime Squad has seized \$914,000 worth of drugs and charged two people following raids at Toogoom.

Officers uncovered a significant quantity of drugs inside the property and inside a vehicle.

Officers also seized \$15,000 in cash, 136 grams of gold worth an estimated \$31,000, a shotgun and ammunition, a homemade taser and knuckle dusters.

A 37-year-old Torquay man was charged with 26 offences.

He has been remanded in custody and will next face Hervey Bay Magistrates Court.

Driving through floodwater costs Bundaberg man



POLICE have charged a man after he was rescued from floodwaters in Bundaberg North in March.

Emergency services were called to the intersection of Thornhill Street and Talon Street, following reports the man was trapped in floodwaters.

It will be alleged the 62-year-old Bundaberg North man had attempted to drive his Holden Crewman ute through a flooded section of the road, before becoming trapped inside his vehicle.

Queensland Fire Department (QFD) swift-water rescue firefighters safely removed the man from his vehicle, and he was transported to Bundaberg Hospital as a precaution.

The man has since been charged with driving without due care or attention and did drive under the influence of liquor.

He is due to appear in Bundaberg Magistrates Court.

The man's licence was immediately suspended.

In a separate incident, Bundaberg police were deployed to The Causeway, Bargara following reports two people were stranded in floodwaters.

Police located the vehicle and officers were able to safely remove both occupants. No injuries were reported.

The driver of the vehicle, a 54-year-old Bundaberg man was also issued a \$667 fine for driving without due care and attention.

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Adventure, history and culture await at the 1770 Festival

EACH SPRING, the coastal town of Seventeen-Seveny comes alive with colour, music and living history as the 1770 Festival celebrates the stories that shaped this remarkable stretch of Queensland coastline.

Running from 22-24 May 2026, the festival brings together Indigenous culture, European exploration and community spirit on the very shores where James Cook and the crew of the HMS Endeavour made their second landing on Australia's east coast in 1770.

Helping bring the event to life is Samantha "Sammy" Organ, festival coordinator, liaison officer for the Gooreng Gooreng people, and owner of 1770 Weddings and Events.

The festival recreates those historical moments through the dramatic longboat landing on the foreshore, where actors portraying Cook, Joseph Banks and the Endeavour crew step ashore in authentic 18th-century costume.

Across the three-day celebration, visitors can also experience Gooreng Gooreng cultural performances, traditional dance and storytelling, live music, markets, workshops and a colourful street parade.

"The festival honours both cultures and celebrates the community we have here," she says. "Every year we're working to expand the program and create new experiences for locals and visitors."

For Sammy, the festival is about more than history; it is about connection.

"It's about sharing the stories of this place and bringing people together," she says.

With free entry, coastal scenery, and a packed program of events, the 1770 Festival offers a unique chance to step into history while celebrating the vibrant culture and community that continues to shape this special part of the Queensland coast.

Go to www.coastlinenews.com.au for a copy of the London Gazette 1768 and read about James Cook leaving England for the South Pacific.



Samantha "Sammy" Organ, festival coordinator, liaison officer for the Gooreng Gooreng people.

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Teaching the movie stars

By Clarissa Ward

A former Bundaberg teacher has taken his passion for teaching beyond the classroom helping young actors keep up with their studies while working in the film and television industry.

Graeme Kirkpatrick was the Foundation Head of Junior School at St Luke's in Bundaberg from 1996-2001, helping shape the early years of the school's development. After leaving Bundaberg he spent many years as the Principal of Coomera Anglican College on the Gold Coast before he took a leap few teachers ever imagine. Soon after leaving his role at Coomera Anglican College, a parent connected to the film industry asked if he would tutor school-aged actors on set.

"I said yes," recalled Kirkpatrick. "It was a great change of lifestyle for me"

The role was like no classroom he had known. Children on film sets often work long intense days for weeks, months or sometimes years whilst still having to keep up with their academic work. Kirkpatrick's job was to guide them through their school-work, helping with assignments, exams and online learning all while they rehearsed lines and navigated the pressures of production.

He started on the set of Ron Howard's *Thirteen Lives*, a film based on the harrowing true story of twelve soccer players and their coach who were rescued from Tham Luang cave after being trapped for 18 days in 2018.

"I had thirteen boys on that set, all acting full-time every day," he said. "Finding time for schooling was tricky, but we made it work."

Later came *The Curious Case of Dolphin Cove*, following a group of teenagers uncov-



Graeme Kirkpatrick.

ering illegal dolphin hunting, as well as the television series *Nautilus*, inspired by Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. *Nautilus* filmed for nearly a year and during its production Kirkpatrick tutored Kayden Price and his body double who both portrayed one of the show's main characters, Blaster.

Kirkpatrick also worked on the Netflix film *True Spirit*, based on Australian sailor Jessica Watson's solo voyage around the world, tutoring several young actors who played members of the Watson family.

Many scenes across these productions were filmed at studios near Movie World on the Gold Coast, where large-scale sets were built to recreate environments such as the caves and water filled tunnels featured in *Thirteen Lives*.

"The workmanship that goes into creating the sets and producing these movies is phenomenal," said Kirkpatrick.

One particularly memorable moment for him was teaching inside the galley of a full-scale submarine set during the filming of *Nautilus*. It wasn't the typical place you'd expect to be teaching but somehow, he made it work.

Despite the demanding filming schedules, Kirkpatrick's students consistently balanced their acting commitments with their education.

"They held down a full time job and did their full time education," said Kirkpatrick, "They never complained, and they all ended up with great marks. The kids are amazing, some of the most incredible people I have ever met."

From shaping classrooms in Bundaberg to being the school principal at Coomera and later guiding students on film sets, one constant has always remained for Graeme Kirkpatrick and that is a commitment to helping young people reach their potential.



One particularly memorable moment for him was teaching inside the galley of a full-scale submarine set during the filming of *Nautilus*. It wasn't the typical place you'd expect to be teaching but somehow, he made it work.

Next generation of reef guardians inspired at Lady Musgrave Island

LOCAL students have traded classrooms for coral lagoons, taking part in a once-in-a-lifetime experience on the Great Barrier Reef as part of a program backed by Bundaberg Regional Council.

Up to 10 schools from across the region were selected to join the Lady Musgrave Experience's "Marine Biologist for a Day" program, an initiative linked to the Reef Guardian Schools network led by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

The excursion to Lady Musgrave Island immersed students in reef conservation, offering hands-on learning alongside marine experts and a close-up look at fragile ecosystems they have been working to protect in their own communities.

Reef Guardian Council representatives Cr Gary Kirk and Cr Larine Statham-Blair said the trip recognised students' environmental leadership, from beach clean-ups to plastic reduction initiatives.

"Giving them the opportunity to experience the reef firsthand helps connect their efforts to real-world impact," Cr Kirk said.

Students were joined by marine educator Jon Moorhead, whose involvement added further scientific depth to the excursion.

For many participants, the visit marked a major milestone. Some had never seen the reef before, while one student experienced their first boat trip during the journey.

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Students enjoy a home away from home at St Leo's

By Dan McMahon

ST LEO'S provides a home for young men undertaking Tertiary Study in Brisbane.

Just over 200 young men make up a very vibrant and encouraging community. They love being at St Leo's, enjoying their mates, getting support in their studies and enjoying three well prepared meals every day.

Our young men identify the 'brotherhood' that they encounter at St Leo's as being one of the best part of College life.

Sport and Cultural activities play a big part in the weekly cycle at the College. Even if not actually participating they enjoy supporting their mates.

All students are supported by a Tutorial program designed to assist each of them maximize their academic success.

St Leo's is a Catholic College but we welcome young men of all faiths and none but we do, actively, view the world through the lens of the Gospel and the story of Jesus of Nazareth.

We prioritize and celebrate the values that emboldened the life of Jesus. Our aim is for the young men who are a part of this community to work hard, to achieve as well as possible and to go into the world and make a positive difference.

St Leo's is the only Residential College where all student accommodation is air-conditioned which is a significant advantage in the warmer and more humid months.

Every student at St Leo's also has access to a car park - another distinct advantage in our local area.

I very much look forward to returning to Bundaberg - my home for 17 years - to speak with any young man and their families who might be considering a Residential College to support their studies in Brisbane.

