



COUNCIL - in brief -

Get in quick for discount

Residents have until March 28 to receive the early-bird discount on their rates, however, discounts for pensioners will apply until June 20. Please also note, that this rates notice includes the compulsory State Government Emergency Management, Fire and Rescue Levy. For more details visit fire.qld.gov.au/about.

Egg-cellent Easter lineup on the cards

From Easter street party entertainment to an exhilarating rooftop battle of the bands, The Lanes - Mackay's Easter Festival - is set to be an animated cultural experience for all on Sunday, April 20. From 10am to 1pm, families can enjoy a magical morning of fun and games including a monster Easter egg hunt, train rides, art workshop and more. Rock on from 12pm until twilight and see some of Mackay's best musical talent battle it out under the stars. See the full program at mackay.qld.gov.au/thelanes.

Youth event to showcase Mackay talent

Held in conjunction with National Youth Week celebrations (April 5-13), Mackay's Got Talent finals will take place at Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre on Saturday, April 5. Doors open at 1pm and the show kicks off at 2pm. This free event is proudly supported by Mackay Regional Council, PCYC, headspace Mackay and Community Solutions. Visit facebook.com/MackaysGotTalent for details.

It's a dog's world

Official off-leash zones and free squishy toys will no doubt delight our region's canine companions

What dog doesn't love chewing, playing fetch or being rewarded? When out and about with your furry companion, be sure to say hello to our region's friendly Local Laws officers.

Waste, Health and Regulatory Services portfolio councillor Laurence Bonaventura said council officers were on the lookout for pet owners walking their registered dogs on leads (unless in an off-leash designated area), to reward them with a small gesture of thanks. "We'll be handing out squishy toys to proactively encourage those in the community who do the right thing and set a good example for other pet owners," he said. "It's fantastic to see the public out exercising their pets and displaying considerate behaviours like picking up after their dogs." "A healthy and sociable dog playing on the beach or cohabiting walkways provides our city with colour, character and a sense of an active and inclusive community. "In order for this to be the case, patrolling officers will be issuing on-the-spot fines to offenders not following these simple regulations." Additionally, you can socialise your best friend at one of council's free dog walking groups, an Active in the City initiative occurring every Saturday from 8am to 9am at the Bluewater Quay.

>> For more details visit mackay.qld.gov.au or call 1300 MACKAY (622 529).



Be sure to say hi to council's Local Laws Officer Rebecca Muscat (pictured with pooch Oscar) who'll be handing out squishy toys at various locations around the region to reward responsible pet ownership.



Approved off-leash areas:

Exercise your dog off-leash at the following locations:

- > Northern Far Beach (5-8am and 5-8pm)
- > Camilleri Street Park (24 hours)
- > Campwin Beach (5-8am and 5-8pm)
- > Bucasia Beach (5-8am and 5-8pm)

Club spurs friendship, fun

It's not often you see 10 ladies in their PJs at your local library. But the Mirani Library Book Club gals wore their flannelettes and nighties with pride to a recent get-together to discuss the book *Before I Go To Sleep*.

Since the club began in 2011, Mirani resident Stephanie Fatnowna has attended meetings and enjoyed reading dozens of novels - from comedies and dramas to wartime and non-fiction titles.

"We make the title of each book we read the theme of our meeting; often we'll dress up and bring nibbles and make a real night out of it," she said.

"The library is the perfect place to meet; mums with children can bring them along and there's always plenty of books, magazines and DVDs for them to enjoy while we chat."

Book clubs are for everyone, >> Visit mackay.qld.gov.au/bookclubs for dates/times of your local library's club.



Mirani Book Club members Katrina Rosicka and Stephanie Fatnowna often dress in theme.

Stephanie said. "Ages in our group range from early 20s to late 60s, reading is something that people of all ages can enjoy together," she said.

"We've spent hours debating, discussing and deliberating well into the night; we enjoy ourselves so much that we've even gone out to dinner and had coffee together outside the library."

Some of the most memorable titles they've read include: *Bluey's War* and *the Light*

Between Oceans. Group members are currently making their way through *Elianne*, written by former Home and Away star Judy Nunn.

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at Mirani Library from 7.30pm to 9pm and new members are always welcome (the next one is on March 19 - all are welcome).

Book Clubs are also held at the City and Gordon White libraries.

\$5000 bursaries on offer

Boasting a monthly turnover of only 1 per cent, Mackay Regional Council is certainly an employer of choice for Mackay region residents.

And council certainly takes this role seriously - in addition to offering dozens of apprentice and trainee positions annually, council also offers four academic bursaries a year to our region's budding university students.

Valued at \$5000 each, the bursaries provide students with much-needed financial assistance and also include a month's worth of work experience in their chosen field at council.

To apply for an academic bursary you must be in your second-last year of university. (Applications close on Friday, March 21.)

>> Apply for an academic bursary at mackay.qld.gov.au/academicbursary.



