



SMALL STEPS, BIG CHANGE: REDLANDS LOCALS EMBRACE HEALTHIER FUTURES

February in the Redlands is all about fresh starts, and the year is still young, making it the perfect time to focus on your wellbeing to tackle the months ahead. If you've been feeling like you're not quite living your best life, the Small Steps for Big Changes initiative might be just what you need. This program, delivered by the YMCA in partnership with The University of Queensland, supports people in reducing their risk of developing type 2 diabetes – and Redlands locals are in luck, with Victoria Point YMCA named as one of four participating centres. You can learn more about how to get involved on page 2.

Out and about in the Redlands, February is typically a busy month. Our batteries have recharged after Christmas, school is back in full swing, and our community calendar is filling with events. From art

exhibitions to live gigs and theatre, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Take a look at our events listing on page 6.

February also brings Valentine's Day, a celebration with a surprisingly rich backstory – turn to page 7 to uncover its origins. And if you're not marking the day with a partner, why not share a little kindness instead? A simple card to a neighbour or friend can be a lovely way to brighten someone's day.

A huge thanks goes to everyone who contributed to this issue – we love sharing your stories!

Pictured: Kaine Doblo (YMCA), Fletcher McIntosh (YMCA), Harry McNeale (member), Jenny Wicks (member), Jared Bonitare (member), and Narelle Van Der Hoeven (YMCA) at the Y Victoria Point.

Happy New Year Redlanders

Wishing you all a fabulous 2026

Courtney Brown | 0410 232 200  LJ Hooker

FREE DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM AT THE Y VICTORIA POINT

The Y (YMCA) Victoria Point is inviting local residents to take charge of their health through an exciting partnership with The University of Queensland. Together, they are delivering *Small Steps for Big Changes*, a free six-week program designed to help community members lower their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by building healthier, more active lifestyles.

With rates of type 2 diabetes continuing to rise across Australia, this program offers a practical, supportive pathway for people who want to make sustainable improvements to their wellbeing. Rather than overwhelming participants with drastic changes, *Small Steps for Big Changes* focuses on achievable daily habits: moving more, eating better, and building confidence along the way.

What makes this program unique is the expert support and full access to Y facilities. Participants will receive personalised health coaching from qualified, experienced trainers, who guide them through realistic goal setting, tailored activity plans, and simple nutrition strategies. This one-on-one support ensures every person's journey is shaped around their needs, preferences, and starting point.

To make healthy living even more accessible, the Y Victoria Point is providing program participants with free, unlimited access to its facilities for the full six weeks. This includes access to the spacious weights and cardio areas, group fitness, pool and aqua aerobics sessions, 24/7 gym access, plus other activity spaces designed to help participants explore new ways to stay active in a welcoming, community-focused environment.

The program is open to eligible adults who want to take proactive steps toward improving their health, whether they're looking to increase physical activity, make better food choices, or simply feel more energised in their daily lives.



By combining expert guidance, community connection, and practical tools, *Small Steps for Big Changes* empowers locals to build healthier habits that last long after the program ends. It's a powerful reminder that meaningful change doesn't require giant leaps – just the courage to take the first small step.

For more information about eligibility or to register, contact the Y Victoria Point at 3820 5300.

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LAPS FOR LEUKAEMIA: SHARKS' STAFF TO WALK NON-STOP FOR 72 HOURS

FROM VICTORIA POINT SHARKS SPORTING CLUB

From 7pm on Thursday 12 February to 7pm on Sunday 15 February, staff from the Victoria Point Sharks Sporting Club will be pushing themselves once again in their Laps for Leukaemia Charity Walk, dedicated to raising awareness and vital funds for blood cancer research and support. This year, staff will walk non-stop for 72 hours around the Sharks' sports oval – up from 48 hours last year – because the cause demands more.

This year's event is the first of three major fundraising initiatives by the Victoria Point Sharks Sporting Club (including their Charity Golf Day in June and the Leukaemia Foundation Charity Luncheon in October), with a bold target of \$100,000. It's a goal inspired by remarkable growth over the past two years. What began as a \$26,000 effort in 2024 rose to an incredible \$80,000 in 2025.


At its heart, Laps for Leukaemia is about more than fundraising. It aligns with the Leukaemia Foundation's ambitious goal to see zero deaths from blood cancer by 2035. Every lap walked represents hope for patients, strength for families, and progress toward improved treatments and outcomes. As staff members walk through the day and night for 72 continuous hours, they do so in honour of those currently battling blood cancer, in memory of those lost, and in support of future generations. Funds raised will help provide critical research, patient support services, and education programs.

Laps for Leukaemia is a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when a community unites with purpose. Please show your support by visiting www.sharksclub.com.au and making a donation.



Photo: Supplied.


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DANCING TO THE RHYTHM OF LIFE – WITH PARKINSON’S

Nicole West, dancer and dance teacher, is well-known in the Redlands for her years of work with U3A and her recent collaboration with Theatre Redlands. In a more specialised role, Nicole also works as a teaching artist with Dance for Parkinson's Australia (DPA).

The Dance for PD (Parkinson's Disease) program was established in New York in 2001 to create an enjoyable social and artistic environment that meets the needs of individuals with Parkinson's Disease, helping them to explore their physical, mental, social and creative capacity in a supportive community. It was brought to Australia by Erica-Rose Jeffrey in 2012.

Nicole, whose interest was sparked by the ABC series *Keep on Dancing* and desire to support one of the dancers in her regular U3A class who suffers from the disease, says that the program isn't therapy but does provide many physical and mental benefits.

"People with Parkinson's lose automaticity – the body's internal rhythm – which makes walking difficult. The music beat in dancing – and every culture on earth has dance – can replace that internal rhythm and help focus movement," Nicole says. "Basically, we run a standard dance class – usually half-and-half, sitting and standing. We have to be very aware of transitions between sitting and standing, then between standing and moving," she says.

The form of dance depends on the style of the teaching artist. Nicole leans towards jazz and tap but the options include ballet, Spanish dance and non-progressive ballroom dances for couples.

"People are encouraged to do what they're comfortable with; you can't say you know Parkinson's because the thing with it is that it's really different for different people.

"We offer options and have two teachers, to work with people in different comfort zones. It's also ideal to have volunteer helpers. It's not all easy stuff – it's dance, it's meant to be challenging!"



Photo: Supplied.

Nicole gained her understanding of the changes wrought by Parkinson's through training programs run by the international Dance for PD, supplemented by her own research and personal experience; her father has Parkinson's.

"There are three big boxes for ageing well," she says, "physical, mental and social – dance ticks all three."

To find a class near you, visit www.danceforparkinsonsaustralia.org.



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EVENTS

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If you're looking for something to do locally, check out The Community Leader's What's On page here and online.



ROCK MUSIC TRIVIA FUNDRAISER

Saturday February 28, from 7:30pm, Redlands RSL, 8 Passage Street, Cleveland

Join trivia master and comedian Mike Van Acker and Play It Forward's Jonathon Welch AM for a night of rock trivia. Funds raised will go to Play It Forward to support arts initiatives in the Redlands area. Play It Forward delivers inclusive, community-focused arts programs. Evolving from pioneering street choirs, it now partners across health, education, arts and social sectors to create diverse choirs, projects and national events. Its mission is to foster connection, creativity and social inclusion through innovative, accessible music-making for people of all backgrounds. For trivia night bookings, scan the QR code.



RANGER STACEY'S JOEY CLUB

Tuesday February 10, 9:00am to 10:00am, IndigiScapes, Runnymede Road, Capalaba

Ranger Stacey invites young nature lovers to a lively morning of wildlife discovery. Children will bellow like koalas, flap like birds and hop like kangaroos before enjoying story time and a sensory bushwalk to uncover natural wonders along the trail. Designed for children aged 0 to six, this interactive experience encourages curiosity and care for the environment. All children must be accompanied by an adult, and tickets are required for both adults and kids. Participants are reminded to wear sun-safe clothing, bring a hat, and carry a water bottle. For tickets, scan the QR code.



THE GREAT BRITISH SONGBOOK, VOL II

Wednesday February 18, 11:00am, RPAC Concert Hall, Middle Street, Cleveland

Craig Martin makes a triumphant return to the RPAC stage with a brand new BritPop spectacular, *The Great British Songbook, Volume II*. Following his previous sell-out shows, he's back by popular demand, joined by his powerhouse six-piece band. Audiences will be treated to classic hits from legendary British bands and iconic singers, spanning the '60s to the '00s. With more than 20 timeless chart toppers in one unforgettable morning, this feel-good musical celebration launches the 2026 Musical Melodies Concert Series in true sing along style. If you love British music, this is unmissable. For tickets, visit rpac.com.au.



ROSE TATTOO LIVE

Friday February 27, 8:00pm, Koala Tavern, 36-40 Moreton Bay Road, Capalaba

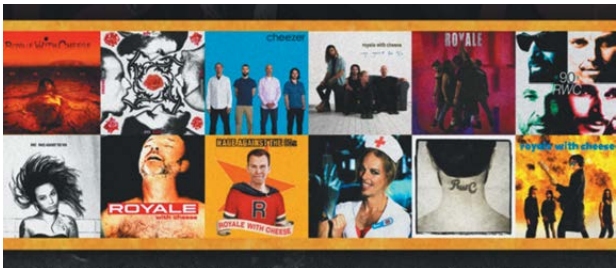
Rose Tattoo, Australia's legendary hard rock icons, bring five decades of raw power back to the stage, delivering the fire, attitude and unmistakable roar that inspired generations. With Angry Anderson leading the charge, fans can expect the hits, the grit and the full force of a true rock institution. This is a rare chance to witness Rose Tattoo in their element, loud and unapologetic. For tickets, scan the QR code.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE BREAKFAST

Wednesday February 11, 7:00am to 9:30am IndigiScapes, Runnymede Road, Capalaba

IndigiScapes will host an intimate breakfast to celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. Guided by Ranger Stacey, guests will hear from inspiring women in Environmental Science as they share their career journeys and passion for empowering future generations. The morning includes a delicious breakfast, engaging conversation, a Q&A session and networking opportunities. With limited seating, attendees are encouraged to purchase tickets early by scanning the QR code.



ROYALE WITH CHEESE – THE ULTIMATE '90S ROCK SHOW

Friday February 13, 8:00pm, Cleveland Sands Hotel

Royale With Cheese, Australia's premier '90s rock show, storms into the Cleveland Sands Hotel on Friday 13 February. Celebrating ten years of sold-out nostalgia, the Sydney outfit delivers the ultimate '90s party, blasting everything from grunge and Britpop to the biggest Oz rock anthems. With hits spanning Nirvana to Oasis, Silverchair to Green Day, they recreate the decade's most iconic sounds in one high energy night. Fans are invited to come as they are and relive the last great era of rock. Tickets on sale now – visit Oztix or scan the QR code.



BE MY VALENTINE? OR WILL YOU BE MY INFANTRY TANK?

BY JAN NARY

One of our most romantic calendar dates started with a Christian physician priest being clubbed – then beheaded – in 3rd century Rome. Or so the story has it, even to stating the date as 14th February. There are stories about several St Valentines but this is the most widely accepted one. It seems that Valentine incurred the wrath of Claudius II by evangelising and performing Christian marriages for couples so that the husbands could escape conscription into the Roman army. Hence the martyrdom – but not until he had cured his gaoler’s daughter of blindness and given her a note signed “from your Valentine”.

