

Savour sweet taste of tourism success

Sarina Sugar Shed caters for demand by opening seven days a week and sets about restoring two wagons to take visitors on tours of cane farms

LIFE is sweet at council's Sarina Sugar Shed tourist attraction.

The award-winning facility recently started opening on Sundays to cater for demand from visitors.

It has also begun restoring two large wagons to be used for cane farm tours.

Mayor Deirdre Comerford said the agritourism attraction was the only miniature working sugar mill and distiller in the nation.

She said the award-winning facility was proving popular with residents and visitors so the decision was made to open Sundays to make it even more accessible.

"The seven-day trading for the facility has been going a little over a month now and feedback from visitors has been excellent."

Tours run daily at 9.30am, 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm.

Cr Comerford said Sarina Sugar Shed bought two

wagons that were formerly used for the popular Polstone farm tours that operated at Homebush for many years.

"The wagons seat 45 each undercover and are pulled by a tractor," she said.

"Feedback from visitors to our Sarina Sugar Shed was they wanted that hands-on experience of meeting the cane farmer and getting out on the cane farm paddocks.

"Once restored, one of the wagons will be used on the



Keldon, Logan and Ellie Kaddatz sample the tastes on offer at Sarina Sugar Shed. The agritourism facility is now open on Sundays.

Reed farm and the other on the Sammut farm.

"They're both suppliers of cane to the Sarina Sugar Shed and both are also volunteers there."

Sarina Sugar Shed was recognised as Best Tourist Attraction and Best in Food Tourism at the Mackay Region Tourism Awards this year.

The Sarina facility was also

recognised for the most outstanding contribution by a volunteer group.

Its brown rum and rum liqueur has also been recognised nationally.

Boatie access ramped up

ACCESSING the water at Grasree Beach is plain sailing thanks to a recently-completed boat ramp upgrade.

Boaties in the Sarina region are enjoying the upgraded facilities.

"The boat ramp was quite old," said Roads and Drainage portfolio councillor Kevin Casey.

"The \$630,000 project increased the boat ramp from four metres wide to 4.5 metres," he said.

"We also constructed a new car park adjacent to the boat ramp to further improve accessibility.

"Grasree Beach is a popular recreational boating spot and this work has provided a wonderful asset for the community."

Meanwhile, council also completed a shared path in the Grasree Beach area.



The upgraded boat ramp at Grasree Beach provides safe and easy access for boaties.



New parking complements the revamped ramp.

The project, which cost about \$450,000, constructed a shared path along Grasree Beach Road from Hall Street to join an existing footpath.

The work included the installation of a 2.5-metre wide pedestrian and cycle path that was built along the road reserve.

Out on the active path

THE way has been paved for a more active Sarina.

A new shared pedestrian and cyclist pathway, connecting the Sarina town centre to educational and recreational precincts, has been opened.

Part of the recently-completed three-year Active Towns program, the 2.5-metre path is aimed at encouraging more walking and cycling.

"The Sarina path was one of the final projects of the Active Towns initiative," said Roads and Drainage portfolio councillor Kevin Casey.

"It extends from Anzac Street near Sarina State High School and follows the laneway to Leslie Street. The path then crosses Range Road and follows Central Street across the railway, down Station Lane and into Railway Square."

>> Active Towns was a State Government and council program



Laura Burrows and her daughter Emily Dillon, 3, check out Broad Street Park.

Park spruced up

BROAD Street Park in Sarina has been given a \$40,000 facelift.

Parks and Environment portfolio councillor Theresa Morgan said the park's location in the centre of town and on the Bruce Highway meant it was important it looked good.

She said the works involved removing picnic settings and stripping out a large area of old pavers.

"Concrete pads for the picnic

settings were also installed and a concrete path to connect the disabled parking bays, picnic settings and amenities was built, improving disabled access.

"The entire area was filled and turfed, garden beds around the fig trees were stripped out, new timber seat planter boxes were constructed and beds replanted.

"Amenities received repairs and a full repaint to complement the park renovation."

>> Go to mackay.qld.gov.au for more parks information

Taking pride and improving facades

OWNERS of commercial properties in the Sarina town centre are encouraged to show their pride.

Applications are now open for the \$200,000 Mackay Pride Facade Improvement Scheme, announced as part of council's 2015-16 budget.

Based on the successful City Centre Facade Improvement Scheme, the new initiative has been expanded to other commercial precincts in our region, including Sarina.

