



THE BACKBONE OF GLADSTONE'S COMMUNITY

How volunteers and industry partnerships are making a difference



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WHAT'S IN THIS *issue*

03

What's On In Gladstone

04

NFP HOUSE: The back bone of
Gladstone's Community

06

Gladstone SDA Energy Hub
Agreement

08

A Bright Future Takes Shape at
Aldoga



10

Former Mayor's bees find a new
home after 30 years

12

Gladstone Locals Dig Deep to
Restore Sight as Global Aid Cuts
Hit Hard



14

New home sales remain at
three-year highs



18

Gladstone's Shop To Win \$10,000
Local Winner



20

Back to School sorted

22

Over 34k for Local Athletes

23

A busy year and milestones
ahead for Gladstone Gopers

WHAT'S ON IN Gladstone

From 8th January 2026



Australia Day Family Fun Day

26TH JANUARY 2026

Let's get together to embrace our shared stories, community spirit, and the people who make Gladstone a great place to live

Enjoy a relaxed morning by the water at the beautiful Millennium Esplanade, with live music from talented local performers and plenty of fun, free activities for all ages.

When: 26th January 10am- 1pm

Where: Millennium Esplanade, Tannum Sands



Coffee and Conversations

10TH JANUARY 2026

There are many in Gladstone who feel quite lonely. We know because we are some of those people!

Everyone is welcome. Come buy a coffee, meet new people, participate in some icebreaker activities and have a chat with other cool people just like you.

When: 10th January (Saturday), from 9.30 am to 11:00 am

Where: Shingle Inn Gladstone. At the entrance to the Mantra, corner Bell St and O'Connel St, Barney Point.



Tannum Sands Triathlon

8TH FEBRUARY 2026

Triathlon returns to Tannum Sands!

There's something for everyone - from those just dipping their toes to the seasoned athlete - with a range of event categories and distances.

Registrations required.

When: Sunday 8th February 6am – 2:30pm

Where: Tannum Sands

FISH OF THE MONTH WINNER

Congratulations Koby Hoffman on catching a Sooty Grunter!

Please contact Gladstone News to arrange collection of your \$50 voucher.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Sooty Grunter can change its color depending on mood and surroundings, appearing almost black (hence "sooty"), and other times silvery or bronze. This helps it blend in with rocky riverbeds and avoid predators!



Want a chance to win?
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Terms and Conditions apply.



Name: Koby Hoffman
Fish Species: Sooty Grunter
Location: Awoonga Gladstone

THE BACKBONE OF GLADSTONE'S COMMUNITY

How volunteers and industry partnerships are making a difference

Across the Gladstone region, community organisations are quietly holding the social fabric together. Men's sheds, sporting clubs, youth groups, cultural associations and support services all rely on volunteers to keep their doors open. Most operate without paid staff, yet they are expected to meet the same governance, safety and compliance standards as professional businesses. For many, that expectation is becoming overwhelming.

“

In this environment, skilled volunteering is no longer a nice addition. It is becoming essential to survival.

”

A growing example of what is possible can be seen in a recent workplace volunteering partnership between ACCIONA Energia and NFP House, Gladstone's volunteer resource centre. Rather than focusing on one off volunteer days, the program matched skilled industry staff with local community organisations that needed help with core systems. This included safety processes, risk management frameworks, document control and governance foundations that many volunteer led groups struggle to maintain.

The impact was immediate. Organisations that were at risk of falling behind compliance requirements were able to stabilise.



Volunteers already stretched thin gained confidence and clarity. In some cases, the difference between continuing to operate or shutting down altogether came down to having the right professional support at the right moment.

This model reflects a broader shift in how communities can be supported. When industry shares its expertise, not just its time, community organisations gain tools that last well beyond a single volunteering event. Employees develop new

perspectives, leadership skills and a deeper connection to the place they live and work. Businesses strengthen trust, relationships and their social licence within the region.

Yet behind this success story sits a growing concern.

NFP House is the engine room that makes skilled volunteering work in Gladstone. It trains, supports and matches volunteers with community organisations. It helps groups navigate governance, safety, risk



management, policy development and organisational health. Each year, it supports around 500 community groups and regularly intervenes in high risk situations referred by government to prevent organisational collapse.

Despite this, NFP House receives no recurrent operational funding.

“

At a time when community organisations are under more pressure than ever, the region's only volunteer resource centre is facing an uncertain future.

”

If NFP House cannot continue its work, the entire ecosystem is at risk. Without this infrastructure, skilled workplace volunteering programs cannot be coordinated. Community groups lose access

to guidance that keeps them compliant and safe. Industry loses a trusted pathway to invest meaningfully in the community.

This is why the story of workplace volunteering in Gladstone is not just about generosity. It is about systems. Skilled volunteers can only make a difference when there is an organisation capable of preparing, supporting and sustaining their contribution.

For workplaces across the region, the message is clear. Structured, skills based workplace volunteering is one of the most effective ways to strengthen the community sector. Programs facilitated by NFP House allow businesses to contribute in a way that is strategic, responsible and mutually beneficial.

The return is seen in stronger local relationships, improved staff wellbeing and development, reduced reputational risk and more resilient communities.

