free

camden haven LOCAL news

DECEMBER / JANUARY
BUMPER EDITION

Glad You Are Here!

SUMMER EDITION
YOUR LOCAL GUIDE TO THE GOOD LIFE



Laurieton | North Haven | Dunbogan | Kendall | Kew | Bonny Hills | Lake Cathie | Dec/Jan 26/27

gardening food music stargazing people travel
reviews what's on pets community chat happenings

Happenings on the home front.

Bonny Hills racer takes national championship honours.

by *The Editor*

From the quiet coastal community of Bonny Hills to the chequered flag on Australia's biggest racing circuits, local motorsport talent Cooper Barnes has proven he has what it takes to compete with the best.

Cooper has been crowned the 2026 Toyota GR Cup Australia Champion, capping off an outstanding season of hard-fought racing against some of the country's most promising drivers.

Competing across five rounds, from Sydney and Townsville to Queensland Raceway, Bathurst and Sandown, Cooper demonstrated the skill, determination and consistency needed to claim the coveted title.

The Toyota GR Cup is one of Australia's most competitive one-make racing categories, running alongside the Supercars Championship and providing an important stepping stone for emerging motorsport talent.

For Cooper, the championship represents the culmination of four years of dedication, including two seasons racing in New Zealand to sharpen his skills and gain valuable experience.

Behind the trophy are countless hours of preparation, personal sacrifice and the unwavering support of family, sponsors, his racing team and the wider Bonny Hills and Port Macquarie communities.



Champion Cooper Barnes and team

But this ambitious young racer isn't about to take his foot off the accelerator.

With his GR Cup championship secured, Cooper has already set his sights on the next challenge – progressing towards Super2 competition in the future.

It's another wonderful example of local talent making its mark on the national stage, and a reminder that big dreams can begin in small coastal towns.

Congratulations, Cooper. Bonny Hills is cheering you on!

Kew's big axe. More than an attraction.

For more than 20 years, Kew's iconic Big Axe has been a familiar landmark for travellers passing through the Camden Haven. One of Australia's famous 'Big Things', the enormous to-scale axe is a fitting tribute to the timber industry that played such an important role in shaping our region.

There's more to discover behind the Axe.

Over the past 12 months, the Kew Information Centre has undergone an extensive makeover, with a freshly refurbished interior and beautifully rejuvenated gardens giving the popular attraction a new lease of life. And the improvements haven't gone unnoticed.

Positive online reviews are helping attract growing numbers of international visitors, while Australian travellers continue to appreciate the centre's free camping facilities, friendly local advice and exceptionally clean 24 hour public amenities.

Inside, visitors will discover a wonderful showcase of local creativity, including more than 50 artworks by regional artists, alongside handmade crafts, unique gifts and locally produced honey, jams, sweets and other tempting treats.

It's an ideal place to pick up an original gift, discover a local artist or simply enjoy browsing the many treasures on display.

Of course, at the heart of the centre is what it has always done best – helping people discover the Camden Haven and the region.

Whether you're looking for a scenic drive, a bushwalking adventure, a secluded picnic spot or somewhere special to take the family, there's a wealth of local knowledge, maps and information available. There are even novelty



items to keep the younger visitors entertained.

For locals, it's also a timely reminder that some of our region's most interesting attractions are right on our doorstep.

And with its enthusiastic volunteers always ready to share a little local knowledge or a free coffee, it's well worth stopping in – even if you think you already know the area.

You'll find the Kew Information Centre and the Big Axe just down the road from the Kew Pub. Drop in, have a browse and rediscover a local landmark.



CAMDEN HAVEN LOCAL NEWS

Cover: Real Aussies support local traders and businesses.

Issue 27 | December 2026/January 2027

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www.camdenhavenlocalnews.com.au

Community Chit Chat.

Aged care. People. Not just numbers.

by *The Editor*

For many older Australians, remaining in their own homes, surrounded by family, friends and familiar communities, is essential to maintaining independence and dignity.

Across the Camden Haven and Mid North Coast, families rely on aged care services to help loved ones remain safely at home. From personal care to simple modifications such as handrails and access ramps, timely assistance can make an enormous difference.

However, concerns have emerged about how government-funded aged care assistance is assessed.

Introduced in November 2025, the Support at Home program uses a computer-based assessment tool to help determine funding levels and priority for assistance.

While designed to provide consistent assessments, questions remain about its ability to recognise individual circumstances, particularly where needs are complex or rapidly changing.

A Commonwealth Ombudsman investigation identified shortcomings involving transparency, fairness and the ability of qualified assessors to override computer-generated decisions. The Ombudsman recommended stronger human oversight.

The Federal Government has acknowledged concerns and introduced an additional review pathway, scheduled to commence in January 2027. An independent review is also underway.

For older Australians and their families, the real issue is ensuring appropriate care is available when needed.

An effective aged care system must balance consistency and accountability with professional judgement, flexibility and compassion.

Ultimately, every assessment represents a person, a family and a desire to maintain independence.

Growing older should never mean becoming just another number.

Christmas Services.

Laurieton Anglican Church
2 Mission Terrace Lakewood
5.00pm Thu Dec 24
Christmas Eve Festival & BBQ - Lakewood
11.00pm Thu Dec 24
Reflective Christmas Service - Lakewood
8.00am & 10.00am Fri Dec 25
Celebrate Jesus at Lakewood
9.30am Fri Dec 25
Celebrate Jesus at Bonny Hills (1060 Ocean Drv)

Laurieton Uniting Church
51 Bold Street Laurieton
9.30am Sun Dec 20 *Special Christmas Carols & Readings*
9.00am Fri Dec 25
Christmas Day Service

North Haven Baptist Church
683 Ocean Drive North Haven
5.30pm Sun Dec 20 *Carols On The Lawn*
9.00am Fri Dec 25 *Christmas Day Service*

Salt Community Church
Wallum Drive Lake Cathie
6.30pm Thur Dec 24 *Christmas Eve Service at Lake Cathie Public School*

Catholic Parish of Camden Haven
421 Ocean Drive Laurieton
14 Laurel St Kendall
Thurs *Vigil* Dec 24 6pm *Laurieton*
and 8pm *Vigil Kendall*
8.30am Dec 25 *Laurieton*

Veteran acknowledgment.

Port Macquarie Hastings Council (PMHC) has received national recognition for its commitment to supporting veterans into meaningful employment, taking out the Best Regional Veteran Employment Initiative award at the 2026 Prime Minister's National Veteran Employment Awards.

The prestigious award recognises the positive impact of Council's Veterans Employment Program, which supports former Australian Defence Force personnel to transition into civilian careers.

PMHC General Manager Robert Fish welcomed the award, describing it as an outstanding achievement for Council and a reflection of its commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace.

"Veterans bring an incredible range of skills, experience and qualities to the workforce, and we're proud to recognise the value they can bring to our organisation and our community," Mr Fish said.

"We pride ourselves on recognising the importance of providing opportunities to support veterans in taking that next step in their careers.

Pictured are PMHC's Group Manager People, Safety and Performance Louise Perry, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Hon Matt Keogh MP and former veteran Cameron Hawkins, PMHC's Group Manager Utilities Planning and Design, at the awards' night.





Community Chit Chat.

Lions. And tigers. And Bears. Oh my! Kendall Boat Shed.

by ***Alison Stewart***

Lions and tigers and bears, oh my! That sentiment pretty much sums up Kendall Boat Shed's recent week away in Murwillumbah. As our grand finale Away Paddle for 2026, it certainly delivered a few surprises. Hospital visits, ambulance rides, beautiful paddles, challenging cycles, games and entertainment all with a healthy douse of laughter – well, following the green whistle anyway!

This trip will certainly be remembered for its mishaps, with club members clocking up two ambulance rides, four hospital visits and multiple fractures, all resulting from cycling accidents. Three members suffered significant injuries on two separate rail trails and a mountain bike track, while another ambulance trip added to the tally after an unexpected fainting episode in a local grocery store. Thankfully, each incident was unrelated, but together they certainly made for an eventful week away!



Di Pope (Club President) commiserates with Cathy Malone

Of course, our club's raison d'être is kayaking, and this year's itinerary was once again masterminded by our dedicated paddle coordinator Wayne Sainsbury. His chosen destinations were Clarrie Hall Dam, Uki, Gudgen Creek, Kingscliff and the Rous River at Tumbulgum.

Each destination required a different access point, careful consideration of tide tables and a multitude of other fluctuating conditions. Not exactly a job for the faint-hearted. Full credit to Wayne for his planning and expert nautical navigation skills, which ensured at least that our paddle adventures went without incident!

Clarrie Hall Dam was undoubtedly the highlight, with its bounty of beautiful islands, inlets and bays providing a wonderfully leisurely tide-free paddle.

The scenery, birdlife and tranquil waterways made for a stellar outing, while the two other waterways offered their own rewards and challenges.

There was enough downtime between paddles to explore the surrounding area, and the 28 club members certainly made the most of it. By the way, 28 people is by far our new record for any paddle near or far.

Some people ventured to the colourful and pungent village of Nimbin, while others explored Springbrook National Park in Queensland. Others opted for cycling the 50K (x-apple-data-detectors://embedded-result/2308) RT Northern Rivers Rail Trail (sometimes navigating successfully!) or the beautiful shared 16k RT pathway from Kingscliff to Cabarita Beach.

The Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre also proved extremely rewarding. With magnificent views, world class exhibitions, an excellent café and, remarkably, FREE admission, it was a wonderful experience.

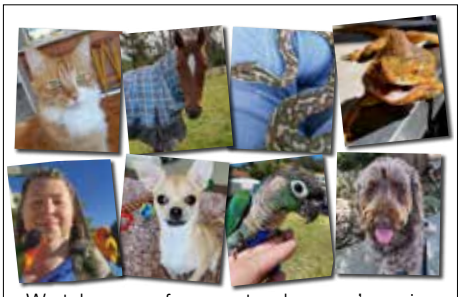
The M-Arts Precinct in town also attracted several members, while evenings brought the customary happy hour muster, with dinners at various venues giving plenty of opportunity to dissect (yes, and diagnosis) the day's adventures.