Griffith University scientists will return to Eungella for round two of the Biodiversity Study.

Schools can join Eungella study

Experts in insects, snails and plants will return to Eungella National Park in the coming weeks to commence round two of their study on how climate impacts biodiversity.

Parks and Environment portfolio councillor Theresa Morgan said local secondary school students had a unique opportunity to get involved in the joint council-Griffith University project.

"Scientists hope to uncover thousands of new species - it's an exciting chance for local students to experience first-hand how a real-life scientist operates." For an opportunity to get your school involved, email council@mackay.qld.gov.au by Monday, March 17.

>> The Pioneer Valley Passport is proudly supported by Sea FM and Seven Local News.

Time to take a stand against bullying

It's time to break the silence. That's the message behind Stand for the Silent - a project dedicated to raising awareness about bullying.

Community Development and Libraries portfolio councillor Alison Jones said the movement, which began in 2010, was a first for our Mackay region.

"According to the Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (qld.gov.au), 27 per cent of Year 4-9 students are bullied every few weeks or more each term," she said.

"This means more than a quarter of our country's school children are being tormented on a regular basis - this statistic is both alarming and heartbreaking.

"Research also indicates many of the same young people who bully others offline are the same individuals who bully others in cyberspace."

To break the silence, Mackay Regional Council, in collaboration with the Valley District Youth Council, headspace Mackay, local

youth workers, community health practitioners and service providers, will present an evening of entertainment and information at Caneland Central on Thursday, March 20.

Running from 6-8pm, the Stand for the Silent event will feature local artists who have previously participated in Mackay's Got Talent over the years.

Paul Stanley, from the Matthew Stanley Foundation, will also speak about the One Punch Can Kill campaign.



Judah Kelly, Levi Cameron, Jack Gray, Tia Gostelow, Oliver Carter-Beck, Jacob Shanks and Tegan Philpott support the anti-bullying campaign Stand for the Silent.

"This event aims to draw out our region's youth with an evening of entertainment tied in with inspiring and educational anti-bullying information and messages," Cr Jones said.

>> For bullying advice call Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800 (24 hours) or Lifeline on 131 114. Report bullying to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or Policelink on 131 444. To receive further advice call headspace Mackay on 4898 2200 or visit headspace.org.au.

migrantvoice

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Chinese New Year in the City Centre

Read all about it!

The first edition of Migrant Voice for 2014 is out now! Migrant Voice is a great resource for residents new to the Mackay community - helping to connect you with people from your own nationality and other countries alike.

The Mackay region has a wonderful multi-cultural mix with 931 residents from 54 countries welcomed at citizenship ceremonies in 2013.

>> Migrant Voice is available at council's libraries, client service centres and at mackay.qld.gov.au/community.

WATCH THE FLOW OF YOUR H₂O

Different tap fittings have different flow rates. It's important to know the flow rate of your fittings to ensure water isn't wasted. Learn how to measure the flow at mackay.qld.gov.au/watertips.

Expansion courtesy of grant

Over the years it's hosted everything from war commemorative services to weddings, making the Soldier's Memorial Hall an integral facility for our Bloomsbury community. Now, thanks to council's community grants program, this hall

(located 85 kilometres north of Mackay) will soon have an extended concrete area for hosting outdoor events.

Community Development portfolio councillor Alison Jones said the hall was a treasure for the Bloomsbury

identity, donated by a local identity who was a returned ANZAC.

"The \$5000 grant will be used to level out a large area with concrete, making the venue more accessible and suitable for outdoor functions."

>> For a list of grants currently on offer, visit mackay.qld.gov.au/grants.

Monitor the flow

Council's automatic meter reading (AMR) program has hit an all-time high, clocking up more than half a million daily water meter reads - a major leap forward from the manual 80,000 reads a year. The milestone comes as more than 25,000 meters have been fitted with the AMR device.

Water and Sewerage Portfolio Councillor Frank Gilbert said council had worked with hardware and software developers, Taggle Systems and Tyeware, to design the versatile and cost-effective product. "We are now building the customer interface which will allow individuals to monitor and manage their water consumption online in real-time," he said.

>> Water bills (for October to April) will be issued in May/June.



Cr Alison Jones, with computer user Alex Hughes, is excited to hear computer use at our region's libraries has skyrocketed.

Get connected

If you're hoping to use one of council's library computers - it might pay to book in advance.

Library computer use across the region has skyrocketed in the last year, with almost 24,000 users clocking up more than 22,000 hours!

Additionally, if you bring your own computer to Gordon White, City, Sarina and Mirani libraries, you can now take advantage of free wireless internet access. The wireless

access is available during library opening hours for library customers with laptops or mobile devices and is free for the first 90 minutes.

Wireless charges apply for non-members from \$2 for the first hour. Ask at the library counter for a username and password to access the wireless network.

(Please note that computer bookings must be made in person at your local library.)