



RUGBY POWER RANKS
WHO RULES THE COAST? P31

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021

GOLDCOASTBULLETIN.COM.AU \$2.20

FIRE RISK AT SPIT

FIRE has emerged as the major planning risk as authorities spend \$8 million of taxpayer and ratepayer money on creating a rain-forest at the end of The Spit.

A council report warns the site, at Federation Walk on the north eastern side of The Spit, has had several fires impacting on the work of volunteers regenerating the area, including a grass fire in 2019 which resulted in hundreds of people stranded for more than four hours.

Deputy Premier Dr Steven Miles in March announced it would take about 12 months for plantings to become established and \$8 million to restore 37 hectares of native forest. **REPORT P3**

GOLD CAN BE GREEN



ANN WASON MOORE ON CABLEWAY P6

SLASHING SERVICE

THE Gold Coast will lose two sexual violence counsellors in a matter of weeks and the state government has still not committed to continuing their funding.

In March the Bulletin revealed the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence stood to lose four counsellors by the end of the year when about \$250,000 in funding relief ran out.

Funding for two of those counsellors will come to an end on June 30, at a time when more people are turning to the service following the deaths of Kelly Wilkinson and Lordy Ramadan.

Centre director Di Macleod said more people had "come out of the woodwork". **REPORT P10**



Picture: JERAD WILLIAMS

BUDGET 2021 CHILDCARE 'WAIT LIST'

THE Federal Government's \$1.7bn child care reforms - announced ahead of today's Budget - have been welcome news for the sector yet providers say thousands of Gold Coast families are crying out for relief now. The changes, aimed at incentivising parents to return to work or take on additional hours, don't kick in until 2022. Coombabah mother Sharmani Facey is returning to work three days a week after the birth of Cali, 3, and Koa, 21 months. **REPORT P5**

'\$12b Crown casinos merger to supercharge conventions, tourism and be BHP of gaming'

STAR ON STEROIDS



A MEGA gaming and hospitality merger of Crown Resorts and Star Entertainment Group will supercharge the Gold Coast's convention

centre and tourism, leaders say. Tourism bigwig Paul Donovan said a proposed \$12 billion Crown-Star behemoth would give impetus to con-

vention centre expansion at Broadbeach. Star CEO Matt Bekier said "What this deal does for the Gold Coast ... it gets us access to a larger

domestic customer base. We can sell the Gold Coast more broadly not just into Sydney but into (Crown in) Melbourne and Perth." **REPORTS P4**

ECO-VILLAGE VS SHOPPING MALL

INSIDE THE BATTLE AT CURRUMBIN P2



TRAVEL UPS & DOWNS

PRIME Minister Scott Morrison is under pressure to clarify when Australia's international borders will reopen, as New Zealand once again opens its borders to NSW following the

state's recent COVID scare. Opposition leader Anthony Albanese said the situation was "very confusing", especially for businesses. **REPORTS P12-13**

Beautiful Girls join Blues gig

THE Beautiful Girls have joined the Blues on Broadbeach 2021 line-up.

The group will be the prelude act to headliner Wolfmother, performing at 7pm on May 22 on the Kurrawa Park Stage.

It comes as the festival announces a partnership with mental health and wellbeing support organisation Beyond Blue.

"If the last year has taught us anything, it's the importance of music and the events that bring us together," Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said.

Wolfmother singer and guitarist Andrew Stockdale said music was a powerful force for connection.

"The past year has been very tough on everyone and I know so many people in the music industry who have really struggled financially and mentally due to COVID," he said.

"It's great to finally be able to come together again as performers and fans to celebrate at a live festival.

"As a performer, creating music and sharing it with others is a big release and having this outlet is an important way I keep on top of my own wellbeing."

For tickets go to bluesonbroadbeach.com



Gold Coast boy William O'Rourke, 6, who has a rare form of tumour, at the SkyPoint Observation Deck at Q1 in Surfers Paradise, which will be lit up blue in May as part of World Neurofibromatosis Awareness month. Picture: Jerad Williams

Q1 TURNS BLUE FOR BATTLER

EMILY TOXWARD

WILLIAM O'Rourke's parents won't let a debilitating genetic disorder stop their six-year-old living a full life.

