

# CooloolaCoastToday



**Cooloola's first ranger**  
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## Whiting still on

Disappointment struck many this week with the cancellation of the iconic Rainbow Beach Family Fishing Classic.

Lucky for Rainbow Beach, the Gardiner Fisheries 3rd Annual Whiting Championship runs until 20 November and that format keeps us going strong.

There's plenty of time to fish around work, family commitments and Covid lockdowns with the four month competition duration.

This year's prizes include a 3.7m Aqua Master V Nose Barra punt with Mercury out board & Redco Trailer valued at over \$9,500.

The competition runs until Saturday 20 August. You can enter online at [www.gardinerfisheries.com](http://www.gardinerfisheries.com) or from Gardiner Fisheries at Rainbow Beach.

**STORY PAGE 17**

Competitor Alex Brantz with a quality Rainbow Beach whiting ready to weigh in.

# Lockdown pain

The Gympie Region has narrowly avoided the South East Queensland lockdowns twice now, with all local businesses allowed to operate as normal with the addition of QR Codes.

But what has been the effect on business who rely on tourism?

Owner of Rainbow Beach Horse Rides Andrew McCarthy is one local business owner

who has felt the adverse reactions of the harsh lockdowns since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

"At the start of 2020, when the lockdown was in place, we had the same issues as everyone. There was however, government support for those who needed it and the banks were compassionate with mortgage repayment options, so that took the pressure off a

bit," Mr McCarthy said.

"Rainbow Beach is fortunate enough that it hasn't been impacted from lockdowns as much as some other areas.

"Lockdowns have affected our business less than some others, which we are grateful for. We have still been able to draw on Queensland residents."

Mr McCarthy said the most recent lockdown of the South East had potential to really hurt the business.

"We have four multi day rides over the next five weeks. We have lost a few clients, and will be operating with a very narrow profit margin, but better to keep swinging than to give up."

**STORY PAGE 3**

**RAINBOW BEACH HORSE RIDES**

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It has been a whirlwind couple of weeks for the Today team after overwhelming support for Cooloola Coast Today has seen us move the publication from a monthly edition into a fortnightly print product, so the Cooloola Region will receive their relevant news in timelier manner. We sincerely hope you enjoy this product as much as we've enjoyed putting it together.

This week we have all felt the effects of the South East Queensland lockdowns, though not directly affected, the Gympie and Cooloola Coast regions have unfortunately suffered.

The cancellation of numerous events, such as the Fishing Classic, has put a major dent in Rainbow Beach economy. Over 500 competitors and their families were due to flock to the region, staying in local accommodation, spending their dollars in cafes, restaurants and grocery stores, all of which won't happen now until 2022.

It has been announced that the Rainbow Beach Triathlon will aim to go ahead on 28-29 August, great news for all the competitors who are so eager to compete, best of luck to our local competitors.

In lighter news, it was fantastic to see the Rainbow Beach State School perform exceptionally well in the Gympie and District Eisteddfod last week, taking home first place for their choir. Well done to the talented boys and girls who well represented the Cooloola Coast with their magical voices.

As always, we would love to hear from you so please don't hesitate to write in to us at [newsdesk@gympietoday.com.au](mailto:newsdesk@gympietoday.com.au)

- Rose Astley



The talented girls and boys of Rainbow Beach State School after their amazing Eisteddfod win.

# Kids sing to win

By Lee McCarthy

Congratulations to the Rainbow Beach State School on winning first place for primary schools with 150 pupils or less at the Gympie Eisteddfod.

They were led by Mrs Cherie Mason and Mrs Annette Bailey, who volunteered their time to teach the children and prepare the choir for the school.

"Cherie has a passion for music and since Easter they have been meeting once or twice a week for practice and at one stage our choir

had 32 students which was nearly half our kids," Principal Steve Bennett said.

"It was great to see a good mix of boys and girls and a really cool thing to be a part of. The choir was formed to get kids singing and when we knew the Eisteddfod was on we decided to enter.

"Over the past 20 years, under the tutelage of Mrs Mason, the school has won the competition ten times.

"They performed a set piece called The Second Star to the Right, which was the opening song to the 1953 film Peter Pan, and their cho-

sen piece was Cover Me in Sunshine, a song by Pink and her daughter Willow.

"The kids were super excited and when Sky Hanlon did a solo piece in the middle it just melted the place. Our school captains Teil and James accepted the shield on the school's behalf."

"A big thank you to all the parents and Mrs Mason and Mrs Bailey for getting the kids to practice each week and supporting the school. The performance was quite amazing. We look forward to another performance later in the year."

## CONTACT US

### CooloolaCoastToday

Telephone: 07 5321 3050

Website:  
[GympieToday.com.au](http://GympieToday.com.au)

Editorial:  
Email: [newsdesk@GympieToday.com.au](mailto:newsdesk@GympieToday.com.au)

Advertising:  
Email: [advertising@GympieToday.com.au](mailto:advertising@GympieToday.com.au)

Classifieds:  
Phone: 1300 666 808  
Email: [sales@networkclassifieds.com.au](mailto:sales@networkclassifieds.com.au)

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[www.todaysservices.com.au](http://www.todaysservices.com.au)

EDITORIAL  
Rose Astley Journalist  
E: [rose.astley@GympieToday.com.au](mailto:rose.astley@GympieToday.com.au)

Donna Jones Journalist  
E: [donna.jones@GympieToday.com.au](mailto:donna.jones@GympieToday.com.au)

Arthur Gorrie Journalist  
E: [arthur.gorrie@GympieToday.com.au](mailto:arthur.gorrie@GympieToday.com.au)

Erle Levey Journalist  
E: [erle.levey@GympieToday.com.au](mailto:erle.levey@GympieToday.com.au)

ADVERTISING  
Andrew Guiver General Manager  
E: [andrew.guiver@GympieToday.com.au](mailto:andrew.guiver@GympieToday.com.au)

Lee McCarthy  
E: [lee.mccarthy@GympieToday.com.au](mailto:lee.mccarthy@GympieToday.com.au)

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## CARTOON



## Warning on smoke haze

By Arthur Gorrie

A smoke haze may affect drivers on Rainbow Beach Rd today with possible lingering effects over the weekend, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has warned.

This is the result of planned burn operations within the Cooloola Recreation Area near Mount Bilewilam.

The burn is part of an annual hazard reduction/conservation management program for the park area and is part of a project which began on Wednesday.

"As a result, smoke may be seen on Rainbow Beach Rd in the Mount Bilewilam section," a spokesperson said.