Kendall Boat Shed will always find a laugh.

All in all, despite the unexpected detours through several local hospital systems, it was a fabulous week. Beautiful waterways, good company and memories that will last long after the fractures and egos have healed.

If I've whetted your appetite and you'd like to join the Kendall Boat Shed Kayak Club, email: thorpe.amanda@gmail.com.



We take care of your pets when you're going away on holidays or to work. We offer home visits, dog walks, transport to appointments and in-home overnight stays in your home.

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ADVERTISING FEATURE

Thank you for your support in 2026.



As 2026 comes to a close, we wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you to the patients, the communities and the team who make our story real.

This year marked 20 years of Sundial Dental.

With this milestone we have time to look back and what stands out in twenty years of dentistry and what we realized is our story stretches back much further than 20 years.

In Wauchope, there's over **70 years of patient trust** behind the doors of our practice. Port Macquarie has been caring for local smiles for more than **50 years**, Laurieton for over **30 years**, and Taree has its own long-standing place in the community. And then there are our newest additions, Kempsey and Coffs Harbour – the babies of the Sundial family, with their own stories just beginning.

We've had the privilege of building on the foundations laid by those who came before us, while bringing new people, ideas and technology into these much-loved local practices.

But perhaps the greatest highlight of 2026 wasn't a new practice or a milestone. It was bringing our team together to celebrate 20 years of Sundial.

We marked the occasion with a cruise – an opportunity to step away from the busy days of dentistry, enjoy each other's company and celebrate everything we've achieved together.

Looking through the photographs, I'm reminded that Sundial has never been about buildings, dental chairs or technology. **It's about people.**

The people who turn up every day, who care about their patients, support their colleagues and take pride in what they do. Some have been with us for many years; others have only recently joined us. Every one of them contributes something to our story.

And then there are our patients.

We've watched children grow up, welcomed their own children into our practices and shared countless conversations along the way. That trust, built over generations, is something we never take for granted.

As we look towards 2027, there are exciting things ahead. We'll continue to grow, embrace new ideas and invest in better ways to care for our patients.

Twenty years on, the faces may have changed, the team has grown and dentistry has come a long way. But the things that matter most haven't changed at all. Local people caring for local people.

To our patients, our communities and our wonderful team, thank you for being part of our story and thank your for a great 2026.

From all of us at Sundial Dental, Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

Your Team at Sundial Dental



Our local legacy still survives.

Generations of history, hard work and a little wiggly tail.

by *The Editor*



Memorabilia and artifacts abound

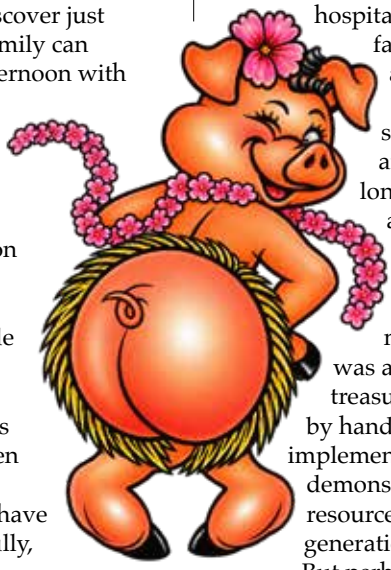
Some families live in a town. Others help build it. For generations, the Bucton family has been woven into the fabric of Camden Haven life, leaving its mark on local businesses, community organisations and even the landscape itself.

And if you want to discover just how much history one family can accumulate, spend an afternoon with Bob Bucton.

At Bob's property, what might casually be described as a shed is anything but ordinary. It's a remarkable collection of historical treasures, from vintage butchering equipment and handmade tools to photographs, machinery, memorabilia and fascinating reminders of a very different Camden Haven.

Every object seems to have a story. And Bob, thankfully, has a story for just about every object!

The family's connections stretch back to the pioneering days of the district. Among those early generations was Mary Bucton, one of the family women who served their community as a midwife, bringing new life into the world at a time when hospitals and modern medical facilities were far less accessible.



The family name also survives in a local bridge, another reminder of their long association with the area.

Those were days of hard physical work, ingenuity and making do with what was available. Among Bob's treasures are tools fashioned by hand, timber-working implements and equipment that demonstrates the extraordinary resourcefulness of earlier generations.

But perhaps the family's most recognisable commercial legacy is the wonderfully named Wiggly Tail Butcher.

From its beginnings in pig farming and butchery, the enterprise became a familiar part of local life. Bob recalls processing around 60 pigs a week, with the operation eventually growing to accommodate some 160 breeding sows.

By producing and selling their own product, the family was able to bypass the middleman, helping make locally produced pork an attractive proposition for customers.

And then there was the marketing!

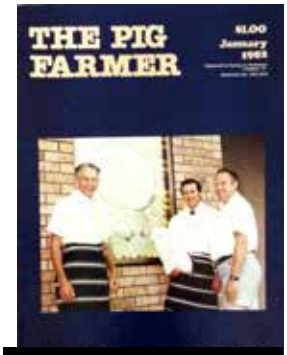
Long before today's advertising gurus discovered the importance of memorable branding, Wiggly Tail had its cheeky pig, catchy radio jingle and promotional giveaways.

Customers purchasing barbecue supplies might receive a branded apron, while colouring books and recipe booklets helped keep the business name circulating among local families.

The memorable little pig certainly knew how to attract attention!

Bob's recollections extend well beyond the piggery. He remembers the days when butchers, bakers and milkmen delivered their goods by horse and cart, and recounts a family story about an early Ford delivery vehicle that sometimes had to reverse up steep hills because of its gravity-fed fuel system.

Such stories offer a delightful glimpse into everyday life before supermarkets, modern transport and mass-produced convenience changed the way communities operated.



Bob & Rod in the news

The Bucton family's involvement has never been confined to commerce. Bob and, subsequently, his son, Rod, have both served as presidents of the local Chamber of Commerce, continuing a tradition of contributing to the district's business and community life.

Today, the former piggery site has evolved into an industrial estate under family ownership, but Bob has another ambition for the property.



He plans to establish a museum where his extraordinary collection can be made accessible to the public.

It's an exciting prospect. Tools once used by pioneering tradesmen, photographs of familiar places before modern development, and the stories behind the people who helped shape Camden Haven could all find a permanent home.For Bob, preserving these memories is about more than nostalgia. It's about ensuring future generations understand where their community came from.

And judging by the collection he's already assembled, visitors will have plenty to discover.

Just be prepared to stay a while. Bob has a few stories to tell!



Community Chit Chat.

A Musical Tribute to Ensi Payne. Celebrating a life of music.

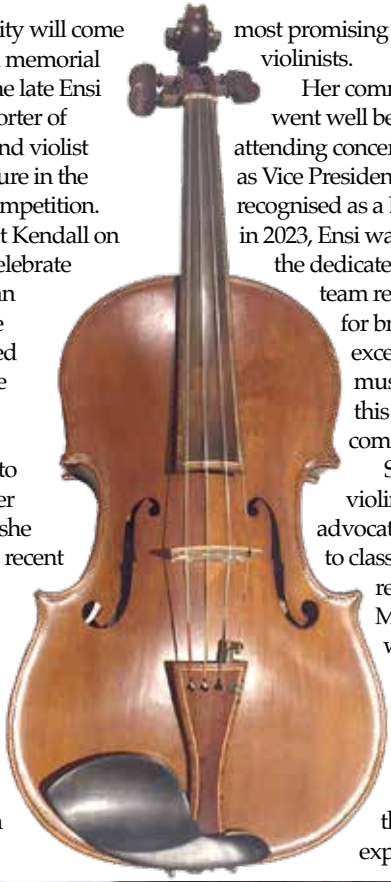
by *Olwen Williams*

The Kendall community will come together for a special memorial concert honouring the late Ensi Payne, a much-loved supporter of classical music, a violinist and violist herself, and a dedicated figure in the Kendall National Violin Competition.

The concert, to be held at Kendall on Sunday, 6 December, will celebrate a remarkable artist, musician and jewellery maker whose enthusiasm for music helped enrich the cultural life of the Camden Haven.

Originally from Europe, Ensi's journey brought her to Australia, where she met her husband, Des, with whom she shared a long life before his recent passing.

Eventually making her home in the Camden Haven region, Ensi became closely involved with the Kendall National Violin Competition, an organisation that has earned national recognition for nurturing Australia's most promising young violinists.



Her commitment went well beyond simply attending concerts. Serving as Vice President and later recognised as a Life Member in 2023, Ensi was part of the dedicated volunteer team responsible for bringing exceptional young musical talent to this small regional community.



Painting by Ensi Payne

She was also a passionate violin and viola teacher and an advocate for introducing children to classical music. In 2024, she represented the competition's Music in Schools program, which is sponsored by the Kendall Op Shop and brings professional-quality live performances to local schools, giving young audiences opportunities they might otherwise never experience. Info: 0419 363 363.

Her contribution will continue through the newly established Ensi Payne Memorial Award, a $2,000 prize recognising outstanding young violinists in the upcoming 24th Kendall National Violin Competition in March 2027.

The memorial concert promises to be a fitting celebration of a life in which music, friendship and community were closely intertwined.

For those who knew Ensi, it will be an opportunity to remember her warmly. For others, it will be a reminder of how one person's dedication can leave an enduring human and cultural legacy.



Local legends. Make a national impact.

Young and the restless.

Supplied from *Mediaopps*





Two remarkable Mid North Coast personalities have been recognised among New South Wales' finest, proving once again that extraordinary people often are in our own backyard.

There is something special about the people who call our region home. Perhaps it's our strong community spirit, our willingness to lend a hand, or simply the belief that one person really can make a difference.

