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**New council column**  
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\$3.00 Inc. GST 9 772652 667009

ISSN 2652-6670



## Spring is in the air

Those who attended the inaugural 2021 Rainbow Beach Spring Fest are the grinners this week after an exceptional event on Saturday night. The joy of being able to enjoy such a quality event was only surpassed by

the professional, talented, and inspiring presence of Aspy Jones, The Lyrical, Fitzy and Cara and OKA.

**STORY AND PICTURES,**  
**PAGES 14-15**

OKA fans and locals Kelli England with Renee Zaks of Spirit of Rainbow loved the event.

## Kingi killer's parole bid

A report of possible parole for convicted sex murderer Barrie John Watts has brought back traumatic memories of the near-Gympie region's most sadistic crime, the brutal murder of Noosa schoolgirl Sian Kingi.

It was a crime solved with the help of determined police work by now-deceased Tin Can Bay resident, retired superintendent Alan Bourke.

In 1987, Alan Bourke was a detective involved with investigating the crime, one which damaged everyone with any link to it, especially her family and friends, but also jurors and the police.

**STORY PAGE 2**

## Tackling beach hoon problem

With major concerns about hooning at Tee-wah, the Rainbow Chamber committee invited Officer in Charge Tin Can Bay Police, Sergeant Mick Bazzo to attend the August meeting.

He explained the best way to help with hooning at Tee-wah is to video or photograph the offenders and upload to Policelink.

He urged people not to put themselves into danger but said the offenders could be found and fined if photographed. He also urged anyone to call 000 for accidents or critical incident.

**STORY PAGE 7**

# Driven to despair

**By Arthur Gorrie**

Trawler operators are suffering worsening mental health issues, some in danger of suicide, because of ongoing state government antagonism, Queensland Seafood Industry Association director and treasurer, Kev Reibel said on Monday.

The Tin Can Bay based trawler operator said seemingly endless meetings with govern-

ment officials had achieved nothing, because "the government just isn't listening".

He said many hours of consultation with government managers and conservation interests had not resulted in any changes to the new Sustainable Fisheries legislation.

"We've been fighting a retreat for 40 years, but the minister (Mark Furner) isn't listening. He says 'Blame (former LNP premier) Camp-

bell Newman. He started it with the MRAG report (prepared by sustainable fisheries consultancy MRAG Asia Pacific)."

But Mr Reibel, a member of the government's Trawler Advisory Group, says the government has "cherry picked" the MRAG report, leaving out recommendations which would have helped fishers.

"The whole report, as written, would prob-

ably cause some pain, but some gain too. Now there's no gain and a lot of pain, with a lot more to come," he said.

"It's got to the stage now where people are just walking away from the Trawler Advisory Group.

"They're not listening to us, why would we waste our time."

**STORY PAGE 3**

**RAINBOW BEACH**  
**HORSE RIDES**

The awards speak for themselves

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Nobody wants shortages of food or timber, or even price rises.

And few of us relish eating imported fish, even if cheaper, while surrounded by one of the best and most productive fish resources in the world. At the same time, nobody wants to see this resource depleted, or the environment damaged in our increasingly impacted marine and estuarine environments.

But fishers in state controlled waters do seem to have suffered unfairly over the years, under various governments. And the environmental damage is not all done by fishers.

Like taxi drivers who bought their licences (for something like the price of a house in Brisbane) suddenly finding their industry de-regulated and their licences worthless, fishers are finding the value of their investments and hard work disappearing fast. In the case of the fishers though, it is heavier regulation rather than de-regulation which is destroying lives and hopes. The rugged individual is out of fashion in the organisation society, particularly it seems in government organisations.

Sometimes it seems process and administration have become more important than actually producing something.

Regulatory straight jackets seem to have been fitted too tightly in some industries, causing them to disappear rather than adapt. On the land, we have the apparent failure through lack of interest of ageing state government plans to develop native hardwood timber farming, to replace state forests given over to the conservation estate. A notable exception is the softwood farming which has been so successful over much of the near-Colooloa Coast hinterland.

- Arthur Gorrie



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Advertising Bookings Friday 3pm
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Published by Gympie Today Pty Ltd ACN 642 169 891.
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Killer's parole bid

By Arthur Gorrie

A report of possible parole for convicted sex murderer Barrie John Watts has brought back traumatic memories of the near-Gympie region's most sadistic crime, the brutal murder of Noosa schoolgirl Sian Kingi.

It was a crime solved with the help of determined police work by now-deceased Tin Can Bay resident, retired superintendent Alan Bourke.

In 1987, Alan Bourke was a detective involved with investigating the crime, one which damaged everyone with any link to it, especially her family and friends, but also jurors and the police.

Driven by the horrific details of her kidnapping, rape and murder, police tracked down the killers, Barrie John Watts and Valmae Faye Beck, despite an almost complete lack of clues.

On her own admission, Beck, who died still a prisoner in Townsville Hospital, helped trick the 12-year-old Sian Kingi into leaving her bicycle, ostensibly to help them find a lost dog.

Her worried parents found the bicycle and took it to police

Alan Bourke was the backroom worker who followed the trail, starting with information about a man behaving strangely in a beach car park near Noosa.

A man provided a vehicle description, a white Holden, and a registration number.



Murdered Noosa schoolgirl Sian Kingi.

The number was not quite accurate, but was close enough to narrow down the list of vehicles police wanted to know about.

The vehicle description aligned with information involving attempts to lure potential victims in other places.

Beck told police Watts had an obsessive and recurring rape fantasy.

She cooperated in making it real because of her own emotional dependence on Watts.

In November 1987, two Ipswich Hospital nurses had narrow escapes after Beck and Watts approached them in separate but consecutive incidents, as they were leaving work.

The approaches were abandoned when Beck and Watts deemed their intended victims

too hard to target.

In another incident soon afterwards, a woman was abducted at knifepoint, also near Ipswich, but managed to disarm Watts.

Their next victim, Sian Kingi, was not so fortunate.

After media exposure of her disappearance, witnesses came forward to describe the man seen behaving strangely in the beach car park.

One of those witnesses was able to provide the almost accurate registration number, which helped narrow down the number of vehicles matching the description they had been given.

Combined with information from the earlier would-be abductions, it came down to one vehicle, registered to Beck and Watts.

By then, Sian Kingi's body had been found in state forest near Cooroy.

