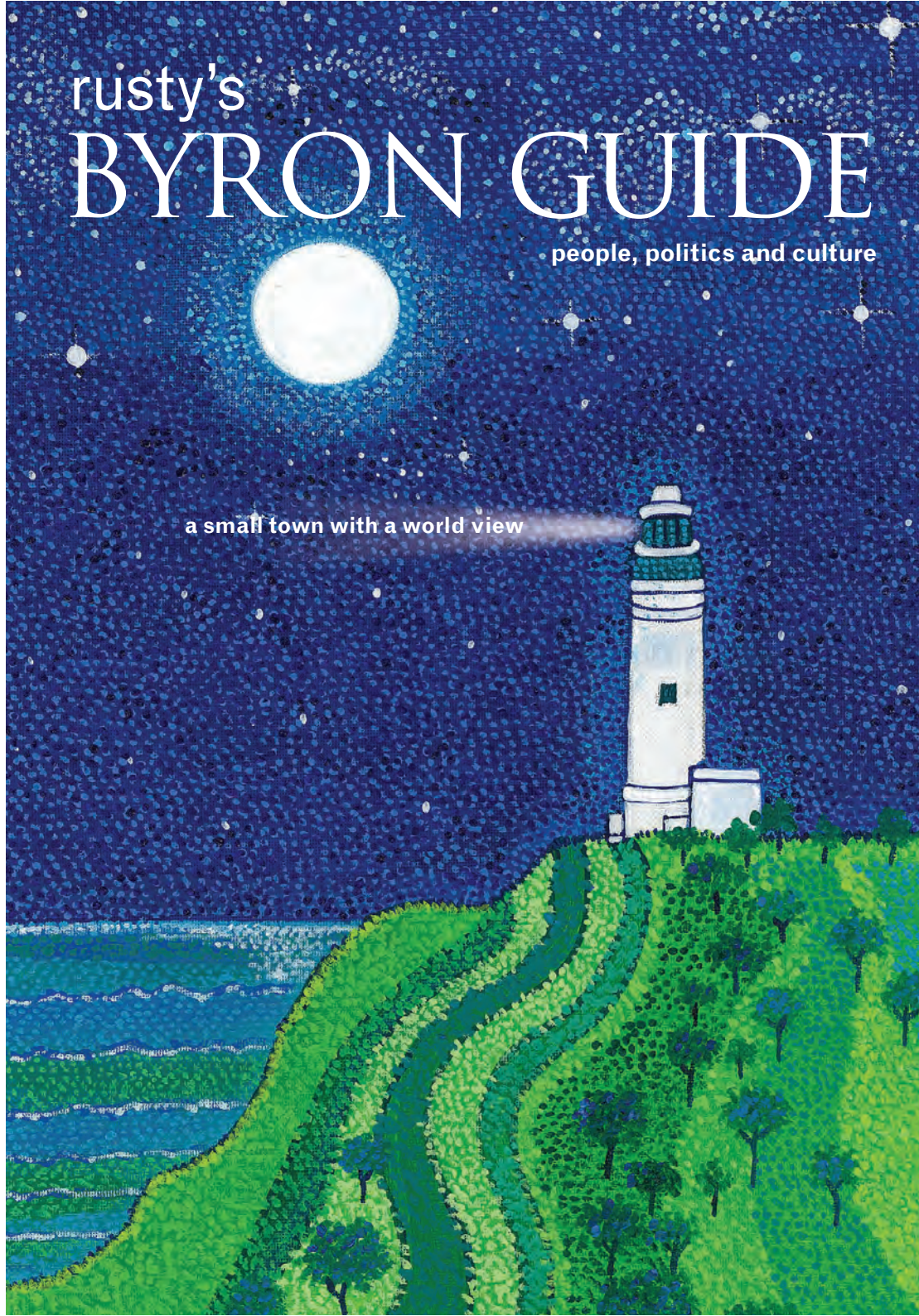


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people, politics and culture

a small town with a world view





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When hydrodynamics meets aerodynamics: Hank Gaskell all day on his Hydro Series boardshorts in southern Sumatra. SCOTT SOENS © 2019 Patagonia, Inc.



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RESILIENCE

AIDEN RICKETTS

A friend asked me this recently, "How do we continue to fight for this planet in the face of climate denial and crackdown?" and this was my reply.

"Once our basic needs are met the only worthwhile thing to do is try to make the world a better place. Let go of linear thinking and the idea of success or failure. There is no end point to history just a series of uncomfortable presents that need attention. The struggle against fascism is eternal. Can you imagine how frustrated fascists feel at the perpetual nature of resistance?"

This society is gripped by a collective psychosis of disconnection from ecological reality and the only antidote is re-connection to nature, the universe and love and a path that serves these.

We may not succeed, accept that, and then keep trying. Every day you awake with energy and in every moment it's a choice between serving the planet or falling prey to the psychosis of disconnection. The deniers and attackers are addicted to the psychosis, they are angry and afraid because it is crumbling. In physics the status quo is the most temporary and vulnerable thing of all, so those who are attached to it are permanently anxious and aggressive."

The recent climate strikes have shown us that we are not alone and there is a rising mass movement globally and in Australia waking up and demanding action on climate emergency and the extinction crisis.

The bullying and backlash being directed at the schoolkids and at Greta Thunberg in particular show the panic in the mind of the fossil fools. As frightening and overwhelming as it can be, the politics of backlash, denial, and authoritarianism is maladaptive.

Real resilience is adaptive, not reactionary. The authoritarian response (rising global fascism, anti-protest laws) is a real and present danger but it is also a sign of brittleness in the power structure as a whole.

The problem is global but the fight to survive needs to be local. We are a powerful region and we have fought off the fossil fuel industry and protected our old growth forests in the past. As a region we may be too far away from the parliaments or from the financial districts to engage in mass civil disobedience there (but go ahead by all means), but we have in our very region the most pressing front-line in fighting climate change and resisting the extinction crisis in our local forests, and we have a duty to be custodians and protectors. Let's join together and protect this vital wildlife habitat.

Aidan Ricketts Activist, Educator, Writer. Oct 29th Nimbin Good Times. aidanricketts.com

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Cover painting by Sylvia Meissner: Beautiful Mystical Byron Bay that is a Spiritual place for healing, tranquility, relaxation, energy and for fun. The Moon signifies opening the gateway to the heavenly stars for an awakening of a higher spiritual consciousness for mankind with a message to Green the Planet. Eye catching Indigo blue is about peace, diplomacy and pioneering vision to help the World make a better place to live in.

RUSTY'S BYRON GUIDE

2020

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A SMALL TOWN WITH A WORLD VIEW

RUSTY MILLER & TRICIA SHANTZ



I first stepped foot in Byron Bay in 1970, half a century ago. I had a memorable surf at Broken Head, after which we went into Byron where I

saw a man riding his horse down Jonson Street. The shops were small and individually owned. No shopping centres here, that is until 2019 when Byron Bay got its first Gold Coast taste of one on that same street. I fell for Byron then. Something happened just as it does now for the 2.2 million annual visitors. People are still falling for Byron.

But, what is still here, these 50 years later, are individual shops, a magnificent natural environment and the atmosphere of creativity. The vigilance to maintain this is as great as ever. We still protest; paddling out against fossil fuel mining and inappropriate development. West Byron has not yet been built. The Regional Planning Panel refused both Development Applications. And the people rallied against what they saw as a non-representative art work on the major road into Byron Bay. If you were here in late December 2018 and came back a year later, you would have missed it. Even though we are an art loving community it just didn't fit.

Byron is a water place, a place of waves coming from storms in the oceans afar. The wind blows and disturbs the surface, changes the texture, becomes a ripple, if it's strong and persistent, it causes a swell, the swell continues in one direction. The swell becomes a pulse. The rhythm and pulsing are shaped by the shallowing bottom and break into waves. Each wave is similar but also subtly different. When waves finish upon the foreshore their energy does not stop but continues in a different form and keeps going through the town and into the hinterland.

We have ridden the many waves of change over the decades. If you don't paddle strong enough into a wave, you miss it. You can also flounder in it or just observe it. If you choose or like its form you can catch it... Sometimes you don't even try to catch it. Are you going with the wave or against it? Which wave is Byron going to ride?

Byron is an idea. It is an ideal. It is a place where people can dream. It is Aldous Huxley's The Island. Again, it is the Utopian thought. David Jones, President of Destination Byron, says there are two very different tourism stories in the Shire, with 1.1 million day visitors and 1.1 million overnight visitors. "One thing that most folk in the town don't comprehend is that 50 percent of all visitors to our region are not staying overnight. That's a phenomenal statistic," he said. "We've become a weekender for Sydney and southeast Queensland.... The demand that Byron gets is very much organic and perennial, and generational." Our visitors love our place because it is low rise, full of nature, creative and different to anywhere else.

As we write this we are enveloped in smoke haze. There are fires throughout NSW – unprecedented fires. If we thought that fire was a risk last year, it certainly has heightened for us over the past year; even here, in the rainforest region, home of ancient forests, a sub-tropical climate with wet seasons. It seems to have changed all of a sudden. Climate change is upon us. And, yet our governments are not acting on it, even though 11,000 scientists co-signed a scientific paper declaring a climate emergency, backing protesters across the world demanding action. They warn of "catastrophic threat" to humanity. When we came here the hills in this region were bare, following years of logging and farming. Many of the new settlers realised the importance of the existing rainforests and protested to save any more from being



Beyond the place of rightdoing and wrongdoing there is a garden. I'll meet you there.

RUMI POEM, 13TH CENTURY PERSIAN POET

logged and began to plant rainforest species to augment the tiny remnants. It is a cruel irony that the rainforests are now beginning to burn and one of the most active fires in our region was in the Nightcap National Park; home to Terania Creek, where the protests to save them was won in the '70s.

When we, who have lived here for a long time, look at the changes to our place, we need to remind ourselves that we've saved a lot of Byron. Stand on one of the vantage points and see all that surrounding bushland. In a study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Paul Piff of UC Irvine and Dacher Keltner of UC Berkeley found that the emotion most likely to generate empathy and compassion is 'awe', the often-positive feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends ourselves. Awe, according to Piff and Keltner, helps with seeing bigger and thinking bigger. It shifts our focus from self-interests to

collective interests, and it motivates us to act in collaborative ways for a greater good.

People have always worked hard in Byron and pulled together in their own ways. Locally owned businesses and community organisations in Byron have always been generous in giving back to the community for the greater good. It is local, individually owned businesses that are still the backbone of all of our towns in the shire. There are a number of businesses here that are known as a B-Corp, which is a rigorous certification for companies that are concerned for their communities and the environment. Byron is in the business of preserving a way of life, that it sees as important – and obviously by the number of visitors they agree.



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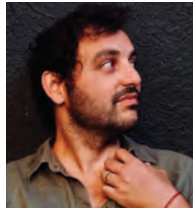
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MY LATE FATHER, BYRON BAY AND AUSTRALIA'S FORTUNE

ARI STEIN



For the first 27 years of my life, I grew up in Sydney, Australia. In that time I don't ever remember thinking to myself, what else awaits me out there.

What else could this blue and green sphere teach me about life? Never once did I expect that I would find myself living in the bustling trenches of Europe and that 12 years would go by so quickly.

Reflecting on my childhood/early adult years, growing up in Sydney was a treat. The only thing I knew as a child was the comfort of my parents, my handful of friends and the safety of my warm brown bricked semi-detached house.

As a child I didn't leave this idyllic safe space until I was 15, managing a whirlwind trip skipping

through the streets of Rome, Prague and Tel Aviv in about six weeks. Up until that point, the only excursions we ever made as a family were lengthy drives up and down the Eastern coast of Australia; those were the holidays I cherished most.

The first long sojourn we made was in 1992 when we set off to a small community situated two hours south of Brisbane called Byron Bay. Byron Bay at that time wasn't a place where property developers flocked to, or where Coachella styled Instagram kids would come to unwind; it flew under the radar.

The reason for the trip was that my father had won a respected songwriting competition and part of his winnings was to spend time in a studio with iconic singer-songwriter The Dragons frontman Marc Hunter.

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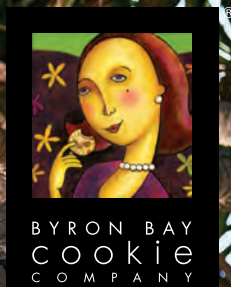
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What survives the wreck of time is the force of the imagination and the power of expression.

LEWIS LAPHAM, AMERICAN WRITER.
EDITOR OF HARPER'S MAGAZINE

I spent most of those 12-hour car trips sick, trying to get my dad to pull over to the roadside to empty my stomach. I remember vividly the floating aroma of sugar cane country, the burnt sprinkles from the fields wafting through our windows. We always knew we were close to our destination when we hit that point.

We must have visited Byron Bay 10-15 times over our collective childhoods, but I remember those times fondly. I remember thinking what a beautiful, spirited community it was - inhabited by a cast of characters who didn't care for the outside world.

