

### NEXT BMCAI Quarterly Meeting

**MAY 3RD**

*This meeting will  
start at 2pm*



### BM COMMUNITY MEETING PLACE

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### NEW FIRE TRUCK FOR THE BUNYAS

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### BMCAI AGM & Quarterly Meeting

**FEBRUARY 8TH**

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# BMCAI NEWSLETTER



## The Latest Highlights

**Successful AGM** - Our February AGM/Quarterly meeting had one of the largest attendances in recent times. BPAC has done a great job of maintaining and upgrading the venue. Their changes to the outdoor space facilitated a lovely social gathering for dinner after the meetings.

**Road Upgrades and Repairs** - BMCAI is actively pursuing TMR to prioritise maintenance of both the road and vegetation on the Bunya Mountains Road. WRDC has begun repairs and maintenance to the gravel roads off Tolmie St in Mowbullin. (see page 19)

**BM Rural Fire Brigade has a New Fire Engine** - Our fire brigade have taken possession of a new state-of-the-art fire engine, the first to be built by R.A.Bell for the QFS. (see page 9)

**BMCAI Social Activities Successful** - The Christmas Carols at Cedarvale and the Australia Day gathering at Fishers Lookout were both well attended and blessed with great weather. Several community activities are in planning for 2025. (see page 7)

**The Community Meeting Place** - There is a lot of activity regarding the fine-tuning of building and septic design standards needed to meet council specifications. Advisory meetings with professionals 'in the know' has resulted in valuable guidance in this regard. (see page 7 & 20)

## Our Partners

**Rural Fire Brigade**  
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**Natural History  
Association**  
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## SubCommittees

**Social, Events &  
Fundraising**  
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**Local Disaster  
Management**  
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**Dingo Management  
Community  
Education  
LSFMG**  
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## 2025 AGM HIGHLIGHTS

### President, Noel Noack's AGM Report

"The Bunya Mts are special. They are the only non-coastal rainforest in Australia, the largest stand of Bunya trees in the world, home to 215 bird species and at 1000m, Mowbullen is the highest 'village' in Queensland.

It is our joy to live, visit, enjoy, help manage and protect this magnificent location. Together through the Bunya Mountains Community Association Inc we accept this responsibility and carry out this task.



The past year has been one of immense activity in which considerable progress has been made in achieving our goals. In obtaining the lease of Lot 80 on Bunya Mountains Road, we have made significant advances in achieving our vision of a Community Meeting Place to serve both locals and visitors."

Noel covered the following areas of focus in his report:

#### **Enhanced Community Liveability (including safety aspects for residents and visitors)**

- Continued advocacy to TMR and local councils for vegetation maintenance of local roads.
- Advocated for the completion of the sealing of the Bunya Mts-Maidenwell Road. Completed by SBRC.
- Advance the Community Meeting Place Plans. SBRC provided a 10 year lease for Lot 80. Sketch plans have been developed and preliminary work on further plan development is being done.
- Develop a closer and productive relationship with BPAC.
- Liaise with SBRC for the management and upgrades of Allan Stirling Memorial Park.
- Upgrade and enhance the BMCAI website.
- Follow the progress of the proposed Dandabah Discovery Centre.
- Hosted and informed the newly elected members of the SBRC regarding relevant issues at the Bunya Mountains.
- Hosted the Bunya Mountains Local Disaster Management Sub-Group.

#### **Natural Environment Management Strategies**

- Hosted the BM Dingo Management and Stakeholders Group
- BM Dingo Public Education Working Group
- Feral Pigs
- Phytophthora in Bunya Trees

#### **Create, Develop and Support Communication and Collaboration (local issues and future planning)**

- Four newsletters annually - edited by Russell Sturgess.
- Grant applications - \$27,630 raised in 2024. (Noel acknowledges Secretary, Carol Weekes)

- Social Events and Fundraising Committee - Brett Mason, Carol Weekes, Annette Sprenger, Meg Noack, Russell Sturgess and Kathy Blackwood.
- Noel highlighted the farewell of Ian and Margaret Harris, long time residents of the Bunyas and contributors to the local community.

### **Sustainability of the BMCAI**

- The BMCAI has 103 financial members and 11 associate members. Maintaining those members and recruiting new members is vital for a viable future.
- Financial Supporters are very important.
  - Heritage Building Society - Nanango
  - Stanwell corporation
  - South Burnett Regional Council
  - Western Downs Regional Council
  - Tarong Power Station
  - Meandu Mine

Noel expressed thanks for their ongoing support.

### **Conclusion**

Noel acknowledged the guest speakers of 2024. He went on by concluding:

"It is clear that the BMCAI Management Committee and Sub Committees have had a significant workload. I wish to acknowledge the dedicated service of all the committee and subcommittee members. Their support is valued and essential in carrying out the goals of the association. The service of our Secretary, Carol Weekes, and her wise advice, determination, diligence and sheer effort have been a mainstay of the Management Committee.

Many other members, whose support and service was vital to the success of our activities, are too numerous to mention. Their commitment was important in achieving our goals."

### **Treasurer, Robert Zigterman's AGM Report**

The Financial Statement prepared by Hobbs and Associates, Wondai, was presented and accepted.

The operating profit for 2024 was \$10,399.