For individuals, there is also a role

to play. NFP House has recently introduced public donation tiers designed to help secure its future and protect the region's community sector. Supporting NFP House is not just supporting one organisation. It is investing in the hundreds of groups that rely on volunteers to keep Gladstone connected, supported and thriving.

The volunteers holding Gladstone together are doing extraordinary work. Ensuring they have a system that supports them may be one of the most important investments the region can make.

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Website: nfphouse.org.au



Donate to Protect the Region's Community Sector



Stanwell and Quinbrook Deepen

PARTNERSHIP WITH NEW AGREEMENT FOR GLADSTONE SDA ENERGY HUB

Stanwell and Quinbrook have taken another significant step in strengthening their collaboration as Queensland advances toward a more secure and sustainable energy future. The two companies have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that grants Stanwell exclusivity over Quinbrook's proposed Gladstone State Development Area (GSDA) Energy Hub Project, marking an important milestone in the development of large-scale, long-duration energy infrastructure in Central Queensland.

This latest agreement builds on an earlier MoU between the organisations to demonstrate Australia's first eight-hour EnerQB Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the Stanwell Power Station. Together, these agreements form the foundation for a technically pioneering and integrated renewables firming and grid-resilience solution designed to support Queensland's rapidly evolving energy system.

Quinbrook, working with development affiliate Private Energy Partners, plans to deliver the GSDA Energy Hub in multiple stages. The proposal outlines a mix of up to 1,080 MW of open-cycle gas turbines equipped with integrated synchronous condenser capabilities, paired with 780 MW of eight-hour battery storage. This combination would inject a substantial new source of firming capacity into the grid, helping Queensland meet demand as renewable energy uptake continues to accelerate.

The Hub's design focuses on strengthening network reliability and ensuring the provision of critical power system services. With its blend of responsive gas turbines, long-duration batteries and grid-stabilising synchronous condensers, the project would be capable of supplying dispatchable electricity during peak periods, unexpected outages or times when weather-dependent generation is limited. The technological configuration is a first for Australia's National Electricity Market.

Stanwell CEO Michael O'Rourke said the GSDA Energy Hub would help underpin Queensland's growing economy and rising energy needs. He emphasised that the partnership positions Stanwell to continue delivering reliable and affordable power well into the future.

Quinbrook Chief Executive Officer Brian Restall said the ongoing collaboration demonstrates both companies' commitment to advancing innovative solutions that support Queensland's transition to a low-carbon energy system. He noted that the combination of long-duration storage, gas-fired backup and synchronous condensers represents a major contribution to grid stability and the Queensland Government's broader Energy Plan.

The GSDA Energy Hub is expected to become a key pillar in the state's efforts to prepare the grid for a cleaner future while ensuring industries have access to resilient and dependable power.

CONNECT

Your Council Community Update



Carmen Jen (with service dog Oakley) and Kate Duffy test the new accessibility ramp at GECC with Jayden Allen and Cr Mellissa Holzheimer.

Accessibility ramp allows everyone to take centre stage at GECC

Guests attending events at the Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre (GECC) will now benefit from improved accessibility, with a new stage ramp installed and ready for use within Hall B.

Last year, the GECC team were tasked with enhancing accessibility in the venue's Hall, particularly for guests who require mobility support or may feel uncomfortable navigating stage stairs.

GECC Team Leader Jayden Allen led the project, undertaking detailed research to ensure the final solution met the needs of guests while also supporting venue operations.

The new ramp provides a safe and inclusive entry point to the stage and can be decommissioned when additional floor space is required.

It will be in place by default for civic events such as the Australia Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremonies, while also available on request for community hirers.

Gladstone Region Councillor Mellissa Holzheimer, who has a background in

disability support, said the accessibility ramp is a welcome addition to the venue.

"Having previously worked within the disability sector, I've seen firsthand how much difference these thoughtful and practical improvements can make," Cr Holzheimer said.

"This new ramp will make a real difference for many GECC patrons and I'm pleased to see the team continuing to improve accessibility throughout the venue as part of Gladstone Regional Council's Access and Inclusion Action Plan."

In another exciting development in addition to the accessibility ramp, GECC has also recently made the Auracast Assistive Hearing System available in both the Theatre and Convention Halls, offering three options for the hearing impaired to access assistive audio.

Visit www.gladstone.qld.gov.au to find out more about Council's Access and Inclusion Action Plan.

New names sign on to serve in 2026

Locals from different ages, backgrounds and life experiences have put their hand up to make the region a better place by nominating for the 2026 Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee and 2026 Gladstone Region Youth Council.

Zane West, Steven Henderson, Lien Jefferies and Derek Woo will join the Saiki committee in 2026 alongside returning members Jaclyn Iwasaka - President, Chris Moore - Vice President, Robina Cupitt, Beverly Fellows, Maureen Mason, Yukiko Moore, Peter O'Dwyer, Mayumi Rey du Boissieu and Garry Scanlan.

