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Voyage of hope



Coley Bowen and Lionel Jack, along with Niall Cobus (INSET), are among a group of Hope Vale residents, mostly youngsters, who are taking to the water on the catamaran SV Pelican for three weeks during the vessel's fifth expedition for a program tackling youth crime, substance abuse, violence and suicide. The unique Hope Vale Pelican Project was a winner at this year's Reconciliation Awards. ▶ Full story, page 5. Picture: SAM PROUDLEY

Cattle battle

Rossville residents to wage war on rogue cows

By SARAH MARTIN

FED-UP Rossville residents say things will get ugly if nothing is done about feral cattle destroying their gardens and fences.

A herd of more than 20 cattle has been wreaking havoc in the small community, about 40km south of Cooktown and bordering Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, since arriving about six months ago.

Private gardens have been

trampled, fences broken and roadside plantings destroyed, say irate residents.

Rossville town agent Jacqui Jackson said she spent hours working on the verges

of Rossville, planting, fertilising and watering dozens of trees, shrubs and palms, only to see them killed by the cattle.

Her partner, Peter Timmer-

'It's just ridiculous... they gallop along the roads at night'

- Peter Timmermans, Rossville

'They ate my roses, all the crotons and green bananas'

- Richie Hatfield, Rossville



"It's just ridiculous, they gallop along the roads at night and all the dogs go off."

Landowner Harold Meyer was contacted by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2007, and asked to contain his cattle to his property.

But Mr Meyer denied the current rampaging herd was his, claiming he had only about 15 beasts – half of which were on his property.

"It could be a mix of some of my cattle and other people's cattle," he said.

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News

Cardiac challenge hits Cooktown

A GROUP of pedalling fundraisers will hit Cooktown on Monday, after a three-day, 335km bike ride from Cairns for the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation's annual Cardiac Challenge.

Riders will take off from Cairns on Saturday, September 27, and hit Cooktown on Monday, raising funds for the foundation, who will direct the money towards cardiac care in Cairns.

Green group lends thumbs for bush tucker garden

EIGHT workers from Conservation Volunteers Australia are bound for Cooktown to help improve the school's bush tucker garden.

P&C president Jennifer Midgley has secured the "labour grant" of seven volunteers and a co-ordinator for two days, on dates yet to be specified, in November.

The conservation volunteers would help rehabilitate

the school's bush food garden, near the pool, as well as build a compost system for food scraps from students' lunches, with the compost to go back on the school's vegetable garden.

"They are keen to make a top gear compost system and have said they could help out with materials," said Ms Midgley.

Pelican flies into Far North waters

IT'S not often that free yacht trips are offered, but that is exactly what youngsters from Hope Vale have been treated to for the past three weeks.

The Tasmanian-based catamaran SV Pelican hit Far Northern waters earlier this month, its fifth visit to the area since the beginning of the Hope Vale Pelican Project in 2004.

Hope Vale's Estelle Bowen invited the Pelican and her crew to the small indigenous town five years ago to help break a cycle of youth crime, violence, substance abuse and suicide.

The boat's crew, under the guidance of captain Garry McKechnie, conduct scientific studies, teach the youth on board about sailing, visit their traditional lands and a host of other activities, including dance and music workshops and digital storytelling.

Cooktown school students also enjoyed a day trip on the Pelican when it arrived from Cairns on September 12.

The Hope Vale Pelican Project earlier this year won the Partnership Award at the 2008 Reconciliation Awards.

Century-old boat dead in water



The Cooktown Re-enactment Association's Jenny Moxham with a 130-year-old wooden boat, one of three used for Cooktown's annual re-enactment of the landing Captain James Cook, which have all been deemed beyond repair by experts.

By SARAH MARTIN

THREE historical wooden boats that have played an integral role in Cooktown's Discovery Festival for decades are beyond saving, experts said.

The Cooktown Re-enactment Association has received bad news about the ageing boats which for many years have been part of the Discovery Festival re-enactment of Lieutenant James Cook's landing on banks of the Endeavour River.

"News from two independent assessors – a marine engineer, and Cairns Wooden Boat Society – confirm that unfortunately all three of the association's boats are beyond reasonably affordable restoration," said the association's Jenny Moxham.

"At present the boats are retained for display purposes and use as a parade

float, while we look for functioning new boats."

Ms Moxham said the association was negotiating with an interstate maritime museum who had a boat "surplus to requirement" which could be heading to Cooktown free of charge, provided someone could transport it.

Despite the setback, the association is powering ahead with the organisation of next year's June long weekend Discovery Festival – in what will be the group's golden jubilee re-enactment – with weekly meetings to nut out details of New Year's Eve functions for 2009 and 2010, as well as a ball during the festival.

"Enquiries for costume allocation and ticket bookings are already being received," Ms Moxham said.

The group's headquarters – the former Cook Shire Council town planning office on Charlotte Street – has been named the

Boat House, and has received a steadily increasing flow of tourists since it opened in recent months.

"Progress on the Boat House continues, with interior layout rearranged to allow for better traffic flow when 10-12 tourists visit at once," Ms Moxham said.

"This is a frequent occurrence now, as tour buses drop off and pick up passengers outside the building."

The building's new layout would be put to the test with a November visit from 25 students and six teachers from Miallo State School, she said, complete with a musket salute.

Photos of re-enactments past and present for a coffee-table style book to be published next year had continued to flood in, Ms Moxham said, but none of the 1970 visit of Queen Elizabeth II as yet.

For details phone the Boat House on 4069 6861.

August building nods half last year's

A \$430,000 duplex at 58 May Street in Cooktown helped push last month's total value of building nods in the Cook Shire to little more than \$620,000 – about half of the worth of approvals in August 2007.

The Department of Housing project was among six developments in the town given the green light by the council in August, along with a \$130,000 home in Mason Street; a \$45,000 shed in Furneaux Street; \$6000 worth of alterations and shutters for the Sovereign Resort Hotel verandah restaurant; a \$3500 demolition of the Cape York Tyres shop awning; and a \$4000 carport in John Street.

Little more than \$2 million in development has been approved for the first two months of the 2008/2009 financial year, compared to a total of about \$1.3 million by August 31 last year.

And 24 building applications with a combined value of almost \$1.7 million were being held by the council for further details, including three lodged last month – a \$49,000 shed by Cr Charlie Martin; a \$12,000 new awning at Cape York Tyres; and a \$20,000 shed by D Dupre.

Meanwhile, two land reconfiguration applications for subdivisions were lodged with the council late last month – one under the old planning scheme for six lots on the rural lot 2 on Endeavour Valley Road, and the other for five lots on rural lot 1 on Esk Valley Road, near Archer Point. A revised subdivision plan for a proposed 19 lots at 'Wyalla Gardens' in Bloomfield was also submitted last month.

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