Please get in touch by emailing
d.mcmahon@stleos.uq.edu.au



Dan McMahon is new CEO and Head of College at St Leo's College.

Pacific workers build new lives in Bundaberg as PALM scheme opens doors to skills, stability and community

By Clarissa Ward

Willie from Vanuatu, Nina from Tonga and Omeli from Tuvalu are now working as window cleaners with Jim's cleaning in Bundaberg.

Willie and Nina arrived in Australia four years ago and initially took on work on banana plantations in North Queensland. These were physically demanding jobs, essential to keeping the agricultural sector running.

Omeli has been in the country just a few weeks and is already stepping into work as part of a steady flow of Pacific Island labour across regional Australia.

Many of these workers are employed under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, which allows Australian businesses to recruit workers from Pacific nations and Timor-Leste when local labour is in short supply.

The scheme allows participants the chance to earn income, gain skills and support their families back home.

Workers can be employed for seasonal roles or longer-term positions across a range of industries including agriculture, hospitality, cleaning, construction and aged care.

Under the PALM scheme, participants are covered by Australian workplace laws with employers required to meet minimum pay, safety and accommodation standards, provide welfare support and guarantee work hours. Oversight and compliance measures are in place to monitor conditions.

The scheme's employer guidelines were recently updated in March 2026 to better clarify and protect worker rights.



Willie from Vanuatu, Nina from Tonga and Omeli from Tuvalu.

The changes come after years of scrutiny, including a 2025 New South Wales parliamentary inquiry into the exploitation of workers which heard evidence of poor working conditions and breaches of employment obligations.

Unions and advocacy groups have also raised concerns about underpayment, visa restrictions and workers dependence on a single employer.

More than a century ago, South Sea Islanders were brought to Queensland to work in the sugar cane industry under arrangements now widely recognised as coercive and exploitative.

Many endured harsh condition, low wages and limited rights and thousands were later deported under the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901.

Unlike the past, today's workers arrive with legal protections, structured agreements and government oversight that is intended to ensure their safety, rights and fair pay.

In practice, these safeguards help workers like Willie, Nina and Omeli not just survive but build meaningful lives and relationships in their new communities while helping keep Australian industries moving.

Bundaberg woman scores life-changing \$2.4M Keno win

THE region's good fortune has continued into 2026, with a Bundaberg woman landing a \$2.4 million Keno win.

The local woman scored the Keno Classic 10 Spot jackpot in draw 600, drawn on Friday, 20 February taking home a total prize of \$2,475,786.70. She was one of three Queenslanders to land a Keno Classic 10 Spot jackpot over the same weekend.

Overwhelmed with emotion, the winner told Keno officials when they confirmed the win that she was pretty stoked.

"It's quite surreal. I'll be able to finally fix my house, which has been a really long time coming! I can take myself on a holiday too. I would love to go to Greece and Cyprus," she said.

The winning Keno entry was purchased at Sandhills Sports Club on Whalley Street in Bargara.

Sandhills Sports Club operations manager Sue Whiting said the club was thrilled to have played a part in such a life changing win.

"Seeing a deserving local win \$2.4 million is just incredible. We couldn't be happier for her and hope this prize opens up

amazing opportunities for her future," said Whiting.

The win follows a streak of lotto wins in the region during 2025.

In January, a Bundaberg resident won \$2.1 million on a Saturday Gold Lotto ticket purchased from Free Choice Bundaberg (Hinkler Lucky Lotto).

In February, a second Bundaberg resident scored \$3.3 million on Saturday Gold Lotto with a ticket purchased from Chippindalls Newsagency on Bourbong Street.

Then in March, a local man won a whopping \$10 million Powerball jackpot and 19 second division prizes with a total winning of \$10,313,821. His ticket was purchased online on The Lott website.

A Gin Gin man scored \$1 million in the Weekday Windfall in June, with a ticket purchased from Gin Gin Newsagency on Musgrave Street.

In November, a Bundaberg man won \$4.8 million in the Set for Life bringing the region's combined winnings to total of more than \$20.5 million in 2025.

Is Bundaberg set for another year of good fortune? Stay tuned.



Keno Classic 10 Spot jackpot of \$2,475,786.70 was won at Sandhills Sports Club, Bargara

Don't let your VHS memories fade

LOCAL residents with old home videos tucked away in cupboards are being encouraged to act sooner rather than later.

Matty, a Bundaberg local who transfers old tapes and recordings onto USB memory sticks, says time is running out to preserve many of these memories.

Having worked in music recording and video for years, Matty began offering the service after realising many people still had tapes but no way to watch them.

"People have boxes of VHS tapes, camcorder tapes and audio recordings, but the players are disappearing," he said.

Matty converts formats including VHS, VHS-C, Hi8, MiniDV, DVDs, audio cassettes and vinyl records into digital files

that can be played on modern TVs and computers. Over the years, he has helped families recover wedding videos, childhood birthdays and other special moments. But he says the biggest challenge is that old tapes don't last forever.

"With humidity and age, they're starting to fail," he said. "I used to see almost every tape play fine, but now more and more are damaged or recorded over."

For Matty, the work is about more than technology. "They're not just tapes, they're people's memories."

Residents interested in having recordings preserved can contact Matty at Bundaberg Digital Media Productions on Facebook or by phone 0422 404 323.

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Ross Wilson talks music, memories, and Lighthouse Rock Festival

By Mellissa Harney

Bundaberg is set to rock this May as music legend Ross Wilson brings his signature sound to the Lighthouse Rock Festival, Saturday 23rd May.

We caught up with Ross ahead of the event to talk music, memories, and the excitement of performing in regional Queensland.

Bundy Local: Have you been to Bundaberg before?

Ross Wilson: Oh yeah. Bundaberg is always a treat. I'm looking forward to coming back and gigging with a bunch of other people, so we can have some fun.

BL: My 12-year-old nephew was so excited when I told him you were coming to Bundy. What does it feel like to know your music spans generations?

RW: That's wonderful. Say hi to him from me. I love it when people bring their kids along, sometimes it's their first ever show, and it leaves a big impression. We try to play our best and hopefully win over some new fans while keeping the old ones happy.

BL: I listened to your solo version of Eagle Rock 1908. It was unique, great sound!

RW: Yeah, I wanted to show the song's roots, a bit of ragtime and boogie influence. I grew up on the jazz my dad played and my mum on piano, so it was fun to experiment with a different sound.

BL: You've been a songwriter, frontman, and producer. Which role challenged you most, and which gave you the most freedom?

RW: Songwriting gives the most freedom; it's all from me, my thoughts, my family, society. Producing is fun too, though challenging. Producing Skyhooks' first three albums was a huge thrill. I didn't plan to be a producer, but I loved their music and wanted to get it out there.

BL: Are there any songs that surprised you with how fans respond?

RW: Cool World has always stuck with people. Live, songs take on a new intensity, even if someone knows the record, the performance adds another dimension. I always

aim to give more than people expect.

BL: What advice would you give young musicians competing at Lighthouse Rock?

RW: Don't trust too many people. There are sharks out there. Make sure someone knowledgeable checks contracts. That's one lesson I learned the hard way back in my Daddy Cool days.

BL: Speaking of Daddy Cool, any moments that still surprise you?

RW: Just how it all fell together. Meeting Ross Hannaford, Wayne Duckett, and Gary Young felt like fate. Without that original lineup, Eagle Rock wouldn't have become the song it is today.

BL: What's your approach to performing now?

RW: I stay fit, lift weights, train, keep moving. A hip replacement years ago almost ended my career, but now I'm bouncing around better than ever, giving every performance my all.

BL: Outside of performing, what's your Sunday morning like?

RW: I stay in bed a bit, then hit the gym. Breakfast is usually protein-focused, smoothie, eggs, veggies, and always coffee.

"... I hope people come along, enjoy the music, and experience something memorable. Live music is special, everyone needs to experience it."

BL: Any final thoughts for your Bundaberg audience?

RW: It's going to be a great day. The lineup is fantastic, and many of the artists are friends, so it's a chance to catch up backstage. I hope people come along, enjoy the music, and experience something memorable. Live music is special, everyone needs to experience it.

