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Sniff out Truffle Discovery Centre

BY TANIA PHILLIPS

Everyone has their own little story and Matt Hibberd from the Truffle Discovery Centre Stanthorpe has a good one.

From security guard to dog trainer to creating a centre where people can come taste, smell, feel and learn about truffles and other gourmet foods sourced from local, regional and global produce. Where you can taste and buy the Granite Belt Gourmet range including jams, chutneys, relishes, sauces and balsamics – not bad for a business which started with “a man with his arm in a dog’s mouth”.

Of course, it’s not just his story – it’s a shared family and work family experience and from chatting with him for a while you know he’d stress that he’s not the whole story but Matt and his passion for life and following it where it takes you is at the centre of it.

Because the Truffle Discovery Centre is a story of passion – something you hear in Matt’s voice when he talks about the first time (and every time since) that one of his dogs sniffed out a truffle – a moment of whooping and cheering. It’s there when he talks about the Centre’s staff, teens starting their first jobs, older wiser heads over 70 working in the shop. It’s there when he talks about the rescue dogs that become truffle dogs working a couple of weeks a year and enjoying the good life.

He is passionate about Stanthorpe, the area he moved to with his family to set up his Law Dog business and display and of course he’s passionate about the produce from the region – the reason he and his team will be part of truffle day at this year’s Apple and Grape Festival.

“A visit to our interactive centre also includes seeing real truffles either fresh or frozen from last year,” Matt explained in a mock tour guide voice that has us both giggling because our chat was fun, honest and informative.

“As part of Apple and Grape we will also be part of cooking demonstrations in town. So, the chefs will be showing the visitors how to use truffles in their cooking and then people have a chance to jump on a bus and come and do the farm tour. We’ll give them a talk and tour of the Display Truffiere and then some dog training demos. We’ll show off the stars of the industry, which are the



Dizzy enjoying the hunt and an audience.

dogs finding the truffles.

“Then of course there will be product tasting. People can see a whole range of truffle and non truffle condiments as well as visiting our tasting gallery. It’s very immersive, bookending. I call it immersive but young people call it 360.

“I think the other connection (to the festival) will be that while it’s the French Black Perigord Truffle that is mainly grown in Australia people are also trying to grow the Italian White Truffle which ties back to the region’s Italian heritage through the fruit growers. So I think there is going to be good cultural connections there too. It’s one of those things, truffles are very niche, they need super cold climates and this is the only place in Queensland that they grow. Grapes and things are in other areas. So, it is very special to the Granite Belt and it is an immersive experience.

“And I believe in not just a product on the shelf, I want to see, touch, smell, taste, I want the full deal. I think we provide that in a really good setting and we’re really excited to be part of Apple and Grape. I think we all need a good news story at the moment, I think it will be great just to bring the town together and have a party at the moment.”

And it’s not just a chance for the local’s to party, it’s also a chance for people outside the region to get up close to where there food

comes from and how it’s grown and by who. Matt said since Covid things like Providores and Carbon Kilometres have become very important to consumers.

“I think the fact that we have all this in Brisbane’s backyard is very important and this festival gives you a chance that when you come and walk the main street of Stanthorpe you will probably stand in line at the bakery next to an apple grower, you will come and meet – at a market stall – the guy that trains the sniffer dogs and our kids that label the jars and bottles,” he explained.

“I think it’s very important we have that connection to growers and we know where the food is coming from, we know how it’s being produced and grown.

“I’m a very passionate advocate for small business, I think at the moment, more than ever, people really want to walk in and meet the grower, meet the kid that trims the vines, meet the kid that picks the apple.

“You can’t get that at the Hunter Valley and other areas, it is very commercial. As much as Stanthorpe’s grown up a lot since I’ve been here and improved in it’s offerings, I think it’s important (pardon the pun) that we stay with those roots. And I think it’s really important that people get to come and meet the grower.

“I think this is a really, really important



Matt Hibberd with his dog, Conan.

Apple and Grape this year for a lot of reasons.”

And of course in the case of truffles we’ve probably all heard of them, seen recipes but never had a chance to actually taste one and work out if we like them without the pressure of being in a fancy restaurant and having to fork out a lot of money (money we might not want to spend on something we don’t know we will like).

“We see them on cooking shows every week, but people don’t know what they look like, they don’t know if it’s a mushroom or part of the mushroom family,” Matt added passionately.

“But people don’t know what it tastes like or how they are going to react. For some it’s a really really interesting experience when you can come and do it all for free. When you can come and check truffles out.

