

A vibrant rainbow arches over a rocky coastline. The foreground shows a sandy beach with two people standing near some large rocks. The background features a calm sea and a hilly coastline under a dramatic sky.

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Paradise? HENRY MILLER

I am led to speak of the "Millennium" because, receiving as many visitors as I do, and from all parts of the globe, I am constantly reminded that I am living in a virtual paradise. ("And how did you manage to find such a place?" is the usual exclamation. As if I had any part in it!) But what amazes me, and this is the point, is that so very few ever think on taking leave that they too might enjoy the fruits of paradise. Almost invariably the visitor will confess that he lacks the courage-imagination would be nearer the mark-to make the necessary break. "You're lucky," he will say-meaning, to be a writer-"you can do your work anywhere." He forgets what I have told him, and most pointedly, about the other members of the community-the ones who really support the show-who are not writers, painters or artists of any sort, except in spirit. "Too late," he probably murmurs to himself, as he takes a last wistful glance about.

How illustrative, this attitude, of the woeful resignation men and women succumb to! Surely every one realizes, at some point along the way, that he is capable of living a far better life than the one he has chosen. What stays him, usually, is the fear of the sacrifices involved. (Even to relinquish his chains seems like a sacrifice.) Yet everyone knows that

nothing is accomplished without sacrifice.

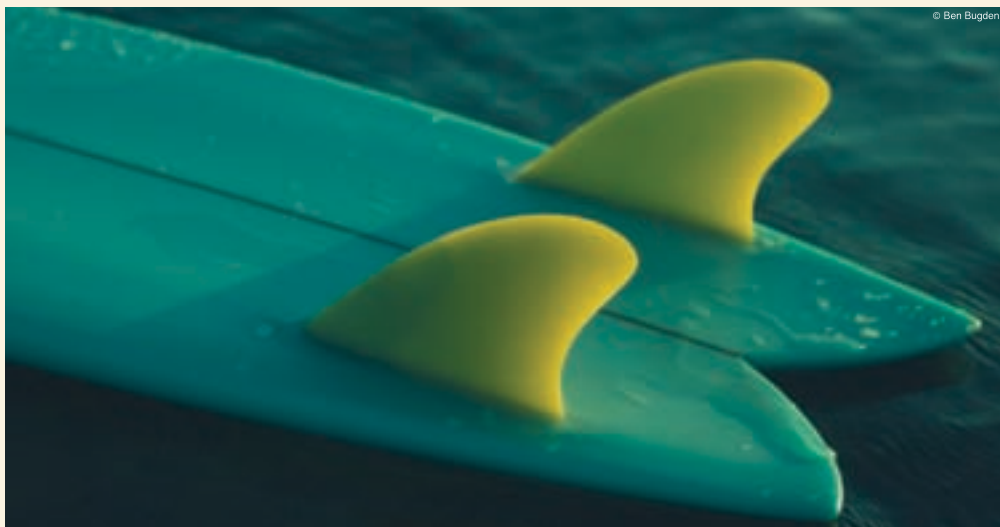
The longing for paradise, whether here on earth or in the beyond, has almost ceased to be. Instead of an idée-force it has become an idée fixe. From a potent myth it has degenerated into a taboo. Men will sacrifice their lives to bring about a better world-whatever that may mean-but they will not budge an inch to attain paradise. Nor will they struggle to create a bit of paradise in the hell they find themselves. It is so much easier, and gorier, to make revolution, which means, to put it simply, establishing another, a different, status quo. If paradise were realizable-this is the classic retort!-it would no longer be paradise.

What is one to say to a man who insists on making his own prison?

There is a type of individual who, after finding what he considers a paradise, proceeds to pick flaws in it. Eventually this man's paradise becomes even worse than the hell from which he had escaped.

*Certainly paradise, whatever, wherever it be, contains flaws. (Paradisiacal flaws, if you like.) If it did not, it would be incapable of drawing the hearts of men or angels. (From Miller's novel *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* written in 1956).*

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Desirelines

RUSTY MILLER & TRICIA SHANTZ



This year we spent three months out of Byron Shire for the first time since we permanently migrated here: Rusty in the '70s and Tricia in the '80s. Much of that time was spent in San Francisco and there, two writers inspired us: Rebecca Solnit and Henry Miller.

Solnit, also an activist, wrote an essay in *The Guardian* entitled, "Protest and Persist: Why Giving Up Hope is Not an Option. The True Impact of activism may not be felt for a generation. That alone is reason to fight, rather than surrender to despair."

Here in Byron Shire this really rings true for us. Giving up is not an option. Byron is too precious. Having been away and come back, we see it anew.

Solnit also writes creative atlases of places using a very different perspective, which one of our writers has attempted to do here for Byron.

Henry Miller's book, *Big Sur & the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch*, has so much resonance for us here in Byron Shire. Having lived in Paris, he chose to move to Big Sur, on the California coast, in the 1950s for much the same reason as people moved to Byron in the 1970s, and continue to keep moving here.

He wrote, "We are in the habit of speaking of 'the last frontier,' but wherever there are 'individuals' there will always be new frontiers. For the man who wants to lead the good life, which is a way of saying his *own life*, there's always a spot where he can dig in and take root."

We like to think that men and women come to Byron to live their *own life*, a thoughtful life, an examined life. Big Sur at the time of Miller's writing was filled with artists, writers, and musicians. Few had much money when they came, living in old rundown huts and cabins – much like Byron in the '70s when the new residents took up living in old banana sheds and

disused dairy farm cow bails.

We regularly hear people who have been here a long time say that Byron Bay has lost, or has, no community. We dispute this. "Making of a community is a result of the happiness and good which people already possess in principle, and the community, whether of one family or several, is the infinitely variable of the excellences of human beings, and not their cause..." So wrote Henry Miller.

Late in 2018, Byron Mayor Simon Richardson, in his objection to a commercial development that proposed to exceed the established Byron town building height limit, said, "This development will not destroy our community because we are stronger than that, and this development will not destroy our town, but it will not add to our community and will not add to our town."

One of our Shire's most valuable principles has always been that, given our proximity to the Gold Coast, we would definitely not follow that type of development. To achieve this aim, a height limit that allows only up to three-story developments has been enshrined in our planning legislation since 1988. However, in these 30 years, there are only approximately a dozen buildings in the CBD that have built three stories. If there had been any community or commercial demand for greater height limits, more buildings would have done so. They haven't!

The height limit is one of the few planning regulations that maintains the character of Byron Bay as a small and unique coastal town. To vary that regulation would set a dangerous and unnecessary precedent. Mayor Richardson, in his speech to the North Coast Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP), which was meeting to determine the proposal, said, "Though there are very few issues that surround us as a community that have near universal agreement, there is one.... support for keeping our commercial and



If we only fight the battles we think we are going to win there would be no point in getting up in the morning.

ABC DOCUMENTARY 'RIOT'

business centres to three stories and within the height limits we have in our planning regime.” This was the rallying cry from the community.

Another near universal agreement in our shire is the love of forests and the environment. However, within Australia we are going backwards with both Federal and State governments allowing large-scale land-clearing, the repealing of legislation that saved the forests, and the Federal Government acting shamefully and neglectfully on climate change. We shouldn't forget that our region was where the battle to save the forests began. Byron's current hot environmental issue is the proposed destruction of the delicate wetlands and waterways surrounding our town by a new town of some 800 houses at West Byron, on the main road into town.

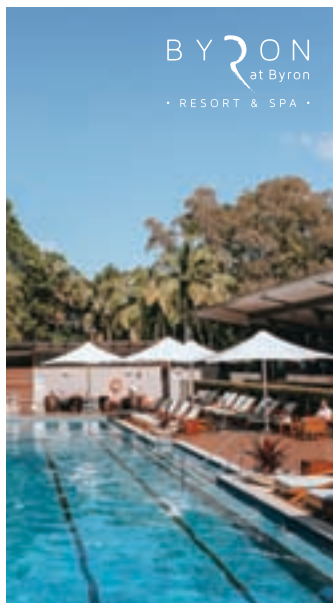
Another reason why Byron is so different is that it has a plethora of small, locally created and owned, original-styled businesses. Bernard

Salt wrote in the Weekend Australian Magazine that he was concerned by what he sees as an incremental loss of economic sovereignty. He says Australian regional towns need to support locally based businesses. “It's far more affective to create a sense of pride in our own business entities. It means being mature enough to see the role business plays in creating a stronger and more independent Australia.”

'Desireline' is a concept that comes from the landscaping fraternity, describing the informal pathways pedestrians make when they step off concrete footpaths and walk across lawns and grass.

They are the routes that people take or make based on their needs and desires to get somewhere via a shorter or perhaps more scenic path. They tend to become more visible over time as more feet walk across the ground.

In Byron people have forged their own desirelines.



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What is it with the beach, anyway?

ROBERT DREWE



A New York publisher visiting for the Byron Writers Festival asked me a curious question. "What do Australians do at the beach anyway?" He was serious. Belongil beach sparkled in the near distance. He was sweating in his tie and seersucker jacket as he inquired.

"How can you guys spend so much time there? It's just sand and water. Isn't it boring?"

He said that back home, weekending in the Hamptons, he might have a quick dip and maybe throw a frisbee if he was feeling particularly light-hearted. Then it was back to the tennis court or neighbourhood drinks in his Brooks Brothers casual-wear.

His question threw me. I muttered self-consciously, "Well, lots of things. Or not much at all." I felt like a mindless wastrel. But I thought I

owed it to Byron and Australia to describe what it is we actually do there, so after earnest thought I went home and wrote him the following beach manifesto:

"Most of us go to the beach to swim, surf or sunbathe. But others go to sail, fish, parasail, exercise, snorkel, paddle, scuba-dive, jog, beachcomb, play with their kids, whale-and-dolphin watch, read paperbacks, fly kites, eat weekend breakfast in a beach café, or drink beer in a hotel beer garden. We might play beach cricket, football or volleyball, or perform teenage mating rituals. We might watch crested terns diving for baitfish, or gather shells, or look for stones that resemble hearts. Getting married in a beach ceremony is very popular."

I said I had attended barefoot beach funerals at Sharpe's Beach and Lennox Head, and that they

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were moving, dignified and surprisingly optimistic ceremonies.

I told the New Yorker that many of us Byron locals spent contented weekend beach-hours simply unwinding: just swimming and body-surfing, then drying off on our towels while trickling sand through our fingers and gazing dreamily out to Julian Rocks or the Three Sisters.

Of course, for those lucky Australians who lived on the coast, the beach was their backyard, their entertainment, picnic ground and compulsory summer holiday spot. Perhaps even their church. At dawn and dusk, meditation was popular on the sand. I told him that for many people seeking peace and serenity the Australian beach had replaced church. Sunday in summer was a family day of rest – at the beach.

As for what we wore at the beach, not much. In approved places, sometimes nothing. I told him the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Citizenship had found it necessary to publish the following information for new immigrants used to rigid clothing customs:

Many Australians live close to the beach and the sea. On hot days, they may wear little clothing on the beach and surrounds. This does not mean that people who dress to go to the beach or to go swimming have low moral standards. It means that this is what we accept on and near our beaches.

I told him that surfers naturally wanted surfing waves but families liked beaches that were safe, sandy, shallow and sheltered and provided a car park, toilets and change rooms, and a kiosk for ice creams and drinks: in other words, a traditional Australian beach.

I mentioned that, unlike in America, there were no privately owned ocean beaches here. They were open to everyone. (He shook his head in wonder.) Moreover, the Australian beach was a great social and physical equalizer. (No need for a seersucker jacket.) As Geoffrey Dutton had written in *The*

Beach: "There is a democracy of the body on the beach, an absence of shame. On every beach there are thousands of old, fat, plain people, happily wobbling down to the forgiving water."

I recalled for the visitor a particular evening, after a scorching, exhausting day, that I dived into the ocean in Byron. All around me, hot and weary people of many races and ages were plunging into the sea, too, and then surfacing revitalised, snorting with pleasure, like so many seals.

As we all caught each other's eye, we could tell what the other was thinking. Regardless of wealth, occupation, background, gender or politics, at that moment we were of one mind: "This is as good as it gets."

I told him our traditional beaches hosted big crowds for important annual celebrations such as New Year's Eve, Christmas Day and Australia Day. On Australia Day some beaches even hosted citizenship ceremonies.

It was customary for foreign tourists at Christmas to crowd the main beaches, where pallid young Europeans wearing Santa hats and reindeer antlers gathered to drink, fall asleep on the sand and get ferociously sunburnt.

I told him that when they got to these beaches, often inebriated and unaccustomed to waves and ocean rips, many visitors were apt to get into trouble. This was where a famous Australian symbol came into its own. The surf lifesaver.

