

# CooloolaCoastToday



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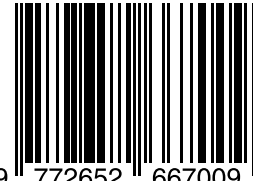
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## Swell time

On the very occasional day the weather doesn't always turn out, but that never stops the groms from making the most of our beautiful surf. This image was taken by Rainbow Beach local and Cooloola Coast Today reporter Lee McCarthy on a recent trip to Double Island Point.

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Bede Moyle from Maroochydore with a fitting board at Double Island.

## Complacency fuelled blaze

Previously unreleased state government documents prove that official complacency fueled the fires which devastated most of Fraser Island over six weeks of uncontrolled destruction last year.

The documents, obtained by ABC News under Right to Information laws provide detailed information proving that senior Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff did not care enough to protect island ecosystems, including rainforest and animal species believed to have been decimated by the blaze.

As first reported in Gympie Today, the fires burned for six weeks, with no serious action taken to control them during most of this time.

The state government said at the time that its response, or lack of it, was based on "expert advice."

**STORY PAGE 3**

## 'Carnage' risk

After living in Rainbow Beach for 29 years and being a regular user of the Rainbow Beach Road, Tony Stewart has seen many near misses and bad accidents. He is disturbed by the behaviour on the road, he is upset about the fatalities and believes if something isn't done very soon, there will be more carnage.

"We have seen the demand for passing lanes increase to the point I felt the need to do something, so I contacted our local member Tony Perrett, and he sponsored the proposal for a petition for a safer passage to Rainbow Beach," Mr Stewart said.

**STORY PAGE 2**

# Nasty beach brawl

**By Rose Astley**

Residents and visitors alike were left mortified over the weekend after a fight between a young crowd broke out on the beach at Double Island Point.

In a video posted to Facebook group 'Double Island Point', a group of young men and women can be seen punching and kicking one

another in an argument which had spectator Julia Rose baffled.

"Trying to enjoy a beautiful day in gods country was a little tough on Saturday with this going on," Ms Rose said in her Facebook post.

"Absolutely disgraceful behaviour... Fights breaking out and bottles getting tossed... Just so dangerous."

Hundreds of commenters were left ap-

palled by the video, with many worried about such actions impacting the future of visitors on Double Island.

It comes after a recent spat of poor behaviour has been captured on our beaches, including an 11-year-old filmed doing donuts as his mother filmed and a large gathering of people participating 'bushdoof' complete with unsafe 4WD antics.



A still from the video of a nasty brawl on Double Island, posted by Julia Rose to Facebook.

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**Bad news for campers**

It is important for visitor destinations like the Cooloola Coast to be welcoming and friendly, while also protecting the tranquility enjoyed by all the people who have committed to living here. But the good will of residents and the majority of visitors has been worn down recently by some shockingly ill-mannered behavior.

Nobody wants heavy handed action by councils or police on issues that do not affect most of us, but something has to be done about people who come here and show no respect for people or the environment.

At Teewah, for example, we have reports of brawling, on top of reports of dangerous hooning in vehicles and anecdotal reports of seriously unwelcome behavior - including camp site invasions and all the problems we might expect at an overcrowded paid campsite without toilets.

This issue also reports on beachfront campers in the Rainbow Beach car park, a phenomenon no-one objected to until people walking their dogs on a track behind the beach found their way impeded by the sight and smell of toilet paper and even human excrement.

And while everyone likes to throw a ball for an enthusiastic dog, or watch their pet run unimpeded, attacks on those very dogs by larger ones uncontrolled by their owners have left many residents welcoming council action to enforce leash laws, hopefully with a gentle touch.

People, residents and visitors alike, go to Cooloola to get away, to feel free.

Then an irresponsible few teach us that we need authority, even here.

- Arthur Gorrie



# Extra lanes urgent

By Lee McCarthy

After living in Rainbow Beach for 29 years and being a regular user of the Rainbow Beach Road, Tony Stewart has seen many near misses and bad accidents.

He is disturbed by the behaviour on the road, he is upset about the fatalities and believes if something isn't done very soon, there will be more carnage.

"We have seen the demand for passing lanes increase to the point I felt the need to do something, so I contacted our local member Tony Perrett, and he sponsored the proposal for a petition for a safer passage to Rainbow Beach," Mr Stewart said.

Gympie MP Tony Perrett said planning should start now on Tin Can Bay Road overtaking lanes.

"The Minister should be aware of this issue. I keep bringing it to his attention. I have raised it numerous times in correspondence, questions in the Parliament, and in Parliamentary speeches," Mr Perrett said.

"There is no way the Minister doesn't know how much the community is concerned about this.

"We have had some small victory in securing a \$50,000 commitment in TMR's budget this year for planning works for overtaking lanes on Tin Can Bay Road.

"Everyone would rather be building than talking about this matter. Planning should start now and not delayed. We need to know that this won't be pushed out, done at the last minute, or deferred.

"I have written to the Minister asking when that planning will commence. I've also asked



The recent spate of crashes along the Tin Can Bay Road have prompted local MPs to move for a safer road.

whether they will be undertaking community consultation and if so when. People deserve to know that they are being heard. They deserve to know their roads will be made safe."

Below is the Petition for a safer road:

TO: The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland  
Queensland residents draws to the attention of the House the need for a safer passage on the State controlled road from Gympie to Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach on the Cooloola Coast. Statistics show this road is the second most dangerous road in Wide Bay, marginally behind the Bruce Highway. There has been 14 deaths between 2011 and 2018 and 312 crashes between 2001 and 2019, equating to one crash every three weeks.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to ensure the upgrade of the road from

Gympie to Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach and to provide a proper and safe passage for residents and tourists as a matter of urgency.

Tony spends about two days a week at the caravan parks, car wash and Inskip Point speaking to people and getting signatures.

Tony said: "People say it's inexperience but the people I am talking to are very experienced. They have done a lot of travelling, some around Australia a few times. I believe about 95% of the caravanners will pull off if they could."

"We want people to come back here and at the moment people are choosing to go down the coast as this road is too dangerous which is hurting our tourism."

Tony needs 10,000 signatures and is asking people to go online and sign the petition. <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/apps/E-Petitions/Home/Sign/3511>

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## CARTOON



## Camps blitz

Gympie Regional Council has cracked down on illegal campers at Rainbow Beach and on people with unrestrained dogs on the beach.

