

CAMDEN HAVEN LOCAL



LAURIE TON | NORTH HAVEN | DUNBOGAN | KEW | KENDALL **news** BONNY HILLS | LAKE CATHIE | OCTOBER 2026

FREE

night gardener

floodland

art. sounds. smells

guess the local

hope and glory

dragon racing

our flower bowl

Gardening Recipe Music Stargazing People Travel
Reviews What's On Pets Community Chat Happenings

Happenings on the home front.



Paddling and battling.

by Alison Stewart

The final weekend of winter saw Camden Haven Dragon Boat Club (CHDBC) host its annual regatta to resounding success. Now in its third successive year, the club's winning formula once again proved invincible. With a genuinely unique venue, dedicated volunteers and, somehow, perfect weather, the regatta continues to go from strength to strength.

Once again, local MP Rob Dwyer made it a priority, officially opening proceedings and adding to the prestige and excitement of the event.

Although hosting a regatta is a goal for every club, only six of the 14 clubs in the Northern Region are able to do so. They need sufficient members, a safe and suitable waterway and, importantly, a serious club commitment to making the event a success.

Interestingly, when a club hosts a regatta, it cannot compete. Every available club member is required in a volunteer capacity. Beyond CHDBC's 50-plus volunteers, each participating club must also provide two dedicated volunteers, taking the total number of people working behind the scenes to more than 75.



Cover: A foraging Bandicoot in a suburban garden.

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What makes CHDBC's regatta particularly special is the venue - Stoney Park at Telegraph Point. New club president Fiona Thorn describes it as "an enclosed, man-made lake specifically intended for water sports. There's plenty of onshore space to watch the action and even accommodation on site. The only other comparable venue in NSW is SIRC in Penrith, which was used during the Olympics."

This unique waterway means crews can race without having to contend with tides or swell. The result is faster racing, quicker turnaround times between the start and finish areas and, most importantly, the ability to run almost 100 races over the weekend.

Another key to the regatta's efficiency is the use of seven dragon boats rather than the usual four. A big thank you goes to Wauchope, Manning River and South West Rocks for increasing the boat numbers. Almost twice the usual number of boats means many more opportunities for paddlers to get on the water - although, of course, it also means twice the organisation and work behind the scenes.

"I'm not sure who gets a better workout, the volunteers or the competitors," laughs Peter Guild, whose role as one of several boat wranglers saw him standing waist-deep in water for much of the weekend.

Around 300 paddlers competed each day, representing 14 clubs from across the state. Crews travelled from Coffs Harbour and the Central Coast and, amazingly, from as far afield as Bathurst and Orange.

The 200m races made up the majority of the program, but there were also 1.4km races

around the islands strategically positioned at either end of the enclosed waterway. Additional categories, including Over 70s and All Cancer Paddlers, added plenty of variety to the racing.

A special thanks also goes to Port Macquarie Marine Rescue, who volunteered their vital services in both First Aid and Water Safety throughout the weekend. Their rescue

boat followed closely behind every race, but thankfully everything went without incident.

When CHDBC first decided to put on a regatta, they knew their primary task was to find a safe and viable venue. It was love at first sight when they laid eyes on Stoney Park. Knowing immediately that it was their 'forever home', they then made an even greater

commitment to the site.

Under the leadership of then-president Anni Yaringa, who always has an eye for koala conservation, Anni organised for 200 food trees to be planted along the foreshore. Eventually, the trees will provide shade for the regatta while creating a food corridor for her - and our - beloved koalas.

Twenty-four dedicated club members planted a variety of tallow wood, red gum and swamp mahogany. It will be another five to eight years before Anni's vision is fully realised, but each regatta provides an opportunity to follow their progress.

If I've whet your appetite, contact Kath Branscombe or Maureen Phinn at sect@havendragons.org.

Dragon boating really is for everyone. With 78 members ranging in age from 26 to 93, it's quite obviously all-inclusive. And, in the case of CHDBC, I would add that they definitely "make the world a better and greener place!"



Kerry Mathieson, Rob Dwyer and Glen Bright. Photo: Hans Foeken

Community Chit Chat.

When it rains it really pours. Opening discussion.

by *The Editor*

For Camden Haven residents, the story told in the acclaimed documentary *Floodland* may feel very close to home.

Just a year before the devastating 2022 Lismore floods, the Camden Haven experienced its own major flood emergency in March 2021. As we know, North Haven, Laurieton, Dunbogan and surrounding low-lying communities were badly affected as homes, businesses and roads went under water and residents faced evacuations, isolation and a lengthy clean-up.

Those memories give special relevance to a free screening of *Floodland* at Laurieton United Services Club on Saturday, 10 October.

Hosted by LUSC and Lyne Together, the screening will be followed by an expert panel discussion looking at what communities can do to prepare for emergencies, minimise risk and recover when disaster strikes.

Directed by Jordan Giusti, *Floodland* captures the disastrous Lismore floods through the eyes of residents who lived through them.

Winner of the Sydney Film Festival's 2025 Sustainability Award, it moves beyond dramatic flood images to explore what happens afterwards – the recovery, healing and community-led responses that emerge when people are forced to rebuild their lives.



The film also highlights First Nations healing practices and the strength that can come from communities working together.

While *Floodland* tells Lismore's story, many of its themes will be immediately recognisable to local residents.

Our region knows only too well that floods, bushfires, storms and other natural disasters can arrive quickly and leave effects lasting long after the water recedes or the immediate danger passes.

Following the screening, representatives from health, local government and the SES will join community leaders for a panel discussion offering practical information about

preparedness, recovery and available support.

The event is also an opportunity to consider what was learned from our own flood experience – and how stronger local connections and better preparation could help the Camden Haven face the next emergency.

Arrivals are from 4pm, with *Floodland* commencing at 4.30pm and the panel discussion at 6pm at LUSC in Seymour Street.

Admission is FREE, with bookings recommended through LUSC.

Those wishing to contribute are encouraged to donate to GIVIT, which has assisted disaster-affected communities throughout the region.

Reuse, repair and recycle at the drive-thru.

NSW EPA funding is supporting a reuse and recycling pilot in the Port Macquarie Hastings region.

Port Macquarie Hastings Council has received \$43,890 in funding from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to deliver a pilot series of Drive Thru and Drop Off - Reuse and Recycling Events.

The funding has been provided through the NSW Government's Local Government Waste Solutions Fund, which supports councils to deliver innovative waste and recycling initiatives that help reduce waste

and support a circular economy.

The pilot will involve four free weekend events where residents can drop off unwanted household items for reuse, repair or recycling using a drive-through model. Items are unloaded directly from vehicle boots by Council staff and partner organisations.

The events help overcome common barriers to reuse and recycling, such as difficulty accessing charity shops during opening hours.

The next event is in November. More info on the PMHC website under /Residents.



APOLOGY

In our story on Nancy-Bird Walton, note that we wrote that she worked in her father's store at Kew. At 2 years old this was not the case. At 13 years she worked in the Mt George store.



"Luke was a pleasure to work with throughout the whole process of selling. He is calm & confident in his work ethic & attentive to detail. Nothing was too much trouble for him in listing our place to market. I thoroughly recommended Luke for a smooth selling or purchasing process."

- Vendor, Laurieton

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Community Chit Chat.

Much much more than meeting places.

by *Alison Stewart*



The Meeting Place is so much more than a café serving tea, coffee and cakes each Thursday morning. It is a vital cog in the Kendall community, with spokes extending well beyond the physical café.

The Meeting Place supports the Market Bazaar, Global Community Garden, Bookends and the entire running and maintenance of the Kendall Community Centre, comprising the historic Kendall Hall, kitchens, offices and business premises, all of which require a paid manager.

So, without The Meeting Place, there is far too much at stake – a reality that hit home a few weeks ago.

After commencing in 2005, The Meeting Place suddenly faced a serious problem: a lack of volunteers. The café is run entirely by volunteers and requires at least 10 people

every week, not including the essential cake makers!