"The beach is an important part of our culture," I said.

"So, what should I do on your Byron beach?" the New Yorker asked.

"Swim between the flags," I said.

However, the New York publisher's questions made me think: What is it with Australians and the beach? Is there another nation so in love with its shoreline? Why is that?

Well, to me – and I'm sure I'm not alone – it's

because the mysterious, sensuous zone where the bush meets the sea is the real Australia.

Of course, you might say “the real Australia” is a sentimental myth, just as easily found in the outback. Some rural traditionalists and university literature departments still see the bush as the centre of our culture. And what about the cities’ suburbs? They’re where most people live, after all.

Those are reasonable alternatives. But consider these basic questions. When do you feel most Australian (in a good way, forgetting politics and such exhausting thoughts)? What does that mean anyway? Perhaps for most of us it means feeling secure, contented, in harmony, at peace – maybe even happy. And this place is where I feel these sensations most intensely.

Personally, I feel most “Australian” when I turn a corner on a bush track at Broken Head and suddenly glimpse the ocean framed in the branches of a eucalypt. Or when I spot whales while drinking coffee on the cliff at Lennox Head. And when I hit the surf at the Pass, or Broken, or Clarke’s.

Ah, the beach. Byron Bay is where it comes into its own. To go a step further, as well as the beach being the “real Australia”, for many of us this “real Australia” has no other season but summer. The first hint of a warm breeze and the sweet scent of 30+ sunscreen can arouse certain feelings – and a theory about beaches that will surprise no one raised in this country in the last century.

How can I put this delicately? There’s an overwhelming reason why many adult Australians regard the beach in a sensual and nostalgic light. It’s where they first made love.

For the rest of their lives, therefore, the beach, the coast, are not only places of pleasure and inspiration but an *idée fixe*, one that resurfaces at each of the four or five critical physical and emotional stages in their lives: as new lovers, as honeymooners, as holidaymakers, and as the retired elderly.

After all that adolescent canoodling in the sand and surf, most contemporary Australians invariably honeymoon at a beach such as Byron. (When did you last hear of someone honeymooning at Dubbo? Kalgoorlie?) Later, as parents, our ordinary Australians take their family holidays at a beach – often the same one where these earlier events occurred.

And, finally, in increasingly large numbers, Australians retire to the particular stretch of coastline befitting their class and superannuation.

Incidentally, those people who haven’t moved to the coast voluntarily might find themselves there anyway, deposited by their children in one of the old people’s homes lining the Esplanades and Ocean View Parades of beach suburbs from Cottesloe to Byron Bay.

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through the ubiquitous Norfolk Island pines, that Australians finally pass into that infinity beyond the horizon – more or less in the direction of New Zealand.

Robert Drewe is the author of many best-selling

*novels, short stories and works of non-fiction set on the coast, including *The Bodysurfers*, *The Shark Net* and *Montebello*, (Penguin Books) and *The Beach: An Australian Passion*, published by the National Library of Australia. His latest book is *The True Colour of the Sea* (Penguin/Hamish Hamilton).*



Photo: Tao Jones



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Philoxenia. The idea that some lives are worth more than others isn't working.

ANGUS MCDONALD



Why does an artist, enjoying the freedom and beauty of work and life in the Northern Rivers with friends and family, suddenly decide to take action by going to the other side of the world to find out the stories of the refugees? I've lived in this beautiful area of Australia for 17 years, but in the past five years, I have become increasingly uncomfortable knowing there were a few thousand innocent others being detained offshore by Australia on PNG's Manus Island, and Nauru, experiencing needless suffering at our hands.

The endless layers of debate surrounding refugee and asylum seeker policy in Australia make it easy to conclude that the issue is mired in so much complexity it's impossible to decipher. But in truth, it's not complicated at all. It's simply about how we treat people.

Why would an affluent country like ours allow our government to inflict the inhumane treatment of detainment without charge on innocent people? In the middle of 2017, I began looking for deeper explanations. I didn't start here in Australia, instead I travelled to Greece, a western country with half our population (11 million versus 24 million people). More than one million refugees arrived there by boat in just 15 months in 2015 and 2016, landing on the shores of small Greek islands scattered across the eastern Aegean.

In response, local communities extended hospitality to them, providing assurances that they'd reached safety as they were pulled out of the sea or they reached the beaches traumatised and desperate. This was humankind helping each other at its most exemplary.

Inspired by the humanitarian nature of what I witnessed in Greece, and its stark contrast to Australia's inhumane treatment of boat arrivals here, I decided to create a series of films to document what I had learned and share it with others. I called the series "Philoxenia", a Greek

word, deeply embedded in that country's cultural tradition which translated means: "extending friendship and hospitality to the stranger".

I returned to Greece with two other talented locals from our region, cameraman Nolan Verheij-Full, and production assistant Rebecca Booth. Afterwards, we continued on to Jordan and then Lebanon. Both nations have experienced immense influxes of arrivals in recent years, putting significant strain on their country's resources. At the time of writing, one in every four people in Lebanon is a refugee and Jordan, a country of eight million people, with limited water supplies, has taken in more than 650,000 Syrians fleeing the civil war just across its northern border.

As we travelled, we filmed and interviewed in small, local communities that had experienced massive arrivals, and with community organisations and large NGO's supporting them. We visited the world's largest Syrian refugee camp, the Zaatari camp in Jordan, home to 80,000 refugees and a model for collaborative humanitarian approaches providing sustainable solutions. Zaatari is not only supporting displaced people, they are rebuilding lives with energy and resolve. Most importantly we met hundreds of refugees and their families who despite surviving loss, death and unimaginable trauma before fleeing their homes with nothing, routinely humbled us with their grace and hospitality. The scale of the refugee issue in all three countries is huge and the effort to find solutions is equally substantial.

Back in Australia, our government has directed considerable energy and resources towards punishing a few thousand people. As at November 2018 there were 1,278 people (including 52 children) remained detained on Nauru or Manus. Billions of taxpayer dollars are spent (more than \$500,000 per refugee and asylum seeker annually) to make sure that



"Nauru is no hellhole by any means. If you like living in the tropics, it's a very, very pleasant island."
 TONY ABBOTT ON 2GB radio October 2018. Former Prime Minister and current Federal MP.

these lives are not only further damaged, but an example is made of them in order to deter others from coming, by keeping them on islands offshore of mainland Australia. I consider this not only ludicrous, but bizarre.

What a miasma of despair and suffering has emanated from the situation we've created for those refugees and asylum seekers locked away on Manus and Nauru. What does it say about our nation's values? The people there who were forced to flee their homes, to escape war and persecution, are ordinary human beings with nowhere to go. What they seek is support, safety and protection while their refugee claims are assessed and the process of rebuilding their lives begins. That's the same thing that any of us would hope for if we found ourselves in their position.

International agreements that Australia has not only signed, but in the case of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we proudly co-wrote, clearly set out the responsibilities of

signatory countries to support and protect those seeking asylum. Where we were once a country proud of its humanitarian standing in the world, why do we now ignore those obligations? When a government implements policies like these, it is only our collective silence as a society of decent people that has allowed them to maintain it. But to speak up, first we need to care.

Creating empathy for the men, women and children who face those impossible situations is the objective of my film project. It's not easy to make people care about things they are not physically confronted with. That's no criticism of Australians, it's a plain fact of life. It's made harder in our case because of our geographic isolation from the situations that have created these present flows of forcibly displaced people in their millions. Add that to the uninterrupted peace and relative prosperity that we are fortunate to enjoy here and it's almost impossible to imagine ourselves in the shoes

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of those whose lives have been completely torn from under them.

Prior to creating Philoxenia, I knew as much about this issue as most Australians, which was very little. Those on Manus and Nauru have been virtually invisible to us since 2013, when they were taken there, their plight an abstraction, which is easily forgotten. Our consciences when periodically pricked were quickly assuaged by the vitriol and myth-making of people who as leaders should know a lot better. To achieve misguided political ends, those in power paint these people as unworthy, second-rate humans, criminals, terrorists, queue jumpers; their race and religion surreptitiously used to build fear rather than compassion. Instead of empathy, we are encouraged to express resentment.


Imagine having a country that works together with the population it represents, playing a leadership role that makes us proud; being compassionate, worldly, transparent and mature, meeting its responsibilities as a global player, and earning respect from humanitarian organisations, and its own people.

The issue of forced migration will continue to grow in the coming decades. War and

persecution have resulted in 65 million people on the move across the world right now, the greatest number in human history. With the advent of climate change, a whole new category of displaced people will also be forced to seek safety. This situation requires real and sustainable solutions that both acknowledge the reasons why people are forced to leave everything behind and respects their rights as human beings.

Australians are proud of the notion that we come to the aid of others in trouble. It's often considered intrinsic to our national character. That might be true in many cases but the evidence of Manus Island and Nauru shows how selective this notion can be. Thankfully, it's not too late. The tide is currently turning. Humanitarian solutions exist. It's only a question of deciding to grasp them.

Angus McDonald is an artist and filmmaker from Lennox Head. In 2017, he began PHILOXENIA, a documentary project of short films dealing with forced migration, refugee attitudes and Australia's widely condemned offshore processing policy. PHILOXENIA on YouTube: www.youtube.com/howlingeagle. TWITTER www.twitter.com/angusmcz. INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/angusmcz, www.instagram.com/howling.eagle



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JOHN BASSETT



If you are able to imagine how Bangalow might have looked in 1980, you would hardly believe its transformation into the self-fulfilling prophecy that it has become today.... The Paddington of the North Coast.

In 1980 Bangalow was still a slow, cow-cocky town with a weekly sale yard auction, a service station that straddled the highway so that you filled up your vehicle on one side and paid on the other. Surrounded by rolling green hills and tropical remnants of the 'big scrub', this was the reason you had left the 'big smoke', this village known as 'such a pretty place'. In stark contrast, however, to this bucolic serenity, were semi-trailers thundering down the main street along with all the other main north-south highway traffic, shaking the buildings to their foundations. Trying to have a conversation on Byron Street was almost impossible over the constant rumbling of highway traffic.

Apart from the traffic which was a lot less than it is today, at night, Bangalow was a ghost town. The only glimmer of culinary life was a tiny 40 seat restaurant in the main street called 'Janot La Frite'.

'Janot's', as it was known locally, was originally started by Jacques Meon, a true Frenchman with a strong accent and even stronger Gallic ideas about food. At a BBQ at Jacques place out at Federal he cooked a Grillade of veined beef hearts on rosemary skewers for us. It took me a while to recall the old French adage, 'if it moves, it's food'.

Coming to Janot La Frite as a chef from a culinary awakening Sydney, Bangalow was like going back to the dark ages. It seemed daunting to contemplate changing the eating habits of the locals, from frogs' legs and snails, duck a l'orange and crème caramel. After all, it was a French restaurant.

After a customer had received a dodgy snail,

and in total frustration, I soon threw out all the ancient traditional French fare and introduced my own version of Nouvelle Cuisine with Mod Oz influences, without alienating the clientele too much from the idea that they were eating in a French restaurant. Actually, my only concession to dining a 'la mode Française, was, that somewhat unbelievably, I wrote all the menus in French. The mystique in menu writing continues to this day but it must have been hell for the wait staff trying to translate and describe the menu dishes simultaneously.

Janot's was a very popular restaurant at that time as there were few places where you could 'dine out' for that 'special occasion'. Byron however, wasn't totally bereft of eating options in the early '80s; there were several burger style joints and casual eateries and even vegans would have happily been catered for at this time. The local café society explosion as we know it today, just did not exist.

Historically, Mexican Mick's was probably Byron Bay's first restaurant and was kicked off in 1969 by 'Brit' Mick Cambray. Many locals will recall having their birthday fiesta there and a photo taken with Mick in his magnifico sombrero. I wonder how Mick would feel about the New Mexican wave of eateries, currently hitting Byron Bay, with their designer miniature tacos?

Early surfers from that era will fondly remember 'Dinty's' which later became 'Julian Rocks Restaurant', run by well-known chef Charly Devlin. Charly and his family later opened the iconic Fig Tree restaurant at Ewingsdale. With Charly's flamboyant Irish charm, stunning views over Byron Bay and innovative food, the Fig Tree was an overnight success. The tradition is carried on today by Charly's son Che.

Notably, the first serious dining restaurant that started in the late '70s, was the 'Argentine Ant', now 'Rae's on Wategos'. The Argentine Ant was established by local art eccentric Ruth



In a Japanese kitchen,
cutting is cooking, not just
something that comes before it.