“And the fact that you than learn little insider secrets. We talk about other growing areas, we actually show people pictures of marbling and how you can tell if it’s ripe or not. I think it’s an “edu-tainment” kind of concept that is more than google, it’s not just on the screen you can come and touch it, taste it, smell it, see it. It is a really good concept.”

Find them at 335 Church Rd The Summit, North of Stanthorpe or come along and see Matt and his family at the Apple and Grape Festival, Truffle Day.

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Homegrown chef loves local produce

BY TANIA PHILLIPS

From his dad's fruit shop on the highway to restaurants in Brisbane, Mexico and Canada, John Speranza has been on quite the culinary journey which has now, as he hits 30, led him back to where it all began in Stanthorpe.

The talented and sought-after International chef will be in action for the first time at the Apple and Grape paddock to plate demonstrations this year appearing on the Monday "Truffle Day" imparting hints and tips on how to get the most out of small amounts of the locally grown delicacy.

It is something he is more than happy to do as part of his plan to help the region continue its culinary evolution.

Chef John was raised and trained in Stanthorpe at the Queensland College of wine Tourism.

He went on to travel extensively through Mexico and Asia. He also worked in many notable North American restaurants. After returning to Brisbane he headed up kitchens such as The Survey Co, Happyboy and Malt Dining.

His approach to food, combines his Italian heritage with a mixture of Asian and South American flavours and techniques. Most recently he has turned his attention to his own pop-up passion project, 'Josie's' alongside his partner Amy Harker.

The pair look to open their first venue in 2024, in the meantime John has been back where he started his culinary journey training as a kitchen hand in his early teens the Queensland College of Wine Tourism (QCWT). He is back there helping to teach the next generation while he and Amy work towards opening their own restaurant on the Granite Belt.

John said he was looking forward to being part of the Stanthorpe Apple and Grape Harvest Festival this year.

"I've probably been working in hospitality about 18 years I started when I was 13, down in Stanthorpe we have the Queensland College of Wine Tourism and through the high school I was able to do my work experience and from work experience I got a casual job in front of house and then they had opportunity for a kitchen hand position," he said. I started as a kitchen hand and then a school-based apprentice, I finished school and finished my apprenticeship, they made me the junior sous chef for a while."

From there he moved to Brisbane where he worked for a few years, back packing around Europe and then later in Central and South America before working in Canada in some nice Top 100 Canadian restaurants before heading back to Brisbane as a head chef and executive chef.

"After a few years I took a break and me and my partner Amy Harker, who was the restaurant manager for Malt Dining where I was the executive chef," he said.

"She worked in various other venues but we started a pop-up restaurant brand called Josies and did a few events in Brisbane and then we got an opportunity to come to Stanthorpe. We did an eight week residency restaurant take over. It was great coming back to my home town, we were able to use local producers and local farmers. We ended up relocating here over the past 10 months.



Stanthorpe-born chef John Speranza.



"I went back, I'm consulting for the QCWT at the moment. Trying to do some more pop-up events and eventually hopefully open up our own brick and mortar restaurant down here in Stanthorpe."

He said it's been great to come home after

all of his experiences.

"Being a nationally recognized chef in the industry I'm hopefully trying to put my own mark on the Australian Hospitality scene but also lend my name and use the Granite Belt's name in a mutually beneficial

way.

"I think it's a shame the Granite Belt isn't a more highly regarded region and tourism hotspot in comparison to some of the other regions in Australia and I think the thing that we lack is just a bigger hospitality presence. Just better venues, better food using local produce.

"We've got amazing producers doing fruit and vege and grassfed beef and organic pork and everything from vinegar to truffles to local cheesemakers. But I think a lot of people don't realise how prolific it is because we just haven't had the calibre of restaurants to showcase it. So that's what we are hoping to do – open one restaurant and go from there. If we can build a bit more or a hospitality brand for the town.

"For us the more good restaurants that open in the Granite Belt the better. The more there is for people to do, the more the tourism sector can handle. For us it's not about competition its about community."

Time to celebrate in Stanthorpe

The Granite Belt is gearing up for Harvest time so that means it's also time for 10 days of fun, food and wine at the Stanthorpe Apple and Grape Harvest Festival.

Stanthorpe and surrounds will be filled with colour, fun and frivolity from 23 February to 3 March as the region embraces the Biennial Festival.

Festival President Russell Wantling said it's a chance for locals and visitors alike to delight in the 10 day festival filled with gastronomical experiences, toe tapping entertainment and wholesome country hospitality.