An urgent community meeting was called, filling the hall with more than 80 stakeholders. Veteran volunteers, market stallholders, regular hall hirers and representatives from many of the community groups whose survival is directly connected to The Meeting Place

Thankfully, the extended community rose to the challenge, with several new volunteers committing immediately.

The volunteer pool is a varied one, extending from baristas – training provided – to wait staff, dishwashers and, of course, the all-important cake makers, baking at home and delivering their treats on Thursday morning.

If you would like to be part of this wonderful weekly endeavour, please contact Karen Hanna on 0415-127-075. Alternatively, if you simply want to see what it's all about pop into The Meeting Place any Thursday between 9am and noon, with last orders at 11.30am.

Together, veteran volunteers and newcomers will help ensure the future of The Meeting Place remains bright. Once again, the Camden Haven community has shown exactly what can happen when people come together.

Meeting ones fête.

The annual Anglican Church Spring Festival, held on September 12, once again drew a huge crowd for a lively morning of bargains, food, live entertainment and friendly conversation.

There was plenty to keep everyone occupied. Over 80 volunteers helped on the day, with children's activities, homemade cakes and food, coffee, sales of plants, crafts, books and games all adding to the mix. The atmosphere was somewhere between a traditional spring fair and a giant community garage sale, with plenty of treasures to be discovered.

Approximately \$10,000 was raised from donated goods and will help support local youth projects and to help support two refugee families in Jakarta who escaped Afghanistan.

Once again, the festival proved a most popular spring gathering with Revd Canon Nathan Killick, Senior Pastor, on the 'mic' keeping everyone heading in the right direction.



Forsaken roundabout.

by *The Editor*

Thank you to the people who responded to our article on the roundabout entry to our region. There was some very constructive feedback with some logical solutions and points of difficulty raised. These have been passed to our Chamber of Commerce which will lobby for a practical solution. As the iKew information centre is under their auspices we hope for an outcome.



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Art for art's sake.

by *Caroline Hopwood*

The Hastings Valley Fine Arts Association (HVFAA) – St Peter the Fisherman Art Group is delighted to present its annual Art Exhibition and Sale.

Each year, the exhibition is a wonderful success, attracting art lovers from across the local community, with many original works sold at very affordable and realistic prices.

There is something for everyone.

The exhibition will showcase a diverse range of artwork in a variety of mediums, including oil, acrylic, pencil and pastel. Styles will range from contemporary and abstract to impressionistic and realistic.

Most works will be beautifully framed and ready to hang, while there will also be a selection of inexpensive, unframed and mounted artworks available – making it easy to find something special to suit every taste and budget.

For further information about membership to HVFAA please contact Caroline Hopwood on 0449 255 393.

Come along to the Laurieton Art Exhibition and Sale, support our local artists, and discover an original artwork to take home and enjoy. The exhibition will be held at the Laurieton United Services Club (LUSC) from 2-5 October, 10am-6pm daily.

For smell's sake.

by *Anne Campbell-Cross*

The Hannam Vale Recreation Reserve will once again host the Hannam Vale Open Garden Day, welcoming visitors to explore a selection of beautiful private country gardens throughout the valley.

This year's event features a vibrant market with approximately 40 stalls.

Visitors can enjoy morning teas, lunches, beverages, market shopping, and community hospitality throughout the day. The Open Garden Day is on Sunday 25 October 2026.

Contact: 0431 092 701 or 0414 989 776.

For sound's sake.

by *Jennie Wright*

Sinfonia MNC, your local Symphony Orchestra, is performing at Camden Haven Anglican Church, Lakewood, on Sunday 1st November at 2pm, with tickets on sale now. The Orchestra will also be playing for the High School students of the Hastings, at Camden Haven High School later in November.

This "Symphonic Symbiosis" showcases the many instruments of an Orchestra, with skillfull arrangements by Sinfonia's Conductor and Musical Director, Mr Iain Pole. Contact: Jennie Wright, 0418 205 971.

Diabetes and your oral health.

The connection may be closer than you think.

When we think about diabetes, teeth and gums probably aren't the first things that come to mind.

But your mouth is part of your body – and the relationship between diabetes and oral health works both ways.

Diabetes can increase your risk of gum disease, particularly when blood glucose levels are difficult to control. At the same time, untreated gum disease can create ongoing inflammation in the body, which may make blood glucose harder to manage and may increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

That makes looking after your gums an important part of looking after your overall health – whether or not you have diabetes.

How can diabetes affect your gums?

Your mouth naturally contains hundreds of different types of bacteria. Most cause us no trouble, particularly when we regularly remove the plaque that builds up around our teeth and gums.

The problem begins when plaque is allowed to accumulate.

The gums can become red, swollen or prone to bleeding – the early stage of gum disease known as **gingivitis**.

If inflammation progresses deeper below the gumline, it can develop into **periodontitis**. This more serious form of gum disease can damage the tissues and bone supporting the teeth and, without treatment, may eventually contribute to loose teeth and tooth loss.

For people living with diabetes, changes in the body's ability to respond to infection and inflammation can make gum disease more likely and sometimes more difficult to control.

How can gum disease affect diabetes?

The relationship also works in the other direction.

Advanced gum disease is a chronic infection. Like other ongoing infections, it can contribute to inflammation throughout the body. This inflammation may make it harder for insulin to work effectively, potentially making blood glucose management more challenging.

For people who already have diabetes, untreated gum disease may make blood glucose levels more difficult to control. For people at risk of type 2 diabetes, maintaining



good oral health is one part of supporting overall health.

This does not mean gum disease directly causes diabetes in every person. Diabetes risk is influenced by many factors, including genetics, weight, diet, physical activity and other health conditions. However, the connection between gum inflammation and blood glucose regulation is another good reason not to ignore unhealthy gums.

Would you know if your gums were unhealthy?

Gum disease doesn't always hurt.

That means it can quietly progress before you realise there is a problem. Silent and Serious!

Have a quick think:

Do your gums bleed when you brush or floss?

Are they red, puffy or tender?

Do you regularly notice bad breath or a bad taste?

Are your gums shrinking away from your teeth?

Have any teeth started to feel loose or changed position?

These are all worth discussing with your dental team.

And importantly, **bleeding gums aren't something we should simply accept as normal.**

It's not just gum disease.

Diabetes can also be associated with other changes in the mouth.

Some people experience **dry mouth**, which means there is less saliva available to naturally protect the teeth, neutralise acids and wash away food and bacteria. This can increase the risk of tooth decay, mouth soreness and bad breath.

Others may be more susceptible to thrush,

a fungal infection that can cause white patches, redness or discomfort in the mouth.

If something in your mouth has changed, tell us. Small changes can sometimes give us useful clues about what is happening with your oral and general health.

What can you do?

The encouraging part is that there is plenty you can do.

Brush thoroughly twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and clean **between your teeth every**

day using floss or interdental brushes.

Keeping plaque levels low helps reduce inflammation around the gums.

Keep your regular dental examinations and professional cleans, and follow the recall interval recommended specifically for you. Some people may benefit from being seen more frequently than every six months, particularly if gum disease is already present.

If you have diabetes, work with your medical team to manage your blood glucose levels and let your dental team know about your diagnosis, medications and any changes to your health.

If you do not have diabetes but have signs of gum disease, don't wait for pain before seeking advice. Treating gum inflammation early may help protect your teeth, gums and general health.

Your mouth is part of the bigger picture.

Modern dentistry isn't simply about fixing teeth when something hurts.

It's about prevention, identifying changes early and understanding that oral health and general health are connected.

Diabetes can increase the risk of gum disease, while untreated gum disease may contribute to inflammation and make blood glucose management more difficult. Caring for your teeth and gums is therefore one more positive thing you can do for your health – and your dental and medical teams can work alongside you to help.

When was the last time someone checked the health of your gums, not just your teeth?

Sundial Dental has been caring for local smiles for 20 years, with a friendly practice in Laurieton 6559 9276. Or check out our recently updated website www.sundialdental.com.au

Another person of plane fame.

An old story most locals know. With hope there's hokey pokey.

by the Editor



On 14 August 1944, while the Second World War was still raging across the Pacific, our quiet fishing town of Laurieton received a visitor nobody could have expected.