JOSH DONALD & MOLLY GORE-EDIBLE
MAGAZINE SAN FRANCISCO



Photo: Nelly le Comte

Harris and husband Ian and featured dishes including Chateaubriand and Chicken a la Kiev, the must have culinary giants at that time. The restaurant later morphed into the spectacular 'La Belle Epoque'. Here the opulent décor probably surprised more than the food. The restaurant could easily have featured in a Fellini film set, with a ceiling glittering with stars, cherubs and seraphs that Michelangelo would have been proud of. The walls were adorned with graphic biblical portrayals of crucifixion scenes gazing down on you as you dined. La Belle Epoque was truly a unique restaurant.

Apart from Mexican Mick's, Byron Bay's first real ethnic restaurant from the early '80s was the 'Athena Taverna', run by 'Pete the Greek'. Pete's delightful Greek food was as close to the real thing without being in a white washed taverna

in the Cyclades. Pete spent his time between creating simple Greek dishes at his restaurant and strolling ponderously down the street for the next race at Caulfield. Unfortunately for us, he now lives back in Greece.

Meanwhile, by the mid-eighties, almost overnight, French food had become decidedly on the nose, for which there were several very good reasons...

French food philosopher Brillat-Savarin made the observation that, 'you are what you eat'. French cuisine with its emphasis on butter, cream and fat eventually made people realise that such a diet could actually become life threatening. Suddenly the trend moved towards eating healthier food.

Australians were also traveling more and more to our near neighbours and had discovered the flavours of Southeast Asia. Not since the early Chinese settlers arrived with their woks in the



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goldfields had there been such a boom in oriental cooking. Thai, Japanese and Vietnamese food now enjoyed the spotlight as they were healthier, lighter and their flavours were refreshingly different. But the final nail in the coffin was through French Government interference in the South Pacific; they had already been testing nuclear bombs in our backyard at Mururoa Atoll since the 1960s and on the 10th July 1985 the French equivalent of the CIA sank the Greenpeace vessel 'Rainbow Warrior' in Auckland harbour. Not exactly an act to guarantee bonhomie. Escargots a la Bourguignonne anyone?

Not even Nouvelle Cuisine with its huge plates, dainty, elaborate food, miniscule portions and chive antennas, could save restaurant French food. The gloves were off! French food was dead! Modern Australian cuisine had arrived, and culinary creativity was whatever you wanted to make it.

As the popularity of the north coast increased so did the number and diversity of restaurants. Over time the trend was moving towards more casual, relaxed dining with simpler dishes that were easier to relate to.

Perhaps one of the most enduring restaurants

from the early '80s was 'Fins' at Brunswick Heads. Masterminded in the kitchen by renowned chef Steve Snow, the restaurant had an idyllic location by the Brunswick River where you could almost dabble your toes in the water as you dined. Snowy, as he's affectionately known locally, changed the seascape with his passion for fresh line caught fish and his light approach to seafood dishes with Portuguese influences. Sadly, the restaurant closed at Bruns due to the new M1 motorway cutting through his dining room. Steve however is irrepressible and now operates his many hatted restaurant out of Salt at Kingscliff.

By the mid-eighties the restaurant scene in Byron was rapidly increasing, this influx could have partly been due to the fact that at this time random breath testing (RBT) had just been introduced.


Simple ideas are often the best and one of the more whimsical and popular restaurants from this time was the Fondue Inn. Run by chef 'Welsh Bill', it may have been a culinary space in time, like something from a '60s TV series, but it was loved by locals for 15 years.

It was inevitable that eventually Italian cuisine would finally arrive in Byron Bay. Francesca's which was run by warm and genial hosts Dorothy and Joe, was a trattoria style restaurant which was a total crowd pleaser and as pleasurable as a belly full of pasta. The other Italian restaurant, perhaps a little more sophisticated was Il Duomo. Il Duomo is rumoured to have had the first espresso machine in Byron Bay. Maybe it was here that our first local Barista was born.

Without doubt an honorable mention should go to Earth 'n' Sea Pizza which had its beginnings in 1975, not forgetting its two main characters Ian Hamilton and Bill Wheatley who many will remember for their promotional rendition of Basil and Manuel from Fawlty Towers.

Today, outside a major provincial city, Byron Bay and its surrounding countryside probably has more dining possibilities than anywhere else in Australia. Food fascination locally continues to thrive. We've come a long way, but what a heritage.

John Bassett has owned and run many restaurants and cafes in the Byron area. Creating beautiful food has been his life's passion. He is soon to launch his new blog 'byronbayfoodie' about the local food scene.



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Sophia Cowen & Ali Toft: 1997 protest against mega chains tempting us towards 'sameness'



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Cheese please

WILL STUDD



Over the past few decades there has been a revolution in the world of cheese. A revolution led by us, the consumers, increasingly concerned about what cheese we eat, and where it comes from. Fed up with the bland mediocrity of mass industrial production on display in the large supermarkets we have increasingly become aware that cheese doesn't have to come in predictable plastic wrapped packs with little or no flavour. Instead we are demanding tastier varieties, with distinctive flavours, textures, aromas, and authentic taste of place.

Cheese is one of the oldest, most complex, and intricate of natural fermented foods. It is produced by allowing milk to decompose, a little, using bacterial microbes to change it from liquid to solid form. In our modern antibacterial obsessed age this idea might seem a little off putting, but not all decomposition is a bad thing when it's controlled; if you are not convinced think of wine!

There is a significant difference between the 'art' of hand making cheese on a small scale, and the science of modern dairy technology where every stage in the process is defined, and any deviation is considered a fault. The most interesting cheeses are handmade, and vary in quality from day to day, and season to season, depending on a host of different influences.

Their crucial starting point is good quality milk sourced from healthy animals, and recent changes to Australia's overly strict mandatory pasteurisation laws finally enable the legal production of local 'hard cooked' cheese varieties from raw milk for the first time in half a century.

Handmade 'artisan' cheese also has major implications for animal welfare, rare breeds, regional diversity, and the environment. They encourage quality milk production and enable

dairy farmers to add value to their hard work. When we choose to buy artisan dairy products at farmers' markets, or specialist retailers, we are supporting sustainable family farming and respecting a cheesemaker's skill, intuition, and patience.

The Northern Rivers region has a rich history of dairy farming, but it is easy to miss the small obelisk that stands outside the information centre in the heart of Byron Bay. Beneath it is a plaque that honours William Clifford and reads 'a friend to everyman and every man his friend'. It is a reminder that the town was the original home of Norco, and the largest cooperative butter factory in the Southern Hemisphere.

Dairy farmers from the southern states moved in to the region to take advantage of the sub-tropical climate and high rainfall in the hinterland behind the coast after much of the indigenous rainforest had been logged for timber in late 19th century. A legacy of the dairy boom that followed is the railway tracks that once linked the Tweed and village dairies across the region to the Byron butter factory in Jonson Street and the wreck of the WSS Wollongbar at Belongil beach which used to transport the butter in wooden boxes to Sydney.

North Coast Cooperative butter making at that scale became extinct years ago, and many of the small family dairy farms supplying milk and cream disappeared with it. This makes the few that remain all the more special, particularly those making distinctly local cheeses with a taste of place. Here are two favourites you will find at the farmers' markets.

Nimbin Valley Dairy are the pioneers of local artisan cheese. Established in 2007 by third generation local farmers Kerry and Paul, the 120 hectare farm lies on the outskirts of Nimbin village, and is home to a flock of



The centre will not hold.

JOAN DIDION



Photo: Michael Robinson

inquisitive goats, and a small herd of cows. After trying to make a go of the farm by selling milk to Norco they decided to change direction and began selling goat's milk at farmers' markets. One of the quirks of Australian law

is that it is legal to sell raw goat milk, but not raw cow's milk. A cheese dairy and range of exceptional award winning goat's and cow's milk cheese followed.

In contrast For the Love of Cheese is one of the region's newest artisan dairies. Built by Debra Allard and her husband Jim several years ago the family farm has a history dating back to 1895. The lush pastures of the Burringbar Valley are now home to the farm's single herd of old breed Jersey cows which are renowned for their rich golden milk. Traditionally used for making cream and butter, Debra has successfully adapted the milk to produce a diverse range of cheese varieties.

Enjoy the revolution.

Will Studd has been working with specialist cheese for more than four decades, is the author of two comprehensive books on cheese, as well as the executive producer and presenter of Cheese Slices, a unique television show focused on artisanal cheese. willstudd.com



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The astrological mandala

LILITH ROCHA



We are born at a given moment, in a given place and, like vintage years of wine, we have the qualities of the year and of the season in which we are born. "Astrology does not lay claim to anything more." Carl Jung, Leo.

As Jung also famously noted about astrology – the art of tracking the patterns and orbital cycles of heavenly bodies as they interact with our earthly world: "Such a large percentage of the population has an insatiable need for this counter pole to the scientific spirit..."

Humans are pattern-tracking animals, which goes some way to explaining the ongoing attraction and practice of astrology from ancient mystery schools to modern day tech-heads all exploring that great galactic love affair; the cosmic convergence between ourselves and the celestial spheres. While the scientifically-minded rightfully question whether we're really affected by goings

on in outer space, quantum physics continues to demonstrate the synchronicity principle underlying the connection between all things.

Many of the powerful forces we take for granted in daily life are invisible, like electricity and microwaves. In the astrological model, planets represent living qualities of energetic intelligence that move through each of us in a continuous choreography of creation.

The astrological mandala maps our ways of engaging with and participating in our world, describing the various styles in which we embody these energies as they influence our incarnational adventure. Or to say it another way, how the Bigger Story is telling itself through each of us.

Using planets as symbols for particular energies and zodiac signs for the different ways these energies operate, the mythic language of astrology can sometimes seem like mystic mumbo jumbo,



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Life is not evenly dealt or felt.

RUSTY MILLER

but the unconscious mind instinctively recognizes and responds to its poetic metaphors.

"The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are all part. The Sun is a great heart whose tremors run through our smallest veins. The moon is a great nerve centre from which we quiver forever... These are vital powers, rippling exquisitely through us all the time." D. H. Lawrence, *Virgo*.

I personally find astrology most valuable as a set of fluid guidelines rather than mandatory rules: a kind of stellar weather report for those who want to take advantage of the prevailing climate. It's not a rigid system imposing simple certainties on complex mysteries, more an ongoing conversation that invites questions, reflection and discourse.

When the Melbourne Sunday Observer first commissioned a weekly astrology column in 1970, I was thrilled to have Michael Leunig ask if he could illustrate it (happy dance!) even though the paper folded the following week (sad face). Since then I've written continuously on astrology related topics including shopping guides, racing tips and moon diaries to food, fashion and erotic stars in publications from here to Hong Kong to Bahrain.

Surely covering the same subject each week for half a century gets boring? Not so far, since I love the down to earth, practical applications of astrology in everyday life: the fascinating and aggravating ways people approach their preferences and peculiarities, reactions and strategies, dreams and fears.

Zodiac archetypes can be extremely useful, not for slotting people into static categories, more for providing insights into how others view the world differently. Understanding that some people engage via their senses while others communicate through ideas or feelings can make challenging behaviours more comprehensible.

And after learning to work with one's own internal cast of characters, it's easier to expand our repertoire of responses to the rest of humanity's fashions and passions; to accept our loved, and not so loved ones for who they are, and who they

aren't. "Only those serving an apprenticeship to nature can be trusted with technology." Sir Herbert Read, *Sagittarius*.

Undeniably, we live in violent times: a crucial period of global history seething with the seeds of awful and awesome possibilities. So as we face this year's tidal wave of apocalyptic prophesies, tsunamis, tectonic shifts, hurricanes, earthquakes, political irresponsibility, economic instability and war on many peoples' doorsteps, are there hopeful omens? Can astrology offer us any clues to how we might align with the invisible currents in the biosphere and become conduits for bringing healthy magic into our environment? I think so...

How? By animating the template of Uranus in Taurus, this year's major planetary placement, which favors reconciling and combining Uranian values - the information age, evolution of collective consciousness, digital technology - with earth-centred, organic practices that honour Tauran instincts and traditional wisdom.

We might perhaps start by investigating nature's indigenous ingenuity, its integrated hierarchy, self-assembly and resilience. By practising biomimicry, the study of nature's recipes: learning the language of bees who vote by dancing, copying the coyote's wild sense of humor, or the way wolves stop to play even while being hunted... Keeping in mind that however we address our world, that's how it's going to reply. And yes, we can expect a degree of rebellion and backlash from areas which have not in the past been addressed with respect.

But humans are good in times of crisis. We know how to wrap our arms round each other and move forward. Life's endlessly rich with gifts, so bring your full wardrobe of talents to this year's planetary party: beauty, humour, kindness, your own personal flavor and forte. Let's dream big, be generous and just for the future fun of it, hit PLAY to find the most joy in doing the most good.

