

Douglas Shire News Newsport

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No mixing drinks at Hemingway's Tropicfest, but there was a great mix of tourists and locals.
Picture: Bryan Littlely



Tourists vs locals Here's cheers to them both!

Bryan Littlely

Port Douglas locals say the town has long ventured past its "tourism tipping point" and has little chance of getting back the fishing village charm, community spirit and way of life they loved.

Comments including "over-priced tourist trap" and "it's just a micro city atmosphere" have flowed since Newsport asked

the question if Port Douglas is at risk of "overtourism" eating away at our community participation and fabric?

A Bond University research says as a top tourist destination, Port Douglas should at very least monitor civic participation as an early warning sign of overtourism, citing a new study of 42 Italian cities which

found community participation held steady at low and moderate levels of tourism but fell sharply in cities with the highest visitor pressure.

But Tourism Port Douglas Daintree executive officer Emma Tunnock says tourism's significant role in the region means it is particularly

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IS IT
FAREWELL
TO A
FAVOURITE?



THE
FIGHT
FOR BIG
FIGGY

Special Report starts P9

'Vibrant' visitors give traders reason to smile - P6-7

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Mission to rescue FNQ jobs

Shaun Hollis

A Far North Queensland leadership delegation has had a "series of positive and constructive meetings" with the Federal Home Affairs Minister and an influential Queensland senator as they petition the government to reverse potentially debilitating changes to the working-visa system.

Leichhardt MP Matt Smith, Tourism Tropical North Queensland chief executive Mark Olsen and other FNQ business representatives flew to Canberra last week to lobby Immigration Minister Tony Burke and Senator for Queensland Murray Watt to reverse flagged changes to working visas that are expected to hit the region's tourism industry hard.

Minister Burke announced the sweeping changes last month - which include second-year visas being reduced from 57,000 to 45,000 places annually, backpackers having to complete a required 88 days of specified regional work despite not being guaranteed a second year, a ballot for second-and-third-year positions, and third-year visas being cut significantly from 31,000 to just



Reef tourism operators are some of a wide range of workers concerned about the working-visa changes. Picture: Shaun Hollis

5000 places. The region relies on seasonal workers to fill a host of jobs during peak season including working in bars and restaurants.

"Backpacker numbers and Working Holiday Visas are issues that play significant roles in Cairns and Regional Australia," Mr Smith said. "We have had a series of positive and constructive meetings with the Minister for Home Affairs Tony Burke MP and Murray Watt - Senator for Queensland as we

work together to forge the best path forward for our communities on these matters."

Mr Smith said the group included a "huge number of businesses and individuals who are critical to the economy of the Far North".

"Government policy is best when informed by honest and open discussion, and that is precisely what I and the Albanese Labor Government are continuing to do."




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TOYAH APPEAL PENDING

A trio of Brisbane Supreme Court judges could take weeks to decide the fate of convicted murderer Rajwinder Singh after he last week appealed his sentence for killing former Paws and Claws volunteer Toyah Cordingley at Wangetti Beach.

Mr Singh, who was sentenced late last year to life imprisonment with a non-parole period of 25 years for the 2018 murder, has based his appeal on several issues relating to the trial, as well as his legal team arguing the sentence was "manifestly excessive".

Singh's lawyer Saul Holt KC told the court one issue was the dismissal by judge Lincoln Crowley of a member of the jury partway through the trial.

BABY BAT SEASON

Conservationists are urging Far North Queensland residents to give flying-fox mothers and their babies space as the annual birthing season gets underway.

Endangered Spectacled Flying-foxes are beginning to give birth across Far North Queensland, with maternity roosts expected to become busier over the coming months.

The native fruit bats give birth to just one pup each year, making every new arrival important for the recovery of the species.

Wet Tropics Wildlife Rescue Coordinator Kristy Jensen said Spectacled Flying-foxes congregate at maternity roosts during spring and summer.

Wildlife carer and FNQ Wildlife Rescue Bat Coordinator Cheryl Hudson said hundreds of flying-fox pups are orphaned or separated from their mothers each year.

"Last year, almost 400 orphaned pups were rescued," she said.

Condolences for Cass

It's been a sad fortnight for the team at Wildlife Habitat and hundreds of thousands of people who have enjoyed the character in person and online of one of its true characters, Cass the female Cassowary.

Cass passed peacefully onsite at the Port Douglas park due to age-related complications with vet

care and members of the wildlife team nursing her.

Cass was a long-term resident of Wildlife Habitat, taking residence in the early days and becoming a crowd favourite over the 33 years at the park.

"Although the team are incredibly sad to say goodbye to Cass, we

also want to celebrate the amazing milestone she shared with us and the special place she held in so many people's hearts," said Wildlife Habitat manager Clare Hunt.

The park has been inundated with messages of condolence and memories, along with pictures of Cass from her fans globally.

Funding disaster averted

Shaun Hollis

Political leaders across Queensland are celebrating after the Federal Government announced it would not go through with a proposed reduction in the amount of emergency funding it would allocate in the event of future disasters.

The Government had proposed changing the Disaster Recovery

Funding Arrangements from a 75 per cent Federal, 25 per cent State Government mix to a 50/50 model, potentially cutting millions of dollars from the disaster-funding budget. But Treasurer Jim Chalmers and Emergency Management Minister Kristy McBain released a joint statement this month "following extensive consultation".

"The Commonwealth will retain the current cost-sharing arrange-

ments," the statement reads. "Because we know communities need certainty when disasters hit."

Douglas Shire Mayor Lisa Scomazzon and Cook MP David Kempton welcomed the move.

"This is a fantastic result," Mayor Scomazzon said.

Mr Kempton: "The Federal Government has listened to the State Government and every council in Queensland."

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* Compared to 2024 financial year, per capita, Queensland Police Service data.



Q | Breach Bail Go to Jail

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A slice of Salami Day tradition

Bryan Littlely

Port Shorts Film Festival will bring stories from across Australia to life on the big screen in Rex Smeal Park this Saturday with one of the tales told the heartwarming Mete family tradition of Salami Day captured by local filmmaker Jake Girgenti.

Jake's 4-minute documentary follows the fun filled day where four generations join in the salami making at the Yungaburra family home of Nonno Filippo Mete.

For the Mete family it is about continuing a long tradition, instilling that in future generations so that it continues beyond Filippo's passing. For Jake, it is all about the storytelling and sharing a rich story from a simple family past time.

"You have to love FNQ because where else are you going to find four generations of the one family making salami in their garage?" Jake says.

"It's very important, especially with the Italian heritage because we are starting to lose our living connections with that culture... so it is critical to capture and share it to keep those traditions alive."



Filmmaker Jake Girgenti, Angelica and Filippo Mete. Picture: Millstream Productions

Screen Queensland's Cairns Studio Manager Riannon Del Favero says it is exciting as a Port Shorts sponsor to see how far it has come and the growing impact it's having each year.