Hollywood comedian and entertainer Bob Hope quite literally dropped in – aboard a US Navy Catalina flying boat forced to make an emergency landing on the Camden Haven River.

Hope was in the Pacific entertaining Allied servicemen, part of the extraordinary wartime touring schedule that would make him one of the best-known troop entertainers of the era. Travelling with him were fellow performers including singer Frances Langford, comedian Jerry Colonna, dancer Patty Thomas, guitarist Tony Romano and writer Barney Dean.

Their PBY-5A Catalina, appropriately named *Spare Gear*, was heading south towards Sydney when a broken fuel line caused its port engine to fail. With the

aircraft losing power, luggage was thrown overboard to lighten the load. According to later accounts, the unwanted cargo included clothing, cigarettes and – most tragically in the eyes of generations of local storytellers – several cases of whisky.

Pilot James Frank Ferguson brought the Catalina down on the Camden Haven River, where it eventually became grounded on a sandbank. The drama had been spotted by Mrs I. M. Grierson, Chief Observer of the Laurieton Volunteer Air Observers Corps, who reported the aircraft's difficulties and helped set assistance in motion.

Local fisherman Allan "Bunny" Wallace then rowed out and ferried the unexpected Hollywood visitors ashore. One enduring story has the pilot asking Wallace whether they had reached Sydney – a reasonable question perhaps, although Laurieton in 1944 was a long way from resembling the harbour city.

The entertainers headed into town

to send messages assuring family and organisers they were safe. Another much-loved local story tells of Hope introducing himself at the post office, only to have busy postmaster Fred Plunkett initially assume the young man was joking. Plunkett later reportedly lent Hope money to cover his immediate expenses.

Word of the famous visitors spread quickly, and Laurieton responded in true country-town fashion – by throwing a party.

More than 400 people reportedly crowded into the School of Arts, where Hope and Colonna joined locals dancing the Hokey Pokey, with celebrations continuing into the early hours. Hope signed hundreds of autographs, while the gathering also raised money for the local Patriotic Fund.

The following day the troupe continued south by road, stopping at Taree where Hope personally thanked members of the Volunteer Air Observers Corps before travelling on towards Newcastle and Sydney.

The Catalina was repaired, but Laurieton's unexpected brush with Hollywood became part of Camden Haven folklore. Hope apparently remembered it too. When he returned to Australia in 1955, Laurieton residents presented him with a painting of the town, and records suggest he was still exchanging Christmas greetings with locals years later.

For one remarkable wartime night, Hollywood didn't come to Laurieton by limousine or red carpet.

It arrived on the river – in a Catalina with one engine, a load of entertainers and considerably less whisky than when it started.



Facts and folklore.

More than eight decades of retelling have added a few colourful touches to the story of Bob Hope's unexpected arrival in Laurieton. So what do we actually know?

Did Bob Hope crash a plane into the Camden Haven River?

Not quite. It was a forced landing, and nobody was injured. Hope had reportedly been allowed to fly the Catalina when its port engine failed, but the aircraft's pilot, James Frank Ferguson, immediately took back the controls and made the landing. The Catalina later became stuck on a sandbank.

What about the whisky? This one appears to have more substance than local folklore might suggest. Records compiled from people connected with the incident state that luggage was thrown overboard to lighten the aircraft, including three cases of whisky and two cases of cigarettes.

Ferguson's son later recalled discovering a family album containing a note about having to throw the "good booze" overboard.

Did locals really go looking for it?

According to local recollections, fishermen later dragged nets through the estuary hoping to recover the missing whisky. Sadly for them, none was found.

Did the pilot really ask, "Is this Sydney?"

That's harder to prove. Fisherman Allan "Bunny" Wallace certainly brought Hope and others ashore – Hope himself confirmed that in a 1968 letter. The famous question supposedly asked of Wallace remains a wonderful part of the story, but is best regarded as local folklore rather than established fact.

And perhaps that's how a good local story should be: **mostly history, with just enough mystery left for Camden Haven locals to argue about over a beer.**



Nancy Bird with Jack, Charles' nephew.

Did Laurieton Send the Hokey Pokey to America?

Perhaps the most treasured part of the story is the claim that Laurieton sent the **Hokey Pokey** to America. Local folklore has it that after being taught the dance at the School of Arts that night, Hope telephoned home and excitedly announced that the locals had shown him a new dance.

There is certainly plenty behind the story. Hope was photographed making a telephone call from Laurieton, and contemporary accounts record that he and Jerry Colonna danced with local girls until the early hours. Hope later told reporters he had learned four new dances that night, although he could only remember one – which he thought was called **Hop Scotch**. Mrs Illingworth, wife of the Laurieton Police Sergeant, was quick to put the record straight. It was the **Hokey Pokey**. Whether Bob Hope really introduced the dance to America is another matter, but generations of locals have happily claimed some of the credit.



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Critiques and Reviews.

The quiet power of walking away.

by the editor

What would happen if you simply walked away? Not dramatically. Not with doors slammed or bridges burned. Just quietly stepped out of the life you had built and went somewhere still enough to hear yourself think.

That's the deceptively simple premise at the heart of Australian author Charlotte Wood's *Stone Yard Devotional*, a thoughtful, beautifully restrained novel that was shortlisted for the 2024 Booker Prize.

Its unnamed narrator leaves Sydney and retreats to a small community of Catholic nuns on the Monaro plains of New South Wales. She's not seeking religious conversion and does not arrive with some grand plan for reinvention. She simply feels a need to withdraw from the noise, expectations and complications of her former life.

What follows is not an action-packed story. Its power comes from observation: the daily rhythms of communal life, changing weather, animals, landscape, memory and the small interactions between people who have chosen, for very different reasons, to live apart from the wider world.

That may be one reason why *Stone Yard Devotional* has particular relevance for readers in the Camden Haven.

Many people here know something about leaving a faster life behind. Some have moved from Sydney or other cities seeking space, community and a different rhythm. Others have lived here all their lives and understand that quiet places are not necessarily uneventful places. Beneath the apparent calm of any small community are histories, friendships, disagreements, losses and stories carried quietly for years.

Wood explores exactly that territory.

The book considers grief, ageing, regret, forgiveness and our complicated relationship with the past. It also asks an interesting question: can changing where we live actually change who we are, or do we simply bring our unfinished business with us?

Nature is ever-present. Birds, animals, drought, weather and the surrounding countryside aren't decorative background

but part of the emotional landscape of the novel. That connection between people and place should feel familiar to anyone who lives between the forests, waterways, mountains and coastline of the Camden Haven.

Wood's writing is literary but never showy. There are passages worth lingering over, yet the book remains remarkably accessible.

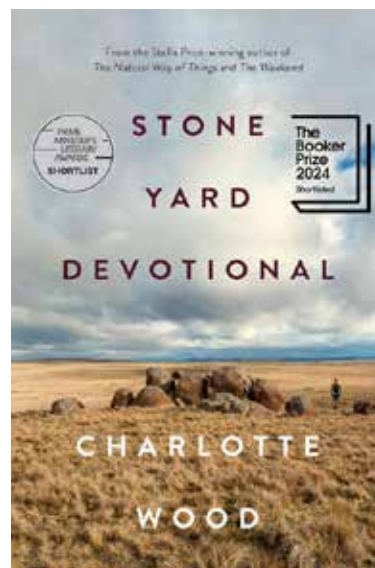
At around 300 pages, it is also a novel that asks for attention rather than endurance.

Stone Yard Devotional will not suit readers looking for cliff-hanging twists. Its pleasures are quieter than that.

It's a book about stopping, noticing and considering what really matters when much of the unnecessary noise has

been stripped away.

In a part of the world where many of us have consciously chosen a slightly quieter way of living, that feels particularly close to home.



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Tourism is not a dirty word.

Turning visitors into locals.

Information supplied by GPMTA

Tourism isn't just about putting heads on pillows. In the Camden Haven, every visitor has the potential to support a café, restaurant, retailer, attraction, tour operator or one of the many small businesses that help make our area such a great place to visit. More than once.