The distant memory of my father taking us up there in his 1980s weathered Fiat was magnificent. It was a time when flying wasn't ubiquitous - when cars were still part of the family romance. When taking a journey was part of enjoying time with the family even if you didn't enjoy their company all the time, when mobile phones were not cemented in your hands.

We were an outsider Jewish family, so we fit in there, we found ourselves led by a father who was a true maverick. He taught us that it was ok to be who we were and to allow the rest of the world to worry about the differences.

Once upon a trip to Byron, we decided to include a pit stop to a surrounding area called Nimbin. At that time it was surrounded by a halo of marijuana smoke. I remember thinking at the time my father was rebellious for taking us there. To be fair, I was terrified. I had never seen people stoned. I felt that particular trip was our version of Kerouac's *On The Road*.

I remember Byron's warmth and idealistic compassion. Thinking to myself, there are places wildly different from my own safe suburban life. Chiming crystals, mystical incense, long-haired surfers mixing with hippies and of course the iconic Beach Hotel.

Byron Bay became a hotbed of activity for our family members: over the years one of us lost

our virginity there, one of us got caught up in deep spiritual experiences, another of us even slept on the beaches hitchhiking throughout the area, formative experiences that we took with us for the rest of our lives. It was more than just a glimpse into an alternative lifestyle.

I visited Byron in March this year (2019) after decades of absence, I was happy to be back. It felt distinctly familiar, with the same atmosphere of eccentricity and harmony leaking from its streets, with its drum circles and buskers. Unfortunately, I witnessed telltale signs of a town succumbing to a globalised world - all this talk about Byron losing its soul drifting through the air.

My father was a musician, artist, poet, bohemian and a spiritualist. Led by his comprehensive music and literature collection at home. There were always records laying on the floor, Bob Dylan or Van Morrison. Dylan even summoned him in person in 1986.

His heart remained in the villages of Eastern Europe. He was lovingly eccentric, and he felt stifled by the lacklustre soulful atmosphere of Australia. He never really saw anyone that resembled himself.

A culture I feel is a sum of its parts, and its parts were missing. Australia was always football ovals, cold beer, males with sprouting chests and materially inspired lifestyles. Owning your home was the be-all. There was no preoccupation with bookstores, cafes, theatres, art galleries, poetry readings or tribes of misunderstood cultures living side by side. My father yearned to venture back to places like Europe or New York, where he felt the streets included him.

As a whole, Australia is a country that was and still is concerned with its financial welfare, not its spiritual health. Ignited by its mineral boom, it set off a chain of events that would see Australia ushering in a new phase of self-adoration and high rise development.

I do love Australia though, its birdcalls, milk

bottle cafes; it's laconic attitude and its obsession with sports. I love its isolation. The general sense of space and its widened streets. I love that it doesn't make headlines in the global news. And when it does it's usually due to some minor tawdry political affair that has gripped the nation. But that was never enough for me.

My father passed away earlier this year, and it was by far the most tragic single event of my lifetime. He went so quickly, and the series of events that led up to it was utterly surreal, nothing will ever prepare you for such an event.

On further reflection, those trips we took to Byron Bay in the eighties and nineties remain etched in my heart. Trips that seemed to go on forever. Australia desperately needs a Byron Bay, an intellectual and spiritual haven for those seeking refuge. If it dies out, expats like myself and my late father will end up leaving forever, and that, in the end, will be Australia's biggest tragedy.

Having lived in Europe for over ten years, Ari Stein has been involved with the entertainment and tech scenes for many years, in 2015 he began his own interview/events platform 52 Insights. It's now an archive of discussions with some of the most influential humans on earth from Yuval Noah Harari to Jonah Hill to Anthony Bourdain. How am I feeling today? "Pretty good, thanks for asking." www.52-insights.com

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THE BAD BIRDS OF BYRON BAY

ROB HIRST



I've always thought of Byron Bay as a place to see with fresh eyes. A place to leave, a place to revisit, time and time again. With fresh eyes, I know that I'll never fail to see Byron's beauty. With fresh eyes, I know that I'll never take her blue brilliance for granted, nor grow weary of the infinite riches of her delightful human scale.

Recently I've been noticing something new – with those fresh eyes of mine. Every time I arrive in 'The Bay' I see more and more birds. In fact, in Byron Bay, it's not an overstatement: the birds are taking over!

The variety of birds here now is dazzling, their numbers staggering: greater than the passing whales of winter; greater than the critically endangered Mitchell's rainforest snail; greater than all of the potholes in Carlyle Street.

For bird lovers this is good news. Byron Shire is now arguably the best 566.7 square kilometres on earth to see birds – with the possible exception of the jungle-covered Caribbean bird-ocracy of Tobago. If, however, you're not a fan of birds, Byron can be a nightmare of Hitchcockian proportions.

Let's take a bird-watching wander north down Paterson Hill and into the Arakwal National Park – a precious coastal resource administered by the traditional owners, the Bundjalung people of Byron Bay, and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. We'll meander through the sandy woodlands below the Cape, then stagger up the rough dirt track under the rainforest to the famous lighthouse. Then it's down to Wategos Beach and up and over to The Pass, returning to the water tank on Paterson Street via Clarkes Beach and the playing fields.

Perhaps it's paranoia, but I'm convinced – from our very first steps – that crows, ravens, currawongs, magpies and butcherbirds are studying our every move, waiting for an opportunity to remove our scalps or peck our eyes out.

They're soon joined by a massed gang of yellow-tailed black cockatoos, refugees from the drought out west. These airborne juggernauts darken the sky, spreading terror with their plaintive battle cries and their insatiable appetite for wilful defoliation and senseless destruction.

We seek shelter in the woodlands to the east of Lighthouse Road. Yet even here, the birds have set their traps: brush-turkeys have sabotaged the track with piles of scattered mulch to ensure we slip, slide and fall on our faces and arses; eastern whipbirds – seldom seen but always heard – first startle us then, with their devilish ventriloquism, confuse us and cause us to lose our bearings; little wattletails flank us and surround us, cutting us off from supply lines, their 'kack-o kack-o kack-o' calls like someone trying to pull-start an ancient Victoria mower.

Fanciful? I think not!

Finally we're in the rainforest, where an eerie silence descends. A pretty eastern yellow robin hops away, a noisy pitta hides under dead palm fronds, a blue-faced honeyeater flits between the Tuckeroos. The roar of the Tallow Beach surf blankets the birdsong, creating a brief false sense of security.

Then, in a perfectly formed hollow made from natural organic fibres, we spot a most desirable specimen indeed. A recent arrival in the shire, the juvenile slow-life-influencer-bird ('hashtagus envy-us') has rapidly become a local Insta-celebrity with a huge international following. This beautiful bird is often accompanied by a



People need to stop grizzling about politicians and look at who put them there. Us voters.

BOB BROWN

handsome mate – they even surf together – plus a brood of cute honey-coloured chicks all sporting feathers made from the latest ethical linen.

After an almost vertical climb we emerge, breathless, to another world – one of sun, salt, strong wind gusts and huge horizons. Welcome swallows dart out from the mud nests they've constructed underneath the lighthouse cottage eaves; they bank alarmingly, then dive like Spitfires around our heads. Down at sea-level, gannets risk migraines, hurtling headlong into water as clear as Cryst-O-Mints; an osprey – one of those stern, humourless fish-eating raptors – perches on a sheoak and examines the scene for breakfast options (maybe us?); and pied cormorants dry wings the size of bedsheets on the most easterly rocks of the Australian mainland.

We take a short break at the picnic tables near the Pass Café. The southern pale barista-bird (*caffeinus tremulus*) is already here, engaged in

light-hearted banter with the locals. A common migratory bird from Avalon in Sydney and Elwood in Melbourne, the barista-bird uses the earth's magnetic field to triangulate its location so that it's never more than a two minute dash to a beetroot and goji berry soy-latte.

We trek along the beach, where we're bombarded by more bad-tempered birds. Beach birds always sound annoyed – silver gulls are forever screaming at someone or fighting over something – but the rainbow bee-eaters look particularly peeved since the recent big storms carved away the homes that they'd laboriously tunnelled into the dunes. Equally irritated is a pair of spangled drongos, who glare contemptuously at the passing parade of surfers, swimmers and beach-bums. 'So who are the real drongos here?' they cry out, impolitely. 'Thanks a million for the rising seas!'

Our last unpleasant avian encounter happens at the Marvell Street playing fields. Peewees (magpie-larks), plovers (masked lapwings)

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Photo: Tao Jones



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wetlands. A large bird barges in behind me and crash-lands on top of the tank. I recognise it immediately: it's none other than the big-bellied, white-footed developer-bird ('byronicus destructus'). A regular visitor from the Gold Coast, it's often spotted at council meetings attempting to ease local nest height restrictions.

Like I said, the birds are taking over.

Rob Hirst is a drummer, songwriter, founder member of Midnight Oil. He also plays in blues band The Backsliders and instrumental group The Break. He's the author of 'Willie's Bar'n'Grill' (Picador).

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SENECA



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CONNECTED FOOD

BEN DEVLIN



FAMILY CONNECTIONS:

As best I can tell I am part of the third generation of cooks in my family, with my grandparents on both sides having worked as cooks to various degrees.

The funny thing being that growing up I didn't feel any real connection to the hospitality industry as such, my direct family wasn't working in it and going to restaurants wasn't a large part of our lives. Food was however a big part of our extended family, particularly at family get-togethers. My mother's mother who was a terrific cook in the English style, put on massive Christmas lunches, baked ham, roasted chicken, gravy and multiple puddings and trifle. The day always did (and still does for me) start with paté on toast, and you weren't allowed to stop eating dessert until you had found a ha'penny in it and returned it for 50 cents.

But the bigger family influence on the kind of cook I am was probably gained through my Uncle Charlie's family. They are familiar to most Byron locals, as the custodians of the Fig Tree Restaurant in Ewingsdale. Visiting my cousins, there was always something to see or taste there that was completely new to me. Charlie and Heather travelled quite a bit through the world, and through the food that they would bring to family gatherings I would try things that I never understood but that have stuck in the back of my mind ever since. The kind of flavours that open your mind to a much wider world, things like saffron, cardamom, rose water, kaffir lime etc. To this day, the smell of fish roasted with butter, lemon and garlic will always trigger a memory of the Fig Tree kitchen and Charlie's food. But like most kids I didn't understand nor appreciate that exposure at the time, only much later in my career did I see how useful that upbringing would become.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS: It also wasn't obvious

to me at the time that this wider viewpoint on food techniques was also based on the idea of connecting more intimately with local food systems. One of the most beautiful aspects to our Northern Rivers area is the ability to produce foods that are common to other regions of the world. We have a great connection to south-east Asia and from certain climate and rainfall perspectives we share more in common with South America than we do with a European heritage with regards to our growing conditions. As a result, what we can call "local" are many foods that other parts of Australia can only dream of! This opens us up to a level of authenticity in the food we are able to produce, even when the ideas may be rooted in cultures that are realistically new to this land.

Family connections and this local produce was one reason that coming home to open my first restaurant (Pipit Restaurant) was a "no brainer". The other main benefit of the Byron area is the people that it attracts – which are people that value the community connection, support creativity, and see a way to make their passion and work a benefit to the area.

We have been lucky enough to build a restaurant of our own in Pottsville, and we use it to connect our family to other members of the community that have their own passions and skills to make great things. This doesn't begin and end with food and great farmers, but in building our restaurant, we also worked with many local designers and trades. The idea of food systems being rooted in the local community is wide reaching and can involve many creative aspects. As an example, we have formed ongoing collaborations with local ceramicist (Grit Ceramics, Pottsville) where we recycle grill ash, pipi shells and fish bones from our kitchen into glazes and bone china.

NEW CONNECTIONS: The benefit of being in a food and customer-focused industry is that we



A bumper sticker seen in Townsville read: Don't take my job and I won't take your soy latte.

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTION 2019

can have conversations with our guests – and the conversation about the local region and food systems is an important one to us. If you can show the people from your community that come through the door that you care about the area, then they will hopefully care for you in return too. As one example, by showing that we use local produce, we have found that other smaller local producers who we might not have known about, get in touch with us to help with supply.

In the restaurant, we often share information and get questions from our guests about local suppliers and producers. We always encourage interested diners to buy direct from those who sell at farmer markets, visit those with cellar doors, and our website purposely list all our Northern Rivers suppliers (building, produce, seafood and drinks etc) to share more about it.

We are a very small restaurant and sometimes it's hard to feel too impactful, but we hope taking small steps where we can and making clear business choices to support the local region and support sustainable food systems we can contribute to changes for the better. Whether that is by making sustainable choices with our suppliers, or by supporting local people that we employ and train in our business, and giving them the tools to make their own impact in the future.