The festival has been running since 1966 and boasts crowds of over 60,000 for the Granite Belt Region.

Russell said it's a week filled with family fun, from street parades to foodies markets, buskers and live entertainment.

"This iconic event is made possible thanks the tireless efforts of our committee, volunteers, sponsors and our community," he said.

"We want to welcome visitors to our region so that they can enjoy what we get to experience daily"

"In light of recent weather events that have impacted local farmers, the festival is taking a proactive approach to support the community. Collaborating with local agricultural organisations, it aims to raise



There are plenty of stalls to visit and food and wine to enjoy during the 10 day festival.

awareness and education ensuring the region's agricultural heritage remains strong.

"Join us February 23rd to March 3rd, 2024, in celebrating the resilience of our farmers and the rich harvest that defines our region at the Stanthorpe Apple and Grape Harvest Festival."

The ten days culminate in a fun-filled main weekend from 1-3 March.

Russell said the final week is a time to get messy, quite literally with the Balancing Heart Grape Crush.

"Jump in barrel and stomp and squelch the latest season grapes in a truly iconic experience," he laughed.

But it's not all grape stained feet and clothes. The organisers warn to "have packed your very best frock for the Apple & Grape Gala Ball on Friday night".

This is an opportunity to indulge in a meal prepared by the award winning Varias Restaurant, local wines and of course entertainment aimed to have festival goers on their feet and dancing the night away.

The weekend also includes the Queensland Country Bank three-day Food and Wine Fiesta which plays host to more than 17 local wineries, breweries, distilleries and food vendors.

"It's the perfect way to enjoy the Granite Belt all in the one location," Russell explained.

"The added bonus is the Fiesta is free for children so they can enjoy the Woolworths Kidszone. Another traditional feature is the Grand Parade on the Saturday and Rebel Fm Street Carnival."

He said in between the markets, the food and all the entertainment if visitors fancy a run there is the Farmgate Family Law Mt Marlay Challenge.

"It's just a quick five or 10 km run which is 919m above sea level with an average eight per cent gradient."

There is plenty to do mid-week during the festival - Monday to Thursday there are daily cooking demonstrations from local Chefs who bring to life Paddock to Plate with their passion for cooking with the Granite Belt's legendary produce.

There is also a chance to meet the local farmers and hear the stories behind the delicious food being cooked and a chance to hear from the people who know exactly which wine to pair the seasonal produce with.

Bus Tours are run daily to see first-hand the farms where the food is coming with truffles, apple, tomato and berry farms open to visitors.

Thursday night is time for the all new Brushes and Bubbles - the perfect opportunity to have the uber-talented Lindsay Muir guide through a still life art class.

"Add in a round of Golf, Open Gardens, exploring the Granite Belt and your week is filled," Russell concluded.



Apple & Grape HARVEST BALL

Time to frock up...it's the Apple and Grape Gala Ball

This formal black-tie evening features a sit-down, two-course alternate-drop meal prepared by the award-winning Queensland College of Wine Tourism & Varias Restaurant. The event includes the presentation of the 2024 Festival Young Ambassadors, as well as live music and dancing.

Special guest MC, an internationally bestselling author and hometown sensation, Kim McCosker, will be co-hosting with the beloved crowd favourite and accomplished weatherman and meteorologist, Livio Regano.

Friday 1st March, 5.45pm Doors open, 6.30pm official proceedings begin, 12 midnight Last drinks, 1am Venue closes, Tickets: \$99 or \$165 VIP



VIP Upgrade includes attendance to pre-event
Cocktail Party with premium drinks, chef prepared canapes and meeting special guests.
Be seated in a premium location at the Ball at a waited table (no need line up for drinks).

Tickets are available from appleandgrape.org

Stanthorpe gardeners open up

The Stanthorpe Apple and Grape Harvest Festival is not only a chance to enjoy good food, entertainment and fun, one of the most popular events of the 10 day event is the Open Gardens.

This year nine gardens will open their gates for visitors, including seven floral/home gardens and two organic edible gardens providing an insight into fruits and vegetable growers on the Granite Belt.

Times for this year are Saturday 24 February 10am - 1pm, Sunday 25 February 10am - 4pm, Wednesday 28 February 10am - 4pm, Friday 1 March 10am - 4pm, Saturday 2 March 10am - 4pm and Sunday 3 March 10am - 1pm.

Granite Gardens will not be open on Wednesday or Friday and the two productive gardens also have limited opening times. Tristan Pabst will be open on Sunday 25 February (same hours as everyone else) while Bridget opens on the Wednesday 28 (same hours as other gardens).