Tracked down to a rented property near Ipswich, the couple had fled. But the property agent said rent had been sent from a New South Wales town, where they were arrested.

Before his death, caused by a worsening heart condition, Mr Bourke told me how the case had haunted him, a rape and murder in daylight in a park in the middle of Noosa, with no witnesses.

But police could not be everywhere, he said. Mr Bourke later retired from his senior Gympie police duties to live at Tin Can Bay.

CARTOON



LENSCAPE



Teewah Beach/ Double Island Point back in the late 1970s. Colin Braithwaite posted this awesome image on Facebook with the caption "we came through on the Rainbow Beach to Freshwater Track and camped at Freshwater before hitting the beach to go home." We love seeing images like this, if you have one you'd love to share, email us atnewsdesk@gympietoday.com.au

Big fines for illegal mangrove clearing

By Rose Astley

Residents in the Wide Bay area are being reminded of the tough penalties involved with clearing and destroying marine plants after a Maryborough man has been fined \$25,000 in the Maryborough Magistrates Court.

The man pleaded guilty to destroying marine plants and conducting unauthorised works in a declared Fish Habitat Area at Kalah Creek, north of Poona.

Member for Maryborough Bruce Saunders said this was a significant penalty and served as a warning to anybody else interfering with protected marine vegetation.

"The defendant had previously been cautioned by the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) over similar activities," Mr Saunders said.

"After receiving a further complaint, QBFP executed a search warrant on the property and also engaged a Queensland Government botanist to help assess the damage.

"The Magistrate agreed that the defendant's actions were cavalier and found that the offending was serious and the works were significant.

"An Enforcement Order to restore the damaged mangroves was also issued by the Court."

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities Mark Furner said damaging important marine plants is unacceptable and



A hefty reminder for coastal dwellers in the Wide Bay after a Maryborough man was fined \$25,000 for destroying marine plants. Picture: Pixabay

anybody found in breach of Queensland's laws will be prosecuted.

"These are important environments for fish breeding and damaging these plants can im-

pact on our fish stocks," Mr Furner said.

"Anyone aware of damage to marine plants should contact the Fishwatch Hotline on 1800 017 116."



# Driven to self harm

By Arthur Gorrie

Trawler operators are suffering worsening mental health issues, some in danger of suicide, because of ongoing state government antagonism, Queensland Seafood Industry Association director and treasurer, Kev Reibel said on Monday.

The Tin Can Bay based trawler operator said seemingly endless meetings with government officials had achieved nothing, because "the government just isn't listening."

He said many hours of consultation with government managers and conservation interests had not resulted in any changes to the new Sustainable Fisheries legislation.

"We've been fighting a retreat for 40 years, but the minister (Mark Furner) isn't listening. He says 'Blame (former LNP premier) Campbell Newman. He started it with the MRAG report (prepared by sustainable fisheries consultancy MRAG Asia Pacific)."

But Mr Reibel, a member of the government's Trawler Advisory Group, says the government has "cherry picked" the MRAG report, leaving out recommendations which would have helped fishers.

"The whole report, as written, would probably cause some pain, but some gain too.

"Now there's no gain and a lot of pain, with a lot more to come," he said.

"It's got to the stage now where people are just walking away from the Trawler Advisory Group. They're not listening to us, why would we waste our time.

The WWF and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority sit on the board too and they blame the industry for everything.

"Even the reef damage most people think was caused by the dredging of Gladstone Harbour is blamed on us.

"We ask about the dredging, which you would think they would be concerned about and they say no, it's too much fishing pressure.

"But I believe it's the dredging that's caused the biggest part of the stock demise."

"One of our members has been very distressed. He's not illiterate, but he is not good (at administration) and they've driven him to the limit with monitoring requirements.

"Back in 1988 we log booked the total hours trawled and the catch.

"Now we have to list it by species and grade as well, with start and stop times for each trawler shot (gear on the bottom time) every night.

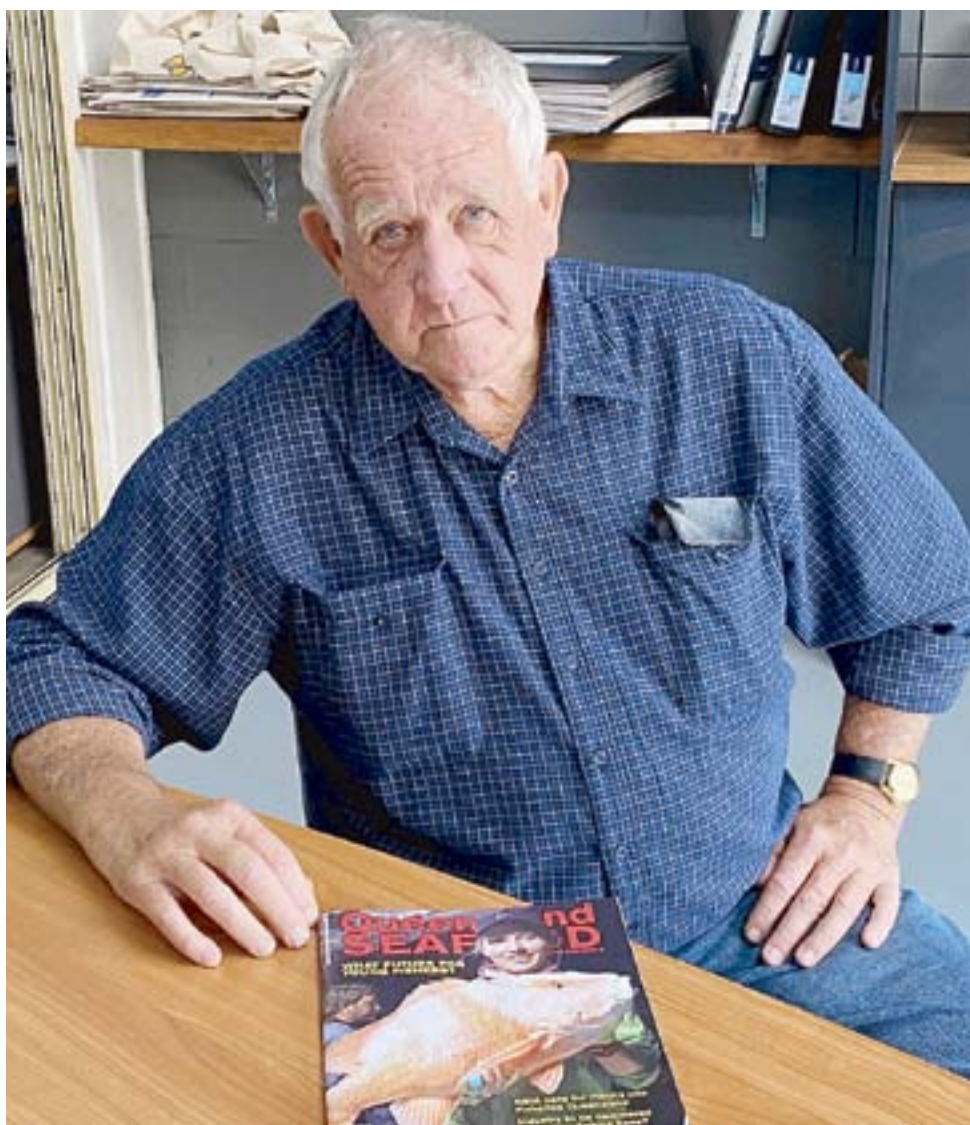
"We have to count and weigh all sandcrabs and bugs and record all sales, but that doesn't help anyone.