Whatever the reason, two outstanding locals have demonstrated those qualities in remarkable fashion, earning prestigious honours in the 2027 Australian of the Year Awards for New South Wales.

Dr David Cooke OAM, from Port Macquarie *(pictured left)* , has been named NSW Senior Australian of the Year, while Danny Schouten, *(pictured right)* from Bonny Hills, has received the NSW Young Australian of the Year award.

At 84, Dr Cooke has devoted more than six decades to medicine, much of it serving Australia's most remote communities. Combining his love of flying with his dedication to healthcare, he worked with the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

His adventures even included training as a parachutist to reach patients in otherwise inaccessible locations!

Since settling in Port Macquarie in 1988, Dr Cooke has continued his remarkable contribution to regional healthcare. Even today, he remains active in caring for patients in Port Macquarie and South West Rocks.

Meanwhile, 30-year-old Danny Schouten has turned a frightening incident into a potentially lifesaving national initiative.

After a friend survived a shark attack thanks to a makeshift tourniquet fashioned from a dog lead, Danny recognised the urgent need for accessible emergency equipment on our beaches.

His response was to develop Community Shark Bite Kits, containing specialised equipment to control severe bleeding while awaiting emergency assistance.

More than 330 Australian beaches now have these kits installed, with Danny determined to see them available nationwide.

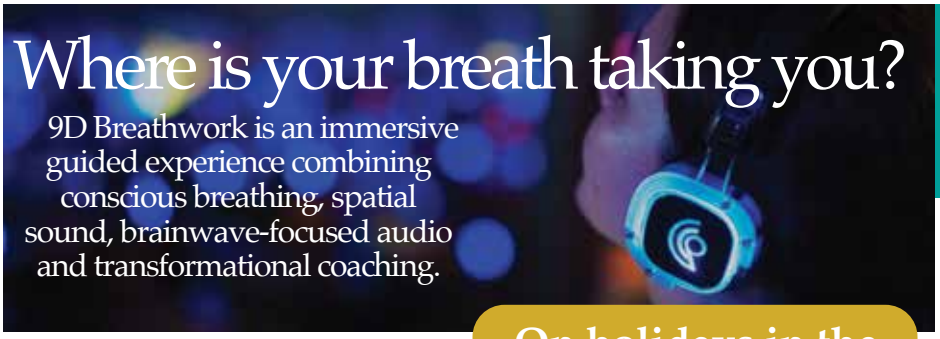
Two generations, two very different journeys, yet both share an extraordinary commitment to helping others.

Their achievements remind us that our region is home to remarkable talent, innovation, compassion and determination.

We often celebrate the beauty of the Camden Haven and Mid North Coast.

Perhaps our greatest asset, however, is the quality of the people who live here.

Both recipients now progress to the national Australian of the Year Awards, to be announced in Canberra on 25 January 2027.



Slow, controlled breathing and therapeutic sound are supported by established research, while additional elements – including binaural beats, nature soundscapes, selected frequencies and NLP-style language – act as supportive layers.

During the approximately one-hour session, rhythmic breathing helps shift the nervous system into a more receptive and restorative state. Immersive audio and gentle coaching then support relaxation, emotional processing and greater self-awareness. Perfect.

On holidays in the Camden Haven?

Make one morning slow down. Come to a guided 9D Breathwork session while you're here.
No experience needed, and you're guided the whole way. Held through December at Dunbogan, Taree and Port Macquarie. $50 a ticket. Book at silverbackbreathwork.com.au

Mobile service for visitors and holiday houses

Breathwork comes to you. Staying at a holiday house, a rental or a holiday park? Silverback Breathwork brings a guided session to your place or a spot near the beach. For couples and families it's $100.pp. For a group of up to 12, a 2 hour session is $500. Enquire at silverbackbreathwork.com.au

What a holiday treat. Relax and let us guide your journey.

Please visit our website for full descriptions of our many journeys.

9D Breathwork Journeys

December

Sat 5th 10.30am,
Fri 11th 6.45pm,
Sat 19th 10.30am
at Flow State Yoga Port Macquarie
Sat 12th 9-11am
at St Johns Hall Taree
Wed 23rd December 6-8pm *Full Moon Special*
Jubilee Hall Dunbogan

No experience needed. Our mats, bolsters and blankets are ready. Only $50 plus a small booking fee.
Every date and booking link at: silverbackbreathwork.com.au

To book a Journey:
0422 468 925

For more info visit:
silverbackbreathwork.com.au

SILVERBACK BREATHWORK

Health in the hands of locals.

Bats and a helping hand.

by *Alison Stewart*

I hope to never write about dying bats again, so bear with me please!
I doubt anyone is unaware of the current 'Bat Mass Starvation' event, affecting vulnerable grey-headed flying foxes. A particularly dry winter has reduced nectar and pollen production, leaving thousands without their usual food sources.

But the reality of that rather scientific explanation is much more confronting. We're talking dead bats and their young actually falling from the sky! A sort of *Hunger Games* scenario, and certainly not something you'd expect to encounter in your own backyard.

What began as a wildlife crisis has triggered an emotional toll to those desperately trying to help. One post from highly regarded local wildlife volunteer De Castle really resonated with me.

De says, "as a lifelong animal lover and dedicated wildlife rescuer, helping animals is a privilege. However, the emotional toll of rescue is real, and something many of us carry long after the call is over. During the recent bat starvation crisis, the number of deceased bats I personally attended became mind-numbing. Call after call, day after day, each one representing a life that could not be saved. While rescuers do their best to remain strong, the sadness builds quietly over time. After another morning of heartbreak, I found myself standing alone in the rain, overwhelmed and in tears. It wasn't a sign of weakness. It was a reminder that caring deeply comes with a cost."

It got me thinking about the emotional challenges we can all face when circumstances become overwhelming. No matter your situation, sometimes a helping hand is just what is needed.

The good news is that help is available. The Mid North Coast Local Health District's Farmgate Wellbeing Service and Disaster Recovery Team offer free, confidential mental health support to rural communities.

Support is flexible and can be arranged at home or even at your favourite local café. Sometimes simply having someone independent to talk to, particularly someone who understands rural life, can make all the difference.

The teams also provide education sessions for workplaces and community groups, helping people recognise when someone might be struggling and how to offer support.



De feeds her local bats fruit salad, giving the trees time to produce nectar

Free support is available through the Mid North Coast Disaster Recovery Team: on Phone: 0498 470 435, or email: MNCLHD-DisasterRecovery@health.nsw.gov.au.

Editor's note:

After finding 13 dead flying foxes in our 'urban' back yard, Ollie, my gourmet chef other half, took it upon herself to buy fruit and provide for a regular visitor, Batfink. Happy to say he has survived and has gone back to his regular feeding habits at night rather than in daylight hours.



WHAT'S ON

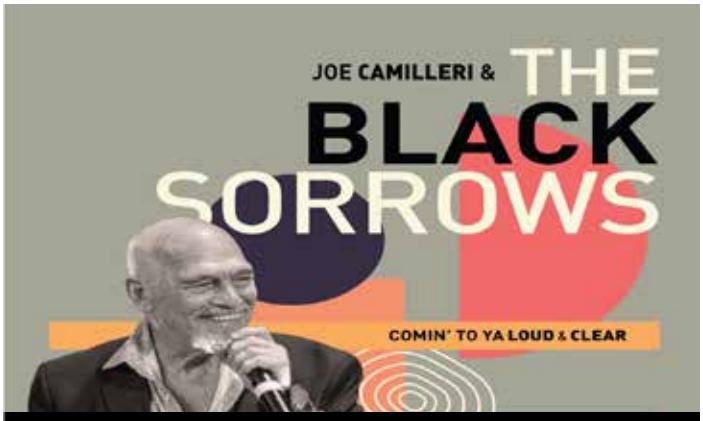
LUSC laurieton united services club
Seymour St Ph **6559 9110** laurietonclub.com.au

KCC kew country club
Kendall Rd Kew Ph **6559 4203**





SATURDAY 2ND JANUARY 2027
DOORS: 7:30PM START: 8PM
Pre-sale 18+ Tickets: $55



THURSDAY 14TH JANUARY 2027
DOORS: 7:30PM START (SUPPORT): 8:00PM
PRE-SALE: $51.00



THURSDAY 7TH JANUARY 2027
DOORS: 7:30PM START: 8:30PM
VIP TICKETS: $33.00 | GA ADULT: $28.00 | GA CHILD: $19.00



SATURDAY 16TH JANUARY 2027
DOORS: 7:30PM START: 8:00PM
Pre-sale: $36.50

What's on and gig guide.

Live music, gigs and events! December 2026

THU DEC 3 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Sebastian *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

FRI DEC 4 **2.00pm**
Laurieton Voices Christmas Concert
Laurieton School of Arts Hall
Tix: $5 includes afternoon tea
Proceeds to SES. Raffle tickets on sale
info: Sue 0402 204 782

FRI DEC 4 **Doors 6.30 / Open Mic 7pm / Concert 8pm - Kendall Music Exchange**
The Wised Up *featuring* Cheryl Hall - vocals, Peter White - keys, Peter Harries – Drums, Jacob Corbet – Bass & Cello
School of Arts Hall Comboyne Rd
Tix: $5
kendallmusicexchange123@gmail.com

FRI DEC 4 **6.30pm - 9.30pm**
Sling Shot Duo *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

SAT DEC 5 **8.00pm – 11.00pm**
(Live Music)
Laurieton Hotel

SAT DEC 5 **7.00pm**
Rhys Callinan *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN DEC 6 **1.00pm Pre-Concert Talk**
PhiloMusica *presents:* **2.00pm Concert**
Celebrate the Ensi Payne Memorial Christmas Concert
Featuring: - The Verbrugghen String Ensemble
Kendall School of Music – Comboyne Rd
Tix: $35 at Door ***or Via Website***
www.kendallviolin.org.au
Info: 0419 363 363

SUN DEC 6 **11.00am – 5.00pm**
Besty *(Live Muic)* **Sunday Sessions**
Free entry. Bookings recommended
Haven Ridge

SUN DEC 6 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Pete Roberts *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

SUN DEC 6 **1.00pm**
Martin Becker *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN DEC 6 **1.30pm - 4.30pm**
Beau Bennett *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

THU DEC 10 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Pete Ball *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

FRI DEC 11 **6.30pm - 9.30pm**
Gary King *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

SAT DEC 12 **Doors 7.00pm Show 8.00pm**
Live & Loud Ladies Night
Brad Lockwood Band *(Live Music)*
Frozen Cocktails $12. Margis $15. Grazing Boards $20
Free entry 18+
Laurieton United Services Club

SAT DEC 12 **7.00pm**
Kyle James *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN DEC 13 **11.00am – 5.00pm**
Ghost Road *(Live Music)* **Sunday Sessions**
Haven Ridge
Tix $20. Bookings essential.