Cost: \$30 for an All Gardens Pass (only available online) or \$5 per person, per garden if paying at the gate. Passes can be scanned multiple times for entry at all locations.

More information on garden opening times www.appleandgrape.org Telephone: 07 4681 4111.

Braeside Homestead - 28 Crystal Mountain Road, Dalveen
"Braeside"

Heritage listed Braeside (built in 1874) is a luxury accommodation destination with a lush 12-acre of formal and park gardens that have been developed over a 10-year period. The terraces define the incredible design, with pathways and avenues that are surrounded by a combination of formal, native and exotic plantings, providing a truly all-year-round immersive garden experience that any gardener would love to enjoy as the seasons change. The gardens at Braeside provide an amazing environment in support of the luxury accommodation available so guests can relax and soak up the rural lifestyle experience of years gone by.

Stanthorpe Serendipity 93 College Road Stanthorpe

Built 120 years ago on 1.7 acres, this sprawling Queenslander sits elegantly among the extensive gardens. Make your way through the huge cottage garden at the front, peek into the past in Bert's Old Shed or sit quietly by the goldfish pond. With quirky outbuildings, native gardens, sweet roses and wisteria covered arbours, this garden has a lot to see. This is the first time in 20 years that the garden has been open to the public. Built in 1903 for the mayor, the house was used as a girls boarding school in the 1920s. Throughout various owners the house has been kept to its original design with all original windows, tongue and groove timbers and high ceilings, whilst lovingly maintained over the years.

Accommodation Creek Cottages - 123 Sundown Road, Ballandean

After the drought year of 2019, the gardens of Accommodation Creek Cottages underwent considerable landscaping, planting, propagation and regeneration. The owners consider themselves first time gardeners and have experimented with spring flowering annuals and bulbs. Set amongst ancient gum trees and bordering



Chillawong gardens.



Stanthorpe Serendipity.



Bridget's garden.

the historic Accommodation Creek, site of one of the area's earliest settlements, the garden offers beautiful views across a peaceful dam, the Sundown Valley and the blue peaks of the Girraween and Sundown National Parks.

Wahroonga - 54 Lock Street, Stanthorpe
"Wahroonga" means place by water and is a fitting name for this historic home built in the last century. Placed on Quart Pot Creek, the garden shifts between informal areas of native grass plantings, majestic trees and camelias to more formal sections of dry walls, long wisteria walkways and garden rooms filled with colour. A hedged avenue on the south-east side of the garden leads you down to the creek. At the end of the wisteria arbour stand beds of magnificent roses. And nestled in the garden is the beauty of this family home.

Diamondvale Estate 26 Diamondvale Road, Diamonvale

As the very first bed and breakfast in the region opening some 25+ years ago, there is a lot to see on this 30 acre property. Owners Rachael and David have added loads of planting over the past 3 years, upgrading garden areas around the 4 cottages to enhance the natural bushland and granite. You will discover emerging planting including an olive grove at the entrance, camelias around the 1907 homestead and established eucalypts amongst the grounds with plenty of places to sit, enjoy the creek views and the peaceful surrounds. The garden is still a work in progress and shows

what can be done in a short space of time. Join us for a cuppa and cake in the Pioneer Hut after your stroll.

Granite Gardens 90 Nicholson Road, Thorndale

The property has endured the climate extremes of the past few years but is now beginning to flourish. Bringing a garden back to life has not been an easy task, but equipped with a growing knowledge of the Granite Belt environment, the current owners have planted many deciduous trees to take advantage of the beauty of autumnal colours. Large garden plots gave way to grassed areas, an aged rose garden became a parterre and aromatic plants such as salvia, rosemary and lavender now grow in abundance. Natives and other flowering plants are great attractions for the birds that regularly visit. In tribute to the original garden, rambling, bush and tea roses have been planted closer to the house. The centerpiece lake in the middle of the property lends a tranquility to Granite Gardens which is surpassed only by the magnificent Swamp Cypress which takes pride of place.

Chillawong gardens 772 Rivertree Road, Rivertree

This magnificent garden shows what can be achieved in a short timeframe. Although the house was only completed in 2020 the design, construction and planting of the garden began earlier. Extensive efforts to establish a level site over several years has resulted in a series of distinct areas including

an established formal garden and pool area, a long terrace and a deciduous woodland. The house garden, facing due north and set back from the retaining walls, gives plenty of room for the decorative gardens with masses of heritage roses, four arbours around a roundel and vegetable garden. The creation of a diverse and rich environment remains a clear goal for the owners.

