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Forster Fortnightly

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Lions Club 65 Years!

Above: The Forster Tuncurry Lions' Committee for 2026/27 was announced at their 65th Anniversary Dinner on 15 June at Club Forster.
Back row (L-R) Mick McGrath, John Monks, John Imber, Rangy Smith, Brian Braithwaite, Bernard Pearson and Peter Sloan (President).
Front row – Suzanne Newton, Dot Monks, Karen Llewellyn, Bev Old, Margaret Kentwell, Jenny Olsen and Vicki Sloan. Photo by Geordie Yule

By Mary Yule - Forster Fortnightly

Forster Tuncurry Lions celebrate 65 years of community service

A walk around Forster-Tuncurry reveals the lasting impact of the Lions Club's hard working volunteers. From pathways, railings and picnic shelters to beach showers, bubblers, signage, fish-cleaning tables, exercise equipment and park facilities, much of the infrastructure enjoyed by residents and visitors has been built or maintained by the club over the past 65 years.

Beyond its physical contributions, the Lions Club of Forster Tuncurry continues to raise significant funds for local organisations and schools through its Mini Golf and Trampolines Park (next to the Forster-Tuncurry Bridge), annual Christmas Trailer Raffle and community barbecues.

The club's achievements were celebrated on June 15 at its 65th Anniversary and Changeover Dinner at Club Forster, attended by members, special guests and representatives from neighbouring clubs.

Mayor Claire Pontin praised the organisation's commitment to service.

"It's truly a pleasure to join you tonight," she said. "Lions is such a wonderful organisation and you should all be very proud of the work that you do because you touch so many people."

"I've seen the work that you do. It's non-stop and well done to you. It's also worth remembering that you are part of Lions International, with 1.4 million members worldwide. The organisation reaches into every part of the globe, providing services, assistance and financial support wherever it is needed."

President Peter Sloan reported on a busy and successful year for the club.

"It's been a privilege to be president of this great team," he said.

Peter highlighted the importance of the club's Mini Golf and Trampolines Park operation, thanking coordinator John Monks and the many volunteers who help keep the facility running.

"Thanks to all who volunteered including help from the Pearl Dragons and the Neighbourhood Centre to support us over the school holiday period. The hours that we volunteered over the school holidays in the past year have been 1,150 actual hours of trampolines. And that's

Continued on page 2.



NEW MENU!

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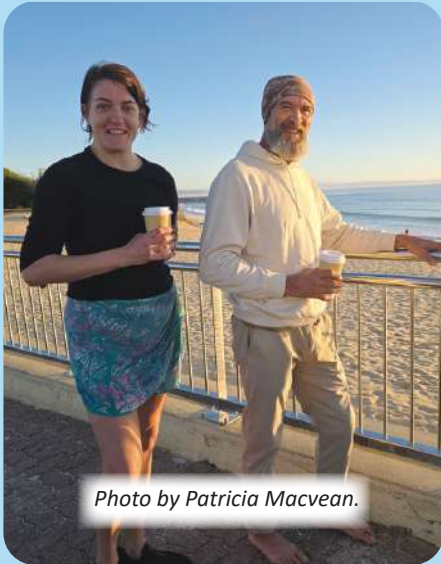


Photo by Patricia Macvean.

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We acknowledge the Worimi People, the traditional custodians of the land where this newspaper is published. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and future.

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65 Years of Lions

Continued from page 1.

just one of the many projects that we do," he said.

The club also continued its extensive barbecue program, led by John Imber, supporting events including Motorfest, school functions and community activities. One upcoming commitment will see members provide a free barbecue for around 500 school students as part of an anti-bullying campaign.

Fundraising efforts again delivered strong results. The annual Christmas Trailer Raffle broke previous records, while the club's popular Christmas cake sales, including gluten-free varieties, sold out.

As a result of its fundraising activities, the club distributed an amazing \$75,000 during the past year. Around 20% was directed to Lions' programs and foundations, 68% to local community organisations and 12% to local school scholarships and education programs.

"You can only imagine how much money has been raised by Forster Tuncurry Lions over the past 65 years," Peter said.

Maintenance coordinator Bernard Pearson was recognised for overseeing projects including mowing, painting, recycling and grant applications. Funds generated through recycling initiatives at Club Forster are donated to the local women's shelter.

Long-serving members Bev Old and Jenny Olson were also acknowledged for their ongoing work recycling postage stamps and eyeglasses, which are processed and sent overseas for reuse.

The club is also expanding its Lions Eye Health



Above: Life Memberships for 50 years of Service were presented to Lions Peter Shaw (on left) and John Hahn OAM (on right) by President Peter Sloan and MP Tanya Thompson. Photo by Mary Yule.

Program. Following successful screenings in Harrington, Coopers Creek and Moorland schools, members found approximately 20% of children assessed had vision issues requiring further attention. Training for the program's next stage commenced on June 16, with three local primary schools participating.

Peter finished the evening by announcing many well-earned awards presented by MP Tanya Thompson before the introduction of the new committee members in their roles for 2026-27.

The Lions Club of Forster Tuncurry was established in 1960 after members of the Three Lions Club explored the possibility of forming a local chapter. The inaugural meeting attracted more than 50 community members and marked the beginning of a service tradition that continues today.

Sixty-five years on, the club remains guided by the Lions motto: "We Serve".

See p18 for Lions' Mini Golf & Tramp Park ad. advert. Tramp

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Shark awareness around Forster Tuncurry



By Sophia McCaughan - Forster Fortnightly

A 35-year-old woman remains in hospital after she was bitten by a shark at Coogee Beach in Sydney's eastern suburbs earlier this month.

The woman was swimming about 30 metres from the shore at the time of the incident and suffered serious injuries to her arm and leg.

Over the last 10 years there were, on average, 27 shark incidents each year where people were injured according to the Australian Shark Incident Database.

This most recent attack in Sydney is putting Australia's shark mitigation programs back in the spotlight.

There are a range of shark mitigation measures across beaches around the Mid-Coast local government area including three tagged shark listening stations, 15 SMART (Shark Management Alert In Real-Time) drum lines and five beaches covered by Surf Lifesaving NSW drones including Forster and Tuncurry.

SMART drum lines are anchored buoys rigged with a GPS communication unit and baited hooks, and within 30 minutes of a shark taking the bait, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) deploys a team to tag and release the shark.

At Forster Surf Lifesaving Club near the roller doors there are shark bite/trauma kits that can be used in the case of an emergency where someone has been bitten by a shark.

There are also community shark bite kits located across beaches in the region with every kit containing an SOF (professional-grade arterial) tourniquet, two compression bandages, two large dressings, emergency thermal blanket, emergency whistle, amputated parts bags, gloves and two shark bite management cards.

President of Forster Surf Life Saving Club, John Quinn said drones have been operating from Forster through to Tuncurry.

"Drones have been operating on the weekends for some years, but this year started operating seven days a week," Mr Quinn said.

"Drones are a great asset not just for our members but for the community as well as a safety measure."

When a shark is spotted by a drone, even if there isn't a surf lifesaver on duty, swimmers and surfers are alerted to get out of the water through a loudspeaker.

As well as this, the drone operator then uploads the sighting of the shark on SharkSmart app, which is an educational and safety initiative by the state government designed to help beachgoers reduce the risk of shark encounters providing real-time tracking and safety alerts of sharks.

Mr Quinn said drones are useful in spotting sharks that aren't visible from the shore.

"The drones are a great feature with a high visual impact, you can see them (sharks) through the water, but if you are just on the shore you can't see them (sharks) properly," he said.

While it may be the off-season for the beach, Mr Quinn has some advice for those who are out in the ocean.

"Swim in numbers and don't swim in overcast or murky waters," he explained.

Surf lifesaving patrols will return during the September school holidays which commence on Monday, September 28.



Above: John Quinn - President Forster Surf Club. Photos supplied.



Above: Shark bite/trauma kit near the roller doors beachside of Forster Surf Club.



Above: Shark bite kit near the ramp going up towards Beach Burns Cafe on Main Beach.

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Noline Cornhill OAM: Recognised for lifetime of service

By Mary Yule – Forster Fortnightly

Forster resident Noline Cornhill was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the King's Birthday Honours on 8 June 2026 for her "service to the communities of Canberra and Forster-Tuncurry." The award recognises a lifetime devoted to education, community service and helping people build meaningful connections.

Noline began her teaching career in Sydney in 1967 before moving to Canberra in 1970, where she spent the majority of her professional life working in ACT schools. Her career included roles as a classroom teacher, principal, mentor and university tutor, and she remains passionate about the profession she loved.

"I actually loved teaching," she said. "It was all about making a connection with every child. If a child was struggling, you found out what interested them that you could talk about together. Whether it was football, animals or cars, you built that relationship and then learning followed."

In 2003 Noline became Principal at Chisholm Primary School in Canberra where she said the schooling system was open to changes and new ideas.

"One of the things I was most passionate about as a principal was keeping class sizes smaller to support the teachers and keep them coming back each day," she said.

She dismisses the common belief that teaching is a simple nine-to-three occupation.

"People say teaching is nine to three. That's rubbish," she said. "As a principal I regularly worked ten-hour days and attended meetings



Above: Noline Cornhill OAM in front of pictures of her father Arthur Flanagan (on left) and her Uncle Jack Flanagan (on right). Noline's father was also awarded an OAM when he was 82 years old for Services to the Community in Murwillumbah. There he organised camping and similar activities (with help from other residents) for the kids who were needing some attention and mentoring.

at night. We did weekends and we had parents come in, particularly at Chisholm in Canberra because it was a suburb that didn't have a lot of financial support. And so parents would come in and do the gardening or paint a wall. They got really, really involved, which was good for them because they got a social network going."

Creating positive school environments was another hallmark of her leadership.

"We had dress-up days where teachers became the Village People or dressed as Dalmatians. We organised musical productions and special events where every child could be involved. When the teachers were enjoying themselves, the students were happy too."

Her schools also developed creative ways to support children who struggled socially. Special areas were established in playgrounds where students could participate in activities designed to encourage positive interaction and friendships.

"We had parents bring in electric car tracks and other activities," she said. "Children who found the playground difficult suddenly had somewhere they wanted to be, and before long other children wanted to join them. It helped build friendships and confidence."

Noline is particularly proud of her work in tackling bullying and supporting vulnerable students.

"Being able to nip bullying in the bud was very important to me," she said. "We had difficult situations just like every other school, but because every teacher was on board and committed to restorative practices, we were able to deal with those issues without expelling or suspending a single child."

She believes quieter children often need the greatest support.

"The shy children are the ones you have to watch. They can go unnoticed. You need to help them develop confidence, communication skills and give them leadership opportunities."

Alongside her school leadership roles, Noline spent 14 years tutoring in the teacher education program at the University of Canberra, helping to prepare future generations of teachers. She travelled to schools across the ACT helping teachers develop inquiry-learning strategies that encouraged students to ask questions, think critically and investigate ideas for themselves.

"When I was at school, everything was written on the blackboard, you copied it down and then repeated it in an exam," she said. "Teaching children how to question, explore and find answers themselves was a major shift and it was something I strongly believed in."

After retiring and moving to Forster in 2008, Noline quickly became involved in community life. One of her first experiences was watching the U3A Puppeteers perform at a children's Christmas event.

"I thought, 'This brings so much joy to the community and it looks like so much fun. That's for me.'"

She joined U3A and became part of the puppetry group, which entertained children in preschools and childcare centres and visited aged-care facilities. Although the group ceased during the COVID pandemic, her involvement with U3A continues and she has served on its committee as President, Vice President, Welfare Officer and Course Coordinator for the last 14 years.

"U3A is all about lifelong learning, friendship and companionship," she said. "People join classes, learn new skills and form incredible friendships. For many older people, particularly those who are lonely or new to town, it's a real lifeline."

The organisation now has more than 200 members and continues to grow as new residents move to the area.

Noline was also recognised for her voluntary work at Forster Library and CatholicCare Community Meals.

Noline thinks she is no different from most other people and doesn't think she has contributed more than anyone else either.

"I've been fortunate to work with wonderful teachers, volunteers and community members. Everything I've done has involved other people. It's always been about working together to help people learn, connect and enjoy life."



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Forster hosts
Biggest
Morning Tea



By Elizabeth Maher – Palms Lakes Estate

On Friday 29th May amidst the clouds and rain, residents and their friends braved the weather to head to the Belleair Country Club (Palm Lakes Resort) where The Biggest Morning Tea was being hosted. It started at 10.30am with entry being a gold coin donation. Residents and their friends were able to buy raffle tickets that had the most amazing prizes donated by residents and local businesses from the Forster/Tuncurry area. The theme was International and tables were decorated in Australiana, French, Pacific Islands, Asian and English themes. Some people made the extra effort and dressed up in areas around the world to add to the fun of the day. Food was supplied by the residents and guests, making it a very tasty day indeed. Apart from the raffle they had many articles for sale on the day from clothes, handmade goods, prints etc. The highlight of the day was the auction. With 105 lots to auction, our day was very exciting with many people bidding for the fabulous articles which ranged from paintings, sporting goods, homeware, beauty products, entertainment, furniture and many wonderful vouchers.