### **Election of Office Bearers**

President	Noel Noack	Publications Officer	Russell Sturgess
Vice President	Gerald Tooth	Committee Member	David Blackwood
Secretary	Carol Weekes	Non-Executive Position	
Treasurer	Robert Zigterman	Assistant Secretary	Kathy Blackwood



## General Business

- The annual membership fee was approved to be \$15 per annum, per person from 1st Jan, 2026.
- The non-executive position of Assistant Secretary was created and implemented.
- Cr Linda Little (SBRC)
  - Still no response from TMR re road vegetation.
  - Septic tank conversation to be held with the SBRC Plumbing Inspector in the following week.
  - Dingo Safe Signage - \$2000 approved for the SBRC local government area.
- Cr Peter Saxelby (WDRC)
  - Chris Gaschk would be able to provide an update on the feral pig tracking program.
- Changes to the signatories with Heritage Community Bank (Nanango) were approved.
- The opening of a Fundraising Account with Heritage Community Bank (Nanango) was approved.
- The Treasurer was approved to be added as an additional authorising officer to ABN.
- The change of signatories for the Tyro account was approved. New Signatories: Treasurer and Secretary.





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## QUARTERLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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### BPAC Report - Melanka Lesina

Events - late 2024:

- Indigenous Tourism Event - Wakka Wakka dancers.
- AGM and Christmas breakup. Presentations by Jennie Firn, Dr Louise Shuey, Chris Gashk, and Qld Tourism.
- Christine Howard presented an indigenous documentary. (Also provided lasagna)

Three week break over Christmas,

A new base for the young rangers was purchased and upgraded by BPAC at Helidon.

A full camp event for Firesticks training with Vic Steffensen. Formed a partnership with Natural Heritage for the Climate Smart Agricultural Program. Did three cultural burns.

Participated in drone training - mapping the balds. Interesting encounter with a Wedge Tailed Eagle!

Dr Louise Shuey is doing more research with Adrien Bauwens - contributing to the bio-security data collection. Continuing tree injections to manage die-back.

Apology from Uncle Bunya. The Volunteer Program he instigated is working really well.

### National Parks Report - Matt Cotterill, Ranger BM QPWS

Tenders for the Dandabah Day Use Area and Campground Upgrade Project closed on the 7th of February. Principal contractors should be awarded the contract by March 2025. Construction should take between 7-9 months.

It is hoped the two trail heads will remain open during this time, when safe to do so. Other trailheads may have to be utilised in the event of their closure. Parking in the National Park may also be impacted throughout this time.

Pig baiting will next occur on the 17th of February. Dan is doing his QPWS firearms training.

Approval has been given to burn the balds in the National Park. A helicopter will be used for this burn.

An attempt was made to poison wattles in the Westcott areas in October/November but the severity of tick brought a halt to this job.

### Guest Speaker - Roger Foxton (presentation notes are available)

Roger congratulated the outgoing and incoming Management Committee on behalf of all of the landowners.

Roger provided an insightful, interesting, and entertaining insight into life in the Bunyas in the late 1880's to the mid 1900's referencing his family's history.

Roger noted that overall weather has been drier in recent years and Cunjevoi Creek does not run as well as it did in the past. He noted that the last really large snowfall was in the 1960's.

## General Business

### Website Upgrade

Dani Rose Designs is progressing with the BMCAI Website upgrade. Brett provided a demonstration of the current format and functionality. The new format is both mobile and tablet friendly. The upgrade is expected to be completed in the next month, or so.

### Bunya Mountains Dingo Management Stakeholder Group Update

Membership includes SBRC, WDRC, QPWS, BPAC, residents, and invitees including body corporate representatives.

Last meeting was on 25th November 2024 with the key outcomes being an update of the BM Dingo Management Plan, and endorsing and progressing the work of the BM Dingo Public Education Program Working Group for the signage and brochure.

Next meeting 24th March 2025. Contact [bunyamcainc@gmail.com](mailto:bunyamcainc@gmail.com) if you would like to be involved.

### BM Dingo Public Education Working Group Report - Kay Joyce (full report is available)

The WDRC Enviro grant application was successful. Be Dingo Safe signage and brochures are now being finalised. The focus of these public information tools is to highlight; how to behave around dingoes, the variety of dingo colours, and how to report engagements to the Stakeholder Group. ([bunyadingolog@gmail.com](mailto:bunyadingolog@gmail.com)) The aim is to have the all-weather signage installed by the Easter school holidays.

Newspaper articles in both South Burnett and Western Downs highlighted the unique environment of the Bunya Mountains, of which dingoes are an essential part. They highlighted that problems in their interactions with humans occur through engagement that is either too close, or feeding the dingos, accidentally or intentionally.

The concern of the Bunya Mountains Owners and Renters Group regarding dingoes was raised, the nature of which demonstrated a lack of updated information that is readily available from the Stakeholders Group.

Editor's Note: Our May Newsletter will be featuring the 'dingo issue' here on the Bunya Mountains.

### Bunya Mountains Local Disaster Management Sub-Group Report - Carol Weekes

The last meeting was held on the 6th Dec 2024. In attendance were: Emergency Management Qld, SES, Qld Police Service, Qld Ambulance Service, Qld Fire Department, BM Rural Fire Brigade, SBRC and WDRC Local Disaster Management Group, BMCAI and local residents. The Sub Plan is an active Sub-Group document which is routinely updated. (Next meeting - 7th March 2025)

In the event of a disaster, the BM Fire Shed will be the Critical Incident Control Centre. The newly SBRC-provided 22kva generator (installed, trained, and live trialed), and soon to be installed Satellite Phone (Ergon Energy Q Community Fund - \$4900) will both serve well in the case of a critical Incident.

