



History comes alive at our Heritage Fair

It is a century since Albert Cook built the iconic Greenmount Homestead near Walkerston in 1915

MACKAY'S Greenmount Homestead will celebrate its centenary at the Heritage Fair later this month.

The free community event will highlight the region's rich history against a colourful backdrop of free, family-friendly activities.

Festival, Events and The Arts portfolio councillor Chris Bonanno said the fair on May 31 was one of the most treasured events in the region.

"The Heritage Fair has a

great reputation for a quality family day out," Cr Bonanno said.

"It is a unique experience from the moment you arrive at the front gate," he said.

The nine-hectare property will be taken over by train rides, an animal farm, horse and carriage rides, working sheep dog demonstrations and much more.

"The vintage machinery and vehicles are always popular and we're thrilled to welcome back the Australian Living

History Show," Cr Bonanno said.

This year's fair has new attractions, including a fashion show and billy cart racing. "We're encouraging everyone to dress up and get into the spirit, with some great prizes up for grabs," he said.

The fashion show will be judged across a few categories, including WWI era (1915-1919), WWII (1939-1945) and the post-war years or baby boomers era.



Sandy Drummond dressed in style at last year's Heritage Fair.

With record numbers expected to attend the event, additional car parking and buses have been organised to transport people from Walkerston.

With no ATM on site, Cr Bonanno encouraged residents to call into Walkerston on the drive to the fair to get cash for food, drinks and the markets.

The Heritage Fair is on Sunday, May 31, from 9am to 3pm at Greenmount Homestead, which is located 5kms from Walkerston.

>> Thanks to UnitingCare Community's Child, Youth and Family Wellbeing Service for coming onboard as major sponsor and Mackay Sugar for sponsoring the stage

Budget aims to deliver efficiencies

WITH finance part of his portfolio, councillor Ross Walker will be front and centre when council hands down its budget next month.

He is confident council is doing all it can to ensure this and future budgets will deliver on the aim of helping relieve financial pressure on residents and businesses.

"We feel the financial pain ratepayers are going through with the adjustment in our economy following a slowdown in the resources sector," Cr Walker said.

"We realise we have to play a part in helping ease that burden," he said. "We're trying everything we can to make council more efficient."

Cr Walker said his fellow councillors, management and staff had been striving to find and deliver efficiencies during the budget preparation process.

"We recently adopted new regulatory cost recovery fees and charges for 2015/16 which will be the same, or in some cases lower, than the current financial year," he said.

"This is the first time in many years there has been no increases in these fees and charges."

Cr Walker said council, like the region's householders, faced rising costs of its own and also diminishing funding sources.



Finance, Asset Management and IT portfolio councillor Ross Walker addresses council.

"For example, the Federal Government did not lift an indexation freeze on its Financial Assistance Grants scheme during its budget,"

Cr Walker said.

"That freeze will cost this council \$2.7 million over four years.

"We'll receive \$6.4 million under the scheme this financial year but even that is down from \$6.8 million in 2010/11.

"If the indexation freeze ends after 2017/18 we'll be 13% behind the eight-ball in terms of where the funding would have been if the freeze was not in place."

Cr Walker said a lot of the efficiencies council was achieving as it transformed to a modern council would also flow on to budgets in future years.

"Our goal is to set the platform to provide ongoing benefits to residents and ratepayers in the future," he said.

>> Mackay Regional Council will adopt its new budget for the 2015/16 financial year at a meeting on Wednesday, June 24

WATCH THE FLOW OF YOUR H₂O

Mulch your plants — spreading a layer of mulch around plants retains moisture, saving water, time and money!

Tapping into latest in meter technology

TWO years ago council officers manually read 40,000 water meters biannually.

Today we receive about 700,000 individual readings a day via council's Automatic Meter Reading system.

But that's only the tip of what Mackay Regional Council's new Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) low-power communication technology can be used for.

This successful technology has now been applied to the development of sewer sensors, which have been installed to monitor a portion of Mackay's sewer network and prevent overflows.

Water and Sewerage portfolio councillor Frank Gilbert said about 70 sensors had been installed in manholes around Mackay as part of an ongoing trial.

"Not only will this technology provide us with early warnings on potential dry weather overflows, we'll also be able to identify the



Apprentice plumber Chris Paterson takes a close look at council's new sewer sensor technology.

triggers causing them," Cr Gilbert said.

"Essentially, the sensors provide us with real-time data about the varying sewer levels in the network at selected manholes," he said.

"When the level rises, we see it in real-time on our computer screens and we can send a crew to investigate the possible blockage and prevent an overflow."

