



A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed

Andia Cally

Six months before the 2022 floods displaced many in our shire, the 2021 Census showed that the Tweed region already had one of the highest rates of homelessness in NSW. With “an estimated 529 people defined as homeless and a growing number of people living in an assortment of multiple residency housing types, temporary lodges or in severely crowded dwellings.”

Local hero and OAM John Lee realised the gravity of the housing crisis 22 years ago when a chance encounter with five homeless men was the catalyst for starting local charity, You Have A Friend.

With a successful op shop in Tweed Heads as its base, John and his team



of 40+ volunteers provide more than 300 meals a week to the homeless and marginalised, including

single mothers and children, from food that Coles and the community donates. John and his wife have also helped out further afield with emergency relief work during the droughts and subsequent floods in QLD and NSW.

“If people could only take time and understand that homeless people are humans who have fallen on bad times. Once you are down and you don’t have a home you won’t get a job, and if you don’t get a job, you won’t get a home,” John explains.

“I know so many (homeless) people who ask what’s the point in trying to

get a place when you’re competing against 40-50 other people.”

Many in our local communities are still waiting for permanent housing after the devastating 2022 floods. “There are single mothers paying \$400 to live in tents and that rate doubles to \$800 a week during peak season. They can only stay in a caravan park for 8 weeks before taking an enforced break for one month,” John reveals.

John is buoyed by Tweed Council’s proposal to allow granny flats as secondary dwellings to stem the housing crisis. He has been frustrated by the lack of long-term solutions and the rejection of his proposal to place extendable and relocatable caravans on a farmer’s land to house displaced single mothers and elderly people.

You Have A Friend delivers food to areas in and around the Tweed, including Currumbin, Pottsville, Chinderah, Coolangatta, Tweed Heads and our very own Squaretunda in Uki, every Friday at 12pm. Other outreach includes support for a growing number of struggling single mothers, as well as weekly breakfasts at Jack Evans Boat Harbour every Sunday.

“In the 22 years I’ve been doing this I have never heard a homeless person complain. I love the people at Uki and Nimbin. They are soft, gentle people, they don’t want to fight, they don’t want to argue, they just do their own thing and help each other and that’s how the world should be,” John says

One hundred percent volunteer-run, John is proud of the fact that You Have A Friend has maintained

its independence. “We don’t get government funding and none of us get paid”. Despite that, when asked how the community can help John insists “I don’t want money, just give me food and cans”.



Left: Food deliveries. Above: Volunteer Brian Bone delivers to Uki weekly.

Over the years John and his team have worked with 11 different schools in Tweed Heads, who mainly collect tinned food. One cooks meals for the homeless and packs them in containers to distribute. He emphasises that giving money “is an easy way out and it is good if the kids actually give food”. If younger people do want to donate, he encourages them to not just rely on their parents and “perhaps pay a little out of their money - hurt a little for those less fortunate than themselves.”

If you would like to support the great work of John and his team, individually or as a school please reach out to him johnl.17@bigpond.com. John would love to recruit some younger volunteers in the op shop (must be over 18) .



From the Editors

Welcome to Issue 139

In February and March we explore heartfelt themes of inclusion, connection and community.

Beginning with our our profile on the amazing John Lee, Founder of local charity, You Have A Friend, a not-for-profit that feeds and supports many in our community who are homeless or experiencing hard times.

We bid a fond farewell to St Colomba, Uki's Catholic Church that for the past 113 years hosted countless baptisms, weddings, and events.

We welcome news of a National Autism Strategy and hope it paves the way for one in NSW.

The Uki Refugee Project shares how we can welcome and support refugees through its exciting calendar of events in the first half of 2025.

RUKI reflects on the wild weather that ripped through our region in January and asks some essential questions around our preparedness for future events.

We are excited to celebrate women in our community with the news of the first local International Women's Day festival, kicking off with three events across Kyogle and Nimbin.

We hope you enjoy this extended online edition that includes some of your favourite columns.