"Screen Queensland, through its Screen Culture Fund, has been a proud, long-standing supporter so it's incredibly rewarding to see it getting bigger, better and reaching an even wider audience.

"I'm excited to see what this year brings and to be part of a community event that continues to go from strength to strength."

The Coral Sea waterfront will

transform into a magnificent open-air cinema, showcasing an outstanding lineup of short films from Far North Queensland, across Australia, and around the globe.

Equipped with a giant outdoor LED screen, immersive surround sound, vibrant local food stalls, and a fully licensed bar, the iconic Rex Smeal Park venue offers one of the most stunning cinematic setups on earth.

Around 800 movie lovers are expected to gather under the palm trees for a rich, entertaining program spanning local narra-

tives, music videos, and work from emerging filmmakers.

Adding extra star power this year is TV royalty Bernie (Bernie) Curry, stepping in as host while his brother and regular host, Stephen, performs in Sydney.

A household name across Australia, Bernie is celebrated for his roles in Neighbours, Home and Away, and Wentworth, as well as winning The Amazing Race Australia: Celebrity Edition alongside Steve.

Port Shorts Festival Director Ali George said the event is a unique celebration of local talent and world-class cinema.

"Port Shorts is a night where strong storytelling, local character, and an extraordinary setting come together," she said.

"Audiences can discover filmmakers from our own region alongside work from across Australia and around the world, all under the stars at Rex Smeal Park."

Following last year's successful turnout of more than 700 attendees, organisers are encouraging both locals and regional neighbours to take full advantage of the weekend.

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Losing Port Douglas Tourism to

From page 1

important that a strong visitor economy goes hand-in-hand with a thriving local community.

"Tourism is the lifeblood of the Port Douglas and Daintree economy, supporting up to one in two local jobs, along with businesses and services that contribute to a vibrant and connected community," Ms Tunnock said.

The Bond University study examined visitor hotspots including Venice, Florence, Rome and Milan between 2009-2023.

The researchers argue cities under intense visitor pressure risk becoming places designed primarily for tourists rather than communities for residents.

"Tourism can support jobs, amenities and community life," Professor Edmund Goh said.

"The concern is whether its scale and concentration begin to undermine the community that helps make the destination attractive in the first place."

"If permanent households are replaced by rotating short-stay guests, a neighbourhood can lose people who sustain its everyday networks such as volunteers, club members, neighbours and regular participants in local activities," he said.

TPDD is currently leading the development of a new Destination Management Plan in collaboration with Douglas Shire Council.

"We are also progressing work around social impact measurement to better understand tourism's contribution to community wellbeing and identify opportunities to strengthen positive outcomes over time," Ms Tunnock said.

"Community sentiment and engagement will be important considerations as this work progresses.

"We must also recognise the importance of maintaining a strong and viable year-round visitor economy," Ms Tunnock said.

Bryan Littlely

A younger and more diverse flow of tourists cruising central Port Douglas has meant a strong season for most traders after disappointing returns in recent years.

But not all sectors have fared well, bespoke dining taking a hit with a slow start to the season - the lowest trade rate ever for some of the favourites foodie places in Far North Queensland - and inconsistent business since.

"It was a late start to the season for us and we started with the lowest trade rates ever, lower than after Jasper," Epicurean's Marlene Erard said.

"It took forever to get a giddy-up.

"What we are finding and hearing in the sector is that it has been very unpredictable. One minute you're up and the next thing you're down."

Marlene said July and August had been good trade months for the bespoke restaurant but it had been a very strange season.

"We've only been in the busi-

ness post Covid, so we don't know the good old Port Douglas days."

Rowan said people had warned them about the lows, but added "when it is low, low, low constantly, it's hard to navigate".

"It's just the way it is," he said.

Nicola Hood said Ngarru Gallery had experienced a good season and she felt Macrossan Street had carried a "lovely busy vibe" throughout the season.

"I feel it has been a pretty good season, bigger than last year but I don't know if we're back to pre-Covid numbers yet," she said.

"We had really good interna-



David Lloyd of Sea Gallery

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bring a smile for most

tional numbers - lots of Kiwis and lots of Canadians - and a lot of return clients."

There's been plenty of action and business for the boating and diving sector with Mel Spring of Wavelength saying the high-foot traffic Macrossan Street location of the booking office had given her plenty of insight into just how busy the town was throughout the season.

"It has been really good for us, chocka block everyday," she said.

"We are still quite busy and it is only dropping off slightly looking at the bookings over the next couple of weeks.

"From what we hear, most of the resorts have had good capacity rates."

Sparrow's Paula Espina said she is in need of a rest with the season "definitely being busier than last year".

"I noticed it was a younger crowd this season," she said.

"It has been nice compared to other years when after school holidays we have a drop. We didn't



Marlene and Rowan Erard

have a big drop off this year... it hasn't really dropped that much at all so far."

David Lloyd of Sea Gallery said trade had been busier and more constant for the Macrossan Street gallery compared to the past couple of years.

"Easter was an underperformer and the season hit at Carnivale," he said.

"It has been a good mix of people too. Younger people, more dynamic and family groups. The internationals are here too".

"There were more internationals in wet season last year and that is hopefully a good sign going forward."



Paula Espina and Michelle Coady from Sparrow. Pictures: Bryan Littlely



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A family favourite has to go

BIG FIG TREE FIGHT

Bryan Littlely

Families and locals have expressed heartbreak at the news a beloved but decaying fig tree at one of Port Douglas' most popular parks will be removed for safety reasons following assessments from independent arborists.

The mature fig tree, located beside the playground at Rex Smeal Park, was deemed dangerous by an assessment in the wake of a serious incident last month when a man was injured and six cars crushed when a tree fell in Macrossan Street.

Council says the tree has been closely monitored for several months following ongoing efforts to improve its health.

But, recent expert assessments have determined the tree cannot be saved and must be removed to protect public safety. Fungal decay is the likely cause of major cracks and weakened branches within the tree.

Council is planning to replace the fig tree and install shade sails over the playground to maintain shade for park users.

The response has flowed since last Friday's news.

"My grandchildren have loved



The fig tree and playground is a favourite for local family Heath Whiley and Kim Lukey and daughter Matilda. They were visiting with grandfather David Lukey and Arpon Carne. Picture: Bryan Littlely

climbing in that tree for years. How sad. All that shade gone. I hope they are planning on planting many more," Chrissy Geyer said.

Matt Coubrough and Samantha Robertson remembered climbing the tree as kids.

"Spent many hours climbing that tree. Be sad to see it gone," Matt said.

"Oh nooo.. I loved climbing that tree as a kid! The park won't ever

be the same," Samantha added.