"The aim of this burn is to reduce the volume of forest fuels and to create a mosaic pattern of burnt and unburnt areas.

"This will help reduce the intensity of any subsequent wildfires, and provide favourable conditions for natural forest regeneration.

"Smoke can decrease visibility on the roads, so it is important that motorists drive safely to the conditions.

"Drivers needing more information can call the QPWS Rainbow Beach office on 07 5486 9999," the spokesperson said.



# Lockdown pain for region

By Rose Astley

The Gympie Region has narrowly avoided the South East Queensland lockdowns twice now, with all local businesses allowed to operate as normal with the addition of QR Codes.

But what has been the effect on business who rely on tourism?

Owner of Rainbow Beach Horse Rides Andrew McCarthy is one local business owner who has felt the adverse reactions of the harsh lockdowns since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

"At the start of 2020, when the lockdown was in place, we had the same issues as everyone. There was however, government support for those who needed it and the banks were compassionate with mortgage repayment options, so that took the pressure off a bit," Mr McCarthy said.

"Rainbow Beach is fortunate enough that it hasn't been impacted from lockdowns as much as some other areas.

"Lockdowns have affected our business less than some others, which we are grateful for. We have still been able to draw on Queensland residents."

Pre-Covid, Mr McCarthy said his client base was 50 per cent international and 50 per cent domestic clients, the vast majority of which were from the self-drive market.

Mr McCarthy said the most recent lockdown of the South East had potential to really hurt the business.

"We have four multi day rides over the next five weeks. We have lost a few clients, and will be operating with a very narrow profit margin, but better to keep swinging than to give up.

"The Covid spread had to be contained, and lockdown had to be implemented. We just need people to be considerate when moving around.

"If we go into another lockdown in the next few weeks it will be dire for us," he said.

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) has placed an urgent call on the Commonwealth Government to extend the current eligibility of the Covid-19 Disaster Payment to employees of tourism and hospitality businesses in locations outside the locked down areas.

QTIC chief executive Daniel Gschwind said their recent communications with operators paint a bleak picture of the current state of business.



Owner and Operator of Rainbow Beach Horse Rides Andrew McCarthy.

"The industry ended the last financial year severely emaciated financially and with no reserves but with a glimmer of hope and optimism that 'the worst' might be behind us. Such expectations have now been comprehensively dashed," Mr Gschwind said.

"Tourism relies on the movement of people to function. We currently have no access to international visitors; most interstate traffic is disrupted and current lockdowns in major population centres effectively even prevent intrastate travel.

"Our industry is at a standstill for all, regardless of whether a business is in a lockdown area or not."

Mr McCarthy said as a business they have had to make some structural changes to try and "pivot" the business, including introduc-

ing a five day Tania Kernaghan ride.

"She is an amazing person, just like the rest of her family," he said.

"Due to her professionalism, these rides have been going well. We will be increasing the number of Tania Kernaghan rides in 2022 and are looking to extend one of them to a seven day ride. Stay tuned."

As the uncertainty of the pandemic continues to loom, Mr McCarthy said planning for the future is becoming increasingly difficult.

"As a small business owner, you always have to allow for unforeseen circumstances. You have to plan for that, but it's not always easy.

"When you have to order machinery eight to 10 months in advance, plan horse buying

events 10 to 12 months in advance, and still keep up with ongoing costs, there's not always a lot of money in the pot when payment is required.

"Particularly when you have been operating on minimum or reduced turnover due to lockdowns."

It is, according to Mr McCarthy, times like these where building a good rapport with the community is essential.

"If a local business provides a good product, it would be nice to think that local communities may remember who supported them and gave them sponsorship throughout the years, when choosing where to go and what to do with their own hard earned money and free time."

## On receiving end of city's Covid escape

By Arthur Gorrie

Lockdown escapees flooded into Gympie region this week, including hoards headed for Fraser Island.

Residents reported busy times during the lockdown, with some attributing this to grey nomads travelling south, but many believing this did not account for those camping

on the beach or elsewhere, after accommodation houses reported turning away many would-be Covid refugees.

The Bruce Highway was a car park for kilometres at Traveston as thousands sought to escape the lockdown before it was came into effect on its first Saturday, with an absolute ban on escaping after 4pm and strict

conditions on anyone who was not on the Gympie side of the Noosa and Sunshine Coast boundaries by 1pm.

Police were said to be questioning people at various Cooloola Coast locations, checking on where drivers and passengers had come from and when, determining what their mask and travel obligations were.



Covid escapees flocked to Fraser Island after the south-east lockdown was lifted, as this Facebook photo shows.



# New servo in the works

Now that conditions have been met by the developer of the new Rainbow Beach Service Station the project is full steam ahead.

The development of stage one is expected to take 10 months and the buildings have now been demolished, making way for the new development.

The builder has been on site preparing the project for owners Stanwand Pty Ltd and material change of use was approved by council on 23 September 2020.

While receiving 13 objections to the project, the developers believe the new service station is a necessary addition to the town especially during peak seasons.

Despite some detest from community members, owner of Little Parliament Cafe Kostas Ladas and spokesperson for the servo said the development has been three years in the making, and they are very excited to see it come to fruition.

“It has always been our vision to build, but we waited until there was an increase in traffic before starting the application process,” Mr Ladas said.

“There is such an increase in numbers now because people can’t fly overseas so a lot more people are coming to Fraser Island and Rainbow Beach. We’re one of the most beautiful spots around.

“We feel it’s an asset to the town and will make the entrance to town so much nicer. Everytime you see a new business open it makes the town look good. It enhances the town.”

The start of the development has seen the Manta Ray office moved to the Industrial Estate in Rainbow Beach, so tickets for the barge



The construction is expected to take 10 months.

Picture: LEE MCCARTHY

and Fraser Island are mostly being booked online now.

“We hope everybody is excited - it’s exciting

for everyone and especially for the town,” Mr Ladas said.

The building plans to have a total of eight

pumps. The hours of operation proposed are 5am to 10pm, 7 days a week, with four air pumps for re-inflating tyres.

## Thundering challenge for Human Powered Vehicle

By Lee McCarthy

Tin Can Bay State School’s first Human Powered Vehicle team is “thundering” along in their journey towards the 24 hour race at this year’s Fraser Coast Technology Challenge in Maryborough in September.

They’ve been training hard each week and can be spotted along the walking path beside Tin Can Bay Road Wednesday afternoons after school, keenly honing their skills in the racing trike.