Residents say many car park campers appeared to be escaping Covid restrictions in Brisbane and interstate and had opted to park their camper vehicles in the beachfront car park.

Their presence had led to objections after some residents found toilet paper and human excrement along one track behind the beach, near the north end of the car park.

Others had found similarly unpleasant evidence of beach camping in some spots slightly further to the north.

At the same time, a council inspector warned dog owners on the beach to keep their animals on leashes, after a number of incidents of unrestrained dogs attacking other dogs on the beach. Similar news of unhygienic camping at Teewah had led to calls for provision of toilets, along with continuing concerns about bad behaviour from drivers and campers.

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The Fraser Island bushfire as photographed for Gympie Today, two days after premier Anastacia Palaszczuk told Brisbane television audiences it had been brought under control.



Satellite photo of burned area

# Complacency fueled blaze

By Arthur Gorrie

Previously unreleased state government documents prove that official complacency fueled the fires which devastated most of Fraser Island over six weeks of uncontrolled destruction last year.

The documents, obtained by ABC News under Right to Information laws provide detailed information proving that senior Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff did not care enough to protect island ecosystems, including rainforest and animal species believed to have been decimated by the blaze.

As first reported in Gympie Today, the fires burned for six weeks, with no serious action taken to control them during most of this time.

The state government said at the time that its response, or lack of it, was based on “expert advice.”

Now, the newly-released emails reveal a senior official ridiculed calls for action, saying the fires were “not that bad” and that people wanting to take action, including the use of water-bombing aircraft were “wishing to indulge their profession.”

Even after water bombing began, another official described as a “senior QPWS bureaucrat” wrote “we are probably burning more \$\$\$ than anything else.”

The report of Inspector General Emergency Management Alistair Dawson also confirmed Gympie Today’s report that much of the damage occurred “despite the availability of a water bombing aircraft based in Bundaberg.”

The national broadcaster has now independently established that the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service had offered to water-bomb the blaze, “but QPWS declined the offer for several reasons.”

Even after a senior ranger told superiors of QFES concerns about the safety of the Orchid

Beach township, the emails revealed QPWS reluctance to pay for water bombing.

An email from QPWS executive Damien Head expressed a view that the fire “isn’t that bad” and people advocating waer bombing were likely to be “indulging their profession. Aka ‘do something.

“There is only another 36 hours of northerly before the southerly kicks in again and pushes the fire back on itself,” Mr Head wrote.

The fire began on October 14, but water-bombing did not begun until November 9.

By that stage, it was not enough on its own to extinguish the fires, which were eventually put out by the sudden arrival of heavy rain weeks later.

Then followed “confusion” about who would pay for it.

General manager of the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation Veronica Bird said it was “absolutely devastating” for traditional owners that so much (85 per cent) of the island had burned.

Rural Fire Brigade sector commander Winston Williams, whose responsibility covered the seriously endangered township of Happy Valley, said hazard reduction burning might have eliminated the need for air operations.

“But if fires become uncontrollable then aerial support should be be requested immediately to support ground crew for containment.

“I would belt everything at it ASAP,” he said.

The blaze burnt an estimated 85,000 hectares, more than half of the island, until it was eventually extinguished by a rain event in early December.

The fires ultimately threatened four townships - Orchid Beach, Happy Valley, Yidney Rocks and The Oaks - and came threateningly close on the island’s western side to the King-

fisher Bay resort and the Cathedrals campgoround.

They also threatened the QPWS base at Dundubara and Butchulla cultural sites.

In shutting down island visitation, ostensibly for safety reasons, the QPWS continued to allow access to people already on the island property owners and business operators, but specifically banned the media.

Gympie Today responded with a helicopter inspection of the fires, resulting in award winning exclusive photographs which were recognised at the Queensland Country Press Association’s annual awards for 2021.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk told Brisbane television audiences the fire had been brought under control by th3e time QPWS passed incident control over to the QFES, but the Gympie Today photographs, taken two days later and showing hugely destructive and widespread burning, proved the premier had been misadvised.

The broadcaster quotes a spokesman for the QPWS parent department, Environment and Science, saying the fire was challenging and that “plans changed as information came to hand on weather conditions, vegetation type and the effectiveness of ground control efforts... throughout the two months of the fire.”

It quoted a QFES spokesperson saying it would be “inappropriate to comment on another agency’s operations or management of the incident.”

Rainbow Beach dingo conservationist and president of the National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program, Jennifer Parkhurst, said it was unlikely animals would have been able to outrun the flames and suffocating smoke from the fires.

Butchulla elder Lillian Burke said she had

spoken to other elders to confirm their support for a call to shut the island down to give it time to recover.

“It’s not about the money, it’s about the land,” she said.

“Close the island down so it can recover,” she said, adding that it was about time Aboriginal people were given real land management authority instead of tokenism.

It was a call echoed in the IGED report which called for greater decision making and management authority to be exercised by First Nations people.

Aunty Lillian said she had discussed the issue with other elders and they were agreed on a call to close the island for a year, or indefinitely, so it could recover.

“It’s disgraceful,” she said, claiming uncontrolled fires on the island had become too common.

“I’m sorry people’s houses are threatened, but I’m also concerned about the animals, especially our dingoes.

“Our people, the Aboriginal people, did burning off for years. It goes back before time.

““Our story is the land was created by fire and we used fire to manage it.”

“There should be co-management between the Butchulla people and the QPWS and we should have a say in what’s happening on the island.

“There have been agreements but they’re tokenistic,” she said.

The IGED report, made public in June, blasted slow and uncoordinated disaster responses by government agencies and a failure to make early use of water bombing aircraft.

The state government response acknowledged that the fires were much more dangerous than initially thought, posing a significant risk to property.

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Illegal campfires on Fraser Island now cost nearly \$700 each, and you will be caught, say rangers. 248062



# Fines burn for illegal sites

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) is reminding people not to light fires on K'gari (Fraser Island) after another camper was fined for lighting an illegal campfire.

Manager compliance Mike Devery said the person received a \$689 penalty infringement notice (PIN) for lighting an illegal campfire in the beach camping zone at the Wongai Camping Area on the southern part of the island.