Douglas Shire Mayor Lisa Scomazzon said the decision had not been made lightly.

"The fig trees are an iconic part of Rex Smeal Park and have provided shade and memories for generations of local families and visitors," Mayor Scomazzon said.

"It is sad to lose such a beautiful tree, and I know many people in our community will share that

disappointment, but the safety of residents and visitors must always come first.

"The playground is used every day by children and families, and we have a responsibility to ensure this much-loved space remains safe for everyone."

Council planned to remove the tree this week and will provide further details on replacement planting in the coming weeks.

It's our tree and we will fight for it

Bryan Littlely

The fight to stop the chop of the Rex Smeal Park fig tree at least until the community had time to understand the process and be sure that all options had been considered started on Sunday morning, Port Douglas local of 17 years, Melina Capogreco, launching a petition.

And she made a call to action for community members to head to Rex Smeal Park early on Monday as Douglas Shire Council issued a notice of temporary closure of the playground around 4pm Sunday, October 18, in preparation for the removal of the tree.

"This decision was not made lightly," council's notice says.

"Following independent arbor-

ist advice, council has determined the tree can no longer be safely retained, with public safety remaining our highest priority."

Mrs Capogreco, a mother-of-two, said she has taken her family to Rex Smeal Park to play in and climb the tree so many times, but before having children "it was a special place for me and many friends".

"It's got lots of memories for so many people here in Port Douglas," she said.

"I started the petition because I saw the post from council that it was to be removed. I got a bit upset about it but thought we still have time, but we don't as they say it will be removed this week."

Mrs Capogreco was gathering

support in person at the tree on Monday morning.

"Our beautiful, magnificent fig tree at Rex Smeal Park is facing removal, and we have a chance to make our voices heard before it's too late," her petition reads.

"This tree is part of Port Douglas. It's provided shade, shelter for wildlife, and precious memories for generations of locals and visitors.

"I've lived here for 16 years, and my children have grown up climbing this beautiful tree. The thought of losing it is heartbreaking.

"Of course, public safety matters. But surely we should explore every reasonable alternative before removing something that has taken decades to grow?"



Petitioner Melina Capogreco, back, says wildlife carers want the chop postponed while protected Torres Strait Pigeons are nesting. Picture: Anthony Capogreco

Chop goes on while court action lodged



MPDT contractors start the chop.
Picture: Bryan Littlely

Bryan Littlely
The chainsaws moved in on the big fig tree in Rex Smeal Park early on Tuesday morning as petitions stepped into the courtroom to stop the chop.

Raised high into the canopy with a lift, the contractors from MPDT cut green, healthy foliage from the fig tree over the area above the Green Ant playground and bench as community members peacefully asked them to stop at least until an 11.30am Supreme Court appeal was heard.

Council representatives on site were presented with the Court papers outlining the action, secured in a 6am mercy call to the Cairns Court orchestrated by lead petitioner Melina Capogreco and Yolanda Passlow.

Mrs Capogreco personally delivered the documents to Douglas

Shire Council when the Shire offices opened on Tuesday morning but the cutting continued.

Emotions were raised when a magpie lark nest was spotted in a nest in an adjacent tree, the nest included in the exclusion zone of the tree removal work. The on-site senior ecologist inspected the nest and confirmed that it was in the exclusion zone.

Petitioners expressed disappointment that they had not had contact from Douglas Shire Council members, although Mrs Capogreco did confirm she had had a brief conversation with Mayor Lisa Scamazzon on Tuesday.

"It is very important that council gives the answers to the community that we want, that the reasons for this removal of the fig tree are clearly communicated with the community," she said.

"That is what is most frustrating, that this process has not been done properly. That is why we have gone to the courts to halt this removal, so we can have time to hear all the information."

Arborist, Ian Crossman, now retired in Port Douglas for the past 20 years, says the fig tree facing the chop is "perfectly healthy".

Mr Crossman gained his qualifications at Merrest Wood College, Surrey in the UK, when the profession first began.

"That was 52 years ago and I have been looking at trees ever since," he said.

"I have saved trees just like this fig around the library in Cairns and also in Palm Cove.

"Council are probably freaking out because people say I'm an expert and I'm saying it's unsafe.

"It's perfectly healthy."

A FAMILY TREE

FAMILY MEMORIES

A resident who arrived around 1981 recalled three children and visiting families playing in the fig.

1988 | FROM ABOVE



Port Douglas, 1988. Picture: Kevin Jarred / Douglas Shire Council.

2010 | UNDER THE STARS

More than 150 guests dine beneath the illuminated fig. Nola Craig recalls "an absolutely magical setting".

2014 | DAY & NIGHT

Wedding Lounge celebrates climbing by day and receptions beneath the lights.

2021 | FAMILY VOICES

Playground consultation records parents' and grandparents' affection for children's play among the trees.

TODAY | A NEW GENERATION



Eden and Elias Zappulla, of Melbourne, enjoying the fig. Picture: Bryan Littlely

Sources: Council photo collection (587); Australian Tropical Foods (2010); Wedding Lounge (2014); council consultation report (2021).

FICUS: GIANTS BUILT TO LAST

GREEN FIG

Ficus virens

Around 35m tall; exceptional trees approach 50m. Aerial roots form supporting trunks. Queensland's Curtain Fig is estimated at over 500 years old.

COMMON THREATS

Spreading roots are vulnerable to excavation, compaction, drought and waterlogging. Wood-decay fungi enter wounds and weaken limbs; wet soils favour Phytophthora root disease. Storms and insect pests add stress.

Sources: NParks; Queensland Parks; National Trust; TEQ; UC IPM. Sizes and longevity vary.

MORETON BAY FIG

Ficus macrophylla

Can reach 50m, with massive buttress roots and a vigorous, spreading root system. Long-lived: A Brisbane garden specimen was planted between 1864 and 1884.

WEeping FIG

Ficus benjamina

Around 20m tall, with crowns about 18-21m wide and aerial roots. Can live beyond 150 years: Brisbane's Weeping Fig Avenue dates to the 1870s.



Moreton Bay fig, Palermo. Giuseppe ME / Wikimedia Commons. CC BY-SA 4.0; unchanged.



Douglas Shire Council's Cr Damian Meadows delivered the heartbreaking news. Picture: Douglas Shire Council

A tough call for Council

Bryan Littlely

"Today is not a good day for me." Douglas Shire Council member Damian Meadows took on the task of telling the community they would lose a local treasure, and the former police sergeant delivered the message as if the tree was a valued member of the community he loves.

"Council has been forced to make a very drastic decision," Mr Meadows said in a video filmed at the base of the tree and distributed across council's social media.

"It affects us all. It is an iconic tree in the region. My kids have grown up climbing this tree. My kids have grown up utilising the playground.

"But unfortunately this tree has reached its end of life and there's nothing more we can do."