SUN DEC 13 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Hudson Rose *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

SUN DEC 13 **2.30pm**
Camden Haven Concert Band & Laurieton Voices *presents:*
Christmas Carols Singalong Extravaganza
Free Entry
Laurieton United Service Club

SUN DEC 13 **1.00pm**
(Live Music)
Laurieton Hotel

SUN DEC 13 **1.00pm**
Charlie O'Derry *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN DEC 13 **1.30pm – 4.30pm**
Simon Gudgeon *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

THU DEC 17 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Matty Zarb *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

FRI DEC 18 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Possum Scratchers *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

SAT DEC 19 **Books on Sale 5pm Bingo 7pm**
$1500 Torchbearers Cash Bingo
$20 Books
Laurieton United Service Club

SAT DEC 19 **7.00pm**
Love Buzz Band *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN DEC 20 **11.00pm – 5.00pm**
Pure Acoustic *(Live Muic)* **Sunday Sessions**
Free entry. Bookings recommended
Haven Ridge

SUN DEC 20 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Sebastian Jones *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

SUN DEC 20 **1.00pm**
Bill Roberts *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN DEC 20 **1.30pm - 4.30pm**
Jake Davey *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

THU DEC 24 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Matty Zarb *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

SAT DEC 26 **1.00pm**
Besty *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN DEC 27 **11.00am – 5.00pm**
Amara Paige *(Live Music)*
Sunday Sessions
Free entry. Bookings recommended
Haven Ridge

SUN DEC 27 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Steve Bennett *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

SUN DEC 27 **1.00pm**
Terry Day *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN DEC 27 **1.30pm - 4.30pm**
Bill Roberts *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

NEW YEARS EVE

THU DEC 31 **6.30pm – Late**
Brock Colley *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

THU DEC 31
Kid Fun Fair, *BBQ and Snow Cones* **4.00pm**
Brad Lockwood *(Live Music)* **Music 8.00pm**
Fireworks **9.00pm**
Laurieton United Service Club

THU DEC 31 **8.00pm – midnight**
Great Gatsby Night with Shane Peters and DJ Cotton *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

VENUES: *ADDRESSES & WEBSITES*

CLUB NORTH HAVEN
1 Woodford Rd North Haven
www.clubnorthhaven.com.au

LAURIETON UNITED SERVICES CLUB
(LUSC) Seymour St Laurieton
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LAKE CATHIE TAVERN
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KENDALL SHOWGROUND MARKETS
Dec 6th/Jan 3rd 9-1pm

COMBOYNE MUSEUM MARKETS
Dec 13th/Jan 10th 8-1pm

LAURIETON RIVERWALK MARKETS
Dec 20th/Jan 3rd/Jan 17th/Jan 31st 8-1pm

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What's on and gig guide.

Live music, gigs and events! January 2027

FRI JAN 1 **From 7.00pm**
Charlie O'Derry *(Live Music)*
Friday Nights at The Jetty
$1.50 oysters. Margis $15. Antipasto $20
Laurieton United Service Club

FRI JAN 1 **6.30pm - 9.30pm**
Chill Factor *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

SAT JAN 2 **Doors 7.30pm Show 8.00pm**
Thirsty Merc *(Live Music)*
Tickets $55 Pre-Sale at:
https://lusc.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/167419
Laurieton United Service Club

SAT JAN 2 **7.00pm**
(Live Music)
Laurieton Hotel

SUN JAN 3 **11.00am – 5.00pm**
Hudson Rose *(Live Music)* **Sunday Sessions**
Free entry. Bookings recommended
Haven Ridge

SUN JAN 3 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Brody Ireland *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

SUN JAN 3 **1.00pm**
Chloe Hicks *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN JAN 3 **1.30pm - 4.30pm**
Beau Bennett *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

THU JAN 7 Doors VIP 7.15pm Gen 7.30pm
IWA Wrestling
VIP Tickets $33 / Adult $28 / Child $19
https://lusc.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/169927
Laurieton United Service Club

THU JAN 7 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Gary King *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

FRI JAN 8 **From 7.00pm**
Ann Woodland *(Live Music)*
Friday Nights at The Jetty
$1.50 oysters, Margis $15,Antipasto $20
Laurieton United Service Club

FRI JAN 8 **6.30pm - 9.30pm**
Happy Dave *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

SAT JAN 9 **Doors 7.30pm Show 8.00pm**
Drag Bingo with Timberlina
Tickets $31
https://lusc.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/171133
Laurieton United Service Club

SAT JAN 9 **7.00pm**
(Live Music)
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN JAN 10 **11.00am – 5.00pm**
Beau Bennett *(Live Music)* **Sunday Sessions**
Free entry. Bookings recommended
Haven Ridge

SUN JAN 10 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Pete Roberts *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

SUN JAN 10 **1.00pm**
(Live Music)
Laurieton Hotel

SUN JAN 10 **1.00pm**
(Live Music)
Lake Cathie Tavern

THU JAN 14 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Besty *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

THU JAN 14 **Doors 7.30pm Show 8.00pm**
The Black Sorrows
Tickets $51
https://lusc.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/169213
Laurieton United Service Club

FRI JAN 15 **Doors 7.30pm Show 8.00pm**
Amara Paige *(Live Music)*
Friday Nights at The Jetty
1.50 oysters, Margis $15,Antipasto $20
Laurieton United Service Club

FRI JAN 15 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Reckless Duo *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

SAT JAN 16 **Doors 7.30pm Show 8.00pm**
INXS Show - Live Baby Live
Tickets $36.50 Pre-Sale at:
https://lusc.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/169725
Laurieton United Service Club

SAT JAN 16 **7.00pm**
(Live Music)
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN JAN 17 **11.00am – 5.00pm**
Max Marvell *(Live Music)* **Sunday Sessions**
Free entry. Bookings recommended
Haven Ridge

SUN JAN 17 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Martin Becker *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

SUN JAN 17 **1.00pm**
(Live Music)
Lake Cathie Tavern

THU JAN 21 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Shane Peters *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

FRI JAN 22 **From 7.00pm**
Brad Lockwood *(Live Music)*
Friday Nights at The Jetty
1.50 oysters, Margis $15,Antipasto $20
Laurieton United Service Club

FRI JAN 22 **6.30pm - 9.30pm**
Rockabillys Duo *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

SAT JAN 23 **7.00pm**
Besty *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN JAN 24 **11.00am – 5.00pm**
Matt Brooker *(Live Music)* **Sunday Sessions**
Free entry. Bookings recommended
Haven Ridge

SUN JAN 24 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Steve Bennett *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

SUN JAN 24 **1.00pm**
Besty *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

THU JAN 28 **6.30pm – 9.30pm**
Peter Ball *(Live Music)*
Club North Haven

FRI JAN 29 **Doors 8.00pm Show 8.30pm**
FABBA - The Ultimate ABBA Experience
Tickets $36 Pre-Sale
https://lusc.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/168561
Laurieton United Service Club

FRI JAN 29 **6.30pm - 9.30pm**
Reckless Duo *(Live Music)*
Club Lake Cathie

SAT JAN 30 **7.00pm**
Alex McLeod *(Live Music)*
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN JAN 31 **11.00am – 5.00pm**
Rhys Callinan *(Live Music)* **Sunday Sessions**
Free entry. Bookings recommended
Haven Ridge

SUN JAN 31 **1.00pm**
(Live Music)
Lake Cathie Tavern

SUN JAN 31 **1.00pm – 4.00pm**
Al McLeod *(Live Music)*
Moo & Bean Kitchen & Bar

VENUES: *ADDRESSES & WEBSITES*

CLUB NORTH HAVEN
1 Woodford Rd North Haven
www.clubnorthhaven.com.au

LAURIETON UNITED SERVICES CLUB
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Thank you Camden Haven.
Here's to 2027.

2026 marked an exciting milestone as we opened our Camden Haven office in Bold Street, Laurieton, growing our local presence and strengthening our commitment to past, present and future clients.