The team of eight boys and girls will compete in the junior mixed division for Year 7, 8 and 9 students and are looking forward to getting amongst the action in this exciting adventure.

The Tin Can Bay school spokesperson said: “The team is getting quicker and quicker the more we are on the track. It’s super exciting to see the vehicle on the track at last.”



Tin Can Bay State School will use their first Human Powered Vehicle to compete at this year’s Technology Challenge.



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The Fraser Island fires



# Recognition we exist

By Arthur Gorrie

A Gympie Today front page article on the G’Gari (Fraser Island) fire investigation has been used by the investigating authority to illustrate a need for better government communication with the community in times of disaster.

The front page story, headed “We don’t exist,” reported to the Rainbow Beach community that we had all been left out of community consultation because government sponsored agencies had not recognised the Cooloola Coast’s important economic and cultural links to the island, or even our existence as a community and tourism business hub.

Despite the status of Rainbow Beach as the island’s main visitor gateway, embarrassed staff from the office of the Inspector General Emergency Management (Alistair Dawson) told a hastily arranged Rainbow Beach consultation session in February that we had been overlooked, because government funded tourism organisations and other relevant agencies had apparently not been aware of the Cooloola Coast’s role in island tourism and investment.

IGEM investigators had organised their public consultation tour, which included Hervey Bay and the island itself, on the basis of advice from government funded tourist organisations and other entities which apparently did not know of these links.

The map of tourist agencies in our area apparently jumped from the Sunshine Coast to the Fraser Coast, without any reference to or apparent awareness of the Cooloola Coast.

More recently, IGEM officials reported back on their investigations to a meeting with the Rainbow Beach Commerce and Tourism Association.

There, they used a photograph of the Gympie Today front page to illustrate a power point presentation on the “importance of local level engagement, improved engagement with traditional owners, greater scoping of event-area flow-on effects and consideration of government boundaries.”

They reported their investigation had found the fire started with an illegal campfire which ignited vegetation on October 14, 2020.

It took government agencies two months to respond effectively.

The fire posed unique challenges and burned about 85,000ha.

There was no loss of life or homes.

The fire fighting effort involved 30 aircraft and 13.3 million litres of water, in addition the efforts of ground crews and community volunteers and island residents.

The investigation received 78 public submissions and held a Butchulla people’s traditional owner forum as well as community and business forums at Hervey Bay, Orchid Beach.

Happy Valley, Kingfisher Bay and, eventually, Rainbow Beach.

The Rainbow Beach forum followed direct agitation from the commerce and tourism association, the forum was told.

The story said Rainbow Beach businesses, providing for the bulk of island visitation, did not exist in the minds of state tourism bureaucrats, according to IGEM officials.

They said the inquiry had not been made aware of Gympie region’s vital links with the island or Rainbow’s role as the island’s major visitor gateway.

They told the meeting, at the Rainbow Beach Sports Club that the inquiry had got “a bad steer” from tourism bodies which had not mentioned the island’s important economic and community links with Gympie region.

This had resulted in all the originally scheduled consultation meetings being held in the Fraser Coast region, despite most of the island’s visitors coming via Gympie and/or Rainbow.

“We would have loved to be here earlier, but it wasn’t something we got the right steer on,” the officials said.

One officer said the inquiry, which was “actually independent,” had been tasked with investigating the disaster and reporting to Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and Emergency Services Minister Mark Ryan by the end of March.

“We’re not part of the Fire and Emergency Services. Our office gives independent advice, which is why your experience, your views, what you think could be done better is what we’re really interested in.

““We look at the systems, we don’t look at individuals,” she said.

“I think sometimes people are concerned about: ‘Is it a real independent review, at it really is.”

The inquiry also recommended better consultation and dialogue with First Nation people, including on areas of cultural significance, traditional burning methods, land management, visitor education and compliance activities, incident management and firefighting capability and water source management, last month’s report-back meeting was told.

The IGEM had recommended “more proactive messaging” by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and a trial of live vision from the fire front by Queensland Fire and Emergency Service controllers “to improve situational awareness during events.”

The IGEM also recommended the use of the Check-in Queensland app, as now used in shops, restaurants and hotels as a Covid precaution,, to help track and manage island visitors.

The government accepted in principle all the IGEM recommendations.



The Gympie Today front page, used to illustrate official ignorance of our region among tourism and other bureaucracies.



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Ron Turner’s view from the office, whales as seen from Double Island Point during his time as the area’s “lone” ranger.

# Cooloola’s First Ranger

From sandmining and unauthorised holiday shacks to mistreatment of wildlife and some strange attitudes, the history of the Cooloola Sand Mass region is a story of conflicting dreams. As **ARTHUR GORRIE** reports, it is all captured, with wit and directness by the area’s first ranger, Ron Turner.

It was a simpler and more adventurous time when Ron Turner became the first Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service ranger for the district from Noosa to Maryborough.

But, as Mr Turner tells it in introducing his new book *First Ranger: A Memoir*, wildlife conservation was not so simple that people could understand the rules, even if they tried.

And mostly, they didn’t try.  
“Perhaps I was a dreamer, but my years spent living and working in the mountains of New Zealand’s South Island provided me with an ideal. Here was spectacular beauty to rival Yosemite, where the national park ideal was conceived.

“My mind became focused on the need to protect and preserve natural landscapes for future generations. Pat Comben, the minister responsible for national parks in the Goss government in Queensland, termed this a ‘sacred trust’.

“I was happy to encourage and advise visitors to enjoy these jewels in the crown. I saw myself as today’s custodian of the nation’s treasures who was holding the line until better educated and resourced staff came along.

“However, I did not last the distance. Years later, I found I was ill-prepared to deal with employees working within the system who did not share those ideals.

“In the early years, my role as District Ranger was a lonely one. There were few departmental mentors with whom I could confide, reflect ideas or discuss issues. At one stage, I was the only District Ranger in Queensland.



Saving the wilderness was not an easy task when Ron Turner became our first ranger.

“Across the years many people have suggested I should write of my life working in national parks.

“More recently, I came to realise today’s front line staff are not aware of events as recent as even 20 years ago.”

In *First Ranger: A Memoir*, Ron records the difficulties of confronting inevitable resistance

to changes in land use, especially in the Cooloola, Fraser Island and Noosa National Parks.

A literate and thoughtful commentator, but with a largely operational and outdoors background, he has produced a book that is particularly valuable for its insight into the difficulties and complexities of outdoor park operations as well as for its chronicle of experiences varying to include “support, indiffer-

ence and hostility from individuals within the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service over a period of great change in Australian public administration.