Andia

ADVERTISING

Business card size	\$30	Half page	\$100	All Advertisers will receive an invoice Advertising revenue helps fund the Uki News
Quarter page	\$60	Full page	\$200	

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Disclaimer: the opinions and views expressed in this newsletter may not reflect those of the Uki News or of UKIRA.*

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Current and past issues are available at Uki Village website - www.ukivillage.com.au/uki-news*

ADVERTISING MATTERS

Advertising revenue funds the printing of Uki News. Without it, we can't bring our community all the regular columns you know and love.

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CONTRIBUTION DEADLINES

Friday 14 March, 2025	April/May
Friday 16 May, 2025	May/June
Friday 18 July, 2025	Aug/Sept

Free legal advice for storm damage

The Disaster Response Legal Service, via Legal Aid NSW, offers free legal help regarding insurance claims, tenancy issues, financial hardship, and government disaster grants.

Timely advice can assist in obtaining available assistance and speed up recovery after the event. This is particularly important when dealing with insurance claims - knowing what you are covered for and what benefits may be available.

For free legal help, call the Disaster Response Legal Service helpline on 1800 801 529, Monday to Friday from 9 am - 5 pm or visit the website at disasterhelp.legalaid.nsw.gov.au



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LARRIKIN COOKIN'

A Recipe for Good People:

Pat Miller

Can I suggest the newest leader of the free world's diet shouldn't be yours and remind you that good people and good food are in the world. They go together.

Fat little fingers of beef are really easy to cook and a great way of presenting food so everyone takes only what they need. Not a bad economic model. It should catch on.

This was served to some great mates after a badly scheduled environmental meeting. As always the idea is more important than the actual quantities.



Image courtesy of <https://www.crayon.com/>

- Cut 500g of charolais topside (thanks Bruce Teitzel, Paddock to Plates – my beef supplier) into 10cm lengths, cross section about 3cm x 3cm. Trim the sinew and fat; put sinew, fat, veggie and herb off-cuts, whatever, into a small pot, just cover with water and simmer. You're making a really easy, almost foolproof stock base for the sauce.
- Marinate the topside fingers for a couple of hours in red wine, olive oil, (lots of) garlic, minced onion, basil and a sprig of rosemary. Salt it carefully.
- After marinating, pat the steak fingers dry-ish and cook in a searing hot, oiled cast iron pan. While this is happening chop a handful of mushrooms and strain the marinade through a coffee filter, a paper towel or tea towel. Doesn't have to be fancy. The idea is to add the red winey garlicky herby juice to the sauce without the lumpy bits. If you end up with a couple of lumps it won't be fatal.
- With the 'finger' cut you can cook to bespoke 'doneness'** really easily. When 'done' take them off to rest. Fry the mushrooms in the 'steak' pan, deglaze with the stock and strained marinade juice. Thicken it with a little cornflour, check the salt.
- Assemble and serve. That's it. It goes with pretty much anything. Tomatoes, feta and torn rocket, mashed spuds, steamed greens, whatever's in the bottom of the fridge.

** A note about 'doneness'. I always undercook excellent produce. You can always apply a bit more heat to get it better cooked. If it's overcooked, you can't undo it.

Pat Miller



Tweed Seniors Festival

Celebrates older people in our community and the contributions they make to enrich local life.

It runs as part of the NSW Seniors Festival, which is the largest celebration of its kind in the southern hemisphere. The theme of the festival is 'Time to shine!'.

The 2025 festival runs from Monday 3 - Sunday 16 March

[Program link](#)

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Holy Trinity: A Church for the Community

Reverend Hilary Singleton and team

When we heard that the heritage-listed Holy Trinity Church might be sold almost three years ago, the community joined together and the sale was postponed.

We are very grateful to the local Anglican parish for its support. Recently Rev Hilary Singleton became honorary part-time pastor and the link person with Murwillumbah.

We function weekly with a mixed team. This little church community exists for Uki and surrounds. We have created a labyrinth and spiritual garden for the village. It is open 24 hours daily for your use.

Under John Tyman's leadership we hosted amazing concerts and we continue to provide a venue for many village activities, including yoga, healing circles, men's groups, art exhibitions, Tweed council events and Just Dance. We support the Uki Refugee Project.

