

Birthday bash

HELP the MECC celebrate 30 years of entertainment in 2018, as the original Mackay Entertainment Centre blows out the candles on February 3 from 6.45am. Residents are invited to an unparalleled night of sophistication and celebration. Enjoy a black-tie function and canapes, with entertainment by The Koi Boys, Mackay Choral Society and Brooke Schubert, followed by a scrumptious post-concert dessert. Book tickets and get more info at themecc.com.au

Huegill home

FORMER Mackay Olympian Geoff Huegill will return to his hometown for the Optus Junior Dolphins Carnival at Bluewater Lagoon on Saturday, January 27. Optus Junior Dolphins is a fun play-based learning program for swimmers, aged five to 12, to build their confidence and skills while having fun. Huegill will be a special guest at the carnival activities at Bluewater Lagoon on the Saturday. An Optus Junior Dolphins Clinic and Carnival will also be held at Mirani Swim Centre on Sunday, January 28. More details at <http://bit.ly/2ml4GwT> or <http://bit.ly/2DaTsLs>

Stop dengue

CLEANING up around your home is key when it comes to avoiding a dengue outbreak. Dengue mosquitoes breed around the house in stagnant water. "To help prevent a dengue outbreak it is important to tip out any water in pot plant bases and containers, store items that can hold water in a dry spot or undercover, throw out any rubbish lying around and clean out your gutters," said Community Engagement Committee deputy chair Cr Justin Englert.

Pool safety

MACKAY residents are being reminded that all pools or spa pools that can be filled to a depth of 300mm of water or more must be fenced under state legislation. Drowning is one of the leading causes of death in children under five and the legislation is in place as a safety precaution.

Life's a beach at new Australia Day event

Eimeo Surf Life Saving Club's 'A Day at the Beach' new addition to this year's Mackay region line-up of truly Aussie celebrations on January 26

WHAT is more Australian than being on the beach on a summer's day in January?

Beach parties are just one way Mackay residents can celebrate next week's Australia Day.

And there is a new beach bash on the Australia Day line-up in the Mackay region, with Eimeo Surf Life Saving Club hosting its inaugural "A Day at the Beach" event from 9am to 2pm.

It is one of 12 community events council has helped fund this Australia Day.

Chair of council's Community Engagement Committee, Cr Fran Mann, said the region's beaches were always popular on Australia Day.

"It is great that the Eimeo Surf Life Saving Club is organising activities to help residents celebrate Australia Day," she said.

"Their application was an easy one for the committee to approve a funding grant for as they have some truly Aussie activities planned."

There will be thong-throwing, Aussie Beach flags, a three-



Gearing up for Eimeo Surf Life Saving Club's "A Day at the Beach" event on Australia Day are (from left) Niko Djukic, Jacob Djukic, Nelson Fenlon, Bella Fenlon and Max Coltan.

legged race, tug-of-war and many other fun activities for both adults and children.

Organiser Louise Maxfield said this year was the first time the event would be held and the council grant had helped immensely with publicity.

"We're always trying to come up with ideas to get families to have fun and be active together," she said.

"We hope it will become a regular event on the Australia Day calendar as Eimeo

Beach is a perfect place for families to gather.

"The activities will finish around lunch-time but come back for dinner and a night of awesome Aussie tunes performed by Hullabaloo. Bring your dancing shoes."

Cr Mann said Sarina Surf Life Saving Club would also be hosting another Australia Day event at Sarina Beach this year.

"Habana also has its own 'beach' party on again this year at the Habana

Community Precinct," she said.

"There are events being held at bowls clubs at Sarina and Northern Beaches, as well as some fun days in parks.

"This year's Australia Day is also doubling as a 30th Anniversary celebration of council's Bob Wood Cultural Hall at Sarina.

"There will be a free community event at the hall between 10am and 1pm. A plaque will also be unveiled to mark the milestone."

Get excited this AUSTRALIA DAY!

Celebrate Australia Day at one of 12 council-supported Australia Day events across the Mackay region.

- > **A Day at the Beach**
9am to 2pm, Eimeo Surf Life Saving Club, Eimeo
- > **Australia Day @ Sarina Beach**
noon to 6pm, Sarina Surf Life Saving Club, Sarina Beach
- > **Barefoot Bowls and BBQ**
11am to 6pm, Northern Beaches Bowls Club
- > **BBQ in the Park**
11.30am to 3pm, Quota Park, southern end of Binnington Esplanade, Mackay
- > **Bob Wood Cultural Hall 30th Anniversary**
10am to 1pm, Bob Wood Cultural Hall and Anzac Park Precinct, Sarina
- > **Family Fun Day**
10am to 1pm, Jaycee Park, Andergrove
- > **Habana 'Beach' Party**
3pm to 7pm, Habana Community Precinct
- > **Magpies Australia Day Games Challenge**
1pm to 3pm, Magpies Sporting Club
- > **Pioneer Valley Awards Day**
9am to 1pm, Pioneer Valley Show Hall, Finch Hatton
- > **Sarina Bowls and BBQ**
1pm to 4.30pm, Sarina Bowls Club
- > **Seaforth Family Australia Day**
9.30am to 1.30pm, Seaforth Foreshore Park
- > **Walkerston Fun in the Sun**
11am to 4pm, Western Suburbs Rugby League Football Club

More details mackay.qld.gov.au/ausdayevents

Awards recognise our region's community heroes



Mayor Greg Williamson and last year's Young Citizen of the Year Zoe Barnes.