The Palm Lake Resort raised over \$12,000 on the day for cancer research.

They could not have done it without the fantastic support from the local businesses and for those residents who donated beautiful gifts. A very big thank you to all involved and we look forward to next year.

Another story from local competition...

By Lorraine Rogers – Tell Me A Story

The Magic Waterfall is another story by Felicity Twaddle in last year's Tell Me A Story writing and illustrating competition. Felicity, then in year 5 at Nabiac Public school, was awarded Commended for her writing and Highly Commended for her illustration of the story. Felicity has been entering stories in the competition since year 3 and has enjoyed sharing and gaining ideas with her classmates and teachers.

Felicity's love of nature and her experiences with waterfalls are the essence of her story of turtles, birds, colours and fantasy, with a surprise magical ending. You can read her story and admire her artistic skills below.

Felicity is now planning another story and illustration for this year's competition, which ends on Friday July 31.

Students in Years 3-4 and 5-6 across the Great Lakes and Manning regions are invited to take part in the Tell Me a Story writing and illustration competitions. This local competition has running successfully since 2018.

All relevant information for teachers, parents and students is on the website at:

tmas@tellmeastory.org.au

"The Magic Waterfall"
by Felicity Twaddle

Splash! Splash!

A fish is flipping and flopping in the water, as an azure kingfisher sitting on a branch of a nearby tree looks for its prey. The dancing fish catches the royal blue kingfisher's eye, causing it to swoop down and snatch it for breakfast. While the azure kingfisher eats its meal, it listens to the waterfall not far away. No human has ever dared to touch the waterfall yet because of the legend about the powerful magic within the water.

Later that day, a few turtles come for a swim, as well as a few humans. They all jump in, and the turtles swim away. The kingfisher sees



Above: Felicity Twaddle holding her published story from 2025.

more fish and swoops down again. This time, he is too slow, and a human quickly pulls out a camera and takes a photo. The camera flash gets into the royal kingfisher's eyes, and the bird instantly collapses into the water.

A little girl sees what happens from a distance. She runs as fast as she can and tells the people,

"You are threatening nature! If you don't stop, you'll have to leave."

"What a Karen," they say.

She ignores them and jumps into the water, bringing the kingfisher home. At home, she and her mother give it treatment. The next day, they let it go. It returns to its favourite branch on the tree near the waterfall.

A few hours pass, and the little girl comes back for a swim. She doesn't know about the magic in the waterfall. She has heard stories but always thought they were rubbish. Without thinking twice, she jumps down the waterfall with joy on her face. She is so brave.

Seconds after she jumps, she hears her name.

"Livy... Livy..."

She jumps out of the water and runs home. "Yes?" she happily calls back to the small, faint voice as she keeps running.

Later that night, she feels a sharp pain in her back, like something is piercing it.

In the morning, she goes to the doctor. The doctor takes a look and whispers, "You can fly?"

Her mum looks shocked.

"No, of course not! I don't have wings."

"Umm... yes, you do."

Livy sprints outside and jumps into the air. She flaps her wings and shouts, "I can flyyyy!"

Her mum rushes outside. "Livy!" she calls, but Livy is nowhere to be seen.

Later that day, Livy is found at the waterfall. She is fine. Not a single scratch.

That's your doctor's bag?

By Mark Davies - Rotary Club of Lower Midcoast

Doctors Daphne Ng and Dr Dylan Wesley, both paediatricians at Manning Base Hospital in Taree, were guest speakers at recent RCLMC Dinner Meeting on 16 June at Sporties in Tuncurry.

Daphne's road to becoming a doctor was helped by participating in a RYSTEM (Rotary Youth Science Day) during high school and a National Youth Science Forum in 2001 when Daphne was hosted by a Rotary family in Canberra.

Dr Daphne showed us her doctor's bag which as she pointed out, isn't your "traditional" doctor's bag (pictured right). A number of Rotarians (and guests) were quite taken with the puppets and fidgets, etc, in the bag. Dr Daphne uses it to help when listening and talking to children who are patients.

A few excerpts from a riveting talk...

• The Paediatrics Ward's five "Cs" are Children, Culture of care and safety, Commitment, Collaboration and Community. Kindness is another other core value, though it doesn't start with a "C."

• Community is essential and a really big part of what they do.

• They do a number of things within the ward to make it more inviting and a bit less



Above: (L-R) Dr Dylan Wesley, President Brad Fletcher, Dr Daphne Ng and Lance Fletcher. Photos supplied.



stressful for the children including decorations at Christmas and other times and staff dressing up in themes such as "Where's Wally". Daphne said Office works have been quite generous in their support.

• They do the best they can to help and to keep families local for treatment if possible. Dr Dylan has worked at Manning Base Hospital (MBH) for 18 years and has seen the team grow from one to over five paediatricians and from 10 to 30 nurses on the team, as well as the other health professionals and support staff.

We at the RCLMC are looking at stepping up our support for the Manning Base Paediatrics Ward.

(See p18 for July Rotary Book Fair advert.)

Mayoral column

I would like to thank everyone who took time to attend our recent Community Conversations.

It's very useful for Councillors and staff to hear community concerns and for residents to learn about what we do and the way we work. There were some great, constructive conversations about many different subjects.

We always lead off by acknowledging that the state of our roads is the highest priority issue and we always get lots of comments on this topic.

Our road network is the second largest in the state and is supported by a population that is not very large. As most people know, Council has been working hard to cut budgets in other areas and to introduce efficiencies into our service delivery so that we can allocate more money to roads.

We talked about the impact the May 25 floods had on our roads and explained that an additional \$90 M per year will be provided by the State government to repair the affected roads over the next two years. This is on top of approximately \$60m we usually put into the roads each year.

Perhaps the most important message from us is that Council had been moving closer to having a conversation with the community about whether there is a willingness to



increase our rates to provide the funds required to improve the status of our roads to the level people expect them to be. However, because of the flood impacts and the resulting increased budget for roads over

the next 2-3 years, this discussion about a potential rates increase has been put off until after that work is complete.

When the next round of Community Conversations come up later in the year, I encourage you to attend to be part of this conversation.

This month's Council meeting will be held on Monday 29 June from 1pm.

Among the important topics being discussed will be the Delivery Program and Operation Plan which we have had out for public comment. These documents set out Council's strategic priorities, key activities and major projects with budgets for 2026-27 and beyond.

Our Council meetings are livestreamed so you can watch it live online via our website or view the YouTube video later.

We have recently launched our new customer online information system. Here you will be able to access your Council business information, including rates and fees payments and any applications you may have made.

I strongly encourage ratepayers to head to the website and create your account. This system streamlines services and you will be able to pay any rates, fees or charges.

Mayor Claire Pontin



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Job losses at NBN

Newy 87.8 FM Newcastle
Federal MPs across the Hunter, Central Coast and Mid North Coast have condemned WIN Network's decision to cut at least 19 jobs at NBN News following its acquisition of the broadcaster, saying the move is a major blow to regional journalism and local communities.

The reported job losses come just days after WIN announced it would reduce weekday bulletins and scrap local weekend news services. The MPs said the cuts confirmed community and staff concerns about the future of NBN News under WIN's ownership.

NBN News has broadcast across the Hunter, Central Coast, Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers for more than six decades, covering local emergencies, major events, community issues and regional achievements. The MPs said the loss of journalists, camera operators, producers, editors and support staff would reduce the network's capacity for local news gathering and weaken regional media diversity.

Minister for Defence Industry and Member for Shortland Pat Conroy said the decision had serious consequences for local communities.

"Last week I called WIN Network's decision to slash NBN News bulletins a kick in the guts for our region," Mr Conroy said.

"Every local journalist lost means fewer local stories told. Every local newsroom job cut means a weaker voice for the Hunter and Central Coast.

"My thoughts are with the hardworking NBN staff and their families."

The MPs said WIN should provide answers about its long-term plans for NBN News and the future of local journalism in the regions the broadcaster has served for generations.

MidCoast Gas Project slashes emissions and provides great long-term benefits for region

MidCoast Council
In just four months, MidCoast Council has slashed (CO2e) emissions by 5,150 tonnes and captured more than 540,200 m3 of harmful biogas, the equivalent of removing 1,113 petrol cars off the road for a year.

The MidCoast Gas Project, a carbon cutting partnership between MidCoast Council and LGI Limited (LGI), was officially opened by MidCoast Council Mayor, Claire Pontin on 9 June.

The project will deliver extraordinary long-term results for the environment and the local community, with MidCoast Council and local ratepayers receiving a share of the Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) revenue generated by reducing landfill gas emissions.

The partnership sees LGI recover biogas from Tuncurry Waste Management Centre, and Taree Waste Management Centre and reduce methane emissions via an enclosed flaring unit at both sites. This methane abatement approach is measurable, immediate and irreversible.

MidCoast Council Mayor, Claire Pontin said the project supports Council's commitment achieving net-zero emissions and 100 per cent renewable energy by 2040.

"The carbon cutting partnership reduces emissions, improves air quality, decreases the risk of odour, and creates a revenue stream for MidCoast Council," Cr Pontin said.

"Unflared methane biogas from our waste operations at Tuncurry and Taree account for 70 per cent of MidCoast Council's total greenhouse gas emissions.

"It's a problem LGI is helping us solve and is another example of Council's commitment to finding financially favourable solutions which reduce harmful emissions."

The project was built and commissioned at minimal cost to ratepayers, with LGI paying to design, build, operate, maintain, and upgrade

the landfill gas flaring system at Tuncurry Waste Management Centre, and Taree Waste Management Centre.

LGI CEO, Jarryd Doran said the partnership with MidCoast Council will deliver long term, meaningful environmental outcomes.

"Phase one of the project is complete and included the installation of a new flaring units at Tuncurry and Taree, the drilling of 55 gas wells and connecting hundreds of metres of below and above ground pipes to the flares," Mr Doran said.

"It's clear MidCoast Council and the local community are serious about protecting the local environment and boosting the economy while transitioning to a sustainable future."

LGI works extensively with other local government areas in New South Wales to capture biogas, decrease emissions and reduce the state's carbon footprint. Small, regional landfill biogas projects, including the waste operations a Tuncurry and Taree, drastically reduce emissions for communities while helping local, state and federal governments achieve their emissions targets.



Partnerships with multiple New South Wales councils have allowed LGI to reduce (CO2e) emissions by more than 2.3 million tonnes, which is the equivalent of planting 38 million seedlings for the next decade.

Since 2013, more than 242 million m3 of biogas has been captured at 14 different New South Wales sites, with 430,000 ACCUs created.

LGI also has the technology to convert biogas extracted from landfills into renewable energy.

In 2022, LGI transformed the Toowoomba Waste Management Centre site into a renewable energy power station. The power station converts methane from landfill into electricity, powering Toowoomba Regional Council's Waste Water Treatment Plant.

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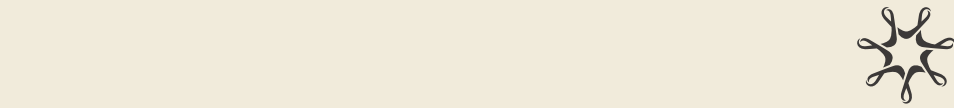
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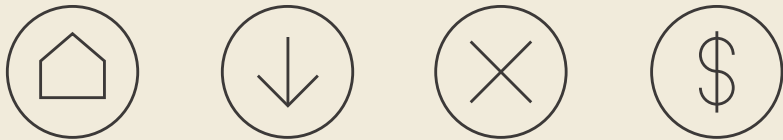
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'Treasure our Wallis Lake' II

By Kim Kilpatrick – FAWNA Hallidays Point
Wallis Lake's Saltmarshes and Mangroves

A previous article highlighted the importance of the seagrass meadows in the ecology of Wallis Lake. However, the seagrass meadows are only one part of the amazingly complex and wonderful eco-system that is our Lake. Two other critically important characteristics are the Saltmarshes and Mangroves. Like the Seagrass meadows, Mangroves and Saltmarshes are essential in keeping the water clean and the complex ecology of the Lake pumping.

Saltmarshes occupy the high tide zone and include plants such as sedges, rushes, reeds, grasses, succulent herbs and shrubs that can tolerate high soil salinity and occasional inundation with salt water. As well as plant life, they often also include bare patches or salt pans. Mangroves, of course, are those specialised trees and shrubs that grow in the fringe of intertidal shallows, able to deal with concentrations of salt that would kill most other plants.

In the past, areas of Saltmarshes and Coastal Mangroves were considered wastelands and were consequently drained, 'reclaimed', degraded and lost. Now we know how critical they are in providing habitat breeding and feeding for crustaceans, fish and birds.