Following the last meeting, the Sub-Group was trained to prepare Situation Reports to report upwards through the Disaster Coordination System, to get assistance in the event of a BM disaster.

## General Business cont'd

### Community Meeting Place Proposal Update - Carol Weekes

Feedback from the last BMCAI Quarterly meeting was provided to Tom Newman (Newman Building Design), who updated the Concept Plan to include as much of that feedback as possible.

Material Change of Use Application being presented to SBRC by Leonie (Town Planner) ONF Surveyors, Kingaroy.

Soil Testing Completed. Water Waste Management is a present hurdle given the that under the Bunya Mts Precinct Plan, that will require a very large space. The Management Committee are currently working with this issue.

ATC Engineering is preparing the Vehicle Manoeuvring Plan and TMR Access approvals.

Seeking Sponsors and Infrastructure funding. Gerald updated the Feasibility Study to be oriented to Lot 80. This will be used by Regional Development Australia (Wide Bay Burnett) in preparing the Economic Modelling for infrastructure grant applications.

SBRC recently slashed the block, and we are seeking a cleanup of the 'footpath' area.

### Social, Events and Fundraising Subcommittee Report - Russell Sturgess

The Subcommittee is currently made up of; Meg Noack, Christine Howard, Russell Sturgess, Brett Mason, Carol Weekes, and Kathy Blackwood. Annette Sprenger resigned late last year. Many thanks to Annette for her significant contribution to the achievements of the Subcommittee in the past.

#### 2024 Subcommittee Projects

- Anzac Day, 25th April. Good weather, great attendance. Gerald Tooth - Guest Speaker. Ian Harris - Organiser. Pte. Will Lawless, 25/29 RQR - Services Representative.
- NAIDOC Week, 1st July. Wet weather - venue changed to BPAC. Very good attendance. Activities included indigenous dancers, native foods, and indigenous art workshop (boomerangs). Thanks to Meg for her art donation for the BMCAI raffle. BMCAI provided lunch.
- Bunya Mountains Play Music on Nature's Porch, 31st August. A global event. A very hot August day, but given our first attempt, was very successful. Music provided by Nanango Sheddars, Bagpiper, Kumbia Ukulele Players, father/son duo, and Dan Cosgrove. Thanks to Ian for his donated handcrafted side table for the BMCAI raffle.
- Bunya Mountains Art of the Forest Exhibition, 23rd/24th November. Focusing on the Bunya Mountains environment, flora and fauna, the weekend was a good success. Grants from SBRC RADF, RES, and Coopers Gap Wind Farm helped to meet costs. Primary artist, Freda Forsberg was supported by local and regional artists and indigenous arts; Niketa Law and Dallas Bond. There were two fully subscribed masterclasses - Gondwanan Landscapes and Indigenous Weaving. Frida Forsberg kindly donated a beautiful original painting (values \$1200) for the BMCAI raffle.



## Social, Events and Fundraising Subcommittee Report cont'd.

- Bunya Christmas Carols 22nd December. Good weather, an enjoyable program, quite a few attendees, and enjoyed by all. Music provided by last minute trumpet player Mia, a young camper, Polly from Kumbia with her ukulele, and Meg on the keyboards. MC'd by Noel who also gave a great talk of St Nicholas. The BM Rural Fire Brigade delivered Santa, who provided small bags of lollies to the children in attendance. The NHA kindly gave access to Cedarvale to the BMCAI for the evening.
- Scenes of the Bunya Mountains Calendar 2025. The photographic competition and professional judging was hugely successful. 412 of the 500 printed calendars were sold.
- 2024 Financial Outcomes. All profits are deposited into the Building Fund Acc. (\$10K + raised in 2024)

NAIDOC Week	\$1,672	Community Lottery	\$736
Play Music on Nature's Porch	\$1,483	Calendars	\$2,325
Art Exhibition	\$3,531	5% Levy to General Fund	\$360

### ● Subcommittee Outcomes

- Promoting social connection and support
- Promoting cultural and environmental awareness of the Bunya Mountains
- Supporting and growing volunteerism, improving community capacity and resilience
- Welcoming new residents and property owners
- Catering for meetings and activities

- Thanks to the Subcommittee for their tremendous contribution. If you would like to be apart of the Subcommittee, email [bunyamcainc@gmail.com](mailto:bunyamcainc@gmail.com)

## Members Issues

Wheelchair Access Toilets are available at the National Parks Dandabah Day Use toilets. It's on the male side of the block, and is for both male and female use. BM National Parks staff have been approached to put up a directional sign indicating the location of the accessible toilet.

## Roads/Parks Maintenance

WDRC: Entrance to Rifle Bird Park repaired. Tree removals on BM/Dalby Rd have been attended to promptly. Repairs and upgrade to gravel roads off Tolmie Street are being currently being carried out.

SBRC: Tree removal on BM/Kumbia Rd attended to. Allan Stirling Park and Bunya Ave walkway tidied by SBRC Parks 5th Feb.

TMR: Road edge washouts near Russell Park, and from Towers to Bunya Ave. Major vegetation issues on much of the Bunya Mountains Rd over the mountain. A letter was sent to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Director General re the safety issues on all of the BM approach roads.