Lilith Rocha is secretary of the poetry group Dangerously Poetic, founder of local Hawaiian hula troupe Mana Aloha and currently writes astrology columns for the Sydney Morning Herald, Melbourne Age, Australian Womens' Weekly and Byron Shire Echo.

From butter & bacon to bloggers & brunch

COURTNEY MILLER



A place is so many things - it's the barista knowing your coffee order, the line up parting briefly to give you that one wave of the day. It's the familiarity we have with people we see regularly but whom might not know our name or any other facts of our life but with whom you've had a bunch of great conversations with. It can be where we feel at home, where we find 'our people' or the opposite. It's layered with everything we've experienced and for each of us it is singularly unique.

American writer, Rebecca Solnit's book 'Infinite City' comprises 22 distinctive maps of San Francisco, which open up a world for infinite map making. Some of her maps include: details of where every murder in the year 2008 was committed contrasted with the beauty of where each living Monterey Cypress tree grows, a phrenological depiction of San Francisco where the Mission is labeled 'Desire for Liquids' and the Financial District is labeled 'Acquisitiveness,' and a combined map of gourmet food spots with past toxic sites that contrasts artisanal chocolates and the alleged birthplace of the martini with mercury mines and radioactive waste.

I would love to produce a similar book of Byron maps with its multitude of contradictions

and stories. Solnit's premise is that places are infused with our memories, our experiences, the energy of all the other people who have been there too. Places encompass the overlay of clichés, expectations and whatever it is we are going through in life at that moment. We can be in one of the most incredible cities in the world and have the worst night or in some hellhole in the middle of nowhere after a rubbish day and have the best time of our lives.

With time, the layers of a place infuse, merge and warp and through the many layers become different things to each person who passes through. Byron is my home and thus holds a myriad of my childhood memories, how it was and the people that I know. But it's also the perceptions and the overlay of what it was and the place it has become. After a couple more trips around the sun and many cities in between, I now live in San Francisco. My sense of Byron is changed with every trip home, every conversation where I explain where I came from and what that means to that person, every new memory fused to my established notions of my hometown.

There are infinite ways to capture the spectrum of how Byron could be mapped. One of the

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Life is long. Some people stick to the rules, some people question who made them.

TONI COLLETTE

biggest changes in recent history has been the transformation of Byron from an industrially rich region - the region of butter-bacon-bananas-beef and blubber to its current lifestyle emphasis where one is far more likely to be a blogger or backpacker and either make or buy copious amounts of beer, brunch or bikinis. Many Byronians work hard, holding three or four jobs just to be able to live here. But they do it for the lifestyle. They're not flensing whale blubber, sand mining Tallow Beach or working a traditional farm. They're designing dresses, making flat whites, instagramming their photogenic life or building interesting modern businesses - working out a way to be able to be flexible and free from the rat race that plagues city dwellers.

What makes Byron's individual sense of place special is also the broader context in which it sits. The map of Byron has changed as Australia itself has grown up, as we've graduated and formed our own identity, pushed away from our British Empire parenthood and become more affluent than early settlers could ever have imagined. The black sheep of the world have created their own place in Byron made possible by the forces of this new land of opportunity - Australia.

People would be shocked seeing photographs of Byron in the '70s. On Tallow Beach a crawling dune-eating Mad Max-like floating dredging machine with a snake-like tail, sucked up wet

sand and spewed out tons of black concentrated heavy metals. Some of this now radiated material was deposited at the depot where Woolies is now located. The main street was treeless as was the lighthouse headland and although I've time and again heard the cliché of Byron moving from being a whaling station to a town that marched to save whales, the photographs will turn your head.

Cartography is often the way in which we imagine a place, all the clear simple lines of roads and houses are made all the more detailed with Google maps. Yet it leaves out the human detail; the stories, the people, and the memories. Individual's stories and their impressions, large or small, make up the human topography.

I yearn for this town like never before: its people, my people. I covet long, warm days at the Pass where seemingly everyone on the beach is someone I know and you can order pizza to be delivered while we watch the sunset. I pine for days when the Northerlies spring up and we hike deeper inland into the bush in search of cool, windless creeks.

My childhood Byron no longer exists; there are long traffic jams on a market day let alone another festival weekend. It's overloaded, expensive and Hollywood money is moving in and building mansions that Beverly Hills would fancy. Some people think filling in the wetland on the way

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I ache in the places
I used to play.

LEONARD COHEN

into Byron Bay and adding almost a thousand homes is a good idea. I would love to do a map of a visitor's trajectory around town, overlaid with the wanderings of one of Byron's burgeoning homeless. I would love to be able to map the cars that have Queensland licence plates in town at any one moment. I want to make a map of all the wins this town has had protecting or bringing back the beauty of this region and who was instrumental in making that happen. I'd love to know what a few local characters have as Byron maps in their heads!

Whether you've just arrived or have lived here all your life, we each carry our own Byron map; our rock star parking spot in front of our favourite cafe or the time of day we find a rare moment of peace in the centre of the hoards and yet away from it all, the dotted memories that are sparked as we walk, run, ride or drive through town. This doesn't mean we can't relate to each other. We don't have to feel the exact same thing, we don't have to be in the same tribe, have the same experience or walk the same street to have some understanding of what another human feels.

From what I know of Byron's original peoples - the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, Byron has always been a meeting place. At a time when we are coming together less and articulating our differences rather than our similarities, the physicality of place pulls us together.

Courtney Miller was born and raised in Byron Bay. She's lived, worked and studied on every continent bar Latin America. She's worked at the highest levels of Australian Federal Government policy, heading Comms for Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and most recently headed up the Australian Fashion Council.



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Seeing clearly

STEPHEN BRADY



We think of vision as a passive, receptive process but our brains actually *construct* our visual experience from the myriad electrical impulses which travel down our optic nerves after light energy (photons) strike our retinas. Our individual conditioning - expectations, personality, emotional state, beliefs, state of mind – all influence the construction of our final visual experience. Take colour vision for example. We have no way of knowing if the way I see the colour red is the same as the way you perceive it. Colour is our *individual* interpretation, or response, to a specific frequency of light. Try and describe the colour red to somebody born blind.

So, vision is our response to light energy. What is light then? Light is a great mystery. Light is an electro-magnetic energy spectrum and our eyes are attuned to only a small portion of this vast spectrum which encompasses radio-waves, x-rays, infra-red and ultra-violet radiations to name some. So, most light is actually invisible to us.

Our modern understanding of light has come mainly from the field of Quantum Physics. Quantum Physics is essentially the study of the very small, fundamental building blocks of everything that exists in our physical universe – the sub-atomic realm. Einstein demonstrated that light and matter are aspects of the same thing. $E = mc^2$. Matter is essentially 'frozen light'. So, everything is composed of light energy units called photons and it is these 'packets' of light energy which strike the retinas of our eyes and create the electro-chemical reactions that result in our visual perception. Our minds then construct our subjective visual 'reality'.

Photons can behave quite strangely. They somehow exhibit characteristics of particles (matter) and waveforms (energy) depending upon the experimental conditions set up to study them. They blink into and out of existence.

They have even been seen to respond to the expectations of the observer of the experiment that is profound because the idea of an objective reality that exists 'out there' independent of an observer (the inner world of our consciousness) is challenged by this finding.

As an Optometrist in Byron I have the privilege of working with two subjects I find interesting - light and the mind. Both can behave and react in mysterious ways! Optometry is thought to be precise in its application and yet we are dependent on the feedback from our clients to arrive at our results! In terms of size, the eyeball is much bigger than an atom and much smaller than a planet so it exists between the random quantum realm and the highly ordered cosmic realm. Fortunately there exists some measure of predictability with vision science and my measurements are usually pretty reliable but I sometimes encounter a case that reminds me that the quantum reality exists with all its quirks and unpredictability.

Everyone is familiar with the process of testing eyesight on a letter chart to determine if they are seeing as clearly as they should. The challenge is that this measurement does not always relate to how people describe/experience their own sight. I often encounter people reporting terrible eyesight who then proceed to almost read the bottom line of the letter chart. Just as often I encounter people who breezily tell me they have fantastic vision and can barely read halfway down the chart.

Vision is a subjective phenomenon and the mind and personality of the individual observer is an integral part of that process. We attempt to reduce eyesight to a few numbers when prescribing lenses for people but I can have two people with the same lens prescription who have entirely different experiences wearing their lenses.

The following illustrates an extreme example. A man with multiple personality disorder



Humans are social animals. We need communities. The biggest contributor to the explosion in loneliness and depression is social fragmentation .

HUGH MCKAY

was being studied at a university in the United States due to his unusual vision. He confounded scientists by exhibiting the physical characteristics of someone with myopia (near-sightedness) in his main persona but upon switching to his other persona he exhibited the signs and symptoms of being long-sighted. Even more amazing is that in one persona he was diabetic and yet his blood chemistry was normal in his other persona! Apparently a 'switch in his mind' had the power to change his eyesight and his blood chemistry.

The link between his personality and the status of his visual system is difficult to explain if one fails to acknowledge the role our individual minds, especially our sub-conscious minds, play in constructing our visual perception. It also challenges the prevailing model of vision science that sees vision problems as being the result of a misshapen eyeball.

The link between personality and eyesight is typified by myopic individuals usually being bookish, introverted and detail-obsessed while long-sighted individuals tend to be more extroverted and entrepreneurial. Of course, these are generalisations and exceptions to the rule abound but I am amazed at how often the stereotype seems to hold true. What is obvious to me is that everyone is an individual

and you cannot always pigeon-hole people with a convenient diagnostic label. As one of my mentors was fond of reminding me, there is a unique personality behind every pair of eyeballs I examine!

Stephen Brady has been practicing optometry for over 20 years and been working at the Byron Bay practice since 2000. He has furthered his education, completing masters subjects in Behavioural Optometry. byronbayeyecare.com.au




Photo: Tao Jones



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Have I made it yet?

RENEE SIMONE



My parents are Jamaican but I was born in the grey UK. I knew my whole life it didn't fit. I needed sunshine and colour.

Story upon story saw my arrival in Sydney in 2003. A commercial came on the radio for auditions for the show '*Popstars*' the original pop idol show. I decided to go for it. After an intensive bush bootcamp elimination process I made the finals. Being a finalist on the show meant having to live under house arrest in the *Popstars* house. It was months and months at a secret location. They were hiding us away from the paparazzi who were trying to leak who the finalists were while the station were still airing the first auditions and bootcamp rounds.

In order to be in the Top 10 we had to first sign a Universal Records contract. The daunting process of doing the back and forth for weeks with lawyers to understand what I was agreeing to was a frightening and priceless eye opener to the reality of the industry. There it was, all the fine print laid out in front of me. This was the deal, negotiations are over, are you in or out? I was on a mission, I was cynical and apprehensive, but in.

They put us through months of torment filming us morning till night in the house. It was like *Big Brother* meets *The Voice*. There was no rest, no peace. They openly wanted to get the contestants to break down or to turn nasty on one another to boost TV ratings. The whole show was based on the premise that the contestants would be so hungry to 'make it' and be 'successful' they would play the game. But who's game? Who's setting the rules? Who is 'the industry'? I was confused. Was I really doing all this so I could keep on with this bizarre soulless nightmare beyond the confines of this mistake of a show? It didn't feel to me how music had always felt. I got sick. My hair started to fall out (and that's quite something when you have dreadlocks).

The vibe was all wrong and the show was a flop. Even the judges were dropping out. I told the

producers I wanted out. I actually said the exact words "I'm going to Byron Bay to go to Bluesfest to recharge and then do something more worthy." They laughed at me and one of them said, "You'll never find anything more worthy than this."

In 2004 I moved to Byron and became a youth worker and singer. I was surrounded by wild performance art in the streets and a myriad of world class music and culture. It was a melting pot: Japanese, Brazilian, Spanish, Middle Eastern, Italian, African, Indonesian, Pacific Islander and more, all congregating in 'Cavanbah - the meeting place'. All had been drawn to this mecca of relaxation, freedom, creativity and amazing surf. The landscape and the climate beg for relaxed jamming from a bed in the back of an open van looking out onto the waves and the occasional pod of dolphins.

I had a baby. My baby's father was also from the other side of the world and although we didn't stay together in the same household we made a pact to support one another as we both have no family here. We agreed to never try to take the baby away from one another. I was officially trapped in paradise.

I was in a number of bands as a backing singer until two Indonesian musicians and I formed the cruisy island style ukulele trio *Blackbirds*. We loved playing in the streets, we performed high end pop-up shows with beautiful seats, plush rugs and vintage lamps. Holiday makers and locals kicked off their shoes and danced in the streets with freedom and acceptance. People in the crowd came together and acknowledged each other and shared energetically in the combined experience. It was inclusive and fun. I was truly at home with the alchemy of music and how we were able to conjure a bubble of magic, a 'Byron Bay Experience' which was magnetising and electric.