This is the new fine cost for illegal fires, which came into affect on 1 July.

"Lighting fires on K'gari outside the designated areas is dangerous and irresponsible behaviour, and people need to follow the rules," Mr Devery said.

"QPWS rangers take a zero-tolerance approach to illegal campfires on K'gari and have issued 33 fire-related PINs to campers in less than eight months since 1 January 2021.

"This is an extraordinary number, especially considering last year's bushfire on K'gari

was caused by an illegal campfire that wasn't extinguished properly.

"Campfires are illegal on K'gari and in many parts of the Cooloola Recreation Area to prevent bushfires, to stop people from burning inappropriate items, and to reduce injuries caused by people stepping on hot campfire embers covered in sand.

"The ban is also in place to keep people safe and to protect the island's unique flora and fauna and areas of cultural significance for the Butchulla people."

"Campers who break the rules on K'gari can expect a fine as other visitors and residents on the island are providing information to rangers about illegal campfires."

Most recent fire related infringements included two illegal fires last weekend at Marloo on Friday morning and Wongai on Sunday morning.

These two infringements join 22 other fires,

4 fines for lighting fires outside of barbecues or fireplaces, 2 fines for failing to extinguish campfires, 4 fines for the removal of plants for firewood and 1 fine for putting non-combustible items in the fire, all issued since the start of the year.

Mr Devery said campfires were only permitted on K'gari in the fire rings at Dundubara and Waddy Point camping areas.

"People must bring their own untreated timber if they are planning on enjoying a campfire at Dundubara and Waddy Point," he said.

"Visitors and residents to the island are not permitted to use bush wood for campfires.

"I encourage visitors and residents to the island to report suspected illegal campfires to QPWS on 1300 130 372 or to the Queensland Police Service on 131 444."

For more information, visit [parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/kgari-fraser/camping](https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/kgari-fraser/camping).



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# Squatters and the ranger

By Arthur Gorrie

Our look at the memoirs of Cooloolool's first national park ranger, Ron Turner continues in this issue, as he notes some of the events and conflicts that have led to life as we know it today on the Cooloolool Coast.

Mr Turner's memoir soon turns to 1967 and "the problem with huts," built illegally between Teewah and Double Island Point, relics of a simpler time...

"I travelled to Royal National Park, south of Sydney Harbour, for the first training course held by the newly formed New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service.

"Declared in 1879, Royal NP is the oldest national park in Australia, and the second in the world.

"In the southern section of the park, we were confronted by four settlements, where rows of modest shacks were occupied by cabin users, or "shackies."

These settlements originated after the First World War, when individuals erected shacks made from cabbage palm trunks and claimed a right as squatters on Crown Land. They stood their ground, using nothing more than cheek and bluff, and, during the depression years, they used under-privilege to challenge authorities to move them. After the Second World War, more huts were built as families grew up.

"After a drowning, a life-saving club was formed. Networks developed among shack owners and social cohesiveness grew."

"Until relatively recently, politicians had lacked the will to enforce their own legislation and support their own department, but the shacks are now gone."

In Cooloolool, early Forestry records suggest similar "fisherman's huts" were erected along the Cooloolool beaches in the 1950s.

Mr Turner recalls "an application by two fishermen in July 1959 for an area near the lagoons at Double Island Point.

"More than a dozen similar requests along Teewah Beach and at Freshwater followed within twelve months.

"Forestry officers were totally unprepared for the controversial issues which came with sand mining, the availability of 4WD vehicles, and the ease of crossing the Noosa River by mining barge or ferry.

"Most of the applicants for beach huts lived at Tewantin, with one each from Kenilworth, Imbil and Kilkivan.

"Olive Donaldson told me Ross's Camp was named after her father, William John Ross. She described substantial huts, built from sawn driftwood collected along the beach," Mr Turner writes.

"Agitation by hut owners for a Camping and Recreation Reserve at Ross's Camp stalled when the Widgee Shire Clerk ruled the council would not be interested in becoming trustees.

"Hut owners made representations to (then Gympie MP) Max Hodges and Forestry Minister Otto Madsen, and short term extensions were offered. Once politicians became involved, District Forester Reg Doggrell's attempts to control the coastal areas were not supported by his own department. Confusion reigned, with local Foresters endeavoring to see huts removed, while their head office was granting extensions to some owners.

"The bureaucratic processes ground on, with endless correspondence between applicants, Forestry and the Land Administration Commission, who were reluctant to see beach leases issued because they were about to release land for sale at Teewah Village.

"When 24 surveyed allotments were auctioned on 12 July 1961, many were bought by hut owners, including George Clifford.

"In 1972, Reg Doggrell wrote that, where beach traffic in the 1930s averaged one vehicle per week, there were now traffic hazards most weekends. He disliked 'beachcombers', whose 'main interest is taking anything that can be turned to short-term profit', and squatters, whose buildings were unlawful. His other concerns were fires and shooting, and taking commercial quantities of coloured sands and flints and stones from Aboriginal middens.

"He summed up the unfolding saga of the huts with a degree of prescience:

"Locating of squatters is proceeding but lagging behind the increase in numbers of huts built ...

"In 1975, there were at least 61 structures



Fish and a firearm lend interest to this picture of fishermen displaying their catch, outside a hut believed to be one known as Page's Hut.

within the newly created national park for which no permits could be found. "More shacks were built as local people capitalised on this lack of enforcement.

"Hut owners would argue they had ancient squatter's rights, because the huts were established before the national park came into being.

"Many people staked a claim on what they viewed as 'vacant' Crown land but Cooloolool was regarded by law as 'occupied' Crown land.

"It had not been 'vacant' since 1880, when it was declared a Timber Reserve. It continued to be 'occupied' in 1925, when the tenure was converted to State Forest, and again as Cooloolool National Park in 1975. The Double Island Point headland had been surveyed as Light-house Reserve in 1919.

"Thirty years on, I was referred to by one Gympie-ite with a long memory as 'That bastard who pulled our hut down'.

"In April 1976, orders were served on people present at the huts.

"Widgee Shire Council wrote to Forestry and QNPWS, stating that Council considered the government's action in forcing removal of fishing huts from Double Island Point was "most unreasonable, as many of these people had been visiting this area for a great number of years and have suddenly found themselves with no-where to camp.