The Church was built by communal effort as a WW1 memorial building more than 100 years ago and is historically linked to many old pioneering families. We are blessed by angels who cut the grass from time to time. People of all denominations and those without, come to share in Sunday morning services, where exploration and reflection are encouraged, doubts and fears expressed and struggles supported. We sit in a circle and everyone's voice is important.

On the first Sunday of the month, Hilary hosts a slightly more formal service of Holy

Communion. Sometimes people from other faiths are invited along to share their stories and we respond, thinking about how our own stories at different points and ways chime in with theirs. We believe in breaking down walls that divide.

Recently we heard that services in the Uki Catholic Church are being discontinued and that building sold, we imagine that grieves many. Please know that you are welcome to join us at 9am any Sunday morning.

Hopefully if ever again there is intention to close Holy Trinity, the whole community will take up the cause to keep this nourishing and sacred resource available to everyone in our village.



Holy Trinity in Uki welcomes people from all denominations



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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

Pauline Hurcombe "Life is not all about me".

Heather McClelland

For 34 years, Pauline was well-known in Uki becoming linchpin of community at the Mount Warning Pre-school. In her warmth she influenced generations of children and their families and enjoyed how both industry and centre developed.



PAULINE HURCOMBE

"I think it is having that sense of connection and security yourself that makes it possible for you to give out to little kids who need safety and security too."

For Pauline safety and security came from family. "The fact that I'm one of a family of six children had a huge influence. It wasn't all about you. You learned to get along with others. You had to share.

Our adventuring happened as a group. Our parents were relaxed for us to roam the neighbourhood with no fear and I had a deep sense of connection. We still go on holidays together."

The matriarchs in her family, both grandmother and mother inspired her.

"My grandma was stoical, teaching and making her way in isolated postings before meeting my grandfather. Both she and mum involved themselves in community organisations leaving me a legacy: how to look out for each other and take time to be present so you have quality interactions. I have great memories of big family dinners at my grandmother's table, engaged in conversations about the world."

A highlight of Pauline's youth was travelling with a friend for six or seven months: on the overland trail to Europe through Burma, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey.

"It meant being cut off, only getting letters occasionally but it really opened my mind to how differently people live".

Pauline goes through life alongside others she can bounce things off while always remaining herself.

"When it comes down to it embrace life... I've been learning about bush regeneration recently and already one side of the creek we've been working on is coming back to life. Fight tooth and nail because there's a lot to live for!"

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Janelle Saffin MP

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National Autism Strategy Opens the Way for NSW Strategy

Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore

In January the Albanese Government released the National Autism Strategy for an inclusive society, where Autistic people are supported to thrive in all aspects of life, in line with international human rights.

I welcome this landmark announcement that I have been eagerly waiting for that I have always advocated for.

The National Strategy was developed after the inquiry by the Senate Select Committee on Autism, highlighting the serious challenges autistic people and their families face in Australia.

Autistic peoples' life expectancy is 20 years shorter than the general population, an unemployment rate almost eight times the general population, and experience high levels of social exclusion, discrimination, loneliness and isolation.

In announcing the strategy the Federal Minister for Social Services, Amanda Rishworth said addressing the barriers Autistic people face in areas like education, employment and diagnosis was long overdue.

The National Autism Strategy and Action plan focuses on four key reform areas: social inclusion; economic inclusion; diagnosis, services and support; and health.

The First Action Plan includes \$42.3 million in funding for programs including:

- a peer support program providing lived-experience/knowledge, empathy and culturally tailored advice for

Autistic people in groups they resonate with; enhancing community understanding, awareness and acceptance of Autism through new awareness and education initiatives;

- improving the diagnosis process through resources to support Autistic people and their families with pre- and post-diagnosis information;
- boosting pathways to meaningful employment;
- a dedicated knowledge translation body that ensures academic research into neurodiversity informs and improves the policies and services impacting Autistic people's daily life;
- identifying ways to improve Australian Government services, supports, information and the safety and welfare of Autistic people;
- a comprehensive epidemiological study identifying the prevalence of Autism in Australia that underpins future policy development.