## BM RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

The big news is that on Wednesday 29 January, we took delivery of a new Isuzu automatic Fire Truck, labelled Bunya Mountain 51. Steve Roberts from Area Office in Kingaroy delivered it, gave us a run through of the new vehicle and took away our old BM51 that had been in the Brigade for almost 24 years. We have been busy reading up the instruction books that came with the new truck.

### Toilets

Lynne Downes, Peter Weekes and I had a phone meeting recently with Chris Spencer, Acting Assistant Chief Officer, Wide Bay Burnett Region and Tim Henwood from the Asset Services Division of the Queensland Fire Department, about the 'Ablution facility' that we have been waiting so long for. It gave us answers for why it has been taking so long. Chris also gave assurances that Rural Fire Services Queensland "will maintain contact and update accordingly".

### Fire Shed & Trucks

The new Truck maintenance team comprising Graeme Wright, Janelle Peterson and Gary Watts started the bi-monthly truck checks on 24 January this year.

Barry Stewart has charged all the batteries and Pat Stewart continues to do the office filing.

The new generator had a trial run on 24 January when there was a power outage to the entire mountain for 21 hours. The gas stove was also lit.

A man from Q-Build visited on 13 February and conducted an Asbestos audit and a Condition Assessment. His report will go to RFSQ but he told Peter Weekes and me that it was in very good condition and very well maintained.

### Community involvement

The Brigade drove Santa to the BMCAI Christmas Carol singing afternoon in December.

### General

I am please with the support from members to keep the Brigade and the Fire Shed operational. I believe that our Brigade is functioning as well as it can, considering the size of the Bunya Mountains community and where some of our members live. I also believe that it is important to have a Fire Brigade to service the Bunya Mountains.

Thank you all members of the Brigade for your support.

John Learmont,

First Officer, Bunya Mountains Rural Fire Brigade.



# BM NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

## Heritage Bank Nanango Sponsorship Awards 2024

On Tuesday, 11th February, 2025, four members of BMNHA attended the Heritage Bank Nanango Sponsorship Awards for 2024. It was a lovely evening. We were provided with hamburgers and drinks, also learning about the history of the Heritage Nanango Bank, which was originally set up as a community bank, with community members, concerned that the other banks were all closing down. They could see that this would have led to the demise of the Nanango community, as people went away to do their banking and shopping in other locations. Heritage Bank Nanango now gives funding to various community groups through their profits. It was rewarding for those who bank with Heritage Bank Nanango to see that their support is helping to fund great projects throughout the community. Our President, Bernice Seton was then presented with our Award.



## Acknowledgement Ceremony Thanking Heritage Bank Nanango

On Saturday morning, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, BMNHA held an Acknowledgement Ceremony to thank Heritage Bank Nanango for the grant for our restoration project at Cedarvale Cottage Museum. We had directors from Heritage Nanango Community Fund (HNCf) along with staff members from Heritage Bank Nanango attend. Our members treated the directors and staff to a delicious morning tea, while they had a look through Cedarvale. They got to see the before, and 'in progress' photos from the restoration project. They also inspected all the work that has been done on *Cedarvale*, *Hillview* and surrounds in the process.

BMNHA President, Bernice Seton started her speech with an Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners and thanked the Heritage Bank Nanango for their funding. She then explained all that had been achieved in the upgrade. Bernice also thanked Capricorn Roofing, and handyman/painter, Ross Lanham for their work, as well as the generous contribution of BMNHA member, Graeme Wright. Graeme worked



voluntarily during the project. Lachlan, manager of the Heritage Bank Nanango, and Jane Hodgkinson, secretary of the HNCf both spoke about what the grants meant to them, and how happy they were with the work that has been done at our museum, as well as how well the museum was set up.

Following the Ceremony, we had our first General Meeting. The meeting was a great success with lots of sharing of views and reviewing the work to be done in 2025.

Ruth Wright,  
Secretary, BMNHA (0447 718 433)



## SOCIAL EVENTS

### Bunya Mountains Christmas Carols

The last Sunday before Christmas, the BM locals and visitors at the Bunyas came together for a community celebration of Christmas. The prefect ingredients; great weather, carols, relaxing venue, a visit from Santa, wonderful Christmas narratives and a delightful crowd of attendees. It was perfect. MC, Noel Noack shared about the origins of Christmas, his wife Meg played the keyboard for the carols, ably accompanied on ukulele by Polly from Kumbia. We even had a young guest trumpeter, Mia, who was staying at the park.



Santa, in his Australian attire, arrived in a fire truck provided by the BM Rural Fire Brigade. He had treats for the kids and hugs for everyone! The feedback was so positive, it will be a certainty in 2025!



### Australia Day 2025



The BMCAI members gathered at Fishers Lookout on Australia Day to celebrate their birth nation (or adopted nation), grateful for a quality of life that could be seen as unparalleled globally. In the Aussie BYO tradition (nibbles, drinks and chairs) members socialised

and grazed, typical of the way we come together here in the

Bunyas. The community connection here in the Bunyas is one of the things that makes it special. Our BMCAI President, Noel Noack shared some thoughts about the Bunya Mountains Australia Day, and invited other members to share their observations. Once again, the weather was perfect!



## MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

### Local Resident Lynne Downes Honoured with 2025 Australia Day Local Achievers Award

The Bunya Mountains community is beaming with pride as long-term resident Lynne Downes was recognised with a 2025 Australia Day Local Achiever Award. The award ceremony, held at Blackbutt Hall, was a heartwarming event attended by some of Lynne's friends and supporters. Deputy Mayor Jane Erkens and Cr Danita Potter presented the award, celebrating Lynne's contributions to the Bunya Mountains community.



Lynne's nomination highlighted her dedication and service to the Bunya Mountains, showing the true spirit of community. Over the years, Lynne has become an integral figure in the region, fostering unity, resilience, and hope through her many volunteer roles and acts of kindness.



As Secretary of the Rural Fire Brigade, she ensures the brigade's efficiency and readiness to protect against bushfire threats, offering residents peace of mind. Beyond emergency services, Lynne's compassion shines through her support for individuals and families during hardships, whether by organising meal rosters, cooking, or sewing assistance. Lynne also strengthens community bonds through the local book club and active participation in craft meetings.

An advocate for environmental education, Lynne is a valued member of the Bunya Mountains Dingo Public Education Working Group. Her involvement demonstrates her commitment to environmental education and wildlife preservation, helping to foster a positive relationship between the local community and the native dingo population. Through her work with this group, Lynne contributes to educating others on the importance of coexistence with native species, promoting ecological awareness that benefits the broader ecosystem.

Lynne Downes exemplifies what it means to be a community member, bringing warmth, compassion, and dedication to roles she takes on. Her contributions have left an indelible mark on the Bunya Mountains.

Congratulations, Lynne, on this well-deserved honour! (Article and photos by Christine Howard)



## MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

### Local Resident Meg Noack's Upcoming Solo Exhibition

BCMAI member and Bunyas resident, Meg Noack, has been busily preparing for her upcoming solo exhibition at Gallery107@Dalby. She said, "The Bunya Mountains has a special place in my heart. I have been visiting regularly since I was a young child – and now I am blessed to live there. The rainforest has an ancient beauty that inspires artistic endeavour."



**NATURE'S STORIES**  
*told in 3 Chapters*  
 by Bunya Mts. Artist  
**MEG NOACK**

**VENUE: Gallery107@Dalby**

**View Meg's ART EXHIBITION**  
 Read NATURE'S WILD TALES  
 of mystery and intrigue

*You are invited*  
 To the Exhibition Opening  
 Gallery107@Dalby  
 23 Marble St., Dalby  
**SATURDAY MARCH 15, 2PM**

**GROUPS & SCHOOL CLASSES  
 WELCOME.**

**Meg's exhibition is open ...**

Saturday, 15th March [2pm]  
 until April 30th, 2025

**RSVP for EXHIBITION OPENING..**  
[info@gallery107dalby.com.au](mailto:info@gallery107dalby.com.au)

**BOOKNOW:**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/nature-stories-by-meg-noack-tickets-1260276042569?aff=oddtcreator>

 Meg's Instagram  
**@mn\_bunyasartist**

Meg continued, "I would like to take the opportunity to invite any BCMAI members to attend the opening [see the flyer for details] or visit the exhibition before the end of April."

*The exhibition has been planned as a child-friendly exhibition; Nature's Stories are told in 3 Chapters:*

**Chapter 1 – "Pick a Wild Favourite"** [focusing on features of different Bunya Mountains plants]

**Chapter 2 – "Help Solve a Mystery"** [story-mystery didactics feature unusual bird behaviours – with a focus on crazy Bush Turkey!]

**Chapter 3: "The Bunya Mountains: I live here too"** [an opportunity to view and have fun learning about the many creatures in the Bunya's Eco-system]

Meg concluded, "The goal of the exhibition is to celebrate the wonderful treasure that is the Bunya Mountains."

### A Different Sort of Fund Raiser

BMCAI Secretary, Carol Weekes, was recently approached by local rangers from the QPWS and asked if she would do some uniform mending for them. Carol kindly donated the proceeds from her mending to the association.

This is a simple but perfect example of the way members of our association are actively involved in volunteerism. There is quite a bit of activity happening state-wide here in Qld regarding volunteerism and its wider benefits. Check out Volunteerism in Queensland on your search-engine (ie Google) to find out more.





## COMING AND GOING

### Ian and Margaret's Farewell

On the 1st of December, members of the BMCAI gathered at Fishers Lookout to farewell long-time Bunya Mountains residents Ian and Margaret Harris. Once again, BYO saw a lovely spread of nibbles and variety of beverages, with seating being managed to minimise the exposure to the afternoon sun. President Noel Noack addressed the gathering highlighting the generous contribution they had made to the Bunya community and environs. Noel invited anyone else who wished to speak to do so. Several members also acknowledged their gratitude for the contribution of the Harris' in particular the way that their approach to life was a 'living sermon' on the Christian values that they subscribed to.



### From Cairns to the Bunyas

Welcome to new Bunya Mountains residents and BMCAI members Richard and Janet Bowler. Richard and Janet have made the decision to make the Bunya Mountains their place to (semi) retire, or at least to live permanently. Having moved between Tasmania and Cairns and places in between, they felt it was time to get settled. When asked why the Bunya's, Richard explained that he had been an avid bushwalker and bird photographer and appreciated what the Bunyas had to offer. Janet explained that the peace and quiet of the Bunyas was a major drawcard, and they wanted to live in the SE corner of Queensland so that they could be closer to the majority of their family. They also felt it would serve to help sustain and improve their health and wellbeing.



