Australia Day Awards

The Bellingen Shire Australia Day Committee hosted the 2015 Australia Day Community Awards and celebrations at Mylestom on Monday 26 January.

The Mayor, Cr Mark Troy along with our Australia Day Ambassador, Master Concert Pianist Simon Tedeschi congratulated all nominees for their contribution to our community. The winners in each category this year are:

- Citizen of the Year: Evan McMillan
- Community Service Citizen: Tim Leader
- Creative Arts Youth Award: Abigail Hardinge
- Community Event of the Year: Bellingen Agricultural Show
- Sportsperson of the Year: Justin Alford
- Junior Sportsperson of the Year: Jonty Neaves
- Team of the Year: Bellingen H.S. 19 years Futsal Team

The Committee is also grateful to the individuals and community groups who took part in making the event a success.

Bellingen Grandstand

The project to upgrade the Bellingen Park grandstand is well underway with work to replace the roof and install solar panels already completed.

The wonderful group of volunteers is working hard to have the grandstand and amenities looking like new in time for the start of the 2015 footy season. A big thanks to Maurie Hulbert who has coordinated much of the work that has taken place.

The Bellingen Valley/Dorrigo Rugby League Football Club is very grateful to have received the NSW Footy Facilities Fund grant from the National Rugby League and NSW Government.

Help shape the future of Bellingen’s CBD

In September 2014 Roads and Maritime Services released a Road Safety Review for Waterfall Way from the Pacific Highway at Raleigh through to Dorrigo. A recommendation from the Review was to provide funding to Council to develop and design a plan for the high pedestrian activity area in the Bellingen Central Business District (CBD).

In early 2015 Council will be working on the development of a concept plan to identify critical works and activities that will improve the safety of pedestrians and enhance the amenity of Bellingen Town Centre. This project will involve extensive community engagement, research and review of existing information.

To assist in the initial information gathering process, Council is seeking community feedback regarding ideas, concerns and suggestions for improvements. This information will assist in the development and implementation of a concept plan which will be placed on display for further community comment and feedback.

The Concept Plan will focus on improving the urban landscape of the Bellingen Town Centre along the Waterfall Way (Hyde Street) and intersecting streets between Coronation and Prince Streets. The aim is to provide a safer town centre that promotes walking and cycling as preferred modes of transport, whilst simultaneously contributing to the liveability and vitality of Bellingen.

Written submissions should be sent to The General Manager, Bellingen Shire Council PO Box 117 or email council@bellingen.nsw.gov.au quoting “Bellingen Active Transport Project - Attn. Manager Asset Management & Design” Comments are to be received by 27 February 2015 however there will be additional community consultation throughout the project.
Community Newsletter

Snippets

**Dorrigo Sewerage Treatment Plant (DSTP)**

Dorrigo residents will shortly witness the start of construction to the new DSTP. Not only will this project greatly improve water quality of the Bielsdown River downstream of the DSTP, it is also a substantial investment in infrastructure for the Dorrigo area.

The latest technology is being used in the design of the treatment plant to lower power consumption and reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Council was successful in securing financial assistance of $2,274 million from the NSW State Government’s ‘Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program’. The project is expected to take around 12 months to complete and is budgeted to cost approximately $8,122 million.

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**Donate a gift that keeps on giving**

Your library strives to be a recognised and valued provider of services, collections and programs that help build community cohesion and capacity. The goal has also always been about connecting the community to the world.

Bellingen Shire Libraries, as part of Clarence Regional Library, has deductible gift recipient status with the Australian Taxation Office which means it can receive tax deductible gifts.

Financial gifts and donations help make a difference to our library service; they can add extra or new technology or a new service or provide money for special projects such as new collections.

Further information is available from Clarence Regional Library on 6641 0111.

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**Community Representatives wanted for Heritage Committee**

Council is calling for community representatives with a keen interest in cultural heritage who would like to join the Bellingen Shire Local Heritage Committee.

The Committee currently consists of 1 councillor, 1 staff member, 6 community representatives (2 each from the seaboard, plateau and valley) and the CEO of the Coffs Harbour Local Aboriginal Land Council.