Helping connect those businesses with the wider visitor economy is the Greater Port Macquarie Tourism Association (GPMTA), an independent, member-driven not-for-profit organisation representing more than 230 tourism, hospitality, accommodation, retail and service businesses across the Port Macquarie Hastings region.

For Camden Haven businesses, that regional connection matters.

Visitors don't tend to recognise council boundaries when planning a holiday. Someone staying in Port Macquarie might spend the next day climbing North Brother Mountain, having lunch in Laurieton, walking along North Haven Beach, exploring Dunbogan or discovering one of our other smaller villages.

The challenge is making sure visitors know what is here.

One way GPMTA is helping is through practical visitor information designed to



encourage people to explore further and stay longer. Its *See, Do & Explore* directory provides ideas for adventures, attractions, nature and family activities, while its *Food & Drink* guide directs visitors towards cafés, restaurants and other regional food experiences.

There's also *The Happenings*, a monthly guide to events, festivals, markets and activities across Greater Port Macquarie – another opportunity to show visitors there is always something worth discovering beyond the place where they are staying. (QR code).

Importantly, Camden Haven features as part of that wider destination alongside Port Macquarie, Wauchope and the Hinterland.

Behind the visitor promotion, GPMTA

also provides businesses with advocacy, networking, industry information, professional development and marketing support, while working with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's tourism and destination marketing team.

For local operators, the message is simple: attracting a visitor to the region is only the beginning.

Encouraging them to venture south, discover Camden Haven, spend locally – and perhaps stay another night – is where the real opportunity lies.

And when visitors explore more, businesses across our entire community benefit.



Robert Dwyer MP

Member for Port Macquarie



Hi, I'm Robert Dwyer, your Member for Port Macquarie.

As your local representative, my priority is helping our community and making sure your voice is heard.

Whether you need support with health services, education, housing, police matters, or issues with our roads, I'm here to help find solutions.

If you need assistance with any State matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

My staff and I are here to help in any way we can, so call us on 6584 0977.

Contact my office if you would like to subscribe to my eNewsletter.



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🖱 robertdwyerMP.com.au

📍 T23, Sovereign Hills Town Centre, 15 Chancellors Drive, Thrumster 2444

📺 Robert Dwyer MP

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Adventures.

Paddling via nature.

by *Alison Stewart*

Last month Kendall Boat Shed saw 22 members head south to Taree for a morning exploring the Manning River, Cocumbac Island and Browns Creek.

Launching from the boat ramp at the Rowing Club, we headed south into a slight headwind, but with the tide in our favour. After passing under the Martin Bridge, we paddled along the sheltered eastern side of Cocumbac Island.

The island is one of the few remaining pockets of subtropical lowland floodplain rainforest in the area and home to a colony of grey-headed flying foxes, along with numerous large fig and other rainforest trees. The name Cocumbac comes from the Biripi language and means "meeting place".

Rounding the southern tip of the island, we found a pleasant gravel beach where we pulled ashore for morning tea and a brief look around before returning to the kayaks.

We continued along the western side of Cocumbac Island, where our resident ornithologist spotted numerous bird species along the foreshore, including azure kingfishers, black-fronted dotterels, white-faced herons and even a striated heron.

As we passed the launch site again, four paddlers called it a day after covering



around 5km, while the remainder continued downstream to Browns Creek, historically known as "The Crooked Creek".

This small but deep, mangrove-lined creek winds its way west under Victoria Street, past some beautiful riverside homes and towards the Taree Showground.

After exploring around 2km of the creek, we turned back, leaving the remainder for another day.

The return journey brought an increasing

headwind once we reached the Manning River, although it was only a short paddle back to the launch site. All up, we covered 10.5km, with an enjoyable mix of open river, sheltered island shoreline and winding mangrove creek.

For lunch, we adjourned to the nearby Sailo's Taree Aquatic Club, where 24 members enjoyed a few drinks, a good meal and even better company, all overlooking the beautiful Manning River.



THE SCIENCE OF 9D BREATHWORK

9D Breathwork is an immersive guided experience combining conscious breathing, spatial sound, brainwave-focused audio and transformational coaching.

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Saturdays 9-11am

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12th December

Flow State Yoga - Port Macquarie OCTOBER

Saturday 3rd	10.30am
Thursday 8th	6.45pm
Friday 16th	6.45pm
Saturday 24th	10.30am
Saturday 31st	10.30am



To book a Journey:
0422 468 925



For more info visit:
silverbackbreathwork.com.au



The art of healthy choices.

Creative fulfilment and why choosing matters.

a retrospective *with a creative*



For much of his life, Callan has been driven by the need to create. Music, novels, film-making and graphic art have each occupied years of his life, yet whenever success seemed close, something unexpected happened – he moved on.

For a long time, he saw this as a failing. Why work so hard at something, finally become good at it, then walk away?

His first serious creative pursuit was rap. After years developing his craft, and many albums and radio coverage, recognition and praise from an established Australian rapper came. It should have been the moment that confirmed his direction. He was Gold Coast 'Battle Champ' at the time.

Instead, once he could genuinely think of himself as "a rapper", doubts appeared and he found reasons to pursue something else.

Then, a short stint as an actor, and stand-up comedian, even performing in NYC. Writing followed. He completed several novels, self published, and reached the point where traditional publication seemed a realistic possibility.

Again, with success suddenly within reach, his attention shifted.

Film-making produced a similar pattern. Years of learning, filming and experimenting eventually resulted in videos attracting hundreds of thousands of views, more than a million views overall and a growing online following. Yet once again, Callan stepped away, this time turning his creative energy towards drawing a graphic novel.

Eventually he began to understand the pattern differently.

Accepting one identity seemed to close the door on all the others. Becoming a film-maker meant, somehow, no longer being the musician, novelist or artist he might also become. He describes

it as a "collapse of potential". The loss of those possible futures – when on a new path.

It led him into much deeper thinking about creativity, artistic ambition, mortality and why some artists sacrifice so much in pursuit of a masterpiece.

Then his own priorities changed.

Marriage and fatherhood presented him with a choice far more important than deciding which artistic medium to pursue. After spending around 30 years regarding art as one of the most important things in his life, he realised there was now something he was quite prepared to choose above all else.

His wife and two new very young sons.

He may still create, experiment and move between artistic worlds. But there is one role he says he will not walk away from.

Being a husband and father has become the legacy that matters most.

Here you get a cut, a chat and a better day.

Small Worlds Barbershop is an independent family-owned barbershop in the heart of Laurieton, founded by Chris Dunn last year with a simple vision: to create more than just a place for haircuts.

Built on genuine connection, quality trade-qualified barbering and a welcoming atmosphere, Small Worlds is a place where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can feel comfortable, respected and valued.

Clients are treated with genuine care and respect because they believe the conversations, relationships and sense of community are just as important as the haircut itself. As an appointment-preferred barbershop (walk-ins welcome by chance) they're able to dedicate quality time to each client allowing them to achieve the best possible barbering results while creating an environment where people feel comfortable to connect, talk and support positive mental wellbeing. Whether it's supporting local events, volunteering time, mentoring the next generation of barbers or creating an inclusive space where everyone feels welcome, they're proud to give back to the community that supports them.

For Chris, barbering has never just been about cutting hair, it's about building trust, forming genuine connections and making a positive difference in people's lives. Every haircut is an opportunity to help someone leave feeling more confident, supported and valued.

