

# Douglas Shire News Newspport

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## SHIRE STANDS STRONG



Luigi Scomazzon and Dalta Hatfield hard at work over the weekend. Picture: Bryan Littlely

Bryan Littlely  
& Shaun Hollis

Locally owned Douglas businesses are proving to be the backbone of the produce supply chain as supplies into the Shire were crippled due to flooded and wrecked roads on the routes into the region.

Luigi Scomazzon was busy

stocking his store north of Mossman on Saturday with fresh produce on the back of a "crazy week".

"We're trying to just cover for our locals, of course... we're not going to turn anyone away but it is just going to shorten stuff for us," Luigi said.

"It is just what I've got and people in the know and local produce in the Tablelands.

"We are just chasing it ourselves and what we can find at the moment. We're doing the best we can."

Luigi said a produce truck he was meant to have arrived on Friday night had been stranded at Charters Towers where roads are washed away and flooded. He hoped it would make it through by Monday evening.



**PEDDLING A PLAN - PAGE 3**



**MONIKA MAKES A MARK - PAGE 5**



**LOVE IS IN THE AIR - PAGES 6&7**

**THALA BEACH**  
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# Drones capture tree kangaroos

Shaun Hollis  
Editor

A new way of studying the Daintree's unique tree kangaroo population is reaping rich rewards for researchers of the elusive marsupials.

A James Cook University study has flown thermal drones from a crane placed deep within the tropical rainforest, offering a more efficient way to track down Bennett's tree kangaroos and study their movements in the wild.

The study found six Bennett's tree kangaroos in less than an hour.

These included a single kangaroo, a pair and a trio.

Not much is known about the Daintree's tree kangaroos compared to those in the Atherton Tablelands area, which can be tracked down more easily with traditional methods such as spotlights and thermal cameras.

"These techniques are less effective in the largely intact Bennett's tree kangaroo habitat where



**This Bennett's tree kangaroo was spotted by the James Cook University team. Picture: Emmeline Bernadette**

fewer roads, mountainous terrain, denser vegetation, and a taller canopy hinder detectability," say study authors Emmeline Bernadette, Barrett Norris and Johan Larson. "Consequently, data are lacking for this species."

The marsupials sometimes live about 40m up trees in rugged, dense vegetation.

# Brash vandals strike in Port

Jamie Jansen  
Journalist

A suspected vandal may be targeting vehicles in Port Douglas after reports of two cars having their windows smashed.

One of the victims, local resident Stephanie V., discovered her car's rear window shattered after leaving it parked overnight on Morning Close.

The incident occurred sometime between 6pm on Sunday, February 2, and 11am on Monday, February 3. Nothing was stolen from the vehicle, suggesting the act was purely vandalism.

After posting in a local Facebook group to ask if anyone had seen or heard anything, another resident responded, claiming that someone had allegedly been going around town smashing car windows.

If you have experienced a similar incident or have seen or heard anything, please contact Newsport at editor@newsport.com.au.

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Beth Treloar Gomez was treated to a real show on her back fence by a 3.5m python. Picture: Beth Treloar Gomez

# Strewth... now that's a snake

A Cooya Beach resident has had a close encounter with a 3.5m python, sticking around long enough to capture footage of the huge reptile.

Beth Treloar Gomez discovered the Australian scrub python on her fence, and had the length independently verified by an expert.

"Due to the fruit bats on Lou Price Drive, and the rain, this one has found its way into the area,"

she told Newport.

The largest snake species in Australia, the scrub python is found throughout the rainforests of tropical Far North Queensland. Some can grow to 8m.

# Council pedals a \$2.5m plan for grant funding

A new 3m-wide shared bike and walking path planned for a 2km stretch of Port Douglas Road is "shovel-ready" - as long as the Federal Government comes up with three quarters of the \$2.57m price tag.

The new Douglas Shire Council path, planned for the stretch of road between the Mirage Resort roundabout and the Old Port Road turnoff, was approved in the most recent full council meeting, subject to securing two separate federal grants.