Perhaps coincidentally, St Valentine’s Day falls in mid-February, the time of the Roman Lupercalia festival, a celebration of spring and fertility that was celebrated in the way that fertility revels have always been celebrated. In the 5th century, Pope Gelasius I banned it, feeling it had gone a bit beyond the pale, and suggested that celebrating a saint might be a bit more respectable.

In 14th century England, Chaucer’s poetry reinforced the romantic Valentine connection by stating birds chose their nest-mates on St Valentine’s and the die was cast. By the 18th century, Valentine

cards were well established (perhaps an offshoot of the traditional German Freundschaftskarten – friendship cards) and they remain an essential part of a stationer’s annual stock.

Valentine means strong and it’s just as well; the saint has a busy schedule. As well as being the patron saint of lovers, he has the added responsibilities of beekeepers and people with epilepsy.

On a less romantic note, a Valentine is a British infantry tank – in fact one-quarter of all the tanks and derivatives produced in Britain during the Second World War were Valentines. No connection to romance here, the name was probably derived from Vickers’ telegraphic address or chosen to honour the then recently deceased Sir John Valentine Carden, acclaimed tank and vehicle designer.



Romantic Victorians used to send messages by bouquets, so if you’re buying flowers, remember that each flower has a meaning. Here are a few to choose...or avoid!

- Yellow Acacia – secret love
- Bridal Rose – happy love
- Red Chrysanthemum – love
- Honeysuckle – affection

- Rose – love
(But beware! Yellow rose = jealousy)
- Fern – sincerity
- Hibiscus – delicate beauty

- Pineapple – you are perfect
- Lavender – distrust
- Oleander – beware
- Rhododendron – danger

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Our future Redland City



Mayor's message

In December Council adopted its latest Corporate Plan *Our Future Redland City: Corporate Plan 2026 – 2031*, which will come into effect in July 2026.

The Corporate Plan sets out high-level goals to guide how Council will allocate our funding and resources.

It will inform all Council decisions, strategies, plans and budgets over the coming years. Council teams will report performance against the plan and be accountable to what our community has told Council matters most.

The Plan follows comprehensive community engagement which saw more than 600 participants across two engagement stages and multiple activities such as focus groups, workshops, pop-ups and surveys.

This included targeted opportunities to speak to our First Nations residents, our youth, the business sector, those living with a disability and those on our island communities.

The online project page was viewed more than 5,000 times, with more than 790 visitors downloading the draft plan before its adoption.

The final product was enriched by the contributions of community members across different age groups, backgrounds, interests and locations – and I wish to thank those who participated online and in our engagement sessions.

We know that a plan is just a plan until it's put into action.

That's why Council is committed to bringing this plan – your priorities – to life.

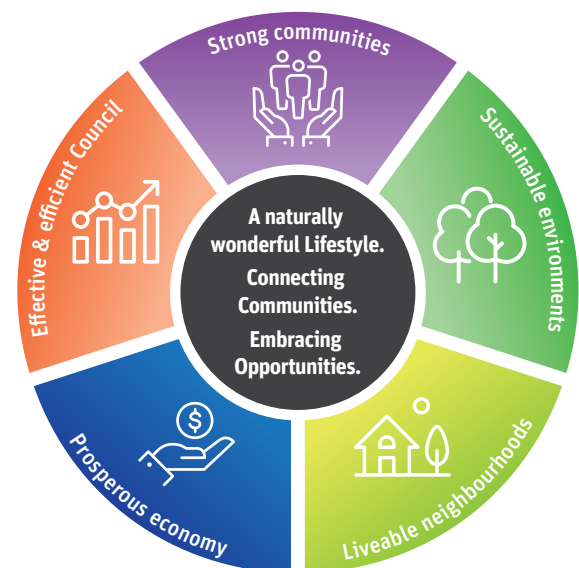
Council starts with the foundations of the previous Corporate Plan, with many projects already underway that complement Council's goals.

Council will be working in partnership with all levels of government and with businesses, groups and residents to ensure the plan continues Council's ongoing vision to deliver for the community.



Cr Jos Mitchell
Mayor of Redland City
Email: mayor@redland.qld.gov.au

Our goals to 2031



Strong communities

Proud, resilient and vibrant communities, where everyone belongs

Sustainable environments

Clean, green and thriving natural environments respected, nurtured and enjoyed by all

Liveable neighbourhoods

Distinctive and well-designed places to live, work and play

Prosperous economy

A flourishing and evolving economy attracting investment, innovation and opportunity

Effective and efficient Council

A well-governed and future-focused Council that leads, listens and delivers

Working towards our shared goals

The new Corporate Plan, an extension of our existing plan, comes into effect in July 2026. The great news is, many of our current projects mean we're already on the road to success.

Through local initiatives, partnerships, or everyday actions, community and Council can collaboratively shape a thriving and sustainable future for Redland City.



What can you do?

Let's work together! The plan includes simple ideas under each goal for residents to help us bring the plan to life.

Scan the QR code to view the full plan and learn more.

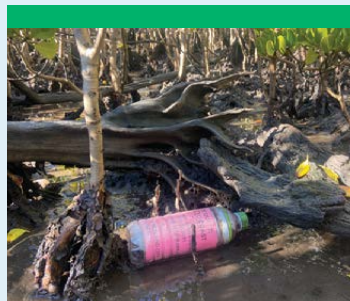


Community grants open

Council has refreshed its Community Grants Program to offer more frequent funding rounds and simpler applications. These grants will help bring ideas to life and create lasting community benefits.

Applications for the Rapid Response Grant and Signature Events Attraction and Retention Fund are open now, and will close on 30 April. Additional grants are also opening soon.

Visit redland.qld.gov.au/grants for more information.



Litter tracked to help local waterways

Litter Quest: Creek to Coast, an innovative Council program, recently used nine GPS-tracked bottles to demonstrate how litter moves through waterways.

Bottles launched into creek catchments became caught in vegetation downstream. Two bottles released into Moreton Bay were trapped in mangroves on nearby islands.

All bottles were retrieved.

We hope projects like this can help us to better understand litter pathways and aid community education.



Caring for our places

Council proudly maintains our community parks, community-leased venues and public amenities across our city.

We respond as quickly as we can to vandalism of our public spaces.

We're asking for your help to keep our shared spaces safe, accessible and welcoming.

Report vandalism of Council assets by calling 3829 8999, or on our website. You can also report graffiti to **vandaltrak.com/graffiti-register**



Our Games legacy

Redlands Coast is proud to be an event venue city for Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with the new Redland Whitewater Centre earmarked to host the Canoe Slalom events.

Council, together with Games partners, are focusing on ensuring benefits will be realised for the local community.

A Redlands Coast 2032 Legacy Working Group has been established to help drive efforts.

Learn more at redland.qld.gov.au/legacy



Council's online services

Council's **Digital Transformation Program** is delivering increased and easier online access to Council services.

The program has already delivered a new, more user-friendly website; an easier public space booking system; upgraded library resources; and better free WiFi locations.

Customers will continue seeing improvements to systems we use and how we engage with you.

Visit Council's website to find out more and, if you're interested, sign up for Council's online services while you're there!

Engagement highlights

Over two stages of engagement for our Corporate Plan there were:



600+ community inputs



Eight focus groups, two workshops and six pop-ups



5200+ project page views



790 downloads of the draft plan

The top three priorities raised by the community were:



Environmental protection



Community advocacy



Value for money

What you told us you value most about Redland City

Community, environment and lifestyle



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redland.qld.gov.au/subscribe



Maggie's Mates

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Photo: Supplied.

What's your name? Hi, my name is Apollo Martin, also known as Mr Fluffy Pants!

Where do you live? I live in Capalaba.

What is your occupation? I'm the Office Mascot for ONE AGENCY, The Martins Real Estate, at Capalaba Park. It's a woofin' good job. I get to receive loads of love from visitors.

What is your favourite local walk? Anything that ends up at the coffee shop. I love going for coffee as it generally means Mum or Dad will give me some bacon.

What is your most treasured toy? I love my chicken toy. I kept stealing it from Nana, and she finally gave in and let me keep it! It's bigger than me, almost!

What is your favourite food? Chicken...and of

course, treats. Our mail lady must love me, as she drops off a treat whenever she delivers a package. I luvs her.

What's your worst habit? Racing from the front door to both ends of the window in the living room to check out who is walking on my street. I positively zoom at breakneck speed when I do this.

What's your favourite local hangout? Next to the kettle, when Nana makes tea, because this means there will be bickies to be had.

Who is your best doggo friend? My cousins Wombat and Mason. We hang out when we go to their house to visit.

Do you have any funny or embarrassing stories you'd like to share? So up until recently,

Mum would call for Dad from the other end of the house yelling "Honeybuns". Now any decent canine would know that this is a name far more suitable for the dog of the house, along with Mr Moo, Mr Fluffy Pants, Puppy Pie etc. So, every time she calls out to Dad as "Honeybuns," I zoom right up ahead and jump on her lap to claim my rightful place.

What do people love most about you? I am a lovable little 'Moodle'. I love giving kisses and getting a good massage, especially on my belly. Life is woofin' good!

Apollo's favourite charity is the RSPCA QLD, and we have made a \$50 donation on his behalf.



Would you like your best mate to be featured in Maggie's Mates? Email us at sales@market2market.com.au and we'll send you a questionnaire. We will donate \$50 to a registered animal charity of your choice for each profile published in The Community Leader.

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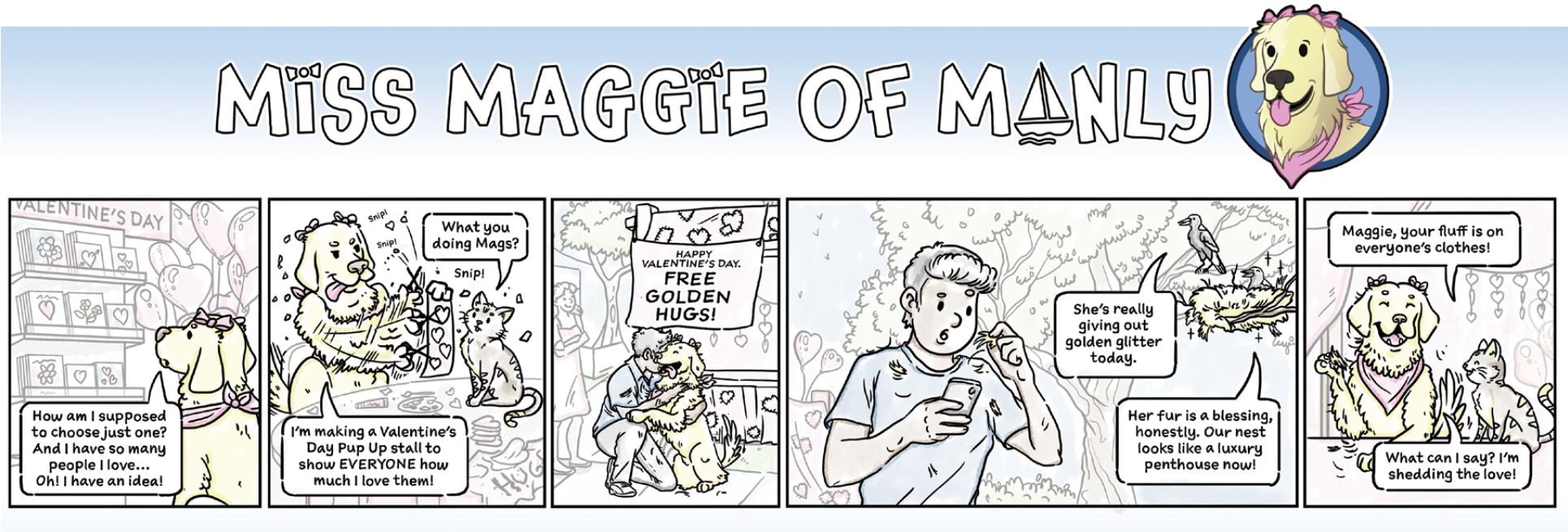
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CONJUNCTIVITIS IN DOGS AND CATS

BY DR NICKY THOMAS, WYNNUM MANLY VETERINARY HOSPITAL

Conjunctivitis is a condition affecting the lining of the eyes. The moist, pink tissue lining the eyelids (including the third eyelid in dogs and cats) becomes red, swollen, and uncomfortable. Pets may blink and squint frequently and develop a watery to cloudy yellow/green discharge. Further signs such as itching, hair loss around the eyes, discharge from the nose, sneezing, and coughing may develop depending on the cause of the conjunctivitis.