Mr Meadows said he was well aware that a lot of people would not be happy about the decision, "but it all boils down to safety"

"We recently had a tree fall in Macrossan Street and we don't want the same thing happening here in Rex Smeal Park," he said, referring to the September 18 event where a tree crushed six vehicles and injured a man when it fell in the main shopping strip.

Mr Meadows raised the specialist arborists reports which had sealed the fate of the tree, reports which are now central to calls of petitioners to be released in full to the public.

"It saddens all of us but unfortunately this has to be done for the safety of our children and the safety of people attending the park," he said.

"However we have plans in place to put shades over the playground to start with and we are going to import some mature trees to see if we can fill the void as quickly as possible."

Just as there has been opposition to the removal, there has

been strong support for the approach to the announcement taken by Douglas Shire Council.

Craig Eggins said Mr Meadows makes a good point several times.

"The tree is at its 'end of life' stage. Trees do not live forever! A tree is considered to be structurally sound if it has 30 per cent or more holding timber," he said.

"Fig trees rot from the inside out. The trick is to plant replacement trees long before they get to this point.

"I was part of a tree crew who removed a fig tree the same size as this one after it crashed through a fence and into a childcare centre playground in Milton 20 mins after the last child had left for the day.

"Sad to see it go, but the best decision for its location.

Jacqueline Funch added: "It's sad to see how decisions and attitudes from some people involved in Council and the town have negatively impacted its progress."

THE BIG FIG

A favourite through time

6 AUGUST 2021

Green Ant playground concept unveiled beneath the fig.

DECEMBER 2021

Council reports 79 per cent support; climbing access is a drawcard.

21 NOVEMBER 2023

Council awards the playground contract and commits \$500,000.

JULY 2024

New playground available; official opening set for July 13.

APRIL-MAY 2025

Council says assessors recommend retention, pruning and monitoring despite decay.

SEPTEMBER 2026

Council reports major decay and cracking in supporting limbs.

16 OCTOBER 2026

Council announces removal the following week, citing safety. Replacement trees and shade measures proposed.

GENERATIONS OF PLAY

A 2021 submitter who arrived 40 years earlier recalled: "all of my three children and countless friends and families have played under and in that tree".

Sources: Douglas Shire Council project updates, 2021 consultation report (p16), July 2024 and October 2026 releases. Compiled 18 October 2026.

ROADMAP TO REMOVAL

Management history, condensed from Council's supplied summary of arborist assessments.

JULY 2024

Council identified the fig for canopy lifting, limb-weight reduction and deadwood removal. Maintenance followed during 2024.

MARCH-APRIL 2025

An aerial inspection identified decay, cracking and limb delamination. Isolation beneath affected sections was recommended; crown reduction aimed to reduce loading.

28 APRIL 2025

Despite cracking and decay, an independent assessment found the tree in reasonable condition, with high amenity value and potential for retention through priority pruning, further testing and six-monthly review.

18 MAY 2025

Resistance drilling found internal decay but also substantial healthy timber and structural aerial roots. The tree remained viable for retention with substantial pruning and close monitoring.

JULY 2025-SEPTEMBER 2026

Further canopy reduction and deadwood removal continued.

21 SEPTEMBER 2026

An aerial inspection found worsening decay and cracking in major load-bearing limbs. Affected limbs supported branches representing up to about half the crown. Previous pruning had not stopped deterioration; complete removal was considered likely to be the most appropriate option.

24 SEPTEMBER 2026

Council's arborist and three independent consultants inspected the tree. All three consultants, including previous supporters of retention, agreed further pruning was no longer viable and removal was the only practical solution.

WHY THE ADVICE CHANGED

Council's arborist said pruning cannot restore strength lost to decay or stop fungal decay. Council weighed irreplaceable shade and amenity against structural defects and the risk to park users.

Goodbye to a beauty

Bryan Littlely

Youngsters Lily and Baron Drew took what may be a final walk around the big fig tree late on Sunday, taking in its beauty, pointing out their favourite path through its maze of branches and breathing in that unique scent of a special friend.

Then they each took out a tablet to take photographs... capturing some memories that will be confined to a screen should the removal of the Rex Smeal Park playground fig tree this week not be stopped.

Father Greville Drew said he had seen the news the tree would be removed this week and brought the children to the site to say farewell.

"I thought we should take some pictures for old time's sake," he said.

"Lily was five years old when we moved here and these kids don't remember life before Port Douglas so this tree has pretty much been a part of their whole life.

"If we lose Baron down here at Rex Smeal, he is usually up there in the tree."

Baron has a straight forward question for council: "What are we going to climb now?"

It is a question being asked by many as family memories attached to the tree flow.

Chrissy Geyer says her grandchildren have loved climbing in that tree for years.

"How sad. All that shade gone. I hope they are planning on planting many more," she adds.



Greville, Lily and Baron Drew pay a final farewell to the big fig tree. Picture: Bryan Littlely

Lynne Walker said it is a sign of "the good days disappearing".

"Our grandchildren many times climbed that great tree, sad but obviously necessary."

While Samantha Robertson has her own childhood memories: "Oh nooo.. I loved climbing that tree as a kid! The park won't ever be the same!"

Others labelled the big fig tree "iconic" and "amazing" while Terence Melchert reflected and looked to the future in adding his

thoughts.

"Everything comes to end of life including human beings and sadly that's what has happened to this fantastic tree - a life well lived and time to move on," he said.

"From recent experience in Macrossan Street we know that trees can fall suddenly if they are coming to end of life.

"The last thing anyone wants is for the tree to fall on children playing in Rex Smeal Park - that's not on."

TRIBUTES TO OUR TREE



Artwork by Nicole Innes.



Lachlan O'Hanlon, far right, in 1990 at sister's birthday.



Jade McAlister's children take a climb.

Poem from a supporter

A giant fig with roots so deep,
A thousand stories it could keep
A living giant old and wise
Beneath its branches birds would rise.

Now comes a playground, shiny and new,
With a price tag big and a safety view.
But tell me, please, before we begin,
Who was here first? Who should give in?

The tree that stood for years untold,
Or slides and swings of plastic and gold?
Must nature always step aside,
So human plans can grow in pride?

Perhaps it's old, perhaps it's weak,
Perhaps it's safety that we seek.
But when we build, do we forget
The living things we haven't lost just yet?

For once a giant's brought to ground,
Its shade, its shelter, its life unwound.
No playground, however bright or tall,
Can replace a living tree for all.

So before the chainsaws sing their song,
Let's ask ourselves where we went wrong.
Was there no way to make room for play,
And let this ancient giant stay?



Bill Crew's stunning capture under the canopy.