Meanwhile, the Gladstone Region Youth Council will be made up of 19 members in 2026 with Alisha Van Den Bosch, Carl Ararao, Casey Deliyiannis, Cooper Townsend, Flynn Kelso, Joshua Hooper, Harold Evangelista, Kaylee Pavlovic, Matilda Heier and Paige Cameron joining returning members Logan Althaus, Lochlain Cathcart, Bailey Dawson, Niel Godwin Quides Torres, Doug Hoffman, Oneli Peiris, Zachary Pulido, Samantha Steemson and Tairui Zang.

Thank you to Alanah Mayo, Ava Hetherington, Holly M, Jayavarshenei Sivananthan, Mily Jalass, Naomi-Jon Redshaw and Roshanne Cakau who are departing Gladstone Region Youth Council.

Visit www.gladstone.qld.gov.au for more information about the Sister City Program and Youth Council.



2025 Youth Council members unveiling 'Sunny' the sun safety mascot.

AUSTRALIA DAY

Family Fun Day

Monday 26 January

FREE EVENT

LIVE MUSIC FOOD STALLS ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

Millennium Esplanade
Tannum Sands
10am-1pm





A Bright Future

TAKES SHAPE AT ALDOGA

Gladstone has long been recognised as an industrial and energy powerhouse for Queensland. From manufacturing and export infrastructure to power generation, the region has helped fuel the state's growth for decades. Now, with the Aldoga Solar Farm reaching full commercial operations, Gladstone is again demonstrating its ability to adapt and lead, this time in the transition to cleaner, renewable energy.

Located around 20 kilometres north-west of Gladstone, the 480-megawatt Aldoga Solar Farm is one of the largest solar projects in Australia. At full capacity, it will generate enough clean electricity to power the equivalent of approximately 185,000 households each year. Just as significant is its environmental impact, avoiding an estimated 934,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually - comparable to removing about 360,000 petrol and diesel vehicles from the road.

While the scale of the project is impressive, its true value lies in what it delivers locally. During construction, Aldoga created up to 350 jobs at peak periods, providing employment opportunities and skills development for workers across the region. Now operational, the facility will support 15 permanent roles in operations and maintenance, helping to establish renewable energy as a long-term employment pathway in Central Queensland.

Local businesses have also benefited substantially. Around \$150 million was invested in Australian-made materials, equipment and services, much of it sourced from regional suppliers. This spending has supported contractors, transport operators, accommodation providers and a wide range of small businesses, reinforcing the importance of major projects choosing to invest locally wherever possible.

The project's contribution extends beyond economics. Infrastructure improvements, including upgrades to Flynn Road, will deliver lasting benefits for road users. In addition, funding has supported initiatives across education, healthcare and cultural development, recognising that strong communities are built through ongoing investment, not just construction activity.

The Small Grants Program, which has funded projects for schools, emergency services, community groups and cultural organisations. At Yarwun State School, grant funding helped purchase laptops for Year 5 and 6 students, ensuring local children have access to the same learning tools as students in larger schools. These practical, targeted investments often make the greatest difference at a grassroots level.

Looking further ahead, the Legacy Investment Program aims to support larger, multi-year initiatives. The Calliope Community Hub, designed to host health services, social programs and community events, stands as an example of how renewable energy projects can leave lasting social infrastructure that benefits residents for generations.

All electricity generated at Aldoga will be supplied to Stanwell Corporation under a 15-year power purchase agreement, supporting Queensland's growing demand for affordable, reliable and lower-emissions energy. As the state balances industrial growth with climate responsibility, projects like Aldoga demonstrate that regional areas can play a central role in delivering both.

PROUD OF GLADSTONE PROUD OF OUR PEOPLE



Part of the Gladstone community, now and into the future

Since 2010, ConocoPhillips Australia—operator of the Australia Pacific LNG facility—has proudly called Gladstone home and supported the local community with a number of different community investment programs.

We applaud our employees who make contributions through volunteer work in the Gladstone community and honour their commitment by offering financial donations to the organisations they support.

This is the story of two of our dedicated employees and their families who give back to the Gladstone community.

Operations Technician Matthew Jaenke and his wife Melanie, have shown an outstanding commitment to the community through their volunteer work. For the past eight years, they have generously volunteered their time at Tannum Sands and Birralee Kindergartens and the Tannum Sands Surf Life Saving Club. In appreciation of their dedication, ConocoPhillips has provided annual donations to support both organisations.

Melanie has served as President and Fundraising Coordinator for Tannum Sands Kindergarten, Vice President at Birralee Kindergarten, and coached Nippers. She even earned her bronze medallion to provide water safety at carnivals. Matt has supported safety, maintenance and project coordination at the kindergartens, and officiated at surf lifesaving carnivals.

The Tannum Sands Surf Life Saving Club keeps our beaches safe and teaches young people water safety skills. They use support like this to keep the club running and maintain lifesaving equipment. Equipment that saves lives.

“For us, volunteering is personal,” says Matt. “Having five kids and Mel being an early childhood teacher, we know how important those early years are. We also love what Surf Life Saving instils in our children, including fitness, safety and giving back.”



Above: Tannum Sands Surf Lifesaving Club

Right: Matthew & Melanie Jaenke

Far Right: Jess & Alan McKay



Another workforce volunteer for the club is Operations Technician Jess McKay and her husband Alan who have been part of the Tannum Sands Surf Life Saving Club for six seasons and volunteering for the past five.