Wilson is currently on his *50 Years of Hits* tour and working on new material, promising fans fresh sounds in the near future. Bundaberg is in for a musical treat this May.



Decline in childhood vaccination rates raises concern in Queensland

HEALTH experts are raising concerns as childhood vaccination rates across Australia continue to fall, with Queensland among the worst-affected states.

National data shows immunisation coverage for children has steadily declined since the COVID-19 pandemic, dropping from 94.8 per cent of fully vaccinated one-year-olds in 2020 to around 91.6 per cent in 2024.

In Queensland, the figures are even lower. Recent data shows only 90.1 per cent of two-year-olds are fully vaccinated, well below the 95 per cent coverage needed to maintain herd immunity and prevent outbreaks of diseases such as measles and whooping cough.

Experts say several factors are contributing to the decline, including disruption to routine health care during the pandem-

ic, rising out-of-pocket medical costs, and growing misinformation about vaccines.

Public health officials warn that the drop in vaccination coverage leaves communities vulnerable to the return of preventable diseases and are urging parents to keep their children's immunisations up to date.

"We are seeing a concerning rise in preventable illnesses across Queensland, but the good news is that we have the tools to stop it," said Crofton Medical Centre's Dr Indika. He encouraged parents to seek advice from trusted medical professionals.

"I want parents to know that their GP is their best resource for navigating these decisions. Whether it's a concern about costs or questions about the schedule, we are here to help you get back on track."

"Taking ten minutes to speak with your

doctor today can prevent a lifetime of complications for your child and help us keep others in the community safe and healthy."

Health authorities say rebuilding trust in vaccines and improving access to affordable medical care will be key to reversing the trend and protecting Australian children.



Crofton Medical Centre's Dr Indika MBBS, FRACGP, DCH, MRCGP.

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Caring for the community since 1948

BUNDABERG Legacy has been at the heart of the community since 1948, supporting the widows and families of veterans who have given their lives or health in service to Australia. Through practical assistance, social connection and advocacy, the organisation ensures that recipients never face life's challenges alone.

Part of the wider Australian Legacy network, Bundaberg Legacy is a not-for-profit that relies heavily on a dedicated team of volunteers. Many are retirees who bring not only time, but experience, kindness, and compassion to the role.

Ken Parker, Community Liaison Officer with Bundaberg Legacy said the organisa-

tion provides a way for people to give back to the community in whatever way they can.

Volunteers like Mr Parker support recipients in a variety of ways - helping them navigate support services, advocating on their behalf or organising social events such as morning teas and gatherings that foster connection. Many of the people Legacy supports are older and regular visits help to reduce social isolation and improve wellbeing.

"Sometimes it's just helping with small things like putting together a flat pack or checking that everything is safe around the home," said Mr Parker. Over time, these small acts can build lasting bonds, creating a sense of belonging for recipients.

Bundaberg Legacy currently supports more than 436 widows and seven dependants across Bundaberg and parts of the surrounding region and is always welcoming of new volunteers. Whether they want to lend a helping hand or simply spend time connecting with others.

Fundraising is another important part of Legacy's work and one of Ken's favourite ways to contribute is through Bunnings Barbecues which give Legacy the opportunity to interact with the local community.

"It's a chance to explain our services, talk about volunteering and show that every dollar raised goes straight back

into supporting the wellbeing and health of our recipients here in Bundaberg," said Mr Parker.

While the organisation has a long and proud history in the region, it continues to thrive thanks to the generosity of the wider community. Local clubs, business and community groups contribute through donations, partnerships and fundraising efforts, helping to ensure the organisation can continue to support local families.

At its heart, Bundaberg Legacy represents the spirit of community, people coming together to honour the sacrifices of veterans by caring for those they loved.

"It's a great team of people to work with. The whole organisation is caring - caring about each other as well as caring for our recipients," said Mr Parker, "and as a bonus, I get lots of hugs."

To find out more about Bundaberg Legacy, how to volunteer or make a donation visit www.legacy.com.au



Ken Parker, Community Liaison Officer with Bundaberg Legacy (right) and Len Gordon.



Fundraising at the recent Childers Festival.

Bundaberg cardiologist retires after years of dedicated service

RESPECTED Bundaberg cardiologist Dr Hermann Wittmer is retiring after years of dedicated service to the local community.

Dr Wittmer has been working with Advara Heart Care and is well known across the region for his expertise in cardiovascular imaging, heart failure management, and adult congenital heart disease.

He moved to Bundaberg from Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2009 with his wife, Glenda, and their children, Tina and Craig.

Dr Wittmer joined Dr Andre Conradie at Bundaberg Cardiology, where he contributed to establishing a cardiac catheterisation laboratory (Cath Lab) providing specialised procedures such as angiography, stents, and pacemakers to both public and private patients.

He said many medical specialists arrived in Bund-

aberg from South Africa around the same time, due to political unrest in their home country.

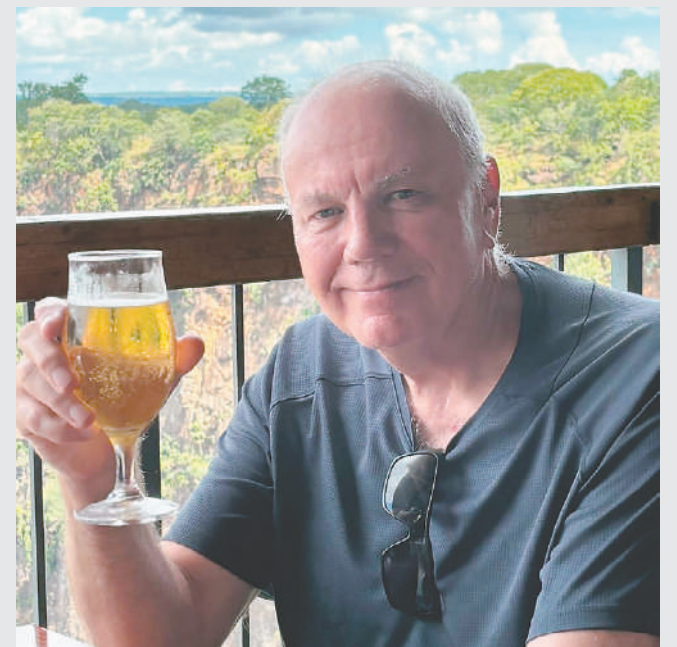
This influx of skilled professionals helped expand local medical services, allowing more patients to receive treatment in Bundaberg rather than travelling to Brisbane.

Reflecting on his time in the region, Dr Wittmer said Bundaberg had been a wonderful place to live and work.

He expressed his gratitude to colleagues, including Dr Conradie, as well as staff at the Friendly Society Private Hospital and Bundaberg Base Hospital, and the many friends who had been part of their journey.

Dr Wittmer and his wife, Glenda, are now relocating to New South Wales to be closer to family.

"Bundaberg has been really good to all of us and will always remain special to me," he said.



Dr Wittmer says, "Thanks Bundy and cheers!"

Specialist Orthopaedic Surgeon

Dr. Andrew McGee has treated many patients in the Wide Bay/Burnett region for over 20 years, specialising in shoulder, knee, hip, foot and hand surgery.

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Local volunteer wins dream family getaway



Breeanna and one of the dingos at Alexandra Park Zoo in Quay Street.

A BUNDABERG volunteer has been rewarded for her dedication to the community, taking out a recent giveaway celebrating local heroes. The competition in the New Year edition of the *Bundy Local* was open to all volunteers in Bundaberg.

Breeanna Heinz, who volunteers at the Alexandra Park Zoo, has been named the winner of the family getaway prize.

For the past six months, she has contributed her time feeding animals, cleaning enclosures, assisting with zoo talks, and helping maintain the park each week.

Her prize includes a three-night stay for four at **The Islander Noosa Resort**, located opposite the Noosa River and featuring spacious villas, multiple pools, spas, and family-friendly facilities.

The package also includes a family pass to **Aussie World**, offering a full day of rides and entertainment, along with a lunch or dinner for four at the **Royal Mail Hotel**, known for its relaxed atmosphere and quality dining.

The competition recognised the vital role volunteers play in the Bundaberg region, with organisers saying the giveaway was a small way to thank those who give their time to others.