Ben Devlin, grew up in Byron Shire, is the chef/ owner of Pipit. It was awarded Best Regional Restaurant (Good Food Guide 2020) and was nominated for Best New Restaurant and Sustainable Innovation (Gourmet Traveller Awards 2020). In 2014, Ben won QLD Good Food Guide's Young Chef of the Year while working as head chef of Brisbane's first three-hatted restaurant, Esquire, previous to that he spent two years working as chef-de-partie at Noma in Copenhagen. He returned to the Northern Rivers in 2015 to work as Executive Chef at Paper Daisy in Cabarita Beach, before opening Pipit. www.pipitrestaurant.com



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THE SECRET LIFE OF FOOD

SAM GOWING



Everything we eat nowadays is a product of culinary evolution, consumer demand and agricultural technique - very few foods are invented. With the exception of plant-based,

lab-tested, meat-like protein, most foods are contemporary twists on traditional themes, and many are highly processed and far removed from the prospect of nourishing, nurturing and healing the body. The consumer demand for the transparency of ingredients has never before seen such traction and the quest for authenticity about where our food comes from is gaining momentum by the minute.

The refreshing approach to healthy eating now extends to thought provoking restaurants steered by chefs who embrace the wild harvest

nearby and mindfully minimise waste in the kitchen. Think carrot top pesto as it jostles in the cold larder next to local kelp oil, bonito butter and bunya cone syrup, for example.

Native Australian ingredients are so hot right now, from finger lime to Kakadu plum, aniseed myrtle to mountain pepper leaf, the forest floor is the new marketplace and nature the foundation of progressive menus worldwide. On the menu at Harvest in Newrybar you'll find the exuberant Chef Ali Waddell and erudite forager Peter Hardwick working side by side sharing the bounty of locally picked ingredients. What was once the domain for herbalists and naturopaths, medicinal herbs are now showcased on from echinacea to elderberry.

Whether it's foraging for coastal weeds and hinterland seeds, buzzing about flow hive honey or costal tea tree vinegar, wild harvested ingredients are infusing fragrant gins with botanicals and craft beers frothing with medicinal elixirs globally. Artisan traditions meet modern nutrition as plant-based menus and sustainable table ideology takes charge.

Kelp is the new kale

Down Yamba way, Cody Possum wild harvests seaweed from the pristine waters of the Coral Sea and sun dries his findings by hand. Unlike wild fungi, most seaweed is edible and varieties include wrack, kelp, laver (nori), sea lettuce, and dulse. Many seaweeds contain sizable amounts of vitamin A, B, C & D and are one of the few plant foods to produce vitamin B12, making an excellent addition to a vegan diet. Most possess a highly concentrated source of nutrients, including high protein and iron content, with high levels of manganese, potassium, phosphorous, sodium, zinc and calcium. Seaweed has long been an essential part of the Japanese diet and noted for its healing properties in the East that dates back to 3000 BC. Contemporary cuisine is embracing mineral rich marine algae with abundance and infusing it - think Grab'n'Go



*Our diseases are our attachments,
be they habits, ideologies,
ideals, principles, possessions,
phobias, gods, cults, religions,
what you please.*


HENRY MILLER



Photo: Nelly le Compte

treats like ginger, kelp and sesame sorbet. Move over 100s & 1000s, here comes the Furikake.

Naturally, seaweed is salty and a little briny. It has an alkalising effect on the blood and contains mucilaginous gels which have a rejuvenating, moistening effect on the lungs and gastrointestinal tract. Great for reflux, ulceration and heartburn. Nori is extremely high in protein and you can crumble the sheets over salads and soups. Most seaweed is rich in fibre, iron and calcium and tends to have a sweet, delicate flavour with a texture that ranges from rubbery to spongy, crispy to crunchy. Interestingly, when you roast kombu it develops a robust, salty and strong umami flavour. It is rich in glutamic acid that gives it a distinct MSG taste with notes of liquorice. The Japanese word umami loosely translates as deliciousness, although it typically describes a flavour that is more savoury than sweet. Umami was coined by chemist Kikunae Ikeda at Tokyo University in 1908 who observed that there was a common taste denominator in asparagus, tomatoes, cheese and meat.



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Nutritional yeast, a popular ingredient used in plant-based cooking, also has the umami bomb and can be your missing link when it comes to building flavour profiles. Can't get your gravy to work? Cashew cheese getting you down? Add a pinch of nutritional yeast, it'll lift the corners of your mouth and warm the belly of your guests.

Superfoods – fact or fantasy?

There is a myriad of claims feeding contemporary society that superfoods can make you live longer, decrease cancer risk, or boost energy. There is a long history of marketing products that capitalize on teaching people to eat right, which itself transcends the dietary advice itself. The term 'Superfood' has become a buzzword in the health and nutrition industry, yet there is no clear consensus on the meaning of the word superfood. Superfoods is a misunderstood term used in the marketing of nutritional products that carries an air of suspicion confusion and lacks an authoritative claim. Definitions are inconsistent and the evidence is unreliable. Superfoods are a type of food that is rich in nutrients and extremely beneficial for health and overall wellbeing. A superfood is generally perceived to be a type of food that has a higher nutritional density than most other food products.

Increasingly, popular superfood campaigns encourage consumers to try exotic powders; potions, tonics and treats that are often imported from far away destinations. Compared to every day fruit and vegetables, the marketing campaigns for superfoods often portray magical potions unearthed in wild jungles in remote lush regions, with happy workers in sustainable or fair trade working cooperatives.

However, at this point there is no clear definition of what the word actually means and the scientific,

evidence-based research, is either conflicting, curative, or completely unsubstantiated. My advice is this: eat from the earth, know your farmer, shop at regional markets and give peas a chance, for the air miles your acai-chia-cacao-lucuma-goji-reishi super bowl has travelled, a bowl of steamed local greens will do you just as good.

Our digestive system is an intricate cellular matrix of delicately integrated components and is well documented as being our second brain. It is home to over one hundred million neurons, many more than our spiny backbones. It can provide us with an enormous amount of information regarding our health, energy and emotional responses. So, fix your gut with the good bugs, whether you get them from miso, kefir, kraut, kombucha or natural wine. The more we clear up the garden of our gut the more we will clean up the backyard of our mind.

The human body is the vehicle for the soul therefore the attention to dietary detail is paramount for the survival and evolution of the species. Overall, it is our continued pursuit of the enjoyment of food and the attainment of an emotional healthy response from eating and utilising ingredients for their unique qualities that connect us with the ocean and earth - not the fragmented processing of foodstuffs with endless food miles and unknown heritage that dominates the mass market.

So use your clarity of vision and look beyond the trends in 2020. Food and happiness is the next big thing and with the daily unfolding chaos of the planet from climate change to Trumped up politics, let's face it, we need all the cheer we can get.

Samantha Gowing put food as medicine on the map in Australia by using her unique blend of nutrition, fine dining and business expertise. She is founder of Gowing's Food Health Wealth (est.1999) a global wellness solutions company for the luxury resort and spa market. At her Byron Bay Cooking School she teaches participants to embrace all things healthy in hands-on private classes and corporate events. www.foodhealthwealth.com



Photo: Nelly le Comte



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Photo: David Young



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Each Sunday, once upon a time a day of rest, a message flashes on my phone. My screentime for this week – by which the automated message means time spent on my phone – is down by 11 per cent. Or up 17 per cent. These jumps may seem large, my phone use volatile, but really it's worryingly consistent: somewhere between two and three hours each day. 14-21 hours a week. That's the equivalent of more than 18 weeks of full-time work each year.

There are points that can be made easily enough here, about the intrusion of work into life, about the ever-broadening encroachment of consumption on our time, the massive dollops of our allotted 82 years (74 if you're Indigenous) we now spend either buying things

or selling ourselves. But – worse news - these are not just statistical patterns of behaviour. By now they have wormed their way into our souls. I have learned to recognise the instinct in myself to shop, the occasional rising of a desire just to purchase, and now it has been matched by the desire to advertise myself somewhere, on Instagram or Twitter or wherever. The second, obviously, is new, but I wonder too when the first person to feel that shopping instinct lived?

As I say, these points are easily made, but I am more interested just at this minute in our desire to get away. Oh let's get away we say, I wish we could get away from all this – from buying and selling, and reading about horror.

It is possible this desire is felt more acutely in Australia. After all, only a small part of the recent shift is that more things are happening in the world. A large part is that we hear about

them, all of the time. Once upon a time we heard about a tiny number, there were only so many media outlets in this country and most were at least a day behind on things that happened elsewhere. It is possible the shock of the new(s) here has been greater.

So when we say get away, what we mean is take me back. Take me back to a time of greater innocence. Get me away from all this knowledge.

Of course, we've always had a talent for complacency. It's been well-noted that a man once wrote a book on this, the fact that we had so much luck and called it skill. He called it 'The Lucky Country'. Yes, we cried, adopting his insult for a compliment, we are lucky, aren't we, the swerve towards self-congratulation making his point for him. Complacency? we said, that's not a criticism that's a motto, and continued on our way.

"Relaxed and comfortable" and "How good's Australia?" are symptoms. Our prime minister has attacked "negative globalism", by which he seems to mean we shouldn't have to do anything we might not want to. He has rubbished international climate forums as "all that sort of nonsense". These are meant to sound like brave defiance, but indicate in fact a type of aggressive complacency. Not content with being a long, long way away, he wants to make sure there really is no chance that what happens in the rest of the world might make its way to us. Let's get away. Weren't we already away? Let's get away MORE.

Which, I can't help but feel, is also true of our pressing need to get away from social media. Don't we go to social media, most of us, most of the time, to stop thinking about our lives? To get away? We tell ourselves we are more engaged than ever with Syria, with Trump, with cruelty, but the way we actually use them – as items to scroll through to distract us from work or waiting for a friend, alongside memes and three-line jokes – suggests precisely the opposite.

And so, when it comes time for our holidays, we

can't get away - not because the world follows us everywhere, but because we are already away.

And the people who actually need to get away? They are the ones who the world actually follows, relentless. Most of them, probably, unable to get to Byron. Pursued by a Centrelink hunting spree, or some unscrupulous pay-day lender, or an authoritarian government that has somehow persuaded our government it's not as brutal as it is.

The odd thing, I suspect, in getting away from the endless trail of everyday concerns to sit beside the sea, is that these are the moments we are most likely to see the world for what it is - without its rapidly proliferating fictions, its timelines and notifications, its abstractions on abstractions. In which we might understand that the world is a solid place, in which actual things are happening, whatever phrases our politicians use about them. They are the moments, in fact, when we are least away from the fact the world is real, and in which we might, however briefly, understand that the pain of others is real too.

Sean Kelly was previously an adviser to Labor prime ministers Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd. He is a columnist for the Sydney Morning Herald and the Age.



*The planet is moving so fast
you can't feel it.*

EVIE THOMPSON - AGED 4

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Photo: Tao Jones

LIVING IN THE SEVENTIES

JENNY HOCKING



I had just turned 18 when Gough Whitlam's Labor government was elected on 2 December 1972, the first Labor government for 23 years. My father, elated to the point of tears, told me it was the first time in his entire adult life that the party he voted for had actually won - and those decades of political wilderness seemed unimaginably, interminably, stark. Like thousands of others who had waited through the long years of conservative government, political inertia and cultural ennui, I found the sense of change, the hopefulness and the possibilities for reform, infinitely captivating.

Equality and opportunity were more than just slogans, they had substance and policy heft and they were at the heart of Whitlam's proudly reformist program, spelt out in the 'three great aims' of the impassioned 'It's Time' policy speech: 'to promote equality; to involve the people of Australia in the decision-making processes of our land; and to liberate the talents and uplift the horizons of the Australian people'. The oratorical brilliance of the 'It's Time' speech, which owes its power and its

resonance to Whitlam's incomparable speech-writer Graham Freudenberg, remains the great standard against which all political speeches in this country must be measured.

After 23 years of Liberal-Country party coalition government with its dead hand of political stasis and policy inaction, 'there were so many wrongs to be righted', as South Australian Labor Premier Don Dunstan recalled. The voting age was still 21 years; young men from the age of 20 were too young to vote but old enough to be picked in a 'lottery of death' to fight in the immensely unpopular Vietnam war; there was no maternity leave, no equal pay, no Medicare and no supporting mother's benefit; married women couldn't open a bank account or get a passport without their husband's permission; we still sang 'God Save the Queen' the British national anthem as our own; Indigenous children were routinely taken from their families as the 'stolen generations' policy of Liberal Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies' time was still entrenched, and there had never been any federal recognition of Indigenous land rights or anti-discrimination laws.