Jess serves as Treasurer, Team Manager, Age Manager, and even patrols when she can. Alan is the Junior Activities Coordinator, overseeing Nippers, coaching, providing water safety, and patrolling. Their eldest daughter also volunteers, while their younger two are building skills through Nippers.

“As a charity organisation, we rely on donations from groups like ConocoPhillips and APLNG to keep the club running and maintain lifesaving equipment,” says Jess. “The surf club makes you feel welcome and like family. It’s great to show our kids how important it is to give back to the community.”

Their stories show how volunteering does more than give back, it strengthens community.

In 2025 alone, our Gladstone employees contributed more than 580 volunteering hours to their local volunteer organisations and through ConocoPhillips \$15,000 was collectively donated.

We are proud to support employees and families like Matthew and Jess, and the organisations that keep Gladstone thriving.

ConocoPhillips is the largest shareholder in Australia Pacific LNG (APLNG), and operate the APLNG facility on Curtis Island. We value our trusted relationship with the local community.

www.conocophillips.com.au

Former Mayor's bees

FIND A NEW HOME AFTER 30 YEARS

After decades tucked away inside a council building wall, a much-loved colony of bees named after a former Gladstone mayor has been safely relocated, ensuring their sweet legacy continues while giving the colony a fresh start.

The hive, believed to be more than 30 years old, was affectionately named after former Gladstone City Mayor Col Brown (1927-1994), who served from 1979 to 1994 and was known for his passion for bees.



Staff at the time put up a playful plaque in his honour and the name Col Brown's Beehive stuck – turning the hive into a quirky part of Council's history.

How and when the bees came to find their home within the walls of the lunchroom at Gladstone Regional Council's 101 Goondoon Street office remains a mystery, but there are some theories.



Former Gladstone City and Gladstone Regional Council executive assistant Maureen Mason, who commenced employment with Council in October 1978, retiring in March 2020, started working under Col from the mid-1980s

and said the bees appeared at some point after Col died in August 1994.

"The bees would have been there for about 30 years," Maureen said.

"Everyone really liked him, and it's been said the bees are Col coming back in spirit."

After taking up residence within the walls and ceiling, the bee colony kept growing from strength to strength as the years progressed.

"Honey would come out of the wall," Maureen said.

Earlier this year, specialist beekeeper Joe Adkins from JBeez Natural Products generously volunteered his time to carefully remove the hive.

Due to the hive's unusual location, the process was challenging, but the bees were safely transferred into portable containers before beginning their rehabilitation.

Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Burnett, who was first elected as a Gladstone City Councillor in 2000, said a large area of the building had to be cordoned off while the bees were relocated.

"We engaged professionals to manage the hive, but I wouldn't let them kill the bees – they were Col's bees and that was not an option – so I asked for them to be relocated and we contacted a local beekeeper to assist."

Since then, the colony has accepted a new queen and is regaining strength.

To honour their legacy, the original Col Brown's Beehive plaque has been placed on the new hive, ensuring the story lives on in its new home opposite the Reg Tanna Park duck ponds in South Gladstone.

As part of the removal, close to six litres of black honey was recovered from the old hive with a small number of jars bottled exclusively for Council, while the rest will be used to help feed the bees during their recovery.

The first person to receive a jar of honey from Col's Bees was his eldest son, Ken Brown, who caught up with Maureen and Mayor Burnett back in July.



Agnes Water Skate Park

READY TO ROLL

The Gladstone Region is moving into an exciting new chapter with the Agnes Water Skate Park revitalisation project now underway this year, delivering a major boost to youth recreation and community infrastructure. Construction on the \$1.94 million upgrade is commencing in February and is expected to be completed by late May, weather permitting.

Jointly funded by the Australian Government's Growing Regions Program - Round 1 and Gladstone Regional Council, the project represents a strong commitment to providing high-quality, inclusive recreational spaces. As demand grows for safe and engaging outdoor facilities, the upgraded skate park will offer a modern, purpose-built environment for skateboarders, BMX riders, scooter users and families alike.

The project reflects extensive community consultation, with local residents, young people and user groups helping shape the final design through feedback sessions and workshops held in recent years. The result is a facility that caters to all skill levels, from beginners finding their balance to experienced riders seeking more challenging features, ensuring the skate park is welcoming and accessible for the wider community.

During construction, the existing skate park and nearby playground are temporarily closed, with Council implementing safety fencing, pedestrian detours and environmental management measures to minimise disruption. While short-term inconvenience is unavoidable, the long-term benefits will be significant.

This investment goes beyond ramps and rails. It supports active lifestyles, encourages social connection, and provides young people with a dedicated space to develop skills, confidence and

community pride. For Agnes Water, a town known for its outdoor lifestyle and strong community spirit, the revitalised skate park strengthens its appeal for both locals and visitors.

As the project progresses this year, the Agnes Water Skate Park stands as a clear example of how collaboration between government and community can deliver lasting, meaningful outcomes and a facility the region can be proud of for years to come.