Cr Michael Rees told the meeting the DSC would be doing well out of the deal if it paid 25 per cent of the bill, adding up to about \$640,000 across three years.

"I think this is great," Mr Rees said. "My understanding is councils would normally have to find half the money but we only have to find 25 per cent.

"So we'd be mad not to pursue this. This is a fantastic opportunity." The council aims to secure about \$1.29m from the federal Active Transport Funding grant pool and about \$640,000 from the Roads to Recovery Program, adding up to a total bill for the shared path of about \$2.57m.

"All costs are distributed across

three consecutive financial years (2025-2026 to 2027-2028)," a report tabled in the meeting states.

The Council's contribution will be funded through its existing footpath renewal program, with the full project aimed to be completed by mid-2029.

"The design is shovel-ready for project commencement once funding is secured," it report reads.

The plan includes demolishing the existing footpath, "protection and modification" of "existing infrastructure", new drainage, pedestrian and cycle crossings and refuges, pavement marking, and new signage.

## HUMAN REMAINS FOUND INSIDE A CROCODILE

Police on Saturday, February 8, located human remains inside a crocodile as part of the recovery of a man reported missing from Aurukun.

Police and wildlife officers located the crocodile along Watson River where it was humanely euthanised.

Forensic testing was carried out and human remains were located within the crocodile.

Further testing will be conducted to identify the remains.

The family of the missing Aurukun man and the local council have been advised.

Local police are thankful to members of the Aurukun community for their support and assistance.

On Friday, February 7, Police advised the search and rescue operation for a 60-year-old man reported missing in Aurukun had moved to a recovery phase.

## TIN SHED FUNDS FOR OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Douglas Shire Historical Society is very pleased to announce it has been awarded funding from the Tin Shed.

For some time, the popular publication "Cattle, Cane and Cedar" has been sold out.

This book documents the evolution of many of the farming techniques used in the Douglas Shire over the decades, with photos of the machinery, and interviews with the farmers describing their work.

It is a priceless record of practices which are often no longer used, and with the closure of the Mossman Central Mill, it is an essential historical document.

**Disaster Management Is Everybody's Business**

# New nightclub hits hurdle

## Travellers diverse with Port Douglas holiday

The latest tourism survey by James Cook University has found travellers to the Port Douglas region are diversifying their methods of booking a holiday, while overall satisfaction with the area remains very high.

The quarterly tourism report, provided to Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree (TPDD), shows that more tourists are skipping the travel websites and booking their stays directly with resorts, but simultaneously using the services of travel agents more.

26.1 per cent of bookings were made direct to resorts in 2014, up from 18.9 per cent in 2013.

Travel agent bookings now make up 25.5 per cent of all bookings, up from 21.6 per cent last year.

Travel websites still remain most popular on 32.1 per cent.



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Shaun Hollis  
Editor

A new late-night cocktail and tapas bar above the shops on the corner of Macrossan and Grant Streets in Port Douglas is in doubt after plans were stalled last month.

The nightclub proposal, which was first put to Douglas Shire Council mid last year, is currently off the agenda after the deadline for updates to the submitted plans lapsed in January.

The Angel Constructions planning submission stated the venue would have been a "charming, air-conditioned oasis located just a stone's throw from the bustling Macrossan Street".

"We proudly offer an exquisite selection of high-end cocktails and an exclusive wine list, complemented by a range of delicious tapas," the plans read.

"Whether you're looking for a refined drink, a culinary delight, or a serene atmosphere to unwind, we provide the perfect escape to savour exceptional flavours in a beautiful setting."



The venue of the proposed nightclub. Picture: Shaun Hollis

The proposed opening hours were to be from Thursday to Sunday, with closing time at 11.30pm.

The DSC had asked Angel Constructions owners Angela and Adrian Whittaker for clarification on several key points of the submission including the shared access points with other shops, such as stairs and a possible new lift, shared parking areas and exact opening times.