In order to maintain a wide cross section of representation across the Shire, these vacancies would ideally be filled by residents of the Bellinger Valley as the seaboard and plateau are already represented. However if no Valley nominations are forthcoming, consideration will be given to suitable applicants from other areas.

The Committee’s roles include:

- Assisting in the implementation and delivery of the Bellingen Shire Heritage Strategy;
- Considering Local Heritage Assistance fund applications;
- Organising Heritage Week in April each year;
- Advising Council on other Heritage related matters that affect the Shire.

Committee members must want to be actively involved in work arising from the Committee and attend up to 4 daytime meetings per year.

If you are interested and willing to play an active role on the Bellingen Shire Local Heritage Committee please apply in writing to the General Manager, Bellingen Shire Council, PO Box 117 Bellingen 2454 by **Friday 13 February 2014**.

Application forms and Information Sheets are available at the Administration Building or can be downloaded from Council’s website at [www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au).

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**Bellingen Memorial Hall Roof**

The much loved Bellingen Memorial Hall will receive a new roof thanks to a $15,000 NSW Government grant.

The NSW Community Building Partnership Program aims to provide improved community infrastructure and encourage the enhancement of local community based activities that create more vibrant and inclusive communities and the Bellingen Memorial Hall is a worthy recipient.

Bellingen Shire Mayor, Cr Mark Troy was very pleased to hear that Council had been successful in its application on behalf of the Memorial Hall Committee.

The Memorial Hall is a well-used and much loved community asset. The roof is in serious need of repair and the grant from the NSW Government will go towards replacing it.

The roof restoration project will commence early in 2015.

Other Bellingen Shire recipients of the NSW Community Building Partnership program include the Bellingen Park Tennis Club, the Dorrigo CWA and the Deervale Community Church.
Keeping active and healthy in later years

As we grow older we lose muscle strength and balance and this can lead to a fall. However, the good news is that research has shown that being physically active can reduce the risk of falls for older people.

Tai-chi in the park

The more active we remain, the better the chance of keeping our muscles strong, our joints mobile and maintaining our balance. Furthermore, regular exercise can help you remain independent and improve your overall health and wellbeing.

The Active and Healthy website is an online directory of physical activity programs for older people in the local area. Use the website to find the right exercise program for you.

Many of the programs are at low cost to seniors and some are even free! The website also has lots of useful information and tools for you to use to reduce your risk of falls including a guide to exercises you can start doing at home by yourself to build your strength and balance.

If you are a physical activity provider of an exercise program suitable for older people that includes a falls prevention component you can register your program on the Active and Healthy website for free. Check out the website at www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au to increase your independence and take control of your health. Enquiries to Council’s Community Wellbeing Planning Officer Anna Joy on 6655 7300.

Community Support Funds

Organisations are reaping the benefits of applying for Council’s Community Event and Community Support Funds with the following groups being successful:

- Dorrigo Plateau Community Inc. - Christmas in the Clouds;
- Titivators Urunga Dragon Boat Club Inc - Annual Regatta;
- Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival - Politics & Society Now School Program;
- Dorrigo RSL Sub Branch - Valuing our Veterans Shop Front Displays;
- Miindala (auspiced by NALAG) - Client Biography Project;
- Dorrigo Guy Fawkes Agricultural Assoc Inc. - 3 tiered portable seating;
- Raleigh Public School P&C - Students arts workshops and exhibition;

- Dorrigo CWA - Craft group; early childhood support & social mornings;
- Camp Creative Inc. - Student scholarships x 3
- Bellingen Big Band - Big Band and Training Band performance;
- Dorrigo Silver Spurs Campdraft Cutting Assoc Inc. - Ramp replacement;
- Bellingen CWA - Rates Remission;
- Dorrigo Guy Fawkes Historical Assoc Inc. - Photographic slideshow display;
- Gleniffer Community Assoc Inc. - Hall projects;
- Urunga Public School - Annual Presentation evening.

The Round 2 projects above totalled $16,047 and the sum allocation of funds across Rounds 1 and 2 was $40,383. The 2015 Round 1 for both Funds will open in May.

Bellingen Shire Youth Hub

The response from the recent Bellingen Youth Hub’s survey has been outstanding with over 300 participants from a broad section of our community.