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Gladstone Locals Dig Deep

TO RESTORE SIGHT AS GLOBAL AID CUTS HIT HARD

The Fred Hollows Foundation has praised the people of Gladstone for their remarkable generosity throughout 2025, as global aid cuts place some of the world's most vulnerable at greater risk of avoidable blindness.

More than 640 Gladstone residents, including 44 first-time donors, contributed an impressive \$152,000 over the past year. Their support helped deliver life-changing treatment to hundreds of thousands of people living with preventable vision loss.

This local generosity comes at a critical time. Recent reductions in international aid by several foreign governments have significantly strained efforts to provide essential eye care in low-income countries. Despite this, Queenslanders have continued to give, contributing a combined \$6.4 million in the past 12 months.

Founding Director Gabi Hollows said she was deeply moved by the Gladstone community's commitment during a time of global uncertainty.

"Fred used to say that the major problem with the world is the disparity between nations, but that it could be changed," she said. "Nine out of 10 cases of blindness and vision impairment are preventable or treatable. Together, we can do something about it, and Australians are proving that even in challenging times, community spirit can change lives. Thank you, Gladstone, for allowing us to keep Fred's vision alive."

In 2025 alone, The Foundation carried out 8.1 million eye screenings, 560,000 eye surgeries and treatments, and provided trachoma medication to 16.5 million people, continuing its mission to end avoidable blindness.

Among those whose lives were transformed was Lien, a 38-year-old mother from northern Laos. After three years of blindness left her unable to work or recognise her children, she received cataract surgery at an outreach eye camp supported by donor funding. When her bandages were removed, she saw her children's faces clearly for the first time in years.

The benefits of restoring sight extend far beyond improved vision. A major study released this year, co-authored by The Fred Hollows Foundation, found that every dollar invested in eye health can generate up to \$28 in economic return, making it one of the most cost-effective health interventions in the world.

Chief Executive Officer Ross Piper said eye health must remain central to global development efforts.

"Restoring sight unlocks people's potential, to learn, to work, to participate in their communities, and to lead longer, more independent lives," he said.

For more information about The Fred Hollows Foundation or to help restore someone's sight, visit hollows.org or call 1800 352 352.



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New Home Sales

REMAIN AT THREE-YEAR HIGHS

Australia's new home market eased back in October 2025, but sales remain at their strongest level in three years, with Queensland emerging as the only major state to record monthly growth.

The latest HIA New Home Sales report, a leading indicator of future detached home construction, revealed a 9 per cent national fall in new home sales for October 2025. Despite the dip, sales volumes remain elevated, sitting higher than any month in recent years except for September 2025.

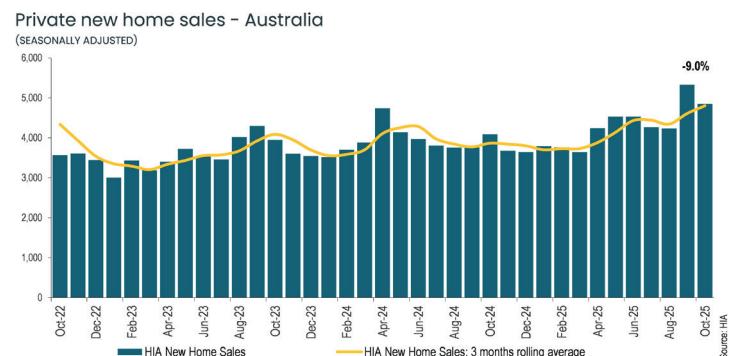
HIA Chief Economist Tim Reardon said the drop should be viewed in context.

"October's decline comes off a three-year high the previous month," he said. "Even with the fall, sales are still tracking well above levels seen over the past few years."

Over the three months to October, new home sales were 8.1 per cent higher than the previous quarter and 24.2 per cent higher than the same period last year, the strongest quarterly result since mid-2022.

Reardon attributed the market's resilience to a combination of three consecutive cash-rate cuts, strong population growth, low unemployment, and rising established home prices.

"These conditions have boosted confidence, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne, where detached housing markets have been slow to respond to earlier rate cuts. We're now seeing sustainable improvements as those markets lift from their troughs," he said.



But while southern states recorded double-digit quarterly growth, they also drove the monthly decline in October. Victoria led the downturn with a 19.5 per cent fall, followed by South Australia (-11.5%), Western Australia (-5.8%), and New South Wales (-3.3%).

Queensland stood alone, recording a 6.7 per cent increase for the month, underscoring the state's ongoing strength in new home demand.

The Sunshine State's consistent population growth, lifestyle-driven migration and strong labour market continue to fuel interest in new builds, placing it in a stronger position than other major states.

Reardon cautioned, however, that future growth will depend on the availability and cost of land.

"With the market conditions in place to support higher sales, it's increasingly the supply and cost of lots that will determine how far sales can rise," he said. "Lowering the cost of bringing new land to market is essential if we're to house Australia's growing population."

New Year's Resolutions

FOR GARDENERS

As we enter the new year, it's the perfect time for gardeners to set intentions for creating more beautiful, sustainable, and joy-filled gardens. Here are twelve meaningful resolutions that can transform your gardening journey:

1. Learn, Grow, Share

Make this your year to both grow and share your garden knowledge. Explore webinars, online courses, and in-person events that spark your interest.