In November the group representing the block of Douglas Manor shops, which includes the

Daintree Shop, Cappanina dessert bar and Coffee Works cafe, held an extraordinary general meeting to discuss the new "night-life offering" at 32 Macrossan St, with the final vote 6-4 to oppose the development proposed for three of the upstairs shops.

Following that meeting, the developers pushed forward with plans, saying they could still go ahead without the support of the entire group.

Angela and Adrian Whittaker could not be reached for comment.

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# Monika's Circle of Plenty

Jamie Jansen

Journalist

**In Mossman, a small community garden is making a big difference. The Circle of Plenty, located at the Mossman Botanic Garden, is more than just a place to garden and grow food - it's a space for learning, connection, and sustainability.**

What started as a simple idea has grown into a space where volunteers gather twice a week to cultivate fresh produce, share knowledge, and connect with nature.

Monika Prins, the project's founder and a Newsport staff member, was recently honoured with the Environmental Achievement Award at the Douglas Shire Australia Day Awards Ceremony for her dedication to the initiative.

For Monika, the award is not just personal recognition but a celebration of the entire community's efforts.

"For a long time, I wasn't sure if people noticed the work we were doing. But this shows that it does matter, not just for me, but for everyone involved."

Overcoming hurdles to bring the garden to life



**Project Founder Monika Prins.**

The Circle of Plenty began in June 2023 when Monika proposed a community food garden at the Mossman Botanic Garden.

After teaching herself to garden and gaining hands-on experience at an orchard in Julatten, she saw its benefits like social connection, mental health, and food security,

and wanted to share them with the community.

Securing space was challenging, but by proposing it as a two-year art installation, Monika gained approval. With support from volunteers, businesses, and schools, the vision became a reality.

By late 2023, more than 500

plants had been planted, with local school students playing a key role in bringing the garden to life.

Today, volunteers tend the garden twice a week, growing seasonal produce like sweet potatoes, taro, leafy greens, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Surplus is donated to the Mossman Support Service's food programs.

The bigger picture: food security and well-being. Monika knows firsthand how gardening fosters connection, health, and self-sufficiency.

"Gardening brings people closer to nature, and even to themselves," she said. "It's about being outdoors, socialising, and experiencing the satisfaction of nurturing something from seed to harvest."

She sees food security as one of the biggest benefits, especially during crises like recent floods that left supermarket shelves empty.

"When you grow your own food, you know exactly where it comes from and what goes into it," she explained. "You're not reliant on produce that's been shipped from thousands of kilometres away."

## Entsch on a global rescue mission

**Helping stamp out one of the world's deadliest diseases and rescuing some of Australia's most endangered species are just two of the projects retiring federal politician Warren Entsch will be throwing himself into after politics.**

"The important thing you need to understand is that I'm not retiring," Entsch told Newsport in a one-on-one interview in the lead-up to this year's May federal election, which Entsch will not be

contesting.

"I'm retiring from politics."

The federal MP for Leichhardt has been working hard to reduce the devastating effects of tuberculosis through a global board he has been a part of since 2014.

"Worldwide it's the biggest single infectious disease killer in the world," he says.

"My mum got TB when I was a child."

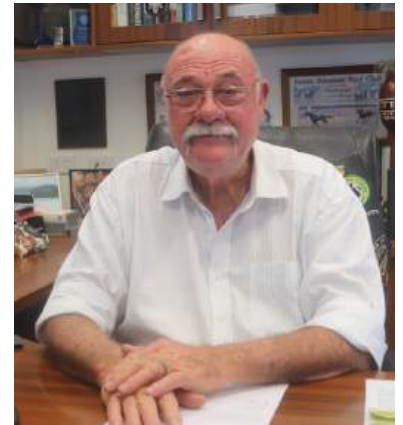
"It split our family up.

"It had a huge impact on our family."

Entsch's other labour of love is the National Threatened Species Institute in Canberra, which he helped establish about six years ago with a pair of friends.

"We are breeding threatened native species for release back into the wild," he says.

This includes several species of native mice and several types of rare native bird.