Prawns, crabs and fin fish all require Mangroves to breed in. Saltmarshes provide habitat and breeding grounds for invertebrates such as crabs, prawns, molluscs, spiders and other insects. Saltmarshes also provides shelter for juvenile and smaller fish species when inundated during high tides. Indeed, over 40 species of fish have been identified as inhabiting tidal Saltmarshes including yellowfin, bream, sand whiting, mullet, garfish, eels and crabs.

Saltmarshes are also essential for migratory waders, those amazing marathon fliers that migrate non-stop from Siberia and other Arctic

zones to our shores in both Summer and Winter. These birds are the most endangered species group on the planet and include several Australian species that are now listed as Threatened and Vulnerable: the Bar-tailed Godwit; Beach-stone Curlew; Eastern Curlew; Golden Plover; Lesser Sand Plover; Red-capped Plover; the Curlew Sandpiper; Red Knot; Great Knot; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper; Marsh Sandpiper and the Latham's Snipe. Many of these species are listed under international protection agreements. Not all frequent our area, but a lot do and are dependent on the Saltmarshes and Mangroves to feed, rest and breed.

In addition to being critical breeding and feeding grounds for so many species, Mangroves and Saltmarshes play another role in stabilising sediment, collecting and recycling nutrients and contaminants (although not plastic waste). This is particularly important in flood run-offs. They also absorb the energy of wind and wave action, creating a buffer that helps minimize erosion. As such they are essential in keeping the water clear and free of mud and other sediment, thus also contributing to the Lake's famous water clarity. With climate change increasing storm-surges and major flooding events, plus rising sea-levels, their roles as erosion buffers and sediment traps will become even more critical.

"In recent years, Mangroves, Saltmarshes and Seagrass Meadows have been found to play another vital role in our eco-systems – they are stores of what is now named 'Blue Carbon'."

In recent years, Mangroves, Saltmarshes and Seagrass Meadows have been found to play another vital role in our eco-systems – they are stores of what is now named 'Blue Carbon'. The legendary Sir David Attenborough highlighted this in his recent documentary 'Ocean'. Not only are underwater eco-systems, including our Wallis Lake, home to extraordinary levels of biodiversity, but between them the Seagrass



Above: Photo of migratory birds Whimbrels and Bar-tailed Godwit that can be found at Wallis Lake by Ian Bradshaw. Ian posts many amazing photos on the Facebook page 'South West Rocks (SWR)/Macleay Birds - SWRBirds, SWRMBirds, MacleayBirds.'

Meadows, the Saltmarshes and Mangroves pull carbon from the atmosphere, store it both in plants and the sediment below, and in turn, release oxygen. It is now known that Australia's coastal wetland ecosystems capture carbon on a per hectare basis at rates of up to 66 times higher than those of land-based forests and store 5 times more carbon in their soils. Intact Mangroves, Saltmarshes and Seagrass Meadows may have stored carbon for thousands of years.

Along with National Parks and state government organizations, MidCoast Council carries obligations to ensure that the complex eco-systems of Wallis Lake continue to be protected. This includes ensuring that the 22 foreshore reserves, the islands and the wetlands totaling roughly 917 hectares continue to be healthy environments in their own right, weed-free and with stable riparian zones.

These areas in themselves are habitat to several native plants and animals, some of which are also identified as Threatened and Endangered species. With the floods of the last few years, weeds in particular have flourished and reportedly over 2000 hectares of the Wallis Lake Catchment are undergoing bush regeneration with target garden escapee weeds including Morning Glory, Lantana, Moth Vine, Senna, Madeira Vine, Camphor Laurel, Tobacco Bush, Ground Asparagus, Groundsel Bush, Brazilian Nightshade, Cape Ivy, Buffalo Grass and Cats Claw Creeper. Controlling feral animals such as foxes and deer is also essential.

Keeping our Lake healthy and clean is clearly a big job, and to my mind, something all of us who enjoy it and treasure it, can also do a bit to protect.

See p26 for MidCoast Council's Coastal Management Plan for Southern Estuaries.

See the best of Tasmania in coach comfort this Spring with Steve Gatland

Advertorial Feature

Travelwise: Travelwise owner and operator Steve Gatland (pictured on right) has learned a lot in 25 years of running tours to Tasmania.

A new offering for the company, Travelwise "Pure Tasmania" tour is a culmination of highlights from those decades.

"This 17-day, all-inclusive, fully guided tour takes place each year when Tassie Springtime colours are at their peak", Mr Gatland said.

Mr Gatland will be conducting this tour with his trusty team to assure you of a magnificent touring holiday.

"Coupled with multiple pick-up locations along the East Coast, this is definitely a trip of a lifetime", he said.

The route takes in Devonport, Burnie, Stanley, Cradle Mountain, Strahan, Derwent Bridge, Hobart, Bruny Island, Ross, Swansea, Bicheno, St Helens, Bay of Fires, Scottsdale, Launceston, George Town and more.

Family owned and operated since 2000, Travelwise provides all-inclusive, fully guided tours for the active and not-so-active traveller.

"We provide amazing experiences to locations you may not otherwise be able to travel to," Mr Gatland said.



Travelwise organises everything from coach transport, flights, accommodation, meals, activities, entries and tours to ensure a "seamless travel experience".

Mr Gatland was inspired to enter the industry after seeing a gap in the local tourism market.

"I saw there was a lack of travel options departing from our local residential areas, especially for our retired people," he said.

Travelwise five-star coaches offer two entry doors (for less queuing when boarding and departing), clean bathrooms, filtered water station, WiFi internet, DVD entertainment and large reclining leather seats.

"Comfort and convenience are amongst our top priorities, which make for a winning formula.

We average 30 guests on a 52-passenger coach for extended tours, offering plenty of room to spread out when on tour," Mr Gatland said.

Customers can expect a safe and reliable first-class service with a personalised experience.

"Guests booking on-board may have a special dietary requirement or may have ability concerns which we can cater for," Mr Gatland said.

"We have options for the active and not-so-active travellers. We aim to provide for all abilities."

(See advertisement below)

Council recognition in Agritourism



MidCoast Council

MidCoast Council has been recognised for the work in assisting primary producers diversify their operations.

Council's Agritourism Product Development and Mentoring program helped build the skills, knowledge and confidence of some of the region's primary producers to allow them to take the leap into agritourism providing them with another income stream.

Executive Manager of Sustainable Development, Rachel Pleasant said it was this program that earned Council's Economic Development team a Highly Commended Excellence award at the Local Government Professionals awards recently.

"Despite strong interest to expand their operations, many producers in the MidCoast lacked the specialised knowledge which limited their ability to aspire, grow, adapt and future proof their operations," she explained.

"Working with Sparrowly Group we provided one-on-one tailored support including site visits, financial modelling, experience design, approvals guidance and digital assistance.

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10:00AM TO 12:00PM

15-19 CASSANDRA CRESCENT
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ABOUT GLAICA GARDENS

Glaica Gardens is an over 55's independent living community located in the heart of Tuncurry.

Our thoughtfully designed retirement villas provide comfortable, low-maintenance living for older Australians and feature:

- Two spacious bedrooms
- Secure lock-up garage
- Private garden and covered outdoor area
- Additional WC for convenience
- Safe, Secure & private surroundings

As part of the trusted GLAICA community, residents enjoy peace of mind & access to a range of lifestyle amenities at nearby GLAICA House.

COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLE

- Independent living in a peaceful setting
- Small pets welcome (subject to approval)
- Continue using your existing home care services and support providers
- Access to GLAICA House facilities including hairdressing salon, cafe, chapel/church services and beautifully maintained gardens & grounds
- Close to shops, medical centres, clubs & entertainment
- Friendly, welcoming community

*Your community.
Your way of life.*

THE PERFECT LOCATION

Forster-Tuncurry is renowned for its relaxed coastal lifestyle, beautiful beaches, waterways, cafes, shops & welcoming community atmosphere.

- Beaches & Waterways
- Medical Centres & Services
- Shopping & Cafes
- Bowling Club & Sports
- Entertainment & Leisure



PERFECTLY POSITIONED

Glaica Gardens is ideally located in Tuncurry, just moments from beaches, shopping, medical centres, clubs & all the local conveniences.



MEDICAL

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Tuncurry Medical Centre | 1.1km / 13 min walk |
| 2. Forster Medical Centre | 4.3km / 8 min drive |
| 3. Forster Private Hospital | 4.3km / 8 min drive |

SHOPPING

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Woolworth Tuncurry | 1.2km / 14 min walk |
| 2. Stocklands Forster | 6.1km / 12 min drive |
| 3. Wharf Street Shops | 2.6km / 6 min drive |

ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Tuncurry Beach | 1.6km / 18 min walk |
| 2. Tuncurry Rock Pool | 1.7km / 20 min walk |
| 3. Forster Main Beach | 2.9km / 6 min drive |
| 4. Forster Marina | 3.8km / 6 min drive |

CLUBS & SOCIAL

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Forster Bowling Club | 3.7km / 6 min drive |
| 2. Tuncurry Bowling Club | 900m / 3 min drive |
| 3. Sporties Tuncurry | 1.5 km / 5 min drive |

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Tuncurry Post Office | 980m / 12 min walk |
| 2. Forster Post Office | 6.5km / 11 min drive |
| 3. Forster Library | 3.3km / 5 min drive |

Small pets welcome
(subject to approval)

CONTACT CLAIRE TODAY
0415 707 624

Claire Brennan Client Relations Manager
clairebrennan@glaica.com.au

Glaica Gardens Independent Living - Over 55's
15-19 Cassandra Crescent, Tuncurry NSW 2428

GLAICA
House
GLAICA Ltd

FORSTER FORTNIGHTLY

Community News

www.forsterfortnightly.com.au

24 June 2026

Page 13

Continued advocacy pays off

MidCoast Council

MidCoast Council Mayor Claire Pontin has welcomed the recent decision by the State Government to take back financial ownership of the Rural Fire Service assets otherwise known as 'the Red Fleet'.



The transfer of ownership of around 150 RFS vehicles from the MidCoast region alone will take place on 1 July 2027, following years of advocacy from LGNSW, the Country Mayors' Association and Mayors across rural and regional NSW, including Mayor Pontin.

"For years Councils have had to carry the financial burden of this and had to account for and depreciate these assets which they have no operational control over," she explained.

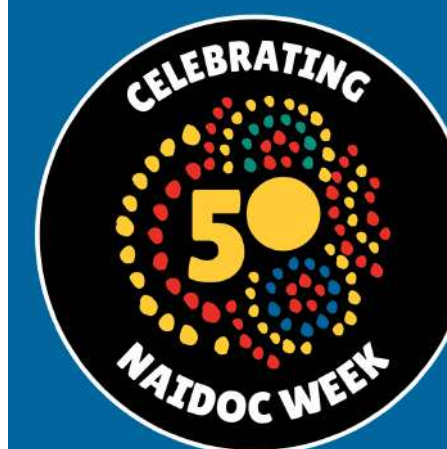
"For the MidCoast region that 150 vehicles is a significant number and has had an impact on our bottom line.

"I have been outspoken about the issue in the past, so I am extremely pleased with the announcement made last week.

"Cost shifting by the NSW Government has become an issue for all NSW Councils, but this is finally a step in the right direction."

Cr Pontin thanked the Minister for Emergency Services Jihad Dib, the Treasurer, the Hon Daniel Mookhey MP, the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Ron Hoenig MP and the NSW Government for the decision.

Local Naidoc Celebrations



NAIDOC
WEEK
50 YEARS
DEADLY
5-12 JULY 2026

Forster Local Aboriginal Land Council

The community is warmly invited to come together and celebrate NAIDOC Week at a "Community Day" from 10am to 2pm on Wednesday 8 July at Tobwabba Reserve, Macintosh Street in Forster.

The celebration will feature cultural dancing, interactive cultural activities, live entertainment, an Elders' Tent, Kids rides, community service stalls, a free BBQ lunch and much more. The event aims to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together to recognise and celebrate the rich histories, cultures, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Admission is free and all are welcome.



Tanya's Community Update

Last week was a fantastic win for our community, with confirmation that Bobin Public School and Upper Lansdowne Public School will remain open.



This outcome was only possible because our community stood together. Families, staff, and residents rallied behind their schools, signed petitions and made it clear that regional schools matter. I was proud to stand alongside them throughout the campaign and equally proud to help deliver this positive result.

Small schools are the heart of many rural communities. This decision shows what can be achieved when a community speaks with one voice.

As this column is published, I will be in Parliament for the announcement of the 2026/27 NSW State Budget. I will be continuing to fight for the investments our region needs, including funding for safer roads, improved health services, flood recovery, dredging at Wallis Lake and the Farquhar Inlet, progress on the long-awaited Tuncurry Slipway and the roundabout at Fairford intersection.

Every dollar invested in regional communities makes a difference, and I will continue pushing for outcomes that strengthen the Myall Lakes electorate now and into the future.

As always, if you need assistance, please contact my office. I am here to help.

