



The Alternative Journal of the Rainbow Region

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THE NIMBIN GOODTIMES

Prickly and FREE

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Tall ship looms through the mist

Like a misty dream from another era, on 15th January a majestic tall ship ghosted past Kingscliff and continued north between Cook Island and Fingal Head, surprising the early morning locals watching from the shore. It was an image from 100 years ago.

The big black schooner was the ‘South Passage’ under the command of Fingal resident and master mariner, Captain Bill Fenelon. On board this sail-training ship were 23 strong young crew who were completing the final task of their prestigious Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, following an adventurous and instructional nine-day voyage from Sydney to Brisbane.

‘South Passage’ is a purpose-built sail-training vessel operated by the Sail Training Association of Queensland, a non-profit initiative which supports youth development through educational maritime voyages from Cooktown to Jervis Bay.

The students involved in this expedition were from a range of places across the nation such as Townsville, Toowoomba, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Central Coast NSW and Canberra.

The esteemed program is available to youths from age 14 to 24, and is now the world’s leading youth achievement award.

Founded in the UK in 1956 by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, it equips young people from all over the world from a diversity of cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds with important life and teamwork skills.

With over 300,000 students across 144 nations now involved, the awards are centred around a series of self-improvement exercises modelled on Kurt Hahn’s solution to the ‘Six Declines of Modern Youth’.

The objectives of the award include developing practical and social skills such as fitness and resilience; team building; planning and coordination; communication and conflict resolution and completion of an adventurous journey all under the guidance and mentorship of an adult leader.

Over 775,000 young Australians have now completed the Award, which is supported by more than 60,000 adult volunteer leaders, supervisors and assessors.

Fingal local Bill Fenelon has been a senior volunteer for the Award programme since 2006. An accomplished Master Mariner, he’s skippered some of world’s largest ships on global voyages including complex square-rigged sailing vessels such as Tall Ships.

“Sail training and youth mentoring have been a large part of my life for over 20 years. I’ve seen the enormous benefits that crewing on a sailing ship has for young people. It combines team work, courage and discipline with excitement, adventure and fun in a spirit of collaboration and camaraderie.

“Underpinned by a solid educational approach such as navigating by the stars and understanding the tides, the crew learn important life skills and have a great time doing it,” said Fenelon.

Bill Fenelon founded the Tweed Valley Sailing Club based at Fingal Head eight years ago, which is centred around a popular and successful youth sailing program.

“I’ve always been committed to my local community and recognised a need for involving young people in constructive activities,” he said.

“My passion for community issues inspired me to become the Tweed state candidate for the Greens in order to stand up for important issues on a political level.”

Celebrating our citizens

by Cr. Elly Bird

I write this on Australia Day, Invasion Day, Survival Day. A difficult day, and one that is always challenging for me.

As a Councillor, today is one of the days that we confer citizenship on people who want to join us and belong to our country, and who want to belong to our community.

It’s also the day that we recognise local people who contribute to our social fabric in significant ways and award them for their service.

And, of course for so many of us today is not a day to celebrate, it is a day to recognise the survival of our First Nations People, who are the custodians of the longest living culture on Earth – and it is a day to acknowledge the genocide, trauma, and ongoing suffering that they have survived.

It might seem small, but if you haven’t done so already please read, and support the Uluru Statement From the Heart, you can find it online at: www.1voiceuluru.org

Doing so is one small step you can take today on a journey that is complex, critical and long overdue; we must do everything we can to work towards justice.

This year Gilbert Laurie performed a smoking ceremony before the event in Lismore which was well received, and I thank him for coming to do that and sharing Widjabul-Wyabul culture with our new citizens.

Each year, as difficult as it is, I do go to the Australia Day ceremony in Lismore because I want to welcome our new citizens to this community that I am so proud of, and I want to



‘Citizen of the Year’ recipient Aliison Kelly with Cr. Bird

honour our active community members and for now, particularly under significant pressure from the Federal Government, this is the day when we do.

This year’s award winners were a varied group of people from across the community. I would like to particularly acknowledge our Citizen of the Year, Aliison Kelly.

Aliison is well known and well loved by so many people, and if you have had the pleasure of working with her or spending time in her company you will know how committed she is to making our home a better place, through her work with Friends of the Koala, the Friendship Festival, the Lismore Lantern Parade, DirtGirl, the Channon Markets and as a member of the (in)famous Kelly Family who are right there with her at so many of our treasured community events.

Congratulations Aliison, you are a very worthy recipient of our Citizen of the Year award!

I also want to acknowledge Vivian Martin for his Sustainable Environment award, received after many

years of hard work, and also a somewhat late recognition for the Terania Forest Blockaders in the 40th anniversary year of those historic protests.

The forest blockades of those times have shaped non-violent action across the world, as well as deeply shaping the culture of our community.

I was fortunate enough to spend time with many Terania blockaders during the CSG fight and if you are reading this, I want you to know that I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities that I have had to learn from you and I thank you for your ongoing commitment to protecting our environment.

Congratulations also to all the other award winners; Young Citizen of the Year: Lily Harrison; Aboriginal Citizen of the Year: Malachi Canning; Services in Community (Individual): John Maloney; Arts/Cultural: Ted Trudgeon; Sportsperson of the Year (Senior): Paul Leadbeater; Sportsperson of the Year (Junior): Matilda Elliott; and Sports Team of the Year: Lismore Swans Australian Football Club Women’s Team.



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