**Warren Entsch. Picture: Shaun Hollis**

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# Do love right at Oaks Resort

Looking for the perfect way to celebrate love this Valentine's Day? Oaks Port Douglas Resort is offering an exclusive Valentine's Day special: a complimentary overnight stay when booking their indulgent five-course Valentine's dinner on Friday, February 14.

Set among lush tropical gardens and featuring a stunning lagoon-style pool, Oaks Port Douglas Resort provides the ideal romantic backdrop for an unforgettable getaway.

Couples can enjoy this romantic dining experience for \$189 per couple, which includes a free night in a hotel room on the night of Friday, 14 February. For those wanting to extend their stay, a second night is available for just \$99.

Those wishing to arrive early can book Thursday night for \$99 and still receive their Valentine's Day stay for free.

Justin Bourke, Food & Beverage Manager at Oaks Port Douglas Resort, shared their excitement about creating a unique experience for couples this year.

"It's a fantastic deal and an incredible value," he said. "It's per-



Valentine's Day bliss at Oaks Resort. Picture: Supplied

fect for visitors from Cairns and the local community looking to enjoy a romantic getaway in Port Douglas."

## A romantic culinary experience

The evening's highlight is a

carefully crafted five-course menu, designed to impress at Oak & Vine Port Douglas.

Mouthwatering dishes include pan fried Goldband Snapper with beetroot and vanilla bean puree, fennel citrus salad and salmoriglio

sauce.

To end on a sweet note, couples can enjoy a decadent Belgian chocolate mousse, the perfect romantic treat.

## Limited rooms available

With a limited number of complimentary rooms available, this exclusive Valentine's Day offer is expected to sell out quickly.

For more details or to book, visit the Oaks Port Douglas Resort website or contact the resort directly on 07 4099 8900 or via EV1portdouglas@theoaksgroup.com.au

For more info about the Valentine's Special, click here: <https://www.oakshotels.com/en/oaks-resort-port-douglas/offers/valentines-day-offer>.



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# The secrets to true love

Jamie Jansen  
Journalist

This June, long-time Port Douglas locals Anne and Peter Lloyd will celebrate 59 years of marriage, a milestone they credited to one simple principle: looking after each other.

"The secret to staying together that long is to look after each other," Anne said.

Peter agreed. "If you care for someone, it's about give and take. We hardly ever argued because we sorted things out before they became arguments," he said.

Peter never tired of telling the story of how they met.

"We both worked at the same place back in the UK. One day, as I was chatting with a colleague in the factory, Anne walked past to get a drink from the fountain.

"I noticed her straight away, she had a nice walk. When she finished, I cheekily asked, 'Aren't you going to leave the tap on for me?' And, to my surprise, she actually turned it back on!

"That got me curious. A few days later, I made sure to bump into her and, bold as anything, asked, 'Would you like to go out to dinner?'"

Anne hesitated at first, telling him she would think about it. A few days later, she agreed on one condition.

"We were both engaged to other people at the time, so we had to end those commitments properly first," Anne explained.

After getting married, they knew they wanted a fresh start.

"We were disillusioned with life in the UK, the economy, the weather. We wanted something different," Anne said.

In 1971, they arrived in Adelaide, and adventurous as they were at the time, they bought a



Anne and Peter Lloyd celebrating their 59th year of marriage. Picture Jamie Jansen

caravan and travelled around Australia in search of the perfect place to call home.

"People thought we were crazy, just a little station wagon and a tiny caravan," Anne recalled. "But we loved the journey. We only had each other to rely on."

Eventually, they found their paradise in Port Douglas, where they built a life and owned the renowned Mocka's Pies bakery for many years.

Anne and Peter share a deep passion for preserving Douglas

Shire's history, dedicating over 30 years to volunteering with the Douglas Shire Historical Society and the Court House Museum, work they continue to this day.

"There is no place like Port Douglas, and we wanted people to remember the town as it once was," Peter said.

Their dedication to the community didn't go unnoticed. In 2012 they received the Douglas Shire Volunteer of the Year award and medal for their contributions to local history and the community.

