

# Greens seek 'Skywalk' at Beacon Hill

GREENS candidate for mayor, Dr Sally Townley, has spoken out regarding aircraft safety at Beacon Hill, but says destroying the important habitat is not the answer.

She said the Greens recognise that a few Brush Box trees need to be pruned at Beacon Hill to ensure aircraft safety landing at the Coffs Harbour Regional Airport, but proposals by the Council to clear a large area of the rainforest was concerning.

"When residents are asked what they value most about Coffs Harbour they have consistently responded that they value the green backdrop to the city," Dr Townley said.

"As opposed to spending tens of thousands clearing an important natural asset, the Coffs Harbour Greens will seek to use these funds to build treetop boardwalk and lookout on the southern side of Beacon Hill below the aircraft height limit.

"This will allow residents and visitors permanent access to views southwards along our coastline."

Dr Townley said the finished project would be a tourist drawcard, showcasing the beautiful rainforest area and boosting Coffs Harbour's reputation as a nature-based tourism destination.

She said with good design and signage the 'Skywalk' could be integrated into the existing cycleway network, connecting to the Coffs Creek walk, creating extra pedestrian and bike tourism and lasting economic benefits.

"Bird watching is a major industry globally and Beacon Hill provides habitat for some of our rarest and most beautiful birds," Dr Townley said.

"Spectacular threatened birds such as the Wompoo Fruit Dove, Green Catbird and the Osprey are frequently seen at Beacon Hill and rather than spending ratepayers funds destroying the habitat we should create opportunities for people to experience these important natural areas."

# Statewide celebration



**CELEBRATION:** Dance students from Woolgoolga High School performed two routines.

**For more photos from the Education Week extravaganza at Centro Toormina, visit our website: [www.coffscost-independent.com.au](http://www.coffscost-independent.com.au)**

**BY CLARA SMITH**

WHAT do you get when you have more than 8000 public school students across the state dancing in time to a single piece of music?

No it's not an earthquake, but one very impressive 'simultaneous launch' to Education Week 2012 involving students from more than 45 locations across the state.

On the Coffs Coast a high energy 'flash mob' took over Centro Toormina, as 300 students took part in the simultaneous launch with their peers.

The 300 students filled the shopping centre, shuffling, dancing and clapping along to a routine that was taught to public school students across the state.

Education Week is celebrated each year by showcasing the wonderful and varied programs and initiatives happening in public schools around NSW.

This year it's all about children, parents and the local community joining together, and the celebration at Centro did just that.

As well as the 'flash mob' at 12.30pm, students from both primary and high schools across the Coffs Coast performed throughout the day with singing, skipping, drumming, dancing and music showcased.

Vocalist Gina Balenzano, a 14-year-old from Bellingen High School was also part of the program, who recently flew to Sydney and recorded this year's Education Week song 'Creating Our Future' with nine other vocalists from across NSW.

Savannah Regan, also from Bellingen High School, was her backing vocalist, impressing the gathered crowd.

It's the second year Centro Toormina has been involved in Education Week, a relationship the centre hopes to continue.

"Having 300 children dancing in the centre is not a normal Monday morning for us," marketing manager Amy Whiteley laughed.

"It took a lot of organisation by all involved but what a wonderful spectacle for the gathered shoppers and parents and friends of the students," she said.



**FLASH MOB:** Students from Narranga, Sawtell, Boambee, Toormina, Bonville, and William Baydon Public School took part in the 'simultaneous launch' on Monday.



## 'Report a Roost' to control bird pest on Mid North Coast

**BY VANESSA ALMOND**

A LOCAL group formed to control the invasion of the Indian Myna will hold a 'Report a Roost' day today, and is asking locals to keep any eye out for the birds.

The Indian Myna Control Project (IMCP) is a joining of two community driven projects funded by the NSW Environmental Trust covering the Coffs Harbour, Nambucca, and Bellingen Local Government Areas (LGAs) and the Hastings and Macleay LGAs.

The projects seek to reduce the impacts of the growing Indian myna invasion in our urban and rural environments.

Indian Myna birds are commonly

found in urban environments. Counts report multiple clusters of the Indian Myna in the local area, with between 20-50 sightings in many areas surrounding Coffs Harbour, Woolgoolga and Sawtell, and populations of between 50-100 north of Woolgoolga and in Coramba.

The birds often congregate around shopping centres, schools and picnic areas scavenging for food. They can often be seen perched on power lines and roof tops and in open grassy areas where they hunt for insects and worms. They frequent backyard gardens to exploit left over pet food.

Mynas also thrive in rural landscapes where agricultural activities provide them with a range

of habitats and feeding options. They often congregate near cattle farms and dairies where feedlots are readily accessible. Racing stables, piggeries and farms with poultry coops are also prime scavenging areas for Indian mynas on the Mid North Coast

Community members are invited to take part in a 'Report a Roost' survey to observe and report the locations of roost sites, which are strategic points of control.

The Report a Roost day takes place over a 24-hour period from August 2-3, and sightings can be reported by visiting [www.indian-mynaproject.com.au](http://www.indian-mynaproject.com.au) or emailing [indianmyna\\_midnorthcoast@yahoo.com.au](mailto:indianmyna_midnorthcoast@yahoo.com.au)

## \$350K to deliver NBN online services

MORE than \$350,000 has been allocated to the Coffs Harbour City Council by the Federal Government to help deliver improved services using the National Broadband Network (NBN).

Announced by Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Stephen Conroy, and Duty Senator for Cowper, Matt Thistlethwaite, the \$347,920 will go to implementing a range of online services.

The funds will enable the Council to implement an online development application and construction

certification process using high definition video conferencing technology, with the increased bandwidth of the NBN enabling both applicants and council planning officers to interact via video and share large files such as spatial images, drawings and maps.

Senator Conroy said the NBN will give ratepayers better access and more accessible and convenient services, delivered more efficiently and with less hassle.

"The building and development application process will be transformed to

enable Coffs Harbour residents to communicate from their homes and business with council staff in real time," Coffs Harbour Mayor Keith Rhoades said.

Under the three-year rollout plan for the Coffs Coast, the construction of NBN fibre services will have been started or be completed for 27,800 homes and businesses by mid-2015.

Residents who live outside the NBN fibre footprint will be able to connect to the NBN via next generation fixed wireless or satellite.



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