COMMUNITY CONDOLENCES

From the Port Douglas, Mossman, Douglas Shire News Weather & Views page

Elle Aitch

It's very sad, I took my kids to the park yesterday so they could play on the tree. You can see it is rotting though when you walk around it

Gregory Herring

Sad day for the tree but public safety is important, a lot of trees are being removed for the upgraded walking/bike path past Reef Resort.

Jacqueline Funch

Why is chopping the tree down here the only solution? Move the playground and create a beautiful boundary around the tree so people aren't walking directly underneath it.

Jet Gregory

They did not do anything for the roots only canopy care by pruning... The only thing they did to the roots was place the playground on top of it which affected the tree's health.

Tom Tyndall

Council didn't make the final decision lightly. It was based on independent arborist assessments brought in specifically to provide objective expert judgements, and they all examined public safety and tree health. The evaluation process is now complete, and the final decision has been made based strictly on those specialist recommendations.

Andersen MJ

It's a tree, it's not hard to plant more? Just takes more time.

Doug Herrington

It's nesting season for the Teresian Imperial Pigeon. That tree is full of nests with eggs and chicks at the moment.

Kate Jesseca

The playground equipment is absolutely slathered in bird and bat poo from the proximity of the tree so not super great in that regards but a shame to see it go.

More than a tree to Tijania

Bryan Littlely

Tijania DeCaux, 10, is the last child to sit beneath the shade and umbrella protection of the Rex Smeal Park fig tree just as thousands have before her.

The swing sits still... it was not play that Tijania went to the park early on Monday for, but one last chance to feel the peace and calm of an "educator".

"The tree is my favourite... it is more than a tree to me," Tijania said.

As protective fencing was moved into place, hi-vis and high lifts moved into place, Tijania didn't budge, and wasn't bothered by the workforce tasked with the removal job ahead.

"The tree feels calm. I love calm spaces," Tijania said.

With the last fencing panels moving into place, the young girl joined mum Margit Klammer, tears rolling down her face crying over the inevitable loss.

"This is a living being... it has seen people get married it has seen young babies nursed under



Tijania DeCaux takes a final sit on the swings under the towering Rex Smeal Park fig tree on Monday morning.
Picture: Bryan Littlely

it, birthday celebrations and funerals," Margit said.

"A tree like this, it is sharing information, it is educating people through the stories shared. This is like an Aboriginal elder. When we cut these trees down, it's a big disturbance to our social connection."

Margit said children flocked to the tree because it helped them to "ground".

"This is a place children explore, they connect with the environment. It is a place where they find courage and peace," she said.

"You cannot get connection on a rubber mat."

Council had late Sunday issued a notice of temporary closure of the Rex Smeal Park playground and area under the tree and contractors were deployed around 8am on Monday to start the establishment of an exclusion zone around the playground and tree.

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Calcutta returns after \$43,550

Bryan Littlely

The Port Douglas Melbourne Cup Calcutta will return on Monday, November 2, after its inaugural event generated \$43,550 in ticket sales and auction proceeds, including \$7,042 for the Port Douglas Surf Life Saving Club.

Organisers are seeking local businesses to join as major sponsors for 2026, with plans to build on last year's turnout and improve the event using feedback from those who attended.

The first Calcutta opened with \$17,500 in ticket sales before the horse auction added another \$26,050. Proceeds funded prizes and a contribution to the club's volunteer lifesaving work.

Committee member Callum Jones said the response exceeded expectations.

"The event grew well beyond our initial expectation and was incredibly well supported," Mr Jones said.

"It really shows how great our community is. With so many charitable functions held across the shire, having the support of local businesses is what made this pos-



Calcutta set to return this Melbourne Cup at the Surfy. Picture: Supplied

sible."

This year, the committee hopes to strengthen those business connections and increase the event's contribution to the community.

Sponsorship offers local businesses a chance to support a community event while backing

the volunteers who help keep Port Douglas beaches safe.

With preparations underway for the Melbourne Cup eve fundraiser, organisers are keen to hear from businesses interested in getting involved.

For sponsorship enquiries, con-

tact Callum Jones on 0437 981 195

The event will be held at The Surfy, with tickets available from Monday 12th. Keep an eye on Facebook more more details: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61580520962260>



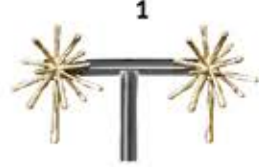
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5



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7



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9

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2. Tropico | Port Douglas | Gold Star Necklace and Choker

3. Floral Edge | Port Douglas | Dried Floral Headband | From \$80

4. Beau Gentry | Port Douglas | R2 Amsterdam Floral Polo

5. Mel Millenery | Port Douglas | White flower | Available instore at Tshintia and In Port Shoes

6. Sportspower | Port Douglas | Asics Court Dress Midnight

7. In Port Shoes | Port Douglas | Zeta Brazen leopard print heels

8. Kandi | Port Douglas | Dita Narcissus Sunglasses

9. Maker | Port Douglas | Moy Handmade Clutch

Keeping Four Mile beach clean

Alex Haratsis

Keeping Far North Queensland's best strip of sand clean takes commitment, and since 2009, Tangaroa Blue has met that challenge.

Hosting monthly cleanups on Four Mile Beach, where volunteers and other members of the Douglas Shire Community participate in removing rubbish from the sand is critical to its pristine condition.

Those efforts from the community have maintained a clean and attractive beach, preserving Port Douglas' appeal as a tourist destination, encouraging visitors to continue visiting the area and supporting the local economy.

Participating in and reporting on the cleanups this week along with Helena Erard while on work experience, I visited one of the monthly clean-ups which was run by Lucy Seeary of Tangaroa Blue.

Meeting at Sheraton Mirage, Ms Seeary gave a briefing on how the clean-up worked and what to look out for while out on the beach.

We were the sole volunteers for this clean-up, Ms Seeary explaining it can vary based on the time of year, but the events typically get a lot of locals or semi-occasional tourists.

"On average, we'll have about six or eight people each clean-up, which is enough given it's a bit of a smaller beach," she said.

The clean-up was structured like an emu parade that kids would do on a school camp. We walked up and down the beach picking up items found on the sand to store in a provided woven sack.

Some interesting items were found on the beach.

Ms Seeary commented on the weirdest item she'd found doing the cleanups.

"We did once find a \$50 note, which was a pretty good day. Other than that, I'd probably say the amount of rubber flip flops or thongs that we get," she said.

"You wouldn't believe how many we find."

A full bottle of rum lying in the sand was another interesting find.

Ms Seeary said she was motivated by the fact that no matter how many times the cleanups are done, they still find rubbish.

"I think the most rewarding thing is seeing the piles and piles of rubbish at the end of the clean-up and knowing that we've done our bit and removed that from the beach itself," she said.

"My favourite part about the cleanups is probably the people that I meet. A lot of our volunteers, they're super passionate about environmental conservation."