2. Master the Art of Pruning

Commit to learning proper pruning techniques for different ornamental plants. Understanding when and how to properly prune plants will result in healthier plants and more abundant blooms.

3. Improve Your Soil's Health

Focus on building healthy soil by adding organic matter, rotating crops, or planting cover crops in vegetable beds. Healthy soil means thriving plants. Get started with these ideas:

4. Support Local Wildlife

Transform your garden into a haven for wildlife by including native flowering plants, creating water features, and providing shelter through thoughtful landscaping.

5. Experiment with Vertical Gardening

Maximize small spaces with vertical gardens. Try trellises, hanging baskets, or living walls to add a lush, layered look to patios or balconies.



6. Start a Garden Journal

Document your garden's progress throughout the seasons. Record maintenance tasks, bloom times, successful plant combinations, color schemes, and observations about weather patterns.

As you embrace these resolutions, remember that every small effort contributes to a garden that is not only beautiful but also thriving and resilient. Let this new year be a season of growth, discovery, and joy in every corner of your garden.



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Built On Trust, Grounded in community.

McCaughey Estate Agents was established with a clear purpose, to raise the standard of how people experience real estate.

The agency is built on the belief that real estate is, first and foremost, about people. Every client interaction, whether buying, selling, leasing or investing, is approached with honesty, care and respect. Clear communication and accountability are not added extras, they are the foundation of how the business operates.

A strong connection to the local community sits at the heart of the agency. McCaughey Estate Agents is committed to being present, supportive and genuinely invested in the areas it serves, believing that strong communities create lasting outcomes for everyone within them.

Internally, the same values apply. The team operates within clear standards and a culture of professionalism, ensuring consistency across every touch point. Clients are treated as individuals, expectations are set clearly, and responsibility is taken seriously.

As the agency continues to grow, its focus remains unchanged. To deliver honest, trustworthy service, support the community it serves, and show that real estate can be done with integrity, clarity and heart.



119 TOOLOOA STREET, SOUTH GLADSTONE



Gladstone, More Than a Headquarters

McCauley Estate Agents has proudly made Gladstone its main headquarters, a decision driven by purpose rather than convenience.

Choosing Gladstone reflects a long-term commitment to the region and the people who live and work here. The agency's presence is not about operating from a distance or passing through. It is about building something meaningful from the ground up, alongside the community it serves.

From supporting local initiatives to creating opportunities and strong professional relationships, McCauley Estate Agents sees its role as broader than property alone. The business is deeply invested in contributing to the stability, growth and future of the region.

Gladstone represents resilience, opportunity and connection, values that align closely with the agency's own. By establishing its headquarters here, McCauley Estate Agents has positioned itself at the heart of the community, where decisions are made locally and standards are set with care and accountability.

This is not a satellite office or a temporary base. Gladstone is home, and it is where the foundation for long-term impact is being built.



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Shop to Win: CELEBRATING GLADSTONE'S \$10,000 WINNER

The Gladstone Shop to Win competition came to an exciting close last month, with the announcement of its 2025 winner, Carl Lohne, on December 19th. Carl was overjoyed to learn he had won an incredible \$10,000 to spend at participating local businesses. His lucky entry came from a visit to Pat's Tackle World Gladstone, making it a moment he'll never forget.

Carl was in shock saying "he never wins anything" and "Just bought some lures"

Carl has been a Gladstone Local for 25 Years and has entered in Shop To Win every year.

This year's Shop to Win saw remarkable community

involvement, with 32 local businesses coming together to support the popular initiative. The competition has become a cherished tradition in Gladstone, fostering community spirit and encouraging residents to shop locally. Each year, the excitement builds as residents eagerly tune in to Gladstone News' live announcement of the winner on social media.

We are already looking ahead, promising an even bigger and better Shop to Win in 2026. The competition not only provides a chance to win but also shines a spotlight on Gladstone's thriving local businesses, showcasing the strength of the region's economy and community ties.

If you're a local business owner interested in being part of Gladstone's largest shopping competition in 2026, now is the time to register your interest! Visit www.shoptowin.com.au to secure your spot in this growing annual tradition.

Congratulations to Carl and a huge thank you to all the businesses and residents who made Shop to Win 2025 a success. Here's to another year of celebrating Gladstone's vibrant local community!



Here in History

THE SYDNEY CAFÉ

The Sydney Café was owned by Demetrious (Jim) Psaradelis who was born in Rapanadi on the Greek Island of Lemnos.

He migrated to Sydney as a young man in 1920 and opened a café. After a few years he went north working on many different jobs, eventually becoming a cane cutter at Babinda in north Queensland.

Jim was on his way to Bundaberg from up north when he stopped off in Gladstone and, liking the place, he stayed. He established a café next door to the Lincoln Hall in Goondoon Street, naming it the Sydney Cafe. At this time, he also bought some land from Zwislers Estate at the base of One Tree Hill in West Gladstone where he could farm.