Preliminary results are overwhelmingly positive for the programs and the support the Hub offers. “We have received some great feedback and new ideas on initiatives to consider in the future”, stated Dean Besley, the Centre’s Coordinator.

The Hub has been operating successfully for two years however the management team were keen to get direct community feedback. “It is important to ensure we reach the broad needs of our community,” added Dean. High on the list of acknowledged initiatives were:

- the Youth Clinic,
- the Bellingen Shire Youth Services support,
- counselling services,
- dance classes,
- drop in facilities,
- Bellingen EYE,
- the Driving simulator,
- homework facilities and art classes.

In 2015 the Centre will be focusing on expanding its educational partnerships, offering more art and music programs, further supporting the Learner Driver Supervisor program and are even in the final design stage of a climbing/bouldering/gym facility.

The bouldering wall idea started when a group of young lads dropped in one day with a thought, and now, with the support of our local architect Steve Gorrell and a local engineer the initial design is complete and ready for the DA process. “If the Hub can source some funding, the wall could be a reality in just a few months”, added Dean.

Once the survey analysis is complete, the Hub will publish the results on its website. To find out more please call Dean at the Hub on 6655 0381.
2014 was a busy year in this area with some notable achievements being:

- The Shire becoming the Number 1 recycler in NSW out of 130 Council areas with 80.1% of kerbside waste diverted from landfill.

- Improving the operational and environmental efficiencies of Council’s waste facilities which has included remediation works and reopening the reuse shop at the Raleigh Waste Management Centre. This is now branded the Bowerhouse.

- Being a finalist in the National Banksia Sustainability Awards – Local Government Sustainability Category. Being one of only 4 councils shortlisted to be a finalist nationally, these awards recognise leadership and innovation in sustainability. Projects nominated were in the areas of resource recovery, climate change, estuary health and social well being.

- Securing a $76,000 grant from the NSW Government, Coastal Management and Estuary Management program titled Friesians & Fish - Bellinger River Floodplain and Estuary Water Quality Improvement.

This will assist Council to continue its work with the local dairy industry to upgrade effluent management systems, improve water quality and contribute to more sustainable farming practices. The project is a partnership between Council, Bellinger Landcare and dairy farmers with support from Local Land Services, Norco Dairy Cooperative, Urunga Anglers and oyster growers.

- Achieved Silver Standard for Planet Footprint Energy Management by effectively monitoring and managing energy costs, consumption and greenhouse gas emissions during 2013/14. Only 16 of the 150 councils who subscribe to the Planet Footprint Scorekeeping service were awarded Silver Standard.

- Progressing the Bellingen Emissions Reduction Program (BERP). Highlights are:
  - installation of a Solar Photovoltaic system on Dorrigo Pool;
  - installation of solar hot water at Bellingen Pool;
  - installation of variable speed drives on the blowers at the Bellingen Waste Water Treatment Plant (one of the largest consumers of electricity in the Shire);
  - Upgraded lighting at Urunga Library and a number of other Council facilities.
  - Planting of 1,500 local eucalypt and rainforest plant species on Council managed land during 2013/14 to offset carbon emissions

Council is continually identifying opportunities for the installation of renewable energy supply and efficiency measures in its facilities. Dollar savings achieved through the implementation of these measures are calculated and deposited back into Council’s Revolving Energy Fund, to be spent on future initiatives.

- Upgrading the Dangar Falls Reserve - including upgrading around 60 metres of wooden boardwalk above the most degraded section of the existing pathway. In partnership with community volunteers, Council project managed the construction of the labyrinth (winding paved pathway) with funding provided by ETC Community Support Fund, Dorrigo Expansive Education Program and Dorrigo Arts Council. Ongoing bush regeneration continues at this site.

- Bellingen Island Restoration project - focused on implementing best practice river bank stabilisation works to protect Bellingen Island (endangered ecological community). The project installed wooden pin groynes, log and rock revetment work and the planting of native seedlings to stabilise the riverbank to the east of Bellingen Island. The project was completed in partnership with the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (design and grant funding), Council’s Works Team, private contractors and Bellingen Urban Landcare Group.