The National Autism Strategy, together with its first action plan, means I can encourage a comprehensive response at a regional and state level.

The National Strategy points out the areas where the states deliver services, including public hospital, community health services, schools, pre-schools and TAFE, police and courts and correctional centres,



Jane Laverty, Mat Rogers and Micheal Lynch at Ballina RSL Club, raising awareness of the need for a National Autism Strategy April 2024

public transport, child protection, domestic and family violence services, and major sporting facilities.

This list makes it clear we now need a strategy at the state level.

I have long been pushing for a NSW Autism Strategy in the Parliament and have supported local advocates who have been calling for this because I understand the significant challenges faced by autistic people in our community, particularly in regional areas.

Three years ago I hosted a roundtable discussion on autism in my office and from that meeting the seeds were sown for the Northern Rivers Autism Association Limited (NRAA).

I acknowledge the Founder and Chair of NRAA Micheal Lynch, who with Business NSW's Regional Director Northern Rivers Jane Laverty, drove local consultations that helped to inform the national strategy.

Like me, Micheal is very keen to see the first NSW Autism Strategy become a reality.

Uki RiverCare volunteer workdays

Matt Bloor

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- boosting pathways to meaningful employment;
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Recent Wild Weather Raises Preparedness Questions



Resilient Uki

It's almost been three years since the devastating floods of 2022. Have you asked yourself: 'Am I better prepared now?'

If your answer is 'Yes, but I could be even better prepared' that's great and a step in the right direction. You may now ask: What does being prepared look like? What to do first? How should I go about this?

It can feel overwhelming but there are resources in place to guide you.

The RUKI website (resilientuki.org) is a good start as it contains some step-by-step 'get ready' resources from multiple agencies. Maybe start at resilientuki.org/emergency-resources/preparing-your-household/

The wild weather on 16 and 23 of January and the stormy start to 2025 shows us it's not just floods that can disrupt our lives. Many of us were without power for over 24 hours and there was a heatwave to boot!

SES volunteers worked like trojans removing trees and clearing debris, and we saw many neighbours helping each other. However, we are all learning the importance of not just community but self-reliance. Also, we're all human and can be caught off guard.

Here are a handful of common-sense things you might want to check regularly:

- Do you have a generator? If so, do you always have spare fuel for it and turn it on occasionally?
- Do you have a solar fridge, or eskies to add bought ice to?
- Do you have a small power bank to charge phones/devices (and do you keep it charged)?
- Do you have a head torch, solar lanterns and a portable radio (and spare batteries)?
- Do you have a small gas stove you can cook and heat water on?
- Is your pantry well stocked and do you have access to water, independent of the town supply?
- Do you have a spare tarp/ropes?
- Is your chainsaw sharp and oiled?
- Have you familiarised yourself with the apps, links and numbers you might need in an emergency?
- Do you know anyone in your neighbourhood who might be willing to share resources with you (i.e. charging your phone using their generator) in an emergency.

Take a breath, take some time, get prepared. You'll feel better for it. Connect with your neighbours and stay safe.

BE AWARE PREPARE CONNECT

Visit the RUKI website for local resources on:

**Bushfire | Floods | Storms |
Landslips | Heatwaves | Health
& mental health | Animal care |
Food security | Connecting with
your neighbours and more.**

resilientuki.org



Supporting Refugees in 2025

Bryan McClelland
.....

In January this year the United Nations Human Rights Commission ruled against Australia in landmark decisions.

They concerned offshore processing of people seeking asylum, indefinite detention of asylum seekers and lack of legislation to prohibit detention of children. Our cruel asylum and border management policies do not comply with International Law!

Our team of letter writers continue to lobby politicians on all these matters, not least the fate of those who have been abandoned in PNG.

In November 2024 an enthusiastic audience braved heavy rain to enjoy Zemzemeh, a peace-centred concert of Persian poetry and song by Greta and Siyavash at Holy Trinity Church. Siyavash and his family came here from Iran when Australia's policies were kinder.