We thank all who entered and congratulations to Breeanna.

Win 1 of 3 Copies of *Let's Go!* by Andy Griffiths

MULTI-AWARD-WINNING Australian Author and Australian Children's Laureate (2026-2027), Andy Griffiths is back with a brand new book, and we have three copies to giveaway!

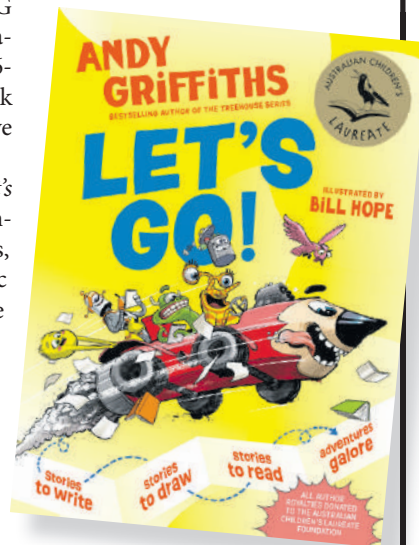
Illustrated by Bill Hope, *Let's Go!* is a wildly entertaining, interactive collection of stories, poems, cartoons and comic strips that will have the whole family laughing.

Griffiths has said he created the book to spread the joys of creative reading, writing, drawing and laughter during his time as Australia's Children's Laureate.

The book is designed to inspire children and even adults to explore and expand their own imaginative worlds, pure fun from start to finish, *Let's Go!* is perfect for young readers seeking screen-free entertainment now that social media is banned for under 16s.

Readers can expect plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, with jokes like:

"What do Dora the Explorer and Chance the Rapper have in common? They have the same middle name."



Don't miss your chance to win this hilarious new book by one of Australia's favourite children's authors.

How To Enter: Entry is free and open to children aged 13 and under. Simply visit www.coastline-news.com.au and complete the questionnaire

Entries close Friday, 29 May 2026. Winners will be contacted, and prizes will be posted anywhere in Australia thanks to Pan Macmillan Australia.

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THE BundyBook

TOURIST GUIDE

The Bundy Book was first published 30 years ago and since then over one million copies have been printed and read by visitors to this region.

Local whale watching tours ready to go

EXCITEMENT is building along the coast as the annual humpback whale migration begins, with the team at Lady Musgrave Experience preparing for another spectacular whale watching season.

Recent reports confirm the whales have started their northern journey along Australia's east coast toward warmer breeding

waters, creating prime viewing opportunities for local tour operators. Lady Musgrave Experience runs dedicated whale watching tours departing from the Bundaberg Port Marina at Burnett Heads, several days a week during the season.

The half-day cruises give guests four hours on the water, offering plenty of time

to witness the incredible displays humpback whales are famous for, from breaching and tail slapping to curious close encounters alongside the vessel.

Director Brett Lakey, who owns and operates the business locally, said the team is proud of its remarkable track record.

"This is our twelfth year in operation,

and we've had a 100 per cent success rate," he said. "I don't know any other whale operator on the coast that has that."



Director Brett Lakey, who owns and operates the whale watch trips



Kevin Hill of Bargara, who took this photo of whale and calf, said he sees many calves each year, some only days old and this was the first almost totally white one.

With whales already on the move, the crew says they are excited to welcome guests aboard for what promises to be another unforgettable season on the Southern Great Barrier Reef.

The calm waters of Hervey Bay off K'Gari attract whales from July to November. More on Whale Watching at the Bay inside this Bundy Book lift-out.

Blueberry Festival on again in Mundubbera

BLUEBERRIES, live music and country hospitality will take centre stage this spring when the Mundubbera Blueberry Festival returns to the North Burnett town of Mundubbera from 25-27 September.

Since launching in 2022, the festival has quickly become a signature North Burnett event, celebrating not only the region's large scale blueberry production but also its rich agricultural heritage and diverse food bowl.

About 150 kilometres inland from Bundaberg, Mundubbera is home to the Southern Hemisphere's largest covered blueberry farm and a thriving agricultural region producing

citrus, mangoes, pecans, timber, beef and more. This year, festival organisers say the event will be the biggest yet with more entertainment, food and family friendly activities planned across the weekend than ever before.

For the first time, the festival will kick off on Friday 25 September with *The Marquee Muster* at the Mundubbera Showgrounds. Held in the Main Marquee festival goers can expect a welcome dinner featuring delicious street-style food prepared by renowned local chef Kel using fresh local ingredients.

Also on the Friday evening, *Locavore*

4626 will offer an intimate paddock to plate experience for 200 guests with Celebrity Chef Matt Golinski at a secret location. Tickets for this exclusive event are limited, and early bookings are recommended.

On Saturday 26 September, the *Berry Big Day Out* will be held on the banks of the Burnett River at Bicentennial Park from 8am-2pm. This free family friendly celebration features more than 80 artisan market stalls, local food vendors, live entertainment, street performers, circus acts, and playful and entertaining competitions.

www.munduberrablueberryfestival.com



The Wakka Wakka Dance Group perform at the 2024 Mundubbera Blueberry Festival.

Cheers to 20 Years for The Barrel!

THIS year, The Bundaberg Brewed Drinks Barrel celebrates 20 years as a much-loved Bundaberg icon!

Since opening, it has welcomed nearly 2 million visitors - from Prime Ministers and sporting legends to celebrity chefs - and featured on national TV, as well as at local events like the Taste Bundaberg Festival.

The Barrel has also earned impressive recognition:

- Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards (2022-2025)
- Best of Queensland Experience Awards (2020-2025)

Congratulations to the Fleming family and the entire team for 20 legendary years. Here's to more brews, more memories, and many more visitors to come!

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Hidden gem reawakens near Bundaberg



Mystery Craters, South Kolan.

A ONCE-FORGOTTEN local attraction is quietly coming back to life, with the Bundaberg Mystery Craters reopening to curious visitors.

Located in South Kolan between Bundaberg and Gin Gin, the site features dozens of unusual, water-filled craters whose origins remain a mystery, drawing interest from both scientists and tourists for decades.

New owners took over the property three years ago and have been steadily restoring the area. Walking paths have been reopened, allowing visitors to once again explore the unique landscape.

Owner Agnele Finette said the goal has been to bring the craters “back to life” and reintroduce them to the community.

Guests can experience the craters through a self-guided tour, including walking trails, viewing platforms, and augmented reality features. VIP guided tours, led by the owners, offer a more personalised look into the site’s history and theories.

Features such as the Earth Room and Jim’s Trail add to the experience, offering visitors a chance to relax and connect with the surroundings.

Open daily from 9.00am to 2.30pm, the Mystery Craters offer a tranquil and intriguing day trip for locals and tourists alike.

Step back in time



BUNDABERG & District Historical Museum will fascinate visitors and locals with “how things used to be”.

Beautifully maintained by a small number of volunteers in the Botanic Gardens, this quaint haven of nostalgia has the famous Lucke Quads’ pram, the Spitfire Scroll, the World Quilt and artifacts unique to the Bundaberg area. Also on display is a butcher shop, general store, hospital equipment including the iron lung, milk cart with horse, even a jail.

Now they have stuffed! birds which once flew around Queens Park, over 100 years ago with photos of Bundy’s former mayors which adorn the walls.

Open 9.30am to 2.30pm Sunday to Friday. Closed Saturdays, Good Friday, Anzac Day and Christmas Day.

Adults \$10, Seniors and Concession holders \$8, children \$5. Family and Group discount prices also. Phone 4152 0101.

Steam train delights visitors at the Botanic Gardens

THE LITTLE TRAIN chuffs happily along its track through the Botanic Gardens, taking delighted children and the young at heart on a steam-powered journey.

Operated by a dedicated group of volunteers from the Bundaberg Steam Tramway Preservation Society, the steam train runs Wednesdays and Sundays all year and in the Queensland school holidays the diesel on Tuesday and Friday as well.

Visit the railway station while at the Gardens.

www.bundabergcanetrains.org.au

Like a winter swim?

WHETHER you’d like to swim laps, have a splash or try an exercise class, the new Bundaberg Aquatic Centre will welcome all ages and abilities and support the health and wellbeing goals of the Bundaberg community.