It will be particularly valuable for historians of the Cooloola area and those studying the era of public sector reform dating from the election of the Goss government in Queensland in December 1989.





Cetaceans ahoy, as photographed by Ron Turner.

Ron was part of the exciting early years of this new government department, which operated with limited finance and few field staff.

As he describes it, he witnessed the introduction of a top-heavy, bureaucratic administration, and in some quarters the absence of basic environmental ethics.

He also recalls a lack of official support for rangers on the front line of a new conservation effort.

For example, acting on a complaint about a Gympie region zoo, he found a kangaroo, a grey kangaroo and a whiptail wallaby in a pen measuring “2.4m by 1m and .6m high”.

“There were about 50 native birds in cages. I passed the information on but heard nothing further.

“Sir Thomas Hiley once asked me to confirm whether the Tansey Lagoons, north of Kilkivan, were a fauna sanctuary.

“They were and all shooting was prohibited.”

His next job was to inform local landowners that warning off strangers and allowing friends to shoot protected wildlife was “out of order.”

“At times, I was told not to report any infringements, (but) “to react quickly to any issues involving dangerous species, such as crocodiles, or cute and cuddly types, such as koalas.”

Less media-attracting species did not rate one way or the other, apparently.

The rules only applied to native animals, but as Mr Turner recalls, no-one was sure what that meant either.

This was complex. All native birds had to be reported, but owners would sometimes claim that species such as the rare eclectus parrot were New Guinea natives,

“However I had heard reports of these birds being taken illegally in Far North Queensland, so they were both native and exotic.

“Most aviaries were too small for the birds, but there were no regulations to control these conditions,” Mr Turner writes.

He was left to deal with all the sensitive issues, including confiscating an emu which was the sole companion of a wheelchair bound landowner. The emu died while the rangers chased it.

Yet, illegal wildlife shooting and poisoning continued without official objection.

That included a strawberry grower controlling rosellas that were eating his crop, by using a poison with a withholding period longer than the maturation time of strawberries, so his produce was routinely toxic.

Widgee (now most of Gympie region) and Noosa shires had been declared sanctuaries, so killing native species was illegal.

Even the wildlife did not always obey all the rules, including the crocodile reportedly seen in a creek near Teewah, on the Noosa north shore, south of Double Island Point.

“I once spent several fruitless hours investigating reports of crocodiles in the wetlands south of Tewantin, and I had unsuccessfully searched mangrove lined creeks on the western side of Fraser Island, seeking evidence of a reported crocodile.

“Despite this, I knew that crocodiles could be found in unusual places.

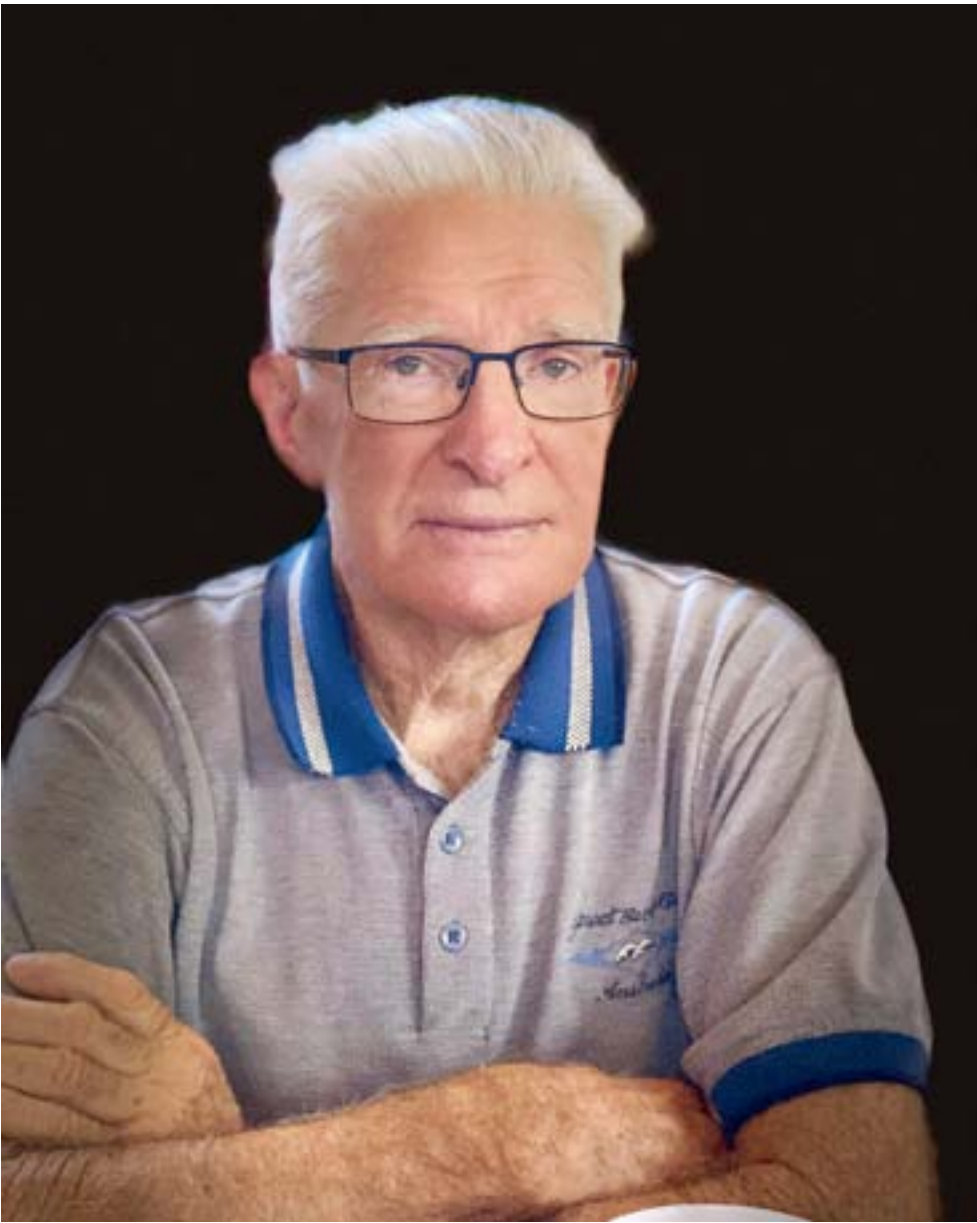
“Former Noosa Shire councillor Olive Donaldson told me that, as a child, she saw a crocodile in the surf at Little Freshwater Creek on Teewah Beach, but the adults laughed at her.