As a result of this concert, we have sent \$1500 to a group of Afghan women now settled in Australia who facilitate the underground education of girls in Afghanistan, something close to many Australian hearts.

The generosity of donors enables us to persevere with helping others who supported our troops

in Afghanistan to remain safe from the Taliban and hopefully find refuge here. This is time consuming.

We also continue to provide considerable financial support to the Romero Centre in Brisbane where many waiting for visas receive care and sustenance. It is planned to again host families and singles in our homes as we welcome them for a true Uki Friendship Visit later in Sept/October.

Diary dates:

- Pot luck Dinner: If you'd like to join our supporters
- come along to this meal together; 6pm on Friday February 28th, Undercroft, Murwillumbah. a time for community, to hear news and enjoy the offerings everyone cooks up.
- A film Event on Sunday May 4th. Watch for details of both film and location.
- A Refugee Week event will take place on June 15th.

Due to generosity from the public, supporters will be turning up at various markets to sell raffle tickets and beautiful prizes will be drawn at the film and the refugee week events.



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little gallery

Nuts about Gums

Heather McClelland

The gum tree in all its variations and in the way it spreads around our continent is completely natural and unable to be tamed by human hands.

“Every country has its own landscape which deposits itself in layers on the consciousness of its citizens, thereby canceling the exclusive claims made by all other national landscapes.” Murray Bail

Artist, Heather McClelland says: “It is the randomness of true harmony I’m seeking to bring to this feature wall exhibition with its variables: tall timbers and gum blossom painted in oils, flanked by smaller watercolours depicting gumnuts, leaves, barks and blossoms, often demonstrating why

and how wildlife and humans alike can be ‘nuts about gums’”.

This feature wall will be on display for the month of February 2025, alongside the works of our 11 other gallery artists.

Little Gallery is open Wednesday to Friday from 10am-3pm and Saturday and Sunday 9am to 2pm.

PLONK!

Ken Corbitt

This comedic murder mystery play is set in the sitting room of the farmhouse at Worth Farm and Vineyard. Heather Watson hatches a plan that in her final handful of years of life, she will have a little fun promising various people they will be her sole beneficiary to the entire farm and vineyard in return for a reduction in their current wages. Each person involved is sworn to secrecy and is not to mention this arrangement to anyone else.

One evening when all five are invited to a gathering, Heather is murdered by one of them in her bedroom. Detective Harman has the job to try and unravel the clues which lead to the murderer. As the story unfolds, revelations of a secret romance are discovered along with the true identity of who is to inherit Worth Farm and Vineyard... but, who is the murderer?

Murwillumbah Civic Centre

March 7-9, 14-16, 21-23.

Tickets at murwillumbahtheatrecompany.com.au



Uki Buttery Bazaar Entertainment

Sanne Grace Kenna

8am - 2pm

To book a stall at the monthly Uki Buttery Bazaar please contact the Market Coordinator on 0487 329 150

Uki Buttery Bazaar Market

PLENTY OF PARKING AT RAINBOW BRIDGE AND SWEETNAM PARK

FEBRUARY Buttery Bazaar

Sunday 16 FEBRUARY

The Heart Of Community Comes Alive!

Set 1: Murray Kyle

Set 2: Tashmeen

Set 3: Murray and Anneliese

R&B influences with intimate, personal lyricism. With a unique background rooted in both Bangladesh and South Africa, her sound reflects a rich cultural tapestry, infused with soulful melodies and heartfelt storytelling.



TASHMEEN

Inspired by her father, **Tashmeen** began singing at the age of six, and over the years, she has developed a distinctive style centred around her jazz and Bangla influence.



Renowned Troubadour **Murray Kyle** returns to the Uki markets bringing his contagious soul restoring tunes to enliven these times.

Based locally and touring internationally, Murray has carved a unique path in independent music with over 20 years of performing around the globe. With a passion for spirituality and social change, his music transcends genres, taking listeners on a journey of self-discovery and connection. Anneliese Rose will also be bringing her powerful vocals and presence, weaving with Murray for a heart opening & joyful journey of sound.