The Bundaberg Aquatic Centre is a Bundaberg Regional Council facility designed to serve needs of the entire Bundaberg community.

The multi-activity facility serves the Bundaberg community and surrounds, offering programs a range of accessible and family-friendly, aquatic and wellbeing facilities, for the whole community to enjoy.

Community mosaic project seeks support to protect reef message



A mosaic girl on a slide in Bargara. Photo by Robyn Weber.

A NEW COMMUNITY art project in Bargara is calling for support as it works to combine creativity with environmental awareness.

Bargara Mosaics has launched the Save Our Reefs: Turtle Park Community Mosaics initiative, transforming designs by Reef Guardian students from Bargara State School into colourful public artworks.

The mosaic panels will be installed at Turtle Park, aiming to both beautify the space and highlight the importance of protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

While the students’ designs are ready to come to life, organisers say the project is still \$8,000 short after missing out on state arts funding.

Donations will go towards materials, installation and artist-led community workshops, with locals encouraged to contribute and get involved.

Organisers say the project is about more than art, helping foster community pride while reinforcing the region’s connection to the reef.

Residents can support the initiative via the GoFundMe campaign: <https://gofund.me/1e2284def>

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The tour cost of \$3800 pp covers bus travel, bed, breakfast, entertainment and nightly meals. You leave on 21 September and return on 1 October 2026. Phone G and D Ross Bus Charters now for more details or to reserve a seat.

Phone 4129 7132.



Who knows! You may find a sapphire in the Gemfields on Greg's tour.

Top fishing at the top of Australia

LESS than an hour from the northernmost tip of Australia, is Loyalty Beach Campground and Fishing Lodge on 13 acres of spectacular beachfront with 11 acres of open bush camping.

During your stay go fishing and also you may see dingos, kangaroos, green tree snakes, pythons, wild horses, crocodiles or a beautiful Ulysses Butterfly. The restaurant

and bar operates seven days a week.

Loyalty Beach Campground officially opened in 2001 and to this day is a place respectful of the Cape's wildlife, people and environment.

This year's fishing season runs from May to December.

Phone Patsy at 07 4069 3808 for bookings.

It's Festival Time in The Outback

OUTBACK Queensland is once again coming alive during the cooler months, with communities rolling out a calendar of high-energy festivals that celebrate the region's spirit, stories and wide-open spaces.

The Drivers Camp has the bronco branding competition from 18 to 19 July. This thrilling, fast-paced event showcases the grit and teamwork of stockmen and women as they demonstrate traditional cattle-handling techniques.

Crowds gather trackside as dust flies and competitors work against the clock, offering a rare glimpse into the toughness and precision of life on the land.

The festivals capture the essence of Outback Queensland: big skies, campfire yarns, live country music and a strong sense of community pride. It's part of a broader winter festival trail that draws visitors from across the state and beyond.

The 2026 winter calendar is packed with standout events. The Festival of Outback Skies (1-3 May 2026) features art workshops, cooking demonstrations and a memora-

ble "Dinner Under the Stars". Later in May, the Festival of Outback Opera (19 - 24 May 2026) brings world-class performances to the bush, including the magical "Dark Sky Serenade".

Film lovers head to Winton for the Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival (26 June - 5 July 2026), proudly held in the "Hollywood of the Outback".

In Boulia, the Boulia Camel Races (18 - 20 July 2025) thrills with the famous "Camel Cup" and quirky Great Australian Ride-on Lawnmower Race, while the Tara Festival of Culture and Camel Races (31 July - 2 August 2026) delivers a colourful, family-friendly celebration of culture and camels.

Grey nomads have long embraced Outback Queensland's winter warmth, but in 2026 a new wave is joining them. Curated festival trails, youth-focused artist line-ups and immersive, high-energy programming are attracting a growing 18 - 35 demographic, proving the outback's appeal spans generations.



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FROM July to November, thousands of humpback whales descend on the sheltered waters off K'gari, turning Hervey Bay into one of Australia's premier wildlife destinations.

It's one of the few locations where whales pause during their migration, using the calm waters to rest, socialise and kindergarten their young.

Many linger for days or even weeks creating extraordinary close encounters that have earned the region its reputation as the Whale Watching Capital of Australia. This remarkable behaviour has also earned global recognition.

In 2019, Hervey Bay was named the world's first Whale Heritage Site by the World Cetacean Alliance, the title reflecting both its strong conservation efforts and the community's deep, long standing connection to the animals.

Visitors can experience daily whale watching tours departing from Urangan.

Blue Dolphin Marine Tours a long established Whale Watching tour operator and Peter has a full day trip to see the whales around Hervey Bay and Fraser Island.

Book now and save 10% by calling 07 4124 9600.

Australia's richest camel race at Boulia



DUST off your boots and head west for one of Queensland's most iconic outback experiences. Returning to the small town of Boulia from 17-19 July, the Boulia Camel Races is considered Australia's longest and richest camel racing event.

Often dubbed the 'Melbourne Cup of camel racing,' the annual race draws thousands of visitors to the edge of the Simpson Desert for an unforgettable weekend in the legendary land of the Min Min Lights.

The action packed program features a series of racing heats leading to the prestigious 1200m Boulia Camel Cup.

Visitors can also enjoy novelty races, including the crowd favourite lawn mower race and camel tagging competition, alongside live music and entertainment, food stalls, children's amusements and spectacular outback sunsets. Free onsite camping is included with all Weekend Passes, no book-

ings required. For those wanting a little extra comfort, glamping packages are also available through Pitch Luxury Camping.

Packages include a pre-pitched five metre bell tent with queen or single bedding, towels, lighting and furnishing for up to four guests.

Don't like camping? Visitors can also stay in nearby accommodation including the Australian Hotel/Motel, Boulia Caravan Park and the Desert Sands Motel. Organisers recommend booking accommodation early to avoid disappointment.

Tickets are on sale now, with Adult Weekend Passes priced at \$120, Saturday Only Passes \$100, and Sunday Passes \$60, while children under 18 receive free entry.

For more information or to purchase tickets visit bouliacamelraces.com.au For Pitch Luxury Camping call 0468 737 370.



Glamping tents available at the Boulia Camel Races.



Make sure you visit the Min Min Encounter and Visitor Information Centre Phone 4746 3386

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The Bundaberg Mother's Day Classic is more than just a walk or run, it is a chance for the community to come together.

Walk or run Mother's Day – support breast and ovarian cancer research

THE Bundaberg Mother's Day Classic will take place this Mother's Day, Sunday 10 May at the beautiful Bargarra foreshore.

Held at Christen Park, the event welcomes participants of all ages and abilities to walk or run in support of breast and ovarian cancer research. The flat, out and return course will follow Bargarra's scenic coastline heading north along the foreshore before looping back to the park.

The morning will begin with registration opening at 7.30am and a welcome and warm up will begin from 8am. Races and walks will roll out from 9am with the 10km run first, followed shortly after by 5km run and walk options. There will also be a shorter 2km walk. Participants can walk or run at their own pace, with the focus firmly on community rather than competition.

Beyond the course the event village will offer a relaxed family friendly atmosphere complete with a coffee van and sausage sizzle. The course is pram and wheelchair friendly with accessible parking and facilities available. Four legged friends are also welcome to join on the fun as long as they are on a leash.

With limited parking along the Esplanade, organisers encourage attendees to car-pool, walk or cycle where possible. Participants are also asked to bring their own water bottles with refill stations provided throughout the course.

Since 1998 the Mother's Day Classic Foundation has helped raise more than \$50 million towards lifesaving research.

Funds from the Bundaberg event support both the National Breast Cancer Foundation and the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation, funding research into prevention, early detection and improved treatments.

The Bundaberg Mother's Day Classic is more than just a walk or run, it is a chance for the community to come together, honour loved ones and contribute to life changing cancer research.

For more information visit www.mothersdayclassic.com.au



Win a copy of Explore Australia 2027

WE ARE giving readers the chance to win one of three copies of *Explore Australia 2027*, the country's longest running essential travel guide.

Now in its 43rd edition, this must have guide is packed with inspiration for your next getaway. Discover more than 700 destinations across Australia, from vibrant cities to hidden regional gems and stunning coastal escapes.