Owners of commercial property in the Broad and Anzac streets areas will be able to apply for grants to help with facade improvements.

"We trialed a Facade Improvement Scheme in the Mackay City Centre and it was a huge success," said



Sarina residents take pride in their Broad Street town centre.

Tourism and Economic Development portfolio councillor Greg Martin.

"In round one of that scheme, \$54,000 in facade improvement funding allocated from the City Centre levy was going to result

in more than \$410,000 in facade improvements when property owner investment is added in," he said.

"The Mackay Pride Facade Improvement Scheme offers the same incentives in Sarina, Mirani,

Pioneer Valley, Walkerston, Calen, Evans Avenue in North Mackay, the West Mackay Fourways and Northern Beaches.

"We've already had some enquiries from property owners in Sarina.

"We hope Sarina business owners embrace this opportunity to make their centre appealing."

Applicants must provide a minimum of matched funding to the value of council's contribution up to a maximum of \$2000 per application for works under \$10,000, and up to a maximum of \$3000 for works over \$10,000.

Any applicants are also able to contribute additional funds beyond the matched contribution.

>> Keep an eye on mackay.qld.gov.au for details on the Mackay Pride Facade Improvement Scheme or call 1300 MACKAY (622 529)

Greener fairways

SARINA Golf Club is sporting greener grass thanks to Sarina's state-of-the-art Water Recycling Facility. Water and Sewerage portfolio councillor Frank Gilbert said the plant had supplied the golf club with more than 87ML of high quality recycled water since the beginning of the year. "It's great to see recycled water being used for irrigation in our local community," he said. "It provides a more reliable supply for the club, allowing the watering of fairways and greens all year round."

Sarina Festival On this Saturday, September 12.



Council is a proud sponsor of the Sarina Festival.

> **BIKE AND CAR SHOW: 3pm to 8pm, Hoey Street Rugby League Grounds.** Originally held as a ute muster, this year's event has been expanded to a full bike and car show. There will be a range of categories on show.

> **LANTERN PARADE:** Wander through the grounds and enjoy the local art and craft markets, food stalls and live entertainment on the main stage. There will also be a laser display on a large curtain. The night promises great free family entertainment for your weekend, with free entry.

>> Visit sarinafestival.com.au for more information



Volunteers had input into the design of the new Sarina SES facility, which has been built for ease of use, in Brewers Road.

New \$610,000 SES facility built at Sarina

MAYOR Deirdre Comerford has officially opened a new \$610,000 Sarina SES facility, thanking volunteers who had input into its design.

The new facility, funded through the Disaster Response Levy, was built on council-owned land in Brewers Road, Sarina.

Cr Comerford said the facility's size and capability meant it would also act

as the reserve Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) for the SES in the Mackay region.

"If Mackay is hit hard in a disaster, emergency services can operate from the Sarina facility," she said.

"It can also be used as a staging area if we require outside assistance."

Councillor Paul Steindl,

who was also at the official opening, was among 118 original volunteers when the Sarina SES was formed in 1976.

He was surprised to be shown his original membership card during the evening's proceedings.

Sarina SES's former premises in Lee Street has been put to good use, donated to the Men's Shed.

>> More details about Emergency Management online at mackay.qld.gov.au

Who to contact

DO you know which councillors look after the Sarina area as part of their rural portfolios? Cr Greg Martin looks after the Sarina urban township, Cr Paul Steindl Sarina beaches and Cr Chris Bonanno all areas south of Sarina, including Armstrong Beach, Koumala, Swayneville and Sarina Range. Cr Bonanno, who is council's Festival, Events and The Arts portfolio councillor, is also chair of the Sarina Festival committee. Contact details for councillors can be found at mackay.qld.gov.au

Watch flow

LEVEL 1 water restrictions apply for Sarina. This means you can only use water efficient sprinklers, hand-held trigger/twist nozzle hoses, irrigation systems and watering cans/buckets on alternate days, before 10am and after 4pm. More details on water restrictions can be found online at mackay.qld.gov.au

Stairs erected

COUNCIL has made beach access easier by installing five new sets of stairs in the Sarina Beach area at a cost of \$130,000. The new accesses were made using recycled plastic and a composite fibre product which is longer lasting and requires less maintenance. They replaced damaged and outdated beach access infrastructure in the Sarina Beach area.