"There is no benefit for the government, the industry, fishing or the environment," he said.

**'Hundreds on the scrap heap' under fishing reforms**

QSI CEO Eric Perez said the new law would be a tragedy for individuals and the industry, with hundreds of commercial fishers set to be forced out of the industry.

"These are changes that bring to fruition the disdain held by the government for Queensland commercial fishing and near total ignorance of what food production looks like.



Queensland Seafood Industry Association board member and Tin Can Bay-based fisherman Kev Reibel.

"Marine parks closures, commercial-free fishing areas and increasing regulatory costs have led us to the state government's less than stellar fisheries policy agenda," Mr Perez said.

Writing in the industry magazine Queensland Seafood, Mr Perez said numbers of active fishers had declined dramatically in the face of government hostility.

East Coast and Gulf net fishers had declined 52 per cent and line fishers by 47 per cent, the crab fishery had lost 27 per cent of its fishers, the trawl fishing industry had declined 68 per cent and there had been a total reduction over 30 years of 51 per cent of active commercial fishers, he said.

He said hundreds of commercial fishers would be forced to exit the industry, with no financial assistance "as a direct result of the government reforms."

"There is no mechanism under the fisheries reforms to provide training or re-skilling to impacted commercial fishers or land-based post-harvest workers.

"Then there are stranded assets.

"Commercial fishers face the prospect of

having millions of dollars in stranded assets that will have little or no resale value.

"No regulatory impact statement has been undertaken and, as a result, industry impacts have not been considered."

Mr Perez said the changes would increase seafood imports as quota-managed fisheries caps impact the ability of commercial fishers to work.

"And they will limit our ability to provide public access to seafood from our waters.

"This industry has been subject to unacceptably poor fisheries policy development and the management of Fisheries Queensland needs to be held accountable."

The reforms would cause "significant" avoidable stress.

He said a petition to parliament would state that the seafood catching sector had lost confidence in fisheries management, based on potential loss of access to marine resources."

Petition forms are available from Mr Perez on 0417 631 353.

More, page 17.



Plenty of fish for the future and for everyone is the aim of new fishing laws according to minister Mark Furner.

## Protection promise

By Arthur Gorrie

Fisheries minister Mark Furner has rejected complaints from some Cooloola Coast commercial fishers, who say new government rules are destroying their industry and those involved in it.

Mr Furner said the government's Sustainable Fisheries Strategy was a response to extensive public consultation and incorporated the responses of industry and consumer interests.

It would "guarantee jobs and ensure a sustainable fishery for our children and grandchildren into the future.

"The strategy is about ensuring the sector continues to keep employing people while also allowing commercial, recreational, charter and traditional fishers to keep on taking fish.

"It supports sustainable supplies of fresh fish to Queensland and the world," he said.

He was responding to claims by Gympie MP Tony Perrett that government policies would mean higher fish prices and would "put many operators out of business."

Mr Perrett said the government "could not answer whether any analysis had been completed on the mental health effects this would have."

Mr Furner said thousands of fishers and Queenslanders generally had made submissions to government reviews and "the overwhelming message was that stakeholders wanted reform in the way fisheries are managed."

"From 1 September, 13 new fishery harvest strategies commenced," Mr Furner told parliament last week.

"Crab, trawl and east coast inshore fisheries are (now) divided into new management regions. In those fisheries new quota units are created so the catch of priority species can be controlled directly.

"We will protect our fisheries so they are sustainable for our children and grandchildren," he said.

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Gympie Regional Division 1 Councillor **JESS MILNE** will keep Cooloola Coast Today readers up to date with council issues as a regular contributor. This is her first column.

# Good planning is the key

Spring would have to be my favourite season, especially on the Cooloola Coast. Warming weather giving perfect days to enjoy the wonderful wildflowers while being serenaded by birds busy in breeding season. September is also Biodiversity Month which is held annually to highlight the importance of protecting, conserving and improving biodiversity.

I like to reflect on the efforts of Kathleen McArthur who, along with Judith Wright, were drivers of a campaign to ensure the Cooloola area was protected that saw the establishment of the Cooloola National Park (which is now part of the Great Sandy National Park) because it was the foresight of people past that have given us our beautiful backyard!

Strategic planning for the future is part of my role that I am passionate about because it is the actions of today that affect the progress of tomorrow. The Gympie Regional Council Corporate Plan is the lead planning document that is the driver of Councils fundamental decision making, annual budget and operational planning while providing the development basis for Councils strategies, plans and policies.

Council has begun the process of renewing this vital document and part of the process must include community engagement. Dates are yet to be determined however I urge everyone to keep an eye out for notices because this document sets the direction of Council for the next five years so your feedback is important.

Rate notices have been issued and if you need extra time to pay then please contact Council before the due date to enter into a payment plan. You will still receive some discount and also not go into arrears which may incur interest. If possible, make regular instalments throughout the year as this spreads the total amount into smaller payments. Also, if



Gympie Regional Division 1 Councillor Jess Milne.

you want to go paperless, send your rates reference number to [rates@gympie.qld.gov.au](mailto:rates@gympie.qld.gov.au) with a request to change your rates notification to digital only. Your rates notice is also valid for two free trees from Cooloola City Farm nursery, just present your paid rates notice to receive a couple of native tube stock to add to your garden.