What a stark contrast to those years of torpor when Gough Whitlam declared his election

victory as a 'command to perform' and perform he did, forming the historic 'duumvirate', a government of two, with his deputy Lance Barnard just days after the election. For two weeks Whitlam and Barnard held all 27 ministries between them while some seats were still being counted. Their first action was the release of all young men who were in prison for refusing to fight in the Vietnam war, followed by the end of conscription in peace-time and the withdrawal of remaining service people from Vietnam. The duumvirate made forty decisions in just two weeks, including support for United Nations' sanctions over apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia, a ban on racially based sporting tours such as the all-white Springboks, \$4 million in grants for the Arts, ratification of conventions on nuclear arms and racial discrimination, the end of British honours in Australia, a Royal Commission into Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory, reopening the equal pay case, abolishing race as a criterion of immigration policy and recognising communist China.

The action packed two weeks of the duumvirate was a marker for what was to come, a sign of Whitlam's determination to effect change. Despite facing unprecedented obstruction inside and outside parliament, the government succeeded in enacting more reforms in its three

years than any government before it.

The Whitlam government was re-elected at the double dissolution election of May 1974. On 11 November 1975, just 18 months after this historic second electoral victory, Gough Whitlam and his entire government was dismissed from office without warning by the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, in an unprecedented use of the Governor-General's claimed 'reserve powers'. It remains one of the most contentious and divisive episodes in our political history. In place of the Whitlam government Kerr appointed as Prime Minister the Liberal party leader, Malcolm Fraser, whose party had lost the previous two elections and who did not have the confidence of the House of Representatives.

It's often forgotten that the House of Representatives continued to sit on the afternoon of 11 November 1975 and within hours of the dismissal Malcolm Fraser lost a motion of confidence in the House by ten votes. That motion also called on the Governor-General to reinstate the Whitlam government. Instead, Kerr kept the unelected Fraser government in office as he called a double dissolution election, giving Fraser the benefit of incumbency and Whitlam the opprobrium of dismissal and Opposition.

It is a truism that history is told by the victors, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the flawed history of the dismissal, marred



*The imagination is not a State:
it is the Human Existence itself.*
WILLIAM BLAKE

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by errors, omissions and outright falsehoods for decades. The simple uncomplicated story constructed for us which became the dominant 'dismissal narrative' is that Kerr acted alone, that he reached a lonely decision in solitude and with great reluctance once an impasse had been reached and which only decisive vice-regal action could resolve. It was never convincing, and it has not held up well.

There was always, as many suspected at the time, a very different story waiting to be told – one of intrigue, deception and political calculation - if only we could find it. Gradually, eked out in pieces and fragmentary revelations, the long-standing view of the dismissal as Kerr's solo act has comprehensively unravelled. Kerr's secret contact with the leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Fraser, his deception of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, his refusal to accept Whitlam's advice to call the half-Senate election, and the startling revelation of the role of the High Court justice, Sir Anthony Mason, in my biography Gough Whitlam: His Time, are now well known. These revelations transformed the history of the dismissal. The Queen also knew far more about Kerr's plans than we have previously imagined

as Kerr drew the Palace into his planning and the prospect of his dismissal of Whitlam. The one thing Kerr feared most from the dismissal was his own recall as Governor-General by the Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Kerr had raised this abiding concern for self-preservation with the Palace on several occasions, first with Prince Charles in September 1975 and then with the Queen's private secretary, which he details in his private papers. Prince Charles' solicitous response would have reassured Kerr that he would be Royally protected should he dismiss Whitlam; 'but surely Sir John, the Queen should not have to accept advice that you should be recalled ... should this happen when you were considering dismissing the Prime Minister'.

Even more disturbing is that the Queen's private secretary agreed to protect Kerr if Whitlam advised his recall as Governor-General, a decision which is solely the Prime Minister's to make. As Kerr describes, the Queen's private secretary advised him that the Queen would in that case 'try to delay things' and not simply act on the advice of her Prime Minister, as a constitutional monarch must. This constitutionally shocking prior knowledge of the



If anything can save the world,
I'd put my money on beauty.
DOUG TOMPKINS,
FOUNDER OF NORTH FACE,
ESPRIT CONSERVATIONIST

Palace of Kerr's planning for the dismissal is part of his secret correspondence with the Queen and her private secretary at that time. These 'Palace letters' are held by the National Archives in Canberra and closed to the Australian public since they are embargoed by the Queen until at least 2027, with her private secretary retaining an effective final veto even after that date. It is quite possible they will never be released despite their obvious historic significance and the great public interest in them.

And so, in 2016 I commenced a crowd-funded Federal Court action against the National Archives seeking the release of the Palace letters. A team of senior lawyers all working on a pro bono basis is heading this landmark case, which has now been through the Federal Court and the Full Federal Court on appeal. Although the Federal Court recognised the 'clear public interest' in the letters, which concern 'one of the most controversial and tumultuous events in the modern history of the nation', it ruled that they are 'personal' letters, effectively continuing the Queen's embargo of them. I then appealed to the Full Federal Court and in a split 2:1 decision the majority of the Full Court also ruled that the Palace letters are 'personal'. In a strong dissenting judgement Justice Flick found that the Palace letters concern "political happenings" going to the very core of the democratic processes of this country' and that they are clearly not personal records. The Palace letters case continues. It is currently before the High Court on appeal following the

success of our application for Special Leave to Appeal and is expected to be heard by the High Court in early 2020.

It has taken more than four decades for the facts of the dismissal to become clearer, revealing Kerr's collusion with others and shattering the view that this was his decision alone. It is extraordinary that even today, 44 years after these dramatic events, we still do not know the full story. The Queen's embargo of the Palace letters held in our own National Archives is a quasi-colonial national humiliation which is preventing us from knowing a critical part of the story of the dismissal of the Whitlam government. It should not be for the Queen to tell us what we can and cannot know about our own history.

Donations in support of the High Court case to release the 'Palace letters' can be made through the Chuffed crowd-funding campaign 'Release the Palace letters - the High Court Appeal.'

Professor Jenny Hocking is an award-winning biographer and Emeritus Professor at Monash University. Her books include the acclaimed two-volume biography of Gough Whitlam, and The Dismissal Dossier – Everything You Were Never Meant to Know about November 1975.



Photo: Rusty Miller

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TAKING THE SYMBIOTIC PATH

DAMON GAMEAU



When we look at the history of human civilizations, our track record is not overly promising. They all have one thing in common; they inevitably collapse. The Romans, the Mesopotamians, the Sumerians and many others built powerful empires that collapsed for a variety of reasons including a lack of stewardship of their natural resources.

Our current civilization is now facing its own mortality. We stand at a fork in the road that offers us a business as usual path that will lead to the fate of those that have gone before us or a new and more uncertain path that will have to redefine the way we interact with each other and our living systems.

Our current system is, in many ways, predicated on the foundations of evolution. We have devised a market system based on Darwin's 'survival of the fittest'. We create and innovate which leads to some products and people succeeding and others that are cast aside; Social Darwinism.

This belief system, however, is missing a crucial element of our own evolution and needs to be urgently factored in if we are to survive.

In nature, although competition exists, it is also contained within a symbiotic framework. The shark hunts the fish but both have evolved at a similar pace so that often the fish gets away. If the shark evolved its hunting skills and numbers to greater levels than the fish evolved their ability to escape, the shark would easily eat all the fish, and would eventually die due to a lack of food. Competition yes, but also equilibrium.

The brilliant thinker, Daniel Schmachtenberger, has done research that takes this evolutionary thinking and applies it to our own species. What we have been able to do is add technology to

our own evolution. Something the shark and other creatures have not. This has allowed us to become superior apex predators. We have amplified the fish catching skills of the shark by building super trawlers that allow us to catch hundreds of tonnes of fish in one haul. We are not confined to one part of the ocean either, as some sharks are, but can move to other regions and inflict similar damage.

What this has done has given us the ability to completely knock out our balance with living systems. There is no symbiotic relationship because, obviously, the fish have not evolved at the same exponential rate as our technologies. This problem isn't confined to our oceans. We are now consuming around 90 billion metric tonnes of resources every year, which includes timber, livestock, fish, minerals and metals, while the earth can only replenish 50 billion metric tonnes a year. Our current growth rates will see us consuming 180 billion metric tonnes by 2050 which will decimate many more living systems.

What is clear is that we need to shift from a system and collective mindset that is based on rivalry and competition, to a system based on symbiotic and interconnected relationships. No easy task, but there is hope.

I have spent the past four years searching for examples of a more symbiotic approach, to write and direct a film (and book) called 2040. It is a visual letter to my daughter showing her what the world could look like in 2040 if these examples were widely implemented today. I have been surprised and buoyed to see just how many people around the world are dedicating their lives to this endeavour. Sadly, these are not the stories that fill our news feeds. Our feeds have also been hijacked by a competitive system looking to grab our attention with emotional headlines that generate more advertising revenue. From



Keep up the good fights my friends
and companeros and maybe we can
save the sinking, stinking world.

GARTH MURPHY

regenerative farming practices that pull carbon back into the soil and improve food quality and water retention, to participatory democracy models that allocate more power and decision making to local residents, to new economic frameworks and the explosion of a 'sharing' economy that is seeing people relinquish individual ownership of products and materials, there are reasons to be encouraged that a better world is possible.

These stories are the 'Hope in the Dark' that Rebecca Solnit writes about in her book of the same name. When we go beyond the mainstream narrative and media spotlight, we are reminded of what humans are actually capable of and find all sorts of magic. Our challenge is to urgently shift that spotlight. This is a major reason I made 2040 and, with others, have developed an online platform that will continue to share and promote these type of stories. We find ourselves locked in a narrative war at present and I fear that if we don't share these stories and show people what life could be like on the other side of this crisis, we may not get through. Because as the climate becomes more unpredictable, people may retreat into fear and seek even more authoritarian leadership that promises to protect them. It is crucial that we reassure people and motivate them into action by

showing them a possible future of abundant nature and empowered communities full of jobs with real purpose. This is what 'The Regeneration' movement is all about. 'Regeneration' has two meanings here. It refers to regenerating all of our living systems and it refers to a new generation of humanity coming together to redefine the foundations of how we interact.

I have lived in the Northern Rivers for three years and see it as having real potential to be an Australian leader of The Regeneration. We have all the skills, resources and creativity to show others how it is done. The fork in the road is now upon us, the stakes are crystal clear and we are all being called upon to find our own agency. 'The greatest threat to the planet' said Robert Swan, 'is the belief that someone else will save it.' I hope that by 2040 we feel immense pride as a community because we actively sought out the best solutions, implemented them across our towns and encouraged others to follow our path.

Damon Gameau won Tropfest in 2011 for his film, *Animal Beatbox*, released 'That Sugar Film' in 2015, the highest grossing Australian documentary across Australia and New Zealand of all time. 2040 was released and shown to leaders at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019. Damon is a NSW Australian of the Year nominee for 2020. www.whatsyour2040.com www.that-sugarfilm.com

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DOG TAILS

JAMES REGAN



My dog, like me, is a creature of the dawn. We are both grounded by the tickle of dew-wet sea grass, sand under foot and calm ocean winds that accompany only the early morning. Common circadian rhythms.

Perhaps it's because seals and sea lions are considered dog-like carnivores and a common gene lies buried deep within these species that generates a magnetic-like pull to the ocean. The more cynical among us might say dogs love the beach because salt water is said to kill fleas. And that I simply like to surf. If so, is that so bad?

Researchers now believe dogs can mirror the anxiety and negativity of owners, while dogs that are relaxed and friendly pass this on to humans, helping their owners cope with stress. Could the social equivalent of symbiotic relationships that exist among plant life be at play here?

That might help explain why former French President Charles de Gaulle was fond of saying: "The better I get to know men, the more I find myself loving dogs." Studies now support theories that both owners and dogs play roles in each other's coping mechanisms.

No surprise here. Dogs have lived alongside humans for more than 30,000 years and researchers have long known canines can pick up emotional information from people and adjust their behaviour accordingly. Professional dog trainers like to say the tension (or lack of) flows down the leash.

"Owners and dogs are social dyads [a group of two], and they influence each other's stress coping," Dr Iris Schoberl of the University of Vienna said in releasing a ground-breaking study where more than 100 dogs and their owners underwent various tests, including

measurement of heart rate and their response to threat.

I agree with Dr. Schoberl and I am not alone.

For more than a decade, Scott Seward's brown and white border collie Francis has patrolled the beach while Seward surfs, almost always around sunrise. Depending on tide and swell direction, he can be found at any one of the numerous leash-free beaches within Byron Shire.

"Just knowing he's there waiting for me, watching out for me, makes me a better surfer," says Seward. "It balances our relationship so much more than just dog and owner."

To date, Byron Bay has resisted turning dogs into real-life surfers with boards and wetsuits of their own, a trend that is emerging in California and just up the road in Noosa, a sort of sister surfing community to Byron.

"I don't need, nor want, to transform Francis into a four-legged clone of me," Scott says. "The beaches around Byron are our home, and we each have our stations there."

Indeed, studies show dogs anticipate and plan for the future, and maintain thoughts about and memories of the past. And like their seal and seal lion relations, patrol their boundaries and bark when necessary to maintain and defend them.