The eye should be kept clean and free of discharge with saline. An Elizabethan collar may be required to prevent rubbing and further trauma to the eye and surrounding tissues. Anti-histamines may be useful to help reduce irritation.



CAUSES OF CONJUNCTIVITIS

Allergic conjunctivitis is common in dogs and cats. Common allergies that may cause conjunctivitis include:

- Grass or pollen
- Dust mites
- Food allergies
- Household moulds

Infectious conjunctivitis occurs more commonly in cats than in dogs – herpesvirus and chlamydia are two viral infections that can present with signs including conjunctivitis

TREATMENT OF CONJUNCTIVITIS

Taking your pet for a vet check is important if they are showing signs of conjunctivitis, as the treatment will vary depending on the cause of the condition and whether there are other clinical signs associated.

Your vet will check your pet for the presence of any corneal ulceration. This involves placing a fluorescent dye in the eye to assess for injuries to the cornea.

Medicated drops will likely be prescribed – if there is no ulceration present, these medications will contain an anti-inflammatory to help reduce the swelling and irritation.

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Why Is The Type Of Carpet Material Important?

BY BEARE FLOORING

The material of your carpet affects everything from how it feels to how long it lasts. It also plays a major role in maintenance, stain resistance, and how well it holds up in high-use areas like bedrooms. Choosing the right carpet fibre means better comfort and fewer headaches down the track.

There are two main types of carpet fibres: natural and synthetic. Natural options like pure wool offer durability and luxury, while synthetic fibres such as nylon and polyester provide stain resistance and affordability for your chosen carpet.

Wool carpets, for example, are naturally insulating, which helps regulate temperature in bedrooms. They're also biodegradable and naturally resistant to dirt. On the other hand, synthetic carpets are known for being budget-friendly and easy to clean, making them ideal for busy households.

How Does Room Size Influence Your Carpet Choice? The size of your bedroom doesn't just impact how much carpet you need – it also influences how the space feels once the carpet is installed. The right choice can make a small room feel bigger or a large room feel cosier, simply by playing with colour, pile height, and pattern.

Carpet Choices For Small Bedrooms: In smaller rooms, lighter carpet colours can help create the illusion of more space. Pale neutrals like soft grey, beige, or off-white reflect light and make the room feel open and airy. Choosing a low to medium pile also helps avoid the space feeling cramped or overly plush. Avoid bold patterns or dark colours in compact rooms, as they can draw the walls in and make the space feel tighter.



Photo: Supplied.

Carpet Choices For Large Bedrooms: In larger bedrooms, you have more flexibility. Deeper shades and even patterned carpets can add depth and character to an otherwise empty space. A thick plush pile or textured loop carpet can also help absorb sound, giving the room a quieter, more peaceful feel.

Still unsure? With Beare Flooring's mobile flooring showroom, you can see how different carpets suit the proportions of your room before making a final decision.

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LOCAL ORGANISATION PROFILE: GROW CAPALABA

Struggling with mental health issues can be a daunting and disheartening experience, but community-based organisation GROW has helped thousands of Australians with their recovery from mental ill-health through a program of mutual support and personal development.

Greg Lysaght, Senior Program Worker at Capalaba GROW, says that mental health issues can be triggered by a wide range of causes.

“We have people come because of anxiety, depression, relationship breakdowns, being made redundant at work, drug or alcohol abuse, or life not turning out the way they expected. Sometimes people aren’t ready for GROW or may want other sorts of help. GROW has a holistic approach; we’re there to work alongside psychologists and psychiatrists.”

Greg says that the GROW program, which is adapted from the 12-step program developed by Alcoholics Anonymous, works on peer-to-peer support.

“Our groups are run by the GROWers themselves. They meet weekly for two hours; someone gives a personal testimony, and people share problems. They’re given a practical task for the following week, then they come back to report on their progress. Our people don’t come as a diagnosis; they come as an individual.”

Greg says that it can help to know that others have gone through what you’re going through, and that sometimes understanding someone else’s problem can help people understand their own issues.

“Mental health problems can be very isolating, so we build a community. Groups have their own social gatherings and often form lifelong friendships, real connections, and relationships.”

The Capalaba group meets at 12.30pm on Tuesdays at Capalaba Library; there are also online eGrow groups and young adult groups. GROW is completely free. For more information, call 1800 558 268.



STARTING PREP CALMLY: HOW TO HELP CHILDREN FEEL READY FOR SCHOOL

FROM LACHLAN THATCHER, PRINCIPAL, CAPALABA STATE COLLEGE

Starting Prep is an exciting moment for families. It’s often a child’s first formal schooling, and it’s natural for parents to wonder how to prepare their child for this step.

Prep readiness is not about academic skills. What matters most is feeling safe, supported, and confident to try new things.

Prep is a gentle transition into school. Children learn through play, exploration, and relationships, developing early literacy, numeracy, social skills, routines, and independence.

Families can help children start Prep calmly by emphasising emotional readiness. Skills like separating from a parent, asking for help, managing minor frustrations, and playing with others are more important than knowing letters or numbers and are supported in Prep classrooms.

Establishing simple routines, such as regular bedtimes, predictable mornings, and practising small independence tasks, such as opening a lunchbox, can help children feel secure and capable.

How adults talk about school influences children. Calm, positive words encourage curiosity instead of worry. Reassuring messages like “Your teacher will help you” or “It’s okay to feel a bit nervous, that happens

when we try something new” make a real difference.

During Prep’s first days, calm, confident goodbyes matter. Children usually settle faster with warm, brief farewells. Prep teachers across the Redlands support children and help them feel safe and included.

Every child settles at their own pace. Some adjust quickly; others take longer. Both are normal. Progress in early weeks often shows in small steps, such as staying longer, joining games, or sharing stories about new friends.

At Capalaba State College, starting Prep is a partnership with families. Children who are supported at home and at school are more likely to begin their learning journey with confidence, resilience, and joy.

Starting Prep calmly isn’t about perfection. It’s about building a steady, caring foundation where children feel safe, valued, and ready to grow.

Top five things to remember when starting Prep

- 1. Confidence is more important than academic skills.
- 2. Children do not need to read or write before Prep; feeling safe and willing to try new things is essential.



- 3. Routines help build security.
- 4. Consistent sleep, morning routines, and drop-offs help children know what to expect and feel secure.
- 5. Calm, confident goodbyes help children settle into school routines. Warm, confident farewells reassure children that school is a safe place.

Every child settles in their own time. Quick or gradual adjustment is normal; progress often comes in small steps. You are not doing this alone. Prep teachers are skilled at supporting children and families through the transition.

EVERY DAY IS BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR CAPALABA’S BEV GRANT

CONTRIBUTED BY ADELIA BERRIDGE

“Meet the kids,” I’m instructed – Fred, Wilma, Alistar, Tintam, Clover, Topaz, Coral, Lulu, and Wendy – and these are only the ones in the nursery.

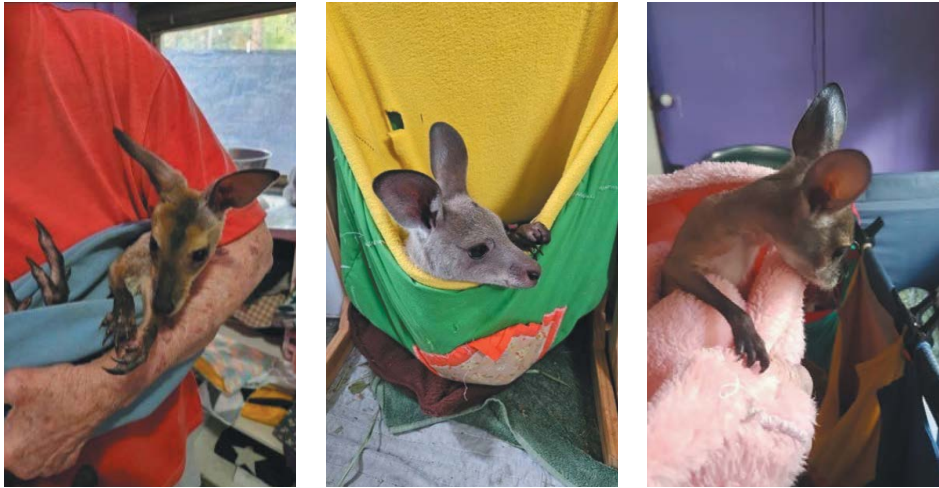
Back in July 2020, I was invited to the Capalaba home of a local wildlife carer, Bev Grant, who looks after orphaned wallabies and kangaroos. All – except one – of her babies and infants were from the Redlands area, with seven from Capalaba, four from Mt Cotton, and others from Sheldon and Thornlands.

It was a tough discussion, with one out the back almost ready for release, which came from out of the area. His mother was a white-faced whip-tailed wallaby who had been shot for dog food. The hunters handed in the joey. This was just one of many stories from 81-year-old pensioner Bev, who has been caring for macropods for 30 years, and in the ten years prior to that, was a possum and bird carer.

On my first of what turned out to be a few visits, Bev had two baby swamp wallabies in the new incubators, requiring three-hourly feeds through the night. These two would remain in care for about 18 months before being released.

“How lucky are we?” is what I heard from the Redlands After Hours Wildlife Ambulance (RAWAR) co-ordinator, who also works tirelessly on the phones. “We’re lucky to have people like Bev and Rob who turn over their home to take orphans who have been removed from pouches, when mothers are either injured or killed,” she said.

Bev says she’s the lucky one. “It’s keeping me alive.” She said to me last week when I called her to see how she was going, “I only have six in care today as I have been in and out of hospital myself. I miss the



Photos: Supplied.

babies, but they are with another carer. She’s wonderful. She is a lot fitter than I am, so this is a good succession plan. We must never give up,” she says. “As much as I love being their mum, they need to be raised by their mother.”

What do you give a macropod carer besides a new apron and a new washing machine? “We badly need good signage to make drivers slow down,” says Bev. “The six we’re looking after now, all their mothers were killed on the road. It’s a cruel world.”

TOGETHER, WE CAN KEEP EVERY PAW ON THE ISLANDS SAFE

FROM HELPING PAW SMBI INC.

Helping Paw SMBI Inc. is the only domestic animal welfare organisation on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands (SMBI). Our aim is to promote the welfare of pets on the islands by supporting their owners who might be doing it tough in the current economic climate. By doing this, we hope to intervene before people are forced to make the difficult decision to surrender their pet.

Pets are an important factor in the emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of their owners, particularly those facing social isolation and loneliness. We distribute food, flea and tick treatment, and other pet necessities through the local community hubs. We also take referrals from our local representatives, veterinary practices, police and community organisations. Outside of this, we’re happy to be contacted via email or our Facebook page.