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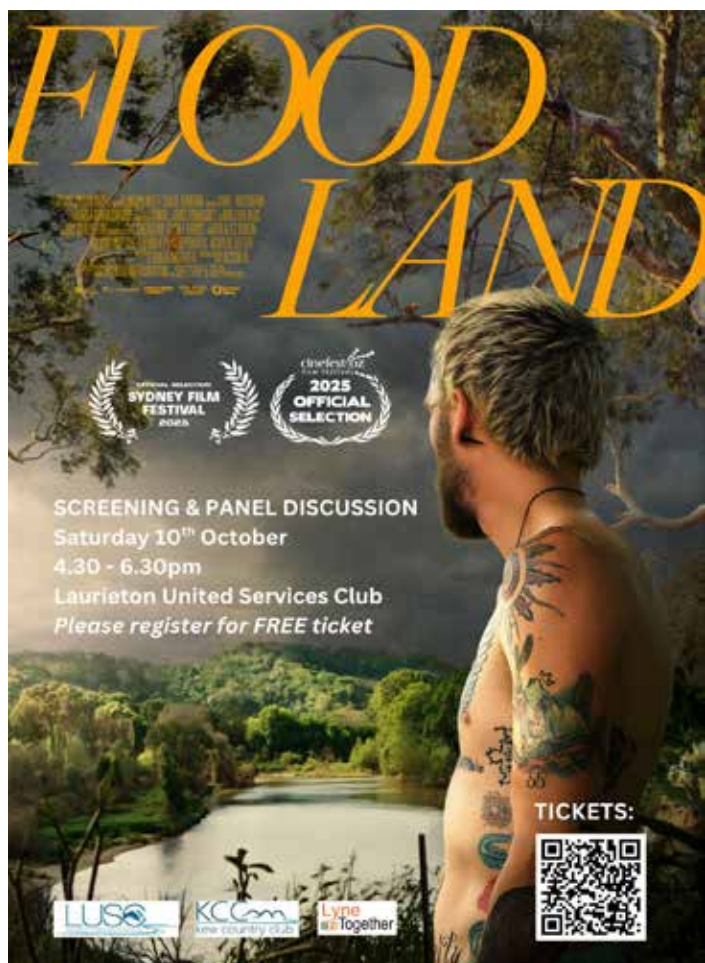
WHAT'S
ON

LUSC
Laurieton United Services Club

Seymour St Ph 6559 9110 laurietonclub.com.au

KCCm
Kew Country Club

Kendall Rd Kew Ph 6559 4203



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SCREENING & PANEL DISCUSSION
Saturday 10th October
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Laurieton United Services Club
Please register for FREE ticket

TICKETS:



LUSC KCCm Lyne and Together



THE JETTY & BAR
FRIDAY NIGHTS

FRI 16TH OCT 2026 | OPEN FROM 4PM

.....

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT WITH ANN WOODLAND FROM 6PM

Cafe Open for Delicious Coffee & Light Bites
\$1 Oysters (Until Sold Out)
Members \$6.20 Hahn Superdry
& \$5 Hahn 3.5 Schooners
\$15 Margis All Night
\$20 Antipasto for Two
Boardwalk Bistro open from 5:30pm



THE JETTY & BAR
FRIDAY NIGHTS

FRI 23RD OCT 2026 | OPEN FROM 4PM

.....

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT WITH BRAD LOCKWOOD FROM 6PM

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& \$5 Hahn 3.5 Schooners
\$15 Margis All Night
\$20 Antipasto for Two
Boardwalk Bistro open from 5:30pm



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 DATE Saturday 24th October 2026	 TIME Doors: 7pm Show: 7:30pm	 TICKETS General Sale: \$51.00
---	--	--

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What's on and gig guide.

Live music, gigs and events! **October 2026**

THU OCT 1 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Al McLeod (Live Music)
 Club North Haven
 1 Woodford Rd North Haven
www.clubnorthhaven.com.au

FRI OCT 2 Open 4.00pm Music 6.00pm
John Ryll (Live Music)
Friday Nights at The Jetty
 \$1 oysters. Beer Specials. Margis \$15. Antipasto \$20
LUSC Seymour St - laurietonclub.com.au

FRI OCT 2 Doors 6.30 / Open Mic 7pm /
Concert 8pm - Kendall Music Exchange
Wendy Jamieson / Sue Lee (Live Music)
 School of Arts Hall Comboyne Rd
 Tix: \$5
kendallmusicexchange123@gmail.com

FRI OCT 2 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Craig Stewart (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd Lake Cathie
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

SAT OCT 3 8.00pm – 11.00pm
Steve Bennett (Live Music)
 Laurieton Hotel - Bold St, Laurieton
www.laurietonhotel.com.au

SAT OCT 3 7.00pm
Anthony Staines (Live Music)
 Lake Cathie Tavern 1609 Ocean Drive
www.lakecathietavern.com.au

SUN OCT 4 1.00pm – 4.00pm
Steve Bennett (Live Music)
 Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar
 613 Ocean Dr North Haven

SUN OCT 4 11.00am – 4.00pm
DJ Luke Cousins - Sunday Sessions
 Haven Ridge 743 Ocean Dr, Grants Beach
 Free entry. Bookings recommended
www.havenridge.com.au

SUN OCT 4 1.00pm
 (Live Music)
 Lake Cathie Tavern - 1609 Ocean Drive
www.lakecathietavern.com.au

SUN OCT 4 1.30pm – 4.30pm
Grey Matters (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd Lake Cathie
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

THU OCT 8 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Pete Ball (Live Music)
 Club North Haven
 1 Woodford Rd North Haven
www.clubnorthhaven.com.au

FRI OCT 9 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Posum Scratchers (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd Lake Cathie
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

SAT OCT 10 Open 4.00pm Film 4.30pm
FLOODLAND (Film Event)
 Free community Event - Panel with local
 emergency services.
LUSC Seymour St - laurietonclub.com.au
 Free RSVP Tix: <https://lusc.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/167756>

SAT OCT 10 7.00pm
Besty (Live Music)
 Lake Cathie Tavern - 1609 Ocean Drive
www.lakecathietavern.com.au

SUN OCT 11 2.00pm
PhiloMusica Concert
 Kendall School of Arts - Comboyne Rd
www.kendallviolin.org.au

SUN OCT 11 Open 4.00pm Music 6.00pm
Charlie O'Derry (Live Music)
Sunday Sessions at The Jetty
 \$1 oysters. Beer Specials. . Antipasto \$20
LUSC Seymour St - laurietonclub.com.au

SUN OCT 11 1.00pm – 4.00pm
Hudson Rose (Live Music)
 Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar
 613 Ocean Dr North Haven

SUN OCT 11 12.00pm – 5.00pm
Amara Page (Live Music) - **Sunday Sessions**
 Haven Ridge - 743 Ocean Dr, Grants Beach
 Free entry. Bookings recommended
www.havenridge.com.au

SUN OCT 11 1.00pm
Pete Ball (Live Music)
 Laurieton Hotel - Bold St, Laurieton
www.laurietonhotel.com.au

SUN OCT 11 7.00pm
Happy Dave (Live Music)
 Lake Cathie Tavern - 1609 Ocean Drive
www.lakecathietavern.com.au

SUN OCT 11 1.30pm – 4.30pm
Bill Roberts (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd Lake Cathie
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

THU OCT 15 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Brad Lockwood (Live Music)
 Club North Haven
 1 Woodford Rd North Haven
www.clubnorthhaven.com.au

FRI OCT 16 Open 4.00pm Music 6.00pm
Ann Woodland (Live Music)
Friday Nights at The Jetty
 \$1 oysters. Beer Specials. Margis \$15. Antipasto \$20
LUSC Seymour St - laurietonclub.com.au

FRI OCT 16 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Slingshot Duo (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

SAT OCT 17 7.00pm
Nathan Astbury (Live Music)
 Lake Cathie Tavern - 1609 Ocean Drive
www.lakecathietavern.com.au

SUN OCT 18 1.00pm – 4.00pm
Sebastian Jones (Live Music)
 Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar
 613 Ocean Dr North Haven

SUN OCT 18 11.00am – 4.00pm
Besty (Live Music) **Sunday Sessions**
 Haven Ridge - 743 Ocean Dr, Grants Beach
 Free entry. Bookings recommended
www.havenridge.com.au

SUN OCT 18 1.00pm
Beau Bennett (Live Music)
 Lake Cathie Tavern - 1609 Ocean Drive
www.lakecathietavern.com.au

SUN OCT 18 1.30pm – 4.30pm
Mat Brooker (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

THU OCT 22 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Brodie Ireland (Live Music)
 Club North Haven
 1 Woodford Rd North Haven
www.clubnorthhaven.com.au