Did you know that all public toilet facilities

have their own unique number? It is located at the front of the facility and can be used to easily identify the building while reporting damage, faults or if urgent servicing is required. If amenities are not up to expected standard then please send as much information as possible such as date, time and any relevant photos to Council to assist staff in determining appropriate action to be taken.

Water storage in Rainbow Beach has a shiny new top from the completed water reservoir roof replacement project which included a new corrosion resistant roof and old ladder replaced by a new staircase to provide safer access for maintenance activities. The project was funded by the Qld Government program Works for Qld.

The Cooloola Revitalisation Project pathway upgrades in Cooloola Cove and Tin Can Bay have been mostly completed. The tender has been awarded for the Cod St to Norman Point boardwalk section, just awaiting construction. Funding for the whole \$3.8M project has been state funding from Building Our Regions \$2,766,800, TMR Cycle Grant \$150,000 and Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme \$309,900 with a Council contribution of \$534,000.

Billabong Park skate facility has had additional works to resolve site drainage issues as well as general waste and recycling bins installed.

Snapper Creek Rd received stormwater drainage rehabilitation including the removal and PVC replacement of damaged concrete pipes, road restoration and line marking.

If you have any enquiries, concerns, or suggestions you can contact Council by using the online requests portal on the Gympie Regional Council website in the Contact Us section located in the top right-hand corner of the homepage.

Alternately, you can email [council@gympie.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@gympie.qld.gov.au), phone one of the helpful customer service officers on 1300 307 800, use the SnapSendSolve app or by sending via messenger on the Gympie Regional Council Facebook page.



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The view is restored.

## We can again see the sea

**By Lee McCarthy**

How wonderful to see the view again from the viewing platform near the propellor. One of the most popular look out spots in Rainbow Beach is once again usable to see the beach from Double Island Point to Fraser Island.

On a clear day there is no better view in Australia and is so appreciated by locals and visitors alike.

Gympie Regional Council said: "What may seem like a simple pruning job has presented a few challenges for our parks team over the last few weeks.

"This is part of council's work at Lawrie Hanson and Phil Rogers Parks in Rainbow

Beach to open up the view of our beautiful beachline."

**The works have included:**

- Reducing the height of existing cotton trees.
- Laying mulch to improve soil conditions
- Trimming deadwood from the Casuarina trees.
- Planting some ground cover to improve the ground stability and lessen the risk of erosion.
- Extending the timber fence to provide a safety barrier.

The locals thank the council and hope it doesn't grow so high next time.



# Coast lacks a health plan

By Arthur Gorrie

Cooloola Coast residents need at least a plan to deliver regional health services to a booming and ageing population, Gympie MP Tony Perrett has told state parliament.

Mr Perrett said the plan would need to include transport home for patients forced to attend medical facilities at the Sunshine Coast, especially if they are discharged late at night.

Coast residents, who had already travelled an hour to reach Gympie Hospital, were too often being transferred to the Sunshine Coast, creating problems getting home again.

And the current review of Gympie and Cooloola Coast health needs, the Master Clinical Services Plan, was long overdue, he said.

Planning would need to include preparations for a new Gympie Hospital, but planning for health services across the region was

moving slowly. Mr Perrett said doctors had approached him with concerns about a wide range of services and about 8000 people had so far supported a petition to restore the hospital's children's ward services.

He told the house, Health Minister Yvette D'Ath had not responded to a letter he and Wide Bay federal MP Llew O'Brien had sent her on a range of issues.

Despite record health budgets across the

state, Gympie health services, including services for coast residents, were being "squeezed with stealthy changes."

Ms D'Ath said the state's public hospitals were delivering "world-class healthcare in the face of rising demand for health services."

She said emergency department presentations had risen 14 per cent across the state and elective surgeries were up 8.8 per cent.

## New fire and emergency headquarters opens

Rainbow Beach residents will have the best of emergency services following the recent completion of the sparkling facility on Rainbow Beach Road.

A Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) spokesperson said they have allocated a total funding amount of \$2.5 million for the provision of the Rainbow Beach Fire and Emergency Services Facility.

"The facility will accommodate both the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and State Emergency Service (SES) and create a full-time equivalent (FTE) of 8.25 jobs.

"It is expected to be completed in September 2021 and will be officially opened in October 2021.

"The facility will feature three bays and ample storage to effectively accommodate FRS and SES operations.

"This increased capacity will allow QFES to cater for current and future demand in Rainbow Beach and surrounding areas.

"QFES staff are thrilled with the new facility and excited to be able to move in once the final fit-out is completed."

Locals and visitors will have the benefit of the new facility after its opening in October and it will be an asset to the increasing population of locals and visitors to the region.

It is understood the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Mark Ryan will attend the opening of the new facility in early October along with other state and local members.

To report a fire or an emergency, call zero zero zero 000

To check fire information go to Queensland Fire and Emergency Services - QFES on facebook or [www.qfes.qld.gov.au/](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/) Current-Incidents or [qfes.qld.gov.au](http://qfes.qld.gov.au)

To contact SES call 132500.



The new Rainbow Beach Fire and Emergency Services Facility.



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# Rescue risks remembered

By Arthur Gorrie

There was not a lot of real organisation in the search and rescue procedures made necessary by increasing use of the Cooloola Coast bushland for hiking, including by children, according to the Gympie-Maryborough region's first national parks ranger Ron Turner.

In his recent book, *First Ranger - A Memoir*, Mr Turner recalls 1978, when student groups were increasingly accessing Teewah Beach or Freshwater via canoes or walking tracks from the near-Tewantin area. Some reportedly were getting into trouble.

There was little liaison at that time with police or the State Emergency Service, he recalls.

"The area of greatest alarm concerned the ratio of adults to students and the question of what could go wrong, a teacher becoming incapacitated or separated from the group, for example.

"The reaction time in case of emergencies such as snake bite was a real concern, the area's inhabitants including deadly snakes like the taipan, eastern brown, death adder, tiger and rough-scaled snake.

"On one occasion, an exhausted person, swimming down the Noosa River, said he was among a small group who had left the Cooloola Sand Patch to walk directly to the river.

