

Sports expo nets some special guest superstars

Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games mascot Borobi the koala to join netball champion and NQ Cowboys players at popular annual event

NEXT month's Mackay Sports Expo and Sign-on Day will boast a star-studded line-up of guests.

Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games mascot Borobi is the latest confirmed for the February 12 event at the MECC.

Organisers GOLDOC will have a booth at the expo with information on the Games, ranging from ticketing to how people can volunteer.

Major sponsor of the expo Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal's mascot Hector

will also attend, as will other sporting mascots.

Romelda Aiken, a 196cm-tall, Jamaican-born netball sharp-shooter for the Queensland Firebirds, will be the expo's main drawcard.

The expo is being held the day after an NRL pre-season trial match at BB Print Stadium Mackay, so NQ Cowboys players will also make an appearance.

Players from Mackay state league teams — Mackay Cutters, Meteors and Meteorettes and

the Whitsunday Sharks netballers — will also attend.

About 100 exhibitors have registered for the event.

Mackay Netball president Lyn Law said it was a big coup for the Sports Expo, organised by a committee of council and community representatives, to have Romelda Aiken as a special guest.

"Romelda has done coaching clinics in Mackay previously and the young kids just adore her," she said.

"She really gives them

someone to look up to. We're taking advantage of her visit to Mackay for the Sports Expo and Sign-on Day by having her conduct a one-hour coaching clinic for 10 to 12-year-olds on the Saturday evening before the expo."

The Cowboys are yet to announce which players will attend as it will depend on their line-up for the February 11 trial against the Sydney Roosters. However, up to six Cowboys are expected.

The expo, to be held from 9am to 1pm, will again feature the Rio Tinto Active Zone.



Netball sharp-shooter Romelda Aiken.

>> The Sports Expo is supported by major sponsor Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal, Rio Tinto, Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association, Star FM and 4MK

February hosts feast of footy

IT will be a feast of footy in Mackay in February.

As well as the NRL pre-season trial between the NQ Cowboys and Sydney Roosters on February 11, the AFL boys will strut their stuff a fortnight later.

The Gold Coast Suns will take on the Essendon Bombers at Harrup Park Country Club in a JLT Community Series Clash, formerly the NAB Challenge, on Sunday, February 26.

Harrup Park general manager Michael Jones said there was a buzz around the AFL clash pre-season competition clash.

"The phone started ringing as soon as the announcement was made," Mr Jones said.

"Corporate ticket sales so far have been strong," he said.

"There is a real interest around whether the Suns can make a significant improvement this year and everyone is speculating about Essendon. It should be a fantastic day for all the family."

Corporate ticket sales for the AFL game are being handled by Harrup Park. General admission tickets will go on sale through Ticketek on February 1.



Excited about the upcoming AFL game in Mackay are Mayor Greg Williamson (centre) with AFL Queensland regional manager Jeff Neumann (left) and Harrup Park Country Club general manager Michael Jones.

>> These two pre-season NRL and AFL games are supported by council's Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program

Celebrate in true-blue style

Put on your Aussie cossie and share your #MackayPride at one of 10 council-supported Australia Day community events on January 26. These events will take place across 10 locations, including Habana, Mackay, Pioneer Valley, Sarina, Seaforth and Walkerston, with plenty of fun for the whole family:

- > **Australia Day Red Devil Family Fishing Competition** 8am to 1pm, Shoal Point Beach, Shoal Point
- > **Pioneer Valley Australia Day Awards and Celebration** 8.30am to 1pm, Pioneer Valley Show Hall, Finch Hatton
- > **Australia Day Open Day** at Banksia Scout Group Den 10am to 1pm, Jaycee Park, Fernleigh Avenue, Andergrove
- > **Australia Day BBQ and Family Fun Day** 10.30am to 2pm, Mackay Surf Life Saving Club, Mackay Harbour
- > **Wests Australia Day Celebration** 11am to 4pm, Western Suburbs Rugby League Football Club, Walkerston
- > **Australia Day Community Barbecue** 11am to 2pm, Iluka Park, Town Beach
- > **We Are One - Aussie Family Day** 11.30am to 3pm, Quota Park, Southern end of Binnington Esplanade, Mackay
- > **Australia Day Party 2017** 2pm to 6pm, Seaforth Foreshore Park
- > **Australia Day at Sarina Beach** 2pm to 6pm, Sarina Lifesaving Club, Sarina Beach
- > **Habana "Beach" Party** 3pm to 7pm, Habana Catholic Church, 1091 Mackay-Habana Rd, Habana

Mayor Greg Williamson will also welcome almost 100 new citizens at an Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony, January 26, at the MECC.

More at mackay.qld.gov.au/ausdayevents



2015 Citizen of the Year Dr Peter Bastable with 2016 winner Samantha Bliss.

Heroes nominated

THERE are plenty of unsung heroes in our community.

More than 180 nominations were received for this month's annual Mackay Regional Council Australia Day Awards.

Deputy Mayor Cr Amanda Camm said the awards were fitting recognition.

"There are so many inspiring people in our community," she said.

All nominees will be recognised at an official awards ceremony at the MECC on Australia Day Eve, January 25. Winners of the

various categories will be announced on the night.

All nominees and nominators have received complimentary tickets. The public can also purchase tickets through the MECC for \$30 each until 4.30pm tomorrow (Thursday, January 19).