FRI OCT 23 Open 4.00pm Music 6.00pm
Brad Lockwood (Live Music)
Friday Nights at The Jetty
 \$1 oysters. Beer Specials. Margis \$15. Antipasto \$20
LUSC Seymour St - laurietonclub.com.au

FRI OCT 23 1.30pm – 4.30pm
Rockabilly's (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

SAT OCT 24 Doors 7.00pm Show 7.30pm
Michelle De Angelis (Psychic Medium)
 Tix: \$51 Book: : <https://lusc.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/167421>
LUSC Seymour St - laurietonclub.com.au

SAT OCT 24 1.00pm
Rhys Callinan (Live Music)
 Lake Cathie Tavern - 1609 Ocean Drive
www.lakecathietavern.com.au

SUN OCT 25 1.00pm – 4.00pm
Brody Ireland (Live Music)
 Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar
 613 Ocean Dr North Haven

SUN OCT 25 11.00pm – 4.00pm
Charlie O'Derry (Live Music) **Sunday Sessions**
 Haven Ridge 743 Ocean Dr, Grants Beach
 Free entry. Bookings recommended
www.havenridge.com.au

SUN OCT 25 1.00pm
Bill Roberts (Live Music)
 Lake Cathie Tavern - 1609 Ocean Drive
www.lakecathietavern.com.au

SUN OCT 25 1.30pm – 4.30pm
 (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

THU OCT 29 6.30pm – 9.30pm
T Larmon (Live Music)
 Club North Haven
 1 Woodford Rd North Haven
www.clubnorthhaven.com.au

FRI OCT 30 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Gary King (Live Music)
 Club Lake Cathie - 45 Evans Rd Lake Cathie
www.lakecathiebowlingclub.com.au

SAT OCT 31 8.00pm – 11.00pm
Ghost Road HALLOWEEN PARTY
 Laurieton Hotel - Bold St, Laurieton
www.laurietonhotel.com.au

SAT OCT 31 6.00pm – 9.00pm
The Broadcasters Band (Live Music)
Blues & Rock
 Royal Hotel Kew - 2 Ocean Drive
www.royalhotel.com.au



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Wildlife with a nightlife.

What is it that's digging up our backyards?

by the editor

If you're waking up to find small holes scattered across the lawn, the culprit may well be the elusive bandicoot.

These shy native animals are mostly active at night and use their long snouts and strong front feet to dig into soft soil in search of insects, worms, beetle larvae and other small invertebrates. Their feeding holes are usually small and cone-shaped, often appearing almost overnight in seemingly random spots across a lawn or garden bed.

Around the Camden Haven, bandicoots are a welcome reminder that native wildlife is still sharing our suburban spaces.

Although their digging can leave a lawn looking a little worse for wear, bandicoots are actually doing some useful gardening along the way. Their constant foraging helps aerate the soil and can reduce populations of lawn pests and grubs. In many cases, the holes are shallow and the grass recovers quite quickly.

If bandicoots are visiting your garden, it is best to leave them to their nightly work. Avoid using poisons, pesticides or traps, and keep cats and dogs indoors at night where possible. Pets can injure bandicoots, particularly young animals, while poisons intended for insects or

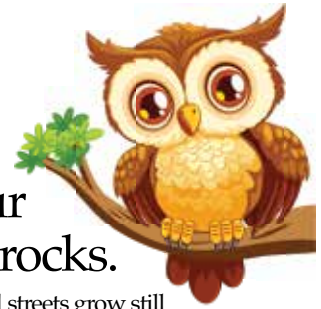


rodents may also harm native wildlife.

Leaving a little ground cover, shrubs and leaf litter around the edges of the garden can also provide useful shelter.

So while those mysterious holes may not improve the appearance of a carefully maintained lawn, they can be a positive sign.

You may simply have a small native gardener working the night shift.



When our nightlife rocks.

Daylight fades and streets grow still
Night creatures stir by river and hill,
From garden beds to forest floor,
The Haven night comes live once more.

Bandicoots snuffle beneath the trees,
Digging for grubs with greatest ease,
Poking lawn with his nose to ground,
Leaving little holes when he's around.

Brushtail possums takes to the roof,
With heavy footsteps being the proof,
Across the verandah, along the rail,
Through the gums with a flick of his tail.

High in the gums, an owl keeps an eye,
Waiting for movement a swoop to try,
Silent wings sweep the moonlit air,
Then suddenly, he's no longer there.

While sleepy humans are all in bed,
Tiny microbats dart overhead,
They twist and turn through the sky,
Catching mosquitoes and moths on the fly.

At the creek where the reeds grow tall,
Frogs join in the evening call,
Croaking and clicking with plenty to say,
In a chorus that lasts till break of day.

So when we all switch off the light,
Another world clocks on for the night,
While tucked in dreaming, quiet and deep,
The wild side of town has no time for sleep!

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Kendall Showground Markets

October 11th 8am-1pm
Comboyne Museum Markets

October 18th 8am to 1pm
Laurieton Riverwalk Markets

KENDALL CHRONICLE
community newspaper.

Pick up your free copy from select locations at the beginning of each month.

It's showtime.

75 shows and still going strong.



For generations of Camden Haven families, October and the Kendall Showground have gone hand in hand. This year that tradition reaches a remarkable milestone when the 75th annual Camden Haven Show is held on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 October 2026.

Long before today's pavilions, horse events and show rings, local people were already finding ways to bring the district together. The Show Society's history records a Junior Farmers Club show at Kendall in 1932, followed by another show on the town's sports ground in 1941.

By 1944 it had become clear that the growing community needed a permanent showground, and around 30 acres were purchased on Batar Creek Road. After years of clearing the heavily timbered land, the first show on the present Kendall Showground was held in 1949.

Seventy-five shows later, much of what makes a traditional country show special remains firmly in place.

The 2026 program offers the usual high octane shows and already includes beef

cattle, horse events and showjumping, chainsaw racing, poultry and an All Breeds Championship Dog Show, while the pavilion will once again fill with the results of local talent – art, photography, cooking, preserves, needlework, handicrafts, fruit and vegetables, flowers and junior exhibits.

The Show Society is encouraging people to become part of the event rather than simply come along to watch, with the 2026 schedules and entry forms now available.

And some traditions are considerably less serious than others. Among the cooking classes is the returning Men's Chocolate Cake Challenge.

No packet mixes are allowed, the cake must be the entrant's own work, and while the winner collects \$25, the schedule promises something potentially even more valuable – bragging rights for an entire year.



The Kendall Showground itself remains something special. Unlike most public showgrounds, it is privately owned by the Camden Haven PAH & I Society, which means its maintenance and improvement depend heavily on members, volunteers, supporters and the events held there.

Today the grounds are used throughout the year by sporting, equestrian and community groups as well as the monthly Kendall markets.

That perhaps explains why the Camden Haven Show has survived for so long. It has never been simply a weekend of ribbons, cattle and cakes. It is something local people have built, maintained and handed from one generation to the next.

This October, the 75th Show is a pretty good reason to celebrate that.

October's Recipe



Zucchini, feta & herb tart

Serves 4-6

Fresh, light and full of spring flavour, this zucchini and feta tart is just the thing for an easy lunch, relaxed dinner or weekend get-together. Serve it warm or at room temperature with a crisp green salad.

Ingredients

- 2 sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 2 medium zucchini, thinly sliced
- 200g feta, crumbled
- 3 eggs
- 150ml thickened cream
- 1 small clove garlic, finely crushed
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Extra herbs and feta, to serve

Method

Preheat oven to 200°C conventional or 180°C fan-forced.

Lightly grease a rectangular tart tin or baking dish. Line with puff pastry, trim the edges and prick the base with a fork.

Place zucchini in a bowl, drizzle with olive oil and season lightly with salt and pepper.

Whisk together eggs, cream, garlic, parsley, mint, dill and lemon zest. Season with black pepper.

Scatter half the feta over the pastry base, then arrange zucchini slices on top.

Pour over the egg mixture and scatter with remaining feta.

Bake for 30-35 minutes, until the filling is set and the pastry is crisp and golden.