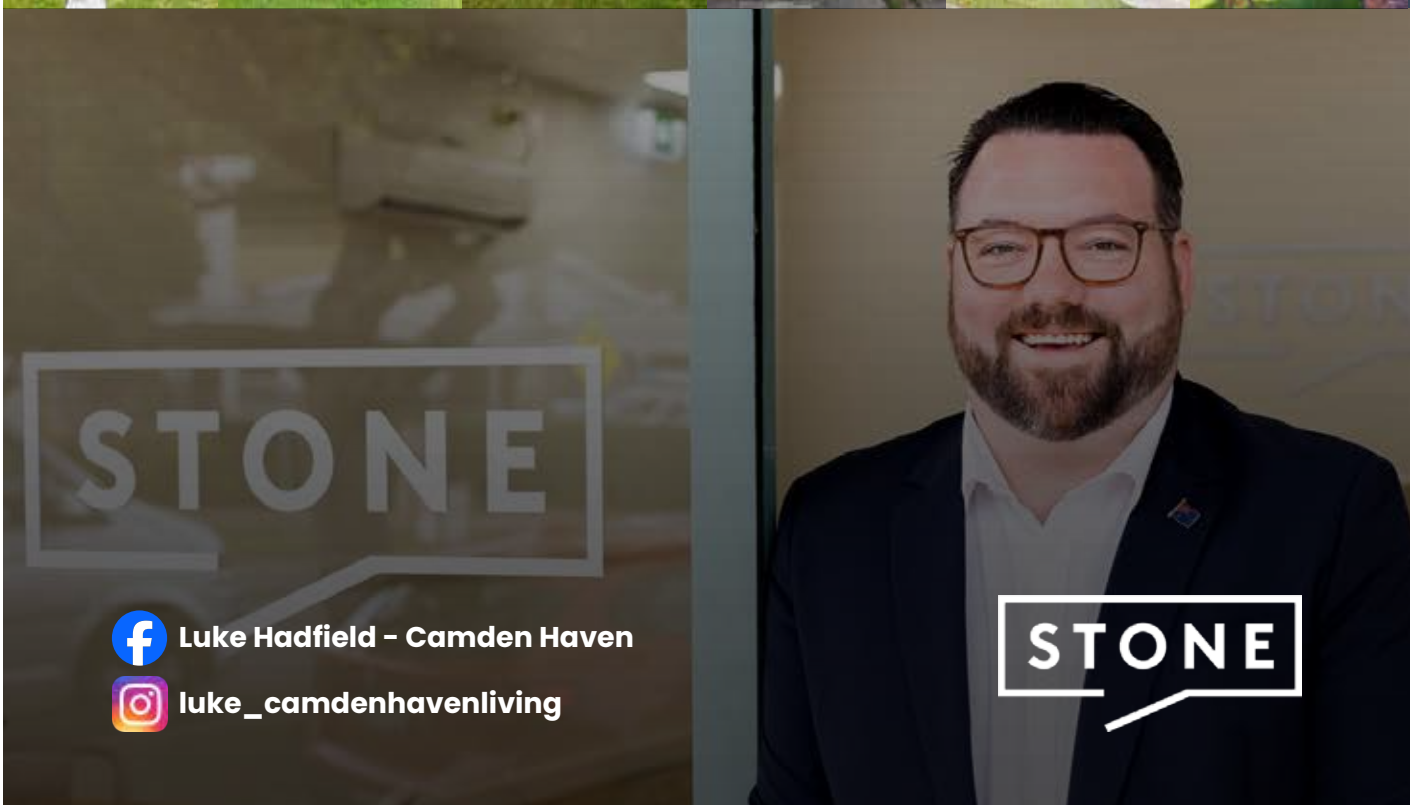
Thank you to everyone who bought, sold, referred a friend or stopped in for a chat. Your trust and support have made this year one to remember.

Planning your next move in 2027? Let's talk.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

Luke Hadfield
Licensed Real Estate Agent
Stone Real Estate Camden Haven
0408 461 038 | lukehadfield@stonerealestate.com.au





Beating around the bush.

Of medicine, mudcrab, mangrove & mistletoe.

by *Dianne Solomon Westerhuis*



Mangroves on the river

Upon reaching retirement age, the youngest of the Baby Boomers (born in the early 1960s), are following the example set by oldest of the boomers (born nine months after soldiers returned from WWII). They are packing up and moving to the coast, many managing to afford to buy a new home, or purchase an older one. The result has been a substantial building boom, producing new villages and extended towns, many along the coast.

Plentiful housing is much needed, however not all of these estates are well designed. Some appear to be built roof to roof, with little room between them for a decent garden or even a few trees. Yet in some of the Camden Haven and Port Macquarie areas we have retained lots of forest and bush, for example in the Lake Innes and Queens Lake Nature Reserves, which protect much of the plant and animal life of the area.

This protection is extended into the Camden Haven area with the Dooragan National Park at North Brother overlooking Laurieton plus protected reserves along the foreshores, such as the Kattang and Pilot Beach Nature Reserves at Camden Head, and my favourite little bit of bush, the Riverview Reserve at North Haven.

These patches of nature are blessed with a wonderful variety of fauna, such as koalas, a wide variety of birds and, particularly useful to we humans, diverse flora. Outdoors these patches of plants offer us shade, beauty and good vibes.



Mistletoe bird

Being out in nature is good for the soul, attested to by a friend of mine who follows a Japanese tradition of Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing). When taken indoors plants improve air quality and just make us feel better. And they don't just look good. When we eat them, plants are a major source of nutrition, to the extent that many of us are vegetarian (eat your greens!).

Plants also offer us a wide variety of medicines, if we know where to look for them and what to look for locally. So let's explore just a few of the many local plants that are useful for food or medicines.

One of the most obvious plants around the estuary is the New Zealand Spinach *(Tetragonia tetragonoides)*, which can be cooked just like spinach and makes a lovely salty side with any dish. Just remember to blanch it properly before eating.

You may also find along the pathway Seablite *(Suaeda australis)* which is a type of Amaranth found in saltmarsh and mangroves. First described by Robert Brown in 1810, it was then included in Joseph Maiden's 1889 publication of 'Useful Native Plants of Australia'[1]. Early settlers would pickle the leaves, or just stew them. Now they are on the menu in some very posh restaurants.

We have two species of mangroves around the foreshore of the estuary, the ubiquitous Grey Mangrove *(Avicenna marina)* and the River Mangrove *(Aegiceras corniculatum)*, both a rich source of food and a nursery for marine life.

In this very salty and insecure habitat mangrove seeds can be found which are full of food reserves for many species, including humans. We can also dine on the diners. Here you will find fish, shellfish, prawns and crabs, including the mudcrab, a great delicacy for Australians through the ages. Tropical Indigenous people would also eat mangrove seeds, but only after a lot of preparation. They also used mangrove leaves for skin diseases and snake bites or stings[2].

Along the foreshores you will also find lots of acacias and casuarinas, providing food for many birds and insects, and for us. Draping themselves over the casuarinas you may find a pretty little flower of one of the mistletoes, which are parasites and take on the look of their host plant. In Laurieton you will find the Needle-leaved Mistletoe *(Amyema cambagei)*, which has edible berries. If you are lucky you may also see the Mistletoe bird *(Dicaeum hirundinaceum)* – a pretty little red chested pollinator. These birds eat mistletoe berries, and then excrete the seeds which adhere to a tree branch and produce new mistletoe plants.

Other trees such as eucalypts and melaleucas also provide a variety of medicines and were used as bush tucker. I often visit an old friend, the corkwood *(Duboisia myoporoides)*. Once a bush medicine for Indigenous people, then used to prevent seasickness in soldiers during World War II, it is now produced as a commercial crop for its leaves which contain **hyoscine** *(scopolamine)*.

Other bush medicines and tucker include brackens, various plums, wild tomatoes, figs and yams. So when on your next wander through one of our reserves, remember that we are blessed with a variety of medicinal natives.

1. Joseph Maiden, (1889) *Useful Native Plants of Australia*, The Open Library online. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL18588534M/The_useful_native_plants_of_Australia
2. Lassak, E. V., & McCarthy, T. (2011) *Australian Medicinal Plants, A complete Guide to identification and usage*. New Holland.



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Amazing stargazing tour with Dave.

Norfolk Island. Come for the Island. Stay for the Stars!

Imagine standing beneath a sky so full of stars that you almost forget where the horizon ends and the universe begins. No city lights, no traffic, no familiar suburban glow. Just the extraordinary spectacle of the Southern Hemisphere night sky.

And you don't have to travel halfway around the world to experience it.

In April 2027, Norfolk Island offers a special opportunity to explore the heavens with astronomer, writer, broadcaster and science communicator Dave Reneke, whose entertaining presentations have introduced thousands of people to the wonders of astronomy.

But this isn't simply another stargazing holiday. There's an entire island waiting to be discovered.

A sky that puts everything into perspective. Light pollution has robbed millions of Australians of something previous generations took for granted: a genuinely dark night sky.

Norfolk Island offers something very different.

Its Gold Level Dark Sky status makes it an exceptional location for appreciating the heavens, away from the overwhelming artificial lighting of our cities.

More than just looking through a telescope. One of the great attractions of these tours is the opportunity to experience astronomy firsthand.

Guests can enjoy a minimum of four guided telescope viewing sessions, exploring the Moon, planets, star clusters and distant galaxies. They'll learn to recognise constellations with the naked eye and discover the stories behind them.

Two entertaining indoor astronomy presentations provide additional insights, with opportunities for astrophotography to capture something of the experience.

There are some unusual hands-on encounters too, including the chance to hold a genuine meteorite that has travelled through space for billions of years, and even touch actual lunar samples.

A group picnic incorporating safe solar viewing brings our nearest star into the picture, demonstrating that astronomy isn't exclusively a night-time activity.

No scientific background is required. Just curiosity and a willingness to discover something extraordinary.

And Then There's Norfolk Island Itself. Of course, there's far more to Norfolk Island than its spectacular skies.



Here, the Milky Way becomes a breathtaking river of light, constellations stand out in remarkable detail and distant planets become far more than tiny points of light.

As Dave puts it, "It's like someone's spilled a bucket of stars across the sky. You don't just look up… you fall into it."

Timed to coincide with International Dark Sky Week, these special April holidays introduce guests to the wonders of the southern skies through fascinating stories, surprising discoveries and Dave's trademark humour.

Forget complicated scientific lectures. This is astronomy presented in everyday language, with plenty of those wonderful moments when somebody looks through a telescope and simply says, "WOW!"

With dramatic coastlines, beautiful beaches, towering Norfolk pines and a relaxed atmosphere, the island has a character entirely its own.

Its fascinating history combines Polynesian heritage, early European settlement and the convict era, particularly around historic Kingston, one of the island's most significant heritage areas.

An included island discovery tour. introduces guests to local highlights, while car hire provides the freedom to explore at their own pace.