After releasing the *Blackbirds* album and then my solo album *ROAR* I had employed a series



Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.

ANONYMOUS

of managers to help us to 'get out there', but the penny finally dropped. I realised that my success is none of anyone else's business. It's 100% personal. Other people can't define my version of success. What they wanted me to do, what they told me I needed to do, I didn't want to do. Their definition of success translated as the opposite of where I wanted my life to be and the opposite of the life that I was so immensely grateful for. I was no longer wooed by the mirage of a false 'success'.

I looked at my icons and saw the repeated story of mysterious tragic deaths of legends dying in a lonely room: Whitney Houston, Janis Joplin, Michael Hutchence, Michael Jackson, Amy Winehouse, Hendrix, the list goes on... No thanks.

Success is being relaxed and present.

Success is being there for my child. Success is having true love. Success is a drama free existence. Success is back porch jams. Success is the silhouette of a palm tree as the sun is setting. Success is having time. Success is riding our bikes to school via breakfast at the farmer's market. Success is beach days with friends and family. Success is a home filled with fresh flowers from beautiful events I have played at. Success is lunch with friends. Success is having the wisdom and freedom to say no to other people's version of my success. Hallelujah I've officially 'made it', and I'm eternally grateful.

Renee Simone is Director of entertainment company Byron Bay Experience specialising in immersive Byron experiences. She is a DJ and singer. Her album ROAR is based on a collection of her interviews with young women and mothers. www.byronbayexperience.com.au
www.missreneesimone.com



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Byron Bay View



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Around the sun

RICHARD EVERIST



An iconic sign at the entrance to Byron currently says: Cheer up, Slow down, Chill out.

Could it ever say: Stop here, Turn around, Go Back?

Many of the world's most beautiful cities and sights are being destroyed by a tide of tourism. More than a few Byron locals – and visitors – think this is true for Byron Bay.

There is no sign the growth in numbers will slow, so it seems inevitable the town will be swamped. Or flooded. Or over-run.

The only certain solution is to halt the growth. But is halting the growth of tourist numbers desirable, possible, or even ethical?

Might any cure for growth be worse than the disease?

In the past, political attempts to control population numbers, or the movement of people,

have either been horrendous in their own right,

or had grotesque unintended consequences.

I find it hard to make a case for more fences and

borders in the world, but there is an increasingly

influential group of people who think that

keeping people out of their own backyard is

their inalienable right.

Their thinking runs along these lines:

My family migrated here (or I migrated here a

year or two ago!) and this gives me the right

to exclude anyone I don't like, or anyone I think

might negatively impact on my quality of life.

I got here before you did so it's mine, all mine!

Finders keepers!

Many Australians like this line of thought,

although the inconvenient fact that the

Aboriginal peoples were here first and were

forcibly dispossessed has to be swept under

the carpet.

Today, we are prepared to indefinitely lock up

people (and children) who come here without

our permission – all to enforce the finders

keepers principle.

Australians are not alone. Trump is building a

wall between Mexico and the USA to prevent

migration from the south. A key motive for Brexit

is to prevent migration to the UK from the east.

Given every modern nation state in the world

(including the UK) was stolen from its original

owners, the movement of people is nearly

always based on 'might is right': the might of

armies, or the almighty dollar.

Does Byron have only two choices?

Digging a ditch from Ewingsdale to Broken

Head, seceding from the Commonwealth of

Australia, and creating the People's Republic of

Byron Bay is one. But this does not appeal. I'd

be sad to lose The Farm and secessionist wars

rarely go well.

Letting capitalism take its course is another



To live is the rarest thing
in the world. Most people exist,
that is all.

OSCAR WILDE

option. Some say once the development of Byron Bay reaches saturation, its charm will be so diminished no one will want to visit and the locals will be left in peace. But this has not happened on the Gold Coast. Even though I love its energy, the Gold Coast is proof unfettered capitalism rarely goes well.

Is there a third way? In a former life I was an author and the global publisher for Lonely Planet. Lonely Planet produced guidebooks that were much loved by backpackers, the shock troops of tourism. As a result, I am frequently held responsible for the destruction of Bali and Koh Samui. Even Byron Bay.

First, I prefer to blame the Boeing Company. Second, I argue that all travellers are effectively guests in someone's house. It is not appropriate for visitors to move into their host's bedroom clutching a fistful of dollars in one hand and an M16 rifle in the other.

Outsiders and visitors must respect their hosts, and the wishes of their hosts.

So one of the key questions for me, as publisher and travel author was, did the people of Koh Samui and Bali want tourism?

Actually, most did. They wanted the things tourism paid for: electricity, toilets, schools, and hospitals, roads, refrigerators, and TVs. What looked like paradise to backpackers in the '70s and '80s was grinding poverty and back-breaking work.

What the locals didn't want was half-naked westerners lolling in their temples, or a tide of sewage and plastic on their beaches.

And the people of Byron?

The people of Byron do want tourism. Our community depends on it. But we do not want Byron to turn into another Gold Coast, nor do we want it to turn into another Barcelona, another Venice, or another North Sydney beachside suburb.

So, the third way is a messy way. It involves outsiders and visitors respecting the wishes of



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their hosts. It involves constant vigilance and engagement. It requires a people's movement, protests, and forcing politicians to listen.

As they have done in the past, Byronians will have to make their wishes known. Hopefully, politicians, outsiders and visitors will listen. Respectfully.

Of course the Byron community does not have one voice, but I got the soap box first. This is what I believe Byronians want:

We do not want multi-storey development or massive buildings. We do want buildings that are modest in size and sympathetic to their surroundings.

We do not want degraded beaches, creeks, and national parks. We do want sustainability. We do want to protect the environment.

We do not want more housing for rich people. We do want affordable housing for average/low income people.

We do not want more cars. We do want pedestrian and cycle friendly streets.

We do not want our existing housing stock to be taken over by absentee landlords and Airbnb. We do want to be able to offer low-key

accommodation in our homes.

We do not want to become an expensive, elitist playground for the rich. We do want to be a place where real people live, with multicultural workers, tradespeople, entrepreneurs, creatives of all sorts – and respectful visitors.

Our weapons will be protests, petitions and the ballot box. We'll develop intelligent, thoughtful planning controls, licensing and penalties. We'll try to find ways the 2.1 million (and growing) visitors who come here every year make a financial contribution to the town they enjoy and the infrastructure they use.

We'll charge parking fees that will make your eyes water. We may even have a vehicle toll, and we'll fight the state government to allow us to introduce a bed tax. The traffic jams and potholes will be awesome (it's a cunning ploy!).

And, of course, we respectfully ask that visitors cheer up, slow down, and chill out. Or turn around.

Richard Everist first visited Byron Bay in 1975 and fulfilled his lifelong dream when he moved here with his family in 2016. Today, he runs Around The Sun, a travel company that specialises in comfortable, ethical adventures. www.aroundthesun.com



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Cleaning water to save the climate

JON WITTENBERG



Climate Change has had a noticeable effect on the world as we know it. Erratic weather events have become more frequent, changes in regional precipitation have become glaringly noticeable, and sea-level rise and recession of the polar ice caps are more deeply ensconced in our daily conversations than ever. Research organizations such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), NASA, the National Center for Atmospheric Research, to name a few, have all amassed an impressive data set over the last several decades that have focused on global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, atmospheric CO₂ concentrations, and average global temperatures. These data demonstrate that global atmospheric CO₂ concentrations, which once hovered around 240 ppm (pre-industrial revolution), have steadily risen to a present day level of greater than 410 ppm. That increase has shown an overwhelming correlation to a rise in average global temperature of 0.6°C that has taken place over the same time period with 2016 clocking in as the hottest year on record.

So, is it all doom and gloom from here on out, or is there a viable solution on the horizon?

Many agree that the solution is to achieve a zero-carbon grid through the use of alternative forms of energy, as well as good old fashioned conservation. But is that enough? To date, efforts to thwart the rapid rise in average global temperature have mainly centered around the development and implementation of renewable forms of energy. In fact, international agreements such as the Kyoto Agreement, and more recently, the Paris Accord have been relying solely on renewable technologies alone as a means of capping the rise in global temperature at 2°C.

However, many reports, including the IPCC 2018 Summary for Policy Makers have stated that the move to renewables alone is no longer sufficient to reverse the rise in average global temperature, and that elimination of fossil fuel combustion will

have to be *combined* with efforts to reduce current atmospheric CO₂ levels through the process of sequestration and long term carbon storage.

Carbon sequestration is a process that actively removes CO₂ from the atmosphere and stores it long term in an inert form or biological system. This can be achieved through a variety of means, some as simple as reforestation and better land management. But natural processes alone are no match for the rate at which industry emits CO₂. A mechanized means of carbon capture will have to be employed to keep up with global CO₂ emissions that are currently estimated at ~38Gtons/ year (38,000,000,000T).

A handful of sequestration technologies have been developed in recent years and are showing up more frequently in the literature. Some of the most notable include technologies such as CO₂ injection which works by pumping CO₂ into deep oil reservoirs which are then capped for long-term storage. There is also Direct Air Capture (DAC) which is designed to form carbonate salts through an evaporative process in the presence of cationic minerals. Another technology that was big in the media recently was the CarbFix Project in Iceland, which permanently fixes carbon into deep basaltic rock through heat and pressure. Each of these technologies have gained traction at the pilot scale and have been well funded through companies such as Carbon Engineering, Climeworks, and Global Thermostat to name a few. While these mechanized means of capturing CO₂ may be viable at the pilot scale, they all face a set of similar challenges. Carbon sequestration is a nascent industry, and lacks the infrastructure to run at large scale. These technologies also tend to have high energy and water requirements, and some have not proven their effectiveness in terms of long term carbon storage. Each of these challenges translate into prohibitively high costs, and most likely, a skewed net carbon balance.



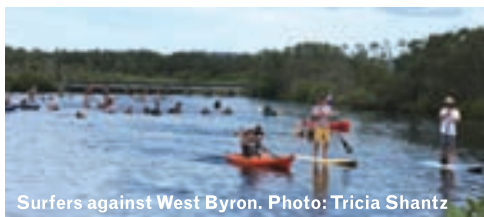
Societies accrue their greatest wealth at the moment they face death.

CHRIS HEDGES

However, a solution may not be that far out of reach. Carbon capture technology could possibly overcome many of these challenges if the philosophy were to change a little bit. For instance, one way to lower capital expenditures might be to look for opportunities to utilize or perhaps modify existing infrastructure with which to operate. Minimizing new construction saves money! Other opportunities for cost reduction could be to utilize free sources of energy or co-generated energy, or to perhaps find waste streams that could be used as raw materials in the sequestration process. Each of these examples would not only serve as a means of cost reduction, but would also benefit by lowering energy demand, therefore making the process more carbon negative.

A great example would be to utilize nutrient runoff in wastewater as a means of capturing CO₂. As we know, nutrient loading is a concomitant public health issue that is causing the eutrophication of both fresh water and marine ecosystems via the formation of unwanted algal blooms. These algal blooms thrive on nutrients that come from treated waste water effluent and agricultural runoff. Developing a process designed to move these harmful algal blooms upstream into a controlled environment would allow for the opportunity to capture large quantities of CO₂ and would treat wastewater simultaneously.

This process could easily be achieved through the use of high rate algae ponds. High rate algae ponds are an age old technology that operate by continuously supplying excess waste nutrients, atmospheric carbon dioxide, sunlight, and water under an optimal set of conditions. The result is that these components get rapidly converted into algal biomass via photosynthesis. This type of process would be ideal to use in combination with existing wastewater treatment facilities or agricultural facilities as each of these necessary components would be readily available. This is essentially using one waste stream (free raw materials) to mitigate another waste stream (CO₂). The potential for communities around



the globe could be that local agriculture and municipalities alike could become centers for carbon sequestration. The marriage of these two processes would help communities hit their carbon reduction goals while simultaneously treating their wastewater.

In addition, this process has another potential, and that is to generate a revenue stream through its carbon rich end-product. In order for algal biomass to be considered a permanent carbon sink, it has to be converted into something that is non-biodegradable. The answer; a high-carbon charcoal that is produced through a process called pyrolysis. This end product is referred to as Biochar, and has received attention from a variety of disciplines for its social, environmental, and financial benefits, such as: creating a soil amendment that improves soil health and agricultural productivity, returning nutrients to agricultural processes thereby relieving the need for heavy fertilizer use, and it is estimated to remain stable in soil for thousands of years and can be considered a permanent carbon sink. Additional input streams for Biochar production could come from a myriad of other waste sources as well, such as municipal green waste, food waste, or agricultural waste, all of which could augment sequestration efforts. The take away message is that there are cheap and viable means to mitigate climate change right at our fingertips. We just have to figure out how to get them implemented at local and global levels.