"In 1977, professional fisherman Sonny Chaplin, representing other hut owners, sought accommodation for nine or ten people for three to four months annually, to securely store equipment, petrol, nets and personal belongings, and the right to continuously run a 10hp diesel generator to operate a refrigeration unit.

"Sonny sought political assistance, and, as a result, Cooroor MP Gordon Simpson brought and Forestry and National Parks Minister Kevin Tomkins to the area, in support of the fishermen, but to no avail.

"On my arrival in Gympie, Sonny Chaplin informed me that no one person owned the hut known as the Fishermen's Hut, or Red Hut. He said the hut, formerly owned by Donny Clark, was now of a loose, consensual, collective ownership, and he nominated himself as the owner for the building.

"In June 1978, I accompanied Tom Ryan to the Gympie Court House, where the Magistrate adjourned our applications for a month because we had not issued a formal summons. The frustration of QNPWS was summed up by Syd Curtis, who noted on the paper work, 'How long, O Lord, how long?'

"Returning to the Court, four QNPWS officers gave evidence. In some cases, officers had spoken to people occupying a structure, who either denied owning it or knowing the owner. In other instances, residents at some addresses given by hut occupants denied any knowledge of the hut.

"The magistrate ruled that the 'unknown owner' structures were to be removed within four weeks.

"However, he maintained that QNPWS should have issued summons to 'known owners'.

In October, QNPWS asked for a Supreme Court ruling to determine whether we were following correct procedure in issuing orders and not a formal summons. The court found in our favour, and we requested a fresh date for another hearing in the Magistrate's Court.

"The Magistrate eventually issued a Court Order, giving notice that, if the hut was still there on 14 December, we could remove it.

"I then flew to Orchid Beach on Fraser Island and travelled with Overseer Ron Walk to the fishermen's camp near Sandy Cape. There was a distinct air of hostility among the fishermen. Even their dogs were hostile and barely restrained. Notice was served on Mr Chaplin to remove his Double Island Point hut.

"Years later, I met a Crown Law solicitor who was surprised and interested to meet 'Ron Turner'.

"He said that, when studying law in relation to the removal of illegal structures on Crown Land, the model pro forma to use was based on the 'Complaint of Ron Turner, QNPWS officer ...'

But almost as soon as the wheels of justice had finished grinding out a result, the forces of nature moved the issue forever beyond appeal to any earthly court.



A photo by Sonny Chaplin, showing a hut near the Freshwater Track.

"Ironically, during the winter of 1981, as the saga of the illegal huts drew to a close, there was a massive change in ocean currents on the northern side of Double Island Point.

"The outer barrier of the salt water lagoon was swept away and the sea eroded steadily inland.

"The casuarina I had used as a datum tree in front of the hut disappeared, along with many other trees and QNPWS signs. "The beach and freshwater lagoons in front of the camping zone disappeared.

"The ocean undermined the base of this dune between the Leisha and Fishermen's tracks, causing a massive land slip.

"In a short space of time, the ocean ate inland 65m from the Median High Water Mark, washing away the site of the fishermen's huts.

"A similar outcome followed the removal of the Freshwater huts, this time with more help from Widgee Shire Council, which wanted to develop a small camping area there."

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# Festival is standing strong, for now

By Rose Astley

The Gympie Region has had its fair share of event cancellation blows due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic in the last few months, and the region is missing their music fix with the entertainment industry being the hardest hit.

Though there is one event that is still planning to go ahead, and fingers and toes are crossed that a snap lockdown won't hinder this Rainbow Beach festival.

Rainbow Beach Spring Fest organiser and president of the Rainbow Beach Community Centre Elisa Suel says it's been heartbreaking watching big music events announcing cancellations and says Spring Fest will be a blessing if able to go ahead.

"The purpose of the Rainbow Beach Spring Fest is to bring a smile to our kids' faces, it's a gift to our small community with music genres that spreads cultural belonging, celebration of life through earthy rhythms," Ms Suel said.

"Every single business has been affected by the roll out of a new system; every person has been affected by the circumstances; the uncertainty of the past 20 months took away the illusory belief that we could have control of what will happen tomorrow.

"We don't want to give up, it's challenging, more than usual, that is for sure. But we have decided to still go ahead with our event, on the 4th of September."

The Rainbow Beach Community Centre Association have invested in the family friendly event, and while their costs may not cover it entirely, they are investing in the emotional wellbeing of the community.



The Lyrical is just one of the performers who are eager to bring music back to Rainbow Beach.

"We care about the artists that keep losing gigs, with it goes money to live, and self-esteem, our brave local small businesses have been negatively touched by the restrictions in the neighbouring Council areas. Our association is dedicated to the broader community.

"So, unless there is a sudden last-minute lockdown involving us, a sudden lockdown keeping our artists at home, we are standing strong," Ms Suel said.

The region is being encouraged to purchase a ticket to show support for the music industry, small businesses and workers who have strug-

gled under the pandemic.

"By simply purchasing a ticket, you are supporting the community and keeping us alive inside, you are supporting the music industry, many workers and their families, small business owners, services of all industries. You are saying yes to music, yes to wellbeing, yes to never giving up.

"Keep following the Rainbow Beach Spring Fest page to stay up to date. We want to make it happen. Prebook your tickets now to help us make our music festival more 'Covid Safe'."

## Stop that bus

Cooloola Coast residents will have more accessible bus stops, probably later this year.

And the good news for a cash strapped Gympie Regional Council is the new disability compliant stops - at Tin Can Bay, Cooloola Cove and Rainbow Beach - will not cost the council any money, despite an estimated construction cost of \$76,000.

The new hardstand bus stops will be fully funded by the state government's Passenger Transport Infrastructure Investment Program.

A staff report to councillors says Fund provides councils with money for improvements to bring infrastructure within Disability Discrimination Act.

They will be built, by the end of the current financial year, at the Rainbow Shores entrance in Clarkson Dve, outside the Kingfisher Caravan Park in Tin Can Bay Rd, Tin Can Bay, at Crab Creek in Toolara Rd and across the road from the Cooloola Cove Shopping Centre, in Nautilus Drive.

Works will include upgraded concrete hardstand surfaces and "associated infrastructure".

## Water supply goes swimmingly

After some relatively minor sewerage outfall quality issues recently, Gympie Regional Council water supply and sewerage services have received a "good work" grade in the council's latest self-assessed report card.