## Thala Beach shares the love with Shire locals

Love is in the air and there is no better air and atmosphere than Thala Beach Nature Reserve to soak it up in.

The team at Thala loves to welcome the local community to experience the tranquility of Thala Beach Nature Reserve and enjoy what it is guests from around the globe flock there for.

And to celebrate Valentine's Day, and love in general, they are promoting their year round Exclusive Local Special at Thala Beach Nature Reserve, 30 per cent off accommodation, with some added extras this month to make it a truly lovely experience.

"Because everyone deserves a peaceful escape," says Thala's Eleanor Jones.

Running through to the end of February, subject to availability, the reduced cost accommodation for Thala's much loved locals gets some February Bonus Perks thrown in too.

"To make your retreat even more special this February, we're adding a few extra indulgences.

"How does a complimentary room upgrade and a bottle of sparkling wine sound?"

Thala Beach Nature Reserve's fabulous locals offer really does provide a chance to disconnect and immerse yourself in the serenity of nature for a night not to be forgotten.



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**2025 School and Vice Captains**  
Hayley Fischer, Amber Schumacher,  
Max Bohm and Deklen Reynolds.

## Mossman High heads

With the 2025 school year under way, Mossman State High School has officially inducted their student leaders for this year's Senior and Junior classes. The ceremony marks the official beginning of their roles.

The leaders will help plan fundraisers and host school and public events such as the annual ANZAC day ceremony.

Max Bohm and Amber Schumacher led the oath of office as the 2025 School Captains with their fellow leaders by their side; Deklen Reynolds and Hayley Fischer in the role of Vice Captains, and Louisa Walker, Charli Padovan, Lani Enoch and Nanami Anderson representing the four school houses.

# Connecting through cycling

Jamie Jansen  
Journalist

Cycling enthusiasts in Douglas Shire have built more than a club, they've created a thriving community. The Rainforest and Reef Cycling Club welcomes riders of all ages and abilities, promoting fitness, friendship, and charity.

At its core, the club is a place where cyclists of all abilities can come together, push their limits, and, as they like to say, channel their inner Cadel Evans.

The club embraces riders of all fitness levels, ensuring that everyone, from beginners to seasoned cyclists, feels included. Club secretary John Grime says, most members are between 50 and 65 years old, though the club also includes riders in their 30s as well as those in their mid-to-late 70s.

"Cycling has a low impact on the joints and body, which allows many of our members to stay active despite old injuries," John said.

"One of its biggest benefits is that it enables people to remain physically and socially engaged, often longer than other sports."

The club's inclusivity is one



**Rainforest and Reef Cycling Club is a thriving community.**

of its greatest strengths. Unlike sports that require participants to maintain a similar fitness level, cycling allows riders of varying abilities to enjoy the experience together.

"We let the younger, fitter members lead the peloton, and we draft behind them."

"This applies to both road cycling and mountain biking," John

said.

"I'm constantly inspired by the men and women in their 70s and even almost 80s who still ride three to four times a week, despite the health challenges that come with aging."

**To get in touch, email [rainforestreefcycling@gmail.com](mailto:rainforestreefcycling@gmail.com).**

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# YOU SAID IT! Opinion Page

## BUTCHERS AND BAKERS STEP UP FOR SHIRE

**Joanna Palmer**

If there's a time to shine, this is it. Support local.

**Anthony Christopher Renwick**

The fact that people are hyped into panic buying by media outlets needs to be addressed, as does the fact that much of that fresh produce hoarded into people's homes will end up in the rubbish simply because it doesn't last and the skills and time to process and store much of it is lost to the majority of people.

## LANDSLIDE OF COMMENTS ON COOK LANDSLIDE

**Geoff Field**

Thanks for giving us useful information.

**JJ Bugman**

Will happen regardless when there's a lot of rain lingering range will only get worse as time goes by.

**John Steger**

Just drove through it it's open on a one lane be careful rocks all over road still but is open.

**Flick Boucher**

Unfortunately, I'm certain we anticipated this outcome, considering the absence of significant works since the Jasper issues.