Nominations received include: Citizen of the Year (47); Young Citizen of the Year (25); Arts and Culture (nine); Environmental Achievement (four); Lori Burgess Community Volunteer (54); Community Group (eight); Young Sports (12); and Senior Sports (24).

Farm project reduces run-off

A NEW project involving local cane farmer Darrell McLennan's 150-hectare farm in the Bakers Creek catchment is an environmental success story.

And it has not only reduced run-off and pollutants coming from his farm — it has also saved him considerable time and made his farm more economically-viable.

Mr McLennan said the two-year pilot project, aimed at offsetting stormwater run-off into waterways, had greatly benefited his farm.

"I've always been someone who has tried to do the right thing, but in the past I haven't had the access to knowledge or resources to really implement best management practices," Mr McLennan said.

"Thanks to this project, I now have an agronomist who I can call at any time for advice on projects and, with council meeting me dollar-for-dollar



to upgrade my equipment, I have noticed massive changes on the farm.

"For example, because of new GPS modelling tools, I have been able to change the angles of my rows before planting to considerably slow and reduce run-off from my paddocks.

"The technology allows me to model 10 different paddock angles to find the best, rather than the old way, which was pretty much guesswork that

you were stuck with for the next five years.

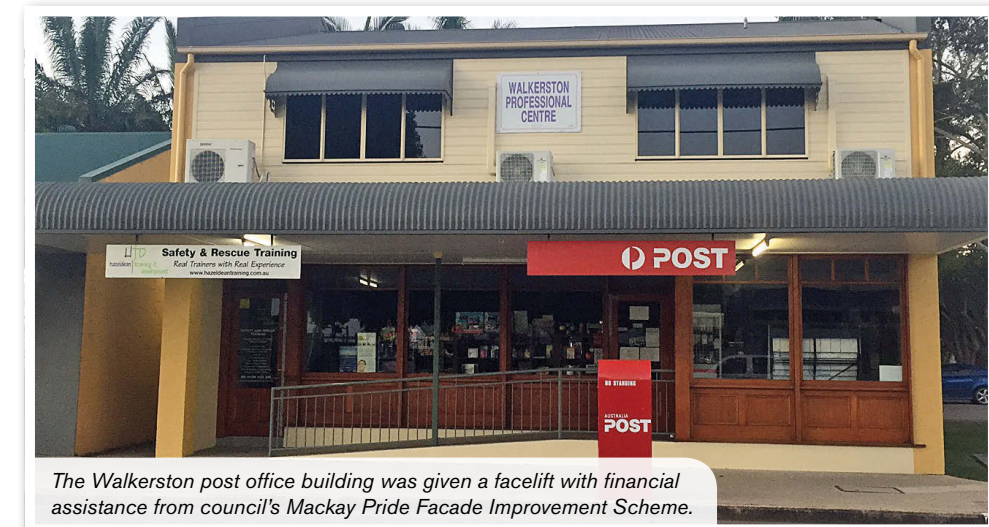
"The technology also reduces overlap during fallow management spraying, which has seen a 25 per cent reduction in used herbicides and a considerable time saving.

"New planting and cultivation equipment has meant that rather than having to work a paddock 11 times before planting, I now have to work it just three times.

"For a 30-acre block of replanting, this saved me 1100 litres of diesel and two and a half days, not to mention all the topsoil you lose to wind and rain while working.

"And the resulting crops have been every bit as good as those worked 11 times.

"It's not just the equipment though — something as simple as changing rows from 1.625m wide to 1.8m equates to a 17 per cent reduction in run-off."



The Walkerston post office building was given a facelift with financial assistance from council's Mackay Pride Facade Improvement Scheme.

Taking pride in building facades pays dividends

AS an owner of commercial property, Tom Casey reckons more landlords should take pride in building facades.

He has previously given facelifts to properties he owns with financial assistance from council's Mackay Pride Facade Improvement Scheme.

A new round of the scheme is open until February 20.

"I think it (the scheme) is a great idea," said Mr Casey, of Mackay Queensland Homes. "I was on the Heritage Advisory Committee with council for 13 years," he said.

"I am not anymore because I live in Airlie Beach but I still own property there."

Mr Casey said the scheme could help restore the facades of historic buildings to their former glory.

But he said it was also great for modern buildings in need of a bit of a facelift.

His Walkerston post office building in Dutton Street was given a makeover in a previous round.

"I built that building myself back in 2000," he said.

"It has had a paint before but it needed a good paint and clean again and the timber restored. We did the whole facade. It is a timber structure, two-storey and it came up really well."

Mr Casey is a partner in the

adjoining Walkerston Plaza, which was also upgraded with assistance from the Mackay Pride scheme.

He also upgraded the facade of his DIY Costume Hire building in Wood Street.

The Mackay Pride scheme, based on the successful City Centre Facade Improvement Scheme, provides financial assistance of up to \$3000.

It is for businesses with active road frontages in designated townships and commercial centres, such as Sarina, Pioneer Valley, Seaforth, Kuttatubul, Mt Ossa, Walkerston, Calen, Evans Avenue and Fourways.

A new round of the City Centre scheme is also open.

>> For more information, or to apply for a grant, go to mackay.qld.gov.au/facade