There's time to discover secluded beaches, enjoy scenic drives, explore historic sites or simply relax and appreciate the island's peaceful surroundings.

Welcome drinks, group activities and a farewell scenic barbecue add a social dimension, giving travellers plenty of opportunities to share their discoveries and make new friends.

It's a wonderful combination: fascinating days exploring a beautiful island, followed by extraordinary nights exploring the universe.

Seven nights, a lifetime of memories. The April 2027 holiday package combines comfortable travel, island discovery and an extensive astronomy program.

Included are return economy airfares, seven nights' accommodation, return airport transfers and car rental, with one vehicle provided per accommodation unit.

Guests also enjoy the Island Discovery Tour, a welcome function with drinks and canapés, two astronomy presentations with Dave, at least four guided telescope sessions, a group picnic with safe solar viewing and a farewell scenic barbecue dinner.

A different way of seeing the world. Perhaps the greatest attraction is that unforgettable moment when Saturn's rings first appear through a telescope, or the Moon's craters become a landscape rather than a photograph.

Then there's the realisation that light from a distant galaxy began its journey millions of years before reaching your eyes.

Suddenly, the universe doesn't seem quite so distant. Past participants have described Dave's astronomy experiences as inspiring and genuinely life-changing. One guest summed it up beautifully:

"Dave doesn't just teach you astronomy. He changes the way you look at the sky forever. Now every time I look up, I see stories, not just dots."

And perhaps that's the real appeal of this holiday. You arrive as a visitor to Norfolk Island and leave with an entirely new appreciation of the world above you.

Two April 2027 Departures – Bookings Now Open.

Whether you're fascinated by space, curious about the night sky or simply seeking a holiday with a difference, Norfolk Island's special stargazing experience offers something memorable.

Come for the island. Stay for the stars. Go home with a universe of memories.

For a free information sheet and booking details, visit: https://norfolkislandtravel.co/stargazing-with-dave/

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Pets in paradise.

Have dog. Will travel. The ups and downs of pets at holiday time.

by *The Editor*



Taking your four-legged friend on holiday – or leaving them in good hands. For many Australians, the family holiday isn't complete without the dog. Whether it's a weekend getaway, a coastal road trip or an extended caravan adventure, our four-legged companions are increasingly part of the travelling party.

But before Fido claims the back seat, a little preparation can make the journey more enjoyable for everyone.

On the road again? Dogs generally love an adventure, but hours in a moving vehicle can be tiring and stressful. A properly fitted safety harness or secured travel crate is essential, helping protect both pets and passengers should sudden braking occur.

Plan regular stops, preferably every couple of hours, allowing your dog to stretch its legs, have a drink and attend to nature's necessities. Carry fresh water, a collapsible bowl, waste bags and a familiar blanket or favourite toy.

And remember, never leave an animal unattended in a parked vehicle. Even with windows slightly open, temperatures can become dangerously high within minutes.

Australia has a growing number of pet-friendly caravan parks, holiday homes and accommodation providers. However, always check the conditions before booking. Some restrict dog sizes or breeds, while others require pets to remain on leads.

Remember that not every beach, walking track or national park welcomes dogs. A little research beforehand avoids disappointment.

Sometimes leaving your companion behind is the better option, particularly for older animals, anxious travellers or holidays involving lengthy absences from accommodation.

Boarding kennels and pet resorts offer everything from basic accommodation to individual exercise areas and supervised playtime. Inspect facilities beforehand, check vaccination requirements and ask about feeding routines, medication and veterinary arrangements.

Alternatively, an experienced pet sitter can care for your animal in familiar surroundings, reducing disruption and maintaining its regular routine.

A holiday for everyone. Whether your best mate is riding shotgun (figuratively speaking!) or enjoying a little holiday of their own, planning ahead makes all the difference.

After all, the best holidays are those where everyone returns home happy, healthy and with a wagging tail!

Adventures of a four legged traveller.

The bags were packed, the car was full,
The holiday was here,
But Rusty sat beside the gate,
Afraid he'd disappear.

Then Dad called out, "Come on mate,
You're coming with us too!"
And Rusty raced towards the car,
As happy doggies do.

He claimed his spot upon the seat,
His harness fastened tight,
And watched the houses disappear,
A most exciting sight.

Through winding roads and country towns,
Past paddocks, sheep and cows,
He barked at every passing truck,
And frightened half the sows.

They stopped beside a shady tree,
To stretch their legs a while,
And Rusty found a muddy pool,
Which made the children smile.

He rolled around from head to tail,
And covered every hair,
Then tried to jump upon the seat,
But Dad said, "Don't you dare!"

At last they reached the Camden Haven,
Where river meets the sea,
And Rusty sniffed the salty breeze,
As happy as could be.

And down upon a dog-safe beach,
With waves around his feet,
Then chased a ball across the sand,
His holiday complete.

But when the time had come to leave,
He wouldn't budge an inch,
They coaxed him with his favourite treats,
And finally, a pinch!

Back home he curled upon his bed,
And dreamed of sand and sea,
Of seagulls, waves and muddy pools,
And running wild and free.

And though the family loved their trip,
One thing was plain to see,
The happiest holidaymaker,
Was Rusty, aged three!

POCO AND THE PRINCESS© by LJ Da Silva



Community concern.

A koala. A joey. And a helpful neighbour

by *The Editor*



Mum, are we there yet?

An unexpected visitor brought a touch of wildlife magic to Lake Street, Laurieton, recently, when local resident Pauline O'Donnell discovered a koala and her baby making themselves at home in her driveway.

The adventurous mother, with her precious joey clinging tightly to her back, had apparently decided to take a stroll through the neighbourhood. On being discovered, she wasted little time scampering up a nearby Tuckeroo tree, where the little family could survey their surroundings in relative safety.

While delighted by her unexpected visitors, Pauline was concerned that the pair might eventually wander onto the roadway, putting themselves in danger.

Not wanting to take any chances, she made a call seeking wildlife advice and was directed to the Koala Hospital.

Help soon arrived, and rather than simply relocating the animals, the rescuers set about gently encouraging the furry travellers to head in the right direction.

What followed was something of a neighbourhood escort service, as the mother and joey were carefully guided along the pathway towards the end of Lake Street and back into the natural bushland bordering Stingray Creek.

Throughout the adventure, the little joey remained safely aboard mum's back, seemingly content to let her do all the navigating.

Interestingly, the rescuers mentioned that another nearby resident had also reported a another wandering koala sighting, suggesting the wandering pair were not the only ones wanting some local attention.

For Pauline, it was a memorable encounter and a wonderful reminder of the extraordinary wildlife that shares our Camden Haven neighbourhoods.

With bushland, waterways and residential streets so closely connected, encounters like these are not uncommon. They also highlight the importance of keeping an eye out for wildlife, particularly on our roads.

Thanks to Pauline's quick thinking and the caring assistance of local wildlife rescuers, this little family was able to continue its journey safely. And hopefully, their next family outing will involve a little less suburban sightseeing!

Ollie's Summer Recipe



Local BBQ Prawns
with Garlic, Lime & Chilli

Fresh, zesty and bursting with summer flavour, these garlic and lime BBQ prawns are perfect for relaxed Australian entertaining. Quick to prepare and delicious straight from the barbecue, they're ideal for Christmas gatherings, lazy afternoons or a light summer dinner. Serve with a crisp salad and crusty bread.

Ingredients

- 1kg large local green prawns, peeled and deveined, tails intact
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely crushed
- Zest and juice of 2 limes
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika
- Generous sprinkle Chilli & Lime 'Mingle' brand
- 2 small red chillis, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh coriander, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Lime wedges, to serve
- Sliced shallots, for garnish

Method

Place olive oil, garlic, lime zest, lime juice, honey, paprika, Chilli & Lime Mingle, and one chopped chilli in a large bowl. Stir well to combine.

Add prawns and toss gently until evenly coated. Cover and refrigerate for 15-20 minutes to allow the flavours to develop.

Preheat barbecue grill or hotplate to medium-high heat. Lightly oil the cooking surface to prevent sticking.

Remove prawns from marinade and arrange on the hot barbecue in a single layer.

Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side, turning once, until prawns are pink, lightly charred and cooked through. Avoid overcooking, as prawns can quickly become tough.

Transfer to a serving platter and scatter with freshly chopped coriander and shallots. Add lime juice and season with black pepper and chilli.

Serve immediately with lime wedges and a little extra chilli for those who enjoy some heat.



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Summer in the garden.

Christmas is just around the corner, and our gardens are certainly starting to show the colours of summer. With warmer days, and longer daylight hours, there is plenty happening in the garden.

December is a busy month for gardeners. Keeping up with watering, feeding and general maintenance will help our plants stay healthy and looking their best throughout the warmer months.

Whether you're adding a little Christmas colour, planting summer vegetables or simply enjoying your outdoor space, there is plenty to do.

PRUNE

A little regular pruning will keep the garden looking tidy and encourage fresh growth.

- **Gardenias:** Lightly trim after flowering to maintain a compact shape.
- **Roses:** Remove spent flowers and any dead or damaged growth.
- **Hibiscus:** Lightly shape if needed, removing untidy growth.
- **Lavender:** Give plants a light trim after flowering, avoiding cutting back into old woody stems.
- **Hedges**: Give fast-growing hedges a light trim to keep them neat.

WHAT TO PLANT IN DECEMBER

There is still plenty of opportunity to add colour to your garden.