The salinity problems of sewerage outfall reported at Cooloola Coast were attributed to salt water leaking in to the system, rather than dangerous pollutants leaking out into the environment.

But the council's July report says things are going even better than that.

Compared to an annual target of 40 water main breaks a year, only two have been reported in July.

Microbial standards were met every day, compared to a 98 per cent target.

Sewer main breaks were more of a worry, with seven in July, compared to an annual target of 30.

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# Make your way to the Bay

By Billy Mitchell, Century 21 Platinum Agents

Just down the road from where I sit right now lies a picturesque part of the world that offers the rare combination of beauty, convenience, lifestyle, and affordability.

It's the kind of place where you can raise a family, escape from the big smoke on week-ends, or enjoy your golden years. It's a spot that feels a million miles away from it all, but it a stone's throw from major regional centres and just a few hours from a capital city.

In my view, Tin Can Bay is a special spot with a lot on offer – and it's not just me who thinks so.

**A hot spot for all**

The level of interest in Tin Can Bay has exploded in recent times, driven by a number of buyer types.

First, you've got the city slickers looking for a more relaxed way of life after enduring coronavirus for the better part of 18 months, looking to regions like ours that have been virtually untouched by the pandemic.

Secondly, there's been an uptick in those from further afield looking for a weekender that has the recreation and relaxation qualities of better-known holiday destinations in our region, without the tourist congestion and enormous price tags.

And last, but certainly not least, I'm hearing a lot from locals drawn by Tin Can Bay's slower pace of life.

They all want a place to call home that's tranquil but well-located near the services and amenities they want and need, from shopping to entertainment to lifestyle amenities, plus



they want somewhere not too far from the big smoke for when they venture back.

But most of all, they want somewhere visually stunning with an unparalleled natural beauty. No wonder Tin Can Bay is in such high demand.

**The fast facts**

The median house price in Tin Can Bay is an attractive \$405,000 and for units it's \$325,000, with data showing the beginning of an upward trend in values this year.

In January, the median for houses was

\$333,000 and for units it was \$315,000, so there's been quite a lot of upward pressure on prices thanks to demand far outstripping supply. It reflects what I've seen – strong buyer enquiry for this unique area.

Demographics here skew towards owner-occupiers, although there's a healthy rental market for investors comprising mostly families and older couples.

Locals will find much of what they need here, from supermarkets to specialty stores, dining, and entertainment.

Those who love being outdoors are spoilt for choice, with an array of recreational activities on offer, from boating and adventure sports to hiking.

But there's also an impressive 18-hole golf course as well as tennis courts and bowling greens.

The regional city of Gympie is only about 30 minutes down the road, so any services not available in Tin Can Bay are easily accessible, and Brisbane is about 220 kilometres to the south.

**A home for everyone**

The mix of housing in Tin Can Bay is healthy, with a range of different dwelling types to suit most budgets.

You've got older style shacks that have good bones but could use a bit of elbow grease to realise their full potential. You've got more modern brick family homes that offer plenty of room to grow, both inside and out. And you've got higher-end architectural-style marvels that come with all the mod cons a higher price tag ensures.

Block sizes here are quite generous so you never feel like you're cramped or closed in. Just the type of vibe you want in an area that's so beautiful.

Tin Can Bay is predominantly detached housing, although there are attached properties – duplexes, villas, and small unit blocks, mostly. They offer a budget option for those that want all the area offers but have a smaller budget to play with.

**Works ramp up on Gympie Bypass**

The Bruce Highway upgrade from Cooroy to Curra is one of Queensland's most important road projects, with a slew of benefits flowing from the \$1 billion overhaul.

It involves realignment and upgrade of a 62 kilometre-stretch of the highway, dubbed the Gympie Bypass, turning it into four lanes.

What this means for the entire Gympie region is a safer Bruce Highway that has greater capacity and a much lower risk of localised flooding.

But most importantly, it will see long-distance traffic separated from local road use to cut congestion and noise.

The improvements to our peaceful way of life can't be measured! And even though it's not super close to this upgrade action, Tin Can Bay will still benefit.

So, a more efficient and less impactful major roadway for the whole community, as well as a significant jobs and economic boost from the three-and-a-half-year construction period.

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# A home of great character

By Lee McCarthy

A house holds many stories and the home recently purchased at Nina Court, Cooloola Cove by Rainbow Beach Barber owners, Azza and Nikki, is a home chosen by people of great character.

Built in 2006, the four-bedroom, 2-bathroom 281 sq. home on 3443 sq. home sold in October 2019 for \$475,000 to its last owners Rob and Gaylene.

The property boasted Executive Living Meets Coastal Lifestyle, well-presented both inside and out. A functional modern styled home for anyone who wants a sense of space, tranquility, and privacy.

It was sold again on 31 March 2021 for \$680,000 by Century 21 Cooloola Cove and made headlines as the biggest sale ever in Cooloola Cove beating the previous highest sale by \$65k.

The stunning home in a quiet cul-de-sac was bought for \$475k by the previous owners and they spent almost \$200k renovating and renewing the home after purchase as it was to be their forever home.

Sadly, due to ill health Rob and Gaylene had to move closer to specialists but the good news is, it was bought by people who also love it.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Rob and Gaylene before they sold. They invited me warmly into their home, where Rob introduced me to their family dog and showed off new work completed on the home, including the addition of a resort style pool, major structural work and extensive landscaping.

Rob's story is fascinating. After completing a health administration course at QUT Rob moved into executive roles within the health industry for Ramsay Health, where he spent most of his career. His first appointment was at Pindara Private Hospital streamlining the hospital, increasing profits, recruiting good specialists, and developing the business side for Ramsay.



Robert Glynn, former Nina Court home owner and author of Jock the German Shepherd.

He moved to AlburyWodonga in 1988 as the head of business development at the Nedlands Hollywood hospital. He negotiated the sale and rebuilt the hospital again bringing in specialists and increasing profit and usage.

Moving on to Greenslopes, a Department of Veteran Affairs hospital where he stayed for seven years where, at the time, the only place Veterans could go for treatment.

He was offered a job with a Hong Kong based company and headed up the build of an international hospital there. He has worked in

Abu Dhabi, Canberra, and CEO of hospitals in five countries.