Byron Bay is book-ended by dog-friendly beaches popular with surfers. To the north lies Belongil, a sandy stretch of uninterrupted



byronbaytrain.com.au



The writer's duty is to help man endure by lifting his heart.

WILLIAM FAULKNER

beachfront, where canines can sniff and roam leash-free as far as Main Beach in the heart of Byron's shopping district. The cut off is just past 'The Wreck', a popular surf spot created by the wreck of the SS Wollongbar in 1921 while transporting a cargo of butter and bacon.

South of town sits several kilometres of dog-friendly Suffolk Park beach, sandwiched between the Arakwal National Park and Broken Head, both part of the National Parks system. Just like Byron's most famous surf spot, The Pass, all National Park beaches are dog-free.

A vox pop of two dozen or so surfers and swimmers at The Pass turned out overwhelmingly supportive of the dog-free zoning. This despite the majority of those polled saying they owned and/or loved dogs.

"Right now there's a fair balance, plenty of space for dogs and beaches like this that are for humans only," said Jason, a self-described "long time visitor" from Britain. "Why stir the pot?"

Despite the National Parks' ban and unlike other local government jurisdictions, Byron Shire council encourages owners to "exercise your dog regularly in an off-leash exercise area to avoid problems associated with boredom."

The council may be on to something here. When was the last time you saw a bored dog on the beach?

All up, Byron Shire offers dog owners several kilometres of leash-free beachfront out of a total coastline of 37 kilometres. By comparison the Gold Coast designates less than 5 kilometres out of 57 kilometres of beachfront for leash-free dogs.

Yet even with Byron's many dog-beach options (there are also leash-free zones in South Golden Beach, Brunswick Heads and New Brighton Beach) most people stick to one, mirroring, psychologists say, wider parochial, or even snobbish human traits.

"It's like when I lived in London, if you lived north of the river, you rarely, if ever, travelled south of it and vice-versa. It wasn't cool," says Leone,

as she and her spaniel Cody headed over the dunes of Suffolk Park for the second time in a day. "I can't prove it, but I know my dog likes it better here than at Belongil."

Then there's the 40-something female who steers clear of any dogs catching frisbees at Belongil because of her own anxieties about being a terrible frisbee thrower in university.

I'd hate to think I was putting her (Terri, the terrier) through the same anxieties and humiliation I felt," she said. "Suffolk to me seems like it would have more frisbees."

Interestingly, several dog owners that regularly visit Belongil or Suffolk exclusively, believe dogs at the other beach were more aggressive.

This tells me there's probably not much difference in dog personalities around Byron's beaches. And, as my cavoodle Honey can attest, in our eyes all of Byron's beaches are equal. Endowed with natural beauty and dog friendliness.

James Regan has been an international correspondent for Reuters News for more than 20 years. He learned to surf in New York in 1966 and never stopped. After a long hiatus, Regan is again a proud dog owner.

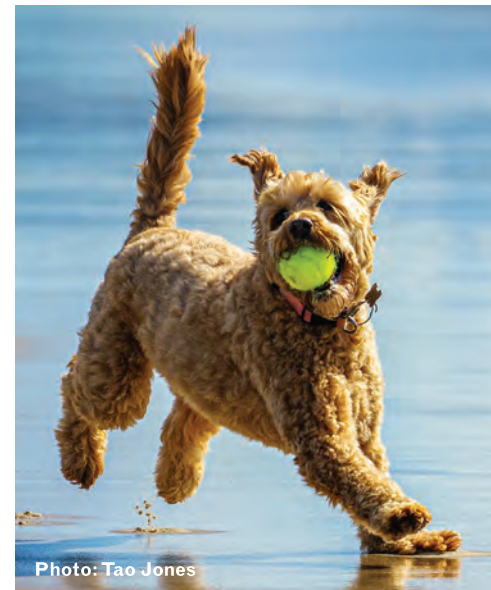


Photo: Tao Jones

BYRON BAY

AUSTRALIA'S MOST EASTERLY POINT

PACIFIC OCEAN



Surfing, he reminds us, comprises a very small percentage of our lives as surfers. Instead we spend much more time thinking about riding waves – dreaming, planning, talking, traveling, watching, waiting, remembering, and learning – than actually doing it. All these activities keep us anchored to what he calls the 'blue mind', a mildly meditative state of 'calm peacefulness, unity and a sense of general happiness and satisfaction with life in the moment', even when we're not in the water. Being in the ocean however dilutes that sense of self.

Wallace J Nichols, Marine Biologist - Author of Blue Mind and one of the world's foremost ocean advocates.

WHY CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST?

PETER SINGER



The record number of deaths in 2019 on the world's tallest mountain underscores the immorality of seeking to reach the summit. But even if you are lucky enough to reach the top without passing a climber in need of help, you are still choosing your personal goal over saving a life.

In 1953, when Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first people to reach the summit of Mount Everest, I was seven years old. For a time, I was immersed in the stories of the epic climb. It seemed like an achievement for all of humankind, like reaching the South Pole. Would there still be any frontiers left, I wondered, by the time I grew up?

A photo of the southern summit ridge of Everest has brought these memories back to me. But what a different Everest this is! The splendid isolation of the top of the world has gone. Instead, there is a long line of climbers waiting their turn to stand briefly on the summit.

It's not hard to see why. As the expedition company Seven Summit Treks advertises: "If you want to experience what it feels like to be on

the highest point on the planet and have strong economic background to compensate for your old age and your fear of risks you can sign up for the VVIP Mount Everest Expedition Service." You need the "strong economic background" because it will cost you US\$130,000. There are less expensive ways to climb Everest, but they all start with the US\$11,000 fee that the Nepalese government charges for a permit.

We shouldn't object to the government of a low-income country seeking revenue from wealthy foreign climbers. But even with the best support money can buy, in the thin air above 8,000 meters, people die – 12 in 2019 alone. There are at least 200 bodies still on the mountain, some in crevasses, others buried by avalanches. Still others have been described as "familiar fixtures on the route to Everest's summit."

It used to be taken for granted that if a climber was in danger, others would help, even if that meant abandoning their own plans. No longer. In 2006, it was reported that David Sharp, who had chosen to climb Everest without Sherpa support, slowly froze to death while about 40 climbers passed him on their way to the summit. Edmund Hillary found it "horrificing." Later reports suggested that most of the 40



It is better to be honest & unpopular than dishonest and popular.

KUMI NAIDOO.
SECRETARY GENERAL OF
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.

did not notice Sharp, or were unaware that he needed help. But some climbers, like the Australian Brad Horn, have been quite explicit in saying that they are on the mountain only to get to the top, and will not stop to help anyone else until they have achieved that goal.

I've used the example of rescuing a child drowning in a shallow pond to explore questions about our obligation to save the lives of strangers. When I ask my students if they would wade into a shallow pond to save a drowning child, even if doing so would ruin their favourite, and most expensive, pair of shoes, they tell me that you can't compare a child's life with a pair of shoes, so of course they would save the child. What if the only way to save a child from being struck and killed by a runaway train is to divert it down a siding where it will destroy your most precious possession, a vintage Bugatti, into which you have sunk most of your savings? Never mind, most still say, you have to save the child. If that's right, then why does climbing

Everest allow one to refrain from saving the life of a fellow climber? Is it because, as Horn says in defending his attitude, "Everyone knows the risk"? That may be true, but, as Immanuel Kant argued, our obligation to help strangers is grounded by our own desire to be helped when in need. Hence, we cannot will, as a universal law, that people pass by strangers in need. Horn would need to reply that, had he needed to be rescued, other climbers would have been justified in leaving him to die as they headed to the summit.

In any case, even if you are lucky enough to get to the top of Everest without passing a climber in need of help, you are still choosing to reach the summit rather than to save a life. That's because the cost of the climb would be enough to save the lives of several people, if given to an effective charity. (If you want to learn about the most effective charities, visit www.thelifeyoucansave.org.au)

I am wondering if there are any parallels with



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surfing here? My guess is that there are very expensive surfing trips that people organize to get to some rare break far away from everything else, and there are also very famous and crowded places to surf, but people don't pay huge amounts to surf crowded breaks (there are many great breaks, and only one highest mountain (though only one Byron Bay, of course). In terms of environmental impact, flying halfway around the world and then chartering a boat to get out to a break isn't good. I enjoy hiking, and being in wild places. I like hikes that take me to a summit, especially one with a view. So I can understand why Hillary wanted to climb Mount Everest. But I have trouble understanding why anyone would see that as a worthwhile goal today. It does not require great mountaineering skill, and it is very far from a wilderness experience. Arnold Coster, a Dutch mountaineer who organizes Everest climbs, says that many of his customers are more like trophy hunters than mountaineers. Tim Macartney-Snape, who climbed Everest in 1984, says that today's climbers are "more interested in talking about it at a cocktail party than actually being in the mountains. It's a status-enhancing thing."

If that is right, one can only regard it as a pity that the desire for status leads us to set goals that involve pointless or even harmful activities, rather than goals that have value independently of status, like helping those in need and making the world a better place.

Peter Singer is Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University and Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne. An updated edition of his book The Life You Can Save can be downloaded free from www.thelifeyoucanlive.org.



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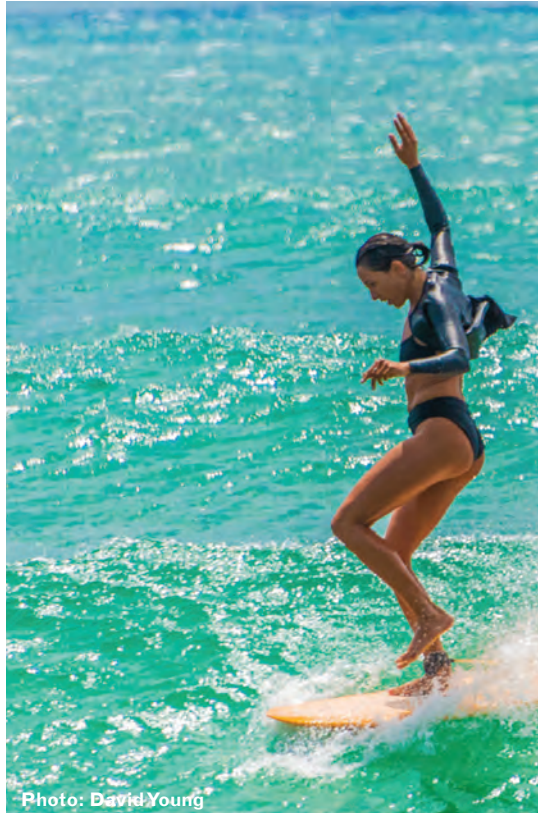


Photo: David Young




On advising people who are suffering from grief and loss to be patient because one day their pain would be useful.

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ANCIENT FORESTS IN THE MODERN WORLD

DR ROB KOOYMAN



Have you ever wondered where the incredible diversity of the far north coast rainforests came from? Despite historic clearing that diversity lives on in small remnant

patches like the Broken Head Nature Reserve and larger areas like Nightcap, Mt. Warning and Border Ranges National Parks Australia was once part of the Gondwanan rainforest super-continent. Joined to Antarctica and linked to South America, the climate was warm and wet. The Antarctic ice-sheets had yet to form. The land was still covered in forest. Giant conifers like Kauri (*Agathis*) and *Araucaria* stood tall over broad-leaved flowering plants, and moist air swirled as mists through the canopy. Just imagine if we were able to move back in time and visit those ancient forests. What do you think we would see?

By using the fossil record we can travel deep into time. In fact, we can trace the evolutionary history and survival of Gondwanan rainforest plant and animal species through many millions of years. The fossil record allows us to trace the emergence, movement, and extinction of the ancient rainforest lineages in relation to the events and processes that shaped the planet. Information about deep time is carried in the geologic history of the land, the fossil record, and by living plants and animals in their genes.

The first emergence of flowering plants is thought to be around 150 million years ago, so the 52 million year history of Australia's rainforest vegetation we recount here is long after the first flowering plants evolved and just after the time of the dinosaurs (65 million years). It may come as a bit of a surprise, but as residents on the north coast it is likely we would recognise many of the plant lineages on Gondwana all those years ago. In fact when we compare Gondwanan rainforest

fossil leaves from sites in Patagonia to living floras on the north coast we find many lineages still living in our local rainforests.

As the Australian continent broke away from Antarctica it managed to escape the freezing of Antarctica that caused the extinction of the Antarctic forests. For millions of years Australia continued its northward journey, carrying the Gondwanan rainforest lineages with it. During that journey it crossed volcanic 'hotspots' that formed arcs of volcanic peaks and basaltic plateaus. The separation of Australia and Antarctica created the southern ocean circumpolar current that caused significant changes to the global climate. As it drifted north the Australian continent began to dry, and went through both warm-wet and cool-dry climate phases. With increased drying, the rainforests retreated to the last of the wet places along the coast. By the time of the volcanic eruptions in eastern Australia that formed Wollumbin (Mt. Warning) and the Big Scrub plateau the rainforests were already in retreat.