In 1935 Jim went back to Lemnos in Greece to marry Marianthe (Mary) Kangi and he bought her back to his new country. The couple had two children, Rigas and Athanasia (Athens Hall) and both grew up in Gladstone. Around 1939, Jim relocated his café to a large building at 154 Goondoon Street, on the corner of Bramston Street and opposite the present Art Gallery and Museum.

This was a huge two-storey building with the café and residence underneath and twelve rooms on top for boarders. There was a



Photo: The inside of the Sydney Café, which was situated beside where the Commonwealth Bank is now.

house out the back that was also rented. When the meatworks were in full swing, the Psaradelis's would take in as many as fifteen boarders. There was much work to be done as they lived on the premises to run the café.

By *Betty Laver*

Happy New Year

Gladstone!

I look forward to serving you
into 2026.



Colin BOYCE

Federal Member for **Flynn**



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The Perfect Back-to-School Lunch Box

As the school year rolls around, the humble lunch box becomes one of the most important tools in an QLD household. It's not just about filling a container, it's about fuelling kids for learning, play and long, hot school days. The ideal lunch box strikes a careful balance: nutritious without being boring, familiar without being repetitive, and practical enough to survive the day in 30-degree heat.

So what does a perfect back-to-school lunch box actually look like?

Balance Comes First

A great lunch starts with the basics. Protein helps keep energy levels steady through the afternoon. Wholegrains provide slow-burn fuel for focus and concentration. Fruit and vegetables add colour, crunch and essential vitamins, while healthy fats support fullness and brain power. And when it comes to drinks, water should always come first.

Familiar Flavours Kids Will Actually Eat

The most successful lunch boxes are filled with foods kids recognise and enjoy. Think Vegemite and cheese scrolls made with whole-grain bread, cut into fun shapes and paired with crunchy veggie sticks and seasonal fruit. Chicken and salad wraps are another reliable option - simple, filling and easy to eat. Mini meatballs, hummus with colourful dippers, or mild, kid-friendly sushi rolls all bring variety without overwhelming younger eaters.

Smart Snacks That Boost, Not Crash

Snacks play a supporting role. A small addition like fruit mix, cheese sticks, banana oat muffins or frozen grapes can top up energy without turning lunch into a sugar spike. Frozen fruit does double duty too, helping keep everything cool in the heat.

Drinks That Do the Job

Water is non-negotiable, especially during an Aussie summer. Milk boxes are a useful calcium boost, while diluted 100% juice can be included occasionally in small portions.

Pack for the Climate

QLD conditions demand practical packing. An ice brick should be standard year-round. Leak-proof containers prevent lunchtime disasters, and separating dips and sauces keeps textures fresh. For kids who prefer warm food, a thermos opens the door to options like soup or macaroni cheese, even on cooler days.

Age-Appropriate Choices Matter

Younger kids (around five to seven) do best with simple, predictable foods and easy-open containers. Older primary students can handle more variety - wraps, sushi, pasta salads - and benefit from having some say in what goes into their lunch box. Giving kids a choice often means they're more likely to eat it.

Back to School

SUPPLY DRIVE RETURNS FOR 2026

RE/MAX Gold Gladstone and Roseberry Qld are excited to once again partner in support of local families through their annual Back to School Supply Drive, now gearing up for the 2026 school year. With the rising cost of living placing increased financial pressure on households across Queensland, community efforts like this are more important than ever in helping children start school with the tools they need to succeed.

This longrunning initiative invites donations of new school supplies, from basic stationery to backpacks and vouchers, to help ease backtoschool expenses for families who might otherwise struggle to afford these essentials. Backtoschool supply drives like this aim to reduce financial stress, improve school attendance, and promote equity by giving every student an equal chance to learn.

Organisers are currently accepting contributions of items commonly found on school booklists. Suggested

donations include exercise books for all year levels, pens and colouring pencils, glue sticks, pencil cases, erasers and sharpeners, rulers, backpacks and gift vouchers that can help families shop for other necessities. Every item no matter how small makes a meaningful difference in a child's education

Community members can donate at two convenient locations: drop off new supplies at the RE/MAX Gold office at 2 Mellefont Street, West Gladstone, or at Roseberry Qld's headquarters on 21 Dawson Road, West Gladstone.

Now in its ninth year, the Back to School Supply Drive has been repeatedly embraced by the Gladstone community. With local need continuing to grow, organisers hope the 2026 campaign will be bigger and even more impactful, helping ensure that every student in the region begins the school year ready to learn, grow and thrive.

Welcome Back

Jo-Ann Bianchi to BOQ Gladstone

BOQ Gladstone is pleased to welcome Jo-Ann Bianchi back to the branch after 15 years.

Formerly Owner Manager of our Goondoon Street Branch, Jo-Ann brings extensive banking experience and a strong commitment to personalised customer service. Her leadership and customer-focused approach have built trusted relationships across the community.

We look forward to Jo-Ann reconnecting with familiar faces and supporting the ongoing success of our Gladstone community.

Welcome home, Jo-Ann! We're so glad to have you back where you belong.

Bank of Queensland Limited ABN 32 009 656 740 AFSL and Australian Credit Licence No 244616.