Inside, you'll find the best things to see and do, handy maps to plan your trip and a guide to major festivals and events happening around the country. With breathtaking photography throughout, *Explore Australia 2027* showcases some of Australia's

most spectacular locations, giving insights into First Nations culture, natural wonders and top food and wine regions.

Whether you are planning a road trip, family holiday or weekend escape the comprehensive guide published by Hardie Grant Explore, has everything you need to get started.

How to Enter:

Entry is free and open to all.

To enter go to www.coastlinenews.com and complete the questionnaire.

Entries close Friday 29 May 2026.

Winners will be contacted. Names of winners in the next Bundy Local and on our website.

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Government incentives make solar and batteries affordable

HOMEOWNERS can now install a new Solar system and Home Battery and save thousands of dollars with assistance from the Federal Government's generous energy bonus schemes.

As part of the government's plan to reduce the pressure of soaring electricity costs, residents can save up to a third of the cost on both Solar systems and Home Batteries.

Local business Clean Energy Bundaberg's area Manager Mr Terry Henry says, "With the existing Solar bonus and the recent addition of the new Home Battery scheme, now is the best time to act to reduce your ongoing energy costs for now and into the future."

Solar Systems

The current Solar system bonus applies to all new solar system installations whereby purchasers can receive up to \$6,000 for a large home installation.

The bonus also applies to those householders who have an existing Solar system and need to increase the size or update their old existing system to a brand new more efficient system.

With the assistance of the bonus, a brand new 6.6kw Solar system can be fully installed by Clean Energy Bundaberg from as little as \$3,995 or no deposit and just \$25 per week interest free.

With current average household electricity costs around \$2,600 per year, Solar now affords householders free power from the sun and saves thousands of dollars from the future rising costs of electricity into the future.

Clean Energy Bundaberg has a full range of brands and models of the latest Solar products, including high quality German brands, to suit every home and budget.

Home Batteries

Installing a new home battery, will produce free power to your home, in particular, night time electricity, which existing daylight dependant Solar systems do not produce.

The prior void can now be filled with an around the clock supply of power which can now be achieved by simply adding a battery to an existing solar system or by installing a brand new battery and solar system package.

Households with a new or existing solar system, which produces power during the day, can now fill the evening gap with a Home battery in lieu of buying power from Ergon.

Now homeowners can provide 100% of their power needs and live bill free! Ever increasing blackouts can also be a thing of the past with a blackout feature option as part of the installation.

The recently released Federal Government Home Battery Scheme, will pay to homeowners an amount of around 30% of the total cost of installing a new home battery to their premises.

The government payment bonus now makes a home battery genuinely economical and affordable for most homeowners.

An ergonomic battery addition can now provide homeowners with long term bill free electricity, thus saving thousands of dollars in power costs into the future.

In fact, Mr Henry says a quality battery installation combined with the new government battery bonus payment, can provide positive cashflow and credits each month, in lieu of a bill, thus creating an excellent investment for homeowners who take advantage of the new scheme.

It is also important to install the correct sized battery to match Solar output and to work effectively within the local Ergon network.

Home batteries also assist government by providing production relief to our already overloaded and expensive energy production network, and reduced harm to our environment.

Both Federal Government Solar and Battery schemes are subject to diminishing amounts over time and householders are urged to act now to achieve the maximum amount of funds towards their installations.

Clean Energy Bundaberg is the local



Solar affords householders free power from the sun and saves thousands of dollars from the future rising costs of electricity into the future.

market leader offering a complete range of brands and models of new home batteries available for installation.

Their technical team have spent much time and resources on the evaluation and testing of solar and home battery technology, and are now able to supply, install and service a complete range of tested solar and battery options.

They are also fully licensed and authorised to take care of the government bonus scheme application on behalf of purchasers.

They specialise in the supply of latest release ultimate quality German engineered solar systems and batteries, with solid long term warranties and local service.

Clean Energy Bundaberg has fully licensed and experienced full-time local crews in lieu of using "out of town subbies".

Initially, homeowners are offered a free no-obligation on-site evaluation, requirements, assessment and quotation, to conclude how solar or a new home battery will

work in the individual household, all explained in plain English.

Clean Energy Bundaberg is currently offering homeowners a special offer of a brand new home battery fully installed from only \$3,995, or no deposit and interest free terms from just \$25 per week.

The company also supplies and installs quality fully ducted or split system air-conditioning, smoke detectors, and all general electrical work.

The business is genuinely locally based working from their offices and warehouse in East Bundaberg, and their experienced teams have been providing 5 star servicing throughout our region for more than 13 years, servicing the greater Bundaberg region from Maryborough to Gladstone.

For a free quote on solar, home batteries or air-conditioning, contact your friendly local service provider Clean Energy Bundaberg now on (07) 4154 8787, 24 hours 7 days

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New scooter rules from July 1

QUEENSLAND has introduced tough new laws banning children under 16 from riding e-bikes and e-scooters, in a major move to improve safety on the state's roads and pathways.

Under the changes, only riders aged 16 and over with a learner licence will be allowed to use personal mobility devices. Teenagers will have to pass a road rules test, costing \$28.70 before applying for a learner licence at \$77.55.

There will be no exemptions, children under 16 will be prohibited from riding even under adult supervision.

Parents could face fines if their child breaks the rules, including a \$166 penalty for underage riding.

The legislation will also tighten regulations around what qualifies as a legal e-bike. Devices cannot exceed a power output of 250 watts and a top speed of 25km/h. Any-

thing more powerful will be classed as a motorcycle, requiring registration and a licence.

Police will have the power to seize, impound or destroy illegal devices on the spot. Additional penalties apply for unsafe behaviour, such as using a mobile phone while riding, which carries a fine of \$1251.

The new laws are expected to take effect on 1 July 2026, with a six month transition period.

More than 6000 e-scooter injuries were treated in Queensland hospitals between 2022 and 2025. The crackdown follows a nine month inquiry into e-bike safety, which received more than 1200 submissions amid rising concerns over accidents and rider behaviour.

Minster for Transport and Main Roads Brent Mickelberg said the Government's decisions were about making Queensland safer through nation-leading reforms.



Will this be the future of scooters in Bundaberg?

Explore what's next at Natrium Coral Cove

YOU ARE invited to discover a new approach to retirement living at the Natrium Coral Cove Discovery Session on Wednesday 29 April at Coral Cove Golf Club.

Running from 10am to 12:30pm, the session offers a relaxed introduction to the Natrium Coral Cove community, with guests able to enjoy light refreshments while learning more about the lifestyle, amenities and opportunities available.

A key highlight will be guest speaker Rachel Lane, a nationally recognised expert in retirement living and aged care.



A regular columnist for The Sydney Morning Herald, Ms Lane is known for breaking down complex financial and care decisions into clear, practical advice.

She has more than two decades of experience in the sector and frequently comments on the changing costs and structures of aged care.

Her latest column examines Australia's aged care means test, questioning how effective and transparent the system is for everyday Australians navigating later-life decisions.

Attendees will gain valuable insights to help them better understand their options and plan their next move with confidence.

Natrium Coral Cove offers a modern, low-maintenance lifestyle in a coastal setting, designed to support connection, comfort and ease for residents entering their next chapter.

Childers Festival: A celebration of the people!

Thursday, 23 July to
Sunday, 26 July, 2026

THE Bruce Highway closes when Childers is transformed into an action-packed entertainment hub, concluding with Sunday's famous market day, when over 30,000 people flock to the small town for celebrity artists and live music.

With over 300 stallholders with vintage treasures, local produce, hand-made gems and local arts and craft; plus dance, culture, street performers and carnival rides.



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St Leo's mixes accommodation, academia, dining and social activities with a brotherhood that will support you far beyond your university experience.

Founded in 1917, St Leo's College sits amongst 114 hectares of Brisbane River-bound land within The University of Queensland, St Lucia.

Beyond the College's fantastic location, residents at St Leo's have access to academic tutorial support, professional opportunities, and a thriving support network of fellow residents and staff.

Every aspect of your university experience at St Leo's has been considered, leaving you free to create long-lasting experiences and memories.

St Leo's College will become YOUR home!