The volcanoes of the eastern coastal ranges, including here in northern New South Wales, provided critically important habitat for the rainforest. Close to the coast the rains were reliable, altitude provided a range of temperature gradients (cool uplands to warm lowlands), and the variable topography and soils combined to add complexity. Just the right set of ingredients for the survival of Gondwanan rainforest lineages on what is now, and even then was becoming, the flattest, hottest and driest continent on earth.

But not all of the current day rainforest is Gondwanan. So what else happened?

The answer comes from Australia's slow drift into the tropics and the collision of the Sunda (Indo-Malesian) and Sahul (Australia-New Guinea) plates. This slow motion collision caused the uplift of Papua, brought two previously separate floras together, and provided

opportunities for both of them to spread. For the Gondwanan element on the brink of extinction from warming and drying there was a chance to escape onto newly formed mountains where cool-wet conditions allowed them to prosper. For the tropical Sunda (Indo-Malesian) element, there was now space available in a rapidly drying continent for species already adapted to the seasonal monsoon climate, and for others who took up opportunities in the wetter areas during the expansion and contraction dynamics of the Australian forests during climate phases. The result was a mixing of the ancient Gondwanan rainforest flora with new elements from the tropics. Some of those tropical elements made it to the mountains and lowlands of our area and became part of that rich living flora.

The north coast rainforests and many of the flora and fauna species we see today owe their existence to the endurance, survival and persistence of the Gondwanan rainforests and their interactions with the tropical Indo-Malesian forests. This story highlights the epic journey of survival the southern rainforests and rainforest plant and animal lineages have undertaken; from ancient Antarctic origins to current day occupation of Australia and the Indo-Malesian tropics. This was a journey across vast geographic distances and timescales, in the face of sometimes large regional extinctions, and major global climate change.

This is a deep time story of how ancient Antarctic rainforest plant lineages survived, and how they continued to thrive, evolve, and diversify. It stands as one of the Earth's greatest biological and evolutionary success stories. This larger story includes the creation story of the sub-tropical rainforest flora of Wollumbin.

Even now the north coast region harbours more Gondwanan rainforest history and diversity in the living flora and fauna than any comparable region on Earth. The nomination and subsequent listing as part of the World Heritage Estate, and the naming of that estate and the rainforests of the region as Gondwanan Rainforests of

Australia reflects that remarkable history.

Many of our local residents fought to protect the forests from logging in the 1970's through to the 1990's, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude for fighting to protect that incredible natural and cultural heritage for the future. Places like Terania Creek, Mt. Nardi and the Nightcap, Blackbutt Plateau, Mt. Jerusalem, Mt. Warning, and the Border Ranges were protected because of the actions of people willing to stand up and fight to protect country.

The implications for what this means in relation to how we manage, and how we go about protecting what remains of the Australian rainforests is tied tightly to that grand story. A story that is now turning another page, with new threats from climate change and the ravages of increasing seasonality driving fires into the rainforest, and extreme weather events and storms causing more disturbance and putting yet more pressure on the last of the Gondwanan forests. At all times we should understand the context of our actions. Not least that they have both ecological and evolutionary implications, and history... lots and lots of history.

Dr. Robert Kooyman, lives locally and works with Macquarie University, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, and Missouri Botanical Garden. His research includes the biogeography, botany, and neo- and paleo-ecology of rainforests in Malesia, Australia, Madagascar, and South America. www.researchgate.net/profile/Robert_Kooyman/research



Photo: Dr Rob Kooyman

*In Western literature, audiences tend to celebrate the author.
In Aboriginal literature, we celebrate the story.*

BRUCE PASCOE

WHY PHOTOS ?

KATE VEITCH



Last October, I travelled to Japan's Inland Sea for the Setouchi Triennale, an enormous and amazing art event. For two weeks I visited island after island, looking at astonishing things in a sublime setting. And every day, I was pretty much the only person whose right arm wasn't semi-permanently raised, smartphone clutched firmly in the modern photographer's salute.

I don't have a smartphone. I do have a little Nokia flip, practically an antique. People laugh when I show them. I use it to, um ... make phone calls. And texts. Also as an alarm clock. That's it. I could connect to the internet with it, but I rather like having slabs of my day not connected. I could download all sorts of apps, but honestly, I can't be arsed. It has a camera, but I've never used it.

So, what do I take photos with? Answer: I don't. I used to. Over the years I've had an assortment of cameras, from a handy Kodak Instamatic I took with me when I first went travelling, eons ago, through a succession of clunky SLRs. Finally a nifty pocket-sized digital camera that I bought in 2007 – the same year, coincidentally and somewhat ironically, that Apple launched the iPhone. I learned how to download photos to my laptop; even joined Facebook, posted photos there. Woohoo!

I think it was round that time I started to tire of taking photos. There are so many beautiful and interesting things in the world, and so many wonderful photographs of them. My not very remarkable contribution didn't really seem to add anything. Worse, trying to take those photographs distracted me from what I really enjoyed, which was simply ... looking.

Maybe my inner perfectionist helped kill it for me. The sour sneaking sense of disappointment

I felt when, all too often, I failed to capture what my eyes had seen. So when my poor little digital camera got accidentally dropped on its head one evening, I somehow never got it fixed. Nor replaced.

That was about three years ago, and I've gone camera free ever since. True, anyone who's travelled with me will be familiar with my nudging request: 'Take a photo of that, would you?' Or even, 'Take a photo of me.' Annoying, probably, but at least there's some photographic trace of me in the world, just to prove I exist. Because it seems that's what we believe these days: not that photographs steal your soul, but that without photographs nothing really happened and no one is real.

Wherever I go, I watch with horrified fascination as people reflexively take endless photos, paying way more attention to what they're

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Everything we do now lasts forever. Not because we want to remember, but because we're no longer allowed to forget. Helping to create that system is my greatest regret.

EDWARD SNOWDEN

recording than to what's actually there in front of them. I tell myself it's none of my business if other people want to spend their every waking minute taking photos, but – it makes me uneasy. Maybe it's the sheer volume of it, the excess, with its whiff of the insatiable urge to consume that we humans have become so good at. Why stop at one photo when you can take ten, or fifty, or a hundred? It's like a visual version of Homer Simpson's insatiable gobbling at the all-you-can-eat seafood restaurant. 'That man ate all our shrimp! And two plastic lobsters!' says an appalled waiter. When Homer is confronted he splutters, mouth full, 'Can't talk. Eating.'

Can't see. Taking photos.

My grandfather was probably photographed only a dozen times in his whole life. I'm looking at one taken in a backyard, early 1950's. The framing's not great: there's more of the paling fence and the neighbour's washing than there is of Pop, who is standing ramrod straight, arms at his side, looking very serious. None of that grinning-at-the-camera malarkey. It was an important thing, getting your photo taken.

Compare and contrast with the 93 million-plus selfies now posted every day. Relentless bright eyes and shiny teeth. Are we really having that much fun? All the time? And hey, what about the nude selfie – who saw that coming? Adults sternly tell the young 'uns not to do it because whatever's on the internet is there for ever and it could all end in tears, but I'm not holding my breath for the yooof to pay any attention to old-people advice.

I think that whatever our age, we all post photos for much the same reasons: it's what our tribe does now, and we want to belong, to impress, to share. And because the technology's there. But you know what? None of it is compulsory.

Just like Homer Simpson didn't have to take 'all you can eat' quite so literally, we don't have to photograph everything. Try it: try not taking any photos for a week. Just for an experiment. Just for the challenge. Just to see if your brain's visual memory still functions. Just to see if you still exist.

Kate Veitch is the author of two novels (Listen and Trust) with a third in the works. She also writes memoir-inflected essays. Kate lives in Mullumbimby with her partner, Phillip Frazer, and likes looking at stuff.



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WATER

JIM TAIT



I'm a freshwater ecologist and despite my scientific training or perhaps because of it, I find water to be a source of near mystical enchantment.

Water is a molecule formed from one oxygen and two hydrogen atoms. It is a precursor for conditions to support life on this planet and a major component of all living things. 60% of the human body is made of it with some organs like the lungs comprised by greater than 80% of it. Yet despite its importance, the general public's understanding of the water cycle and its behaviour within the landscape is limited. This not only undermines our connection with the natural world, but also translates into mismanagement of what is our most important natural resource.

To appreciate the water cycle it's useful to recognise its major components. These include rainfall that falls as 'precipitation' to the earth's surface and conveyed either as surface run off or as 'infiltration' through the soil to form groundwater. Surface run off follows gravity toward the ocean (or in some Australian drainage networks to terminal inland lakes) via stream drainage networks or as subsurface

groundwater flows. Groundwater can also break out to the surface and feed surface water bodies and stream networks. Some groundwater undergoes 'percolation' to deep fractured rock aquifers and some drains directly to the ocean via sub-marine discharges. Surface water in streams, lakes and oceans and moisture in the soil all supply 'evaporation' whereby water energised by solar radiation, heat and/or wind and subject to ambient humidity, becomes gaseous and ascends through the atmosphere forming clouds. Once it reaches sufficient altitude or is otherwise cooled it then undergoes the process of 'condensation' to again become liquid and heavy enough to fall to earth as rain. 'Evapo-transpiration' involves plants. Water taken up by plant roots is released by stomate pores in leaves via transpiration and evaporates to the atmosphere. This is the process being referred to when the connection between vegetation and rainfall is made.

Understanding a few key processes can lead to a deeper appreciation of where and how water goes, what it does in terms of biophysical processes and importantly how the collective actions of humans can impact negatively to limit ecosystem service benefits. These include the obvious such as providing clean drinking

water, to regulating the height of flood events and creating opportunities for water-based recreation and cultural practices.

To think about water behaviour in the broader landscape it is useful to understand water catchments which are an area of land within which water drains to a common discharge point. Catchments are often named by the creek systems formed within them e.g. Wilsons Creek or at a larger scale as a named river basin e.g. the Richmond River. A river basin represents an amalgamation of creek 'sub-catchments' and the river mouth the common discharge point for all rainfall that falls within it. In the Byron Shire there are two river Basins, the Richmond with its mouth at Ballina and the Brunswick which drains the Main Arm valley to Brunswick Heads. There are also smaller isolated coastal catchments such as Belongil Creek.

For natural resource managers, knowing the boundaries of a catchment and where we are located within it provides us with a capacity to predict a whole range of characteristics about

not only the water but also the critters within it. As an experienced fish biologist, I know that as you move upstream in a catchment the number of species you observe become less as fish passage barriers, natural (waterfalls) or constructed (dams), exclude migratory, estuarine dependent species such as Herring, Gudgeons and our much loved Australian Bass. At the top of a catchment only a small number of species with great upstream movement capacities (like eels) or local breeding abilities like Australian Smelt occur.

I am constantly surprised when even long-term Shire locals express a limited understanding of the layout of water catchments. I've met people within the Wilsons Creek community who thought their creek's mouth was at Brunswick Heads. Where in fact Wilsons Creek downstream of Laverty Gap Weir (Mullumbimby's Water Supply) hangs a hard right and heads all the way inland to Lismore where it joins with the Richmond River and follows a long meandering tidal reach stretching to its mouth at Ballina. So,

For me there is just good writing and bad writing.
JOHN BANVILLE, IRISH WRITER,
BOOKER PRIZE WINNER



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if you lose your boogie board in a Wilsons Creek flood (remember those) you now know where to go looking.

The condition of a water catchment and whether it's natural or disturbed, determines its water's flow behaviour, quality and quantity. Two totally pristine catchments can have wildly different water quality and flow regimes based on different natural conditions. Natural catchment condition factors include geology, topography and climate.

A developed catchment's condition is determined by factors such as vegetation cover, the prevalence of slope, gully and riverbank erosion, the intensity of land use, the prevalence of exotic pests and levels of water resource development including consumptive offtake and structures such as dams. How some of these factors affect flows and water quality is apparent i.e. erosion of exposed soil and its suspension in run off generates turbid water, sedimentation of downstream pools and bottom habitats and a source of phosphorus which promotes nuisance algal growth. Dams absorb and modify flows and block biological connectivity. Generally, the more intensive the land use pattern within a catchment the poorer the water quality and the greater the modification of flows downstream.

Measuring these factors at the bottom of a catchment provides an integrated measure of its biophysical condition.

Consider a catchment extensively cleared of its original tree cover and subject to cattle grazing. When rain falls it is not intercepted by tree foliage and a moisture retaining blanket of forest leaf litter. Instead it falls with all its energy onto short grass and areas of exposed ground. Without the flow baffling of vegetation cover, water runs more quickly along the ground surface with higher speed flows capable of generating soil erosion and mobilising organic material and nutrients from the soil and animal manure toward receiving creeks. If the ground surface has been compacted most rainfall will run off as surface flow with little infiltrating through the soil to replenish groundwater aquifers. This reduce the supply of groundwater to creek systems making them less perennial and more seasonal.