The last part of the event is to observe and sort the find with the rubbish separated into soft plastics, hard plastics, bottle caps, and larger items.



Sunday's Community Garage Sale at the Port Douglas Community Centre.

Community comes together for garage sale

It was a wet one, but it didn't stop plenty people turning out on Sunday for the Port Douglas Community Garage Sale at the Community Centre.

Trade across the stalls was reportedly steady, with those involved saying they had plenty of fun and put some funds in their

pockets.

Stall holder Alex Haratsis snapped some pictures while also finding time to make some sales and work on the food stall.

"I think I made about \$70 so that is a bit of spending money," he said.



Port Douglas Community Garage Sale. Pictures: Alex Haratsis

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HOMES



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Friday, October 23
9am - 9.30am
Sold By Steve @realty

OPEN HOME
13 Dawal Close, Cooya Beach
Saturday, October 24
9am - 9.30am
Ray White

OPEN HOME
6 Mitre Street, Port Douglas
Saturday, October 24
10am - 10.30am
Ray White

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Raine & Horne Mark Whitham

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3 1 1 1
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10 Shalom Close, Cooya Beach
4 2 1 1
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26-30 Macrossan St | 0417 248 854 | queenslandsothebysrealty.com

Port Douglas specialist helps local businesses

Jamie Jansen

For Douglas Shire business owners, marketing often sits at the bottom of a relentless to-do list. But as AI changes how people find local spots, staying visible matters. When daily operations take over, strategy feels like a luxury, yet local guidance can quickly turn a headache into real results.

Enter Sasha Mason, founder and marketing strategist at Port Douglas-based agency Local Lab Digital.

Sasha brings over two decades of marketing experience across advertising agencies, education, and small business.

She specialises in helping booking-based businesses - from tour operators and accommodation to tradies, health, and beauty - cut through the noise and attract a reliable flow of customers.

The inspiration for Local Lab

Digital came while Sasha and her family were travelling around Australia in a caravan.

"I kept finding fantastic local businesses that were just really hard to find or hard to understand online," Sasha explains.

"Some of the best places we went to, we only found because a local or fellow traveller told us about them. Their websites and listings didn't do them justice."

After settling in Port Douglas, she launched Local Lab Digital to solve that exact problem.



To read the full story scan this QR code

Want to showcase your business with a business feature? Please contact feature editor jamie@newsport.com.au



Sasha Mason, founder of Port Douglas-based Local Lab Digital



Mossman AG team From L-R: Kye Sullivan, Liam Bevan, Mick Kelly, Chantel Smithy, Mel Johanson, Matt Eastham. Picture: Jamie Jansen

Mossman AG Services

Jamie Jansen

A trusted local fixture since the early 1900s, Mossman Agricultural Services is famous for its farm supplies - but as it grows alongside the community, it's helping everyday town residents feel right at home with everything they need for their garden or hobby farm.

Historically built around the local sugarcane industry, the store smoothly shifted gears following the closure of the mill.

Today, locals might be surprised by just how much more is on offer; from home gardening gear, large and small animal supplies and specialised fencing to custom shed design.

While continuing to support commercial growers as they branch out into new ventures, the team is opening its doors wider to

ensure there is something for every backyard across the Douglas Shire.

Walk through the front doors and you'll find shelves filled with home gardening supplies, specialised vegetable seeds, organic fertilisers, and pet care essentials. They've even become the region's go-to supplier for chicken and poultry feed.

General Manager Matt Eastham says the store's focus is on serving both long-time agricultural clients, animal lovers and home gardeners.



To read the full story scan this QR code

Want to showcase your business with a business feature? Please contact feature editor jamie@newsport.com.au

POSITIONS VACANT



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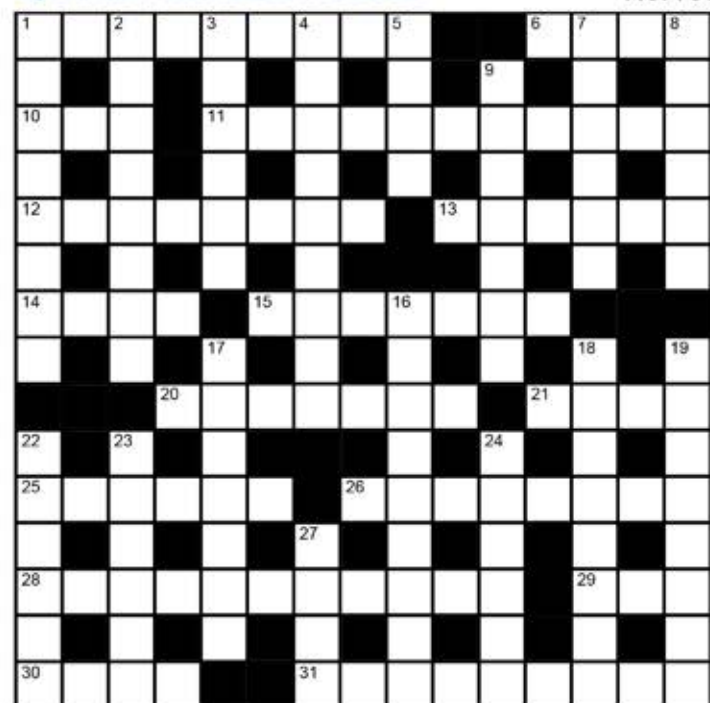
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QUICK CROSSWORD

No. 106



ACROSS

- 1 Relating to government (9)
6 Fastener (4)
10 Large flightless bird (3)
11 Agreement (11)
12 Room where vestments and articles of worship are kept (8)
13 Purchasing (6)
14 Require (4)
15 Candied citrus peel (7)
20 Warn (7)
21 Close (4)
- 25 Pizazz (6)
26 Amaze (8)
28 Ideas; strategies (11)
29 Taxi (3)
30 Relating to audio equipment (2-2)
31 Consecutive sporting wins (9)
- 8 Clear out (river bed) (6)
9 Reasons (7)
16 Hybrid (9)
17 Good deal (7)
18 Middling (8)
19 Ban (8)
22 Highest point (6)
23 Dogma (6)
24 Rich dessert (6)
27 Figure (abbr) (4)

DOWN

- 1 Hospitable (8)
2 Initiates (8)
3 Alarm bell (6)
4 Compile (9)
5 Noisy (4)
7 Game played on a court (6)

SOLUTIONS

pagemasters 22-10-26

Quick Crossword



Word Find Message:

Find me in the garden

Sudoku

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

9-Letter

smiley, syne, ylem
sine, slime, smile,
seml, senile, stime,
seemly, seen, seine,
myeline, seem,
myelin, mise, myelin,
mlen, mile, mlme,
line, lysine, mernie,
lime, limen, limey,
IMMENSELY, isle, len,
ensile, immense,
elem, else, enemy.