We’re passionate about promoting desexing. Together with the Redlands Veterinary Clinic, we ran a subsidised desexing campaign last winter, and we continue to partly or fully subsidise desexing on a case-by-case basis, whenever this is financially possible.

Sadly, we have seen the outcome of un-desexed or unwanted pets. We have found 14 abandoned cats in the past year, including two lots of mums with kittens. They have all been microchipped, vaccinated, desexed and rehomed, again with the assistance of Redlands Veterinary Clinic.

We would love to run another desexing campaign this year, but we lack the funds. Unfortunately, council won’t fund it through a community grant. We would appreciate any donations to: Helping Paw SMBI Inc. BSB: 064-138 Acc: 10769589.



Photo: Supplied.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION PROFILE: SAILS AT BAYSIDE

CONTRIBUTED BY SAILS AT BAYSIDE

SAILS at Bayside (S@B) is a wonderful way to experience the pleasures of Waterloo Bay with sit-on-top Viking kayaks staffed by qualified supervisors, and experienced skippers on the Nacra 4.5-metre catamarans.

Open to the public on one Saturday per month, these days are for any member of the public, and events are advertised on the SAILS at Bayside website – but book in early as places reach their quota within 20 minutes of opening. Later applicants are automatically placed on a wait list and contacted as places become available.

(S@B) is an outreach of the Bayside Anglican Churches under the control of St Peter’s Anglican Church, Wynnum, which is the “Parent Parish”. While some volunteers may attend other churches, they and other keen sailors and kayakers within the local community subscribe to the Code of Conduct and ethics of the organisation. All volunteers hold current Blue Cards and have qualified for the Anglican Diocese of Southern Queensland’s stringent Safe Ministry Check for Children. All participants are required to wear life jackets to participate (supplied). A rigid inflatable safety boat patrols the catamaran area and provides support when necessary.

Key team members carry marine VHF radios for communication, ensuring participants are assured of maximum safety at all times.

The main aim of S@B is to offer opportunities for youth at risk, their families and carers, to promote reconciliation and provide a service for the parishes and the community. S@B aims to help young people overcome difficulties, reach their potential, and actively engage in community life through sailing, teamwork, kayaking, and life skills. Closed private days are normally held mid-week twice a month.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of S@B providing sailing and kayaking activities to disadvantaged youth (including Indigenous female youth), refugees recovering from torture and trauma, and young carers (looking after siblings, parents, and grandparents), children in out-of-home care, and the general public.

The public events take place mainly at Breakwater Park, Wynnum (on the south bank of Wynnum Creek), Foreshore Park at Raby Bay in the Redlands, and at other locations in the Wynnum-Manly area for the majority of private clients.



Photo: Supplied.

A collection of colorful bingo balls with numbers and letters (B, I, N, G, O) and several blue bingo cards with numbers on a green background.

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TUESDAY

EYES DOWN 7PM

THURSDAY

EYES DOWN 10AM

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CHINESE NEW YEAR: A DIFFERENT HOGMANAY.....

If you've recovered from the western New Year's festivities, you might like to start preparing for the Chinese New Year, cleaning the house thoroughly to remove dust and bad luck, and hanging lucky red objects like lanterns and paper cut-outs. It won't be over in one night, though; beginning on February 17, it will last until the next full moon on March 3. In the Chinese lunisolar calendar (a calendar that combines monthly lunar cycles with the solar year), each year is represented by an animal and an element – this new year will farewell the year of the Wooden Snake and welcome in the year of the Fire Horse.

Whereas the Wooden Snake represented resilience, flexibility, and tolerance, the Fire Horse will sweep in with passion, vitality, independence, and activity. The sign is also known as the Red Horse, an encouraging title since red is considered to be very lucky. A traditional part of the celebration is giving (and hopefully receiving)

hongbao, red envelopes containing money. Care must be taken, though; even amounts – except numbers with four in them – are preferred; uneven amounts are traditionally associated with funerals - except number nine. Not surprisingly, the digital age has seen the development of e-hongbao through social networking platforms.

Legend has it that the horse won its place in the zodiac because of its endurance and speed, evident in the character mǎ 馬 (horse), with its arched neck, flowing mane, and four flying hooves.

Lions are also considered auspicious animals, and lion dancing, complete with cymbals and drums, is an essential part of the celebrations. It's a martial arts-based art form, and the sheer athleticism of the dancers is probably necessary, considering the responsibilities laid on them: to usher in good fortune, positivity, joy, and wealth, and to chase away evil spirits.



If you like to have an each-way bet on fortunes in 2026, some western astrologists pick Cancer as the luckiest sign of the zodiac, followed closely by Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius – the fire signs. Coincidental, that.

PERCUSSIONISTS INVITED TO JOIN NATIONAL BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS WITH BAYSIDE BRASS

FROM BAYSIDE BRASS

Bayside Brass is inviting percussion players to join an exciting eight-week opportunity to participate in the National Band Championships, to be held at Brisbane City Hall over the Easter long weekend in April 2026.

This is a rare opportunity to perform on one of Australia's most prestigious band stages, in a venue renowned for its acoustics, grandeur, and history.

Bayside Brass is attending its first National Band Championships since 2014, and the band is looking for energetic, music-reading percussion players to complement an already committed brass line-up. We are keen to welcome players who want both a musical challenge and a memorable championship experience.

Whether your strengths lie in tuned percussion, mallets, timpani, auxiliary, or kit, Bayside Brass offers an engaging repertoire and a supportive rehearsal environment. The focus is on teamwork, musical excellence, and enjoying the journey as much as the performance itself.

The National Championships are more than a contest – they're a celebration of banding, camaraderie, and shared passion. Performing in Brisbane City Hall, surrounded by the buzz of Easter festivities and the nation's best bands, makes this event truly special.

If you're a percussionist (or brass player) looking to challenge yourself, expand your experience, and be part of a motivated and friendly band, Bayside Brass would love to hear from you. Join us and help drive the rhythm as we take on the National stage in 2026.

Rehearsals: Tuesday evenings, 7:00pm to 9:00pm at 202 Gallipoli Road, Carina Heights.

For more Information, email secretary@baysidebrass.com.au or find us on Facebook and Instagram to see what we've been up to.



Photo: Supplied.



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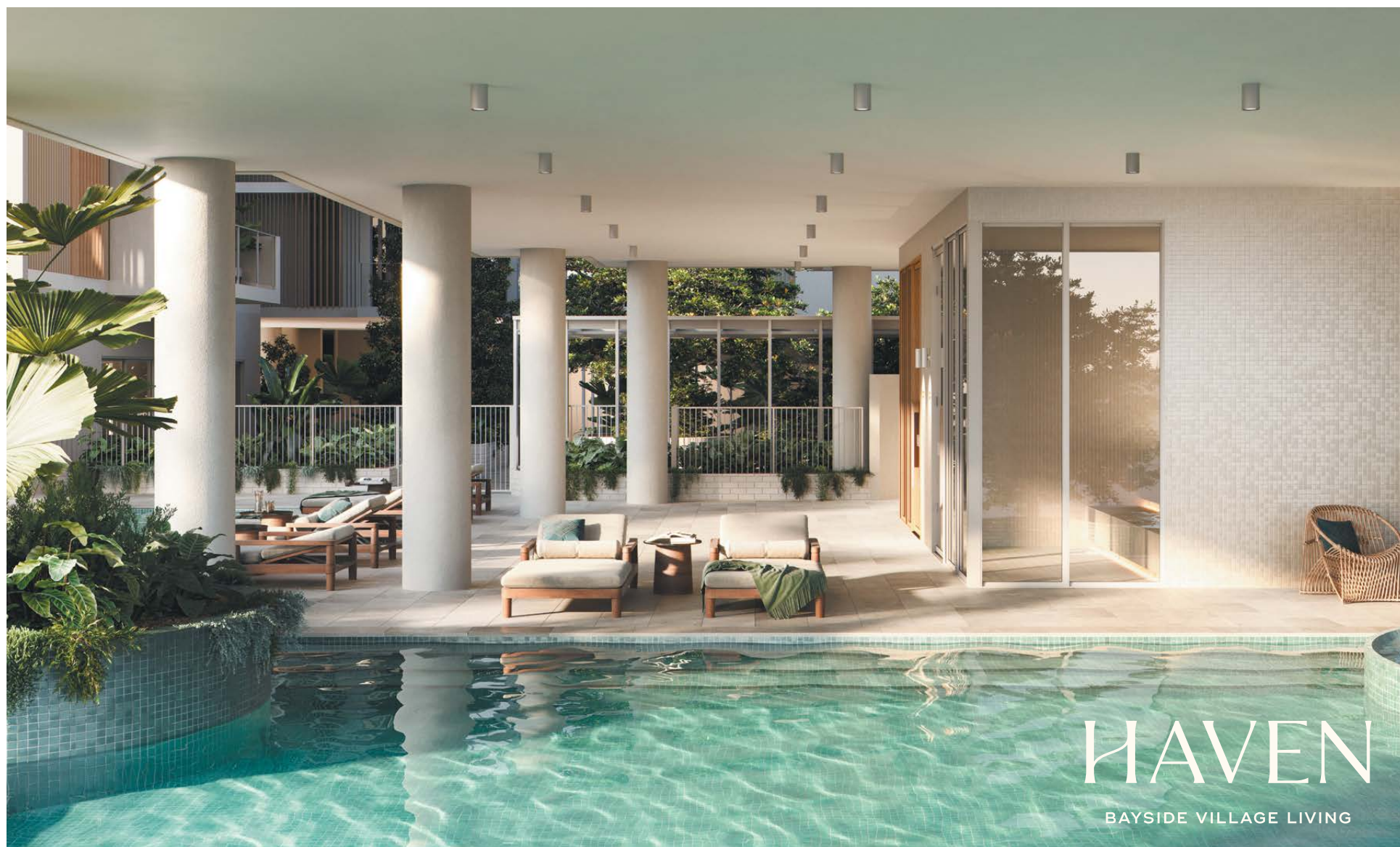
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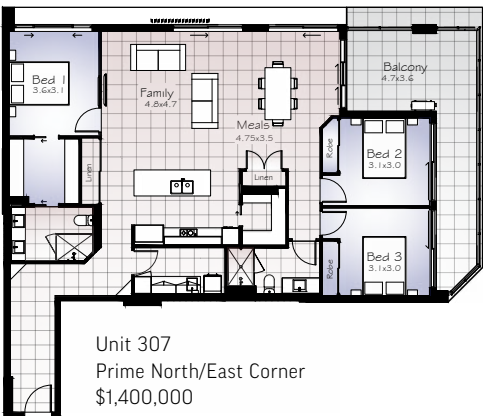
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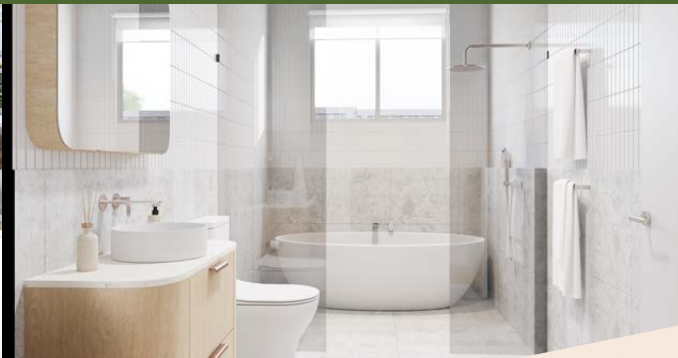
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Haven Redefines Premium Living in Cleveland

FROM CS DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Cleveland's bayside is poised for a significant transformation with the arrival of Haven, a new residential project that, according to its developer, will introduce a new level of sophistication and amenity to the Redlands market. Conceived as an elevated lifestyle offering, Haven has been designed to blend coastal calm with resort-style living, positioning it as a premium addition to Cleveland's evolving residential landscape.