MURRAY KYLE
www.murraykyle.com

Murray's earth-honouring performances and uplifting vibes reflect his dedication to fostering positive change through the power of music.

MARCH Buttery Bazaar

Sunday 16 MARCH

Balkan Inspired Reggae & Rock Stripped-Back Acoustic Storytelling

Set 1: Anya + Shey

Set 2: Zac Crackalaka

Set 3: Leopard Zebra Tiger

Set 4: Empress Katia

Mum and Dad power-combo; **Anya** Bunya and **Sheyzo** will kick the day off with some soulful, light-hearted acoustic tracks, covering a range of decades. With an electric chemistry, this playful duo share stories of the trials and the triumphs, the journeys of the heart, and the quirky!



ZAC CRACKALAKA

Swimming in instruments, loopers, effect pedals and cables, watch this crafty creator strip it back to his roots. Leading the audience on a journey of his life as experienced through song, **Zac** will be sharing from his deep vault of original folk, ballad, blues and Reggae tunes. Drawing inspirations from adventures throughout Australia, New Zealand, Europe, India and Asia, witness this Zac-Of-All-Trades in a far more vulnerable, stripped-back and raw form than usual.



LEOPARD ZEBRA TIGER



EMPRESS KATIA

Multi dimensional songstress **Empress Katia** is an Enchantress of creativity and expression. Soulful Earth Mama vocals with a lush honey like undertone melting into a unique flavour of Soul Funk Reggae Roots Jazz HipHop RnB World fusion, this taste is bound to stay on your lips and dance through your mind with lyrics of powerful affirmations.

Emerging straight outta The Channon Rainforest on all-fours, is the rainbow regions' newest and most stylish collective. This animal-print outfit; **LEOPARD ZEBRA TIGER**, bring the vibes with their safari of Balkan-inspired Reggae/Dub, Folk and Funk, and healthy amount of good ol' fashion Rock n' Roll.

Local Festival Celebrating Women's Week in March

Jeanette Dal Santo

To coincide with NSW Women's Week and International Women's Day, Creative Communities Connect Inc. (CCC) has announced the launch of the Northern Rivers' own International Women's Week Festival from 2 to 8 March 2025.

After delivering several sold-out festivals in Queensland, this festival will celebrate and empower women in our local community, as we explore their changing landscape.

"We are so excited to finally bring this festival to the Northern Rivers. We saw incredible new initiatives come out of our previous festivals, with new connections sparking collaborations and ideas that made a profound impact on the community", said Jeanette Dal Santo, President of CCC.

It's been a big few years in the world, and the International Women's Week Festival 2025 offers women across the Northern Rivers an opportunity to find new connections, get creative, explore deep topics and have a much-needed laugh with like-minded others. We have some fantastic speakers and performers and hope to see a great turnout", she added.

The festival will kick off with three events across Kyogle and Nimbin and is a collaboration between local not-for-profit group CCC and regional community organisations, businesses, speakers and creatives.

Women Rising - Business Event - Sunday 2 March, Kyogle Golf Club

A one-day women's business event where women can connect, be inspired and build new skills to unleash their business potential in 2025. Speakers include three-times Australian Marketing Institute national award-winner, Amanda Blennerhassett, NLP and mindset master, Michelle Prowse, Daina Walker, local Wirangu woman, and Founder of both Diversified Business Skills and not-for-profit, First Nations Women in Tourism.

Blossoming Throughout The Seasons - One Day Workshop - Wednesday 5 March, Church of Aquarius Nimbin

This intimate event will explore our intergenerational journeys as women from maiden to mother to crone and includes creative activities and local speakers at each stage of life, each of which having chosen authenticity over convention to find her own truth and step into her destiny, including maiden, Eleanor Hearn, mother Tereza Andjelic, and crone, Rose Cubis.