Tanya Thompson MP - Member for Myall Lakes

Tanya
THOMPSON MP
Member for Myall Lakes



As your local State MP
I'M HERE TO ASSIST YOU WITH:

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- ✓ Social services

- ✓ Community infrastructure
- ✓ Affordable housing
- ✓ Schools and education
- ✓ Congratulatory messages

If you need help or want to raise a local issue, please get in touch, I'm here to listen and take your voice to Parliament.



1-9 Manning Street, Tuncurry



myalllakes@parliament.nsw.gov.au



02 6555 4099



tanyathompson.com.au



TanyaThompsonForMyallLakes

Authorised by Tanya Thompson MP, 1-9 Manning Street, Tuncurry NSW 2428, funded using Parliamentary Entitlements October 2025.

Manning - Great Lakes Police District Update

Dear Readers,

This fortnight I will provide you with information regarding ways you can deal with barking dogs (a common complaint across all communities) and provide you with details of a very special day for first responders.

The information below is from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) website:

Dealing with barking dogs

Barking is one way dogs communicate but excessive barking can disturb neighbours and cause annoyance. Here are some actions you can take to make life better for dogs, dog owners and neighbours.

If you suspect a dog is being mistreated, contact an RSPCA inspector on (02) 9770 7555 or 1300 278 3589, or visit the RSPCA website.

Caring for dogs

Compassion and common sense can eliminate many causes of excessive barking. A well cared for dog will generally not bark unreasonably and disturb neighbours. Dogs need enough space to move freely in an enclosed backyard. A dog should not be left on a fixed chain for long periods. If a dog has to be chained, it should be on a running chain.

• Dogs need a place of their own. This can be a ventilated and waterproof kennel outside or an indoor area. Under section 8 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, a dog must be provided with adequate shelter, that is, a



structure that protects them from wind, rain and sunshine.

- Dogs need regular and adequate exercise according to their breed and size.
- To prevent dogs from getting bored, give them toys to play with or a puzzle to solve such as a puzzle feeder.

Noisy dogs and the law

If you are annoyed by the noise from your neighbour's dog, there are several things you can do:

Talk to the dog's owner

The dog's owner may not have realised that their dog is bothering you, and will often be happy to work with you to solve the problem.

Contact your local council

If mediation is unsuccessful and the noise problem persists, contact your local council. They may ask you to provide evidence substantiating your complaint such as

- obtaining written statements from neighbours explaining ways in which the dog is disturbing them

- keeping a diary of when the noise occurs
- Check with your council to find out what evidence they need as there are standards around the level of proof that is required before legal action can be taken.
- If, after examining the evidence, the council officer believes your complaint requires investigating, they will visit the property where the dog is kept. If their investigation proves the complaint is justified, they can warn the dog owner that they intend to issue a nuisance order under the Companion Animals Act 1988. The dog owner may object to the proposed order but must submit their objection in writing within 7 days.
- The council officer will consider the objection and decide whether to issue the order.
- If they do so, the order must specify
 - what aspects of the dog's behaviour need to change to prevent the disturbance from continuing
 - that it remains in force for six months and cannot be appealed against
- If the owner does not comply with the order, council officers can issue them fines of \$275 or they may be liable for a fine of up to \$880 for the first offence and \$1650 for the second and each subsequent offence if proceedings are taken to a local court.

If proceedings are taken to a local court, and the offender is prosecuted, they may be liable for a maximum penalty of \$250,000 and a further \$60,000 for each day the offence continues.

Seek a noise abatement order

If you want to take action independently of the council, you can seek a noise abatement order under section 268 of the POEO Act from the local court.

Thank a First Responder Day

Finally, it was Thank a First Responder Day on 10 June, and local police (and other local first responders) enjoyed "coffees on the house" at a number of local establishments. Many thanks to those local businesses and supporters, including: Forster Neighbourhood Centre, Cheers Brew Coffee cart, The Shack at Tuncurry, At The Hillside, Forster, Great Lakes Packaging Party Supplies and Buddy Up Australia (an event based community for current and ex-serving Defence, First Responders and their families).

Please don't forget to be kind to each other and to say "G'day!" to your local police!

Chief Inspector Timothy Bayly - OIC Forster Police Station

Puzzles Page

The Grin Bin

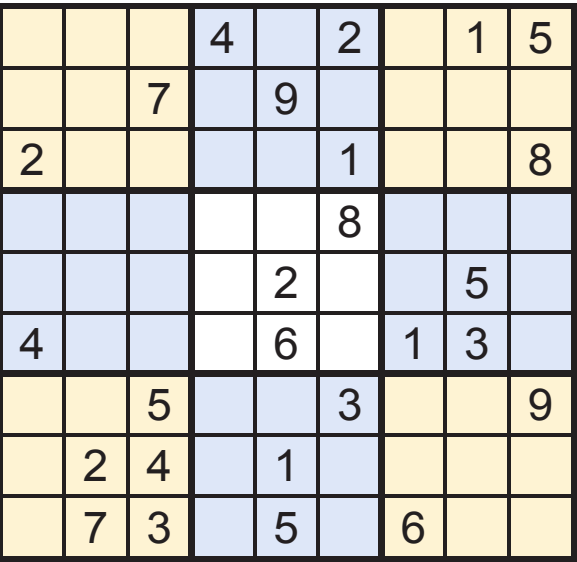


Doodley Squat



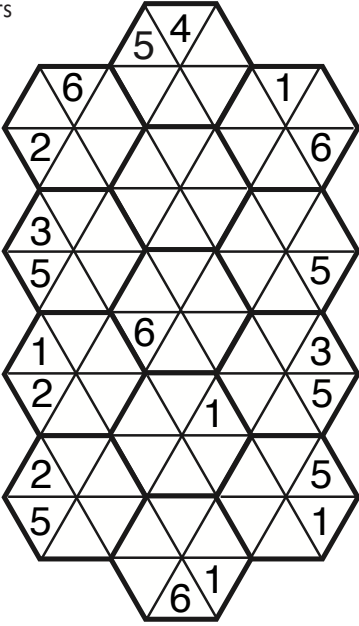
Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers from 1 to 9. Each number can only appear once in each row, column and 3x3 block.

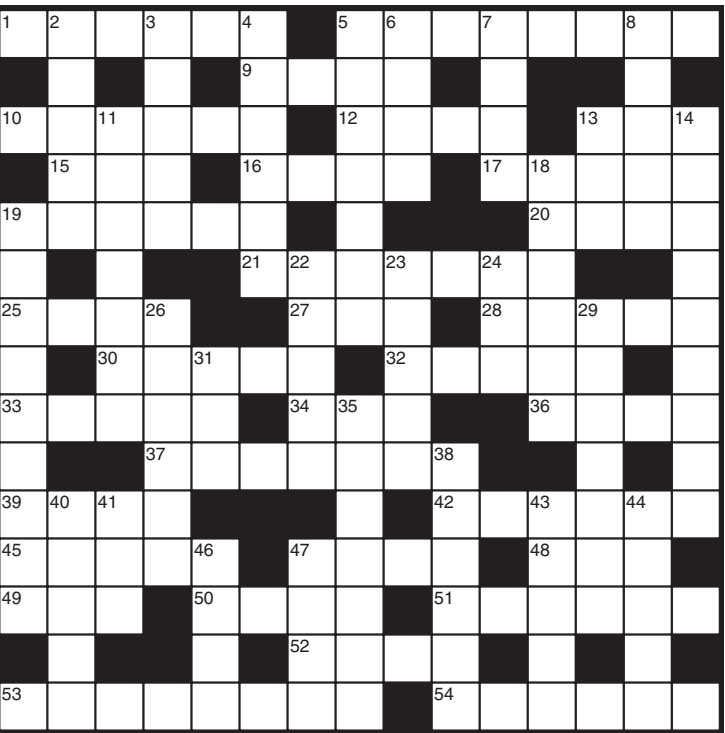


Quick Workout

Fit the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 into the hexagons so that where the hexagons touch, the numbers will be the same. No number is repeated in any hexagon.

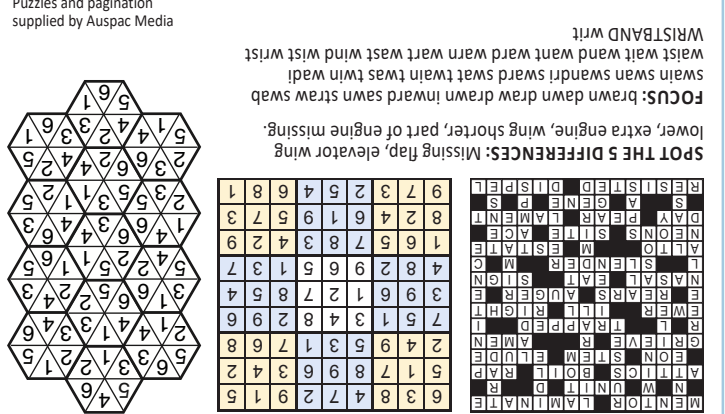


Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Wise counsellor
 - 5 Split into thin layers
 - 9 Single entity
 - 10 Top rooms
 - 12 Inflamed swelling
 - 13 Sharp blow
 - 15 Vast age
 - 16 Slender support
 - 17 Escape artfully
 - 19 Mourn
 - 20 Prayer ending
 - 21 Ensnared
 - 25 Water pitcher
 - 27 Unwell
 - 28 Correct
 - 30 Brings up
 - 32 Carpenter's tool
 - 33 Of the nose
 - 34 Consume
 - 36 Token
 - 37 Slim
 - 39 Singer
 - 42 Landed property
 - 45 Illuminated signs
 - 47 Location
 - 48 Top card
 - 49 Period of time
 - 50 Fruit
 - 51 Express grief
 - 52 Unit of inheritance
 - 53 Opposed
 - 54 Scatter
 - 11 Hard workers
 - 13 Spirit
 - 14 Contrition
 - 18 Refined women
 - 19 Largest island
 - 22 Ascended
 - 23 Shallow circular dish
 - 24 Work unit
 - 26 Sanity
 - 29 Facial distortion
 - 31 Everyone
 - 35 Had high opinion of
 - 38 Staggered
 - 40 Letting agreement
 - 41 Playing
 - 43 Stops up
 - 44 Time in grammar
 - 46 Mineral springs
 - 47 Wise man

Solutions



The Federal Government is responsible for national issues that affect all Australians. As your Federal MP I can assist you with:

✔ Centrelink

✔ Medicare

✔ Aged Care

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✔ Post and Telecommunications

✔ Banking and Finance

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Cnr High and Hastings Streets (PO Box 244), Wauchope NSW 2446

TAREE OFFICE

(02) 6557 8910

144 Victoria Street, Taree NSW 2430

✉ Alison.Penfold.MP@aph.gov.au

🌐 alisonpenfold.com.au

📺 AlisonPenfoldMPforLyne

📺 alison_penfold_for_lyne

Authorised by Alison Penfold MP, 144 Victoria Street, Taree NSW 2430.

Forster Fortnightly

www.forsterfortnightly.com.au

Winter School Holidays



Local Calendar

Your 'Local Calendar' lists FREE events. Max 4 lines. It is the responsibility of the organisation to update their information.

June

Sat 27 June - Tuncurry Market
8am to 1pm at John Wright Park, Tuncurry.
Enquiries: Anne 0417 400 994

Sun 28 June - Pacific Palms Market
9am to 1pm Pacific Palms Community Centre.
Community Library Stall open in hall.
Enquiries: Jennifer Doyle 0401 968 516

July



Sat 4 July - Real Food Market (above)
8am -11am Pacific Palms Community Centre.
Enquiries: Sue Williams 0438 433 063.

Sun 5 July - Hallidays Point Car Boot Sale
7am to 12pm Hallidays Point Shopping Village
Enquiries: 0403 042 088

Fri 10 to Mon 13 July - Rotary Book Fair
9am to 4pm daily. Tuncurry Memorial Hall
Enquiries: Brian Leggett 0422 365 256
(See advertisement below right.)

Sun 12 July - Forster Town Park Market
8am to 1pm, Town Park, Oyster Pde Forster.
Search Forster Town Park Market on Facebook.

Sat 18 July - Forster Farmers Market
8am to 12pm in the grounds next door to
Forster Court House on Little St.
Enquiries: Linda 0421 347 273

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FORSTER-TUNCURRY

Winter holiday program at MidCoast Libraries



MidCoast Libraries

From hands-on workshops at our libraries, to nature adventures and community events. Explore what's on near you and make the most of the holidays with free activities for all ages. Children aged 2-5yrs must be supervised by an adult.

