Bellingen Shire

Community Newsletter

Extra Safety for School Zones

The NSW Government has provided funding for the placement of school zone signs with flashing lights at all schools by the end of this year to alert motorists to the 40km speed limit required during school drop off and pick-up times.

Installing these flashing lights in schools zones has been shown to improve driver awareness of the need to travel at a lower speed to ensure the safety of children and others coming and going from the school area.

Roads and Maritime Services is delivering this safety initiative and plans to install signs outside the following schools during July/August 2015 outside of 40km school zone hours.

- Bellingen High, Bellingen Public and St Mary’s Primary School,
- Dorrigio High, Dorrigio Public and Mount St John Primary School,
- Raleigh Public, Repton Public and Urunga Public School

Work will take up to two hours to complete, weather permitting. Lights are installed on pre-existing poles or new poles are put in place if needed.

Partial lane closures may be in place while work is carried out to ensure safety of road users and workers. There will be some noise associated with this work, but every effort will be made to minimise these impacts.

For more information about the flashing lights program please visit the Centre for Road Safety website at www.roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/flashingsigns (go to the schools section) or you can contact our team on 1800 726 958 or Flashingsigns@cms.nsw.gov.au.

Bellinger River Snapping Turtle Update

On 18 February, 2015 a number of sick and dead Bellinger River Snapping Turtles (Myuchelys georgesi) were found by canoeists paddling 2km downstream from Thora Bridge on the Bellinger River.

The disease has now spread to affect all of the turtle’s known distribution in the Bellinger River. The disease, which results in mortality in 100% of affected turtles, is identified in its earlier stages by visible symptoms including severe skin and eye lesions.

Dr Karrie Rose from Taronga Zoo Conservation Society is taking a major role in diagnosing the disease and states “This situation is very unique. We’ve never seen a disease in wildlife spread so quickly and threaten an entire population.

All tests for known turtle diseases have come back negative so it appears this is something new or highly unusual.”

In mid-April, a small area of unaffected habitat was searched by a team from the Office of Environment & Heritage, National Parks & Wildlife Service and the University of Western Sydney.

Seventeen healthy turtles were captured and these animals were transferred to secure quarantine facilities where they remain under the care of Dr Ricky Spencer from the University of Western Sydney.

Council, in conjunction with the Office of Environment & Heritage will provide updates as and when they become available.

2015 NAIDOC Week in Bellingen

To acknowledge and celebrate NAIDOC Week in the Bellingen Shire, a ceremony was held in the grounds of Maam Gaduying Park in Bellingen.

Dylan Berger performed a traditional Welcome to Country in Gumbaynggirr language, before the Mayor, Cr Mark Troy, spoke about this year’s NAIDOC Week theme, ‘We all stand on sacred ground; learn, respect and celebrate’.

The Aboriginal flag was presented by Lisa Kelly to the Mayor Cr Mark Troy and together with Aunty Jessie Williams, the flag was raised. This special part of the ceremony was accompanied by music from Shane Nelson who played didgeridoos and tapping sticks.

The crowd, which included many local community members, groups, organisations and students from overseas being hosted by the Urunga Lions Club, were treated to a traditional dance performance by Tahshni Berger, Codi Denham, Gloria Mercy and Star Denham (pictured above).

Barbara Weaver, who made the trip from Dorrigio, also received loud applause for her beautiful singing, which included a rendition of ‘We Are Australian’.


A great big thanks to Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre, Indigenous Community Links and Ngambaa Bindarry Girrwea Community services Inc. for their contributions to the day. Special thanks also to the performers and the community members who made the day so special.

Dorrigo Sewerage Treatment Plant

The construction of the new Dorrigio Wastewater Treatment Plant is running on schedule despite several wet weather delays earlier in the year. All major concrete pours have been completed, the chemical dosing tanks and decant systems have been installed, 70% of electrical conduit lines have been laid and the amenities building is nearly complete.

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

The project will greatly improve water quality in the Bieldsdown River downstream of the Plant and it is also a substantial investment in infrastructure for the Dorrigio area.

Council secured a grant of $2,274 million from the NSW State Government’s ‘Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program’. The project is expected to be operational by the end of the year representing an overall investment of $8.122 million.
Bellingen Shire Council is partnering with the Coffs Harbour Innovation Centre to hold Innovation Workshops. Innovation can be applied to all forms of business. It can deliver a competitive edge or improve efficiencies to your operations.

The workshops will provide an overview on innovation concepts and investigate how these can be applied to your business planning and operations. The workshops are open to existing businesses, community organisations and start ups. They are scheduled as follows:

- 11 August – Youth Hub - Bellingen 9.00 am-1.00pm
- 12 August – C.ex Club - Urunga 9.00am-1.00pm
- 13 August – Heritage Hotel - Dorrigo 9.00am-1.00pm

The cost is $45 which includes lunch. Chamber of Commerce members will receive a discount of $10.

Registrations must be received by Monday 3 August. To find out more and register: contact Michael Grieve on 66557306, email Michael.grieve@bellingen.nsw.gov.au or Julianne McKeon on 0409741196 or email coordinator@coffsinnovation.com.au.

Discovery Apps

What are the ORANGE POSTS all about?

Have you noticed some bright orange posts scattered around the Shire and wondered what they are?

Five Discovery App posts have been located at tourist attractions around the Shire. They are located at Urunga Boardwalk, Alma Doopal Reserve Myloemont, Hungry Head Lookout, Church St Bellingen and Dangar Falls Dorrigo.