The development has been thoughtfully designed to embrace Cleveland's natural bayside setting. According to the developer, residents will have access to a comprehensive suite of resort-style amenities, including a lap pool, a leisure pool and spa, and a steam room and sauna – features intended to create a residential environment more commonly associated with high-end resort destinations.

Haven is being delivered by CS Development Group, a privately owned Queensland builder and developer with more than 20 years of experience delivering residential projects across Greater Brisbane. The group's portfolio includes developments in inner-city locations such as Toowong, Ashgrove, Stones Corner, and Greenslopes, as well as previous bayside projects in Cleveland.

CS Development Group is known for its focus on design quality, detailed execution, and sustainability-led outcomes, principles that the company says have informed Haven's design from its earliest stages.

For CS Development Group, Haven represents a continuation of its established presence in the Cleveland market, while also marking an

evolution in the scale and amenity of its bayside developments.

"Cleveland holds a very special place for us," a spokesperson for the developer said.

"Following the success of Casa and Banyan Residences, we were excited to return with our third project in Cleveland – one that allows us to further refine our approach to coastal living. Haven reflects our focus on smart design, environmental sensitivity, and creating homes that enhance everyday living."

The spokesperson said the group sees long-term opportunity in Cleveland and the broader Redlands region.

"We recognise the long-term potential in Cleveland for buyers seeking a village-style bayside lifestyle. With multiple projects planned into the future and a committed investment exceeding \$450 million, our presence in the area is a deliberate, long-term commitment. Our focus remains on delivering lifestyle developments that are designed to endure."

Recent buyer activity at Banyan Residences highlights the breadth of demand for CS Development Group's bayside projects. According to the developer, buyers have included local residents, investors, and downsizers attracted by the ability to remain close to family and established networks while benefiting from larger floor plans, generous storage, quality entertaining spaces, and low-maintenance living. Natural bay breezes and proximity to the waterfront were also cited as contributing factors to Cleveland's appeal.



Photo: Supplied.

CS Development Group's broader portfolio includes Hanlon Park Residences, Cello Apartments, and major multi-unit developments across Victoria Park, Toowong, and Sherwood, in addition to a range of boutique projects throughout Brisbane. The Group says the success of its previous Cleveland developments, CASA and Banyan Residences, has reinforced confidence in the local market and informed the vision for Haven.

As interest continues to build, the developer says Haven is intended to establish a new benchmark for residential amenity in the Redlands, combining architectural refinement with a bayside lifestyle focus. Further details regarding the project are expected to be released in due course.



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Redland City Market

STATS FOR MARKET REPORT - As at January 2026							
SUBURB	FOR SALE	LAST MTH VARIANCE	SOLD	LAST MTH VARIANCE	% SOLD	AV. DAYS ON MARKET	MEDIAN SALE PRICE
VICTORIA POINT	57	-6	28	-8	49.12	22	\$1,067,500
REDLAND BAY	140	-9	20	-15	14.29	20	\$1,080,000
THORNLANDS	34	-27	21	3	61.76	17	\$1,125,000
MOUNT COTTON	8	-7	4	0	50.00	19	\$1,135,000
CLEVELAND	80	-20	16	-13	20.00	27	\$1,297,500
ALEXANDRA HILLS	17	-10	8	0	47.06	11	\$1,026,000
CAPALABA	17	-13	7	-5	41.18	10	\$999,500
WELLINGTON POINT	19	-10	8	2	42.11	21	\$1,325,000
BIRKDALE	22	-5	2	-2	9.09	15	\$1,235,375
THORNESIDE	7	-6	4	2	57.14	16	\$1,192,250
ORMISTON	41	-2	3	0	7.32	23	\$1,355,000
SHELDON	7	1	1	1	14.29	20	\$1,740,000
REDLAND CITY TOTAL	449	-114	122	-35	27.17	18	\$1,163,625

Redland City big picture

- Stock levels and sales activity both declined month-on-month, but days on market remain relatively low, suggesting buyers are still active for well-priced homes.
- Market activity slowed in December, typical of a seasonal lull.
- Buyer demand remains strong across all suburbs.
- Pricing overall remains resilient, with medians above \$1.16M.
- Premium suburbs continue to command high prices, while more affordable areas may attract value-driven buyers where correct pricing is critical.

Pricing Insights

- Highest median price: Sheldon – \$1,740,000
- More affordable medians are Capalaba – \$999,500 and Alexandra Hills – \$1,026,000
- Thornlands has the highest % sold at 61.76%, a good demand despite a sharp drop in listings.
- Thorneside 57.14% sold, solid buyer interest.
- Victoria Point high volume suburb with 28 sales and 49.12% sold.

Rate Jitters Chill The Nation – But Redlands Still Shines.

Growing concern over potential interest rate hikes has taken the heat out of Australia's once-booming housing market. While prices posted modest gains in Brisbane and Redland City, values declined in Sydney and Melbourne as buyer confidence softened.

PropTrack's monthly Home Price Index shows national dwelling prices — across houses, units and townhouses — rose just 0.1 per cent in December, marking the slowest monthly growth in nearly a year.

Property experts say momentum began to fade after higher-than-expected inflation figures in November all but extinguished hopes of further RBA rate cuts, instead raising the prospect of rate hikes in early 2026. This shift is notable, following three interest rate cuts in 2025 — in February, May and August — which had boosted buyer confidence and fuelled much of the price growth seen throughout the year.

As a result, PropTrack expects the pace of price growth to moderate further in 2026, with national values forecast to rise by around 5 per cent over the year.

Despite this cooling trend, price falls in Brisbane and Redland City appear unlikely. Ongoing housing shortages, strong population growth and continued government support — including the First Home Guarantee Scheme — are expected to underpin demand. While price growth is projected to slow and no further rate cuts are anticipated, Redland City is still well-positioned to outperform many other markets if inflation remains under control.

Redland City homeowners have entered the new year significantly better off, with median property values up \$135,900. Annual growth in the area has been more than double that of Sydney and triple Melbourne's pace, reflecting the strength of Queensland and regional markets.

Brisbane led the eastern seaboard, recording a 14.6 per cent annual increase to a median value of \$1.013 million, according to the latest PropTrack Home Price Index.

In a notable market shift, Brisbane units outperformed houses — defying decades of conventional wisdom. Unit values surged 18.3 per cent, adding \$125,500, compared to house prices, which rose 13.5 per cent or \$146,900. This outperformance highlights changing buyer priorities, driven by affordability constraints, downsizers, interstate migration and growing demand from young professionals.

Written by Dave Tidbold.



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Various shopping centres, cafes, clubs and local businesses.



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REDLANDS COAST MUSEUM PRESENTS ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIAN ART

A celebration of Australia’s natural beauty – plus some iconic architecture – is the theme of the current art exhibition at the Redlands Coast Museum. *Aspects of Australian Art* is a display of artworks from painter Carol Dinte and china painter Shirley Stoodley.

Carol has been drawing and painting most of her life. Her parents and grandparents lived out west and loved the plants and wildlife. These were Carol’s subjects as a child, when she’d venture out with a sketchbook and a clutch of coloured pencils or crayons. Failing that, she’d draw pictures in the dirt. These days her favoured medium is acrylic, sometimes mixed with ink or watercolours.

“I’m a keen gardener, so I’ve come to know the details of various plants and flowers,” Carol says. “When Russel and I travelled around Australia, if we pulled up to go bushwalking, he’d be way ahead of me with a camera, but I stopped to look at things. I took notes in my diary, but no sketches, no photographs, I just kept the pictures in my head.”

Carol’s favourite birds are kookaburras, ravens and wedge-tailed eagles, and her favourite flower, despite the fact that she’s allergic to kapok, is the bright yellow blossom of the kapok tree.

Carol chose the theme for this, her third exhibition, and involved her friend of 40 years, Shirley Stoodley. Shirley has been painting china for 20 years (“My mother-in-law used to enjoy it, so that’s probably what influenced me”), but this is her first exhibition.

“I usually just paint for myself, things I can use around the house, or as gifts for friends,” she says.

“I was a bit nervous about being in an exhibition, but I’m really surprised at the good response I’ve had, and I’ve sold pieces already!”

“I’ve enjoyed the whole process, so yes, I’ll probably do it again!”

Aspects of Australian Art runs until February 13, 2026, at Redlands Coast Museum, located at 60 Smith Street, Cleveland. For more information, phone 3286 3494.



Photos: Supplied.

LOCAL READERS A BOOK REVIEW – BUTTER BY ASAKO YUZUKI

BY ANNE CROWLEY

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAID:

“In this Japanese bestseller based on a real-life case, food unites a journalist and a cook turned murderer in a frequently thrilling novel anchored in misogyny.

“Kajii is a femme fatale who is the target of relentless body shaming during her trial and while in prison. Hungry for an exclusive interview, Rika writes to Kajii asking for the recipe for her beef stew – the last meal eaten by one of her victims.

“The relationship that ensues is as intimate as it is unconventional, with Rika finding herself increasingly fascinated by Kajii’s gourmet tastes ... and the insolence and indulgence of her worldview.”
Source: *The Guardian*.

MY THOUGHTS:

Butter is nothing short of a feast – rich in flavour, stuffed with tantalising recipes, and layered with meaning. It’s not just a crime story with culinary trimmings; it’s an incisive meditation on how appetites – literal and figurative – shape our relationships and our sense of self.

One memorable recipe is the simple dish of rice with butter and soy sauce. This humble meal recurs throughout the story, becoming a

symbol of comfort, nostalgia, and quiet rebellion – a way to reclaim pleasure in a world that often polices women’s appetites. The dish’s unpretentiousness highlights the beauty found in everyday rituals, and Yuzuki’s sensual descriptions make you crave its warmth and simplicity, reinforcing food’s central role as both sustenance and metaphor.

But the book doesn’t shy away from its darker aspects. Indeed, its willingness to explore obsession, shame, longing, guilt, rejection, and the blurry boundaries between reality and illusion is what makes it so satisfying, albeit unsettling.

The novel questions traditional expectations placed on women: to be modest, restrained, and self-sacrificing. For Rika, “Japanese women are required to be self-denying, hard-working and ascetic, and in the same breath to be feminine, soft and caring towards men”. Rika’s boyfriend’s misogynistic statements ring in her ears, “Men putting on weight is different from women putting on weight”.

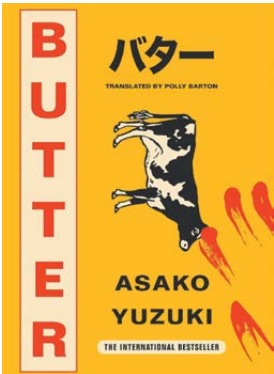
Through Kajii’s character – unapologetically large, passionate, and defiant – Yuzuki challenges the reader to reconsider what it means to live authentically in a world that demands conformity.

The two main characters are well developed, as are their evolving and complex relationship, and the deepening relationships of Rika with her friends.

Some readers may find the pace a bit slow at times, with action suspended for periods of introspection, especially in scenes where Rika muses on her own insecurities and frustrations as she journeys towards self-acceptance. As such, if you’re expecting a traditional crime thriller, while the book does involve the journalist’s investigation of the murders, you might be frustrated by the novel’s reflective passages.