The Gold Coaster was just six months old when he was diagnosed with a condition called neurofibromatosis (NF) Type 1, which causes tumours to form on nerves in the body, including the brain and spine. It affects one in every 2500 adults and children and on average, every three days a child is born with NF in Australia.

William has an optic nerve

glioma; a tumour in his brain that can cause a deterioration in his vision. Unfortunately, treatment is limited but he's been closely monitored. He also has fine and gross motor delays and a significant speech-language delay.

His mum Amy said early intervention had been the key to supporting her son to maintaining age appropriate development.

May is Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month and the Children's Tumour Foundation, which supports families such as William's,

asked The SkyPoint Observation deck to help bring the condition out of the shadows by turning blue.

Mrs O'Rourke hopes as her son grows "he will speak openly of his challenges, without the fear of shame or stigma that can so often come with disability".

"It will only be when the community around us recognises this significant illness and the impact it has, and will continue to have, on individuals and their families, that change might happen."

Details ctf.org.au/outoftheshadows

Cableway plan lacks specifics

PAUL WESTON

THE state government will require council to prove how a new cableway project will work in the Gold Coast hinterland before jumping on board the \$170m project.

Hinterland-based councillor Glenn Tozer, on the eve of Wednesday's council committee meeting to discuss the proposal, wants both the city and the state to undertake an environmental study before going to public consultation.

But the Bulletin understands the government is reluctant to proceed with a "green" check because the proposal presently lacks a private enterprise backer and specifics about the route and its infrastructure.

Environment Minister Meaghan Scanlon said: "Springbrook National Park already has in place a management strategy which recognises its World Heritage status and environmental values."

"In the absence of any detailed proposal outside the initial preliminary feasibility study, it would be difficult to specify environmental impacts and mitigation measures."

"In 2000, an assessment report was made in relation to the Naturelink Cableway Project which recommended the project not proceed, outlining a number of issues."

"The state government is happy to work with council to explore eco-tourism opportunities, however any new cableway project would need to detail how any future proposal would differ from the last."

In 2000, the Coordinator-General recommended against the Naturelink project after reading an Environment Protection Agency review, environmental impact statement and public submissions, along with



MP Meaghan Scanlon.

legal advice. The cableway, which was to be supported by 44 towers, covered a route from 4km west of Mudgeeraba to Springbrook, crossing private land, water reserves and the World Heritage-listed forest.

The Coordinator-General said the plan raised concerns about an "increased fire hazard", threats to the Coast's potable water supply and potential threat to World Heritage values.

Cr Tozer said an environmental audit could be undertaken on the latest proposal because a report by a consultant had identified a "target area".

Maps show the study area extends across the valleys between Springbrook and Nerangwood.

The Urbis report found the new tourist attraction would require a capital investment of \$170m and ongoing operational costs at \$5.1m and concluded it had "merit" in being explored.

But consultants warned the cableway needed to be eco-friendly and fit with the character of a national park. A section of their report noted the bushfire hazard.

"The Springbrook hinterland contains extensive areas of vegetation that is capable of supporting high-intensity landscape fires beyond the capacity of emergency services to control," the report said.

Expo for Boomers

THE Gold Coast Seniors Health and Lifestyle Expo is coming to Palm Beach on May 13, with more than 60 exhibitors.

The free information and education expo has plenty on offer for Baby Boomers including retirement living options, in-home care, seniors travel and insurance, financial planning and investment advice.

Also on offer is advice on vision and mobility aids, funeral services as well as free hearing and eyesight checks. Open from 9am-1pm, the expo is located at the Palm Beach Share 'n' Care Centre, 31 Tenth Ave.

GOLD COAST

Women OF THE Year

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Tickets now on Sale

Join us on Friday 16 July to announce the winners of the 2021 Harvey Norman Gold Coast Women of the Year.

Event Details
 Friday 16 July | 6,30pm - 11,00pm
 The Star Gold Coast, Broadbeach
 \$190 per person | \$1,800 table of 10

PURCHASE TICKETS WOMENOFtheyear.com.au

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Nominations open 12:01am Monday 12th April 2021 and close 11:59pm May 7th May 2021 AEST. Finalist determined during judging on 10th May 2021 and published in the Gold Coast Bulletin on Monday 24th May 2021. Winners will be announced at the Gold Coast Women of the Year dinner on Friday 16th July 2021. Open to QLD residents only.