Jon Wittenberg is a surfer, kayaker, mountain biker and musician who lives in Half Moon Bay California. He has a BS in Molecular Biology and Chemistry and works in the biotechnology industry on clean energy. Over the last two years he has focused his efforts on climate change mitigation through the use of microalgae.

How to live a truly zero waste life

ANITA VANDYKE



This is a story of how I became an accidental environmentalist. I didn't grow up with a hippie mother or a passion for the environment. I was just a person trying to find happiness in all the usual places – money, power and status. But this triumvirate of success didn't provide me with the happiness that I expected. I was wasting away my life.

At age twenty-six I was a manager in a large engineering firm, earning more money than my Chinese migrant parents ever had. On paper my life was the epitome of success. I was the one my parents didn't have to worry about: the daughter who graduated high school with a near perfect UAI, had a well-paying corporate job and the latest Givenchy boots in my closet. It was supposedly a picture-perfect life. That all changed in an instant.

I remember sitting in that board meeting on Level 6, looking at my boss, my boss's boss and the big boss, thinking is this it? Is this who I will become in five, ten, fifteen years' time? I realised then that if I kept going down this path, all my hopes of living a life that was truly mine, one that wasn't bound by golden handcuffs, would be lost forever.

These questions haunted me and when the doubt started to make me miserable, my husband looked me in the eyes and said "You have to quit your job – it's killing you." I knew then that if I didn't do something about my everyday misery, I risked losing him.

I quit my job the next day.

Since that day, my life has transformed. By embracing a zero waste life, I have been able to go back to university to study full-time to become a doctor, I've moved out of my in-laws' house into a 59-square metre apartment and I've dedicated my life to something greater.

Working in corporate Australia didn't reflect who I was, but that doesn't mean it's not right for everyone: you certainly don't have to quit

your corporate job to live a more eco-friendly life. But you do have to find what works for you.

The zero waste living movement is centred on reducing the waste you send to landfill and reducing the amount of plastic used in your life. But I want to show you that living a truly zero waste life means also not wasting your life away. Quite simply, plastic is Mother Nature's non-renewable resource, and time is ours. We shouldn't waste either one.

I want to show six simple ways to live an *eco-luxe life*, one in which we can all be zero waste activists without depriving yourself of the modern luxuries of life.

TIP 1: Replace your disposables with reusables

- Replace items such as plastic bottles, paper napkins, plastic grocery bags, disposable coffee cups with reusable options. Make yourself a zero waste kit to take everywhere. A zero

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All change in history,
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the non-conformists

A J.P.TAYLOR

waste kit can include; a reusable water bottle, reusable coffee cup, cotton bag, stainless steel drinking straw and a spork!

TIP 2: Set up a composting system that works for you – food waste is a major issue! Food sits in our landfills and emits toxic greenhouse emissions. It's time to compost food scraps instead of sending them to landfill. This might be as simple as sharing a compost bin with a community garden or even setting up your own. ShareWaste.com is a free community website that allows you to see what compost bins are in your local area.

TIP 3: Shop the outer aisles of the supermarket or at bulk stores – shopping the outer aisles of the supermarket means that you are buying package-free food. Not only is this better for the planet, it's also a healthier option for you and your family!

TIP 4: Make secondhand your first choice - whenever you need to buy something, try to see if you can buy it secondhand first. Look at

local thrift stores, ask neighbours and friends, try eBay - make a good effort to try to buy secondhand before buying new.



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The problem - and it is a problem, throughout the West - is *quis custodiet*: who guards the guardians?

GEOFFREY ROBERTSON

TIP 5: Be mindful of your time and money

— put yourself on a spending ban, eliminate unnecessary engagements from your calendar! Money is a renewable resource that we should not waste, time can never be gained back — we should be mindful of how we use both these resources.

TIP 6: Head outside! - By enjoying the outdoors and seeing how amazing Mother Nature is, we can learn to appreciate that every step, no matter how small, is important in helping our planet. In living a truly zero waste life, you actually gain more — more time, more money and more life. Isn't that what we all want in the end: a life of happiness, a life of luxury, a life that isn't wasted?

Anita Vandyke is a qualified rocket scientist (graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering — Aeronautical Space) and runs an Instagram account (@rocket_science) about zero waste living. She currently splits her time between studying Medicine in Sydney, and living with her husband in San Francisco. She launched her first book, *A Zero Waste Life: a thirty day guide*, in 2018. anitavandyke.com



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Byron's fire risk

ZOFIE LAHODNY-GECSO / NORM GRAHAM



Compared to other parts of NSW we live in a lush green part of the state, however there is a very real risk of bushfire in Byron Bay. Even though we live by the coast and much of our surrounding vegetation falls into a wetter category, looking around Byron, you can see just by the presence of certain plant species, that this area has and continues to be exposed to fire, whether by lightning or human activity.

Since colonisation the natural environment of Byron has been significantly altered by activities such as farming practices, industry, sand mining and finally urban sprawl. These activities have all contributed to making Byron's fire risk what it is today. During summer months we experience hotter weather coupled with coastal winds, which has a drying and cumulative effect leading to the potential for bushfire.

Many houses in Byron have been built on the

urban interface adjoining heavily vegetated areas, which pose a significant fire risk. A lot of these homes were built prior to 2006, when a stricter building code in relation to bushfire was imposed. As such there are a significant number of homes built, in timber and other materials susceptible to fire, in close proximity or adjacent to areas that naturally experience bushfire. Byron Bay is built on a wetland and continues to be surrounded by two wetland systems: Cumbebin Swamp and Cibum Margil Swamp. Some of those areas include the Arakwal National Park and the Cumbebin Swamp Nature Reserve.

Most of the urban interface in Byron is in close proximity to volatile vegetation types such as coastal heath and paper bark swamps. Ti Tree species have combustible oils and paper barks pose a risk as their light bark can 'fly' as embers, some distance from the actual fire front starting their own spot ignitions.

A colorful advertisement with a background of paint splashes in red, yellow, green, and blue. At the bottom, there is a black and white image of a typewriter. The word 'Echo' is written in a large, colorful, 3D bubble font across the typewriter.

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'balm of miraculous
healing properties'.

ALEXANDER HUMBOLDT

The presence of peat, hundreds of years of decomposed vegetable material, can pose another fire risk. Once alight peat can burn for weeks or months due to its depth being indeterminable. The fire can run for a number of kilometres underground, only to pop up at a different location as seen during recent fires on the coast road to Lennox Head. Due to peat burning like an underground oven, it is too dangerous to place fire fighters in these areas because the ground can suddenly give way and engulf a person. There are many areas that contain coastal peat in the Byron Shire, with the Belongil Cumbebin wetland in the Cumbebin Swamp Nature Reserve being one of those sites.

Fire is a natural occurrence in the Australian landscape and this is reflected by plants such as Banksias, Wattles, Eucalypts and Sheoaks. These species need to have the heat of a fire before their seedpods will burst to allow germination. Grasses, shrubs and groundcovers will die back after fire, but the post fire ash will provide a nutrient rich bed for regeneration. Other

adaptations to living with fire can be evidenced by Eucalyptus trees that have lignotubers or epicormic buds, which allow for reshooting from the base of the tree, or from where a branch meets the tree trunk after exposure to fire. Too much or too little fire can have deleterious effects on ecosystems, but in the right amounts the environment can flourish. It's getting the mix just right, that is the skillful part.

Zofie Lahodny-Gecso has a degree in Applied Science specialising in Parks & Wildlife, she works with NSW Rural Fire Service Far North Coast, and has lived locally



Photo: Tao Jones

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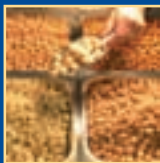
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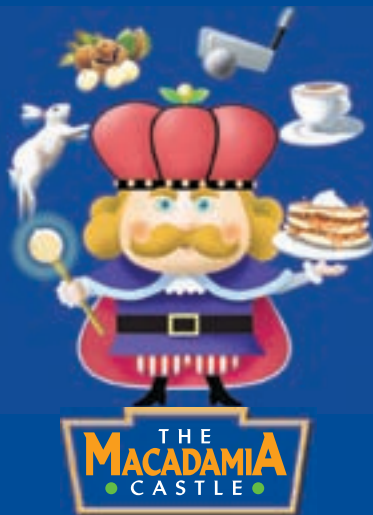
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Norm Graham Arakwal National Park Ranger

As a child my mother would often take me down to Tallow Creek, Byron Bay with my Aunties. Walking through the bush they would reminisce and recall about living at Ironbark Avenue and one of the stories I would overhear was about the place 'needing a good clean.' They would talk about their father Jim Kay burning the bushland near their home camp, bush that is now part of the Arakwal National Park. He would clean up the bush so that it would be healthy, open so that you see where you are going, and allow the plants and animals that need the fire and new shoots to live and thrive. There was a touch of sadness in their voice that the bush was allowed to get into such a state. If Country is not healthy and the animals getting their food or the mob not being able to collect bush tucker – then we cannot be happy and content. Fire and burning Country the right way allows today's mob to practice our culture like our ancestors, connect with Country, use and be sustained by Country, look after Country so that it will be healthy.

Norm Graham, an Arakwal and Bundjalung man, strives to conserve his family's culture & stories in honour of his mother Yvonne Graham and her sisters Lorna Kelly, Linda Vidler and Dulcie Nicholls who initiated a native title claim in 1995 over lands in the Byron Bay area.



Photo: Tao Jones



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Climate change is only half the problem

BOB DEBUS



If you stand beside the Lighthouse on the peak of the Cape Byron Headland Reserve, the eastern tip of Australia, you will be witness to one of the finest views of the natural landscape to be seen anywhere on our continent. You will also be looking at some of the great successes of Australian environmental policy.

Below, if you are lucky, you will see the school of dolphins resident in the Cape Byron Marine Park, to the south along the coast Arakwal National Park co-managed under an Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the Arakwal people and Broken Head Nature Reserve beyond; over the horizon the magnificent Bundjalung National Park.

To the west you will gaze out to the splendour of the forest national parks of the mountain ranges: Nightcap, Whian Whian, the Border Ranges, the majesty of the Wollumbin-Mount Warning caldera. And over the arc of the western horizon there are dozens more of the national parks that are included in the World Heritage listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, a global "biodiversity hotspot" and the most extensive area of subtropical rainforest in the world.

A period of great Park extensions around the turn of this century in northern new South Wales saw many timber workers change tools to become national parks field staff. Arrangements were also put in place to ensure that remaining productive forests were managed to protect vulnerable species and logged sustainably. At the same time measures were developed to carefully limit the clearing of native vegetation on private land.

These historic achievements were even more important than most of us understood at the time. The loss of habitat is still the primary cause of the vulnerability and continuing extinction of species. But it also becomes more evident as the years go by that forest conservation and regeneration is critical to the mitigation of climate change itself. Healthy natural forests are

globally critical for the reduction of greenhouse emissions. In everyday terms the consequent requirements are pretty clear.

Good public environmental policy will include the effective management of national parks against the threats of feral animals and weeds and inappropriate fire regimes. It will seek to encourage the careful stewardship of land that is privately owned, to create more formally protected land wherever that is reasonably possible and to support the collaboration of land managers of all kinds in programs to make the wider landscape healthy and resilient. However, this is exactly the opposite of the policies that conservative governments have deliberately followed in more recent years.

The capacity of the National Parks and Wildlife Service to manage its estate has been consistently reduced by budget cuts and redundancies. The regulations introduced to ensure sustainable logging practise in working forests were first ignored and have later been abandoned to allow virtual clear felling in parts of the North Coast. New regulations concerning the clearing of private native woodland vegetation are ineffectual. Landcare, a wonderful institution for landowner support, has been diminished.

For the sake of our kids and the health of our Earth, we need to get back on track very soon indeed!

Bob Debus has worked as a lawyer, publisher and ABC Radio broadcaster. He later held many portfolios in the Wran and Carr NSW Governments, including Minister for Environment (1999/00) and Attorney General (2000/07), and served as Minister for Home Affairs (2007/09) in the Federal Government of Kevin Rudd.



Saving Byron's soul

NICQUI YAZDI



Byron's greatest gift is not its beautiful beaches, but its beautiful people. What many visitors to Byron probably never realise is that this amazing place has the highest number of volunteers in Australia, not just giving at a local level, but also on a global level. Volunteers are the real backbone of this community, giving their time to countless causes and initiatives, from picking up rubbish on our beaches and volunteering to look after the more than 10,000 schoolies visitors who descend every year, to saving orangutans in Borneo. Byron is a community full of campaigners, protestors, activists and gift-givers who are incredibly passionate about their causes. It's not just our older folk, our young people also volunteer and are activists.