BOQ Gladstone
Jo Bianchi
Senior Mobile Banker
0434 805 677

Over 34K for Local Athletes

Young athletes from communities across the Flynn electorate will receive a welcome boost, with more than \$34,000 awarded under Round 2 of the Federal Government's 2025–26 Local Sporting Champions and Local Para Champions programs.

A total of 53 young people have been successful in this round, securing funding to help cover the cost of travelling to and participating in local, state and national sporting championships. The grants are designed to ease the financial pressure on families and ensure more young competitors can pursue opportunities at higher levels of their sport.

Successful applicants come from right across the electorate, representing towns including Agnes Water, Bajool, Banana, Beecher, Benaraby, Biloela, Blackwater, Bororen, Boynewood, Bucca, Burua, Calliope, Emerald, Gayndah, Gladstone, Gracemere, Kabra, Miriam Vale, Moore Park Beach, Mundubbera, Ridgelands, Tannum Sands, Taroom and Woorabinda.

Federal Member for Flynn Colin Boyce said the grants highlight the diverse talent and dedication of the region's emerging athletes.

"These successful applicants are competing or have competed in sports including gymnastics, cross country, rugby league, rugby union, athletics, surf lifesaving, equestrian, BMX, touch football, soccer, race walking, volleyball and softball," Mr Boyce said.

"These grants recognise not only the incredible talent of our young athletes, but also the countless hours put in by families, coaches and volunteers who support them every step of the way."

Mr Boyce said community sport continues to play a crucial role in shaping strong, healthy and resilient regional communities.

"It's fantastic to see so many young people from right across the Flynn electorate pursuing their goals," he said. "Whether they're representing their local community, their state or their country, these young champions are outstanding ambassadors for our region."

The Local Sporting Champions and Local Para Champions programs run multiple rounds each year, providing financial assistance to help young people aged 12–18 compete at eligible sporting events across Australia.

HAPPY

New Year

New year = new goals, new choreography, and new stages to shine on. Wishing our dance family a year full of rhythm, joy, and standing ovations!

May this year bring lots of luck & happiness!

Fiesta Loca
CLASS BOOKINGS ONLINE

www.fiestaloca.com.au  **Fiesta Loca**



A Busy Year and a Milestone Ahead

FOR GLADSTONE GROPERS

2025 has once again been a very active and rewarding year for the Gladstone Gropers Masters Swimming Club, marked by participation, community connection and a strong focus on fun, friendship and fitness.

This year also saw Masters Swimming Australia celebrate its 50th anniversary. The Gladstone Gropers proudly took part in the national 50x50 Challenge, with the club's popular Pyramid training session gaining recognition as part of the celebrations. Of those 50 years, the Gladstone Gropers will have been active for 40 by 2026 — a significant milestone for a community club that began around a kitchen table and has thrived ever since.

Planning is already underway for the club's 40th anniversary celebrations, with a weekend of activities centred on fun, friendship and fitness scheduled for 10–11 October 2026. Further details will be confirmed during 2026.

The club continues to benefit from a dedicated team of volunteer coaches who support swimmers at every session. Coach education remains a priority, with senior coaches attending the Swim Coaches and Teachers Australia SWIMCON24 development sessions on the Sunshine Coast in September 2024. This professional development was part-funded through a Queensland

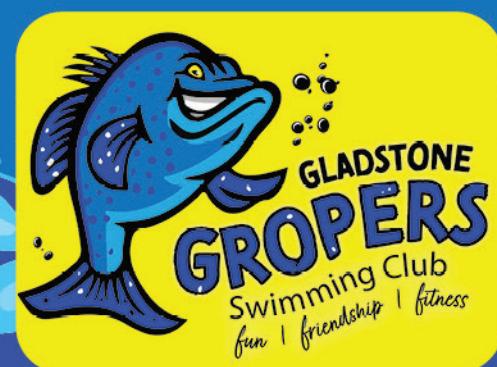
Government grant and ensures members continue to receive high-quality coaching.

Social connection remains a key strength of the club. Members enjoyed a potluck dinner followed by Symphony Under the Stars at the Marina, while the combined 2024 AGM and Christmas function was held for the first time at Junction Café. In February 2025, club members also welcomed Masters Swimming Queensland executives for an informal meet-and-greet to discuss collaboration and future opportunities for clubs across the state.

Community involvement extended beyond the pool, with Gropers supporting the "Swim for Claire Challenge" to raise funds for rare ovarian cancer research. Members participated in the challenge hosted by Miami Masters Swim Club in October 2024.

Competitive spirit remains strong, with members representing the club internationally by taking part in an open water swim at the World Aquatics Masters Championships in Singapore in August 2025.

As the Gladstone Gropers head toward their 40th year, the club looks forward to welcoming new and returning members to training sessions held every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday at the Gladstone Aquatic Centre.



GLADSTONE GROPERS IS AN ACTIVE SWIMMING CLUB/ GROUP FOR THOSE 18 AND OVER

Come along and swim with us, create a genuine team bond, and participate in social gatherings with regular exercise.



Training Times

Tuesday:
6.00pm - 7.00pm

Thursday:
6.00pm - 7.00pm

Sunday:
7.30am - 9.00am

Gladstone Aquatic Centre, 60 Tank Street, Gladstone



gladstonegropers



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