SOME of Mackay's unsung community heroes will be recognised at an awards dinner on Australia Day Eve.

Council received 168 nominations in eight categories for its 2018 Australia Day Awards.

All nominees and those who nominated them have been invited to the dinner at the MECC on Thursday, January 25, where the winners of the awards will be announced.

"The dinner and awards evening is our way of recognising the achievements of everyone who has been nominated for an award," said Mayor Greg Williamson.

"The awards night's format changed to a sitdown dinner last year and was a resounding success," he said.

"Around 500 people attended last year's awards

evening and similar numbers are expected again this year."

As well as complimentary tickets for all nominees and nominators, tickets are also on sale to the public until noon this Friday (January 19).

To purchase a ticket, visit the MECC box office or buy them online at themecc.com.au.

The evening features a two-course, Aussie-themed

meal and live entertainment, including musician Luke Geiger and Aboriginal dance group Dirama Gangali.

The three major awards of the evening include Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year and the Lori Burgess Community Volunteer awards. Arts and Culture, Environmental Achievement, Community Group and Senior and Junior Sports awards will also be presented.

Memories of 1918 'storm' exhibited

IT has been 100 years since our town was almost wiped from the map.

Tragically, 30 lives were lost when the 1918 cyclone ripped through our fledgling town on January 21, 1918.

One family alone, the Welch family, lost six members.

The huge storm flattened much of the region and inundated large parts of the town, with waves up to three metres high rolling down Sydney Street.

A total of 1411mm of rain fell

in just three days.

To commemorate the centenary of this natural disaster, council is presenting an exhibition at the Jubilee Community Centre in the Civic Precinct from Saturday, January 20, until Friday, February 16.

The exhibition is a joint initiative of the four regional museums and Mackay Regional Council Libraries.

Mayor Greg Williamson is encouraging all residents to stop in and see the free exhibition.

The exhibition includes a film, featuring interviews with survivors, hundreds of photos and many stories from families who witnessed the cyclone's devastation.

"This is an exhibition that has come about through various council departments working together to come up with something special," Cr Williamson said.

"The two-part exhibition contains a section titled 'In the path of the storm', which looks at the direct impact of the event, and it flows into a theatre space and second

section, titled 'After the Storm', which looks at the aftermath," he said.

"I guarantee after you have

seen this exhibition and the sheer devastation on display, you will never be complacent about a cyclone warning again."



Town Hall in Sydney Street was used as a refuge centre during the impact of the 1918 cyclone.

>> More details on the exhibition to celebrate the centenary of Mackay's 1918 cyclone at mackay.qld.gov.au/afterthestorm

Expo in league of own

LOCAL rugby league legend Renae Kunst, who co-captained the Australia Jillaroos to World Cup glory last year, will be a special guest at next month's Sports Expo and Sign-on Day.

She's a perfect ambassador as the theme for this year's expo is "Women in Sport".

Sports Expo and Sign-on Day committee chair Cr Kevin Casey said the expo would celebrate the achievements of women in sport in a bid to inspire more people, both male and female, to get active and take up a sport.

"Exhibitors at the expo will be encouraged to decorate

their booths to celebrate the theme," Cr Casey said.

"We'll again have 100 sporting and recreation clubs and organisations under one roof," he said.

"So, it is an ideal event to come along and sign up for a sport or find out information about sporting and recreation options available in Mackay."

The 2018 Sports Expo and Sign-on Day will be held at the MECC on Sunday, February 11.

It is free for both exhibitors and for the public to attend.

Long-time supporter of the

expo Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal returns as the major sponsor.

Rio Tinto, Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association and StarFM and 4MK are also returning as sponsors, helping council deliver the event.

The event will feature the Rio Tinto Active Zone, with demonstrations of sports.

A mascot race is again sure to be a crowd favourite.

Optus has also come aboard as a sponsor and will have a five-metre high inflatable "dart" board to shoot balls at during the expo.



DBCT mascot Hector at last year's Sports Expo with North Mackay Saints AFL players (from left) Heather Davies, Kate Morley and Rahnee Vaccaneo.

>> The Sports Expo and Sign-on Day is a council initiative powered by DBCT

>> Darts details and tickets at themecc.com.au