“Soon afterwards, local fisherman Joe Masoud found the carcass of a crocodile being devoured by dingoes on the beach further south.

“Steve Irwin once caught a freshwater crocodile in a dam near the Glasshouse Mountains, close to (his) Beerwah Reptile Park, now Australia Zoo,” Mr Turner recalls.

Mr Turner’s book can be found in full at <https://www.parksleisure.com.au/library/>

Cooloola Coast’s first ranger, Ron Turner





# Spring Fest will happen

By Lee McCarthy

The inaugural Rainbow Beach Spring Fest is set to happen on 4 September and organisers say, ...it will go ahead.

Event organiser and president of the Rainbow Beach Community Centre, Elisa Seul, said nobody likes the sound of a lockdown.

“It’s close to a deafening silence. But spring lasts three months, so no matter what the restrictions are, we have a Covid safe outdoor space and we will make this happen. It’s too important.”

The local not-for-profit association run by volunteers is bringing this event to Rainbow Beach.

The centre has been constantly growing, and Elisa said the technical support of the experienced team from Events and Tents QLD will enhance the success of the Spring Fest.

“From the start the goal was to gift our rural area something amazing to inspire our younger generations with music and the arts,” she said.

“Artists have always played a major role in societies, although as the current circumstances have proved, they are not always recognised.”

The event organisers are dedicating their spare time to a project with a long-term vision, believing that music is essential to wellbeing.

The line-up of 2021 selected artists are close to the heart of Rainbow Beach where Aboriginal history blends with a multicultural community.

The Spring Fest is a signature event that promotes the region to a broader audience and encourages visitation to the town and a way to keep culture alive.

The event aims to activate a space where the community can share the stories and local history of the district and more specifically from our First Nations people.

Fred Leone is a Butchulla song man, artist, and cultural facilitator. Stuart Fergie, front man of Oka Collective is also an Aboriginal artist who creates his work with the influence of Julian Bel-bachir originally from North-western Africa.



Organiser of the Spring Fest Elisa Seul, looking over the Rainbow Beach Centre Block, the venue for the art, music and culture festival on 4 September says it will go ahead

Hat Fitz is a wild bluesman, true blue Aussie, who married Irish born folk singer Cara Robinson, becoming a striking pair on stage.

Karl Smith from The Lyrical was born in Vanuatu and grew up in the Solomon Islands, before moving to Brisbane.

“Most of these talented and professional artists have now settled on the Sunshine Coast. They live and love our area, which I am sure has inspired some of their songs,” Mr Smith said.

“They were all very enthusiastic about the Rainbow Beach Spring Fest project and its purpose and are excited to share their music in our community, for the very first time”.

“These artists represent all of us, they push us to remember our roots, stand strong in our

culture and respectfully share who we are. Amazing things can be created when we express our knowledge.”

So, in case you need another reason to visit Rainbow Beach for the first time or to come back, buy your ticket to this family friendly event, enjoy live music with Oka, Fred Leone, Hat Fitz & Cara, The Lyrical. Follow the Rainbow Beach Spring Fest Facebook page to stay up to date as they monitor closely the roll out of restrictions.

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# Cooloola's lockdown role

By Arthur Gorrie

Cooloola Cove's Woolworths-based shopping centre has become significant strategic territory for national real estate investor SCA Property, in its quest to expand its portfolio of Covid-proof shopping assets in Queensland.

Property writer Nick Nichols said the firm's latest move was the \$34.34 million purchase of Toowoomba's Drayton Central Shopping Centre.

This came on top of other purchases of what the firm described as "low-risk non-discretionary retail assets," including the Woolworths-anchored Cooloola Cove centre.

Mr Nichols quoted one industry observer saying: "This asset class has proven to be resilient due to its exposure to non-discretionary retail tenants and strong weighting to food sales."

"The pandemic has highlighted the resilience of neighbourhood centres."

The Toowoomba deal brings the company's

Queensland investment spree this year to \$97 million, Mr Nichols reported in Business News Australia.

"It also followed the \$44.2 million acquisition of Mt Isa Village, anchored by Coles and Kmart, and the \$18.66 million deal for the Woolworths Cooloola Cove shopping centre," he said.

The Cooloola Cove purchase earlier this year illustrated the centre's growing status as a barometer of real estate optimism in the Coast area.

Its most recent previous sale, at \$12.85 million, occurred in 2018.

The centre's is central to the increasingly sought after suburb of Cooloola Cove, but is also across the road from the newer Cooloola Sands master planned community, with 800 homes.

The centre, completed in July 2009, has a lettable area of 4300sq.m, with 10 specialty shops on one level, with parking for 233 vehicles.



Ray Brown, Peter Gilfoyle and Tin Can Bay RSL Sub branch President Don Holland at the Vietnam Veterans Day commemorative service in 2020.

## Mark service in Vietnam

Join members of the RSL, ex-service men and women and families for the commemorative Vietnam Veterans Day service being held on 18 August on the Cooloola Coast.

The service is held each year on the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan in 1966.

The day is to remember the sacrifices of

those who died and say thank you to almost 60,000 Australians who served during the 10 years of our involvement in the Vietnam War.

A service will be held from 11am at the Rainbow Beach Cenotaph and 10.45am at Anzac Memorial Park, Tin Can Bay. Everyone is welcome.



Join in commemorating our Veterans in Rainbow Beach or Tin Can Bay this August 18.

# Rainbow Beach

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Darryl Fitzgerald, Sue Fitzgerald and Scott Fitzgerald from Rainbow Beach Meats.

# Meet Beach businesses

By Lee McCarthy

Congratulations and welcome to our new businesses or business owners who have chosen to join the business community on the Cooloolool Coast.

**Rainbow Beach Barber**

It's always encouraging to see new business come to the Cooloolool Coast and we are all very excited to welcome new Rainbow Beach Barber owners Azza and Nikki Holder.

From the Gold Coast and now living nearby, the couple found the beauty of Rainbow Beach so compelling they decided to open a barber shop. Nikki has joined Azza now and they both already love the area.

The business is at the IGA complex, and they are open Tuesday- Friday 8.30am-4.30pm and Saturday 8am-12pm and closed Sunday & Monday. Drop in or phone 0413 092

116 for appointments.