"Unaware of the swampy terrain, they had found the going extremely heavy. Becoming dehydrated, the party split and had to be rescued.

"Another group, consisting of three staff and 40 students, set off to hike from Elanda to Harrys Hut with a good briefing on the route to follow.

"They missed the Kin Kin Creek crossing and headed west before realising their error. Turning back, they again went too far, reaching Kinaba, where they received further guidance. Returning to Kin Kin Creek, they headed north along the Service Road, but at Harrys Hut Road they turned west instead of east and had to re-trace their steps.

"They must have been very tired when they finally reached Harrys Hut!

"Next day, despite warnings, they crossed the river and headed directly towards what seemed to be the tantalisingly close Cooloola Sand Patch.

"Up to their waists in swamp water, the party had a disagreement and split, leaving one adult with 20 students. Fortunately they had marked their route and all were able to return to the river."

Rangers followed up by finding the only viable trail and building the present walking track.

After "various debacles" they produced a "Teacher's Guide to Southern Cooloola" about what to expect and what was expected of them. "This guide was keenly sought by many schools."

One night, about 1am, a ranger was woken by two men who had paddled down the river to advise that two hikers, headed for the Cooloola Sand Patch earlier in the day, were missing.

They turned up safe, with a story to tell. "Having reached the top of the Sand Patch,



Lake Cootharaba was not always placid, as Ron Turner recalls from his search and rescue experiences in the Cooloola region.

they decided to descend to the beach for a swim. Too late to traverse the sand mass again, they hitched a lift north to Rainbow Beach.

"Another kind person drove them to the police station in Gympie. Police drove them to their campsite."

Another happy conclusion came when a primary school group in canoes became scattered across wind-swept Lake Cootharaba.

"Two children were posted missing and a helicopter was called to search for them. Unable to paddle against the wind, the missing children had decided to walk around the lake's perimeter outside the search zone, towing their canoe. Walking in the lake is always risky, as the warm shallows are popular with basking stingrays.

"I thought of the ex-convict John Graham, who walked a similar route in August 1836 to rescue the castaway Eliza Fraser.

"On a mid-afternoon in March 1984, Grade 11 and 12 students from a Brisbane high school were practising capsize and rescue techniques on Lake Cootharaba, when a sudden 30 to 40 km westerly wind arose. Students, teachers and boats were scattered across the lake, and it was dusk before all the

students were rescued. This shallow lake is not to be underestimated.

"In May 1985, I flew to Melbourne and on to the Counter Disaster Organization training centre at Mt Macedon for a week's instruction in emergency situations and procedures.

"I subsequently invited Jim Campbell, the helicopter pilot, to advise us on landing sites and two were cleared by hand near Harrys Hut and further north along the Log Landing Road.

"We also formulated an emergency plan, containing essential information such as the names, addresses and telephone numbers of QNPWS staff, our radio frequency and grid references for the two helicopter landing sites.

The response to my enquiries about police and SES liaison (initially) came in the form of a police officer who tried to convince me to 'take it easy, everything's under control'.

In September 1985, he surprised me by saying he had prepared an emergency exercise in the national park. The SES intended to launch their trailer boats at Log Landing or Camp Site 3.

"I pointed out that Log Landing Road was temporarily closed due to wet conditions, and

it was not possible to launch trailer boats into the river at either point because the steep river banks rose almost 3m above the water."

Access was also blocked by a dump of old logs.

The exercise did not go ahead. "A breath of fresh air arrived when Cavill Heywood was appointed police-SES liaison officer in Gympie. He listened to my concerns and asked whether he could carry out an exercise involving a crashed aeroplane.

"I suggested a suitable site. "In January 1988, our attention was drawn to an unattended vehicle at Elanda that no-one had been seen near for some days. I alerted the police.

A searcher took a boat up Kin Kin Creek, then walked upstream along the southern bank.

"He found a woman sitting naked on a log in the creek. She was 'Quite all right, thank you'.

"I could think of better places to commune with nature than the mosquito and leech infested rainforests of Kin Kin Creek in summer, even if I were fully clothed and liberally supplied with insect repellent."



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# Chamber told how to help beat hooners

By Lee McCarthy

The Rainbow Beach Chamber would like to invite anyone in local business to come along to the next chamber meeting on Tuesday 21 September at the Rainbow Beach Surf Club.

It is great to see new members joining and we would like to encourage some of our old members who have not renewed their membership to return.

With major concerns about hooning at Teewah, the committee invited Officer in Charge Tin Can Bay Police, Sergeant Mick Bazzo to attend the August Chamber meeting.

He explained the best way to help with hooning at Teewah is to video or photograph the offenders and upload to Policelink.

He urged people not to put themselves into danger but said the offenders could be found and fined if photographed. He also urged anyone to call 000 for accidents or critical incidents.

The contact centre is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. By phoning 131 444, you will speak with a Policelink Client Service Officer who can assist to generate a non-urgent property incident report, provide answers to general police enquiries, among other functions.

It was suggested a ban on vehicles caught offending and those driving dangerously might deter the trouble makers. To make this happen chamber will need to work together with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and lobby State Government.

Website: [www.policelink.qld.gov.au](http://www.policelink.qld.gov.au), Save Triple Zero (000) for emergencies, Think Policelink, call 131 444 to report non-urgent incidents, 24 hours a day.



Special guest at the August Rainbow Beach Commerce and Tourism Association meeting, Senior Constable Mick Bazzo with Troy Summerville, Diana Jorneaux, Tim Sayre, Kristy Pamenter, Fiona Worthington.

dents, 24 hours a day.

Going forward there is much to do and chamber is seeking feedback on issues that

affect business owners of Rainbow Beach. See you at the next chamber meeting if you want to make a difference.

## Policelink

We want you to have a great day at the beach.

Remember the beach is considered a highway, and all Queensland Road rules still apply.

Drivers must have a valid licence, seat belts must be used, and vehicles must be registered.

Remember that other people use the beach, so drive carefully and be considerate of wildlife, other drivers, bathers, and those out to enjoy their day.

Police maybe be anywhere, anytime. Every decision you make behind the wheel counts.