Let's Hear It For The Girls - Dinner with Entertainment - Saturday 8 March, Kyogle Golf Club

This uplifting night for men and women in our community will celebrate the special ladies in our lives and includes dinner plus inspiring and thought-provoking speaker, war veteran, husband and father of two girls, James Greenshields, who will be joined by local up-and-coming comedian, Helen Sager, and local music duo, Hear and Now.

For full information and to book tickets, please visit: www.creativecommunitiesconnect.org



Vale Doug Turner

UKIRA

UKIRA is sorry to announce the passing of Doug Turner on 23rd January 2025.

Doug and his wife Mirielle retired to the Tweed in 2018 settling at Mt Warning.

Doug was very popular and a great community-minded man. He joined UKIRA, volunteered at the Murwillumbah Community Garden, and in keeping with his Christian faith was a regular in the congregation at Murwillumbah's Uniting Church.

Doug supported many causes and could often be seen gathering bottles and cans to raise money towards building materials for a community church at the Solomon Islands and to help with food, clothing and medical needs in Uganda.

He also seemed a very determined man. As a UKIRA committee member Doug never missed a meeting or a Uki News folding session. He took on gardening work at the Uki Buttery and regularly helped with distribution of the Uki News, all duties he performed even when he was feeling below par. Doug will be deeply missed.

Our sympathies go to Mirielle and family.



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Strap on your seatbelts: Major planetary shifts are underway

Paola Emma

.....

A year of amazing planetary shifts has just began. The Lunar Nodes, signposts of the upcoming eclipses (March 14 Lunar and 29 Solar), moved signs first (Jan11/12), from Aries/Libra to Pisces/Virgo.

The Moon Nodes symbolise the planet's soul trajectory: the Pisces North Node represents the evolutionary way ahead, suggesting the need to consider what's happening in our lives and on the planet in the light of a higher purpose, with greater spiritual acceptance, emotional sensitivity and compassion.

The Virgo South Node symbolises what we have to release, hinting at the need to re-dimension our concerns with endless preoccupations about work, money, productivity etc. Naturally, we all need to take care of practical concerns, but we shouldn't let them dominate our lives.

During this period the focus will be on the ongoing retrogradation of Mars between Cancer and Leo, ending on February 24, and the upcoming retrogradation of Venus from Aries back into Pisces, from March 3 to April 13.

The transits of Mars have been stressing the need for tough adjustments within families, clans, communities, groups and even nations (Cancer), as the first aftermath of the US Presidential Elections is showing.

Due to Cancer's highly emotional nature, these transits have generated discord among people who should ideally share a sense of belonging.

However, they are also making us more conscious that our personal needs and desires (Mars) can and should co-exist with the needs of our families or of the social pool we belong to, be it a community, an entire nation or the whole world (Cancer). This is a perfect time to realize and act upon the fact that both needs are equally important.



The retrogradation of Venus will bring our sister planet to cross the first degree of Aries three times, (Feb4-Mar27-May1) thus becoming, in the short term, a significant catalyst to the most important upcoming transit, the conjunction of Saturn and Neptune on this very same degree, active from July to September and culminating in their exact alignment on February 21st 2026.

Neptune will enter Aries on March 30 and Saturn on May 25. Their historical conjunction would be a game changer for the world and for many of us at the personal level, bringing our highest collective ideals (Neptune) to a point of actualization (Saturn). Great stuff, but certainly fraught with serious difficulties and susceptible to lengthy and troublesome setbacks that could last to the end of the decade.

The present period is one of transition. Pisces, the Sign Neptune and Saturn are leaving, is the last in the Zodiac, symbolizing a time when things are coming to an end but new beginnings are still shrouded in mist, creating feelings of confusion and uncertainty. Whatever hasn't find solution or resolved itself in the previous cycle of Saturn (30 years) and Neptune (164 + years) is coming to a head this year, in 2026 and beyond, when these two align.

At the Autumn Equinox (March 20, 7.01 pm local time), when the Sun will also cross the first degree of Aries, marking the traditional beginning of the new astrological year, it could be then particularly important to set our personal goals and intentions for the coming months, on a new level.

For more astrological insight, articles and free tutorials please visit my site: <https://livingmoonastrology.wordpress.com>



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