**Sails Bar & Bistro**

Welcome to Tony and Tanya Heading who have opened their second business in the Cooloolool Coast at the Tin Can Bay Yacht Club.

The new venture is called Sails and what a view! Serving the same quality Italian cuisine that patrons are used to having at Arco's at Rainbow Beach Tony and Tanya have installed a new pizza oven which is now on fire!

Sails is open every day from 7:30am until 8pm serving cafe style breakfasts, followed by local seafood and Italian cuisine for lunch and dinner. Call on 07 5486 4308 to make a booking.

**Rainbow Beach Meats**

Sue Fitzgerald and husband Jim bought the butcher shop next to the Shell Service Station 30 years ago from their mate Wayne Mitchell.

With Jim as butcher, they employed Doug Robertson and the apprentice was son Scott Fitzgerald.

Jim and Sue then built where the shop now sits on Rainbow Beach Road and sons Darryl and Scott worked for the family business. Sadly, Jim passed away in 2012 and Sue has kept the business with the help of her sons until Scott offered to buy the business in June.

**Sue said:** "It was a pretty amazing building and we built it from scratch. I was a bit sad to sell after all this time but I'm glad it's staying in the family."

"It was great to be able to work in a business with my husband and sons. I'm proud of what Jim and I achieved and loved having a family business. We could go to the farm and leave Darryl and Scott to run the business."

Scott and his wife Zaneta have taken over the business and we wish them all the best

with the new endeavour.

**Rainbow Beach Fruit**

All the best to Andrew and Annie Kingsley and their four children Charlie 16, Nathan 15, Alex 14 and Zoe 12 who move to Launceston this week.

**Andrew said:** "We had to sell their business and move because there was nowhere to live. We tried everywhere, even in Gympie and the last house we looked at had 26 people looking at it to rent."

"My family is in Launceston so although we are all exhausted, it will be good to be with family again."

While the state has a shortage of housing, Rainbow Beach is in crisis, and it is a great loss to the town to lose such a prominent family because they simply can't find anywhere to live. All the best to Andrew, Annie, and their family.





## 91.5FM - HAVE YOU TUNED IN LATELY?

Gympie has its own community radio station - 91.5FM broadcasting across the Cooloolool Region for almost 25 years.

Better Music Variety - Playlists are continuously being developed to appeal to a wider audience. We regularly update our lists to introduce new music."

As a community station 91.5FM is very much about they how can support the local community.

Free Community Service Announcements - contact the 91.5FM Office and let them know what you are doing.

Not-for-profit organisation sustained by donations, memberships, sales from the 91five Op Shop located at 131 Mary Street and business sponsorship.

 **5482 1769**  **91.5fmOffice@gmail.com**



# Mark's riding for a cure

By Lee McCarthy

Well known Gympie dentist and businessman Mark Cull has found a way to give back to the community he lives in, in a way he finds tough but enjoyable.

Mark is a dedicated cyclist and when he was invited by Erin Strang, CFO of Suncorp to do the Spirit to Cure, run by Tour De Cure, he knew it was his way to say thanks.

The Toowoomba to Brisbane via Warwick bike ride being held on 13-16 November is to raise funds to support Spirit to Cure, raising money for cancer research, support and prevention.

Mark, who with wife Mary, has a home in Rainbow Beach and spends as much time in town as they can, says it's full circle for him.

"I was not long out of Uni in 1989 and working in Charleville and Mary was nursing there. She had entered the Nurse of the Year quest and asked us if we would do a cycle ride to raise money for her fundraising.

"My mates and I raised \$2000 by riding from Charleville to Morven, Morven to Augathella and back to Charleville. We rode close to 100km each day... with no helmets! \$2000 was a lot of money back then for poor little country towns. It was after that I took up cycling and triathlons.

"Needless to say, due to my great cycling effort and the lasting impression I made, I captivated the nurse so much that we married the following year."

In 2011, Mary experienced her own cancer journey, thankfully a happy ending, well supported by the Cancer Council of Australia.

"We were so grateful for the help and support she received and the chemotherapy unit and McGrath Nurse at Gympie Hospital was amazing.

"The training is five days a week now, doing about 200-300 kilometers each week. It's good to give a bit back and the camaraderie beforehand is great getting to know the group.

"We are using virtual indoor trainers so all those in lockdown are on a group 'Zwift' ride. This is like zoom for cyclists, a virtual training platform where we organise meet ups and have a program to talk to each other.

"I think cancer touches a lot of people, a lot of families and there is a lot of fundraising, but this just touches us personally.

"They are coming up with breakthroughs all the time but only through Australians being so generous.

"I think Covid has reset people's thoughts. Everyone has gone back to basics. That's where people are realising life is short and doing their bit for the community.

Mark said there would be about 100 riders in the Spirit to Cure in four groups. He is in the longer faster group which is for more experienced riders doing the challenge rides and will be riding about 140 km a day.

He has already raised \$2,462.21 and says he would love to raise more for cancer.

If you feel inclined to donate, please follow the link. <https://tourdecure.grassrootz.com/suncorp-spirit-to-cure-ride/mark-cull>



Mark (blue) with his team Gympie Riders Group with Erin Strang (purple), CFO Suncorp Head Office



Mark riding 80's style.

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Chris Morris with his 1950 Pontiac he bought on eBay.



Steve and Donna with their much-loved 1932 'Fordor' Ford.



Rainbow Beach enthusiasts Daz and Phil enjoying the magnificent 1932 'Fordor' Ford.

# Sharing stunning cars

By Lee McCarthy

You learn a lot more than just about cars at the monthly cars-and-coffee catch ups at the Woolies carpark in Cooloolo Cove on Sunday mornings.

Thirty to 35 cars rock up each month from 8am for a coffee and a chat for a chance to swap stories and for eager fans to have a look at the gleaming machines.

Whether a '65, '66 or '67 Mustang is your thing or a 1948 Chevy, car enthusiasts from Maryborough, Gympie and the Cooloolo Coast join up over their common love of cars.

Started four years ago by a few guys who loved cars and now attracting lots of fans, including Harley riders, Porsche owners and even the proud owners of a bright orange 1932 'Fordor' Ford.

The owner of the 1950 Pontiac owner, Chris Morris bought his car on eBay as he wanted to learn about mechanics so thought this was a good way to learn.

He and his family have now moved to the Cooloolo Coast, and he works from home as a "Hatter". That is a person who makes men's Hats, not a milliner. He sells his hats across the world to people like Native American Micki Free, famous for his soundtracks, Grammy award and as Prince's guitarist.