Rest for 10 minutes before slicing. Finish with extra feta, fresh herbs and a squeeze of lemon if desired.

Serving suggestion: Pair with a simple salad of rocket, cucumber and cherry tomatoes.

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From garden to plate.

October in the garden.

Spring is certainly underway, with warmer days and longer daylight hours; the gardens are bursting into new growth.

October is an excellent month for planting; the soil is warming, and there is subsoil moisture to help establish new growth.

Vegetable Garden

Time to plant: Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Beans, Corn, Chilli, Capsicum, Eggplant, Zucchini and Pumpkins.

Prepare the soil before planting with well-rotted manure and compost.

Fertilise regular to promote strong and healthy growth. Keep an eye out for snails and slugs with new seedlings.

Lawn care

Control weeds and aerate compacted soils; lightly top dress if lawn is uneven and patchy. Feed with Grassmaster Lawn food every 12 weeks throughout the growing season. This ensures strong and healthy growth.

Lavenders



Lavenders are full of flowers, and the bees are loving them. Removing spent flowers will help maintain healthy growth; a small handful of garden lime at the base of each plant will help keep the plant happy. Consider planting a couple around the veggies and fruit trees; this helps attract the pollinators into this part of the garden. Lavenders love a position in full sun with good airflow. Avoid overhead watering where possible.

Blueberries

With the increasing popularity of blueberries, now is a perfect time to plant some in our gardens.

Blueberries love an acidic soil with a pH of 4.5-5.5. Ensure they receive a sunny position and are protected from strong winds. They are perfect for growing in containers. They are best planted in acid-loving potting mix.

Time to feed.

As plants are starting to grow rapidly with the warm weather now is an ideal time to apply fertiliser. Apply a suitable controlled-release or organic fertiliser around established plants.

Mulch

Mulching is important before the summer heat arrives. A good layer of organic mulch helps to retain moisture, suppress weeds and helps to moderate soil temperature, protecting shallow and surface roots.

Mal's Plant of the month

Alstroemeria

- A hardy perennial plant that thrives in full sun or part shade.
- Growing to 40cm
- Perfect for growing in containers
- Flowering from late winter through spring and summer.
- Comes in a wide range of colours
- Attracts bees and Butterflies

Happy Growing,

Malcolm McKinlay

Garden Clubs of Australia Zone Coordinator

New faces. New fare.



There's something new cooking at Haven Ridge, Grants Beach, with two talented chefs bringing fresh ideas, new flavours and a renewed energy to the kitchen.

Leading the team is Head Chef Sion, a proud Welshman with a passion for good food and bold, thoughtful cooking. Alongside him is Lyndon, taking on the role of sous chef and helping shape a new dining direction for the popular local venue.

Together, the pair are introducing menus designed to tempt those who appreciate food that is a little special – dishes that combine quality ingredients, creative presentation and flavours worth lingering over.

The emphasis is on keeping things interesting, with new styles and fresh menu ideas giving both regular diners and first-time visitors something to discover.

Set close to the natural beauty of Grants Beach, Haven Ridge already offers a relaxed destination away from the everyday rush. Now, with Sion and Lyndon adding their own personality to the kitchen, there is another very good reason to make the trip.

For local food lovers, it could be the perfect opportunity to revisit an old favourite – or discover Haven Ridge for the first time.

The new team is ready to welcome diners, fire up the kitchen and let the Italian-style food do the talking.

Fridays, noon to 8pm. Saturdays noon to 8pm. Sundays, 11am to 4pm with live music.


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Other T&Cs apply

TIP OF THE MONTH

TEETH GRINDING – WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Teeth grinding, also known as bruxism, is common and many people don't realise they're grinding until signs of damage start to appear.

Over time, frequent grinding can lead to:

- Worn, flattened or chipped teeth
- Cracks and damage to teeth
- Tooth sensitivity
- Jaw pain, tightness or clicking
- Headaches, particularly in the morning
- Damage to fillings, crowns and other dental work

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Some things you never know.

The big one! How big is the universe?

What are the secrets of the Universe? How big is it, and how many stars does it contain? That's the title of an audio-visual presentation I'll be giving in Wauchope this coming week – but in truth, it's also the kind of question that follows me everywhere I go under the night sky.

Whether it's a public talk, a school visit, or a quiet evening with a telescope set up in a dark field, the questions always come. Adults tend to lean toward the technical edges of astronomy – distances measured in light years, the nature of black holes, the structure of the cosmos itself. But children... children go straight to the heart of it. No hesitation. No filters. Just wonder.

I've only been truly stopped in my tracks once. It came during a school outreach session while I was showing images from the Hubble Space Telescope, explaining how far into the Universe we can now see. A small hand went up. A 10-year-old girl asked, very simply: "Can you see God with your telescope?"

There's no textbook answer for that. Even the teachers looked at the floor. I remember pausing, then answering from instinct rather than knowledge: "No... God is outside the Universe. He can see us, but we can't see Him." I still don't know where those words came from. But the room seemed to accept them, especially her.

And so the questions continue – the ones that return again and again, no matter the audience. How big is the Universe? As far as we can tell, it may be limitless. The observable Universe stretches back about 14 billion years to the Big Bang, but beyond that boundary lies pure uncertainty. What we do know is already staggering: there are more stars than there are heartbeats for every human who has ever lived.

Are we alone? The numbers alone make it difficult to believe we are. Hundreds of billions



of galaxies exist, each containing hundreds of billions of stars. Many of those stars host planets, and some of those planets sit in conditions not unlike our own. If life arises naturally given the right ingredients, then the Universe seems more likely to be alive than empty. Then there is the unsettling realisation that when we look up at the night sky, we are also looking back in time. Some of the stars we see may no longer exist at all. Their light has simply been travelling long enough to reach us after their own end.

What happens if you fall into a black hole? That's where science meets mystery. We know the gravity becomes so extreme that not even light can escape. Beyond that point, physics breaks into theory – perhaps a crushed singularity, perhaps a tunnel through space-time, perhaps something we have not yet imagined.

And just when the Universe feels remote and unreachable, it reminds us it is not. Australia's space authorities have confirmed that unusual objects found washed up on remote beaches are likely

fuel pressure vessels from a launch vehicle. Investigations, supported by the Australian Space Agency, suggest the debris is space hardware – fragments of rocket systems that survived re-entry through Earth's atmosphere before falling back to the surface. It's a quiet but powerful reminder that space is no longer distant. It is active, busy, and increasingly present in our everyday world – from rocket launches overhead to fragments returning unannounced to our shores.

So whether we are tracing the birth of the Universe, wondering about life among the stars, or holding a piece of fallen space hardware in our hands, one thing becomes clear. The sky is not the limit. It is only the beginning.

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Back to nature.

The flower bowl of the Camden Haven.

by *Diane Solomon Westerhuis*

At morning tea with Landcare friends we range across many topics. At this time of year it's always about the change the seasons bring, when we clean out the fireplace and change the sheets from flannelette to cotton. Last year the morning tea group were particularly concerned that we may not see our regular pollinators in the spring garden, but they eventually turned up, and most of us had reasonable flowers and therefore fruit crops. This year is perhaps no different, although maybe hotter. Our last morning tea discussion was about native flowers and what had started to bloom. I decided to investigate. So my intrepid other half got out the camera and binoculars, I found a notebook and we set off on one of the best nature walks you could find.

Here at Camden Haven we have our own Flower Bowl Circuit at Camden Head. It is linked to the Perpendicular Point track which follows a path along the headland to reach the most southerly point on this part of the coast. This is a relatively easy walk with some steep parts, just under 4km return. At the beginning of Spring the walk is unsurpassed, not only do you see the bush burst into bloom, but the coastal path leads to the headland where, if you are lucky, you can watch the whales heading south in their annual migration. This year they were first spotted in August, a little early, but they continue to head south through to November.

