



Media Release  
Byron Community Centre

For immediate release

## **130 Years of Being Local: Celebrating Byron's Past, Present and Future**

*Honouring 130 Years of Community Spirit – Byron Community Centre Launches Celebrations with the 'Be Local' Campaign*

**Byron Bay** – In 2025, the Byron Community Centre will commemorate a remarkable milestone, celebrating 130 years as Byron Bay's original hub. From its beginnings as the Byron Bay School of Arts in 1895, the building at 69 Jonson Street has evolved into a beacon of connection, creativity and care. Over the years, it has played a pivotal role in shaping Byron's unique cultural identity, adapting to the community's changing needs while honouring its roots.

Throughout its history, the Byron Community Centre has been more than just a building. It has been a gathering place for locals to celebrate, engage and support one another, hosting everything from silent films to the first library and a skating rink. Now, 130 years on, the community centre remains at the heart of Byron's story, fostering community spirit through dynamic cultural events, social services and local markets.

*"This anniversary is a testament to the strength and passion of our community spirit,"* says Kate Love, Communications Manager of the Byron Community Centre. *"For 130 years, we've brought people together. In 2025, we will celebrate by not only honouring our past but inspiring a future that reconnects with the authentic heart of Byron Bay."*

In the 1980s, the building faced significant challenges, falling into disrepair. However, thanks to the vision of Jan Dawkins and a team of dedicated volunteers, it reopened in 1981 and reclaimed its role as the community's beating heart. A major turning point came in 1987 when the community centre assumed management of the Byron Markets, creating financial sustainability. This was followed by the opening of the Byron Theatre in 2003, and the ongoing provision of community services. .

*"This anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on everything that has brought us here,"* adds Kate. *"From silent films to live theatre, public meetings to markets, this space has grown with Byron. The 130th anniversary isn't just about the past, it's about celebrating who we are today and looking forward to the next chapter with the same vibrant energy, creativity and care that defines Byron Bay."*



As part of the anniversary celebration, the *Be A Local* campaign will launch, inviting locals and visitors alike to rediscover the essence of the Byron Shire. The campaign encourages participation in programs such as *Shop Local* at the Byron Markets and *Give Local* at Fletcher Street Cottage, highlighting the importance of reconnecting with the community.

*“The Byron Bay Historical Society is happy and excited to support the Byron Community Centre’s plans to develop 130 Year celebrations of its genesis from the Byron Bay School of Arts to the evolution of the community centre today,”* says President Donald Maughan. *“This building and the various functioning groups who have inhabited the space have been a continuous heartbeat of our community over all that time, and its story is our story.”*

Throughout 2025, the Byron Community Centre will host various events designed to unite people and celebrate Byron’s past, present and future.

*“This is an invitation to everyone, whether you live here or are just passing through, to come and celebrate Byron’s strong community spirit,”* says Kate. *“Because Byron’s story belongs to all of us.”*

For more information about the anniversary celebrations and the *Be Local* campaign, visit [www.byroncentre.com.au](http://www.byroncentre.com.au).

## Timeline

- 1895: Byron Bay School of Arts
- 1913: Byron Bay Literary Institute
- 1980: Byron Community Centre
- 1987: Byron Markets
- 2003: Byron Theatre
- 2022: Fletcher Street Cottage (18 Fletcher St, Byron Bay)

## About Byron Community Centre

The [Byron Community Centre](http://www.byroncentre.com.au) is an independent not-for-profit and charity that provides essential services including meals, advocacy and counselling, as well as arts and social programs for the benefit of the whole community.

### **Blog: A Short History of the Byron Community Centre:**

<https://www.byroncentre.com.au/stories/a-short-history-of-the-byron-community-centre>

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