Gary and Lisa Jones from Cooloolo Cove own a 1948 Chevrolet which was built in Australia for Chevrolet during wartime. They have owned it for over 20 years with Gary spending seven and half years restoring it.

Steve and Donna, proud owners of the 1932 Fordor Ford with a 302 Cleveland motor are from the Cooloolo Coast. They said they love driving it and it sits quite easily on 100 km and hugs the corners beautifully.

Steve Downing who owns the C10 Chevy said he had been interested in cars all his life since his first car, a Datsun 1600. He said he spends as much time working on it as driving because he enjoys it so much.

They are collectively following their passion and generously sharing their love of these beautiful vehicles with anyone who expresses interest.

Full marks to the Cooloolo Cove shopping centre businesses for opening early to serve hot coffee and we are told exceptional hamburgers to the crowd.



The meticulous interior of Steve Downing's Left-Hand drive C10 imported Chevy.



Gympie's Steve Downing with his stunning C10 Chevy.



Cooloolo Cove's Gary and Lisa Jones with their 1948 Chevy.



# RAINBOW BEACH Spring Fest

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# Fridays in Tin Can Bay

Fridays are a treat in Tin Can Bay, especially when the weather is warm and the sun is shining. Our photographer **SHANE ZAHNER** spent the morning meeting the locals and snapping some pictures from around the Bay.



Koby Collings, Lacey Scott, Liza Scott and Kristian Toynton.



Kevin McCormac and Rob Butt.



Charmaine Riach and Dave Lang.



Chase McLeod having some playground fun.



Daniel Wayne-Bowles, Ciara Taylor, Kerry Wayne-Bowles and Jordan Taylor.



Dave and Alice Gardiner.





Gordon Smith, Garry Thompson, George Oxtan, Barry Chandler and Lyle Janke.



Lea Nicholson and Jayne Schwajhardt.



Mark Bulow and Harrison King.



Madden and Ziva Fitzpatrick.



Vera Alexander, Mark Chandler and Di Oxtan.



Levi, Oliver and Christelle Leckenby.





# Boat fatalities up

A massive rise in boating numbers last year coincided with Queensland recording its highest number of marine fatalities in 20 years.

Transport and Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey said figures released in Maritime Safety Queensland's Marine Incident Report 2020 made for distressing reading.

"In 2020, 17 lives were needlessly lost on Queensland waterways," Mr Bailey said.

"This was one higher than the previous year, and well above anything Queensland has experienced in the previous 20 years.

"Sadly, the tragedies we saw play out on our roads last year were echoed on our waterways too.

"Despite less cars being on the road during lockdowns, more Queenslanders took risks like speeding or drug driving, resulting in more deaths and severe injuries.

"We also saw an increase in boating activity during the Covid-19 hiatus accompanied by an alarming rise in person-overboard incidents."

Mr Bailey said the most recent marine incidents' report confirmed a significant rise in the number of new boats in 2020, with an extra 7224 recreational vessels registered.

"This was a substantial increase, more than

three times the number we would expect to see in any given year," Mr Bailey said.

"There were 33 reported incidents of people going overboard in 2020 which included 14 of the 17 fatalities, the highest in 10 years.

"Just two of those people who drowned, or were thought to have drowned, were known to have been wearing a life jacket."

Mr Bailey said the report showed boat users were continuing to ignore safety messages and disregarding the routine use of life jackets.

"While the circumstances may differ over time, the water safety message hasn't changed," he said.

"Boat operators need to keep a proper lookout at all times and always travel at a safe speed.

"Most importantly, they must have enough life jackets for all on board and ensure they wear them whenever there's a heightened risk."

Mr Bailey said Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) would continue a campaign of checks on safety equipment and unlicensed operation of vessels.

"MSQ's Maritime Enforcement Team carries out on-water education and compliance operations in joint campaigns with Queensland

Police, Boating and Fisheries Patrol, and Parks and Wildlife," he said.

"These campaigns have intercepted hundreds of boat users in targeted operations, with the aim of raising awareness of boating rules which may differ from state to state, and generally reminding people of their responsibilities on the water.

"We just awarded a \$1.9 million contract to supply MSQ with eight additional, high-speed vessels.

"Having those boats out on the water will mean our crews are able to get out there and educate the community, make sure people are travelling in safe vessels, and provide support to any incidents on the water."

In 2020 there were 264,547 recreational vessels registered in Queensland.

In the same year, they were involved in 339 reported marine incidents – seven more than in 2019.

This included 38 collisions with objects, 39 groundings, 34 capsizes and 33 people overboard incidents.

The incidents resulted in 137 injuries with 40 requiring hospital treatment.

Sixteen incidents resulted in 17 deaths.



FREE CALLS: Telstra has announced that all payphone standard calls will be free from now on. Picture: NEESHA SINNYA

## Telstra payphones now free

Australians will now be able to make free local and national calls to standard fixed line numbers from Telstra payphones.

The announcement to allow free calls from 15,000 payphones across the country comes after Telstra recognised the important role they play in keeping Australians connected.

Telstra's CEO, Andrew Penn, said the decision came after realising that payphones act as a lifeline for vulnerable Australians.

"The homeless, the isolated, those escaping domestic violence - often payphones are their only link to critical support services and those that care about them," Mr Penn said.

"Even in the age of the smartphone, they [payphones] play an important role in our community, particularly in times of need, and particularly for those in need.

"Last year alone Australians made 11 million calls on payphones, including more than 230,000 calls to vital services like Triple Zero, so there's no doubt payphones are already often the lifeline that's there when it's needed most," he said.

Local and national calls to standard fixed line numbers and to standard Australian mobiles are now free following the announcement last Tuesday 3 August.

# New mobile phone and seatbelt cameras rollout

Roadside cameras that detect drivers illegally using mobile phones and not wearing a seatbelt began appearing on Queensland roads on Monday.

Transport and Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey said the fixed and portable cameras would operate on urban and regional roads.

"Our message has been direct and simple: just put your phone away," Mr Bailey said.

"In 2020, 23 people lost their lives and 1475 were hospitalised because of distracted driving," Mr Bailey said.

"43 people died and 187 were hospitalised because they were not wearing a seatbelt.

"These deaths and injuries could have been prevented."

Mr Bailey said drivers doing the wrong thing need to change their dangerous behaviour before penalties were issued.

"Until 31 October, those caught by the cameras will not be fined," he said.

"Instead, they will receive a warning letter advising them that they've been caught.