The ending is ambiguous, leaving several threads unresolved, but for me, it adds to the book’s authenticity and emotional impact. Life rarely offers perfect closure, and neither do the best stories.

I missed my book club’s review of this book, but I’m told the host provided rice with butter and soy sauce for lunch.



WYNNUM MANLY SEAGULLS RLFC CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

FROM THE WYNNUM MANLY SEAGULLS

The Wynnum Manly Seagulls would like to announce the beginning of the 2026 rugby league season and the celebration of their 75th season of operation as the Wynnum Manly Seagulls RLFC.

Wynnum Manly Seagulls has, for many years, provided a platform for rugby league athletes to strive for excellence in sport, with many achieving accolades at the highest levels of rugby league, including the National Rugby League, Queensland State of Origin, and playing for Australia.

Rugby League greats such as Lionel Morgan, Wally Lewis, Gene Miles, Bob Lindner, and Greg Dowling have worn the famous ‘green and red’ for the Seagulls. In recent times, players such as Selwyn Cobbo, Cory Paix, and Julia Robinson have played with the Seagulls and gone on to achieve further success with NRL premierships and state and national honours, underpinning the strong reputation of the mighty Wynnum Manly Seagulls RLFC.

“We are very proud to announce the celebration of our 75th rugby league season in 2026,” said Wynnum Manly Seagulls’ CEO Wayne Weekes.



Photo: Supplied.



“The long-standing heritage and history of our club are loved and embraced by our community, supporters, members, and stakeholders alike.

“While the current group of 2026 players and staff are very proud to have our own place in our club’s history, we honour all of the members of the Seagulls from the past who, without their commitment and passion, we wouldn’t have the platform for our men and women to compete in the Queensland statewide competition that we have today.”

Wynnum Manly Seagulls RLFC invites the community of Wynnum/Manly, Redlands, and surrounding areas to get behind the premier rugby league club in our region and support our rugby league club to celebrate its 75th year of operation.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MATCH DAYS AT THE SEAGULLS

Friday 27th Feb – Golf Day/Season Launch at Wynnum Golf Club.

Sunday 8th Feb – Kougari Oval – RD 1, Junior Representative Boys and Girls, 10:30am onwards.

Saturday 14th Feb – Kougari Oval – Host Plus Cup Trial: Wynnum Manly Seagulls vs Tweed Seagulls from 3:00pm.

Saturday 7th March – Rd 1 at Kougari Oval – Host plus Cup/Mitch Cronin Cup Day: Wynnum Manly Seagulls vs Souths Magpies


SPONSORSHIP

Wynnum Manly Seagulls is seeking further support through sponsorship partners. Those interested in being involved with the Wynnum Manly Seagulls RLFC, please contact CEO Wayne Weekes at 0478 835 221 or email wayne.weekes@wynnumseagulls.com.au.

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Friday 27th February

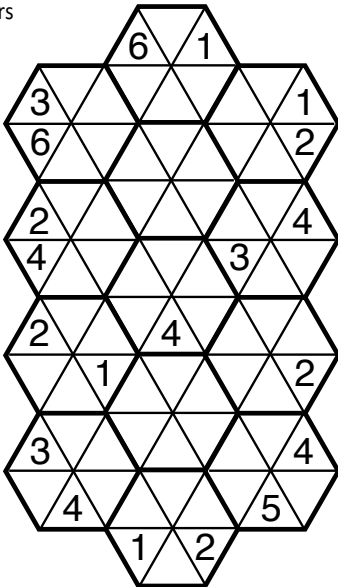
Sudoku

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

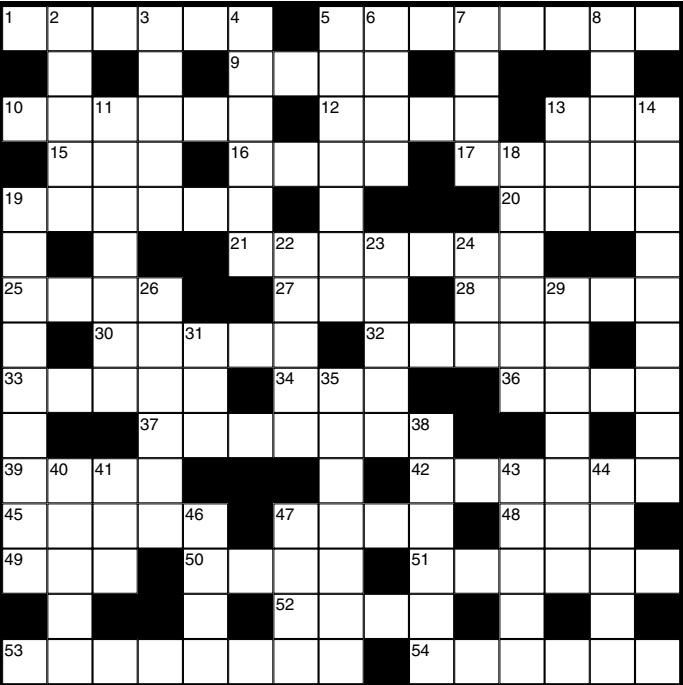
4		8	9		2			
	1				5			
			8			4		3
		3				1		
			2			5	3	
		5	7	1				9
		2	3	8		6	4	
8				2				
					6			5

Quick Workout

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



Crossword



- ACROSS**

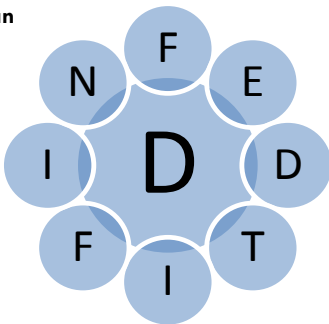
 - 1 Subordinate ruler
 - 5 Ground-living apes
 - 9 Augury
 - 10 One who enjoys inflicting pain
 - 12 Of no effect
 - 13 Sharp blow
 - 15 Fuel
 - 16 Supplements
 - 17 Frighten
 - 19 Debase
 - 20 Observed
 - 21 Agricultural aid
 - 25 Droops
 - 27 Drink
 - 28 Acts
 - 30 Brilliance of success
 - 32 Vision
 - 33 Composition
 - 34 Greek letter
 - 36 Capital of Peru
- DOWN**

 - 2 Proverb
 - 3 Lift up
 - 4 Powerful
 - 5 Army rank
 - 6 Burden
 - 7 Ailments
 - 8 Conscious of
 - 37 Free time
 - 39 Wan
 - 42 Makes even
 - 45 Have being
 - 47 Country
 - 48 United
 - 49 Disencumber
 - 50 Restore to soundness
 - 51 Stifled laugh
 - 52 Court attendant
 - 53 One bringing goods from abroad
 - 54 Constraint
- 11 Harms
 - 13 Narrow beam
 - 14 Column supports
 - 18 Breakfast food
 - 19 Canine disease
 - 22 Scolds
 - 23 Tree
 - 24 Lyric poem
 - 26 Climbs
 - 29 Distinguished
 - 31 Solution resulting from leaching
 - 35 Tube-shaped
 - 38 In high spirits
 - 40 Recognised truth
 - 41 Cover
 - 43 Elector
 - 44 Vegetables
 - 46 Thunder god
 - 47 Sleeveless garment

Focus

An All Australian Word Game

- * Each word must contain the centre 'Focus' letter and each letter may be used only once
- * Each word must be four letters or more
- * Find at least one nine letter word
- * No swear words
- * No verb forms or plurals ending in 's'
- * No proper nouns and no hyphenated words



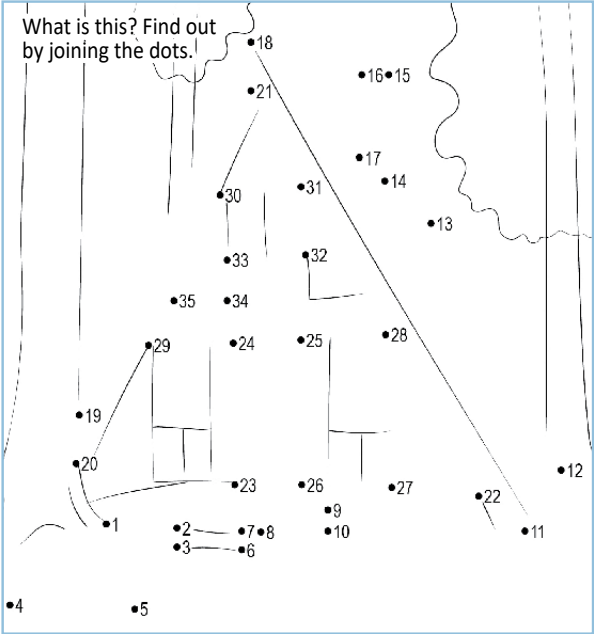
TODAY'S FOCUS Good: 9 words
Very good: 16 words
Excellent: 24 words

Reference: Macquarie Concise Dictionary
Focus No. 3903

Spot the 5 Differences



Join the Dots



Solutions

Puzzles and pagination supplied by Auspac Media

SPOT THE 5 DIFFERENCES: Top of beanie missing, sun moved, extra snow flake, smaller thumb, missing hair.

FOCUS: deff dent died diff dfff DIFFIDENT dnt dined dnt dnt edit fend fentd friend fiffd friend indle nld tend tide tided tided tied

NATURAL SOLUTIONS FOR WOMEN’S HORMONES

BY CHEREE SHELDON, QUALIFIED NATUROPATH, FLANNERY’S ORGANIC WHOLEFOOD MARKET, VICTORIA POINT HOMECO CENTRE

Hormonal health is a journey every woman experiences, but it’s also a topic that everyone, regardless of gender, can benefit from understanding. By learning about the hormonal shifts women go through, we can all become better supporters of the women in our lives.

The Hormonal Journey: From Puberty to Menopause

Hormonal changes begin quietly, with about two years of subtle shifts before a girl’s first period. From that point, most women experience a cycle roughly every 28 days for decades, until menopause. These fertile years are unique to each woman, with cycles that can range from smooth and symptom-free to challenging and disruptive.

The ideal period comes and goes without pain, doesn’t impact our mood significantly, and allows us to function normally. But for many women, it’s a wild ride, emotional highs and lows, intense pain, and debilitating cramping. Mid-cycle, we emulate the body’s most fertile time. We should feel energised, maybe a little “in the mood,” but for some women, this stage can bring discomfort or even zero desire.

If your cycle doesn’t fit this “ideal” and you’ve been told it’s normal, remember, common doesn’t mean normal. Symptoms like PMS, pain, clotting, or low libido are signs of hormonal imbalance. Rather than masking symptoms each month, it’s important to address the root causes and restore balance.

Understanding the Cycle

Put simply there are two main phases in the menstrual cycle:

Phase 1 – Follicular Phase: Oestrogen rises, then dips at ovulation.

Phase 2 – Luteal Phase: Progesterone rises.

If the interplay between these two hormones isn’t balanced, issues arise, such as PMS, PMDD, cramps, acne, PCOS, mood changes, pain, and fatigue.

What Influences Hormones?

Hormones are shaped by diet, stress, sleep, and environmental toxins. Phthalates – found in fragrances, cosmetics, and plastics – are endocrine disruptors that can mimic hormones and cause chaos in the body. Prioritising clean eating, organic skincare, and reducing exposure to toxins can make a significant difference. Ask yourself: Is everything

you put on or in your body natural and free from chemicals?

Puberty is the perfect time to lay the foundation for lifelong hormonal health. The lessons we wish we’d learned can become the new normal for the next generation.