At the time Ramsay Health had 400 facilities with 70 in Australia, 33 in the UK and 150 in France and he returned to become a non-executive director to steer the company.

In 2006-2007 he worked at Buderim Private Hospital and re-joined Ramsay to head up their Asian Business Development in China and Asia, then Macquarie Hospital in Sydney and resigned to spend time with family.

Rob said he and Gaylene had loved the area



The Nina Court home.

and it was hard to imagine living anywhere else but due to his diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease, they were left with no choice.

Rob is also the author of three very cleverly written and illustrated children's Christmas books whose characters are based on his family and are set in Tin Can Bay.

It is sad when good people who embrace the region and seek to find the good in it, have to leave. We wish them both the very best and wish Azza and Nikki the best of luck in their new home and business.

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# Quilts of Valour presented

By Lee McCarthy

The Rainbow Beach RSL Sub-Branch held a moving service last week to commemorate Veterans Day and remember the sacrifices and service of all Australians who served their Country during Peace, Peacekeeping Missions and War.

After the service, four Quilts of Valour were presented to previous President Joe Casey (Army), Barry Hogan (RAAF), Bruce Dorman's widow Pam (Army) and current President Greg Walker (RAAF).

It is an honour to receive a Quilt of Valour and there are many moving stories of gratitude from recipients. On the back of all the quilts there is a badge - 'Wrapped in love by Australians'.

The quilts were presented by Cr Dolly Jensen along with a speech of thanks:

"We award this quilt to you to acknowledge your Valour, Service and Sacrifice for our country. The quilt has been made with love for you by your sisters and mother to wrap you in warmth and care. The top of the quilt represents the communities and the many individuals we are. The wadding, the filler, is the centre of the quilt - it's warmth. It represents our hope that this quilt will bring warmth, comfort, peace, and healing to you. The backing is the strength that supports the other layers. It represents your strength, the support of communities, and our nation. Each stitch that holds the layers together represents love, gratitude and sometimes the tears of the maker."

"The Quilt makes such a difference to people to be acknowledged. To date there have been 3000 quilts - all donated for the veterans," Queensland Coordinator of Quilts of Valour, Barbara Kenny said.



Joe Casey and Barry Hogan receiving their Quilts of Valour from Cr Dolly Jensen.



Pam Dorman receiving the Quilt on behalf of her late husband Bruce Dorman with son Martin and Jen Imhoff.



Quilts of Valour Qld Co-ordinator Barbara Kenny with Nathan, Jen Imhoff, Pam Dorman, President Gary Walker and Cr Dolly Jensen.



Cr Dolly Jensen speaking at the Vietnam Veterans service.



Rainbow Beach RSL President Greg Walker.



## PHOTO COMPETITION FOR OUR 91.5FM CELEBRATION CALENDAR

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# Boffins find fens unique

By Lee McCarthy

I took a helicopter ride over Rainbow Beach recently with Rainbow Beach Helicopters and pilot Glen Cruikshank pointed out fauna, flora and landmarks.

Besides turtles, dugong and water features, he pointed out the 'Fens' and said they were rare to the southern hemisphere.

I contacted Lindy from Cooloola Coastcare who said Mike West was the person to help and here is his comprehensive explanation of our Patterned Fens.

"Patterned Fens only came to light during a flight over K'gari (Fraser Island) following a RAMSAR conference trip to Lady Elliot Island in 1996.

"International wetland scientists on that trip could not believe their eye's as patterned fens were previously only known in areas of high latitude and high altitude like Tundra. Yet there they were just above high tide and almost in the tropics!

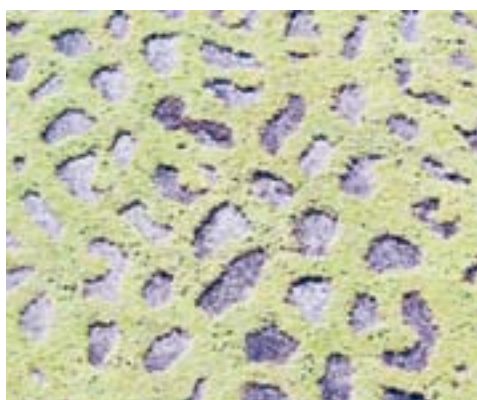
"A scientific study was put together and Richard Lindsay came from the UK to lead it. As a long-time Great Sandy conservationist, I went along as a volunteer.

"The first expedition began at Rainbow Beach and continued onto K'gari. We met at the QPWS at Rainbow Beach and looked at a map that had "dangerous bogs" marked on it. Where were we going? The largest fen is near Carlo Point, with others between the Rainbow Beach Road and the Tin Can Bay Inlet.

"It turns out they are not dangerous, but they are tricky to navigate. They are not bogs, they are Patterned Fens, and are truly unique.

"The dominant vegetation is Empodisma minus, wire rush. The name means Tanglefoot – well named. It was first described in Australia in 1974. The mature "forest" of wire rush makes a wonderful "beanbag" to sit while having smoko.

"The scientists had thought that patterned



Close up of the Patterned Fens. Supplied by Rainbow Beach Helicopters.

fens were formed by ice and snow freezing and thawing. The Great Sandy patterns look identical to the northern hemisphere ones, but they certainly have nothing to do with melting ice.

"Another surprise for the scientists was the "leopard spot" patterns that only occur in bogs in the northern hemisphere, are actually in fens here. The other patterned fens are called String Fens, which look like a "leopard" has been dragged backwards and its claws form the patterns.

"Yet another surprise is the water actually flows through the walls of the ridges rather than along them. Our fens are extremely resistant to fire, virtually all the vegetation can be consumed leaving only the ponds and bare ridges and it will recover.

"How the wildlife handles this is unknown. While there are not a lot of species in the fens there are surprises. One night we set 50 traps and caught over 30 native rodents from three different species. Surprisingly large crayfish live in the ponds which are highly acidic, they burrow down during fires. Fish and frogs are also found there. How they survive is yet unknown."



The rare Patterned Fens found in the Cooloola Coast viewed from the air.

According to Richard Lindsay the Patterned Fens of Fraser Island and Cooloola are globally unique. They are the only sub-tropical patterned fens and the only fens flowing into tidal

wetlands in the world and they have distinctive faunal inhabitants such as fish, crayfish and earthworms that would not normally be found in such acid environments.