"From 1 November all bets are off.

"Drivers caught on camera will receive a \$1033 fine and four demerit points for mobile phone offences and a \$413 fine and three demerit points for each vehicle occupant detected not wearing a seatbelt."

Mr Bailey said the cameras were an important tool to make Queensland roads safer for all.

"Already in 2021, more than 150 people have lost their lives on Queensland's roads," he said.

"If you are driving a vehicle, leave your phone alone.

"If you don't, your selfish actions endanger not only your own safety, but others you share the road with.

"Seatbelts became compulsory almost 50 years ago because belting up saves lives, so we will look at options to increase penalties for not wearing a seatbelt so it aligns with distracted driving.

"Every dollar collected through these fines is invested back into making Queensland's roads safer."



If new cameras, designed to catch drivers on their phones and not wearing seatbelts, snap your picture, you're looking at some hefty fines, according to TMR.



# Fishing

## Cooloola Coast



April to August is the best time to be catching quality mud crabs.

## Busting the myths

Fishing our diverse ecosystem is something we love sharing. Tin Can Bay, Wide Bay and The Great Sandy Straits is without doubt the most unique fishing system on the east coast of Australia.

Let's bust a few myths around fishing our region to help you out.

**Myth 1: You'll never catch quality mud crab in any month without an 'R'.**

Having commercially crabbed the region for over 20 years we have followed the crab biomass and feeding habits. Starting in November, the biomass of crab begins its migration from offshore waters into the Great Sandy Straits

From November through until March, the crab continues their migration, preferring the deeper melon holes and creeks. By the end of March, the biomass migration is over, and this season's crab are now in our local waters. This is when they begin moving further up into feeder creeks and shallower waters. We see the best crab caught from April until August.

Ensure your pots remain covered on the

lowest tide and allow them to have a good overnight soak. Exposed pots are prone to invasion from eagles, wild dogs, and feral pigs. Crab do not like smelly rotting bait. Another myth busted. Fresh baits like mullet heads, fish frames, kangaroo chunks, and chicken frames are a must. Change your baits every 24 hours at a minimum.

**Myth 2: You can only catch big Sand Whiting in summer.**

It's important to distinguish between whiting commonly caught in winter months in large numbers and Sand Whiting. Sand Whiting are often called 'Summer' whiting, but we know that most of the largest sand whiting are caught from August through until November. When they come on the bite, monster whiting will inhale baits such as live and preserved worms and yabbies. Water clarity has a big influence on strike rate. When the water is crystal clear, daylight fishing can be tough going. If you can see the fish, they can see you. Fishing the open beaches will almost always be more productive in the evening and preferably with

a run out tide. Look for shallow gutters with a clear exit. Whiting will enter and leave the gutter once the water depth leaves them vulnerable to predators.

For inshore Sand Whiting, the bite time is often strongest with the incoming tide. As the water floods over yabbie banks, some monster fish will brave ankle deep water for a feed. Whiting are ambush predators and will smash surface lures such as the Nomad Dartwings and Bassday Sugapens.

The 2021 Gardiner Fisheries Whiting Championship kicked off on August 1 and runs until November 20th. With a total prize pool exceeding 20K including a 3.7 metre Aqua Master V Nose Barra punt with a Mercury 9.9hp four stroke on a Redco Trailer, you'd be mad not to enter. Entry is as easy as snapping our QR code on our advert or go to [www.gardinerfisheries.com](http://www.gardinerfisheries.com) and register online.

Our business is helping you catch fish. Find us on Facebook or drop in and chat with our team at 1 Karoonda Road, Rainbow Beach or call us on 0404 853 232.

## Plenty of time for win

Disappointment struck many this week with the cancellation of the iconic Rainbow Beach Family Fishing Classic.

Lucky for Rainbow Beach, the Gardiner Fisheries 3rd Annual Whiting Championship runs until 20 November and that format keeps us going strong.

There's plenty of time to fish around work, family commitments and Covid lockdowns with the four month competition duration.

Numbers were capped at 300 this year and tickets are filling fast due to other competition cancellations so if your keen to get in on the action and possibly win yourself a new boat package drop in and see the team at the Gardiner Fisheries to sign up or go to [www.gardinerfisheries.com](http://www.gardinerfisheries.com) for registration and all the info.

The new whiting competition board is now up at Gardiner Fisheries and it is beginning to fill.



## Weighing in

How awesome is this catch 13-year-old Gympie girl Ursula Mackay scored on her holiday to Townsville? This mighty specimen was 90cm long and weighed a whopping 21kg. Well done Ursula! Feel free to share photos of your catches with Cooloola Coast Today.

## FRESH LIVE BAIT DAILY

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# Sport

## The tri returns... again

By Lee McCarthy

The announcement late last month that the Rainbow Beach Double Triathlon would have to be postponed due to a snap lockdown, was devastating for organiser Phil Hungerford.

But, true to his competitive roots, he jumped back into action mode and has announced it will now be held on 28-29 August.

Mr Hungerford said he's hopeful to see it go ahead at the end of this month.

"Fingers crossed the South East Queensland community continues to see improved results from the latest outbreak and we are able to go ahead.

"After discussion with many of our key stakeholders and providers, we would like to officially announce the date for 'Take Two - 28 & 29 August 2021.

"Please be mindful that we are a very small business, with only one full time employee," Mr Hungerford said.

Please support this event in any way you can with racing starting at 2pm, 28 August. Full details <http://rainbowbeachtriathlon.com.au/race-info>

Event organiser Phil Hungerford has his fingers crossed that the Triathlon will return on 28 August 2021.



## ‘Can-do’ crew bringing the sailing fun to Tin Can Bay

Sailability at Tin Can Bay has been operating for over 10 years and offers sailing to people with a disability.

The club relies on volunteers to keep it going and on Friday mornings from 8.30am you will see a whole heap of action mixed with a lot of laughter.

The sailors are all fully trained skippers and they take the boats out for a 30-minute sail on their two-man yachts with the support of the Tin Can Bay Yacht Club.

Anyone is welcome to come and join in to watch or volunteer as the club is always looking for volunteers. Phone: 07 5486 4308 <https://tcbsailability.wixsite.com/sailabilitytincanbay>

The Yacht club is next to the Coastguard at the Tin Can Bay boat ramp at Norman Point.



Maddi Shannon and Day Skipper David.



Pam Smith, Sam Richmond, Elspeth Axtell with dog Winnie, Len Druce and Warren Woodland.





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