Janet is a qualified chef, but also gained qualifications and skills in HR and Training. She still does some work in this regard. It was the adventure into the later that lead to her meeting Richard at a job interview that she attended. As she said, she ended up marrying the boss! Richard has a broad skillset in business management and marketing, but in more recent years has focused on rescuing broken businesses.

Their primary focus now is making changes to their newly acquired home that reflects their lifestyle and passions. A new kitchen will be a priority given Janet's passion for cooking. And I can vouch that Richard makes a mean cup of coffee! Welcome Richard and Janet, to the Bunya Mountains.

# THE HARD HEART OF THE BUNYA PINE

## Un-Knotting the secret at the hard heart of the Bunya Pines

Graeme Wright (BMNHA Member and Treasurer)

Bunya Pines are not the softies we may think they are.

They are in fact capable of growing a rare "heart wood" that doesn't decompose like the soft body of the tree when it falls to the forest floor, and when burned, produces great heat. In the following article Graeme Wright explores the origins and uses of this unusual feature of the iconic ancient trees:

I have always been intrigued by the conical shaped pieces of hardwood known as 'Bunya Horns', 'Bunya Candles' or 'Bunya Knots' which are on display at the Cedarvale Museum.

Bunya Mountains Natural History Association (BMNHA) members (and in particular John Learmont) had mentioned that these 'Bunya Horns' were remnants of large Bunya trees that connected the large branches to the main trunk of the tree.

I decided to do some research to find out a bit more about the origin, history and uses of these amazing Bunya structures. They are composed of extremely dense wood that is much harder than the softer timber present in the rest of the tree trunk and branches. Stories were told by the early timber getters that these 'Bunya Horns' burnt very well with the fires achieving extremely high temperatures that could "buckle the cast iron fire bars in stoves".

The 'Bunya Horns' were often found lying on the forest floor where large Bunya trees had fallen and rotted on the ground. While the main trunk and branches were all fully decomposed, the "Bunya Horns" remained fully intact despite many years of biological degradation of the main tree carcass.

### 1. Bunya Candles

In his iconic 'Bonyi-Bonyi' book, Ray Humphrys describes the story of a group of young people who attended a Lutheran camp at the Bunya Mountains back in 1915. On setting up the camp *"two men emerged from the rainforest with a bag full of wood known to the mountain dwellers as 'Bunya Candles'. There is something peculiar about these. Dry wood is rather scarce; it is often difficult to get suitable wood to keep the campfire burning. These "Bunya Candles" are the remains of the top part of the trunk of a bunya pine tree. The log and branches of the tree once having rotted away, leave knotty butts of the branches which were embedded in the trunk, as sound as ever. This contains a quantity of resin and tarry matter which will burn, wet or dry. Visitors to the mountain are invited to look for these "Bunya Candles". They do not need chopping fine and are easily gathered and burn reasonably well"* - from 'Bonyi-Bonyi', page 102 (see Pic 2)



Pic 1. 'Bunya Horns' displayed at Cedarvale Museum



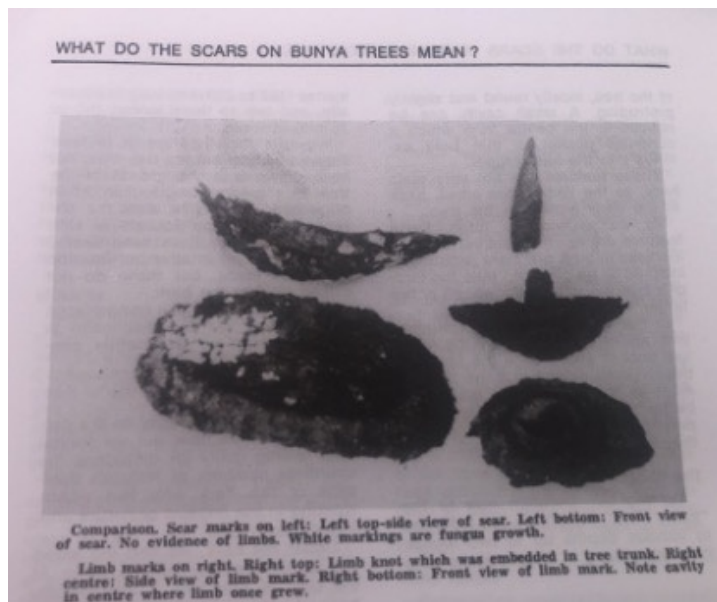
Pic 2. 'Bunya Candles' from 'Bonyi-Bonyi' page 98.



## The Hard Heart of the Bunya Pine cont'd

### 2. Bunya Knots

In another iconic book on the Bunya Mountains, "Joe's Book - Facts and Theories on the Bunya Mountains", The 'Bunya Horns' are described as 'Knots' (page 28), "*which are defined as that portion of the limb which extends into the trunk of the tree, and can vary in size from 76mm to 609mm! Yellow to brown in colour, and tapering to a point near the heart (centre) of the tree*". He goes on to talk about the knots being very hard and durable..., stating that "these knots are very hard and of such durability that I would venture to say that they can remain in evidence half a century after a tree has fallen. An important point to remember is that it is impossible for a limb to fall from a tree without leaving a knot within the trunk. This applies to both Hoop and Bunya pine. These knots are often seen in sawn timber". As an aside, his case for the indigenous impact in creating the scars on large Bunya trees (v's just being scars created from branch excision) is quite compelling. I read this section many years back, but knowing a bit more about Bunya branch structure/anatomy now, it is certainly good to re-read this (see Pics 3 and 4)!