Cr Gilbert said this cutting-edge technology had already

enhanced council's response times and prevented overflows, which had a positive effect on public health and the environment.

"We've also installed rainfall monitors in multiple catchments around Mackay, which allows us to monitor the impact rainfall has on our sewer levels," he said.

"Putting our technology to multiple uses enables council to leverage off existing assets and generate additional benefits at a very low cost."

>> Residents can log on to myh20.qld.gov.au to monitor household water use

Expo is a good sport at awards

THE Sports Expo and Sign-on Day was a finalist in the 2015 Government Communications Australia Awards for Excellence.

Sport, Recreation and Facilities portfolio councillor Paul Steindl said it was wonderful to see the event recognised on a national stage.

"We were one of two finalists, with more the 30 entries received in the category best advocacy and public affairs," Cr Steindl said.

"Although we didn't come away with the top prize, it was still a fantastic achievement."

About 8000 residents attended this year's expo, held at the MECC in February.

>> Save the date for next year's Sports Expo and Sign-on Day on Sunday, February 7



Council's new mini street sweeper.

It's a clean sweep

COUNCIL has a new mini street sweeper keeping our City Centre looking spick and span.

It is mainly used for maintenance in the City Centre, Bluewater Quay, Forgan Bridge and boardwalk areas.

Roads and Drainage portfolio councillor Kevin Casey said rotating crews began each morning at 3am.

"We recently took delivery of the AZURA Concept, which is

a compact sweeper designed for undertaking a range of sweeping tasks efficiently and in an environmentally-friendly way," he said.

"It is a fantastic little machine."

Cr Casey said a power wash option had been ordered with the machine to improve surface treatments in the City Centre and on footpaths.

"A scrubber option still remains an option going forward should the need be identified," he said.

>> The sweeper has a maximum sweep width of 2540mm



Mackay Regional Council's Local Government Management Challenge state champions (from left) Bronwyn Forster, Pete Owen, Shaun Woods, Kathleen Price, Debra Howe, Richard Brown and Karlee Hayden.

MRC team tops state

MACKAY Regional Council is topping the state when it comes to leadership.

A team of six staff representing Mackay Regional Council has been crowned Queensland champions of the 2015 Local Government Management Challenge.

Competing against 18 other council teams from all over the state, the challenge

tested the team's leadership, communication and project management skills.

Mackay Regional Council CEO Barry Omundson, who is a past winner of the challenge, praised the team for its achievement.

"This is the first time Mackay Regional Council has won the Local Government Challenge award and builds upon our

third placing last year," Mr Omundson said.

"The team's performance was outstanding, scoring top marks across all areas of the competition," he said.

"Council has been working hard to create a culture that fosters strong leadership and teamwork skills among staff and we're proud of their efforts."

>> The team heads to the 2015 Australasian finals in Melbourne on June 25-26

Microchip pets

MICROCHIPPING your cat could help save one of its nine lives. A cat that turned up at council's pound recently had been missing for about 12 months. It was reunited with its owner after pound staff checked for a microchip. The cat had been missing since the owner moved home. It had turned up at another resident's home a few months back and they'd cared for it before handing it on to council's pound.

Get wriggle on

KIDS, get a wriggle on. You have until 4pm Friday, June 19, to submit your entry into Mackay Regional Council's Waste Art Competition. Simply come up with an A3 or A4-sized artwork on "why worms are awesome" to help celebrate International Year of the Soils, and go into the draw to win a \$50, \$30 or \$20 gift voucher of your choice plus prizes for your school. The competition is open to kindy, primary and secondary school students with prizes for all three categories. For more details and to download an entry form visit council's website at mackay.qld.gov.au/wastecomp.

Taxi rank shifts

A WOOD Street taxi rank has been temporarily relocated due to City Centre revitalisation construction works. The rank, usually outside travel agency helloworld Mackay, has been relocated to the River Street end of Wood Street. It is expected to remain in this temporary location for about three months. Mackay Taxis will also continue to service their ranks in Victoria Street in front of Tooma's Dry Cleaners and Caneland Central.

Party pops up

POP in for a pop-up party to officially launch this year's Mackay Festival of Arts. The Festival of Arts Pop-Up Party community event will be held at Bluewater Quay this Saturday from 6pm to 9pm. Residents are being invited to take a walk on the wild side at the launch. Entertainment will include Australian music icon Rhonda Burchmore, as well as local performers Karrie Hayward and Will Anderson. There will be roaming zebras and aerial acrobats, as well as a fireworks display at 9pm. The program for this year's Festival of Arts will be unveiled at the Pop-Up Party.