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COLLEGE
(WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND)

St Leo's College welcomes Dan McMahon, our new CEO and Head of College. Dan was principal for 17 years at Shalom Catholic College, Bundaberg.

"I very much look forward to returning to Bundaberg, to speak with any young men and their families who might be considering a Residential College to support their studies in Brisbane."



MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A CHAT WITH DAN McMAHON DURING HIS VISIT TO BUNDABERG – MAY 11, 2026.

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Norfolk Island welcomes visitors to an unspoiled paradise

THIS green island paradise is found in the middle of the South Pacific ocean and is just 35 kms square in size with 32 kms of coastline.

On Norfolk the only fast food is pulled fresh from the soil or sea. Where there are no traffic lights. Where you can still park your car with the keys in the ignition.

On Norfolk you won't find any railways, port or harbours or even busy roads for that matter. There are 80 kms of laneways across the island and cows still have right of way.

When supplies come by ship, jetties on either side of the Island are used to send small boats out to the bigger ships to ferry in 5 tonnes of supplies at a time.

Time moves slowly. Elegant convict-built Georgian buildings are still in daily use and the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) is now World Heritage Listed as part of the Australian Convict Sites inscription.

Climate – In a word –comfortable. One

of the many blessings is a subtropical climate with summer averages from 23 to 25c and winter from 17 to 20c during the day and rarely below 10c at night.

Average rainfall is 1328 mm per year with wettest months May to August; driest November to January. Norfolk Island is nearly a straight line across from Byron Bay.

Population – The small but perfectly formed world of Norfolk is home to around 1800 but in peak tourist season the numbers swell to 2800.

Sometimes tourists combined with temporary residents can exceed the permanent population but there's plenty of wide open space for everybody.

Norfolk is an island of unspoiled natural beauty, where the locals tread lightly upon the earth. They are a unique people, descendants of the famous Bounty mutineers.

The islanders speak their own special language, and will welcome you in their own unique way.



Emily Bay.



Historic buildings of Norfolk Island.

TWO TOP EVENTS ON NORFOLK ISLAND

ANNIVERSARY BOUNTY DAY 8 June 2026



ANNIVERSARY (Bounty) Day on the 8th of June celebrates the anniversary of the arrival of the Pitcairn Islanders to Norfolk Island.

The Pitcairn Islanders were the descendants of the infamous English sailors of mutiny on the Bounty fame and the Tahitian women who, under their leader Fletcher Christian began a new life on isolated Pitcairn Island.

After outgrowing tiny Pitcairn the community, Queen Victoria gave Norfolk Island to the 8 island families, 194 islanders arrived on the Morayshire in 1856.

The celebrations are held in the World Heritage area of Kingston which includes a re-enactment, parade, wreath laying, singing of hymns and a community picnic highlighting traditional food.

Visitors are welcome to observe and can also pre-book a traditional lunch experience with a local tour operator.
www.norfolkisland.com.au

PRO-AM GOLF CLASSIC 22-28 August 2026



AMATEUR and professional golfers not only play for an attractive prize pool every August, but they also experience golf Norfolk Island style. The tournament is challenging yet highly friendly and social, local players join visiting Pros and Amateurs to compete in the four-day comp.

The Norfolk Island Golf course is set in the World Heritage listed area of Kingston, with coastal views and a challenging nine hole, 18 tees course.

The Pro-Am is one of the most popular tournaments of the year and golfers are recommended to book their spot early.
www.norfolkislandgolf.com



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BUSHkids programs help Bundaberg families thrive together

By Mellissa Harney

FAMILIES across Bundaberg are being supported through a range of free parenting programs and community initiatives delivered by BUSHkids, a Queensland-based not-for-profit organisation focused on strengthening children and families in regional communities.

Locally, BUSHkids offers several evidence-based parenting programs designed to support families with children aged 0 to 12.

For families navigating attention challenges, the ADHD parent group provides practical strategies and shared learning opportunities across six sessions, available both online and in person.

The program focuses on understanding how children's brains work, while equipping parents with tools to support both home and school environments.

Another key offering is the SEEN Parenting Course, a reflective program that encourages parents to explore their own upbringing and develop new, more connected approaches to raising children.

The course has recently been delivered in collaboration with local Intensive Family Support services, responding directly to community need.

Early outcomes have been promising. BUSHkids marked its 90th anniversary with the launch of the SEEN – The Movie Parent Documentary Roadshow at the Moncrieff Entertainment Centre in September, draw-

ing strong local support including Bundaberg Regional Councillor Tracey McPhee, Federal Hinkler MP David Batt and BUSHkids Chair Neil Bartels.

Following the screening, several local groups have engaged in the SEEN Parenting modules, with participants already reporting meaningful changes.

One local mother, with a complex trauma background, has shown significant progress, responding to her children with greater empathy, pausing rather than reacting, and building healthier family relationships.

Beyond structured programs, BUSHkids is also actively involved in community events, including this year's Agrotrend. The organisation will once again "bring the bush" to the event, offering a safe and engag-

ing space for children with fun activities.

These events play an important role in strengthening community ties, giving families the chance to connect, learn and spend quality time together outside of daily routines. They also provide a valuable opportunity for parents to access information about local services and supports in a relaxed, welcoming environment.

Parents and carers interested in accessing BUSHkids programs can refer via the organisation's website www.bushkids.org.au or contact the local office directly on (07) 4111 1655 for assistance.

With a strong focus on connection, education and community, BUSHkids continues to play a vital role in supporting Bundaberg families to thrive.

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BUNDY TIME MACHINE

1924.



Bert Hinkler.

Hinkler Wins Air Race

IN 1924 Bert Hinkler broke a record at a light aeroplane competition at Lypne, reaching an altitude of 4000ft. Lypne is a village in Kent, England.

Unfortunately, he was disqualified from the competition for not being in time with his entry.

The Bundaberg aviator later went on to win the Lypne trial Hundred Mile open race for the Grosvenor Cup.

Hinkler was flying an Avro Avis biplane and finished with a time of 1 hour, 31 minutes, and 5 seconds.

1931.

The Hummock Lookout Officially Opens

ON 17 October 1931, more than 1000 people gathered at the summit of The Hummock for the official opening of Hummock Lookout.

Over 100 motor cars and several buses travelled from Bundaberg and across the region to attend, drawn by a promise of breathtaking views.

The Lookout was developed by the Bundaberg branch of RACQ. Years of volunteer labour and local effort transformed the rugged summit into an accessible vantage point. Land was purchased, cleared and landscaped, roads were built, and shade trees were planted creating a welcoming spot for visitors.

Speaking at the official opening ceremony, then Club President of RACQ, Mr D.S.M Finmore said that the club had their eye on the property for some time realising what a wonderful asset it would be to the district if the hill could be purchased and access to the summit secured.

A remnant of ancient volcanic activity, The Hummock offers panoramic views of the districts cane fields, the Burnett River and stunning coastline.

Hailed a major achievement for the re-

gion at the time, the Lookout remains as a testament to community spirit, and the early popularity of motoring and scenic tourism in Queensland.

1965.

The Paramount Theatre screened its final film in 1965

AFTER more than half a century entertaining the people of Bundaberg, The Paramount Theatre screened its final film on October 30, 1965, closing the doors on one of the city's most recognisable landmarks.

Opened in the early 1910s, the theatre was located on Bourbong Street between Tantitha and Walla streets and was a prominent feature of Bundaberg's streetscape with its distinct façade.

Over the decades the theatre evolved with the changing film industry, welcoming the transition from silent pictures with live music to 'talkies and cinematic releases. It was a popular and affordable form of entertainment for local families.

Formally known as the Jubilee Picture Gardens, The Paramount was more than just a movie theatre. It served as a social meeting place during major historical periods, including both World Wars and the Great Depression.

At the time of its closure, proprietor Doug Rattray said he regretted the decision but felt the time had come to retire. Mr Rattray, also known as 'Mr Motion Pictures', owned and ran the theatre from 1927-1965. He was widely remembered for his generosity during the difficult times of the Great Depression, when no patron was turned away even if they could not afford a ticket.

Although the theatre building was later demolished the Paramount lives on in Bundaberg's history as a place where stories came to life on screen and lasting memories were made.