In very poor condition catchments where wetlands and creeks have been cleared of their riparian (bankside) vegetation there is nothing to slow or intercept run off as it moves downstream. If these poor conditions exist across an entire river basin it results in cumulative run off flowing quickly toward and meeting in the lower

catchment where it combines to create higher flood peaks. These break out across floodplains inundating areas of agriculture and settlement and further mobilising soil and other contaminant loads toward receiving estuaries. Historically floodplains were areas rich in wetlands like the paperbark forests we still see (for now) in the Belongil Creek catchment. Such wetlands filter the flow of water. This 'detention' of flow provides time for a range of useful biophysical processes to occur such as settlement and 'retention' of silt and other material loads, processing and uptake of nutrients, burial of organic material (a form of 'carbon sequestration' important in our climate impacted world) and biological activity e.g. primary and secondary production that support the fishery nursery values of wetlands.

Built environments, including roads and other hard surfaces, constructed stormwater and agricultural drainage networks also move water faster from the catchment to the estuary with the same impact risks to water quality, flood peaks, groundwater recharge and dependent ecological values. In today's ecocidal world threatened by the climate and other ecological crises the need for ecosystem regeneration has never been greater. Recognising that humans still need places for settlement and agricultural production we can't turn all our catchments back into pristine wildernesses, but we can do a better job of integrating healthy catchment functions into a human dominated landscape.

Revegetation is a primary one. Strategically this needs to focus on the important functional areas of catchments such as bank stabilising and high flow baffling riparian areas and water detaining wetland basins. Groundwater recharge areas and slopes prone to erosion are another priority, not to mention faunal corridors and habitat needs.

Revegetation will slow catchment run off and promote groundwater recharge. But physical works and structures are also required. For example there is a case for reinstating wetland and pool basins along small stream drainage lines and across floodplain distributary channels considering what has been historically lost to sediment infilling and development. Slowing and storing more water within the landscape will improve water quality and quantity, groundwater recharge and flow perennality and associated habitat values and ecological functions.

The other area for major restorative works are estuarine ecosystem margins. Sea level rise projections include the potential for multi metre rises before 2100. If that occurs much of our estuarine areas will become marine and our estuarine ecosystems will need to migrate or be relocated /promoted landward to maintain them. Much of the existing estuarine margins of our catchments are occupied by agriculture and settlement with numerous flow modifying structure such as tide gates, drains and bunds. To keep the ecosystem services of salt marsh and mangroves in our future catchment we need to be working now to remove such structures and to facilitate the successional development of these estuarine communities. A bonus of doing this will be a 'carbon sequestration' windfall due to the enhanced storage of organic material (carbon) conveyed from upper catchment sources. Improved land management practices, particularly a commitment to regenerative agriculture to increase soil carbon content will also see enhanced soil water holding capacity, reduced soil erosion and carbon sequestration delivered throughout our catchment landscapes.

To promote all the above we need appropriate local government planning strategies and development controls. For any defined catchment, thresholds to the level of vegetation clearing and associated development that can occur before catchment functions and values are impacted need to be recognised. These biophysical thresholds should be translated into both development constraints and regeneration targets.

Jim Tait is an aquatic ecologist with over thirty years' experience in river systems spanning from northern NSW Australia to Papua New Guinea. Jim's primary professional interests include freshwater fish, riparian and wetland ecosystems and catchment based natural resource management. econcern@bigpond.com



Photo: Tao Jones



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IMAGINING THE FUTURE: RESISTANCE AND CHANGE IN BYRON SHIRE

STEPHEN POLLARD



This piece traces stories of resistance and change in Byron Shire with respect to community, energy and climate. At issue are questions of who has the power to shape change, and how are changes at the local level constrained and enlarged with respect to prevailing legal and regulatory systems. The stories are in four parts: Belonging, Creative Resistance, Imagining Change, and Local Vantage.

Part one: Belonging. The Arakwal people call Byron Bay 'Cavanbah', which means meeting place. Tides of exchange and change run deep here, where the eastern-most point of Australia folds into the sea. Timber cutters first came to the area via the Brunswick River, and when the forests were cleared settlers started farms and dairies. On the coast, Byron Bay boomed

with shipping, whaling and sand mining. As industries declined, surfers discovered the waves off shore, and waves of new settlers came to the hinterlands. Tourism and population growth promised social and economic renewal, but recent years have seen visitors and development surge putting pressure on housing, damaging roads, threatening fragile ecologies and, at least to some, eroding values of community and place. Who belongs is always a matter of perspective.

Part two: Creative Resistance. Former Mayor Jan Barham holds that "Byron Bay is beautiful because of the people that fight daily to keep it that way". Sometimes resistance confronts ruling elites head on while at other times uses regulation in resourceful ways. An endangered orchid helped to stop development at Paterson Hill, in concert with one thousand protesters and a local Councillor who established his office on top of the excavator under a local bylaw, giving



This is the nature of death; even a brush with mortality gives life a marvellous sense of meaning.

BEHROUZ BOOCHANI

Council time to issue a stop work notice. With the threat of coal seam gas in 2010, people came together against a common enemy. Innovative community surveys verified near-total opposition to gas field development. When local and state government disregarded the message, the people behind those voices blockaded the drill sites, culminating at Bentley in 2015 where 10,000 protesters stopped the rigs and their 800-strong escort of NSW police. These contests over what belongs, and who gets to decide, highlight the power of a common enemy to forge a collective sense of identity and place.

Part three: Imagining Change. A constellation of local organisations has emerged in Byron Shire charting new pathways for energy, climate and community. Mentioning only two, a key dynamic lies between ideals of local self-sufficiency and contributing to sustainability more broadly.

Resisting coal seam gas as out of place catalysed COREM to imagine a desirable energy future of community owned renewable energy, with profits and benefits recirculating locally. COREM is encouraging those seeking energy independence with solar and batteries to stay on the grid, arguing that every kW of solar energy they export avoids a kW from fossil fuels burnt elsewhere. The argument carries weight because the federal government's 'small scale renewable energy scheme' requires retailers to purchase surplus energy from small systems, in addition to their other targets. This local self-sufficiency generates a surplus benefit beyond the local, but its dependence on national energy policy leaves

it exposed.

Zero Emissions Byron imagines the Shire with net zero emissions by 2025, and seeks to lower local emissions as much as possible and to sequester enough carbon within Shire boundaries to counteract any residual emissions. The vision reflects a moral imperative to do "all that we can" by becoming carbon self-sufficient, coupled with a desire to lead other communities and provoke state and national governments into greater action. However, it is a challenge to conceptualize self-sufficiency when there are more than two million visitors to the region each year, to highlight just one area where flows of people, patterns of consumption and systems of infrastructure traverse spatial and jurisdictional borders. Prevailing orthodoxies of carbon accounting make certain actors and emissions more accountable than others, foregrounding systems of production over practices of consumption and underlying structures of wealth. Efforts towards local net-zero emissions thus evoke tensions between the limits of local climate governance and the imagination needed to blur and stretch our conceptual boundaries.

Part four: Local Vantage. Byron Shire and its region are the local vantage point in efforts to imagine and enact desirable energy and climate futures, but the horizon of these visions extends much further. Tracing stories of belonging in the Shire highlights how communities are made and remade. Charting struggles of resistance exposes the power of a common enemy to define collective identity. Imagining change, on the other hand, generates friction between multiple, often conflicting, perspectives and values. As we consider these issues, a local vantage reminds us that no single value characterises a place, no uniform culture defines a community, and no distinct knowledge counts as local. But new possibilities can emerge from the clash and slide between different imaginaries of the future.

Stephen Pollard is a PhD student at the University of Melbourne. His research explores how local actors are imagining and enacting pathways to net zero emissions with a focus on Byron Shire, Copenhagen, and Melbourne.

MEDICINAL CANNIBAS

DR. BOB LODGE



"But I've never smoked marijuana" a common response when explaining the rationale for the use of medicinal cannabis and effects on cannabinoid receptors in our ECS (endocannabinoid system). So what is this ECS and what are cannabinoid receptors? We all have cannabinoid receptors throughout our bodies and in great abundance in our brains. Indeed, cannabinoid receptors outnumber the combined total of serotonin and dopamine receptors. Which should make us suspicious that this ECS is likely to be a "significant player", not a mere "bystander" in we humans.

The remarkably ubiquitous ECS, existent in all vertebrates (that includes us!) has been around for 500 million years...even present in many

invertebrates, like sea squirts.

When we use the word cannabinoids, what are we talking about? It is easiest to think of three different groups. Firstly, phytocannabinoids, the ones we all know about, come from plants e.g. marijuana plant. Secondly, endocannabinoids, which we all produce, in our various bodily systems. Thirdly, synthetic cannabinoids which are designer-engineered in laboratories, by scientists.

What does the ECS do in our bodies? Well, multiple roles, best summarized as maintaining homeostasis or "bodily harmony". These roles include modulating brain function (e.g. perception of pain, control of metabolism and appetite etc.) and also controlling body's inflammatory and immune functions.

Why haven't we known about this ancient but



No one is too small
to make a difference.
GRETA THUNBERG

important bodily system? The answer is not so much lack of scientific inquisitiveness but is a consequence of politics; fear and ignorance; and, deliberate stifling of research.

A quick run through history is helpful. Evidence of therapeutic use of medicinal cannabis in Central Asia dates back 3000BC. Emperor Shen Nung (2,700 BC) described the effective use of cannabis for treatment of beri-beri and malaria. The Ancient Greeks and Romans provide many accounts of therapeutic use of cannabis. By the late 19th century, cannabis use was widespread in a variety of "medicines and potions" in Western Europe. In 1890, Sir John Russell Reynolds, Physician to Queen Victoria, reported 30 years of medicinal cannabis for migraine and neuralgia. The foremost medical textbook at the beginning of the 20th century, Sir William Osler's "Principles and Practice of Medicine" describes cannabis as the best treatment for migraine. Then, in Australian pharmacies, "between the wars", up to a dozen mixtures containing cannabis were available (e.g. "Dr J Collis Browns Chlorodyne").

So what happened? Why did medicinal cannabis disappear? Soon after the onset of Alcohol Prohibition, marijuana became the next target, this time at the behest of the infamous Harry Aslinger, Commissioner of the US Federal Bureau of Narcotics. This led to a Marijuana Tax in 1937. In 1941, all cannabis preparations were removed from the United States Pharmacopoeia And National Formulary. Never to return! Australia slavishly followed the US lead!

After WWII, there was little effort to reverse the above decisions. Then came Woodstock in 1969... too many young folk having too much of a good time! Polities and lawmakers flew into action again and banned all cannabis products, sadly blurring the distinction between recreational and medicinal cannabis. A more nuanced and responsible political response would have been to raise concerns regarding the known risks of recreational cannabis on young brains whilst still allowing scientific evaluation of medicinal cannabis. The Controlled Substances Act 1970

listed marijuana as a Schedule 1 substance, the same as heroin and LSD. And it still is! Furthermore, research on cannabis in the US was made illegal. And it still is!

A consequence of the above has been the majority of research and then clinical trials have occurred outside the US. Indeed much of basic science arose in Israel, particularly at the hands of Professor Raphael Mechoulam "the father of the ECS", who isolated THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) in 1964. In the late 1980s, cannabinoid receptors in rat brains then human brains were identified and, in the 30 years since, endocannabinoid receptors and various endocannabinoids (e.g. anandamide and 2-AG), acting on these receptors, have been identified.

But we are still "in prep grade" given the complexity of function of ECS, and the expanding list of endocannabinoids and associated receptors, further complicated by the heterogeneity of the cannabis plant which produces 80-100 cannabinoids and 200-300 non-cannabinoid chemicals.

What is our understanding of medicinal cannabis in improving health and treating disease? Formal clinical trials, to establish effectiveness and





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safety of medicinal cannabis, have been slow to materialise. This is a consequence of restrictive government regulations; relative scarcity of normal funding sources; and, anti-competitive actions of big Pharma who produce alternatives to medicinal cannabis e.g. opiates. Nevertheless, there is clinical trial data demonstrating efficacy in such varying conditions as rare childhood epilepsies, spasm in multiple sclerosis, neuropathic pain, appetite stimulation, Parkinsons disease, prevention of chemotherapy associated nausea and vomiting...

Access to medicinal cannabis can be utterly confusing, frustrating and unnecessarily expensive for the user (and "would be prescriber"). Certainly in Australia and the US! The Commonwealth Government gave the official "green light" to medicinal cannabis in 2016 with the passing of Narcotic Drugs Amendment Act 2016. However, each Australian state then imposed its own regulations and laws. Likewise in the US. In August 2019, 33 states and the District of Columbia had given the "green light" to medicinal cannabis for specific medical conditions. At the same time, the US Federal government has continued to classify cannabis as illegal, complicating its medical use and research.