The app contains a QR reader. Once you scan the code at the top of the post, a short video plays highlighting features of the area.

This technology significantly enhances the visitor experience and provides information for both locals and visitors- twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

The Discovery Apps are a one stop shop or portal where information about tourism products and local services can be accessed.

You can connect via a smart phones and tablets and access a range of information including: accommodation, attractions, festivals, events, eateries, tours, shopping, sports facilities, emergency services, parks and barbeque facilities. There is a separate app for Dorrigo, Urunga and Bellingen.

We encourage you to take a look and become familiar with the Discovery Apps posts. Then when you next have family and friends visiting, send them on a tour to search out the orange posts.

It will enhance their appreciation of our wonderful attractions through the information provided. The technology also enhances the experience for people with disabilities. The Discovery Apps are free to download on the Apple Store or Google Play Store.

A Platform for the Future

The Discovery Apps provide an exciting platform for visitor and community services into the future. Bellingen Shire Council is working closely with the Discovery App team to integrate a range of community services.

These include; subsidised subscriptions for non-profit and community organisations, the integration of the Shire’s new Local Food Guide and Heritage Trail and a list of all events held across the Shire.

Our tourist information centres will also have QR code facilities to enable visitors to get access to tourist information twenty four hours a day.

The technology also provides many opportunities for creativity where information can be delivered through a range of innovative formats.

For businesses or community groups who are interested in subscribing to Discovery Apps please contact the Discovery Apps team on 0477 641 033 or email: sales@discoveryapps.info

Are you interested in learning how innovation can help your business?

Bellingen Shire Council is partnering with the Coffs Harbour Innovation Centre to hold Innovation Workshops.

Snippets

Bellingen Main Street Study

John Mongard Architects has provided Council with a draft report and concept plans depicting the different options for the Bellingen Main Street Project.

A Community Information session has been scheduled for Wednesday 29 July where Council staff will outline the study’s findings and the proposed treatments to address pedestrian movement, safety and streetscape design.

The community session will commence at 6:00 pm at the Uniting Church Hall in Hyde Street Bellingen.

Council will consider the report and concept plans at its Ordinary meeting on 26 August after which there will be a further period of community engagement.

The NSW Roads & Maritime Services have confirmed that $100,000 in funding has been made available within their current financial year to progress detailed designs in preparation for staged project construction.

Waterfall Way Activities

The NSW Government is funding the delivery of services and infrastructure to the communities along Waterfall Way and the following update of current and future activities within the Bellingen Shire has been provided by the RMS.

Reducing the risk of rock falls - A number of sites have been identified as needing safety improvements due to the risk of rock falls. Works will involve vegetation removal, scaling of identified loose rocks and boulders. Further sites are planning to start within the next 6 months.

Waterfall Way interchange - traffic switch - The Pacific Highway upgrade includes improvements to the existing interchange at Waterfall Way. To allow this work to be completed, all traffic has been moved from the existing highway onto a temporary roadway on the eastern side of the highway. This minor deviation will remain in place until the new highway is fully open to traffic next year.

Bus stop at Thora - A sealed bus pull over area at Thora has been constructed and bitumen sealed to provide a safe facility for drop offs and pickups of school children.

Drainage and Shoulder Clearing Works - are being undertaken at Newell Falls on Dorrigo Mountain. This area will be under traffic control and reduced to one lane.

Road improvements between Connells Creek and East Fernmount - Stage 1 is a 900m section near SWeedmans Lane. This work will involve repairing the existing road, upgrading the Swedemans Lane intersection, widening the road shoulder and improving drainage, new road seal and line marking. This work will be completed in sections to minimise the impact of road users however it will be reduced to one lane of traffic during the works. Stage 1 is expected to take about two months to complete, weather permitting.

Stage 2 will include improvement of further sections between SWeedmans Lane and East Fernmount. The works will start following the completion of Stage 1.

Scaling Works Dorrigo Mountain - The RMS has engaged contractors to undertake scaling works on the cliff face on Waterfall Way at the top of Dorrigo Mountain. As a result of these works, traffic is reduced to one lane.

Urunga Old Antimony Processing Site

Urunga's contaminated antimony processing site has taken its first steps towards rehabilitation with preliminary work now complete and the remediation and rehabilitation of the old antimony processing site also having commenced.

Stage 1 of the State Government owned site including clearing the site of uncontaminated general waste, debris and obstacles to enable unobstructed access for subsequent remediation has been completed.

Stage 2 has commenced with the site office now up and running. This stage of the project required development consent from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment due to the State Significant nature of the work, level of contamination and proximity to the SEPP 14 wetland. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared and the application was approved in May this year.

Residents will notice additional traffic along Hillside Drive and Pilot Street. Works will be conducted in accordance with the EIS and site specific management plans and it is anticipated, weather permitting, that works will be complete early 2016.

NSW Department of Primary Industries, Land & Natural Resources engaged the Soil Conservation Service to develop a Remedial Action Plan. The remediation of the site, so that it is safe for public access without unacceptable risk to human health and minimise any further impact on the adjacent wetland, has conditional approval from the EPA and involves excavation of the site, treatment of the contaminated material which is then placed in a specially engineered ‘monocell’ which will be capped and the area revegetated.

Once remediation and rehabilitation has been completed it is anticipated that the site will be used as public open space. The Department of Primary Industry is establishing a Community Liaison Group to provide a forum for regular updates on the remediation process, gather community feedback and address concerns as they arise.