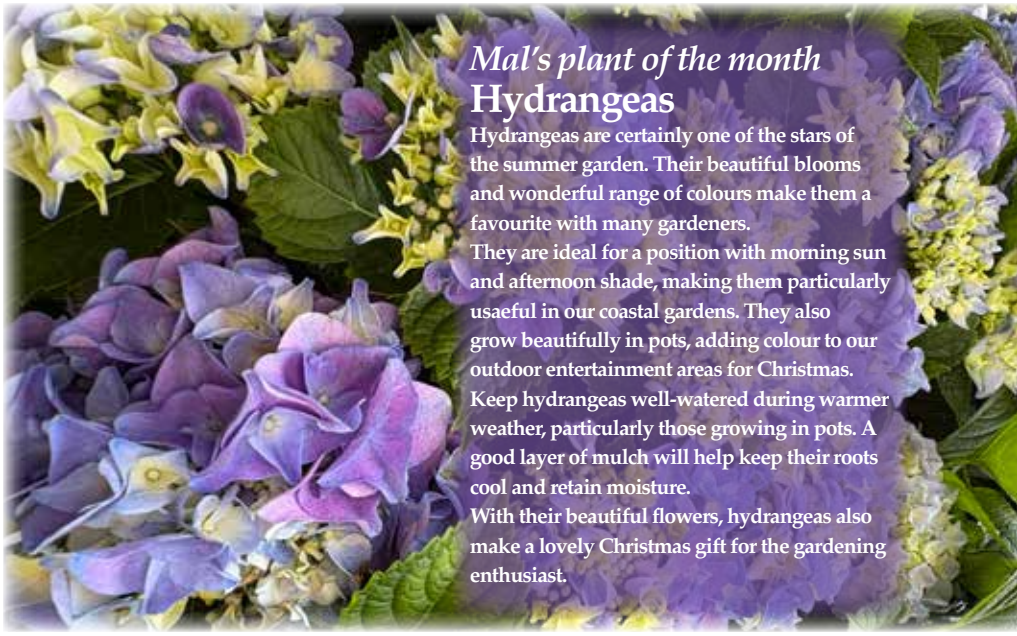
Flowers

Zinnias, Marigolds, Celosia, Dahlias, Petunias Vinca

Vegetables and herbs

Tomatoes, Capsicum, Eggplant, Cucumbers Beans, Basil, Sweet Corn.

Choose a position with suitable sunlight and keep newly planted seedlings well watered while they establish. A layer of mulch will help retain moisture and keep the soil cooler.



Mal's plant of the month

Hydrangeas

Hydrangeas are certainly one of the stars of the summer garden. Their beautiful blooms and wonderful range of colours make them a favourite with many gardeners.

They are ideal for a position with morning sun and afternoon shade, making them particularly usaeful in our coastal gardens. They also grow beautifully in pots, adding colour to our outdoor entertainment areas for Christmas.

Keep hydrangeas well-watered during warmer weather, particularly those growing in pots. A good layer of mulch will help keep their roots cool and retain moisture.

With their beautiful flowers, hydrangeas also make a lovely Christmas gift for the gardening enthusiast.

FEED

With plants actively growing, December is a good time to keep up with regular feeding.

- **Roses:** Apply Sudden Impact to encourage continued flowering.
- **Hydrangeas:** Powerfeed or Organic life pellets. to support healthy foliage and flowering.
- **Citrus:** Apply a good handful of Organic Life pellets around the drip zone.
- **Flowering annuals:** A liquid fertiliser every couple of weeks will help maintain flowering.
- **Vegetable gardens:** Powerfeed or Sudden Impact fortnightly for best results.

A LITTLE CHRISTMAS MAGIC – NSW CHRISTMAS BUSH

It's hard to think of an Australian Christmas without thinking of our beautiful native Christmas Bush, *Ceratopetalum gummiferum.*

This wonderful NSW native is famous for its festive display.

Christmas Bush is a lovely addition to the garden, particularly when planted as a feature shrub. It prefers a sunny to partly shaded position, with well-drained soil. Feed with Bush Tucker fertiliser to ensure healthy growth.

A FEW DECEMBER GARDENING REMINDERS

- Water early in the morning to reduce moisture loss.
- Keep on top of weeds before they become established.
- Mulch garden beds to help retain moisture.
- Check pots and hanging baskets regularly, as they dry out quickly.
- Watch for pests and diseases, particularly during humid weather.

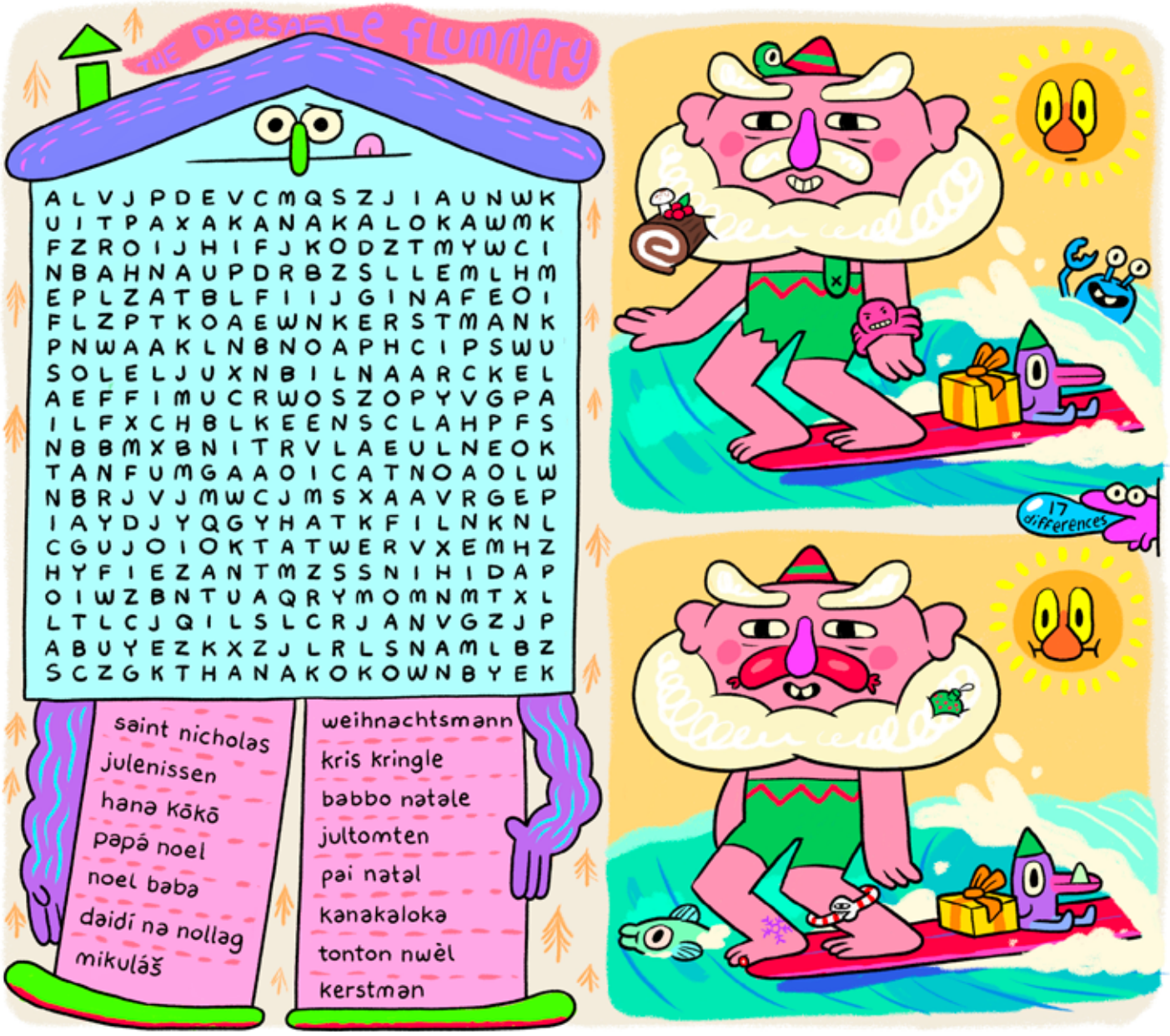
Wishing everyone a safe and Merry Christmas,
Malcolm McKinlay
Zone Coordinator Garden Clubs of Australia



Puzzle page. by *Jared Atkins*

Keep your mind sharp and test your skills.

Answers available on our website www.camdenhavenlocalnews.com.au



TIP OF THE MONTH

Advice for the Festive Season

Protecting your smile during the festive season can be easy when you follow these healthy habits:

- Limit Sugar to Mealtimes – Enjoy Christmas pudding and sweets with meals rather than grazing throughout the day. Eating with a meal increases saliva, helping neutralise sugars.
- Pair Wine with Cheese – Cheese can help neutralise acids from wine and protect your tooth enamel.
- Be Careful with Hard Foods – Hard lollies and nuts can crack or chip teeth, crowns and fillings.
- Wait Before Brushing – Wait at least one hour after acidic drinks or alcohol before brushing.
- Keep Brushing – Even with late nights and parties, remember to brush twice a day for two minutes.



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Critiques and Reviews.

Warm gloves. A story of courage. Survival. Hope.

A book by local author ***L.S. Balchin***

Why do people experiencing domestic violence stay? Why do they remain silent, or sometimes even defend the person causing them harm?

These are uncomfortable questions, but they sit at the heart of *Warm Gloves*, a moving story by L.S. Balchin that explores the complicated realities of abusive relationships and the courage required to escape them.

Set in Australia during the 1970s, the book follows Sophie, a young woman whose childhood has done little to prepare her for a loving, secure relationship.

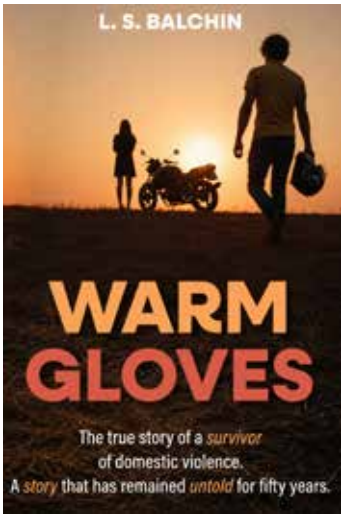
Growing up with an unpredictable father and an emotionally distant mother, Sophie learns early that affection can be fleeting and that keeping quiet is often the safest option. In an era when family problems were largely kept behind closed doors, questioning authority or speaking openly about abuse was rarely encouraged.