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Martine Lokan from Village Food and Events spent two days cooking to make enough goodies for everyone.



Jonah from Traditional German Sausages with a tray of fresh pretzels

# Covid-safe at the market

By Lee McCarthy

A stunning day for the Rainbow Beach markets last week with quality stalls, entertainment by Andrew Copland and people happy to enjoy the freedom of a simple day out.

Locals and visitors came out to play with Covid measures in place with instructions to be Covid safe, not to touch items unless buying, keep your physical distance and QR codes were prominent for scanning in.

The markets are held on the second Saturday of each month at the 'Centre Block' from 7am till midday and raise funds for the Rainbow Beach Community Centre run by volunteers.

The Tin Can Bay markets are held at the RSL Hall on the third Saturday of each month from 7am to noon and include homemade, home-grown products, food stalls, plants, bric-a-brac.



Organiser of the Rainbow Beach markets, volunteer Megan Dahl with popular candle and flower supplier Kelly Fredline



Sarah Booth with her natural products and Rainbow Beach Learn to Surf Clothing Brand



Andrew Copland provided beautiful music to entertain market guests



Carolyn Simpson - Occasions by Carolyn Celebrant



Locals Marcia Ireland with stall holder Andrea Hayes



Brooke and John from Maryborough Coffee Cart were very popular as always

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Pete with owner Tzar from Sumavi Luxe Turkish Towels.



Beverley Jones of Tin Can Bay with her stunning knitted and crochet work.

# Sunny skies for markets

By Lee McCarthy

It doesn't have to be a perfect day to hold a market, but it does help to draw the crowds and keeps the talented stallholders and visitors smiling.

Handmade goods are now more sought after than ever, and quality seamstresses, knitters and artisans are enjoying a resurgence of their talents.

Their popularity was obvious at the Tin Can Bay markets last Saturday with a huge number of stallholders proudly showing off their unique and intricate handiwork.

Here is just a little snapshot of the artisans:

Beverley Jones showed off her array of beautiful knitted and crocheted tea cosies, rugs, beanies, and patrons stopped to admire her beautiful work.

Mary Boyd always looks bright and happy to be at any of the markets she sets up at and her unique artwork is also colourful. Mary, originally from Scotland, also offers card readings and enters her art into the art shows in the region.

Shirley Doyle from Gympie is based inside the RSL hall and shows off her quality handbags and gifts which she has makes from scratch and is proud to show off.

Lynette Dimmock of Net Rae Art can be spotted at a lot of markets around the region and is seeing a huge increase in her commissions since she has been showing her work. Beautiful seascapes of Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay are her specialty, and her work is hung in many homes across the country and overseas.

Brett Thompson from Bleet Art loves the markets at Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay and his vibrant home decor is not only beautiful



Maz from Vibrant Earth Clothing and Accessories.

but practical. He is another business owner who loves showing his beachy products and gets a lot of enjoyment from meeting people.

Volunteers from the Tin Can Bay Fishing Club Gavin Hay, Beverley Chaplin, Debbie George and current President Jim George are

regularly at the markets with their lucky number stand. Jim is stepping down as President at the AGM on 3 October and the club is looking for new office bearers. If you have some time and love fishing, see the report in the fishing section of this paper.



Mary Boyd with her colourful designs and readings.

Take a wander to Tin Can Bay on the third Saturday of the month. Make a day of it with the early morning dolphin feeding, then on to the RSL hall and grounds for the market from 7am to 12 noon and finish just in time to grab a bite at one of the great cafes in the region.

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# Sport



## Sign up to be a Nipper

In exciting news, the Rainbow Beach nipper season is fast approaching, and it is thanks to all the volunteers who have put their hand up and made this possible.

According to Surf Life Saving Queensland, if you're thinking of introducing your child to lifesaving, then Junior Activities (Nippers) is for you. Junior Activities is open to children from age five up to 13 years (age for a season is calculated as of midnight 30 September).

Lifesaving is something for the whole family to get involved in and there are many supporting roles that you can play as a parent of a child involved in Junior Activities.

Surf lifesaving is an amazing activity for growing a child's confidence, knowledge, and skills in the beach environment. Not only will your child have fun and meet new friends they will become part of an iconic organisation that has served the Australian community for over 100 years.

The program is focused on play, participation, and fun. It offers an educational pathway through the delivery of the Junior Development Resource Kit which is designed to en-



sure children have fun at the beach while participating in lessons that will develop them to become a knowledgeable participant in both lifesaving and sport.

As they progress through the various age groups, nippers will undergo lessons in wading, running, swimming, board paddling and lifesaving skills including working towards resuscitation and first aid. Practicing these skills allows children to compete in club, regional and state surf lifesaving carnivals rep-

resenting their clubs.

The Rainbow Beach club is full of great leaders who will guide your children through this unforgettable time of their lives.

Membership prices are Family - \$170; Junior/Nipper - \$55 and Associate - \$75. Nippers is on every Sunday morning from 8.15am for approximately two hours.

Please email [surf@rainbowbeachsurf.com.au](mailto:surf@rainbowbeachsurf.com.au) for further information.



## Train to become a life saver

The Rainbow Beach Surf Club will be holding their Bronze and Surf Rescue Certificate week-long camp this coming school holidays.

It will run from 26 September to 3 October.

The week-long course is available to anyone looking to join a great lifesaving team! You can live in our surf club or in your own accommodation.

### To commence training for the Bronze Medallion you will need to:

- Be a financial member of an SLS club.
- Be at least 15 years of age on the final assessment date.
- Complete an unaided swim of 400 m in 9 minutes or less (goggles and masks permitted) in a swimming pool of not less than 25 m, or over a measured open water course which will be observed prior to you undertaking any water training or assessment

activities.

Not only is it an opportunity to be involved in something dynamic, but you will also find a group of people from all walks of life enjoying giving back to the community.

The Bronze Medallion course provides participants with the skills and knowledge to be able to become a Surf Life Saver and patrol the beach.

It is just one of the many ways you can get involved as a Surf Life Saving volunteer. Surf Life Saving has opportunities for people to be an active patrol member saving lives on the beach, an age manager for Nippers on the weekend or as a volunteer club official working behind the scenes to ensure things run smoothly.

