

THE BYRON SHIRE

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SO MANY IMAGES BUT ONLY A FEW GET THE PICTURE



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Frazer yanks at the Yankee joker, P J O'Rourke - p19

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Hiroshima Day remembered
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Council term ends as it started: without planning clarity

Hans Lovejoy

In some parts of Byron Shire, last Thursday morning was perhaps welcomed by a salute to the sun or a downward dog.

In Council's chambers it was the last chance for the majority to sign off on scrambled and confusing policy.

While there is another meeting planned, under 'caretaker' mode, it only provides limited powers for councillors. So this was it!

One of the parting gifts from the majority of Crs Woods, Ibrahim, Hunter, Cubis and Wanchap was the contentious draft Rural Land Use Strategy (DRLUS). It's a 20 year template for rural planning that will work with other planning instruments.

With 830 public submissions largely against the way in which they handled it, and state government agencies flagging major concerns, Cr Wanchap bravely took to the floor and sprung an unseen two-page convoluted proposal upon councillors and gallery.

And so the councillor who changed the balance of power within the chamber from the start of term - by defecting from the Greens - got her chance right at the end of Council's term to rewrite important policy on the fly.

As usual, it didn't matter that the minority of councillors weren't consulted; their opinions don't matter when you have the numbers.

One addition was to give special treatment to twelve private properties

and include them in the strategy.

It's an increase from a staff suggestion of four, and they are classed as 'priority rural lifestyle living opportunities' (RLLO). They come with associated criteria, such as being west of the highway, being an undeveloped site and within a 5km radius of a town with a high school.

Two staff recommendations were rejected by the majority, which would have seen the policy delayed while an intersection 'capacity and functionality' assessment was undertaken for the RLLO properties.

The foreshadowed amendment said in reply, 'Council should not be responsible for paying for an intersection capacity assessment for a private property.'

Cr Wanchap argued that the additional properties have been seeking multiple occupancy (MO) status for many years, and that 'all of the suggestions staff have made, other than these, will still carry through... they are very minor changes.'

Around that point, Cr Dey asked cheekily if he could include his Main Arm property on the list as well.

Last-minute inclusion

Cr Alan Hunter then slipped in his own inclusion, entitled 'Byron Shire Farmland Variation Criteria'.

It replaced the 'NCRP and farmland variation criteria', which staff had recommended to remove altogether.

The Farmland Variation Criteria will identify land that 'may have

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Dissecting discourse



Local luminary Kerry O'Brien with fellow journalist Sarah Ferguson. For more Writers Fest photos, see page 42. Photo Jeff 'Four Cornered' Dawson

Vivienne Pearson

A Byron festival featuring mud, gumboots and crowds having a blast despite the weather? No, this is not a belated report of last year's Splendour, it's about last weekend's Byron Writers Festival, which went ahead despite serious meteorological challenges.

Friday 9.20am: 'Oooh, it looks like Glastonbury out there' - Annabel Crabb (ABC political commentator).

Words, worlds, woes and wins

This is a festival full of writers, who openly share their words, worlds, woes and wins.

Sunday 11.55am: 'You'd be amazed how odd you can be and still chime a chord with others,' said author and radio presenter Richard Glover.

Perhaps even more so, it is a festival of readers. Others come well read. I arrive having to consult authors' bios but leave with a year's worth of 'must reads'.

Friday 11.45am: No-one says: 'One day I would like to be a great reader... but maybe they should,' - philosopher and author Damon Young.

It is also a festival of ideas and inspiration. I scribble captured thoughts before they are occluded by the next speaker.

Friday 12.40pm: 'What is writing if not trying to find your way home?' - Robert Dessaix (author and former radio broadcaster).

Because this is Byron, there are strong doses of politics, environmentalism, education and concerns about our cultural conversations.

Because this is Byron, all is served with consideration and humour.

Sunday 1.35pm: 'All names have been changed to protect the guilty,' - Grant Cameron, author of self-published novel *Stash*.

This is a festival driven by a small team of staff and a huge team of volunteers. All were calm and helpful - notable at any time but heroic given that the festival was only just able to proceed after strong winds shredded marquees.

Everything is within a stroll across the grass/mud. If you are super keen to hear someone, you move smartly to that marquee.

If you are easy, you can see where the flow of the crowd takes you.

Sunday 10.45am: 'I'll climb aboard my duck and ride off into the sunset' - Michael Leunig (cartoonist and Living National Treasure).

This is where the stories of the 2016 Byron Writers Festival took me.

Take Back Your Power! Solar Battery Value Comparison Chart

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 Motoma Gel-Acid with Megapulse	\$3,800	6.72 kWh	\$0.15	<Grid Price ✓
 LG Chem RESU Li-ion	\$7,500	5.12 kWh	\$0.43	✗
 Tesla Power Wall Li-ion	\$8,000	5.44 kWh	\$0.50	✗

figures for Lithium Ion batteries provided in an independent review by Solar Quotes

The Truth About The REAL Cost of Solar Batteries

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