The Power of Diet and Cyclic Eating

Diet impacts hormones in several ways. Blood sugar imbalances and poor digestion can disrupt hormonal harmony. For example, constipation can cause the body to reabsorb toxic forms of oestrogen, tipping the balance.

Cyclic eating is the practice of eating differently through the phases of your menstrual cycle. You can rewrite your hormonal rhythm with this transformative way of eating.

Follicular Phase: Eat a bit lighter, focusing on flax and pumpkin seeds, sprouted and fermented foods, choline, turmeric, and CoQ10.

Ovulation: Embrace your energy with a raw, plant-based diet.

Luteal Phase: Increase calories with slow-cooked meals, root vegetables, leafy greens, sesame and

sunflower seeds (for progesterone support), vitamin E, and fatty acids. Balance blood sugar with chromium, fibre, and cinnamon.

Menstruation: Replenish with iron-rich foods, red meat, organ meats, sea vegetables for iodine, and warming herbs like ginger.

Perimenopause and Menopause

During perimenopause, cycles may become irregular. Aligning eating patterns with the lunar cycle can help during this transition, as fertility winds down and oestrogen drops. This can lead to dryness in the skin, eyes, and muscles, and increased pain sensitivity. Sea buckthorn oil, rich in omegas, is deeply moisturising from within. Supportive herbs include chaste tree, peony, liquorice, sage, and wild yam.

Personalised Support and Natural Solutions

Your hormones are unique. Using food as medicine is a nourishing way to support daily hormone health and live in sync with your cycles.

It’s important to consult with a qualified health professional before making changes to your supplements. Our naturopaths are here to help guide you in a way that’s right for you.



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CHICKPEA & LEMON-HERB COLD PASTA SALAD RECIPE

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INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- 250g chickpea pasta (any short shape – you choose!)
 - 4 cups of chicken stock
 - 1 can (400 g) of chickpeas (or you can use canned lentils), drained and rinsed
- 1 cucumber, diced
 - 1 cup of cherry tomatoes, halved
 - 1 small red capsicum, chopped
 - ¼ of a red onion, diced
 - 1 cup of finely chopped kale leaves
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
 - A handful of fresh basil leaves
 - 2 tbsp of fresh mint, finely chopped
 - ½ cup grated parmesan (optional)

DRESSING

- 3 tbsp olive oil
 - 3 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp lemon zest
 - 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
 - Salt and pepper to taste



METHOD

1. Boil the pasta in the chicken stock (this adds depth of flavour) and extra water if needed (add salt) until al dente. Drain, then rinse under cold water, and put it in a large bowl or container.

2. Chop the cucumber, tomatoes, capsicum, kale, onion, parsley, basil, and mint.
3. In a small bowl or jar, combine the olive oil, lemon juice, zest, mustard, garlic, salt, and pepper.

4. Add the herbs, chickpeas and veggies to the pasta, then pour over the dressing and mix well.
5. Top with grated parmesan and you're ready to eat!

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LOCAL GARDENING WITH KAT

DAHLIA DAYS

BY KAT PEARSON, *GIRL IN THE GREEN*

I have three designated veggie beds in the backyard. In theory, I was going to have amazing tomato crops, trellises of cucumbers, salad greens, and brassicas. In reality, I haven't got a lot of time for attention-seeking annual veggies, and while I did have a very impressive broccoli and cabbage crop one winter, I decided to give that bed over to beautiful flowering dahlias the following summer.

I justify this situation with the fact that they're technically edible. The petals can be used as garnishes or added to salads, and the tubers can be eaten like potatoes. The original dahlias come from the mountainous regions of Mexico and Central America and were consumed by the Aztecs as a starch source. The dahlias we love to grow now are generally significantly hybridised, and not necessarily with tuber taste in mind, so it might be a bit hit-and-miss flavour-wise if you care to try.

Dahlias love a spot in full morning sun with a little protection from the harsh afternoon rays. They can be

grown from seed or, more commonly, from tubers. When planting tubers, water sparingly until they shoot, so they don't rot. Once established, they do like a fair bit of water. Taller varieties will need staking, but there are many dwarf cultivars that are fine on their own.

When they die down in winter, if your soil is sandy and free-draining, you can leave them in the ground (hence why mine haven't moved from their original veggie patch location!). If you have heavier clay soil or they are in a spot that often gets waterlogged, it's best to lift them and replant next season.

With flowers ranging from 20 mm single open flowers to 20-30 cm massive double extravaganzas, it's easy to see how quickly the dahlia bug can grab you. Mid-summer to autumn is the peak dahlia-flowering time, so have a look at your nursery now and see if you can pick up some potted plants. Save the tubers for next year, and you're well on your way to your next addiction!



Photos by Kat Pearson.



ABOUT KAT

I love gardening, growing my own food and plants in general. I've been working on our current garden in subtropical Brisbane for the last six-plus years, but have been gardening for much, much longer in all sorts of places. I'm an ex-engineer, recently turned horticulturist (life's too short not to work in something you love!). I grow edibles and ornamentals in an often wild, rambling jungle, filled with birds and bugs, including a handful of pet chooks and a brand new puppy (who likes to chase said chickens, and is not averse to helping me dig a hole!).

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ADVENTURES IN COLOUR SHOWCASES THE TALENTS OF LOCAL CREATIVES

FROM THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE GALLERY

Old SchoolHouse Gallery wishes everyone a happy, safe, and wonderful year ahead! The gallery will begin 2026 with an exciting exhibition, *Adventures in Colour* – a local emerging artists’ exhibition dedicated to celebrating a new wave of fine art talent.

Step into a world where creativity knows no bounds at *Adventures in Colour*, an electrifying art exhibition showcasing the artistic talents of local, emerging, and established artists who have trained under internationally recognised tutor Sandra Temple.

This event is your chance to be introduced to talented creative newcomers pushing the boundaries of painting, sculpture, and mixed media.

Meet the artists behind the masterpieces and enjoy

live art demonstrations throughout the exhibition. Whether you’re a seasoned collector, a curious local looking for inspiration, or want to know how to start creating yourself, *Adventures in Colour* promises an unforgettable visual experience.

Join us in supporting our homegrown talent and don’t miss your chance to be part of their amazing creative journey!

The artists will be giving demonstrations each Saturday and Sunday during the exhibition. Stay tuned to our social media for updates.

The exhibition runs from February 5 to March 1, Thursdays to Sundays, from 9:30am to 4:30pm. There will be an official opening on Saturday, February 7, from 10:00am to 12 noon.

The Old SchoolHouse gallery is located at 124-126 Shore Street North, Cleveland.



Photos: Supplied.

LOCAL ARTISTS TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT ROTARY CLEVELAND’S ART SHOW

CONTRIBUTED BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF CLEVELAND

Cleveland Rotary aims to celebrate the creativity and talent of artists from the Redlands region and wider South East Queensland, offering artists a platform to showcase and sell their work. Rotary Cleveland’s upcoming Art Show is a two-day exhibition that will connect the viewing public with artists and their creations.

This is an invitation for artists to share their vision, connect with a wider audience, and be part of what we hope will become an annual event.

It’s also an opportunity for the community to support local world-class artistic talent and raise funds that will be used to further Rotary’s incredible work in many communities, including our local area.

Set against the backdrop of natural rainforest and a waterhole in Hilliard’s Creek in Ormiston, the Art Show will offer a beautiful display of paintings, photographs, and sculptures available for purchase. Whether you’re a serious collector or a casual art lover, the event is a chance to discover inspiring pieces and support your local community.

DETAILS

DATE: Saturday, March 21, and Sunday, March 22, 2026

TIME: 10:00am to 4:00pm.

LOCATION: Community Hall, Ormiston Rise Retirement Precinct, 174 Wellington Street, Ormiston.

ENTRY: Free. Tea, coffee, and light refreshments will be available for sale for a small fee during the show.

PARKING AND ACCESS: There will be plenty of on-street parking with a short walk (200 metres) to the art show. For attendees who may need assistance from the street, golf buggies will be available to take you directly to and from the show.

Attention Artists: To be part of this exciting new show, simply download the Conditions of Entry and complete the entry form on the Cleveland Rotary website: <https://clevelandrotary.org.au/event/64762/art-show>



Photo: Supplied.

LOCAL FISHING WITH SPERO

SUMMER FEASTS: GET YOUR CALAMARI NOW, FRESH FROM THE BAY!

BY SPERO KARTANOS

February is one of the best months to catch tiger squid in the bay. Find them close in at Green Island, Wellington Point, Mud (on the north-west side), and of course, throughout the weed banks from Chain Banks, Amity, the Rous Channel, the Sand Hills, and all along the western side of Moreton Island.

Tiger squid fishing is great fun for the family, and the kids love to eat them – and at this time of the year, they are ravenous!

All you need for squid fishing is a couple of good-quality squid jigs on a light rod. Jig colours vary, but a pilchard-colour jig, like NKN Yamashita or the Daiwa blood-coloured shrimp, is as good as you can get. Then it's just a matter of casting out and retrieving slowly, or if you are fishing for whiting, a jig under a float will catch them as well.

A little trick: when you catch them and lift them out of the water, grab between the head and body and turn the squid upside down so they release the water. That way, they can't mix water with ink to squirt you, and please, don't drag squid behind the boat to clean and remove the skin – it's the best-tasting part of the squid.

BUT beware... if you catch plenty of squid, sooner or later, when you bring them in, you will get inked! Another tip: if you get ink on your boat, the easiest way to clean up is "30 Seconds" cleaner from Bunnings – it makes squid ink disappear without rubbing, but don't let kids use it, and don't get it in your eyes.

So, get inked and have some fresh calamari for lunch and dinner this month.

Good fishing!



Photos: Spero Kartanos.

HERE'S TO LIFE ANNOUNCES NEW CLASSES, AND FAMILIAR FAVOURITES

CONTRIBUTED BY HERE'S TO LIFE

As 2026 has arrived, Here's to Life is proud to unveil an exciting and inclusive program of movement, music, and creativity, designed for adults of all abilities and experience levels.

This year brings the introduction of several new classes, including the ever-popular Line Dancing, a gentle and low-impact Barre Ballet class, as well as Lyrical Dance, and Classical Ballet. These additions reflect a growing interest in expressive movement, balance, and wellbeing, while remaining accessible and welcoming.

Alongside these new offerings, participants can continue to enjoy Here's to Life's award-winning programs, including Jazz, Tap, Singing, Djembe Drumming, and the long-standing favourite Buff Bones®, which continues to support strength, mobility, and confidence through movement.

A core part of Here's to Life's philosophy is accessibility. Classes are casual, with no term payments required, allowing people to attend in a way that suits their lifestyle. Every class is offered with a free trial, encouraging newcomers to explore and find what feels right for them.

Here's to Life also remains deeply committed to inclusion, offering dedicated classes for adults living with disability. These programs continue to grow and now include Line Dancing, Singing, Dancercise, DrumBeat, and Art and Craft, providing creative, social, and physical opportunities in a supportive environment.

With a strong focus on community, wellbeing, and enjoyment, Here's to Life continues to be a place where people can move, create, and connect.

For more information or to enquire about classes, call 0408 717 742.



Photo: Supplied.



LOCAL POETRY

AUSTRALIA'S INJURY

BY GEOFF SMILEY

There was an assault on us
and we bled.
Damage to any
hurts us all.

Rage from those
who came for refuge,
refusing the self-identity
they themselves claim.

Does this horror
stain us?

Or did the protection and care
of others cleanse us?
Certainly, we are proud.
How dare they!
The intention to kill
takes the perpetrators
beyond belonging.