- Buckle up - passengers must wear seatbelts
- Ensure you keep left
- Avoid rock, pools, and wash-outs
- Choose the correct 4wd gear
- High tides can leave you stranded
- Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Remote medical assistance can be hours away - carry a first aid kit
- Invest in vehicle recovery equipment
- Vehicle permits are required
- Item storage - don't overload your vehicle
- Night driving is not advisable
- Give way to pedestrians and watch out for sunbakers

Enjoy your day and stay safe.

If a crime is happening now, call Triple Zero (000)

If not, think POLICELINK or report online via [police.qld.gov.au/reporting](http://police.qld.gov.au/reporting)







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Weddings Rainbow Beach style.

Picture: EEVEE PHOTOGRAPHY, WWW.EEVEEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

# No better place for a perfect wedding

Where else can you have a backdrop like this but Rainbow Beach. Esther from EeVee Photography shared a couple of her photos with us of a recent wedding she photographed at the lookout in Phil Rogers Park last week.

The Cooloola Coast has become a popular

wedding destination with remarkable settings in Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach and the rainforest in between. The region caters for all your wedding needs including venues, accommodation, celebrants, hair and beauty stylists, decorators,

musicians, caterers and beautiful backdrops. You can choose rainforest or beach, sand or grass, venue or rooftop views to hold your ceremony and reception to suit your special day.

## New depot shade house

By Lee McCarthy

Well done to the Gympie Regional Council parks team who have built a shade house at the Tin Can Bay depot. They can now harvest seeds and cuttings from local natives, raise them in the nursery shade house, and plant them back out throughout the coast's gardens. "The shade house will also be used to propagate Pandanus which plays an important role in erosion control on the Cooloola Coast.



The new shade house at the depot.

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The property at 24 Naiad Court.

# Housing crisis looms

Supply and demand determine the level of competition in any market and affect price and availability.

The price surge across the Cooloola Coast is making the possibility of owning a home in Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay out of the reach of most families, but there are still some good buys in Cooloola Cove.

Those already in the market are feeling pleased with themselves and breathing a sigh of relief they beat the boom for once.

Those not so lucky are scrambling to find something about to hit the market or are downsizing their expectations just to get in on the action.

Others will tell stories about how they could have bought at Cooloola Cove for \$20,000 ten years ago like the ones that got away in Hasting Street in the 70's.

You could buy a block of land in Sentinel Court, Cooloola Cove for \$15,000 in 1989. The same property sat on the market for 1674 days and finally sold for \$135,000 in 2017.

Skip to 2021, a one bedroom shed/house

with double lock up garage on 1,265 square metres next door on Golden Hind Avenue sold in May this year for \$320,000 after only 31 days on market.

According to realestate.com.au the median house price for Rainbow Beach is now \$760,000 with an annual growth of 9.4 per cent.

The median property price for Cooloola Cove is \$370,000 which is based on 156 house sales between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

The median price for a three-bedroom home in Tin Can Bay is \$405,000 according to realestate.com.au however these figures will no doubt have a major jump when we see the next lot of data.

A 1003 square metre vacant block of land at Number 24 Naiad Court was listed for sale in 2008. The brochure said, 'Only 15 beachfront blocks in Rainbow Shores, so your investment is protected by its sheer rarity.'

After building finished it was sold 2002 for \$295,000

It was sold in 2011 for \$495,000. The four bedroom, two bath and three car home is now

on the market with offers over \$1,600,000 considered.

According to Core Logic the household structure of Tin Can Bay homeowners is 70.9% childless couples, 16.6 per cent couples with children, 12.6 per cent single parents, the remainder is 'other'.

Of these, 48.9 per cent own the property outright, 34.7 per cent are renting; 11.6 per cent are purchasing with the remainder 'other'.

In Rainbow Beach 50.4 per cent are childless couples, 26.6 per cent are couples with children and 13 per cent are single parents (remainder is 'other').

Of these, 42 per cent own their property outright, 37.3 per cent are renting; 15.7 per cent have a mortgage.

Gympie MP Tony Perrett said the housing crisis was certainly acute.

"It's a big problem on the Cooloola Coast and throughout the Gympie region," he said.

"Rainbow Beach which is a solely tourist-based economy is being impacted because much of the housing is for the tourist trade.

"Regular housing is becoming expensive and creating problems for locals and itinerant workers.

"I receive frequent complaints from people wanting to live in this region and on the coast. I've raised housing shortages with the various housing ministers, asked them questions, and written to them.

"We've discovered that there is less welfare housing in Gympie than existed six years ago.

"In 2015 there were 463 social housing rental properties, it dropped to 308 in 2019, and in February this year there were 296 social housing properties.

"The Government needs to back our region more instead of just talking."

As reported in the last issue of Cooloola Coast Today, business owners Andrew and Annie along with their four children had to relocate to Tasmania as they couldn't find any accommodation in the region.

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# Cooloola Coast booming

With property prices soaring and availability slim, buyers looking for property in Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay feel like they hit the jackpot when a contract goes unconditional.

Agents are loving the momentum, buyers and vendors are winning and with all reports indicating the Cooloola Coast is a major growth area, Cooloola Cove is also powering ahead.

Agents Dee and Andy White from Cooloola Coast Realty with offices in Rainbow Beach and Cooloola Cove, opened their business in 2008 and say the frenzy is a fundamental demographic issue.

"It's all about supply and demand. With people moving out of the metropolitan areas and being encouraged to work from home, we are seeing a lot more young families moving into the area.

"It's not just 4581. Our buyers are observing the rental crises across South East Queensland and Brisbane and buyers are chasing property further north.

"Through Covid there was generally a shift towards regional buying with buyers in touch with the benefits of regional living. Less populous areas are appealing given the current situation with Covid and generally speaking, the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast has become too busy for some.

"We often speak to people who have lived in places like Buderim, Noosa and Coolool for years and they are getting frustrated with the extended commute times to work and school and even just the difficulty of finding a park at the shopping centre or beach. We don't really have that problem on the Cooloola Coast.

"Although we have not been directly impacted by Covid on the Cooloola Coast, we have seen an increase in property purchases. Around 20-25 per cent increase in general and in some cases, up to 45 per cent increase in the past 18 months (since the beginning of the pandemic).

"The only short term solution as we see it, is to release land and get it into circulation now. We are landlocked in Rainbow Beach though and the land around the town is subject to Native Title or National Park.

"The developments need to be fast-tracked for more permanent housing for staff which is not an easy solution either as now the builders and tradies are so busy and wait times longer.