We have successfully protested against inappropriate developments that would have daunted other small communities. One such development was the proposed mega Dan Murphy's bottle shop a few years back, when they thought they could just move into Byron Bay and open up a massive discount liquor superstore here, three times the size of all of the current bottle shops combined. The planned location was directly adjacent to the only real entertainment venue for young

people, the cinema. As a community we made our voices heard to the NSW government. The community wrote so many objections, that the NSW Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority actually came to Byron Bay and held its first ever community forum to address the social impacts of the proposal. They heard the pleas of young and old alike, including local doctors, nurses, and the police who had not traditionally been able to express their professional views, as all stood in front of the panel and presented the town's case. Byron Bay did not need another liquor outlet, let alone one selling heavily discounted bulk alcohol.

Concerns like this are not new here. Our community protested against McDonalds back in 1997 with the 'No Maccin Way' campaign. We've since taken on KFC, who right from the start should have realised we would resist. They also thought it was ok to cut down a tree to make way for a sign. You don't cut down trees in Byron and think we won't notice. As Joni Mitchell sang, "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot, with a pink hotel, a boutique and a swinging hot spot." Byron Shire is the only shire between Brisbane and Sydney that does not have the three big fast food chains of McDonalds, KFC and Pizza Hut. We are proud of this and we work

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We thought we were saving time; instead we revved up the treadmill of life to ten times its former speed and made our days more anxious and agitated

YUVAL HARARI (SAPIENS)

hard to keep it that way.

Byron Shire is no stranger to speaking its mind. There was the world famous photograph of 750 naked women and children who got together at Australian singer, Grace Knight's home in the hinterland in 2003. We formed a massive love heart encasing the words NO WAR, spelled out by our naked bodies, to protest against Australia being roped into the Iraq War by USA President George Bush. When Grace dreamed up the concept to get 76 women to her place she had no idea that in the end there would be ten times that number, along with our children. It happened again when we spelled out 'NO CSG' (Coal Seam Gas) in massive numbers on Main Beach. We Locked the Gate on that too.

One of the most pressing issues in Byron Shire over the past couple of years is the amount of unregulated holiday rental accommodation. The Shire has 85 times the national average of holiday rentals and the majority are unregistered and unregulated. The NSW state government has been legislating on this but Byron is a unique situation and does not fit into their one-size fits all policy. Byron Shire, along with Manly in Sydney, has the highest proportion of visitors to resident population in the state. The residential population is declining, as residents are forced out due to the high increase in housing and rental costs. It is now more expensive to live in Byron than some of the world's largest cities. Remember the t-shirt 'Paris New York London Byron Bay?' We have now earned this dubious placement. Permanent residents pay the price

for this, with some no longer being able to afford their chosen town. Some of these residents are leaving, including activists and volunteers and we seriously need these people. Holiday letting needs regulation and residents need affordable housing .

Keeping Byron's soul alive and healthy requires eternal vigilance. As a community we will keep working towards this, thanks to the passionate dedication of our many activists and volunteers.

Nicqui Yazdi is a long-time community volunteer, youth advocate and activist, who has led countless initiatives in Byron over the last 20 years to address the needs of young people, and the community as a whole.



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Screenworks

KEN CROUCH



When people think of our region they don't always think or know that there is a thriving filmmaking industry here. This wasn't always the case.

It was in the mid 1990s when a small group of local filmmakers in the Northern Rivers got together at a barbeque at a time when the number of screen content creators and producers had steadily been growing in the region. By 2000 there was sufficient demand to create a hub for networking, professional development, crewing and increasing production in order to generate professional film and television work for the locals. Screenworks was formed. From the beginning it was a grass-roots membership-based association that focused on providing support to each other and on finding ways to increase film and television production in the region.

Over the years, the charitable non-profit organisation has grown along with the increasing number of filmmakers in the region and is now the largest regional screen industry body in Australia that continues to connect local stories and storytellers with Australians and the rest of the world. This is in keeping with our area where a small group of people have a creative, big idea and are able to bring it to fruition and take it to the world.

Two of the reasons why this organisation continues to grow is the unique creative environment that the region provides and the fact that it is home to a great range of talented screen industry professionals - including award-winning screenwriters Deb Cox (*Miss Fishers Murder Mystery*) and Belinda Chayko (*Safe Harbour, Secret City*), producer/writer Cate McQuillen (*dirtgirlworld*), producer Lois Randall (*Grace Beside Me*), VR specialist J'aimee Skippon-Volke who also runs the Byron International Film Festival, actor Dustin Clare, director and founder, Fighting Chance Films, and Will Gammon, founder of Byron Bay-based Cumulus VFX.

Like many industries in Australia unless you live in one of the main cities such as Sydney or Melbourne it is hard to pursue a full-time career in the film & TV industry. As a result, local filmmakers often find that they have to travel to where the work is or find other ways to make ends meet – waiting tables comes to mind or serving coffee. This is especially the case for young people in the region who want to pursue a screen career but don't have the means or desire to leave their family and friends to access opportunities.

In recent times, to help tackle this tyranny of distance, Screenworks has been creating initiatives that provide young people with the chance to get their first experiences in the industry on productions filming in the region. These experiences have provided incredibly valuable writers' room and on-set experience in addition to providing important connections with professionals that have led to ongoing work opportunities. Given the Australia-wide issue, and in our region in particular, of high youth unemployment, this allows young people to stay, learn, and gain work experience without having to leave the region.

Screenworks' Deadlock initiatives began when it partnered with Every Cloud Productions (*Miss Fishers Murder Mysteries, Gods of Wheat Street*) to organise and deliver an innovative script development lab in Byron Bay that would develop a new multi-platform series written by and specifically for young people. The script development lab experience provided young people access to professionals working in the industry and the chance to gain much sought after experience working on the development of a new series.

Since holding the development lab in 2015, Deadlock has now gone on to be produced and screened around the world. In fact, it was one of the young writers who participated in the Screenworks script development lab - Billie



In India there is a saying:
'You have to learn to live
with the snake in the room'

JOSHUA YELDHAM

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Include Billinudgel on your visit list

In the wake of Cyclone Debbie, Byron Shire Council and the Billinudgel community were awarded the Northern Rivers Business Recovery Grant from the NSW State Government. The aim of the funding was to encourage locals and visitors to come into Billinudgel, stay a time and explore the town and support local business.

Follow the new welcome signs from the highway and enjoy the new park and parrot art trail and nesting boxes.

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giving back is  in our nature

Pleffer – who went on to write and direct the five-part Deadlock series.

Not content to stop there, Screenworks went on to create the Deadlock Attachment Program (again in partnership with Every Cloud Productions), which provided paid on-set experience for nine, local 18-30-year-olds. Funding for this program came primarily from donations and philanthropic grants from the local community who continue to be concerned about the number of young people having to leave the region as a result of the lack of opportunities provided locally. Again, this is very much in keeping with this region being a giving community when it's needed most.

Most of the applicants to the Deadlock Attachment Program had never worked on a professional film set previously and were eager to take advantage of the rare opportunity to work alongside professionals without having to travel away from home. Screenworks ensured that the young people who were selected were able to gain skills and experience in roles that they were passionate about pursuing as a career. As an outcome of the program, many of the young participants have gone on to secure further screen-related work.

Increasing diversity in the screen industry is

another issue that is being addressed through our Createability project - a three-year initiative that provides funded opportunities for filmmakers living in Regional NSW to showcase artists with a disability living and creating in their community. Each of the 20 short documentary films created provides the viewer with an up-close encounter with each of the artists and showcases their creative talents and the important role that art plays in their day-to-day lives. Many of the artists featured in the short films have gone on to successfully secure funding or have been commissioned to undertake more projects as a direct result of being involved with the Createability project.

Over three years, Createability has featured artists from the far corners of regional NSW including Broken Hill, Bega, Wagga Wagga, Albury, Upper Hunter and Lake Macquarie. The films produced have been distributed widely, including as part of a 'Createability Collection' on ABC iview, around the globe in many film festivals and in the sky as part of Virgin Australia's Inflight Entertainment. The ABC has also broadcast all of the films on their free-to-air channels, in addition to their international network.

In early 2019, Screenworks will be announcing several new programs. One of these will be a new international scholarship program that will send a screenwriter from regional, rural or remote Australia to Hollywood to undertake a four-week residency and will facilitate connections with industry executives in the U.S.

Despite its growth over the past three years, Screenworks retains and prides itself on being a home-grown Northern Rivers institution that continues to benefit the local screen practitioners and filmmakers, as well as the community and that is one thing that will never change. We are focused on connecting the global screen industry to the Northern Rivers region and shine the spotlight on the abundant beauty and incredible talent that can be found right here in our backyard.

Ken Crouch is CEO of Screenworks - a not-for-profit registered charity based in Northern NSW that supports and advances the screen industry across regional, rural and remote Australia. www.screenworks.com.au

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photo: suerado

Justine Elliot MP

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The happening place

DARIUS DEVAS



I grew up in Byron and as a teenager like most of my friends I couldn't wait to get out of here. I wanted to be where life was happening and in my mind it wasn't here. I spent my twenties chasing that 'happening place' all round the world and ended up in some amazing locations and connecting with incredible humans, but that 'happening place' always seemed around the next bend. I ended up settling in Melbourne and for a brief moment found that 'happening place' in a bohemian gypsy music scene full of life and colour. But it was fleeting and soon the warm colour that painted the streets with its vibrancy dried up.

I continued to live in Melbourne for several years, coming to a dull acceptance that my time in the 'happening place' must have come and gone and just got on with my life. After a big relationship break up I made a spur of the moment decision

to return to Byron. It was one of those rare decisions I have learnt to trust, it was coming not from some spread sheet of pros and cons in my mind but an intuitive feeling about what I needed in my life.

Returning back to Byron this time around something was different. For the first time in my life I wasn't trying to chase the 'happening place.' I simply no longer wanted to live in a city and had a strong desire to be back in the ocean daily. I began to recognise that I was affected by anxiety and that city living although not the cause, hadn't helped. So I began to do that Byron clichéd thing we used to laugh at our parents' friends for doing when we were teenagers, learn to 'connect with myself.' I explored different modalities, read tons of books and spent as much time as I could in the ocean. I found a set of tools and language to support me to begin to understand myself. Through this process it started to become clear that the 'happening place' was not out there but it was in me (if my fourteen year old self could see me writing that line he would die!) I had spent much of my adult life on this goose chase because essentially I was uncomfortable in my own skin and hoped that somehow some place was going to make me feel better, feel whole, feel connected.

Most days I still am uncomfortable in my own skin but now I can accept it and not try to run away from it. I understand that these feelings are coming from an old place of fear, of being alone, scared, separate, abandoned, and on and on. Now I work to replace those feelings with things that remind me I'm connected and whole, the ocean and nature, peer support, good friends and meditation all help to bring me back to accepting who and where I am.

I'm very lucky to have grown up here and have the option to return to a culture and place that actively supports a more holistic way of life for those who choose it. I look around at the wider

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ANONYMOUS

collective culture and it appears to me that most of humanity is moving further and further away from a life of inner connection in a frantic pursuit of striving for the 'next', constantly comparing ourselves to a barrage of perfectly framed hollow mirages, unable to appreciate who and where they are. Now I don't want to pretend that I am still not falling back daily into this way of thinking but I have an immense gratitude to at least now be able to recognise when it is happening. So now my 'happening place' is the rug on my lounge room floor where I sit and write this on a hot spring afternoon. It's certainly not what I dreamed of as that idealistic teenager years ago but it is my life and I do my best to be grateful and accept it, in whatever shape it takes.

Darius Devas is a local filmmaker currently making a documentary series called HeadOn that examines the lives of young adult Australians suffering in the midst

of the mental health crisis. To learn more about the project visit: www.documentaryaustralia.com.au/films/4302/headon/



Photo: Tao Jones



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Photo: Tao Jones

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A good newspaper, I suppose, is a nation talking to itself.

ARTHUR MILLER

Some local festivals....