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FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FLYNN

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Authorised by Colin Boyce MP, LNP, 76 Goondoon Street, Gladstone QLD 4680.

A look at Bundaberg through the years

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1966.

Genuine alternative to the "Big Banks" began locally

IN 1966, Ron Hancock set out to create something different for banking customers in the region. Believing people deserved an alternative to the big banks, he helped establish what would eventually grow into Auswide Bank.

Originally operating as a building society, the organisation began serving local communities with a focus on practical financial support and strong customer re-



Ron Hancock.

lationships. Over the following decades it expanded steadily throughout Queensland, operating under several names including Wide Bay Capricorn Building Society, Wide Bay Capricorn and later Wide Bay Australia.

Growth came through a combination of new branches, mergers and a steadily increasing customer base, with the organisation building a reputation for its "small things, big difference" approach to service.

In April 2015, the organisation officially launched as Auswide Bank, marking a significant milestone after almost five decades of growth.

More recently, in February 2025, Auswide Bank merged with MyState Bank to become a wholly owned subsidiary, beginning a new chapter in its history.

While much has changed since those early days in 1966, the original vision remains the same - providing Australians with a genuine alternative to the big banks.

1980.

Leanne Dick is crowned Miss Australia

BUNDABERG celebrated with pride after local woman Leanne Dick was crowned Miss Australia in Melbourne on October 24, 1980.



IMAGE RAY PEEK

Miss Australia 1980, Leanne Dick.

Upon her return to Bundaberg, she stepped off the plane at the airport to a rousing welcome from family, locals and well-wishers.

A crowd of 100 waited in the terminal to get a closer look at the girl whose face graced the front pages of national dailies.

Miss Dick smiled and posed for pictures and signed autographs as she was reunited

with her family. In the days that followed, the 20 year old teacher from South Kolan was paraded down Bourbong Street on a throne as locals lined the street clapping and cheering.

She was honoured with a reception at the Civic Centre on October 31 where then Mayor Ald Cliff Neilson formally recognised her achievement and presented her with an unexpected gift.

Accustomed to gifting cuff links the Mayor said at the time he hoped that Miss Dick would give them to her husband should she choose to marry!

Dressed in a pale blue off-the-shoulder frock and wearing her Miss Australia tiara and sash, Miss Dick spoke of her experiences over the past few weeks and the big changes winning the title would bring to her life.

She said she planned to return to teaching once her reign was over.

Over the next 12 months she went on to travel around the country, attending community events and raising awareness and funds for people with Cerebral Palsy.

Leanne Dick was the eighth Queensland woman to hold the title of Miss Australia and the first from Bundaberg. She was later given a second mayoral reception in August 1981.

As part of her duties, she crowned the new Miss Burnett, Janelle Curd on October 10, 1981, before relinquishing her own crown.

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natriumcoralcove.com.au



Council updates winter hours for local community swimming pools

AS WINTER approaches, Bundaberg Regional Council is advising residents of updated operating times for Council owned pools over the cooler months.

Gin Gin Swimming Pool

The Gin Gin pool closed for the winter season from 20 April.

The pool is scheduled to re-open for the start of the new swim season on 19 September 2026.

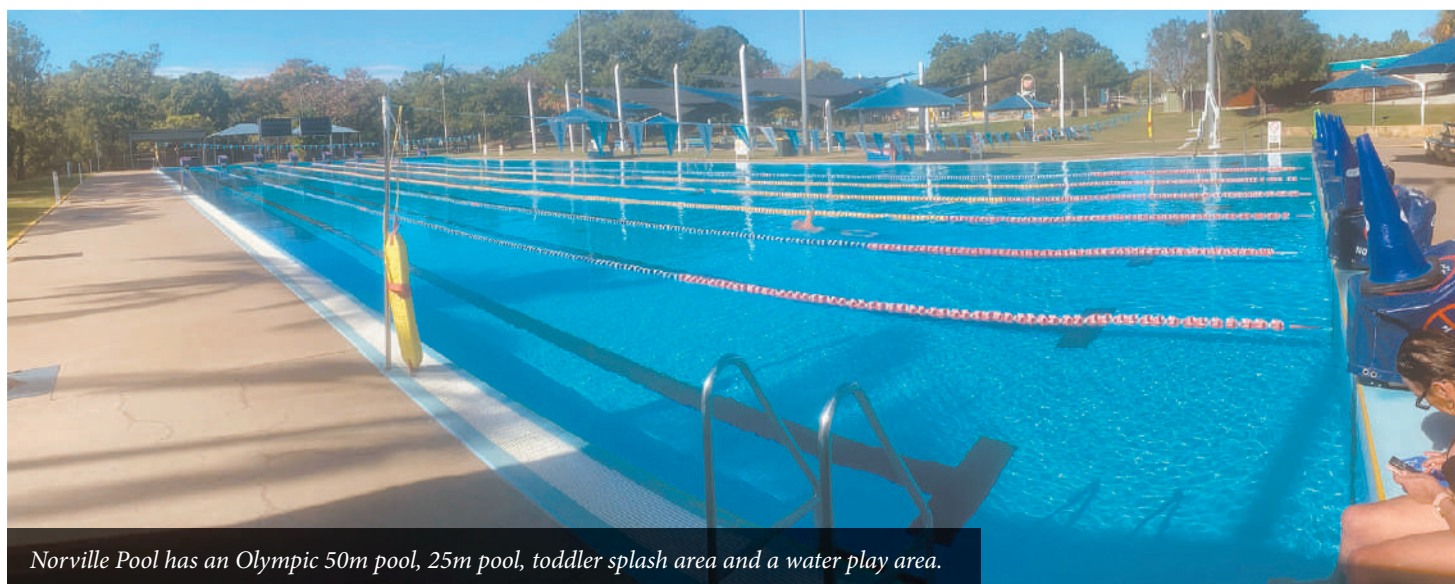
Isis War Memorial Swimming Pool

The Isis War Memorial pool will temporarily close to allow for essential maintenance works.

The facility will be closed from 1 June to 3 August, helping ensure the pool is safe, well-maintained and ready for the upcoming warmer months.

Norville Park Swimming Pool

Norville Park pool is expected to remain open into May, provided water temperatures remain favourable and there is sufficient community demand.



Norville Pool has an Olympic 50m pool, 25m pool, toddler splash area and a water play area.

The confirmed winter closure date will be posted on the pool's website once determined.

Following its winter closure, Norville Park pool will re-open for the new swim season on 1 September

Bundaberg Aquatic Centre

The Bundaberg Aquatic Centre remains open all year round, offering heated indoor swimming, programs and activities for all ages.

Residents are encouraged to visit their website to explore their available facilities and services.

For more information and updates on all Council swimming pools across the region, head to Council's website.

Bundaberg Show returns bigger, brighter, and bolder



EXCITEMENT is building as the Bundaberg Show returns from May 27-29, celebrating an incredible 132 years of community, culture, and country pride.

A standout on the region's social calendar, this year's show promises thrilling horse show jumping, vibrant agricultural showcases, more than 30 fiercely contested events, spectacular fireworks, and a lively lineup of entertainment for all ages.

Locals are invited to showcase their talents across a wide variety of categories, including cooking, crafts, and animal classes.

Behind the scenes, dedicated craft groups and volunteers work tirelessly to bring each display to life, highlighting the skills and passion within the Bundaberg community.

Businesses are also encouraged to get involved, with a range of site options available for everyone from small vendors to large machinery exhibitors, both indoors and outdoors.

Despite ongoing financial pressures facing rural shows across Australia, including rising fuel costs, the Bundaberg Show remains resilient, thanks largely to its strong community support.

With free entry for children under six and seniors over 75, plus opportunities to volunteer, exhibit, or simply enjoy the atmosphere, this year's show is not to be missed.

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MICHAEL

The Michael Jackson biopic is set for release on April 23 starring his nephew Jaafar Jackson as the King of Pop.

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2

Coming April 30, a sequel to the 2006 film The Devil Wears Prada starring Meryl Streep.

MORTAL KOMBAT II

American martial arts fantasy film based on the video game. Starts May 7.

THE SHEEP DETECTIVES

Mystery comedy film with Hugh Jackman. Screening from May 7.

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