Don't miss out! Bookings are essential. To see the full program and to books: <https://library.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Whats-on/Events>

Mon 6 July: Move and groove - toddler disco, 10.30-11.30am, 2-5yrs, Taree Library

Tues 7 July: Science on the move, 2-3pm, 5+, Hallidays Point Library

Tues 7 July: Graphic mixed media printing workshop, 2-3pm, 5+, Taree Library

Wed 8 July: Getting all sciency with Dr T, 10-10.30am, 5+, Harrington Library

Wed 8 July: Library trivia and treasure hunt for kids, 10.30-11.30am, 5+, Forster Library

Thurs 9 July: Kids bingo, 10.30-11.30am, 5+, Hallidays Point Library

Thurs 9 July: Calling all Pokémon trainers! 11am-12pm, 5+, Taree Old Bar Surf Club

Fri 10 July: Winter lantern workshop, 10.30-11.30am, 2+, Gloucester Library

Mon 13 July: Movie screening of DogMan,

Rated PG, 10.30am-12pm, all ages, Wingham Library

Mon 13 July: Laser art workshop, 2-3pm, 5+, Taree Old Bar Surf Club

Tues 14 July: Art workshop with local artist Kim Read, 10.30-11.30am, 7+, Forster Library

Tues 14 July: Paper dolls papercraft, 10.30am-12pm, 8+, Wingham Library

Tues 14 July: The fierce footstep: author talk and book cover workshop, 2-3pm, 7+, Hallidays Point Library

Tues 14 July: ACFM Drumming workshop with Matty Zarb, 2-3pm, 5+, Bulahdelah School of Arts

Wed 15 July: Movie screening - Spongebob Squarepants Rated PG, 10.30am-12pm, all ages, Gloucester Library

Wed 15 July: Movie screening - Oddball Rated G, 2-3pm, all ages, Taree Library

Thurs 16 July: Mini golf, 10.30-11.30am, 3+, Wingham Library

Fri 17 July: Crafty winter warmers, 10-10.30am, 5+, Harrington Library

Fri 17 July: Movie screening - Spongebob Squarepants Rated PG, 10.30am-12pm, all ages, Hallidays Point Library

Looking for an adventure, want to explore ...



By Mark Davies Rotary Club Lower Midcoast

Free entry to come and enjoy the adventure of browsing an extensive Children's Section with Children's books at the amazing family budget friendly price of 50 Cents each. Other books are only \$3.00 each. Cash and Eftpos are Welcome

Check out the terrific range of Fiction books organised by the Author's Surname A-Z and a boutique Sci Fi/Fantasy section. Also take the

opportunity to explore the Non-Fiction books in the 2nd Room. Over 15 categories including Academic (Reference), Crafts and Hobbies, Travel, War Related and Humour.

Net profits from our Book Fairs are distributed to a number of Local, Regional and International Rotary and Community Projects. These include Ronald MacDonald House Family Retreat Forster, Great Lakes Palliative Care Support, Great Lakes Suicide Prevention Network, Great Lakes Women Shelter, Local Schools and the 2025 NSW Mid North Coast Flood Disaster Relief.

In December this year we begin the Celebrations of 70 Years of Rotary locally in Tuncurry/Forster which will culminate in a number of activities/events including a Dinner on Tuesday 2nd of March 2027.



Above: Profits from the Book Fair go to local community projects. (L-R) Rotary members Brad Fletcher (President) and Mark Davies assisted with 'Meals from the Heart' night at the Ronald McDonald House Family Retreat in Forster. Photo by Sarah Wilkinson.

Contact Brian Leggett on 0422 365 256 or <https://www.facebook.com/RotaryTuncurryForster> for more details.

(See advertisement below.)

What's on around town & beyond!

Valerie Wright's "Oyster Leases" for sale!

By Elizabeth Ho – Forster Gallery

When a painting by well-known local artist Valerie Wright (1920 - 2008) comes onto the market, collectors of her work want to know. Forster Gallery has an original Valerie Wright work, Oyster Leases, for sale. It's impressionist in mood, documentary in subject. Valerie's gift was for catching Forster Tuncurry's working waterways in a few marks: busy, sunlit, and unmistakably of this place.

Oyster Leases is a monotype print with pastel overlays — you can see it in the fluid washes of green and blue layered over quick, gestural line work, and nothing is overworked. She lets the paper show through, so light becomes part of the painting. The Wallis Lake water isn't solid blue; it's built from layered greens, blues, and the cream of the page.

Valerie captured people as part of the landscape, not separate from it. Tiny figures haul oysters, punt boats, work the sheds — life on the lake recorded without sentimentality. Hills roll in the distance with just a few ink sweeps. She was known for her vibrant and colourful compositions. Her work is characterised by a strong sense of colour and rhythm and a keen sense of observation which are all evident in this work.

When asked what art meant to her, Valerie replied, "Always colour and the remarkable repetition of movement and colour in certain elements of nature repeated in all other things.



You only have to stand in a position and look anywhere at all, and you will see the colours, patterns and movement of nature eternally repeated unifying man and his world".

Newly re-framed and ready to hang "Oyster Leases" is reasonably priced and was donated to help raise funds for the gallery which is a much-loved space for the local community to exhibit their works and to come together to share and learn new skills.

Call in to the gallery to view this lovely work by one of our famous local artists, it might just be the painting you need to complete your collection!

(See advertisement below.)

Open Saturday and Sunday 10am – 2pm (Winter hours) or when the flags are flying, you will find Foster Gallery at 34 Lake Street, Forster. Further information about the gallery is available online at www.forstergallery.org

Come to our 'Ruby Ball'



Strictly Social Dance Club

The 'Strictly Social Dance Club' at Club Forster would like to invite you to our 2026 Annual Ball to be held in July.

warm-up as we dance the night away to great music.

Pre purchase tickets are essential. Please call: Melisa 0478 529 426

(See advertisement below.)

The RUBY is the gemstone for July so we thought it appropriate to use this as our theme/colour for our Ball this year.

Join us at our 'Ruby Ball' on 31 July as we enjoy a tasty meal shared with good company and

Wintertime is the best season to warm-up with dancing! There's the opportunity to learn or expand your dance skills each Tuesday at Club Forster (see our entry in the "Weekly Diary").

Collector's alert!

Valerie Wright original now on sale at Forster Gallery



Purchase a special piece of local history with this original Valerie Wright artwork: "Oyster Leases". On display now at Forster Gallery from 20 June – 26 July 2026.

FORSTER GALLERY

34 Lake St, Forster
Open Sat and Sun 10am – 2pm
or when the flags are flying
All works for sale — Entry free
www.forstergallery.org

Ruby Ball

Tickets \$50 each **Friday 31st July 2026**

Door open 5:30pm - Sit down at 6:00pm

2 course meal, tea & coffee served in Auditorium.

Raffle, Monte Carlo & Jackpot Draw. Dress: Formal

Venue: The Auditorium, Club Forster, Street, Forster NSW

Phone Melisa 0478 529 426

Live Band program & Dinner Entertainment "Barry Noble"

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John Wright Park

Saturday 27th June

8am - 1pm

Bookings Essential

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TRAMPOLINE & MINI GOLF PARK

OPEN OVER JULY SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

10AM - 6PM

4th - 19th JULY

TRAMPOLINES: 10 minute sessions \$5 per person

MINI GOLF: \$5 per person (9 holes)

Interested in having a friendly family competition? We offer free free playoff hole.

There are Putt Putt Trophies for sale @\$15 each.

Drinks \$2.50 each

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Club of Lower Midcoast Forster Tuncurry

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MAJOR PRIZE WIN A PS5

13 - 18 JULY 2026

Community Connection & Memories

Mixed bag and Feedback

Letters to the Editor

'Letter to the Editor' is the place for our community to share their thoughts and feedback. Maximum 250 words unless prior arrangement. Material that is offensive, defamatory or overtly political will not be published. This newspaper intends to provide an opportunity of reply for any person/organisation involved before publication. The author's name and town are required, unless specifically requested otherwise. Send your letters to info@forsterfortnightly.com.au

Thank you for lost ring

Thank you to the lady who found my ring on Saturday 13 June at Stockland Forster and handed it to the mid aisle desk lady who carefully cleaned it and kept it safe.

I would wish for you both the same outcome should you lose something precious.

"And so shines a good deed in a weary world". (Willy Wonka 1971).

Melissa Day - Forster

Still not upgraded

The article headed: Coffs Harbour bypass hits new milestones (Forster Fortnightly 10 June p.1) caught my eye, particularly the sentence beginning "bypass will deliver a continuous motorway link between Sydney and Brisbane" because there is a small section of the Pacific Highway just north or Nabiac which is still not upgraded.

When the Bundacree Creek to Possum Brush Upgrade of the Pacific Highway (finished in 2006) was being constructed I believe the leadership group came under pressure from Sydney to speed up their efforts so they decided to delete the last few kilometres which involved two overpasses and associated infrastructure worth maybe as much as \$100 million! They then, I believe, transferred this money north to hurry the building of motorways up there.

The result now sees a twisty, 90 km/h speed restricted section of the Pacific Highway that

is DEFINITELY NOT of motorway standard! There are many pieces of guard rails, hot-mix surfacing and other signs to warn drivers of private driveways - as these and motorway traffic just do not mix.

In place of the two overpasses and other infrastructure, the RTA produced a brochure in February 2006 which described the concept plans for the Fainford Road To Tritton Road Upgrade. They also purchased the land for the road corridor to the east of the present southbound carriageway, but no further work has been done.

How long is this dangerous situation going to continue? The completion of the Coffs Harbour bypass and the Raymond Terrace extension WILL NOT deliver a continuous motorway link between Sydney and Brisbane while ever the forgotten/ignored piece work north of Nabiac exists!

Stuart Weller JP - Nabiac



Above: The winner of the 2026 People's Choice Award at the recent Pacific Palms Art Festival is Kathy Corner for her acrylic painting, 'Beach Walk'. See more on p26.



Hanson vows to stop bird migration

The Shovel

POLITICAL SATIRE: One Nation leader Pauline Hanson has blamed the federal Labor Government for letting bird migration numbers get out of hand, after a bird found in Western Australia was believed to have bird flu.

Hanson said for too long birds had been able to fly in and out of the country, without any consequences. "Every year, millions of birds come here, take advantage of our favourable climate, eat our food, and then fly back overseas. They don't even speak English a lot of them".

Hanson said over half of all birds in Australia had at least one parent born overseas. "Is that what Australians really want? I'm not anti-bird, but if you're a bird and you want to come here, then you'll need to learn our songs, and adapt to our way of life".

She claimed migrating birds were taking Australian jobs. "You want to know why houses are unaffordable? It's because we're being



swamped by birds. A lot of the birds that I've seen look like they've recently arrived. Well, enough's enough. We will decide which birds come here and the circumstances in which they come".

Asked how her party proposed to stop bird migration, Hanson said that was an unfair and tricky question, deliberately designed to make her look stupid.

One Nation MP Barnaby Joyce said he loved all birds.

Screen Reviews

TV Show Reviews by Leon Batman - Forster

Star City - Apple, released May 2026 8 Episodes

An American sci fi drama spin off of For All Mankind, this time it focuses on Soviet Union side of the space race. The series revolves around the Soviets arriving on the moon first but the Soviets restrict the information about the landing including the awards given to important members of the space team for fear of the Americans targeting them. As much as the show is about the space race it is also about espionage, fear of the Americans finding out about their space plans and more importantly this was happening in a Russia where the KGB is always right. Although only 2 episodes have been released the show shows great promise with the interesting storyline.



Woman of Substance - Foxtel, released March 2026, 8 episodes

A British historical drama, based on a book of the same name, this drama spans sixty years as Emma rises from a maid in the early 1900s to a powerful businesswoman in the 1970s. She despises the aristocrat family that she worked for as a maid who cast her out when she became pregnant to a family member. She now vows to destroy the family. Now in her 80s she faces betrayal by her own family who threaten to destroy what she has built. If you like historical dramas, you will really enjoy this series.

Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed - Apple, released May 2026 10 episodes

Another recently released Apple series, this time a dark comedy involving a divorcee who falls into a web of murder, blackmail and soccer mums. The starting point for this series is when the divorcee, whilst watching a pay for sexual experience live internet site, sees the main internet character Trevor murdered on screen. The murderer sees that he is being watched and proceeds to blackmail the divorcee. Now that you have the idea of this sometimes crazy show, sit back and watch this intriguing dark comedy.



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PHONE 02 6555 5411
EMAIL: ceo@forsteralc.org.au

Forster Local Aboriginal Land Council
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
(Attractive Remuneration Package Negotiable)

The Forster Local Aboriginal Land Council (FLALC) is seeking applications from experienced and motivated people interested in a rewarding career undertaking a new and challenging role of Chief Executive Officer.

This position holder will provide an extensive range of assistance and support to the elected Board through the day-to-day management of the Forster LALC affairs in accordance with delegated authorities, the provision of sound and accurate advice and the implementation of the Board's resolutions in a timely and appropriate manner.

The successful applicant will have demonstratable knowledge and understanding of the ALRA, the capacity to interpret and implement legislation and sound communication skills. Organisational and management experience is essential together with an understanding of accounting practices and principles. A sound knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal issues is also required.

All applicants must obtain a copy of the recruitment package containing the position description and selection criteria and address the selection criteria for their application to be considered. For a recruitment package please contact Sharni Carberry, by email: Sharni.Carberry@alc.org.au 0455 742 488

Applications can be forwarded to Sharni.Carberry@alc.org.au "Confidential" and posted to:

Sharni Carberry
Senior Project Officer
Northern Zone
P.O. Box 1125
Parramatta. NSW. 2124.