## THE WEATHER'S ALMOST FINE

**Tammy Threlfall**

Wet season is port break time, always was, always should be. Locals look after each other and the town stops. It's not long and honestly if I were a tourist just give it a break for 2 months.

Come back late march onwards it rains, locals want a break, sleep, be with their families and have their own time in paradise. So yes some are open but they all need a break, places are taking breaks, many restaurants. So if you want to just be warm in the rain, go in a boat tour, come on up, but many places like restaurants will be closed.

**Neal Keenan**

They've already cancelled by now for immediate future who wouldn't with the way the media portrays this event?

**Kynee Christensen**

There is not enough food for the locals, let alone encouraging tourists to come and be disappointed when they get here and there is nothing for them to eat while their on holidays.

## PUT THE BRAKES ON BIKE PATH PLANS

**Dawn Marr**

Bike paths in other areas of the Shire would be nice.

**Joanna Palmer**

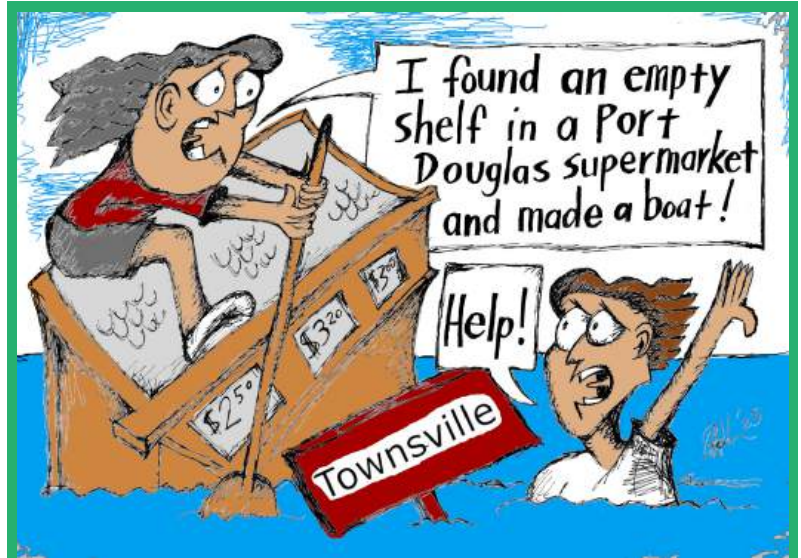
Isn't there already one there? Along the opposite side of the road?

**Andrew Petrack**

I think a bike path from Port to Mossman is an absolute must!

**David Haratsis**

To those saying it's a waste of money and there are other priorities (there are always other priorities!), I would say this sort of federal grant funding is provided on a use it or lose to another shire basis. If that is the case, and I'm sure it is, council comms should really come out and say that, and say they are also working on securing grants for other projects. You can walk



**How We See It!**



Shaun Hollis and Bryan Littlely bring you a lighter look at local news online every Saturday.

and chew gum at the same time. Unfortunately, council has not been great at Comms since, well, since I've been here!

**Geoff Morton**

Have just ridden from Seabrook Ave to Old Port Road, path already exists, why are we wasting more hard earned rates?

**Tom Patts**

And meanwhile, rates and cost of living just keep on going skywards.

**Joanne Storey**

Spend some bloody money on the roads in the Daintree, would love bitumen. Every year council do band aid work on our gravel roads that get washed out every year. We pay rates too.

**Brad Cooper**

Absolute waste of \$. Are we spending \$ for the sake of it? First section from Barrier to Langley Rd has two roads one with a bike lane and two

footpaths?? Bank this money and put towards a lagoon at the back of Sugar wharf or Rex meal. Give the town a boost for residents and tourists with infrastructure that we will all use. There is no need to spend this money on this project it's throwing rate payers money up in the air.