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SUDOKU

No. 007

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

9-LETTER

No. 007

Using the nine letters in the grid, how many words of four letters or more can you list? The centre letter must be included and each letter may only be used once. No colloquial or foreign words. No capitalised nouns, apostrophes or plural nouns ending in 's'.



Today's Aim:

17 words: **Good**
22 words: **Very good**
32+ words: **Excellent**

QUIZ

- In total, how many provinces and territories are there in Canada?
- Which *Seinfeld* actor went on to star in the sitcom *Veep*?
- In what year did the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster occur?
- Nauru was formerly known by what name?
- The character Freddy Krueger first appeared in which horror film?
- What is the typical filling of an eccles cake?
- John Bonham is best remembered as the drummer for which English band?
- What is the birth name of actress Dakota Fanning (pictured)?
- In which country in Great Britain is the mountain Sugar Loaf located?
- Who is the only US president to have resigned from office?



ANSWERS: 1. 13 2. Julia Louis-Dreyfus
3. 1986 4. Pleasant Island 5. A Nightmare
On Elm Street 6. Curran 7. Lee Zeppelin
8. Hannah Dakota Fanning 9. Wales
10. Richard Nixon

WORD FIND

THEME: Trees and shrubs

The remaining letters will spell out a message.

Y	C	A	C	A	O	L	I	E	T	L	B	S	F	T
S	A	O	A	I	S	L	O	E	I	U	O	O	N	U
E	A	M	C	X	D	B	A	M	K	U	L	T	X	N
I	C	T	O	C	E	A	E	U	A	O	S	I	E	R
B	E	M	R	C	O	L	E	R	R	E	P	E	P	O
A	R	F	N	I	O	M	I	C	R	E	V	A	T	O
A	N	I	U	Q	A	U	I	O	I	I	L	E	S	T
N	U	G	T	S	K	L	D	L	L	P	A	S	U	H
Q	H	Y	Y	B	T	P	Y	O	I	K	S	E	C	A
X	E	V	E	G	I	I	S	A	T	A	L	L	O	W
W	I	A	S	N	L	U	C	R	B	F	A	F	L	R
R	M	L	E	U	M	A	A	I	L	I	T	A	A	A
O	R	R	A	L	M	U	E	S	O	R	B	E	D	T
A	Y	C	U	S	T	A	R	D	A	P	P	L	E	A
N	E	N	E	L	O	B	C	A	E	H	S	H	I	P

ABIES	FIR	QUINCE
ACER	FUSTIC	ROAN
ACORN	HAW	ROD PINE
ALLSPICE	HIP	ROOT
ARUM	ILEX	SALIX
ASA	IVY	SAP
ATAP	KARRI	SHEA
BALM	LAUREL	SLOE
BASS	LEAF	SORB
BAY	LIME	SOUARI
BEAM	LOCUST	SUMAC
BOLE	LOTE	TALLOW
BOX	MAY	TEA
CACAO	NUT	TEAK
COCCO-	OAK	TEIL
MILIA	OLIVE	TILIA
CUSTARD	OSIER	TOD
APPLE	PEAR	TUART
DEAL	PINERY	TULIP
ELM	PLUM	ULMUS
FIG	QUINA	YEW

YOUR CHRISTMAS PARTY CALLED....IT WANTS COSMOS



IT'S TIME TO BOOK.



SOCIALS

Savannah in the Round and the Marina Markets grab our focus in socials this week, with Cal Jones, Alex Haratsis and Helena Erard out and about grabbing some pics.



Indie Langton with Indie's Flutterbands.



Sophie Holmes and Emma Bosworth.



Phillip Robson, Janet Robson, Will Pycroft, Angel Fletcher.



Douglas crew at Savannah in the Round.



Rachael Berg showcasing her skincare range.



Tarot Readings with Kerry McCall.

WHAT'S ON

OCT 22 **Trivia Night**
Time: 6.30pm - 8pm
Location: 3Sixteen Bar & Bistro at Ramada Resort

OCT 22 **Trivia with Supa Sal and Wevs**
Time: 7pm - 9.30pm
Location: Club Mossman

OCT 23 **Ben Jansz**
Time: 5.30pm - 8.30pm
Location: Ellis Beach Bar & Grill

OCT 23 **Bingo Night**
Time: 6.30pm - 8pm
Location: 3Sixteen Bar & Bistro at Ramada Resort

OCT 23 **Yahdoh**
Time: 07.30pm - 10.30pm
Location: Club Mossman

OCT 24 **Rachael Boon - Art Exhibition Opening**
Time: 10.30am -
Location: 16 Robert St, Atherton

OCT 24 **Port Shorts Film Festival**
Time: 4.30pm - 10pm
Location: Rex Smeal Park

OCT 24 **Bon Jovi Forever show**
Time: 3pm - 7pm
Location: The Yachty - Port Douglas Yacht Club - 1 spinnaker cl

OCT 24 **Mark Seymour**
Time: 5pm - 11pm
Location: Ellis Beach Bar and Grill

OCT 26 **Hole In One Cash Jackpot**
Time: 10am - 6pm
Location: Daddysack Indoor Golf, Grant St

OCT 27 **Indonesian Night**
Time: 5pm - 8pm
Location: 3Sixteen Bar & Bistro at Ramada Resort

OCT 28 **Marina Markets**
Time: 11am - 5pm
Location: Crystalbrooke Marina, Wharf Street

OCT 29 **Trivia Night**
Time: 6.30pm - 8pm
Location: 3Sixteen Bar & Bistro at Ramada Resort

OCT 29 **Bingo with K-Star**
Time: 7pm - 8.30pm
Location: Club Mossman

OCT 30 **Wellness Festival Port Douglas**
Time: 4pm - 9pm
Location: Sugar Wharf,

OCT 30 **Dave Cooke**
Time: 5.30pm - 8.30pm
Location: Ellis Beach Bar & Grill

OCT 30 **Bingo Night**
Time: 6.30pm - 8pm
Location: 3Sixteen Bar & Bistro at Ramada Resort

OCT 30 **Rockin' Rick Karaoke**
Time: 7.30pm - 10.30pm
Location: Club Mossman

OCT 31 **Wellness Festival Port Douglas**
Time: 9am - 4pm
Location: Community Hall, Mowbray Street,

OCT 31 **Ironbar's End Of Season Halloween Party**
Time: 9pm - 4am
Location: 5 Macrossan Street,

OCT 31 **Halloween Kids Disco**
Time: 1pm - 4pm
Location: Club Mossman

OCT 31 **Katchafire**
Time: 6pm -
Location: Ellis Beach Bar and Grill

NOV 2 **Ports' Melbourne Cup Calcutta**
Time: 5pm - 11pm
Location: the Surfy

NOV 2 **Hole In One Cash Jackpot**
Time: 10am - 6pm
Location: Daddysack Indoor Golf, Grant St,