Pic 3. A comparison of Scar marks vs Limb marks from Joe's Book, page 30. Note the Limb Knot - top right.



Pic 4. Trunk of a mature Bunya tree showing branch excision and evidence of embedded 'Bunya Knots'.



### 3. Wood Turned Bunya vase showing 'Bunya Knots'

A unique wood vase (made by Mr Don Graham and on display at Cedarvale Museum) had been made from turning the top section of a large Bunya tree, and clearly shows the 'Bunya Knots' which are embedded in the trunk. (See Pic 5). Anecdotes from the making of this vase were that upon contacting the 'Bunya Knots' the operator's turning chisel was 'nearly knocked out his hands', thus indicating the differences in the wood structure and hardness between the bulk sapwood and the 'Bunya Nut' hardwood.

Pic 5. Bunya wood vase made by Mr Don Graham.



## The Hard Heart of the Bunya Pine cont'd

### 4. Flammable Resins in 'Bunya Candles'

In an interesting article by former Bunya resident, Mr Bruce Perkins (and now owner of Bunya Nursery in Toowoomba and Blackbutt), mention is made of the unique resin properties of the 'Bunya Candles', *"Bunya candles are the knots or glands at the base of each mature branch which can lie on the rainforest floor for a 100 years without attack from fungi or wood eating insects. This is because of the flammable resin which becomes apparent when one of these 100 year candles is burnt"*.

Bruce ponders on the potential of this Bunya sap/resin as a timber preserver, with the "Bunya Candles" offering an interesting insight.

### 5. Conclusions

I have searched the available literature quite thoroughly and not found any specific study on the uniqueness of the Bunya horns/candles/knots. If anyone has more information, please feel free to contact me.

We can speculate around why the knots are so different to the rest of the branch and tree components? Is it a structural adaptation to increase strength / support of the branch onto the trunk of the tree with its long drooping branches towards the top of the tree, and with most of the weight (with bunya leaflets) forming at the tip of the branch. The strength required to hold up this weight must be enormous, and arguably much stronger than required in other trees (including Araucarias like Hoop Pine), where branches seems to be a lot thinner in diameter and leaf growth is more evenly spread along the branch.

I have also observed that other species (e.g. *Brachychiton rupestris* - narrow leaf bottle tree) have similar knot-like structures where branches have detached from the main trunk (see Pic 6).

The Bunya horns/candles/knots uniqueness appears to centre around a combination of its dense heartwood offering structural strength along with very high resin content, which being a complex mix of terpenoids and phenolics, offers incredible preservation characteristics along with very high flammability.



Pic 6. A branch knot from a narrow leaf bottle tree.  
(*Brachychiton rupestris*)

### 6. Acknowledgements

A big thanks to John Learmont for encouraging me to write this article, and for reviewing/editing the early draft.

### 7. References and Further Reading

Bunya Mountains Natural History Association webpage - <https://wrightgraeme.wixsite.com/bunya-mountains-natu>

## The Hard Heart of the Bunya Pine cont'd

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## COMET - C/2024 G3 (ATLAS)



In January, for only just a few nights a newly found comet, C/2024 G# (ATLAS) could be seen on the western horizon, just after sunset. Obviously, Fishers Lookout was the perfect place to view it!

After a few cloudy nights, regular Bunya Mountains visitor Krystle Sturgess, persevered, and with the parting of the clouds was fortunate enough to capture a glimpse of this "beauty in the sky!"

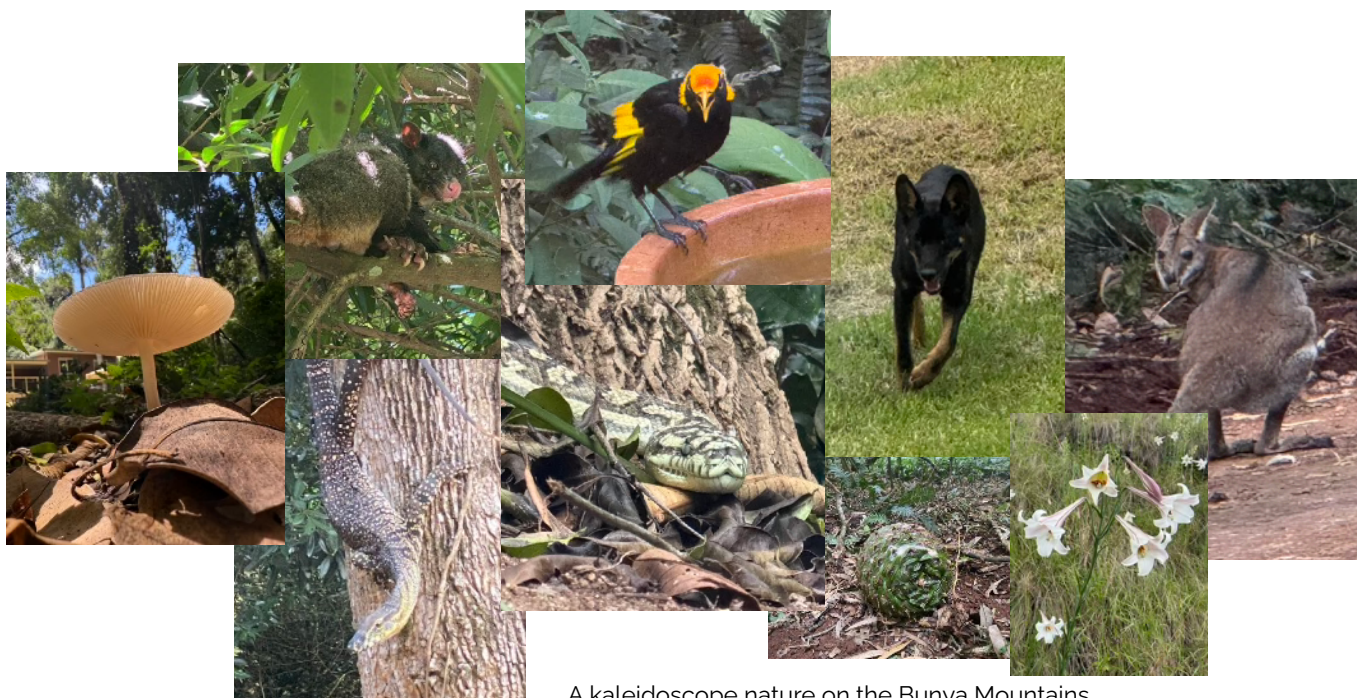
"As the comet faded each night, it was quite faint to the naked eye & having binoculars sure did help, (but thanks to a planetarium app called Stellarium I was able to confirm the exact location) & my 'magic' little phone camera was able to capture this spectacular sight from Fishers Lookout."