"We need to get the holiday homes back into circulation for permanent rentals. Existing property owners are looking to increase their rental return in line with demand and we have been encouraging some holiday home owners to perhaps switch to permanent rental in order to provide more housing options for permanent residents and locals.

"When we moved here in 2008 there were roughly 150 blocks in Rainbow Shores; approximately 50 were owner occupied; 50 were holiday rentals and 50 were vacant. Now there are only around 15 freehold vacant blocks left in Rainbow Shores, with approximately 65 holiday rentals and the remainder are either owner occupied or permanently rented.

"While buyers in Cooloola Cove are typically young families, the buyers coming to the shores are professional people and the return is not as critical, it's a lifestyle choice, a place to holiday, so they are becoming the typical buyer.

"Rainbow Beach is an extreme example of what is happening across the South East. The market is volatile and its musical chairs with expats who were living overseas now coming home and needing a place to live."

As reported recently in The Age, if 480,000 Australians have returned home from overseas since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, that is close to half the total number of Australians previously living abroad. These people all have to live somewhere and a lot of them want to live outside of the cities.

If you want to buy a piece of paradise make sure you are pre-approved for the amount you need to borrow and contact your agent to see what is coming up in the market - you might get lucky.



Cooloola Coast Realty owners Andy and Dee White.

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# Book Week a real blast

The students at Tin Can Bay P-10 State School had a blast with book week. The students, and mums and dads, rose to the occasion and embraced the art of reading.

The library was busy each day with students given the opportunity to make pom pom animals, crowns, sun catchers, shrink keyrings, scratch art, bookmarks and paper bracelets.

Here are a few photos of the students showing off their favourite characters.



## Dr Suzie Starfish shares message through her stories

The children of Rainbow Beach received a treat last week when Dr Sue Pillans aka Dr Suzie Starfish dropped in to read her books.

Sue writes and illustrates the impact of marine debris and plastic pollution on our oceans and the animals that live there.

She is a marine scientist, artist and children's author and specialises in environmental education and visual storytelling.

Sue will launch her latest book "Cranky Frankie and the oceans of trash" next February and said: "the book is told through the eyes of a VERY feisty fish named Frankie and is full of messages of science, solutions and hope."

"I love using the art and science of storytelling to engage, educate, excite and empower young readers that they CAN be the change they want to 'sea' in the world."

"Dr Suzie Starfish has a great devotion for the ocean and through her words and pictures she hopes everyone gains a greater appreciation and understanding of our wondrous marine world."

With a property in Rainbow Beach, Sue loves the ocean and is a watercolour artist who has always been inspired by the ocean and all its amazing creatures.

For more on Dr Sue's ocean storytelling visit her website at [www.druepillans.com](http://www.druepillans.com)



Dr Suzie Starfish reading one of her books to the children at the Rainbow Beach Library.



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Aspy Jones drummer Caleb Wilson on stage at Spring Fest.



Hector and Jennie Christie were thrilled to win tickets to the Spring Fest!

# What a start to Spring!

Those who attended the inaugural 2021 Rainbow Beach Spring Fest are the grinners this week after an exceptional event on Saturday night.

Live entertainment is a wonderful way to bring a community together and during covid these events have been scarce.

The joy of being able to enjoy such a quality event was only surpassed by the professional, talented, and inspiring presence of Aspy Jones, The Lyrical, Fitzzy and Cara and OKA.

With talent in spades, these entertainers gave it their all and their energy radiated through the audience - making it a unique experience for all ticket holders.

Congratulations to all those who supported the event and all those who helped put it together, you should be very proud.

President of the Rainbow Beach Community Centre and organiser Elisa Seul said:

“We cannot find the words to express our happiness. What a day to remember.

We had a fantastic crowd, amazing and talented artists.”

“We want to thank the professional and reliable team from Events and Tents Qld, Kroppy and Marnie. We came to you with a vision and your technical support and experience made it happen.”

“Thank you to the Rainbow Beach Community Centre Volunteers, you are legends. You cooked up a storm after all food vendors pulled out at the last minute. You attended the bar areas; you kept the amenities in a wonderful clean condition.

And our performers - Aspy Jones, The Lyrical, Fitzzy and Cara and Oka: what a vibe you built up, thank you.”

See you next year!



Passionate organiser of the Spring Fest event, Elisa Seul with favourite local Rose Mayes.



On trumpet James Battersby with the band Aspy Jones.



OKA fans Jenni and Kerri came from Coolumb to enjoy the 2021 Rainbow Beach Spring Fest.



Performer Aspy Jones with talented music teacher Kerri Eaton at the festival.





Fans travelled for miles to see OKA who didn't disappoint.



Peter and Helen Wodetzka happy to be at Spring Fest 2021.



The incredible The Lyrical - such a talent!



The Lyrical lead Karl Smith - what a voice!



Siblings Aspy Jones, Saul Roberts on bass and Jaimie Roberts on vocals.



The crowd loved Hat Fitz and Cara.



Tin Can Bay locals Wendy Bartholomew and Kerry Bale at Spring Fest 2021.



OKA.

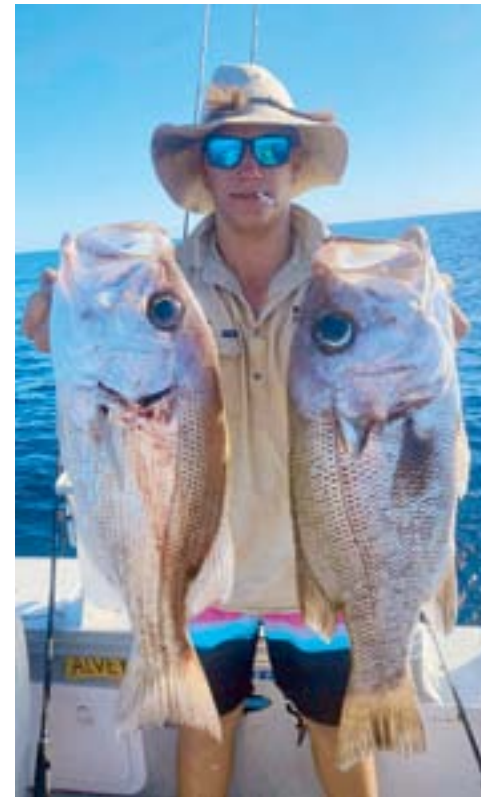


# Fishing

## Cooloola Coast



Amber with an obst.