NOV 4 **Keep It Tropical - Bobby Alu**
Time: 6:00pm -
Location: Ellis Beach Bar and Grill

NOV 5 **Trivia with Supa Sal and Wevs**
Time: 7pm - 9.30pm
Location: Club Mossman

NOV 6 **Rob Longstaff**
Time: 07.30pm - 10.30pm
Location: Club Mossman

NOV 8 **Wellness Festival Satellite Events**
Time: 9.55am - 4.45pm
Location: Port Douglas Yoga Shala, Above The Book Lounge

NOV 9 **Hole In One Cash Jackpot**
Time: 10am - 6pm
Location: Daddysack Indoor Golf, Grant St

NOV 12 **Bingo with K-Star**
Time: 7pm - 8.30pm
Location: Club Mossman

NOV 13 **Dave Dusch**
Time: 7.30pm - 10.30pm
Location: Club Mossman

NOV 14 **Daintree Coast community shed community BBQ**
Time: 10.30 am - 2pm
Location: Cow Bay Beach park.

Visit www.newsport.com.au to list your event for free

FIG TREE FACES THE CHOP

Ann Ireland

Douglas Shire Council We need a second opinion from another arborist. Remember a couple of years back when in Warner Street a whole row of trees which bloom with a yellow flowers were going to go under the Councils axe? After a protest from Port peeps a second arborists opinion was sort and many of the trees were saved. That whole street looks amazing today.

Mim Hayward

As they have done with others, when I lived there. It was found the trees removed were perfectly healthy. Let's hope they haven't just told everyone it's ill, when it isn't! Nothing would surprise me tbh.

Cathy Alexander

They should never have built the kids playground under it. It's one of the most iconic trees in Port with so many memories.

Karen Marsden

Please Rethink ,Signs and Slings .Were there is a will there is a way .Where Nature Rules we have a Future . Without it ,we don't ..This tree is home to so many and food to some ,oxygen and shade and peace for our hearts

Leonie Phillips

Bloody stupid. An icon. So angry.

Sime Coomb

This tree is one of our most iconic landmarks, and makes the park what it is. Surely theres a got to be a more sensible option than chopping it down

Ron Smith

If the tree is rotten, then safety for the public is a major concern.

HAS PORT PASSED ITS TOURISM TIPPING POINT?

Cooya Takeaway

Port was a place where eccentric people and people who lived simply collided to create a colourful community. You could walk into a bar with no shoes and it'll be no worries. It wasn't unusual to bump into a celebrity at the Iron Bar at 11pm and be playing golf with them by 6am. There was a licensed place to drink somewhere in Port 24 hours a day and people came here to party. Now people come here to retire. Port Douglas you've changed.

Gregg Buchanan

I've been living here 45 years and still love it! Yes there are lots of retirees, but most of the people I know here are tradies, boaties, hospo workers business people, backpackers and musicians. Of course it's not the same as it was before, but we're so lucky to be living where we are considering the state of the rest of the world. Stop whinging and just enjoy our beautiful town.

Andrew Rowen

Lost it's small fishing village image years ago

Sharon Kenny

Just so glad to have been part of the old days lol honesty tin at the bakery after a good boogie at Danny's Bar absolutely priceless

Anthony White

Port lost its character in 80s when mirage was built, used to be a great village atmosphere. Now it's just a micro city atmosphere.

Nelly Burrowes

Silvers night club! I loved growing up in Port Douglas.



From the Holster



Shaun Hollis brings you a lighter look at local news.

Don Ferguson

Port is well past the tipping point It used to be a town with character.

Caroline Bloomfield

It was lost years ago

Michael Joseph Anich

Port Douglas is as close to heaven as can be. Problem is Mossman/Mossman Sugar Mill/ Douglas Farms. Only one option to fix is supergene dwarf palm oil trees/entities/Airbnb.

Neil Calhoun

Will the answer be more taxes ? Let's hope so !! Mmmmmm yum taxes. Taxes and rules for breakfast lunch and dinner.

Christopher Saint

Too little reinvestment Into the resorts. Most look tired and dated. A tipping point suggests a sudden dramatic change, I think death by a thousand cuts would be a better analogy.

Jake Wyatt

No growth, people get bored. Things falling apart. Too many don't like change and it's showing now.

Matt Pacific Seagull

It's an overpriced tourist trap..see it for what it is..

Ian Locke

It has sadly gone to Greed and overdevelopment and developers can do whatever they like thanks to this council !!! due to conflict off interest

RELIEF AS DISASTER FUNDING SECURED

Adam Howard

So our rates will go back down? this long.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Send your letters and comments to editor@newsport.com.au or post comments on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

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Every Fortnight

BELLISSIMO BATTLE



Kubirri Munjal Dancers sent the Eastern Kuku Yalanji players into battle against the Queensland Italian team on Saturday night at the Mossman Showgrounds. (inset) Mossman's Wesley Creek looks wide to Andy 'Pandy' Guy during the Masters game against Mareeba before the big clash. The two players were instrumental in what was a 16-16 draw. Pictures: Bryan Littleley

Bryan Littleley

A warrior-like performance from the Eastern Kuku Yalanji representative side was not enough to overcome the Queensland Italian team in a showcase of rugby league at Mossman Showgrounds on Saturday night, the local side going down 22 - 34 in their debut game.

A hard-hitting start to the clash had the visiting side on the back

foot early, Eastern Yalanji monsterring them to score early and convert for a 6-0 lead and looking every bit the force the local fans hoped for.

But the Italian's skills and speed started to shine through, overcoming the brute force by the locals to drive the scoring action from halfway through the first term before a serious injury just before half time crushed momen-

tum of a fight back.

With an injury depleted but still desperate Eastern Yalanji side fronting up in the second half, the Italians had the run of the play to run out winners despite a strong fight from the locals.

The big clash was held in place of a NAIDOC rugby league carnival that was cancelled due to sorry business.



The Muddies Thirds play Mareeba this Saturday. Picture: Shaun Hollis

Mulgrave cook the muddies

Shaun Hollis

The Muddies Third Grade cricket team lost the toss and was sent in to bat by Mulgrave.

They posted 7/120 in close to 25 overs at home in Port Douglas on Saturday in a weather-affected match.

Top scorer was season recruit Andy Freeman with 32, while Khobi Arthurson hit 28 from 22, including a six.

Mulgrave got the runs easily in the 16th of their allotted 24 overs, smashing a fast 2/122.

On Sunday, the Fourth's game was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

This weekend, the Thirds are home to Mareeba from 1pm on Saturday, October 24, while the Fourth's are also playing in Port Douglas - on Sunday, October 25, from 12.30pm.

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