Applications close: 12th July 2026

Aboriginal people are strongly encouraged to apply.

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Forster Tuncurry U3A AGM

The Annual General Meeting for Forster Tuncurry U3A will be held at 10am on Monday 27th July 2026 at Cape Hawke Surf Lifesaving Club One Mile Beach Forster. At the AGM we will require a vote on changes to our Constitution.

All Financial Members will receive notification of these proposed changes prior to the Meeting.



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Forster Digital Photography Competition success



Above: Grahame Wilson won first place in Open Digital with "Inspired by Jeffrey Smart"

FDPC won four out of the five divisions that were offered. An amazing achievement.

We also offer our congratulations to A grade members Grahame Wilson (Inspired by Jeffrey Smart) securing first place in the Open Digital and Danny Dunne (Cracked Walls) picked up a second place in the Open Colour prints.

Other Highlights include...

Digital Colour Merits: Grahame Wilson (Picnic Train), Keith Pascoe (Fields of Colour) and Helen Walker (Ethereal)

Open Monochrome Merits: Grahame Wilson (The Last Zebra) and Anna McKendry (Dunes).

Creative Altered Reality Prints Merit: Keith Pascoe (Pop Star)



Above: Fields of Colour by Keith Pascoe.



Above: Picnic Train by Grahame Wilson.



Above: Ant Feast by Danny Dunne.



Above: Dunes by Anna McKendry.



Right: Harmonica Player by Yvonne Moule.

By Keith Pascoe – Forster Digital Photography Club

We have some exciting news where FDPC was highly successful at the Northern Zone Convention Interclub Competition held recently in Coffs Harbour.

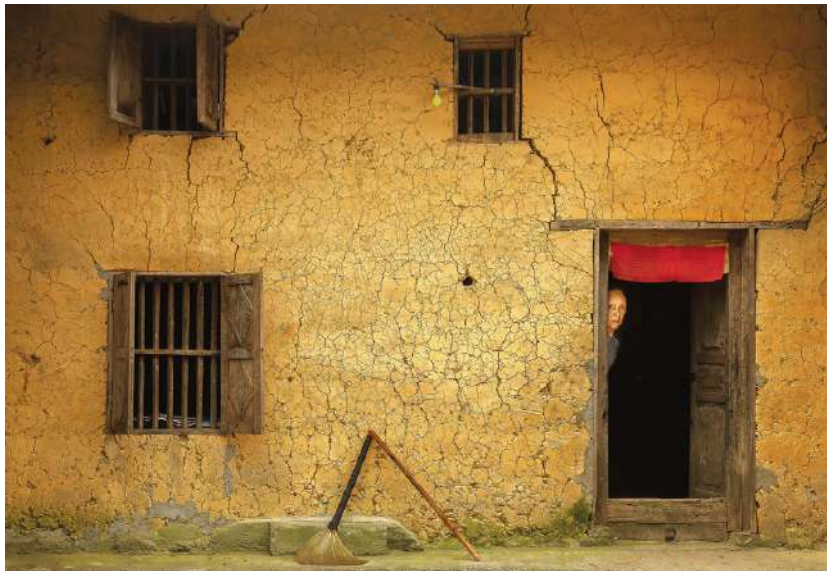
The Northern Zone consists of photography clubs from Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Nambucca Heads, Taree, Kempsey, Port Macquarie and our own Forster club FDPC.

Large Colour Prints Merit: Yvonne Moule (Harmonica Player), Danny Dunne (Ant Feast).

Our President Danny had an amazing and unexpected experience where he was given four of the five trophies at the presentation dinner.

It was an outstanding result and a complement to the standard of photography of the members of our club.

Below: Danny Dunne came second in Open Colour with "Cracked Wall".



Below: Pop Star by Keith Pascoe.



Ethereal by Helen Walker.

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Village of Bungwahl



Croll, Wright & Rodgers Sawmill, Bungwahl, Circa 1875.

Great Lakes Museum

The village of Bungwahl, at first known as Bungwahl Flats, owes its existence to Alexander Croll, who went there to set up a mill in 1870. With his good friends John Wright and John Rodgers, they built a mill and a general store. Croll's business and influence dominated the area. In 1875 John Wright decided to set out on his own and came to Forster, where he saw the potential of the North Shore (Tuncurry.) John Rodgers commenced milling in Laurieton. The first school was built on Croll land near the church in 1870 and John Green was the first teacher. Another school operated close by Hudson's Sawmill at Neranie but a recession in timber milling around 1893 caused a fall in attendance and the school operated part time with Seal Rocks until its closure in 1908. At one time Bungwahl had two hotels. The Caledonia Hotel owned by George and Sarah

"It was said by the locals that the district echoed with the sounds of bullock drivers shouting and cracking whips and the ring of the timber cutters axes."

Bramble, situated on the hill near the church, eventually burnt down. The Court House Hotel operated under various licensees over the years and became a boarding house before being demolished by the then owner Richard Payne. The timber was then used to construct a shop directly opposite which was owned and run by the family of his brother, William Payne. The Police Station, lock up and stables was situated on Seal Rocks Road and closed during the 1920's. The Church of England church, built on Croll land, still stands on the hill overlooking the Myall Lake. The School of Arts was the cultural centre of the district, holding many dances, balls and concerts.

The general store, bakehouse and butcher was near the Post Office, and all supplied by goods which came back to the town on "back loads" after timber had been delivered. The slaughterhouse supplying the butcher was at Huntley some miles away.

The town had three cemeteries. Neranie now a NSW Heritage Site, early Bungwahl Flat cemetery on the steep hill behind the Anglican Church and the present day cemetery on the Lakes Way west of the village.

The Blacksmith's shop was a very important business of the town. All the ironwork for the bullock teams had to be made or mended as well as making horseshoes and repairing farm equipment. Bungwahl had a racetrack and regular meetings were held, culminating in a dance at the School of Arts in the evening. Brumbies roamed the area and the Palmer brothers, Lincoln, Jim, Will and Tom caught many and these horses which were then broken in and trained for racing.

The Bungwahl football team, hard working men, timber getters, fishermen, bullock drivers and dairy hands played in the Wallamba League travelling to Forster Tuncurry, Purfleet, Krambach, Nabic, Wootton and Bulahdelah. The team trained in a cow paddock and travelled to the games crowded on the back of Kelly Paynes truck.

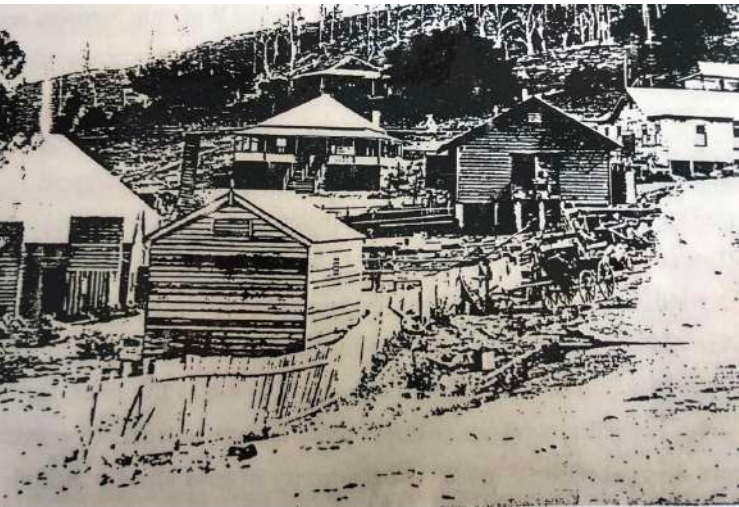
Bungwahl was a hub of activity, the roads were very basic and the lake was the



Above: Alexander Croll Senior.

main avenue of transport. It was said by the locals that the district echoed with the sounds of bullock drivers shouting and cracking whips and the ring of the timber cutters axes.

Great Lakes Museum is at 1 Capel Street, Tuncurry. Opening hours are on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10am-1pm and Sunday 1pm-3pm.



Bungwahl 1913.

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The people have spoken!



By Rhonda Andrew - Pacific Palms Art Festival Inc

The winner of the 2026 People's Choice Award at the recent Pacific Palms Art Festival is Kathy Corner (pictured above) for her acrylic painting, 'Beach Walk' (see page 20).

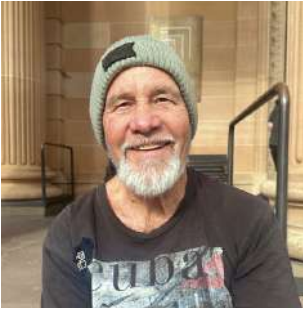
The winner of the Festival's 2026 Raffle Prize is former Pacific Palms Primary School teacher



Grahame Blades (pictured below). Grahame takes home the beautiful artwork 'Gone In A Flash' by Anne Pollard (pictured above). Anne was the winner of the 2024 Pacific Palms Art Prize with her work 'Wallis Lake – Coomba Park'.



The 2026 Major Art Prize has been awarded to Tracie Bertram for her ceramic sculpture 'Cactus Crown' (pictured left holding her winning sculpture with Cath Bennett- President Pacific Palms Art Festival.)



Book Review



Book Review by John King - Pacific Palms Librarian

Brainstorm

"They say a wise man plants a tree under which he will never sit." P 241

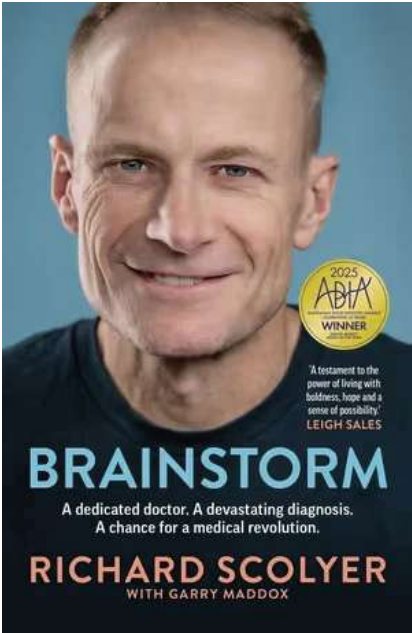
The above could almost be the title for Richard Scolyer's autobiography Brainstorm published in 2024. The first part of the book covers his early life, medical training, and the breakthrough on a melanoma vaccine – immunotherapy. The second part deals with his life after his seizure in May 2023 and discovery of an aggressive and incurable brain cancer.

He grew up in a very active family and was always competitive trying to excel at whatever he did. He said that he never read a book except for work or study; he much preferred being outside kicking a football. Indeed, he played for several local, Tasmanian, teams. Memories include hiking with his father around Cradle Mountain, and family holidays camping at Ulverstone with other families each year.

Richard had four uncles, two of whom were doctors, one an engineer, and the other a scientist. His medical ambitions set early, wanting to help others which was his parents' ethos. Money was not the object. What is especially striking is the collegiate mentoring that he and other young student doctors received from those around him, and which he continued for others throughout his career; it is clearly a very close-knit community. He was advised: never do a difficult diagnosis after 3pm, wait until you are fresh.

He liked the urgency of emergency medicine but not that there was only a temporary contact with the person. He came to pathology partly because of those mentors, but also because it brought scientific and analytical skills to the fore and offered the chance to make a difference. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancers in the world largely because of our climate and love of outdoor activities. Their breakthrough came with finding an immunotherapy drug that energized the body's own immune system: "Hi, wake up, invaders about!" From nearly 100% death rate from advanced skin cancer, the team of which he was a part, reduced that to 50%. And it was for this work that he and his co-director of the Melanoma Institute, Georgina Long, were honoured as Australians of the Year in 2024.

This work on skin cancer underpinned their decision to try to apply it to Richard Scolyer's



A healthier future for southern estuaries

MidCoast Council

MidCoast Council has adopted the Southern Estuaries Coastal Management Program after extensive community consultation over the last few years.

The 10 year program aims to protect the lakes, lagoons and river system from Wallabi Point to Karuah River.

The program identifies 15 key challenges facing southern estuaries including climate change, flooding, erosion and the loss of important coastal wetlands.

To address these challenges, the program outlines 63 actions designed to improve the health and resilience of local waterways and surrounding environments.

Some of these actions include regenerating 1500 hectares of important estuary habitat, remediating 11 stormwater discharge sites, and protecting and revegetating seven major coastal wetlands.

MidCoast Council's Manager of Natural Systems, Gerard Tuckerman, said the program reflects the community's strong connection to local waterways.

"We know the community highly values these waterways and his program gives us a clear roadmap to help protect and improve them into the future."

The program was developed with extensive community consultation across multiple stages over the past four years.

Over 860 engagement interactions took place over the stages of the program's development. This included 440 surveys, 32 responses to an online poll, 239 conversations at pop-ups, 136 entries in a photography competition to promote the program, and 17 formal submissions.

"Thank you to everyone who took the time to share feedback, ideas and local knowledge



throughout the development of the program," said Mr Tuckerman. "The strong community response highlights just how important these waterways are to people in the MidCoast."