But one horrible act
does not represent all.

Sadly, we know

rage continues.
But yet bravery
and love overcome
the darkness.

It was a man from
their same culture
who confronted them.

And candles are
lit for hope.
© Geoff Smiley



LOCAL SPORTING CLUB PROFILE: WELLINGTON POINT BOWLS CLUB

CONTRIBUTED BY WELLINGTON POINT BOWLS CLUB

The 2025 season was another significant year for the juniors at Wellington Point Bowls Club. The club continued its commitment to nurturing young talent, fostering sportsmanship, and encouraging the next generation of bowlers. This report outlines the key achievements, participation statistics, events, coaching highlights, and future plans for the junior program.

Junior membership saw a steady increase in 2025, with a total of 18 active junior members aged between six and 17 years. This growth can be attributed to successful school outreach programs, word-of-mouth referrals, and the ongoing support from families and volunteers. The club welcomed several new faces, all of whom have shown great enthusiasm and promise for the sport.

The club's dedicated coaching team, Leanne Grieve, Alyson Thompson, Andy Thompson, Bev Ryan, Daryl Denman and our wonderful volunteers John Leys, Tom Mullen and Gill Homan, delivered weekly training sessions throughout the year. The focus remained on developing fundamental skills, teamwork, and a strong sense of fair play. In addition to regular training, several skill clinics and guest coaching sessions were held, giving juniors access to new techniques and a broader understanding of the game.

Wellington Point's juniors participated in a variety of competitions in 2025, including the Qld State Junior Championships, and the inaugural annual club singles, consistency and pairs tournaments.

Notable achievements included:

- Hunter Crumblin winning the Under-18 Singles title and R/U Novice Singles.
- Enzo Greco being the youngest player ever in our club to play in a winning Div 9 team.
- Ten juniors played in the club's inaugural club championships.

These results reflect the dedication of the players and the effectiveness of the club's coaching program.

In 2025, the juniors took part in community events, including our School Holiday Programs, and "Belmont's Fun Family Bowls Day" to promote junior bowls.

These events helped foster a strong sense of camaraderie and club pride, involving juniors, their families, and senior members. The Family Fun Day was a particular highlight, with juniors running demonstration games and introducing new families to the sport.

As a club, we are also involved with the Wellington Point Primary School year-six students, who will be coming every term to learn our game. As a feeder school hopefully we will see a growth in our Juniors.

The future of bowls at Wellington Point looks bright, with a growing and enthusiastic group of juniors ready to take the sport forward. Plans for 2026 include introducing a junior leadership program, expanding



Photos: Supplied.

competition opportunities, and further enhancing coaching resources. We look forward to another successful year and the continued development of our young bowlers.

RICHIE’S RAINBOW FUNDRAISING WALK NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

Local charity **Richie’s Rainbow** is gearing up for its annual fundraising walk on **Sunday, March 29, beginning at Lota Reserve Park, and you’re invited to join the procession.**

It’s all in aid of children’s cancer research, and the charity’s efforts to make the cancer journeys of Queensland families a little brighter. Richie’s Rainbow Foundation supports children undergoing cancer treatment by providing iPads to lift their spirits. Funds are also directed to childhood cancer research, with a strong focus on supporting those treated at the Queensland Children’s Hospital.

The walk, now in its fifth year, began in memory of Richie Walsh, who sadly lost his battle with a rare cancer in 2021, aged nine.

While the walk is a fundraiser, it’s also a celebration of Richie’s life and legacy; a day to honour children currently fighting cancer and to remember those we have lost, and stand in solidarity with families navigating the unimaginable.

Organisers say the continued growth of the walk reflects the generosity and spirit of the local community, whose support has helped Richie’s Rainbow reach more families each year.

With entertainment, family-friendly activities, and strong local business involvement, this year’s walk consolidates the enduring impact of one little boy’s legacy.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to take part, walk in honour of someone special, and help ensure that no family faces childhood cancer alone. Follow this link to make a donation or to register for the walk: <https://richiesrainbow.org.au/shop/ols/categories/bayside-walk-2026>.

Find out more about Richie’s Rainbow Foundation by visiting www.Richiesrainbow.org.au.



Photo: Supplied.

INTERNATIONAL SAILING STARS HEADED TO BRISBANE FOR FINN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AT MANLY

Brisbane is set to welcome an exciting wave of international sailing action this February as the Porsche Centre Brisbane Finn Championships brings together the world’s best Finn sailors at Manly.

The series kicks off with the Australian Finn Championships, leading into the prestigious Finn Gold Cup – the class’s premier world championship – and wraps up with the Finn World Masters, which attracts over 100 sailors aged 40-plus from around the world.

Adding to the excitement, World No. 1 Alessandro Marega has just been finalized for the Gold Cup, alongside World No. 2 Peter Peet and World No. 4 Laurent Hay. Entry numbers highlight the scale of the event, with over 70 boats already entered for the Australian Titles, more than 60 for the Gold Cup, and 110-115 competitors expected for the World Masters.

Preparations are well underway, with shipping containers now arriving from Norway, Spain, New Zealand, the USA, and more boats due to arrive any day from Europe in preparation for the busy month at Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, beginning with training with fellow competitors to sharpen performance in local waters.

While the racing will be world-class, the focus remains on ensuring competitors, families, and the local community enjoy both the sailing and the on-shore activities in and around Manly, including the Finn Rocks Filthy Animals concert on 21 February.



Pictured: Finn sailors Trevor Martin, Hayden Barney, Anthony Arnold, Tony Bierre, and Phil Chadwick at RQYS.

With ideal conditions, excellent facilities, and a well-practised volunteer team, Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron and its local community are ready to host a fantastic international event. The club encourages Brisbane locals to visit during the month and get up close with the world’s best sailors in this prestigious class of sailing dinghy.



NATURALLY WONDERFUL ... WITH RANGER STACEY

RANGER STACEY THOMSON IS PRINCIPAL ADVISER – COMMUNITY EDUCATION (REDLAND CITY COUNCIL)

February may be the shortest month of the year, but when it comes to our environment, it's a big 28 days of natural wonder, wildlife activity, and significant calendar celebrations.

World Wetlands Day is February 2nd. Redlands Coast boasts unique wetland environments, which means wild places to discover and explore. My tip is to plan activities early in the morning or later in the day to avoid the heat.

Why not go green this Valentine's Day by giving a gorgeous native flowering plant to grow and cherish for years to come? The Love Flower (*Pseuderanthemum variabile*) is a small native perennial with clusters of white to mauve tubular flowers. How romantic!

Not so romantic is the typical hot, sticky, and sweaty February weather. Yep, as the old 1980s Glenn Frey hit song says, "The Heat Is On!"

It's not just us and our pets who struggle with the intense heat. Native animals, including birds, reptiles, and mammals, do too. Therefore, it helps to recognise the tell-tale signs of heat stress – signs such as panting, salivating, and licking limbs or the body. It's their way of trying to regulate body temperature, but this can be difficult when

conditions are extreme. Heat-stressed birds often sit with wings outstretched and mouth open, while nocturnal animals may end up disoriented and vulnerable on the ground. Unusual, sluggish, or agitated behaviour requires assistance.

Reach out to Redlands 24-hour Wildlife Rescue Service for expert advice (3833 4031). In the meantime, we can provide shade for the animal and ensure it is safe from domestic pets. Offer a shallow tray of water, but it's important not to force an animal to drink. Common sense tells us that an unresponsive animal must be taken to a vet immediately.

Our wonderfully wild pollinators and seed dispersers, aka flying foxes, find prolonged periods of extreme heat too much to bear. Panting, fanning of wings, licking wrists, as well as clumping together on a tree trunk, are a strong indication that they're in trouble. Call Bat Conservation and Rescue QLD without hesitation (0488 228 134). I promise good karma will come your way!

Until next time ... Stay Wild (and cool)!

Ranger Stacey

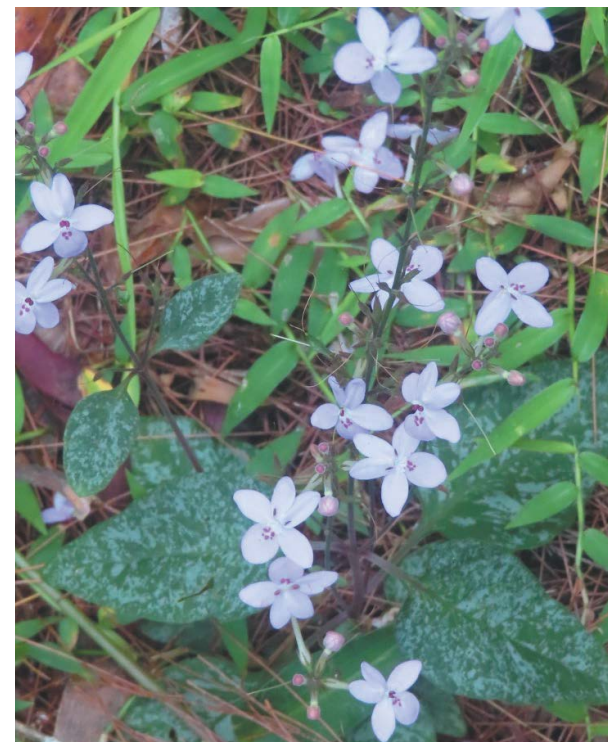


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The Hidden Cost of Convenience

BY LAURENCE SMITH, FINANCIAL ADVISER, UEM WEALTH, AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE, LIFESPAN FINANCIAL PLANNING PTY LTD AFSL 229892

Smartphones and high-speed internet have transformed the way we live, making almost every service available at the push of a button or a scan of a QR Code. From ordering a meal at a pub to booking Uber Eats and streaming a Friday night movie at home (does anyone remember Blockbuster?), digital applications allow services to be delivered to us rather than us needing to go to the service.

But convenience doesn't stop at food and entertainment. Domestic services like lawn mowing, garden maintenance, home cleaning, and even pool care are just a few taps away. When my car battery failed last month, even RACQ directed me to complete an online form to book roadside assistance. It was amazing, and I would say it was even faster than calling a call centre.

This convenience comes with a price tag. The question is: what's the real cost? Beyond the cost of the service being delivered, there is normally a small charge or fee that is attached to each transaction. Take a close look next time you order a meal directly from your table; you will probably see a couple of dollars added to the bill.

These surcharges and service fees can add up quickly, particularly if orders are placed across several transactions. It's worth asking

whether the time saved is truly worth the expense. For example, if you're time-poor and value your weekends, paying a cleaner for a few hours might be a smart investment. On the other hand, spending an extra \$6 to avoid walking a few hundred metres for a chicken schnitzel might not be.

There's also a bigger picture to consider – life lessons for kids. Outsourcing every chore means fewer opportunities for them to learn responsibility. A sure way to not appreciate the magical age we live in is to normalise it. After all, some parents joke that one of the best reasons to have kids is to get help mowing the lawn.

The takeaway? Don't avoid convenience, but don't ignore its impact either. Use money as a tool to enhance your life, not as a shortcut for every minor inconvenience. If you want to become more aware of surcharges and extra service spending, track it for a month and consider what else that money could be used for. Take up the ultimate money-hack for 2026, and take charge of what money is being spent on. Take a Marie Kondo approach – if it doesn't add value, it's not worth it.

And if you need help to set some financial priorities, a financial planner is uniquely positioned as an impartial third party to help you set some ambitious goals achievable goals for the year.



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Laurence Smith, Financial Adviser at UEM Wealth, part of the UEM Group



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