Then she meets Nate.

A simple act of kindness makes Sophie feel valued in a way she has never experienced before. What begins as the promise of love gradually becomes something far more troubling.

By the time Sophie recognises the pattern of abuse, she is pregnant, isolated and financially dependent on the very person she needs to escape.

Through Sophie's experiences, *Warm Gloves* examines how emotional vulnerability, manipulation and circumstances can trap someone in a relationship that outsiders might assume would be easy to leave.



But this is more than a story about domestic violence. It is also about resilience, self-discovery and the determination to create a better future for the next generation.

One of the book's strengths, according to editor Daina Lindeman, is its sensitive portrayal of Sophie as a believable, sympathetic character. Lindeman praises the natural progression from childhood to adulthood and the engaging pace of the narrative.

She also observes that many readers will recognise familiar family and relationship dynamics within its pages.

The author's accompanying note explains that Sophie's story reflects experiences from a time when domestic violence was often dismissed as a private family matter, and those affected frequently suffered in silence.

Five decades later, greater public awareness and support services have encouraged more open conversations, although domestic violence remains a serious issue in Australian society.

At its heart, *Warm Gloves* seeks to offer understanding rather than judgement. It explores not only the struggle to leave an abusive relationship but also the emotional journey towards healing.

For readers who appreciate stories with genuine human depth and an important message, *Warm Gloves* promises to be a thought-provoking and ultimately hopeful read. Available through Amazon Books online, booksellers and libraries. Also at www.lsbalchin.com

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.



Contact Robert

02 6584 0977 portmacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au robertdwyerMP.com.au
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Hidden in plain sight. Guess who!

A man with a plan and a few tricks up his sleeve.

This is the fourth 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.

From an old Volkswagen Kombi to international rallying glory, round-the-world adventures and a few battles with bureaucracy, this Camden Haven character has never been one to take the conventional route.

There are people who spend their lives dreaming of adventure, and then there are those who simply climb behind the wheel, turn the key and see where the road takes them.



Our mystery personality falls firmly into the latter category. Although, as we'll discover, the road hasn't always been particularly smooth, and occasionally hasn't existed at all.

The story begins in 1973, when a young bloke decided to take a girl halfway around Australia in a 1963 split-screen Volkswagen Kombi. *Pictured stuck near Alice Springs.*

These days they'd probably call it a gap year. Back then, it was simply an adventure, involving a rather basic vehicle, a considerable amount of optimism and, presumably, a very understanding travelling companion.

The romance clearly survived the journey. The couple married in 1978 and are still together today, proving that a long-distance relationship can work remarkably well when you're both travelling in the same direction.

And all without air conditioning, satellite navigation or Google Maps!

But that early adventure was merely the beginning of a lifelong fascination with cars, travel and challenges that might persuade a less adventurous soul to stay comfortably at home.

From Kombi to Porsche

Fast-forward to 1994, and our mystery man was about to achieve something extraordinary.

Partnering renowned racing driver Andrew Miedecke as navigator, he helped steer a Porsche 944 Turbo Cup to outright victory in the prestigious Targa Tasmania.

This wasn't simply a matter of joining a few motoring enthusiasts for a spirited Sunday drive.

Targa Tasmania was already developing an international reputation, attracting accomplished competitors and an extraordinary assortment of machinery.

Among those competing was legendary European rally driver Sandro Munari, a four-time Monte Carlo Rally winner, driving a factory-entered Lamborghini.

Yet it was the Miedecke partnership that emerged victorious, delivering Porsche its first major Australian tarmac rally triumph.

Their winning car was something special too – a rare, factory-built right-hand-drive Porsche 944 Turbo Cup, capable of extraordinary performance.

The pair returned in 1995 hoping to repeat their success, but modifications intended to improve the Porsche's performance resulted in mechanical difficulties.

Such is motorsport. One year you're celebrating victory, the next you're being reminded that machinery occasionally has its own ideas.

Nevertheless, an outright Targa Tasmania victory remains an impressive entry on anyone's curriculum vitae.

And our mystery man wasn't finished exploring the possibilities of four wheels.



The world is his driveway

Years later came perhaps his most ambitious motoring adventure of all.

This time the vehicle was a 1991 Toyota LandCruiser, and the destination was, quite literally, much of the world.

An extraordinary expedition lasting 18 months would eventually cover approximately 70,000 kilometres through 34 countries, taking in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Canada.

There were remote mountain roads, vast deserts, difficult border crossings, questionable directions and stretches of countryside where seeing another vehicle was something of an event.

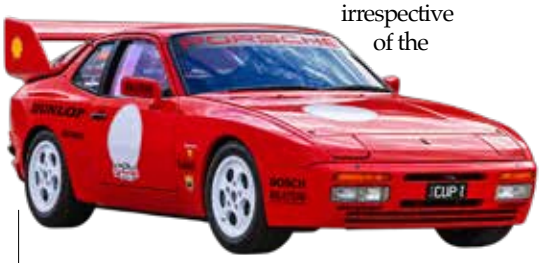
The travellers followed portions of the historic Silk Road, encountered the immense spaces of Mongolia and Kazakhstan, and experienced everything from searing desert heat to temperatures well below freezing.

On some rough sections, six hours of driving could produce barely 100 kilometres of progress.

In Mongolia, a navigational mistake reportedly resulted in a distinctly uncomfortable encounter with an armed border guard.

At the China–Laos border, an argument over vehicle paperwork brought commercial traffic to a standstill for around 20 minutes.

Clearly, our man has never been particularly intimidated by officialdom, irrespective of the country.



The journey consumed around 10,000 litres of diesel, along with what must have been a considerable supply of patience, ingenuity and humour.

Accompanied by fellow adventurers in another four-wheel drive, the expedition ultimately reached Canada, where the LandCruiser was shipped home across the Pacific.

And what became of that remarkable vehicle?

It's still recognisable around the Camden Haven, its once-proud white paintwork bearing a faded map tracing its extraordinary travels.

Some people collect fridge magnets from their holidays. Others bring home a well-worn LandCruiser with a story on practically every panel.

The man with a plan

Adventure is only one side of this

fascinating local identity.

Professionally, he has spent decades immersed in engineering, construction, development and the intricate world of town planning.

A Laurieton engineering consultancy bearing his name was established in 1983, undertaking projects across the Mid North Coast and extending into Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Lord Howe Island.

His experience encompasses structural and civil engineering, project management and the complexities of turning an idea into something that will actually stand up.

Yet his interest in problem-solving extends beyond conventional engineering.

He's also an inventor.

Together with a fellow inventor, he developed a patented device designed to join



construction panels, addressing a practical challenge within the building industry.

His inventive efforts even took him onto national television, appearing on the ABC programme *The New Inventors*.

Not everyone gets the opportunity to present their ideas to a national audience, although one suspects the experience would have provided our mystery man with a few stories of its own.

Closer to home, his professional knowledge has also been associated with community education and support for young people pursuing science and engineering.

Not afraid to ask questions

Anyone familiar with local planning matters may recognise another characteristic.

Our mystery man is not particularly inclined to accept an official decision simply because somebody in authority says it's the final word.

Over the years, he's been prepared to challenge planning processes, question Council decisions and lend his professional knowledge to people he believes deserve a fair hearing.

That doesn't necessarily make him the most convenient person to have sitting across the table at a meeting.

But it does make for some interesting conversations.

Whether the issue involves development, engineering, local regulations or simply what he considers common sense, he's generally prepared to speak his mind.

Perhaps it's the same determination that carried him through remote border crossings and thousands of kilometres of difficult terrain.

When confronted by an obstacle, he seems more interested in finding a way through it than turning around.

And then there's the mischief…

Of course, we've saved one of his more entertaining qualities until last.

Behind the engineering expertise, planning knowledge and adventurous spirit lurks a thoroughly mischievous sense of humour.

He's a born storyteller, an enthusiastic practical joker and a man who appreciates the considerable entertainment value of a convincingly delivered tall tale.

Indeed, regular readers of this magazine may already have encountered his handiwork without realising it.

Some of our April Fools' offerings have benefited from his fertile imagination, and one suspects he takes particular pleasure in discovering just how far a wonderfully improbable story can travel before somebody finally spots the joke.

There's something rather appealing about a man who can discuss structural engineering one moment, challenge a planning decision the next, and then suggest a completely outrageous story with an absolutely straight face.

And the adventures continue.

Even now, when others might be contemplating a quieter existence, he's still travelling, exploring and finding new matters worthy of his attention.

Perhaps that explains a life that has taken him from a humble Volkswagen Kombi to the winner's podium at Targa Tasmania, across continents in a LandCruiser, onto national television and into the occasional disagreement with bureaucracy.

It's certainly been anything but ordinary.

And through it all, the girl who accompanied him on that first Australian adventure has remained part of the journey.

Not a bad outcome for a young bloke with an old Kombi and an ambitious travel plan.

So, who is this rally-winning navigator, engineer, inventor, world traveller, community advocate and occasional master of mischief?

Here's your final clue.

Look for a white LandCruiser sporting a faded map of the world.

The vehicle has travelled a very long way. And so has the bloke behind the wheel.

Last month's "guess who": Luke Hadfield





WHAT'S ON AT

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✦THURS DEC 10



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✦THURS DEC 17



Matty Zarb - live and free from 6.30 - 9.30pm

✦THURS DEC 24



Shane Peters 6.30 - 9.30pm

✦THURS DEC 31



Brock Colley 6.30 - 9.30pm in the Main Bar

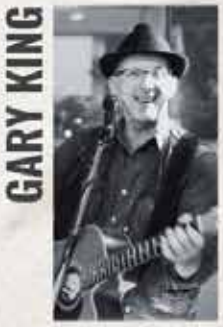


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