The adopted Southern Estuaries Coastal Management Program will now be forwarded to the Minister for certification.

The certified Coastal Management Program will then be published in the Government Gazette in accordance with section 17 of the Coastal Management Act of 2016 once it is certified.

The CMP has been developed with funding and technical support from the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, in collaboration with state agencies, Aboriginal representatives, and the local community.



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Local Identity – Kelsey Fillery

Interview by Vanda Gooley

The day before Mother's Day, I walked into 'Flowers by Fillery' to the aroma and sight of beautiful fresh blooms. There was a real buzz in the air as the girls were busy creating magnificent bouquets for the fortunate mothers.

Kelsey Maree Fillery, 33, born in Taree, is the founder of 'Flowers by Fillery.' She is a creative locally respected florist and successful businesswoman, whose work centres on artistic, nature-inspired floral design, particularly for weddings and special occasions. Kelsey is based in Forster and runs her beautiful boutique florist along with gift wares, homewares and curated products. Her floristry style is based on simplicity and elegance.

Kelsey's parents Narelle and Bryan, run a cleaning business in Forster Tuncurry, 'NB Clean.' Kelsey is the middle daughter of three girls, the one younger is Coral who lives in Sydney with her son, Noah and the older sister is Krissi, living in Brisbane.

Kelsey and her family relocated to South Western Sydney, Camden from Wingham when Kelsey was 10. Life revolved around school and sport. She attended Elderslie High School, Narellan NSW. Kelsey loved hockey and the girls in the family loved to create, painting and craft.

Moving abroad when Kelsey was 19 to the UK truly started her travel bug. Kelsey bravely set out alone on a one-way ticket, and she has continued to travel throughout her life "and am blessed to have visited almost 50 countries."



Kelsie Fillery with Mr Trevi.



Mr Trevi with books written about his adventures.

Kelsey found work in a bakery in Chorley, an historic market town in Lancashire, England. She also worked in the pub where she lived.

She developed her love of floristry through travelling across Europe where she drew inspiration from botanical gardens and natural landscapes. She trained and refined her skills working with a florist in South West Sydney for two years

before starting her own business. Kelsey's humble business beginnings began in 2016 in her garage – a small florist business supplying flowers for weddings and other special occasions.

Kelsey also gained creative experience "through a wonderful career as a visual merchandiser," giving her attention and creative eye to detail, displays and shop front windows. Kelsey quit her job in Sydney in 2019 and returned to the mid north coast after being in Sydney for 16 years. She ached for change, a quieter life and a fresh new start. She established the 'Flowers By Fillery,' in Forster, as a shopfront, turning her passion into a full-time creative business.

Flowers are Kelsey's passion but she also loves travel and lots of games and crafting at home. When she's not in her shop running her business and creating beautiful bouquets, she loves to draw, paint and cook. Kelsey has also written and self-published three children's books about Mr Trevi, her three-year-old

beloved sausage dog. Kelsey considers Mr Trevi to be her best friend, and her fourth book is currently in print and will be available from soon. All the books are named, 'The Adventures of Mr Trevi,' with the sub titles being 'The Florist Dog,' 'The Italian Journey,' and 'The Christmas Wish.' The beautiful watercolour illustrations are by her friend Abbey Briggs. Kelsey has also published a children's colouring book about Mr Trevi.

Kelsey said she has been blessed to have done a lot of adventuring in the way of travel – highlights are South African Safari with her Mum in 2020 and New York City adventuring for 2 weeks. She has also had multiple return trips to Italy – "favourite city I've been lucky to visit is Rome. Hence Mr Trevi's name." Kelsey was at the Trevi Fountain on April 3rd 2023, for her 30th birthday. The best-known tradition at the fountain consists of throwing a coin into the fountain and making a wish. Kelsey wished for 'love.' Kelsey's wish came true, as serendipity played a part, Kelsey's future partner signed a lease to move to Forster that very same day. Also, she arrived home and discovered her birthday gift from her parents was a surprise puppy Dachshund – she appropriately named him Mr Trevi, and he's certainly a true love of hers.

Kelsey now lives with Mr Trevi and her partner, Stefan, a Dutch/Australian working as a project manager in construction. Stefan and Kelsey met at her original florist/cafe establishment on West Street, Forster (now based on Boundary Street). Stefan enjoyed many coffees there and the rest is history.

As well as Kelsey's travel adventures, she considers building her business in the midst of Covid and creating what she has today in the way of 'Flowers by Fillery,' to be a huge adventure. Fortunately, Kelsey was able to continue trading through Covid as the café was considered an essential service.

One of Kelsey's achievements was winning 'Wedding florist of South Western Sydney' in 2017. She is also proud publishing her three children's books. However, she considers her greatest achievement being an aunty to her nephew Noah.

Kelsey has faced some challenges during her business venture, such as, small business struggles in a small town. She said the growth of a small town can't compete with the big city florists. She said the pace of life is much slower than in the city so customers are fewer. Another challenge Kelsey has is the inability to "believe in myself and more often than not I have serious imposter syndrome."

Living in Forster, Kelsey loves the waterways and wonderful cafes. She also loves the quietness and family orientated activities.

Kelsey is extremely happy to be pregnant with her first baby, a boy, who is due in early August. Where her next journey of motherhood begins.

Kelsey's motto to live by is, Meraki (a Greek philosophy) - "the soul, creativity, or love put into something; the essence of yourself that is put into your work."

See page 23 for Star Pet Mr Trevi.

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John Cribb Memorial Vets Golf

By David Blanchard - Forster Mens Vet golf

On the 15/6 90 avid Vets members hit off an 8.30am shotgun start at the magnificent Tuncurry course to compete for the John Cribb Memorial trophy over 18 holes. The weather was a great winter's day and the game as always was hotly contested and the following winners played very well.

A grade: Michael Tinker 36 points

B grade: Harry Overton 36 points

C grade: Michael Meehan 40 points

Winner of the John Cribb Memorial Trophy is Michael Meehan.

The day was sponsored by the very popular Pacific Ocean Brewery at Tuncurry and our special thanks go out to Dave and Jane Gander for their great support and their prizes were very well received by all the winners.

Our esteemed member Ken Pares gave a passionate talk for John Cribb, or Cribby as he was known, describing what a great Captain he was in the developing years of the Men's Vets and is missed by all who knew him and will be long remembered.

Right: (L-R) Dave Gander and Michael Meehan, winner of the John Cribb Memorial Trophy. Photo supplied.

Once again everyone enjoyed a superb BBQ lunch prior to the mega raffle and prize presentation.

The popularity of the Men's Vets golf is growing and anyone wishing to join us please contact the Forster Clubhouse desk on 02 6554 6799 who will put you in touch with a committee member for further detail.



Proud Nan's scrapbooks tell the story behind a Socceroo's rise



Above: Tuncurry's Robyn Metcalfe holding up one of her scrapbook records of grandson Connor Metcalfe who scored a goal for Australia in the World Cup Soccer. Photo by Mary Yule.

By Mary Yule – Forster Fortnightly

When the 26-year-old Socceroo Connor Metcalfe found the net in Australia's exciting win against Turkey on June 14, it was the latest chapter in a journey his grandmother Robyn Metcalfe has documented for more than 15 years through photographs, newspaper clippings and carefully kept records.

"I've just been really happy to see him achieve his lifelong goal," she said, in front of numerous scrap books and photographs of Connor spread out on her kitchen table in Tuncurry.

"I think it is certainly a time for all Australians to unite behind this young squad. They bring joy to us. You can see the passion in them and the pride they have in representing their country. The team have a very strong bond and these young men will continue to grow together as players and as people."

Long before he was representing Australia, Connor was a football-mad toddler growing up in Newcastle. According to Robyn, he collected soccer balls with remarkable devotion.

"He didn't have teddy bears, he had soccer balls when he was two and a half," she recalled. "One night he wouldn't go to sleep until a missing ball was found. He knew exactly which one was missing out of about 12."

That passion soon developed into talent. Connor began organised football at five or six years of age and quickly progressed through representative pathways. Despite being selected for elite teams, he faced a challenge that would follow him through much of his youth.

"He was really very small until he was about 16," Robyn said. "Everybody wrote him off and

said, 'You'll never go anywhere.' Then all of a sudden he grew."

His breakthrough came in 2011 when he earned selection in the Catholic Polding School side while still only 11 years old. The move to Melbourne two years later accelerated his development through the National Training Centre and Melbourne City's youth system.

By 2017, he was training with Melbourne City's senior squad. A year later he wore the green and gold for Australia's under-19 side before progressing to the under-23s and Olympic qualification campaigns.

In 2021, Connor achieved another milestone when he made his senior Socceroos debut and was named Professional Footballers Australia Young Footballer of the Year.

The road was not always smooth. A move to Germany before the 2022 FIFA World Cup saw him narrowly miss selection for Hamburg's St Paulis team after struggling for regular game time. Yet he persevered, helping his club earn promotion before re-establishing himself in the team.

Throughout the journey, Robyn and her late husband Tom were among Connor's most dedicated supporters. A former rugby league coach, Tom became one of Connor's biggest believers, particularly during the years when doubts surrounded his size and future prospects.

"Tom would keep saying, 'It's going to be all right. You're a great little player,'" Robyn said.

Tom died before seeing Connor wear the national colours, but Robyn believes his encouragement helped shape the player he became.

"I think Connor's whole family has handled it well, really," she said. "They appreciate that these things don't come on a platter. It comes back to someone having the passion, the drive and the ambition to work towards their goal, and that requires the support of the family around them."

Robyn believes Connor's story is also a reminder of the vital role played by families, volunteers and community clubs across Australia.

"There's always going to be emerging talent coming from anywhere," she said. "Raw talent that's identified and placed in an encouraging environment will blossom, which is really what Connor's story is. He came into the representative teams, but it's been a long, long journey built on hard work, dedication, self-belief and resilience. And nothing happens unless someone is willing to give up their time along the way. There has to be someone who steps forward and says, 'Yes, I'll staff the canteen on Saturday mornings. I'll manage the kit bag. I'll transport the kids who don't have transport. I'll coach them and help them get where they need to be. It's giving up something for others which we all do in a way."



Top right: Young Connor Metcalfe with his grandad Tom Metcalfe.

Right: Connor at age 17, playing for Victoria when they won the National Youth League Champs in 2017.

Below: Connor scored a goal at the World Cup against Turkey on 14 June. Image credit: APP.



Pearl Dragons prove Dragon Boating is for everyone

By Michelle Richardson – Great Lakes Pearl Dragons

If you think dragon boating is only for elite athletes or older paddlers, think again.

The Great Lakes Pearl Dragons are breaking stereotypes and proving that one of Australia's fastest-growing water sports is attracting people of all ages – from teenagers looking for adventure to grandparents enjoying an active lifestyle.

For two of the club's youngest members, Rachael and Caitlyn, dragon boating has opened doors to friendships, travel, competition and experiences they never imagined.

Rachael's journey began when her Nan invited her to attend a training session with the Great Lakes Pearl Dragons.

"I was hooked from the moment I stepped on the boat," Rachael said.

What started as a simple invitation quickly turned into a passion. The welcoming atmosphere, team spirit and sense of belonging kept her coming back, and before long she was competing at regattas alongside her clubmates.

One of those regattas led to an unexpected opportunity when paddlers from Ryde Dragon Boat Club invited her to join their junior team at a Sydney competition.

Without hesitation, she accepted.

"It was such an amazing experience competing with people my own age," she said. "I met so many new friends and learned that every team has its own way of training and racing. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming."

Meanwhile, fellow paddler Caitlyn recently



Above: Great Lakes Pearl Dragons member Rachael.

travelled to Queensland to compete at the Australian Dragon Boat Championships as part of the newly formed Kangaroo Premier Team.

Despite not knowing anyone on the team before arriving, it didn't take long for the young paddlers to gel.

"After the first race we found our rhythm, and we just got stronger with every race," Caitlyn said. Competing in 200-metre, 500-metre and 1-kilometre events against some of Australia's best young paddlers, Caitlyn and her teammates achieved impressive results, reaching both semi finals and grand finals."

More importantly, she came home with new friendships, valuable racing experience and memories she will never forget.

"It was such a positive and supportive environment," she said. "I'd love to do it all again next year."

For Great Lakes Pearl Dragons, stories like Rachael's and Caitlyn's highlight something the club has always known – dragon boating isn't just a sport. It's a community.

On any training day you'll find teenagers paddling alongside parents, grandparents and everyone in between. Age, fitness level and experience don't matter nearly as much as enthusiasm, teamwork and a willingness to have a go.

The sport offers a unique mix of fitness, fun, friendship and teamwork, all while enjoying the beautiful waterways of the Great Lakes region.

Club members say many newcomers arrive feeling nervous, only to discover a supportive group of people who quickly become friends.

Whether you're 12 or 92, looking to improve your fitness, make new friends, challenge yourself or simply try something different, the Great Lakes Pearl Dragons would love to welcome you aboard.