We set out on an overcast day, a little windy but reasonably comfortable. For a weekday it appeared quite busy when we arrived. We chatted with strangers at the carpark, including a whale watcher from

Newcastle and a lovely man who patiently waited while I finished focussing a photo of a very elusive bird. The little grey shrikethrush was flitting in and out of the bush onto the path, probably hunting insects, when we interrupted his breakfast. His Latin name suits him perfectly, as his song is harmonious. *Fig 1. Grey Shrikethrush (Colluricincla harmonica)*

Further along we started seeing flowers, some blooming vigorously, others just beginning to bloom. The bush canopy was also flecked with striking white flowers which became more ubiquitous as we continued along the path. This is the plant known as Satinwood, it is a native in the citrus family and, like your orange and lemon tree, has lovely small white flowers.

It grows mostly on the escarpment ranges north from Bulahdelah. *Fig 2. Satinwood (Nematolepis squamea)*

As we came around a bend in the track we heard, and then saw, the glossy black cockatoos feasting on the black she-oaks. They were a bit camera shy: after screeching their objections to our intrusion they flew off to find other suitable trees.

We did find the flowers we came looking for. I had been following the National Science Week 2026 favourite wildflower competition, which garnered more than 70,000 votes. The most popular wild flower was announced at the end of August, and here I found it blooming on our beautiful headland. The

flannel flowers were just beginning to open their buds, heralding the end of winter and spring rejuvenation. They remind me of May Gibbs, and her flannel flower babies (if you



Fig 1.

want a bit of nostalgia, there is a copy on display in our Camden Haven Museum). As the ABC reminded us, although they look like a daisy they are not- they are in the Apiaceae family, which also includes carrots, parsley and fennel. There are 14 different species of Flannel Flower in Australia, we have the lovely soft green white type.

Figure 3. Flannel Flower (Actinotus helianthi)

And then we found them. I must admit my favourite of the (May Gibbs) babies of the bush, the Boronia here has small brilliant purple pink flowers, with quite square buds which open to delightfully perfumed flowers. *Fig 4. Boronia (Boronia pinnata)*

There were many more delights to be found, including of course, the Banksia, the lichens and mosses which create wonderful little habitats on trunks and branches of trees, and other flowers, including Dusky Coral Pea, Purple Flags, violas, the climbing Guinea Flower and wax flowers.

With many of these, we also found pollinators, so unlike last spring I am not too concerned about pollinator survival this year. Yet we are in for a long hot summer, and many of the pollinators will relish the heat, others will suffer.

The walk took us a couple of hours, but we were very satisfied that we had such successful flower hunting. The only disappointment was that we didn't see any whales on their journey south. Perhaps next time.

Note: Over the last 25 years or more a group of locals have worked with Landcare to maintain and care for our bush, in particular this part of Kattang Nature Reserve. Thank you to those wonderful volunteers.



Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



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Hidden in plain sight. Guess who!

This just may be a mission impossible.

This is the second of a series about local personalities who have life-stories we are mostly unaware of. We will attempt to tell their stories without naming names. LOL.

*Just email who you think it is to:
editor@camdenhavenlocalnews.com.au
Answer published next month.*

His working life has taken him from movie sets and practical special effects workshops to extreme sports, local government and, eventually, to sports facilities and community projects of the Camden Haven. It is an unusual journey, and one that few people who know him today would probably guess.

One of the most intriguing chapters began in the world of film, where he worked behind the scenes in special effects during a particularly exciting period for movies being made in Australia.

He worked on more than ten Hollywood blockbusters, five Australian movies, many Australian TV shows such as *Home and Away*, and hundreds of commercials.

His credits include the 1996 production *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, starring Marlon Brando and Val Kilmer. Other movies have him working with stars such as Toni Collette, Geoffrey Rush, Sam Neil, Keano Reeves, Kiefer Sutherland, Patrick Stewart, Hugo Weaving to name but a few. And even featured in a scene with Gregory Peck

In 2000 he worked as a special effects technician on *Mission: Impossible II*, starring Tom Cruise and directed by John Woo.

Much of the film was shot in and around Sydney and became one of the major international productions undertaken in Australia at the time.

But perhaps the most instantly recognisable titles on his film resumé came a few years later when he became part of the Australian special effects department for *The Matrix* movies.

This series brought a huge international production to Australia, requiring elaborate sets, stunts, mechanical effects and practical movie-making ingenuity long before today's

filmmakers could simply hand everything over to a computer.

Yet movies represented only one part of a life that seems to have been built around a willingness to try something different.

Sharing a workshop with Greenpeace making devices and training volunteers was another diversion. Yet another chapter took him into the world of motocross and extreme four wheel driving. He became involved as owner/manager of an 'extreme' sporting facility in northern NSW.

Established during the 1990s, this venue developed into a substantial adventure and off-road recreation park. While there he ran junior motocross programs nurturing young riders in their skills. Some went on with professions in freestyle motocross such as Nitro Circus and X Games. One lad is now owner/manager/performer of the nationwide spectacular Bikes & Bulls.

For someone accustomed to creating action for the movie camera, perhaps crossing from a place where the action was very real was not such a great leap after all.

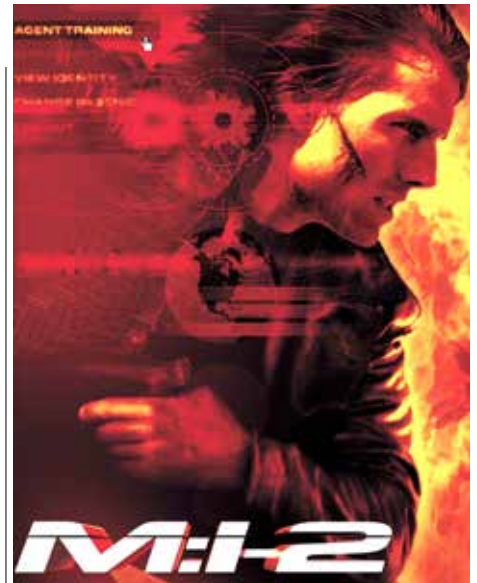
Life then produced yet another diverse change of direction.

After becoming established in the Tenterfield district, he entered local government and served as a councillor on Tenterfield Shire Council. It added politics, council meetings, community representation and the sometimes complicated business of local government to an already varied collection of experiences.

Eventually the road led to the Camden Haven. Today, locals are more likely to encounter him discussing a community project than a movie explosion.

He has become closely involved in preserving and improving Camden Head, including helping establish the Friends of Camden Head organisation and advocating for the future of the Camden Head lookout.

History has also captured his attention. He has helped drive efforts to restore the historic graves associated with the wreck of the paddle steamer Prince of Wales, which sank off



Camden Head in 1862 with tragic loss of life.

And then there is sport!

He has taken on executive roles in several local sports and community clubs that have seen improvements to facilities and significant growth in memberships while concentrating on junior development and their paths for success. He also became a lifesaver as a patrolling member of the Camden Haven.

It seems a long way from special effects workshops filled with the strange creatures of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the action sequences of *Mission: Impossible II* and the extraordinary cinematic world of *The Matrix* franchise.

Yet perhaps there is a common thread.

Whether building something for a movie, developing an extreme sports facility, representing a community as a councillor, restoring an important piece of local history or helping young people onward in sport, his life has rarely involved simply sitting back and watching.

He appears much happier making things happen. So next time you see this familiar Camden Haven face around the traps, on surf patrol, or encouraging the best out of youth in the region, you might like to ask him one question.

Just what was it like working on an *Impossible Mission*?

Lasiandras. Billykarts. And 2 way tech.

James Wallis is the Technical Director for 2Way FM for the past few years, working tirelessly behind the scenes keeping the station on air.

Born and bred in the Hastings area, he has become a part of all things community. He has been a member of the Apex Club of Wauchope for 20 years before moving to Wauchope Lions and still a part of the Wauchope Lasiandra Festival Committee and Beechwood Billycart Classic Committee.



James would help with the set up of our outside broadcasts at the Wauchope Show when our studio was behind the Wauchope Hospital and when we were to relocate the station to our current site, James with his background in electronics, was asked to help with the

wiring of the studios. With his knowledge of how the equipment was set up, when the time came for a new technician James was clearly the best option.

Last month's "guess who": Olwen Williams



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