For more information contact our administration on 07 5486 3249 or [surf@rainbowbeachsurf.com.au](mailto:surf@rainbowbeachsurf.com.au)



2020 bronze camp members receiving their patrol gear.



# Fishing

## Cooloola Coast



Ron Cox from Tin Can Bay Fishing Club.

# Training workshop popular

Cooloola Coast Today is thrilled to be able to share the Tin Can Bay Fishing Club News each month. President Joe George said the club's training day workshop recently was well attended.

"These workshops will now be held regularly to assist members with the information and knowledge needed to safely operate their vessels in our creeks and waterways. The workshops are followed by a barbeque," he said.

"Guest speaker QF17 Commander of Coast Guard Tin Can Bay, John MacFarlane spoke about the many rescues and assistance provided by Coast Guard volunteers day and night. He wanted to remind recreational fishermen and the boating public that they can apply for a Coast Guard Marine Assist Package to assist them to be towed back to their base following a breakdown."

**Report for August**

With the cooler months now behind us the

prospect of getting out on the water early in the morning to take advantage of the bite times to coincide with an early morning tide change is not as hard to cope with especially for those of us who were born in the middle of last century.

Flathead have been caught consistently of late and are worth targeting by casting soft plastics and small hard bodied lures. Around low tide, the small gutters that drain out to the channels and creeks are a worthwhile area to target and around high tide on the top of the sand banks can be productive. Trolling small hard bodied lures along the drop offs can also be productive for those not wanting to expend the energy casting.

Quality Summer whiting are beginning to school up possibly for spawning and are being caught in increasing numbers. Yabbies and beach worms are getting good results. Small black soldier crabs are a worthwhile op-

tion as they are a natural food for whiting and bream. The periods with more run in the tide over the sand banks can be a good time and place to target whiting as their natural food is being dislodged by the current shifting the sand.

Squid are a bit hit and miss and sometimes a bit of searching their usual haunts is required to find where they are on the day. There are quite a few cuttlefish around and are good eating if you can cope with their seemingly never-ending ink supply.

The inside reefs are a bit slow with only a few quality fish being caught. The reefs are still worth a try if the neap tides and good weather correspond.

The traditional theory that the months without an R in them are no good for mud crabs seems to not hold true as some quality crabs have been caught recently. Some people

have their theories about the activity and the quality of mud crabs in relation to the moon phases but getting the pots in the water is the most likely approach to get results.

Winner of the Club June mini fishing comp was Ian Nowell with a cracking Red Emperor at 89 cm for 222.5 points.

Winner of the July mini comp was Selwyn Potter with a flathead 52 cm that was caught on a soft plastic for 137.28 points.

In view of the happenings in large parts of our country, it could be a good idea to take advantage of the periods of good weather and get out on the water while we can.

There is always something interesting to see if you look, even if the piscatorial creatures don't cooperate.

New club members are always very welcome, and all enquiries may be made to the Secretary on 0437 242 171 or email: [tcbfishingclub@bigpond.com](mailto:tcbfishingclub@bigpond.com)

## Hanging 10 at Double

Rain, hail or shine, our stunning coastline has plenty to offer for the keen salt-water lovers that need their fix. LEE McCARTHY captured some impressive images of some local surfers getting some waves in at Double Island.



Leigh surfing at Double.



Leigh and Amanda.



# Fishing

## Cooloola Coast



Dom Long With a ripper of an open season Snapper.



Judy on board Keely Rose getting it done with a quality snapper.

# On the chew in Tin Can Bay

By Chris Rippon, The Chandlery

G'day Crew, hope everyone has been making the most of this awesome run of weather we have been having the last couple of weeks. I'm loving the heat the sun is starting to bring to the mornings!

Let's have a quick look at what has been getting caught the last couple of weeks in The Bay and up the straits.

I guess the talk amongst most fishos is that the snapper and pearlies are back on the take list of species. To say the weather played the game was an understatement! Light winds and small swell made for a cracker of an opening day. Plenty of the smaller boats managed to venture out over the Wide Bay Bar and bag a feed with reports of good fishing coming in from as close as 4/5nm off Rainbow Beach.

Fresh squid and strip baits fished on a double snelled hook rig with light ball sinker worked a treat! The lure fishos weren't to go without either, the slow pith jig proved deadly on the snapper and pearlies just can't resist a small micro jig with a bit of tinsel hanging off the hooks.

Soft plastics like the 5 and 7" Gulp jerk shads or Squidgy Wrigglers rigged on a light jighead can be a killer combo also. Try the old "Rodney Rod Holder" trick & cast a soft plastic well ahead of your drift or out the back if you are at anchor and let it waft slowly down the water column, park the rod in a rod holder and let nature do the rest.

Nine out of ten times I bet the lure will not even get down to the seabed and a snapper will nail it on the drop. Just remember to either back your drag off a little so you don't damage

your rod or engage the baitrunner feature if you are using a baitrunner style reel.

Up the creeks a few early season mangrove jacks have been getting around as the water temp starts to increase. Bream have been biting well and floating strips of mullet and peeled prawns back into the snags has been producing good fish. Mixed in with the bream have been some good catches of cods, grunter and a few jacks.

Plenty of good whiting have been getting around also with Ida and Pannikin Is holding good fish on the flood tides. Live yabbies and fresh beach worms working the best for them. There have been some great catches of flat-head at the creek mouths on the flood also.

The standout lure of choice here would have to be the Nomad Vertrex Vibes, with the

75mm in Hot Pink being the winner. But a very close second would have to be the Squidgy 100mm Bloodworm Wiggler, a true tried and tested favorite with customers & a go to soft plastic for myself. I've always said, "if in doubt chuck a Bloodworm Wiggler out!!"

On that note, just to let everyone know, The Chandlery Bait & Tackle is now a Shimano stockist! So, if you want to see some of the latest fishing tackle pop down and say G'day. You can find us on Emperor St out the front of the Tin Can Bay Marina, just look for the 4 big white sheds.

Well, that's about enough from me this week till net time.

Tight Lines, Chris

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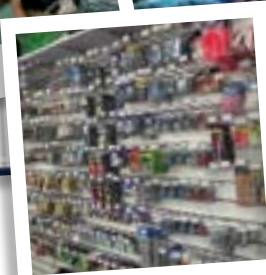
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