After all, as Rachael and Caitlyn have discovered, some of life's best adventures begin with stepping into a dragon boat for the very first time.



Above: Great Lakes Pearl Dragons member Caitlyn. Photos supplied.

Interested in giving it a go?

The Great Lakes Pearl Dragons welcome new members of all ages and abilities.

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Let’s run a marathon at 70 years old

By Leon Batman - Tuncurry

My running journey began on 23 December 2017. Until then, I had barely run at all, not even as a youngster. Encouraged by my eldest daughter, I took part in the relatively new Forster Parkrun. I crossed the finish line in a very modest 45 minutes and 33 seconds, having probably walked half of the course, but I was immediately hooked. Before I had even recovered, I was already planning my next parkrun.

Work commitments meant I couldn’t attend Forster Parkrun every Saturday, but whenever possible I ran there. I also managed to complete parkruns while working in Port Hedland, Western Australia, and my daughter enthusiastically introduced me to many others across New South Wales.

My venture into longer-distance running began after joining Forster Runners following my retirement. Being home more often gave me the opportunity to train regularly with a supportive group of runners. In 2019, I completed my first longer event, the Fernleigh 15 in Newcastle. Although I couldn’t run the entire distance, I finished the race and have since completed it three times.

With the encouragement and guidance of fellow Forster Runners, my running steadily improved. In 2024, I achieved a significant milestone by completing the Gold Coast Half Marathon. I had hoped to return to the Gold Coast in 2025 to tackle my first marathon, but family commitments made that impossible.

Instead, a chance meeting with new Forster Runner Samantha Gardiner changed my plans. Sam had entered the Gold Coast Marathon, and we struck up a friendship while training together. Supporting Sam in her marathon preparation became an enjoyable challenge, and she rewarded all her hard work with an impressive finishing time of 5 hours and 1 minute.

Inspired by Sam’s achievement, I began to consider running my own marathon. Once again, family commitments ruled out the 2026 Gold Coast Marathon, so I turned my attention to the South West Rocks Marathon in June 2026. After several months of discussion, and despite a few injury setbacks, Sam agreed to join me on the journey.

Our early training was disrupted by injuries, but by March we were following a structured marathon program thanks to Josh Moody from Forster Runners. Along the way, runners including Lindy McDonnell, Amanda Montesin and others joined us for training runs, offering encouragement as our distances gradually extended beyond 30 kilometres.

Race day arrived quickly. On 7 June, Sam and I stood at the start line surrounded by family, friends and our Forster Runners support crew. We had trained together for months, and now the challenge was real.

The marathon tested us both. We navigated narrow bush tracks, rolling hills and long stretches of road. Sam looked out for me on the technical sections because of my poor eyesight,

while Josh provided encouragement during difficult moments. There were unexpected toilet stops, sore knees and, late in the race, a heavy fall that left me bruised and bleeding just three kilometres from the finish.

After checking that nothing was seriously injured, Sam and I continued together. We walked, talked and eventually shuffled into a slow run as the finish line drew closer. Emerging from the bush, we crossed the line side by side. We had trained together, started together and finished together. That shared achievement was undoubtedly the highlight of the day.

At 70 years of age, will I run another marathon? Probably not. But I will always treasure the friendships, support and memories that running has given me.



Above: Leon Batman and Sam Gardiner in their Forster Runner's club shirts during the South West Rocks Marathon. Photo supplied.

Celebrations all round at Forster Surf Club!



100% patrol attendance with Forster Surf Life Saving Club for 2025/26 season.

Forster Surf Life Saving Club

Forster SLSC Presentation Awards night celebrated the outstanding contributions and service to the club in many areas. The night was a wonderful opportunity to recognise the dedication and commitment of our members throughout the season.

Williams and Lorraine Morgan. Absent: Claire Whitaker and Karen Kelly.

All of these members demonstrated exceptional commitment to surf lifesaving by consistently fulfilling their patrol obligations and contributing to the safety of our beach-going community throughout the season.



Above: President's Award was presented to Mike Keegan (on right) by Ron Hartley. Photos supplied.

The Leading Patrol Hours Award for the Female Patrol Member was presented to Beth Lee, (64 hours) acknowledging her remarkable commitment to patrol duties. Julie Wilcox and Georgia Wilcox (62.5 hours) shared second place after both achieving outstanding patrol hour totals. In the men's category, John Quinn (95 hours) was recognised as the Leading Male Patrol Member, Rob Chappell (75 hours) secured second place, while Bruce Higgs, Joe Williams and Jarrah Verdich (66.5 hours) shared third place honours. The club sincerely thanks all patrol members for their service and congratulates this year's 100% Patrol Award recipients and the Leading Patrol Hours Award winners on their remarkable achievement.

One of the highlights of our Awards Night was the presentation of the 100% Patrol Awards, recognising members who achieved perfect attendance for their rostered patrol commitments throughout the season. This outstanding achievement reflects the dedication, reliability and commitment that are essential to keeping our beaches safe and supporting the important work of our club. Congratulations to the following members who achieved 100% Patrol Hours: From Left to Right: Bruce Higgs, Julie Wilcox, John Quinn, Jim Wills, Georgia Wilcox, Sophia Lee, Beth Lee, Angela Elkington, Simon Lee, Dave Keating, Ric Brennan, Glen Mason, Janet Litwin, Joe

A new award added to the selection categories was the Associate Members Award. This was jointly awarded to Wendy Fahey and Wayne Gooley in recognition of their valuable contribution and ongoing support of the club, buildings and surrounds.

A special highlight of the evening was the presentation of the President's Award to Mike Keegan. Mike was recognised for his extensive work researching, compiling and preserving the history of our club and awards gained by members This included reviewing archived SLSNSW records, The Advocate, Manning River Times and Historical Society, creating a valuable

record that will benefit current and future members alike.

Congratulations to all award recipients and thank you to everyone whose dedication and volunteer spirit continue to make our club such a success. The prestigious Gordon Godwin Club Person of the Year Award was jointly presented this year to Ryan Crompton and Cathy Quinn by Alison Penfold MP, Federal Member for Lyne, in recognition of their outstanding service and unwavering commitment to our club. Both Ryan and Cathy have demonstrated exceptional dedication through their selfless contributions to the club's daily operations, committee work, and patrol activities, consistently going above and beyond for the benefit of members and the community.

Ryan Crompton was recognised for his outstanding leadership and commitment to patrol operations. As a Patrol Captain and member of the emergency call-out team, Ryan encourages active participation among members and regularly contributes his IRB driving skills at club and community events, including Weekend of Surf, the Club-to-Club Ocean Swim, and NSW Triathlon events. His positive attitude, reliability, and willingness to help make him a valued member of our club.

Cathy Quinn was honoured for her significant contribution to the club's administration and

Right: Joint Person of the Year Award was presented to (L-R) Ryan Crompton and Cathy Quinn by Alison Penfold MP.



operations. Alongside her patrol commitments, Cathy serves as Club Registrar, assists with bar operations, contributes her administration skills at club and community events, including Weekend of Surf announcer, the Club-to-Club Ocean Swim results recorder, and volunteering at the Forster Running Festival; developed the club newsletter, and has led the development of important policies, procedures, and position descriptions. Her dedication and organisational skills have made a lasting impact on the club.

Ryan and Cathy embody the spirit of volunteerism that is at the heart of our club. Their dedication, leadership, and countless hours of service make them worthy recipients of the Gordon Godwin Club Person of the Year Award. Congratulations to both on this well-deserved honour.

Congratulations to all award recipients and thank you to everyone whose dedication and volunteer spirit continue to make our club such a success.

By Dave Hughes

Coffs Harbour Back Yard Ultra

On June 7th Coffs Harbour hosted its annual Back Yard Ultra. It was recognised as the second biggest BYU attendance in the world with 492 starters. Each participant runs 6.7km every hour on the hour until only one person remains. There is one eventual winner and 491 DNF's (did not finish). The DNF's go home with a wooden spoon.

It is a community-based event run by run director Keelan Birch. There is no entry fee but donations are gratefully accepted and assist Coffs Trail Running Group with their out of pocket expenses.

Keelan Birch said the weekend exceeded all expectations.

“From first-timers tackling their very first yard to runners pushing deep into the night and beyond 200km, every single person who stood on that start line helped make this event something special,” Birch said.



Sydney runner Oliver Sheekey, 21, successfully defended his 2025 title, completing 33 yards (circuits) – 221km – to be crowned last male standing.

Clare Palmer pushed him every step of the way, completing 32 yards – 214km – to take the last female standing title in an extraordinary display of endurance.

Forster Runners provided many worthwhile contributors. The surprise package were the young children. McKenna (6 years female) and Alex Eichner (7 years male) both broke national records for their respective age groups by exceeding 20 km (3 yards). Kitty Hoey (7 years female) became the national record holder by completing two yards. Her parents noted that she was going to stop after one yard but was told if she did two, she'd be the champion – so she did. Her parents also commented that it was the friendliest and most supportive community race they had ever been to. Young Evan Milligan (9 years male) also completed 3 yards and equalled the national record. There was a suggestion that these youngsters run a few extra hundred metres to complete their first ever half marathon, however they were too busy eating well deserved donuts.

Ashley Birks 12 yards (86km) and Aaron Eichner 8 yards (54km) ran the furthest of the Forster Running group. Other contributors were Deb Milligan and James Quiring 3 yards and Kirby Eichner 1 yard. James decided to “kiss the ground” for the second year in a row. He is improving though as this year hospitalisation was not required.

Praise must be given to Run Director Keelan Birch and his merry group of volunteers for continuing to provide quality events for our running community.

South West Rocks Runfest

This annual event took place on Saturday the 6th of June in the scenic town of South West Rocks (Little Bay, Arakoon). There were several distances to choose from ...3k, 5k, 10k, half marathon (21.1k) and the full marathon (42.195k).

Whilst conditions were benign there was a definite chill in the air as the contestants converged on the sleepy little town.

At 6:45 am the half and full marathoners began their race. They followed the coastline of Trial Bay past Horseshoe

Left: Evan Milligan (green cap) with dad Ashley Birks (blue cap) during the Coffs BYU.



Above: Front row (L-R) Kitty Hoey, McKenna, Kirby and Alex Eichner. Back row Roger Smith and Aaron Eichner. Photos supplied.

Bay and out to the breakwater of the Macleay River. The course is a mixture of trails and paths and it would be hard pressed to find a prettier area in which to spend your Saturday morning. The course is slightly undulating and not one to set a fast personal best. All contestants returned towards the start line however the marathoners still had plenty of work to do. Whilst the half marathoners were entering the finishing Shute the marathoners had two more 10.5 km laps to navigate.

Forster Runners Sam Gardener (age 39) and Leon Batman (age 70 - see story above) have been training tirelessly together for months and set this race as their prime focus of 2026. This was Sam's second and Leon's first marathon. They were given great support by several group members who held signs (“We Believe In You

(according to Garmin) and hillier than expected so perhaps the gap was closer than indicated”

Leon was “rushed” to the first aid tent after the finish line. He was battered and bruised after falling at the 40k mark. Rumours were rife that he deliberately falls (this was not the first time) just to get the attention of the medics and a guaranteed photo shoot. Mention of perhaps another marathon in Leon's household is taboo. Watch this space. Pain is temporary, memories last forever.

To round out the trilogy of competing Forster Runners was Amanda Montesin. Amanda competed in the 10km event and managed a well earned personal best of 55 minutes.

Next year's event will be staged on the 13th of June 2027.

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Pickleball fever hits Tuncurry



Above: It's just been a fantastic day," said Sonia Rockley. Photos from Tuncurry Sporties by Sophia McCaughan.

By Sophia McCaughan - Forster Fortnightly

Over 80 competitors across the region descended onto Tuncurry Sporties for The Dink Collective's Mid North Coast Challenge on Sunday, June 21.

Players hailed from as far north as Nambucca Valley and as south as Hallidays Point with clubs representing Kempsey, Wauchope and surrounding areas in the region.

Pickleball is a fast-paced paddle sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong.

It is played on a compact court (about one-quarter the size of a tennis court) using a solid paddle and a lightweight plastic ball with holes.

Pickleball is one of the world's fastest-growing sports because beginners are able to learn the rules and engage in fun rallies within their first 10 minutes on the court.

Secretary of Pickleball at Tuncurry Sporties, Sonia Rockley said the competition was an opportunity to meet other pickleball enthusiasts on the Mid North Coast.

"It's just been a fantastic day and I'm hoping to promote pickleball in Forster-Tuncurry," she said.

The Mid North Coast Challenge ran all day earlier this month with three different categories: novice, intermediate and advanced.

Sonia says pickleball is an inclusive, easy-to-learn game and encourages the community to head down to Tuncurry Sporties to give it a go.

"Pickleball is infectious, social, good therapy and a great form of exercise," she said.

You can play pickleball at Tuncurry Sporties on Tuesdays and Fridays at 9.30am, Saturday at 5pm and for more experienced players, Thursday at 5.30pm.



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