**Damon Woods**

Could get the Balley Hooley up and running from the marina to Mossman with a morning and afternoon journey for tourists and locals alike for that money and do so in a manner that makes it indefinitely profitable. Of course both Port Douglas and Mossman, especially Mossman with the sugar mill closed could do with an intelligent and economically viable boost. A \$2.5 million bike path that most people will unlikely utilize doesn't seem like money well spent when their are far better options such as the Balley Hooley/public transport or a swimming lagoons.

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# SOCIALS

Jamie Jansen caught up with some excited Port Douglas School students for their first day of school



Junior Captains Bryson Collins, Natasha Scenna, Emily Harris and Kaydee Reynolds.



Mergen begins Prep, while Billy moves up to Year 6, ready to take on his final year of primary school.



Caleb and Freya share a sweet moment as they say goodbye to their mum, Peta, before starting their school day.



Penelope is excited to begin Year 1, Portia is all set for Year 5, and Hunter is starting Year 3.



Drew begins her Prep journey, while Billy is heading into Year 2, dropped off at the school gated by their mum, Marni.



Twins Tiana and Peyton wave goodbye to their mum, Mel, who stays calm and composed, saying it's her second time experiencing this milestone.

# WHAT'S ON

## STAY UP TO DATE

Scan this QR code to stay up to date with the latest events in the region



## FEBRUARY 14

Drewboy DUO @ Ellis Beach Bar & Grill, Time: 5:30pm - 8:30pm, Location: Ellis Beach Bar & Grill

Self-Love for Valentine's Day, Time: 5 PM - 6.30 PM, Location: Yoga in The Tropics Studio, 56-64 Macrossan St, Port Douglas

St. Valentine's Day dinner, Time: 5:30pm - 8:00pm, Location: Club Mossman

Wet Season Indoor Golf League, Time: 10am - 9pm, Location: Daddyshack PD golf shop, bottom of Grant St, Port Douglas. Opposite the Quicksilver building.

## FEBRUARY 15

Girls' Night Out at Harrisons, Time: 6PM - 10PM, Location: Harrisons Restaurant

Gin Masterclass with Wolf Lane Distillery, Time: 3PM - 4PM, Location: Daintree Bar & Lounge

Community Food Gardening at Circle of Plenty, Time: 7 am - 8.30am, Location: Circle of Plenty, Mossman Botanic Garden, Foxton Ave, Mossman

## FEBRUARY 16

Nicole Nighthawk @ Ellis Beach Bar & Grill, Time: 1:00pm - 4:00pm, Location: Ellis Beach Bar & Grill

Brandon Walker, Time: 1:30pm - 4:30pm, Location: Club Mossman

## FEBRUARY 20

Bingo, Time: 7:00pm - 9:00pm, Location: Club Mossman

## REAL ESTATE

OPEN HOME  
52/121-137 Port Douglas Road,  
Friday 14 February  
3:00pm - 3:45pm  
Property Shop

OPEN HOME  
58/121-137 Port Douglas Road,  
Friday 14 February  
3.00pm  
Raine & Horne

OPEN HOME  
27 Birdwing Street,  
Saturday 15 February  
9.00am  
Raine & Horne



Scan the QR code to list your property, and it will be added to our print edition for free.

## FEBRUARY 21

Rob Longstaff, Time: 7:30pm - 10:30pm, Location: Club Mossman

## FEBRUARY 22

Agnes x Harrisons Takeover Dinner, Time: 6PM - 10PM, Location: Harrisons Restaurant

Yoga & Supper, Time: 5pm - pm, Location: Yoga in The Tropics Studio, Coconut

## FEBRUARY 22

Yahdoh, Time: 5:00pm - 9:00pm, Location: Club Mossman

Suck My Kiss - Red Hot Chilli Peppers Tribute NIGHT, Time: 5:30pm - 8:30pm, Location: Ellis Beach Bar & Grill

## FEBRUARY 23

Christine Ukulele Duo @ Ellis Beach Bar & Grill, Time: 1:00pm - 4:00pm, Location: Ellis Beach Bar & Grill

Visit [www.newsport.com.au](http://www.newsport.com.au) to list your event for free

# SPORTS DIGEST

## Planning out a raid on rugby title

Shaun Hollis

Editor

**Port Douglas's own rugby union club the Reef Raiders are training hard in preparation for the season launch on March 22.**

Second-year coach Richard Johnston is hoping to go one game deeper into the season after his team made the semi-finals last year.