Within this context, an intriguing statistic is that the alarming and ever-increasing mortality rate, from medically-prescribed opiate analgesia, starts to reverse within a couple of years of each state legalising medicinal cannabis.

So, what is the future of medicinal cannabis in Australia? Firstly, given current scientific knowledge and increasing reports of efficacy, it will never again "disappear", as in the early-mid 20th century. Secondly, there is a "burning imperative" for real facts i.e. which cannabinoid in which condition; clinical trial data; correct dosing; adverse effects profile; driving restrictions and medicinal cannabis. Thirdly, we require universal access to products of well-validated content and quality, at affordable prices. After all, we are talking about an easily-cultivated "medicinal herb"!

The medicinal cannabis story shares some parallels with renewable energy policy and rooftop solar panels in Australia. The people are on the front foot, making decisions, trialing new options whilst the polities and regulators vacillate.

Dr. Bob Lodge is a Consultant Physician, trained in Melbourne and Oxford and now based in the Northern Rivers, practising in Neurological and Cardiovascular fields. His mantra is "the more inquisitive the Medicine, the better the Medicine".



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DEATH BY TOURISM

MICHAEL MURRAY



Byron Bay is not the only place having a popularity problem. Other tourist destinations have a similar predicament where demand is out pacing the capacity to cope. Increasing density,

cheap airfares, and people's desire for an aspirational social media profile, are just some of the reasons you get stuck in traffic on Ewingsdale Road.

Many high-profile locations are doing it tough and, as yet, none have found a silver bullet solution. Short of 'doing a Trump' and building a wall, or blocking the highway exits, there are not that many things you can do. It could be timely to look at other places with problems, and also consider a few options that may help.

Venice: Venice is well known as the city with the most excessive tourism problem. Not only is it literally sinking in the mud, it also suffers under the weight of 28 million annual visitors. Byron gets around 2.2 million as a comparison. Permanent resident numbers have dropped from 175,000 to close to only 55,000, due to home conversions into the short-term holiday let market. It is attempting to limit cruise ships out of the Grand Canal and disembarking passengers at a less imposing entry. Parts of Venice to the north remain staunchly local and try to stay tourist free.

Barcelona: Like Venice, Barcelona is a must-see destination with a vibrant culture and nightlife. In 2018, 32 million tourists visited Barcelona, far outnumbering its 1.6 million population. Similar to Byron, the Catalans are a bolshie and opinionated people and have not taken it lying down. There are now a lot fewer beds to lie down on as well, since around 40% of housing has been converted to tourist accommodation. Streets are littered with anti tourism graffiti and the city is now employing inspectors who track and fine unlicensed AirBNB operators.

Bar Harbor: Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and Bar Harbor are small islands off the north east

coast of the USA. Traditionally holiday retreats for the wealthy with summer holiday homes, they now suffer under the fast food of tourism – the ballooning cruise ship industry. The 4,500 residents of Bar Harbor, Maine, are often overwhelmed by up to 5,500 tourists a day, only some of which are disgorged from the massive floating hotels. The town recently appointed a committee to consult stakeholders and provide an option paper. They advised buying and improving the marina, prioritising private boats, light rail and buses for better people movement. The cruise ship industry opposes this and wants the marina to be big enough to land passengers direct to shore, something the anti tourist residents are strongly resisting.

San Francisco: SF has two locations that have a similarity to Byron Bay. Marin County is over the Golden Gate Bridge to the north of the city. Towns like Fairfax, San Anselmo and Mill Valley have the same feel and sensibility to our own Bangalow, Federal or Mullumbimby. Health food stores advertise yoga classes and colonic irrigations. It has since been "discovered" and these days no one tries to go anywhere between 3 and 7 as all the roads are completely clogged with late model, expensive SUVs. Palo Alto and Mountain View are suburbs to the south of the city, more commonly known as Silicon Valley. It still looks like suburbia, with three or four bedroom family homes, but these average houses now have a median price of \$US2.5 million. Workers in teaching, nursing, hospitality and cleaning, or anyone not participating in a recent IT share float, have to commute for hours to get to work.

What to do? Byron Bay is on the international hit list and it cannot get off, unless we destroy most of the things we love about it. What we have in common with the places listed above is that we are all relatively powerless to completely stop the onslaught of modern tourism. A Local Government Authority is not sufficiently armed with enough buttons and levers. However, there are some

things that can be done to remediate or temper the worst outcomes.

1. De car De-emphasising the priority of cars in the centre of our towns and villages is something that is known to work. Yes, it is inconvenient to have to park and walk to shops and facilities – especially for the elderly or mums with young kids – I'm sorry. The resistance to paid parking, bypasses and other elements in the current town master plans is understandable and valid. But they are necessary parts on the long process to keeping our towns and villages people friendly instead of clogged by cars.

2. Quality over quantity We cannot stop people from coming here, but we can have an influence over who WANTS to come here. Many of us are not happy that our sleepy little beach town is going up market and trendy, but there are advantages. Eco tourism is more than narrow niche. It is a growing market and being inherently clean and green, we can play to our strength. A family on holiday may be preferable to a house full of backpackers or a car full of day-trippers. If that family enjoys nature walks, yoga and spas, buys locally produced organic food at the farmers market, stays longer and spends more with less impact, then we have an overall win/win.

3. Manage holiday letting This is a contentious and combative area and obviously there are residents who have been adversely affected by holiday letting. AirBNB, UBER and other disrupters in the sharing economy have faults and problems, but they are popular and are here to stay. Killing STHL (Short Term Holiday Letting) will only create worse problems. There is a middle way as long as

the proportion of HL properties do not overpower permanent residents. New regulations soon to be introduced like limiting letting time to 180 days a year, will be interesting to watch.

4. Discourage HNWI property speculation Holiday letting was this past decade's problem, land banking and property speculation will be the next decade's problem. I was once walking along a beach in Florida. My friend listed the owners of the mega mansions lined up beyond the dunes: Pro golfer V.J. Singh, Madonna, a hedge fund manager, etc. Every one of these houses was empty and shuttered. HNWI's (High Net Worth Individuals) buy expensive properties to park money in safe assets and only spend a few weeks a year living there. Now that Byron has \$20 million plus properties and is a safe investment, this will become an issue. Some places have introduced a Vacancy Tax to avoid this and we may need to do the same.

5. Maintain the vibe The "vibe" is more important than the built space. People, lifestyle, culture and community are more important than trying to stop change. Byron is always changing but still remains quirky, interesting, different, beautiful and green. Diversity is key, especially in finding the right mix between visitor, tourist and resident. We will certainly suffer if we become a monoculture playground for the rich, famous, and "Instagram-influencers". Gentrification is a problem when it economically isolates us from the very people who can keep reinventing Byron to be the place where so many people want to be.

Michael Murray is a long term local, buyer's agent and lives in Mullumbimby. He is currently volunteering on the Mullumbimby Master Plan Guidance Group and the Mullumbimby Hospital Site Project Reference Group.



*Live not for the battles won,
live not for the end-of-the-song.
Live in the along.*
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*You've only got so many breaths.
When you come into the world
you cry, when you leave the world
you sigh.*

CHINESE PROVERB

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Byron Car Hire: at Byron Service Station at railway crossing simmonsbyronbay.com.au	6685 6638	51
Byron Visitors Centre: Behind the bus stop www.visitbyronbay.com	6680 8558	
Cape Byron State Conservation Area: Visit the lighthouse & Australia's most easterly point. www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au	6639 8300	
Cape Byron Marine Park: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/marine-protected-areas/marine-parks	6639 6200	
Crystal Castle: Monet Dr Montecollum www.crystalcastle.com.au	6684 3111	68
Go Sea Kayak: opp 56 Lawson St www.goseakayakbyronbay.com.au	0416 222 344	57
Macadamia Castle: Hinterland Way, Knockrow www.macadamiacastle.com.au	6687 8432	47

BUILDING

Arcbuild Pty Ltd: Specialises in architect-designed residences www.arcbuildinsurance.com.au	1300 095 393	57
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FASHION & CLOTHING

Patagonia: 1/58 Jonson Street. www.patagonia.com.au	6685 8528	5
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FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT

Bay Grocer: 63 Tennyson St. Byron Bay. www.baygrocer.com	5605 8407	15
Byron Bay Cookie Company: Shop 3/4 Jonson St Ozigo Bayshore Drive. BB Ind Estate. www.cookie.com.au	6685 5143	10
Byron at Byron Restaurant: 77-97 Broken Hd Rd www.crystalbrookcollection.com/byron	6639 2111	9
Byron Corner Store: 7/47 Jonson St www.facebook.com/byroncornerstore	6685 6672	
Byron Farmers' Market: Cavanbah Centre Thurs morning Bangalow Sat morning www.byronfarmersmarket.com.au		19
Cape Byron Distillery 80 McLeods Sht www.capebyrondistillery.com	6684 7961	21
di Vino: Italian Restaurant. 2 Fletcher St www.divinobyron.com	6680 8424	
Earth 'n' Sea Pizza : 3 Marvel St www.earthnsea.com.au	6685 6029	24
Hunky Dory: Shop 3/109 Jonson St www.hunkydory.com.au	6680 7985	16
Legend Pizza: 90 Jonson St www.legendpizza.com.au	6685 5700	12
Loft Byron Bay: 4 Jonson St www.loftbyronbay	6680 9183	13
Main Street Burger Bar: 18 Jonson St www.mainstreetburgerbar.com.au	6680 8832	22
No Bones: 11 Fletcher St. instagram/nobonesbyronbay	6680 7418	12



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Real Food Republic: realfoodrepublic.com.au	0421 106 229	17
Salumi Australia: www.salumi.com.au	6680 5030	23
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 5173	67
The Bread Social: 11 Ewingsdale Road at The Farm www.thebreadsocial.com.au	6684 7940	2
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	15

GIFTS & SHOPPING

Bay Gems: Beach end Jonson St. instagram/byronbaygems	6685 7437	31
Byron Photo Magic: Shop 20 "Mercato on Byron" 108-114 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
Skullcandy 63 Centennial Cct Arts & Ind Est. www.skullcandy.com.au Indy: Truly wireless earbuds	6639 5555	28
Sweetness, Skulls and Light: shop 7/4 Jonson St. Cavanbah Arcade www.sweetnessskullsandlight.com	0413 673 855	52
The Book Room: 27 Fletcher St. www.thebookroomcollective.com 2/60 Ballina St. Lennox Head	6685 8183 6687 5639	26
Traeger BBQ Grill: 63 Centennial Cct Arts & Ind Est. www.sb8.com.au	6639 5555	44
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	4

Anyone who would think that you
can have infinite growth in a finite
environment is either a madman or
an economist.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH

Heeling Dean Tarot Reader www.heelingtarot.wixsite.com/lightworker	0432 410 139	29
The Spa & Wellness Centre Byron at Byron : 77-97 Broken Head Rd www.crystalbrookcollection.com/byron	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	50
Rusty's Byron Guide: PO Box 851, Byron Bay, NSW, 2481 rustym@inet.net.au / www.byron-bay-guide.com.au	0428 847 390	

SERVICES / EDUCATION

Atlas Currency: Exchange 4/47 Byron St, www.atlascurrency.com.au	1300 261 090	46
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 Property Search www.byronpropertysearch.com	0428 555 501	38
Byron Youth Service 1 Gilmore Cres / bys.org.au / info@bys.org.au	6685 7777	
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	0499 862 886	
Simply Ethical Advice: www.simplyethicaladvice.com.au	0421 778 683	54
Southern Cross University www.scu.edu.au	6620 3666	60
Subpod www.subpod.com	8188 7360	43
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




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We continue to lean towards joy.
MICK O'REGAN

SURFING


Black Dog Surfing: 4/5 11 Byron St. www.blackdogsurfing.com	6680 9828	39
Fliteboard 6/4 Banksia Dr. Arts & Ind Est. www.fliteboard.com	1300 00 FLITE	48
Munro Surfboards: 29 Acacia St Arts & Ind Est www.munrosurfboards.com.au	6685 6211	7
North Coast Surfboards: 1/29 Acacia St Arts & Ind Est www.vouchsurf.com & surfboardsbydonaldtakayama.com	6685 6896	6
Rusty Miller Personalised Surfing Instruction www.rustymillersurf.com	0422 099 684	65
Surfection: 2 Banksia Drive Arts & Ind Estate www.surfection.com	6685 6022	45



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TURNINGPOINT BOOKS/PRINTS
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STONE & WOOD BREWERY

Born and raised in Byron Bay, Stone & Wood Brewery is proudly local and independent, brewing approachable beer in the Northern Rivers. Pop in for a tasting paddle and lunch or book a tour to learn about our approach to brewing and conscious business.

100 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay | 02 6685 5173

Weekdays: 10am - 5pm

Weekends: 12pm - 6pm

Tours: \$35 per person (includes tasting paddle and arrival beer)

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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