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evolveyogafestival.com.au

BRUNSWICK HEADS FISH & CHIPS FESTIVAL
brunswickheads.org.au

FEBRUARY

BYRON BAY SURF FESTIVAL
byronbaysurffestival.com

MARCH

BRUNSWICK HEADS KITES AND BIKES FESTIVAL
brunswickheads.org.au

EASTER

BLUESFEST
bluesfest.com.au

BOOMERANG FESTIVAL
BI-ANNUAL
boomerangfestival.com.au

MAY

BANGALOW BILLYCART FESTIVAL
bangalowbillycart.com.au

JULY

SPLENDOUR IN THE GRASS
splendourinthegrass.com

AUGUST

BYRON WRITERS FESTIVAL
byronwritersfestival.com

BANGALOW CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL
visitnsw.com

BANGALOW BBQ & BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL
bbqbluegrass.com.au

SEPTEMBER

SAMPLE FOOD FESTIVAL
samplefoodfestival.com.au

OCTOBER

BYRON BAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
bbff.com.au

BYRON LATIN DANCE FESTIVAL
byronlatinfiesta.com.au

NOVEMBER

MULLUMBIMBY MUSIC FESTIVAL
mullummusicfestival.com

BANGALOW SHOW
bangalowshow.com.au

DECEMBER

UPLIFT BYRON BAY
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My generation really stuffed up;
whether it's the free market bullshit,
environmental devastation,
or the incredible gap between rich
and poor...

MARILYN WARING

BYRON GUIDE DIRECTORY 2019

PHONE (02)

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Byron Bay Writers Festival 2019: Level 1/28 Jonson St August 2 - 4 byronbaywritersfestival.com.au	6685 5115	59
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Byron at Byron Restaurant: 77-97 Broken Hd Rd www.thebyronatbyron.com.au	6639 2111	9
Byron Bay Services Club & Pandanus Room: Jonson St www.byronbayservicesclub.com.au	6685 6878	13
Byron Corner Store: 7/47 Jonson St www.facebook.com/byroncornerstore	6685 6672	
Byron Farmers' Market: Byron Butler St. Thurs morning Bangalow Sat morning www.byronfarmersmarket.com.au		19



Civilisation exists by geological consent, subject to change without notice.

WILLIAM DURRANT (1885-1993)

BYRON GUIDE DIRECTORY 2019

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Fel's Kitchen: 3/30 Fletcher street(Williams Lane)	0408 292 057	15
Finn Poké: Shop 5, 8 Fletcher St. www.finnpoke.com.au		21
Jonsons: Italian 111 Jonson St. www.jonsonsrestaurantbar.com	6685 6754	15
La Bottega: 1/7 Grevillea St Arts & Ind Estate www.peppepizzabyronbay.com	0404 508 041	45
Legend Pizza: 90 Jonson St www.legendpizza.com.au	6685 5700	12
Main Street Burger Bar: 18 Jonson St mainstreetburgerbar.com.au	6680 8832	21
No Bones: 11 Fletcher St. instagram/nobonesbyronbay	6680 7418	15
Safya Cafe: 8 Fletcher St. www.restaurantwebx.com/SafyaCafe/	6680 8005	16
Salumi: Quality Meats Rajah Rd Ocean Shores www.salumi.com.au	6680 1577	23
Slice Pizzeria: Shop 5 Cavanbah Arcade - beach end Jonson St www.slicepizzeria.com.au	6680 9357	
Sparrow Coffee: 1 Byron St Byron Bay & 32 Byron St Bangalow www.facebook.com/sparrowcoffeeco		20
Stone & Wood: 100 Centennial Cct Arts & Ind Estate www.stoneandwood.com.au	6685 9220	67
The Bread Social: 11 Ewingsdale Road at The Farm www.thebreadsocial.com.au	6684 7940	2
The Cellar: 4 Lawson St Byron Bay thecellar.com.au Byron St Bangalow	6685 6455 6687 1262	29
The Italian: 2 Bay St adjoining Beach Hotel www.theitalianbyronbay.com	6680 7055	17
Three Blue Ducks: 11 Ewingsdale Rd at The Farm www.threeblueducks.com	6684 7795	2
Top Shop: crn. Massinger & Carlyle St. www.facebook.com/TopShopByronBay/	6685 6495	16
GIFTS & SHOPPING		
Bangalow Rug Shop: 11 Byron St Bangalow www.orientalcarpets.com.au	6687 2424	36
Bay Gems: Beach end Jonson St. instagram/byronbaygems	6685 7437	31

Byron Photo Magic: Shop 20 "Mercato on Byron" 108-110 Jonson St www.photomagic.com.au	6685 5877	39
Eco Food Boards 128 Woodford Lane Ewingsdale www.ecofoodboards.com.au	6684 7804	37
Eden at Byron Garden Centre: 140 Bangalow Rd www.edenatbyron.com.au	6685 6874	42
Emporium of Wonders 8 Banksia Dr. Arts & Ind Est www.emporiumofwondersbyronbay.com	5614 8879	57
Skullcandy 63 Centennial Cct Arts & Ind Est. www.skullcandy.com.au	6639 5555	28
Sweetness, Skulls and Light: shop 7/4 Jonson St. Cavanbah Arcade www.sweetnessskullsandlight.com	0413 673 855	38
The Book Room: 27 Fletcher St. www.thebookroomcollective.com 2/60 Ballina st. Lennox Head	6685 8183 6687 6639	26
Traeger BBQ Grill: 63 Centennial Cct Arts & Ind Est. www.sb8.com.au	6639 5555	28
Turning Point Book & Prints: www.rustymillersurf.com	0428 847 390	65

HEALTH, BEAUTY & HOLISM

Feros Care: www.feroscare.com.au	1300 763 583	58
Fusion Health: P.O. Box 1999. Byron Bay. www.fusionhealth.com.au	1800 550 103	3
The Spa & Wellness Centre Byron at Byron : 77-97 Broken Head Rd www.thebyronatbyron.com.au	6639 2110	9

OPTOMETRIST

Byron Bay Eyecare: Stephen Brady, Fiona Eising, 6 Lawson St www.byronbayeyecare.com.au	6685 7025	
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PRINT, MEDIA & COMPUTERS

Byron Shire Echo: Village Way, Mullumbimby www.echo.net.au / www.echonetdaily.net.au	6684 1777	46
Rusty's Byron Guide: PO Box 851, Byron Bay, NSW, 2481 rustym@iinet.net.au / www.byron-bay-guide.com.au	0428 847 390	

SERVICES

Atlas Currency: Exchange 4/47 Byron St, www.atlascurrency.com.au	1300 261 090	50
Byron Community Centre: 69 Jonson St www.byroncentre.com.au	6685 6807	
Byron Community College - Never Stop Learning! For more details: www.byroncollege.org.au	6684 3374	
Byron Car Hire & Service Station: NRMA at the Railway crossing www.simmonsbyronbay.com.au	6685 6638	51
Byron Youth Service 1 Gilmore Cres / bys.org.au / info@bys.org.au	6685 7777	



Words are acts.
JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

BYRON GUIDE DIRECTORY 2019

PHONE (02)

PAGE

Future Dreamers Girls Club: 24 Marvel St
www.futuredreamers.com.au

0401 561 244

Labor: Justine Elliot. 107 Minjungbal Dv. Tweed Heads South.
justine.elliottmp@aph.gov.au

07 5523 4371

55

Ngara Institute: The Activist Think Tank - Mullumbimby
www.ngarainstitute.org.au

Northern Rivers Community Foundation: We help you help others.
PO Box 1426 Ballina info@ncrf.org.au www.ncrf.org.au

The Nationals: Ben Franklin ben.franklin@parliament.nsw.gov.au

9230 3793

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Tricia Shantz TS Consultants: Social Planning,
Social Geographer / Planning / Research PO Box 851

0421 422 645

SOLICITOR

BVK: Suite 2 / 13 Lawson St (upstairs) www.bvk.com.au

6680 8522

54

Ramsey Moloney: 1/6 Jonson St

6685 6400

29

SURFING

Black Dog Surfing: 4/5 11 Byron St. www.blackdogsurfing.com

6680 9828

39

Fliteboard 6/4 Banksia Dr. Arts & Ind Est. fliteboard.com

1300 00 FLITE

48

Let's Go Surfing: 84 Jonson St 6/4 Cavanbah Arcade Jonson St
www.byronbay.letsgosurfing.com.au

6680 9443

56

Munro Surfboards: 29 Acacia St Arts & Ind Est
www.munrosurfboards.com.au

6685 6211

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North Coast Surfboards: 1/29 Acacia St Arts & Ind Est
www.vouchsurf.com &
surfboardsbydonaltdakayama.com/about-us/about-hpd-australia/

6685 6896

6

Rusty Miller Personalised Surfing Instruction
www.rustymillersurf.com

0422 099 684

33

Surfection: 2 Banksia Drive Arts & Ind Estate www.surfection.com

6685 6022

45

TURNINGPOINT BOOKS
rustymillersurf.com





EMERGENCY NUMBER 000 POLICE, AMBULANCE, RESCUE, FIRE

Police Station	6685 9499	Byron Bay Library	6685 8540	NRMA	13 11 22
Marine Rescue	6680 8417	Byron Shire Council	6626 7000	WIRES - Wildlife Rescue	1300 094 737
Byron Central Hospital	6639 9400	George the Snakeman	0407 965 092	NSW Rural Fire Service	6671 5500
Byron Community Centre	6685 6807	Byron Bay Visitor Centre	6680 8558		

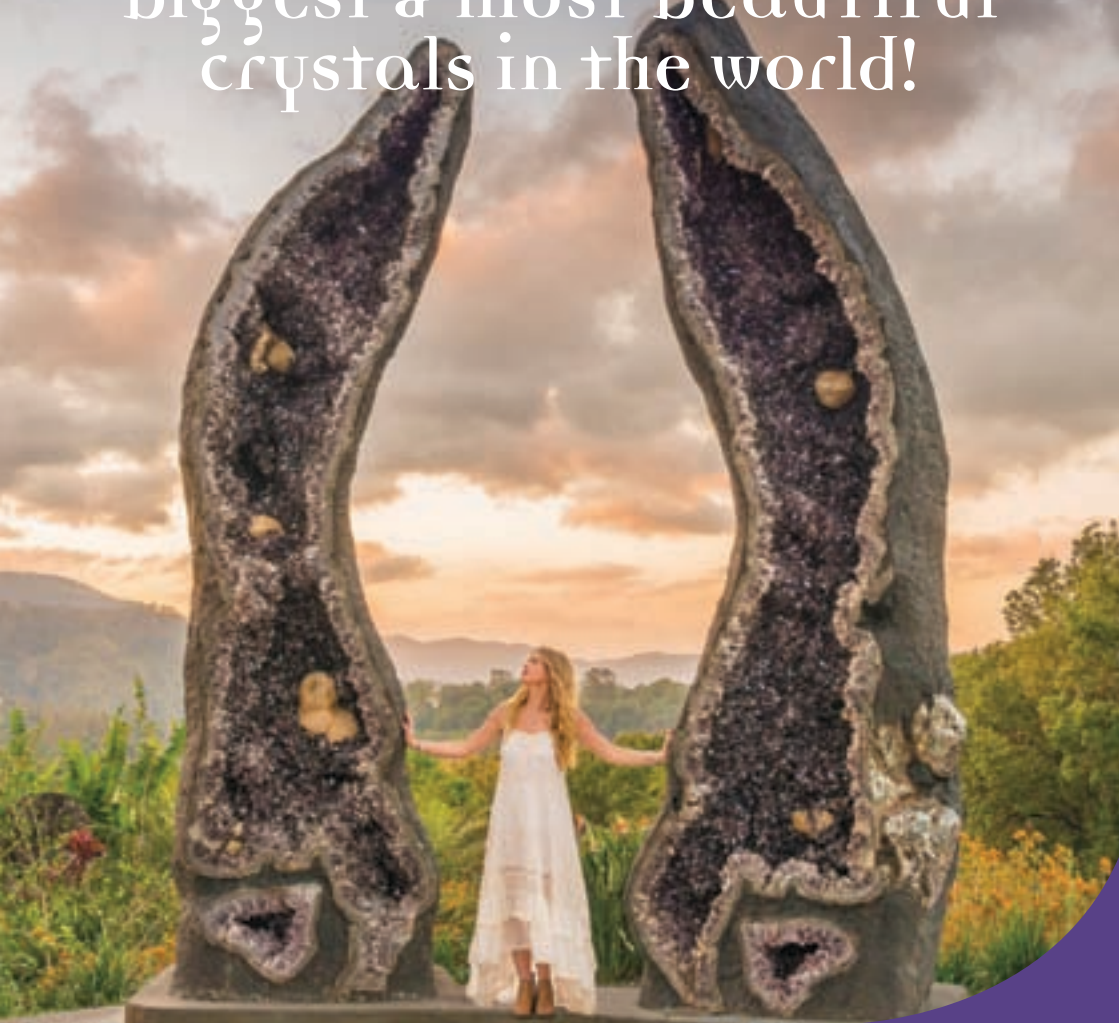


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stoneandwood.com.au



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Open 7 days 10am-5pm (NSW time)
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