Dom with a pair of pearlies.

# On the chew in the Bay

**By Chris Rippon**

G'day Crew!

I trust you have all been out enjoying the great Sandy Straits the last couple of weeks and have been able to get out and land a few for a feed while doing so. We really are blessed to be able to call the Cooloola Coast our home.

It's been great seeing so many families out enjoying our foreshore along the esplanade lately, be it fishing, picnicking or just having a game of cricket. Father's Day it was packed, almost standing room only. A belated Happy Father's Day to all the dads out there!

Over the last couple of weeks we've had some great reports of whiting coming in from everywhere! Dinnies, Ida and Pannikin have been fishing well the past few weeks on the flood. The flats up the straits also holding good numbers of Summeries and fishos have been telling us lately that the last couple of hours of the fulling tide has been producing.

Fishing the drains as the tide recedes with freshly pumped yabbies and our locally caught beach worm, has been working a treat with small poppers and stick baits also successful in bagging a few. Kauri Creek has also been a bit of a hot spot to catch a feed of whiting.

There has also been no shortage of flathead

being caught lately either. I have always been a fan of the last two hours of the runout tide, but the last few trips have seen us (myself, the wife and the kids) fishing the flats around Crab Creek on the flood with small soft vibes and Squidgy soft plastics working best for us. It's priceless to see the excitement when they land a fish, be it a little flattie, but the kids still think it's impressive! The little fella is learning to cast an eggbeater so make sure you all have your safety sunnies on. LoL!

Offshore the fishing has been firing. Snapper and pearl perch have been keeping fishos happy now that they are back on the menu and there have been some crackers caught. But there are so many other species to target while out wide. We have been seeing some great catches of cobia, tuskies AJ's, cod, hussa, lipper & moses perch.

GT's have been making an appearance up around the barge landing and Big Mick. There have been some good sizes big ones caught lately and our local charter guide Pommy Jon (Great Sandy Straits Sports Fishing) has been getting his clients stretched!! Unweighted livies have been producing, but I'd tip it that if you were to work the current lines and pressure points with bigger poppers, you'd get stretched for sure.



Chris with a cobia.

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

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# Fishing

## Cooloola Coast



Reibels prawn catch - if you want to eat local seafood, its time to say so in the e-petition.



Desperate times call for desperate measures for Queensland Trawler owners.

# Fishing petition launched

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) has created an e-petition calling for an enquiry into the management of Fisheries Queensland.

The QSIA is encouraging support for the petition and assert that the seafood industry has lost confidence in the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' (DAF) after years of mismanagement and are seeking a full inquiry into fisheries' management.

The QSIA said on 1 September: "Today is the first day of the most poorly managed fisheries reform process in the history of this State".

"All you need do is look to the Minister for Fisheries and Fisheries Queensland for what not to do when it comes to undermining a great industry."

If you are impacted by these so-called reforms, the QSIA is urging you to get in touch with the Association via email to [eo@qsia.com.au](mailto:eo@qsia.com.au) or send to PO Box 3856 Victoria Point West Qld 4165.

"The impacts of the reform can include mental health and increased medical costs as well as estimates on infrastructure you have invested in that may be in jeopardy as a result of the reform process.

"You can also provide us with information of impacts to you financially and personally if you are not involved in the new quota managed fishers.

"The introduction of quota management and new regulations as part of the so-called reform process will have significant impacts

on commercial fishing operations and post-harvest businesses across Queensland.

"Lesley Powell, Legal Practitioner Director from Milburn's Law will be examining your feedback and may need to contact you so please provide a contact email and mobile."

Fishermen attended a workshop last week with the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) regarding a new and unworkable reporting regime as part of the current fisheries reform process.

It was confirmed at the meeting that a reporting contact number, set up by the State Government and managed by Fisheries Queensland was disconnected.

Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) President, Allan Bobbermen said: "Dis-

connected, who is managing this show? This reform has been rushed and mismanaged at all levels."

"The day before the introduction of unnecessary reporting requirements, all industry can see is a department unprepared for the introduction of their so-called reforms."

"The QBFP officer tried the contact number and confirmed that it was not working. How can this reform roll out from 1 September if basic contact numbers we are being forced to contact are not working?"

A podcast on QSIA Podcasts with guest speaker Tony Riesenweber, a Qld commercial fisher, is available here: [qsia.podbean.com](http://qsia.podbean.com)

For further information go to [www.facebook.com/QLDSeafood](http://www.facebook.com/QLDSeafood)

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# Kerin, Backhouse salute

By Lee McCarthy

What an event! Congratulations to organiser Phil Hungerford and his team on the wonderful success of the 2021 Rainbow Beach Triathlon.

The weather was perfect on Saturday with a few showers on Sunday. There were world class athletes competing and it is a tremendous boost for the region to have such an event held here each year. Wonderful competitors and a great event.

The 2022 Rainbow Beach triathlon is back on the last weekend in July!

**Congratulations to the overall winners:**

**Men's Winners:**

1. Lachlan Kerin in the 25-29 age group with a time of 01:52:122
2. Peyton Craig in the 15-16 age group with a time of 01:55:39
3. Taylor Elms in the 30-34 age group in a time of 02:02:40

**Women's Winners:**

1. Gillian Backhouse in the 30-34 age group with a time of 02:03:10
2. Clare Denkes in the 25-29 age group in a time of 02:18:15
3. Sophie Burger in the 15-16 age group with a time of 02:19:34



Peyton Craig, who finished second overall.



Women's winner Gillian Backhouse on her way to a fourth overall placing.

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2021 Rainbow Beach Triathlon men's overall first, second and third - Lachlan Kerin, Peyton Craig and Taylor Elms.



Women's winner Gillian Backhouse being interviewed at the finish line.



Taylor Elms finished third overall.



Lachlan Kerin, who finished first overall, in the cycle leg.



Michael Hooper was fifth overall.



Men's winner Lachlan Kerin wasn't even breathing heavy when he crossed the line.



Taylor Elms came in third place overall.



A mighty effort - first, second and third overall - Gillian Backhouse, Clare Denkes, Sophie Burger.



Rainbow Beach Senior Constable Michael Brantz with organiser Phil Hungerford.





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