"It's been good, lots of positive signs," Johnston says.

"It all depends on the people that come to town, hopefully we'll have a few returning players."

The team is always heavily dependent on who turns up from the large contingent of expats and backpackers in the region, with Italians, Spanish, Argentinians, English and Irish players already sign-

ing up for this year.

"Our team is brand new every year, pretty much."

Johnston says he might have less than 10 of the same players from last year, along with 20 or 30 new recruits.

"I have to put together a team and figure out a game plan that works for us to try and be successful. "It's a fun challenge that I enjoy."

Johnston says he helps overcome the big turnover of personnel by trying to be extra organised with his planning.

"I think about rugby a lot and I have our preseason plans already written," he says.

"My drills are all drawn out in the colours of the cones I will use, I'm super sad about things like that."



Reef Raiders coach Richard Johnston.



### Shot of the day!

**Brendon Wood hitting off the tee in a way he would rather forget!**  
Picture: Bryan Littlely



### Rising Suns

The Port Douglas Junior Academy Under 16s High Crocs are celebrating the success and rise of two of their young stars, Kobe Sazon and Tyler Ronalds, who have been training hard across the summer holidays preparing to take up their positions in the Gold Coast Suns Cairns

Academy Under 16s High Performance Squad for 2025. Making the trip to Cairns twice a week to train with their crew, the boys and their dedicated parents have notched up plenty of kilometres on the road.

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Unity Beitzel's Olympic dream is on the right track. Picture: Kylie Nyssen/Athletics Thru My Lens

## Heptathlete Unity soars high

Byron Filmer  
Journalist

**Douglas heptathlete Unity Beitzel's Olympic dream is one step closer after she recently qualified for the national championships taking place in April.**

At just 22, Unity finished second in the Women's Open Heptathlon event at the recent Queensland Combined Event Championships.

"There were nine or 10 of us girls trying to qualify for nationals," Unity says.

"I set my personal best in my three track events; hurdles, the

200m and the 800m."

Following her excellent result in the event, which features seven track and field disciplines put together to achieve an overall total score, Unity will compete at the April Australian Open Track and Field Championships in Adelaide.

She will be training six days a week for the various events in the lead-up to the titles.

"It can be really hard because you need a mix of endurance, speed and strength," she says.

"Really, it's about bringing it all together."

Unity began competing in heptathlons while at Mossman State

High School, where she took part in a large range of sports.

"When I was 15 my coach Greg Hamilton told me I should give (heptathlon) a try."

Her biggest goal is to compete in the 2032 Brisbane Olympics.

"To qualify for the Olympics I essentially need to be in the top three in the country.

"I also need ranking points and a heptathlete score to be one of the top in the world." Unity is looking for more sponsors to help her achieve her dream. Details: unitybeitzel@gmail.com

## Good Sports headed for Port Douglas

Representatives from community sporting clubs in Port Douglas are invited to attend a free Good Sports workshop later this month, covering the important role local clubs can play in building healthy communities.

The workshop will be held at Port Douglas Community Hall on Wednesday, February 19 from 5.30pm to 7.30pm.

Clubs will hear how the Alcohol and Drug Foundation's Good Sports program can support them to set up a better environment by helping them tackle tricky topics including alcohol, drugs, smoking, mental health and safe transport.

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation's Queensland State Manager Martin Milne said the workshop is a great opportunity for clubs to come together and learn about creating safer places to enjoy sport.

"Community sporting clubs are often at the heart of community and can play a really important role when it comes to modelling healthy behaviours and reducing and preventing the risk of alcohol and other drug harms," he said.

"Good Sports inspires and supports clubs to do this by giving them access to an experienced support crew, with the resources and know-how to help busy volunteers make a positive difference.

"Over the last 25 years, Good Sports has made a significant contribution."

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