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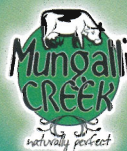
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Mareeba Rodeo

It's that time of year again, the Mareeba Rodeo Festival is in full swing, running until July 14. Starting with the junior cowpokes competition right through to the street parade and crowning of the Rodeo Queen, there's something for everyone at the Rodeo. As usual the event also features bull riding, saddle bronc, steer wrestling, barrel race and breakaway roping. Local competitions are followed by the State of Origin Rodeo Challenge: QLD vs NSW! And of course there's the traditional show with rides & games together with an extensive agricultural exhibition. Includes photography, needlework, handcraft, woodwork and horticulture displays. For more information visit www.mareebarodeo.com.au

New programme for people affected by stroke, acquired brain injury and their supporters

The Atherton Tableland STEPS group is a social support group for people affected by Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) or Stroke (aged 18 to 65), and those who support them.

The STEPS Program is an initiative of ABIOS, The Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service, based in Brisbane. Three Tableland locals, Debbie Lowrie, Caroline Black and

Leslee Hogan were trained by ABIOS to facilitate a 6 week STEPS Program in Atherton. The group will meet for social outings, including a regular meet up at Bridges on the last Sunday of every month.

Another 6 week program will be offered on the Tableland at a future date. In the meantime, anyone whose life has been affected by Acquired Brain Injury or Stroke is

welcome to join them at Bridges Café on Sunday July 28 from 1pm. Monthly STEPS Network meetings offer an opportunity to meet others with similar challenges for social support and fun.

For further information phone Louise Anderson-Clemence on 0439 977 746 or Leslee Hogan on 4091 1102.

New Tablelands wildlife hotline

The Tablelands is rich with native wildlife, it is one of our tourism attractions and adds a lot of beauty and wonder to our area. Sadly, as many Tablelanders are aware, it also means injured and sick animals are common too.

Living in such a diverse and natural area means caring for our wildlife should be a priority, all locals can play a part in keeping an eye out for any trouble. Now it's easy with a new 24 hour native wildlife hotline exclusive to the Tablelands. Founders Nikki, Claire and Jean (pictured below left) originally worked out of a Cairns wildlife organisation when they realised a lot more carers and help was needed around the Tablelands area. Since then, these three Tablelanders, along with a number of other local carers, have been busy creating just that. If you find any injured or sick wildlife from macropods (kangaroos and wallabies), possums, sugar gliders, birds and reptiles the carers at Tablelands Wildlife Rescue urge you to give them a call, any time, any day, and they will send out the nearest available carer to help.

Covering the Tablelands and as far as Ravenshoe, Molloy, Dimbulah and everywhere in between, no problem is too big or small, and the carers all take turns manning the new hotline. One of the founders and carers Nikki said she's had many unusual animals to care for over the last 15 years, "I've cared for quolls, echidnas and even platypus before, it's a very rewarding experience when you see them recover and then release them back into the wild." Nikki's current patient is Giddy, a full grown goanna. Giddy was found by workers at the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. They noticed he was slow and sluggish, and on further inspection that he had a large abscess in his chest. Nikki said he wouldn't have survived if he wasn't rescued, "He would have suffered a slow decline, not healing fast enough to catch his food."

Giddy is in his fourth week of recovery now and has undergone a number of surgeries.

Another helpful service the carers from Tablelands Wildlife Rescue offer is snake removal, however registered carers with a snake permit are few, with only 4 in operation currently. Wildlife promotions worker and carer Jean, who started helping wildlife around 2005, said they are always after more carers, members or even donations, "There is something for everyone, covering all levels of comfort, whether it's taking a shift to help cover the hotline, becoming a carer, a rescue only person to relocate an injured animal or even just a financial helper," Jean said. "We offer training and if we can get people who love snakes as well that would be fantastic." The group also holds various training workshops for people interested, this month they are starting a beginners bird caring workshop from July 28 (see calendar for details). But Jean warns it's important people realise they need a permit as it is illegal to care for native wildlife without one.

There will be forms available at the course, "Tablelands Wildlife Rescue is happy to help set up and train carers, anyone interested feel free to contact us for more information. Alternatively people can help by shopping at the Atherton District Welfare Society shop on Main street, as they are one of the organisations major supporters.

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