The comet was discovered on April 5, 2024 by the Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System (ATLAS). It reached perihelion (closest approach to the sun) on January 13, 2025. It was the brightest comet in 18 years. Skywatchers in the Southern Hemisphere got the best views!

Comet picture: Bunya Mountains. Fishers Lookout.  
22nd January 2025, 8.00pm. Krystle Sturgess.



# SNAPSHOTS OF THE BUNYAS



A kaleidoscope nature on the Bunya Mountains



Ensor Street, Mowbullan.  
Before and After.

Grimley Street, Mowbullan.  
Before and After.



Road conditions around the Bunya Mountains.



## BM COMMUNITY MEETING CENTRE UPDATE

In the November edition of this Newsletter we let you know that SBRC had generously approved the lease of Lot 80, 3384 Bunya Mountains Road for the purpose of creating a Community Meeting Place. The Lease Agreement was formally signed on 25 November 2025 by Mark Pitt, CEO, on behalf of SBRC, Noel Noack, President, BMCAI and Carol Weekes, Secretary, on behalf of BMCAI, in the presence of Karen Searl, JP Qualified, SBRC.



We also informed you at that time that we had engaged Tom Newman, Newman Building Designs to develop the Concept Plan. The Concept Plan was shared with you in the November Newsletter, Leonie Meurant, Town Planner, ONF has begun preparing the Material Change of Use application to present to Council. Leonie is waiting on the Wastewater Management Plan which is being prepared by Enviro Wastewater Management Systems and the Vehicle Manoeuvrability Plan being prepared by ATC Engineering. As far as possible we aim to utilise local suppliers.

As usually occurs, the Christmas /New Year Period impeded progress as businesses took their well earned holiday breaks. Hopefully over this first quarter of 2025, we will be able to move the project along and provide you with a progress update in the May 2025 Newsletter.

In the meantime, SBRC have slashed the block for us. BMCAI will arrange a Working Bee in the cooler months of year to a further tidy up of the block.



BMCAI are also exploring funding and sponsorship options. We are extremely grateful to all our members and friends who have supported our activities and events, which raised in excess of \$67,000. We are now tapping into those funds to cover the costs of the Lot 80 Assessment and Planning works by each of the suppliers mentioned above. We wish to sincerely thank you for your support thus far and into the future. The Community Meeting Place will be your venue to meet, greet, recreate, celebrate, workshop and utilise to meet the needs of our community and visitors to the Bunya Mountains (and how good will it be not to be anxious about what the weather is going to do!).

## Donate to Help Us Build a Bunya Mountains Community Meeting Place



No Cash... No worries....Use this  
QR Code to donate via our  
Trybooking Fundraising Page.

Please note that at this stage any  
gifts are not tax deductible.



### Thank you for your support

Office of Fairtrading, Qld. Certificate of Sanction to Fundraise no CPL4549817

## Become a member of the BMCAI

If you own a property or reside at the Bunya Mountains, then you are invited to become a member of the BMCAI. As our membership grows so does our ability to lobby government, local councils and other organisations for improved services and conditions on the Bunya Mountains. Your active participation will help enhance the Bunya Mountains experience for all who live, visit, work and play here.

All Bunya Mountains property owners are welcome to make application to become a member. Membership is just \$10 per person, \$20 per couple or \$30 per family per annum (Jan 1 - Dec 30 each year. From Jul 1 - Dec 30 will be \$5 per person for the balance of the year). If you would like to become a member we are happy to send you an Application Form. Request a form by e-mailing us at [bunyamcainc@gmail.com](mailto:bunyamcainc@gmail.com).

## Do you have an article of interest?

The best way to reach out to me with content for the newsletter, is by email - [russellsturgess@me.com](mailto:russellsturgess@me.com). If you want to get in contact by phone, and have a chat, you can reach me on 0405 711 771. You can also forward articles etc to [bunyamcainc@gmail.com](mailto:bunyamcainc@gmail.com).