

Local News

Cannonvale photography exhibition

THE Facebook Bowen and Whitsunday Photography Group is holding its inaugural photography exhibition today at the Whitsunday Regional Council Beach Library in Cannonvale.

For more information about the event phone Anne Smith on 0419 709 897.

Competition winners back Maroons

LUCKY winners of a Mackay Airport State of Origin competition Justine Jackson and Alan Flagan (centre) with Laura Fordyce, of Harvey World Travel, and airport general manager and NSW Blues supporter Rob Porter.

Ms Jackson and Mr Flagan flew out yesterday for last night's game in Brisbane.



Motorist fined \$2500 and disqualified

AYDON Trent Seaton was fined \$2500 and disqualified from driving for 12 months.

He'd pleaded guilty in the Mackay Magistrates Court to five traffic related offences, including dangerous driving, which arose after he drove a high-powered vehicle at a police officer.

PEST PLAN: HOPES JUVENILE FISH WILL FEAST ON TILAPIA

Barra latest strategy

Gooseponds plan waiting for approval

Ross Irby

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THE planned release of hundreds of young barramundi in Mackay's Gooseponds to feast on the vermin tilapia will not usher in an open season.

Reef Catchment fisheries biologist Tim Marsden agreed it would lure more fishers but the barra could not make a takeaway fish meal because they were too small.

An alliance of recreational fishing groups is putting up the cash to buy stocks of barramundi to let loose in the Gooseponds to devour the young tilapia.

Mr Marsden said any influx of people fishing there could not legally take the barramundi home because they would be undersize.

"Yes, you will see a surge of fishers but the barra we put in will be 300mm. They have got to be 580mm to take home," Mr Marsden said.

"If kids go fishing for them then good luck to them but they must let them go," he said.

"Barramundi have a big bucket mouth and will eat anything going."

"If we can knock off these tilapia it will be one of the few times that we have not had to use poison."

"It is a solid plan. By stocking up on barramundi numbers as a biological control at



CARTOON: HARRY BRUCE

Barramundi have a big bucket mouth and will eat anything going..

— Biologist Tim Marsden

the very least we will slow their (tilapia) spread."

Mr Marsden hopes Queensland Fisheries will give the go-ahead to put in barramundi.

Although the barramundi

also will have an impact on native fish stocks, he said they would quickly breed up again.

Winter temperatures would not be low enough to kill off tilapia as the species can survive as low as 7.9C, he said.

A Queensland Fisheries spokeswoman said a permit was required to release barramundi fingerlings.

"Stocking of barramundi is unlikely to eradicate tilapia from waterways," she said.

YOUR SAY

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■ A positive story, you've made my day with this news.

— Queensland, Marian

■ Finally some community involvement to improve the Gooseponds. This is such a wonderful asset for our area. I've often wondered why the aquatic pest weeds weren't removed more often.

Now for a small jetty and row boats for hire and an annual catch and release fishing comp.

— Lawndog, Mount Pleasant

■ Oh, more Queensland stupidity. Bit like the cane toad isn't it? Introduce it to control a pest without research, and you get another pest.

— qld_frog, Cairns

Pole art to brighten up streets

Pamela Frost

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DRIVERS along Slade Point Road could soon be treated to an array of artistic masterpieces.

Mackay Regional Council yesterday gave Slade Point Neighbourhood Watch the green light to paint 12 power poles along Slade Point Rd to help liven up the street.

The "pole painting" public art project will reflect flora and fauna specific to the Slade Point area.

In a bid to get their project completed, the Neighbourhood Watch committee has already applied and been granted approval from Ergon Energy, under a decorative painting agreement, to carry out the work.

The group also holds a road corridor permit from the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Councillor Chris Bonanno told the council the group needed its approval so the committee could apply for a grant through the Regional Arts Development Fund.

The project was passed through the council's Economic Development manager and the Visual Arts Advisory Committee before the meeting.

A report before council noted there would be no "implications" for them.

It was also noted the Neighbourhood Watch committee had carefully considered the risks involved in the project and that the artwork would keep with the character of the surrounding area.

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