Bridget's Garden 20 Nelson Cres, Stanthorpe

Bridget has been growing organic produce in her market garden for over a decade, recent additions in the kitchen garden are 8 raised garden beds. Vegetables, berries, fruit and herbs are sold at the local Granite Belt Farmers Market which are on every Saturday in the Railway precinct. Excess tomatoes are processed into passata and paste or sundried. There is a variety of garden art throughout the garden from local artists, some for sale. Join us in the pavilion for a cup of tea after a tour of the garden. Open one day only during the Open Gardens showcase at Stanthorpe Apple and Grape Harvest Festival.

Heart and Soil's Garden 438 Marinis Road, Mount Tully

"Heart and Soil Australia" is a chemical free, diverse, mixed farm, focused on regenerating the landscape by rotationally grazing cattle and goats and nurturing a no-till market garden. Tristan, Jess, Claudia and Florence strive to grow nutritious and delicious produce for their local community by following the soil health principles.

Bubbles of colour fun

BY TANIA PHILLIPS

One of the newest and probably most colourful events of this year's Apple and Grape Harvest Festival is Bubbles and Brushes at the Stanthorpe Civic Centre on 29 February from 6.30pm-9.30pm.

President Russell Wantling said the event promised to be lots of fun and a great way to kick back and relax before the big final weekend.

"It's your basic paint and sip but of course with all Stanthorpe things we like to put a bit of a Stanthorpe spin on it and add some bubbles – bubbles make everything better," Russell joked. "The other thing is, this year the art gallery won't be ready – the inside of the art gallery won't be ready – so we decided we needed to incorporate a little bit of art into what we do. But of course, we can't take our selves too seriously, so we ended up with the bubbles and brushes."

The event to be held at the Stanthorpe Civic Centre will be run by Lindsay Muir.

"He's quite a famous international artist especially in pottery but also in painting," he said. "He'll be facilitating but to top it up we will have a lot of the Stanthorpe artistic community coming around to help people with their masterpieces and we will be entertained by – well I believe Marie



Antoinette is going to pay us a special visit to add a bit a French feeling to the evening.

"Yes, we know she's no longer with us, but she's been reincarnated just for this one – no we have an entertainer who helps us during the festival – she plays the role of Sophie Loren during the Italian lunch and she dresses up Lucille Ball at the grape crush and does a scene from grape episode of I love Lucy. She has a lot of different characters. But for the bubble and brushes she's coming as Marie Antoinette."

So, what do the organisers hope people

get out of the event and what will they be creating?

"They'll be paint our mascots Jonathon and Bella and how they see them," he laughed. "Of course, Jonathon and Bella will make an appearance so people can see them and capture them on canvas. At the beginning we toyed with doing a paint and strip and we were going to have Jonathon come on stage in a bathrobe and slowly disrobe but we weren't quite sure with the strip in the title whether it would be a bit off-putting. So, we just stuck with the

bubbles and brushes and Jonathon will be there on the night. It's a lot of fun, you don't have to be an artist, there's a lot of people who will help you.

"At the end of the day it's just about enjoying yourself, enjoying the festival and getting together and celebrating before that main weekend."

The ladies from Zonta will also be bringing cheese platters on the night with 100 per cent of the proceeds from the platters going to help domestic violence victims on the Granite Belt.

"It's really important for the festival that we give back and we do that all through the festival," he said. "I don't think there's an event where some community event isn't benefiting from what we're doing and it's a very good cause so we're very happy to support the ladies on that one."

The event will be held on 29 February to celebrate the leap year. It's at the Stanthorpe Civic Centre and tickets are available online at Appleandgrape.org. You can also purchase the cheese platter online.

"We will have some available on the night but we would prefer if you can prepurchase so the ladies know how many to cater for," Russell added.

"And, of course, our bubbles will be a hundred per cent grown and created on the Granite Belt by Balancing Heart Winery.

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FOCUS ON MADISON HEBBARD

.....



Everyone loves “Lucy”.



You never know where “Sophia Loren” is going to pop up.



Shazza the ballroom dancer.

Playing for laughs

.....

BY TANIA PHILLIPS

You never know who will turn up to a country festival and that’s the way Madison Hebbard likes it.

Most weekend’s the Gold Coast based performer and host can be found out at a rural festival around the state or across Australia bringing a little fun to festival functions. Though you might not recognise her at every event she hosts.

“I go under a lot of aliases because I’m a “rooral” character MC,” she laughs.

That means that instead of Madison former media and marketing consultant you are more likely to see Dolly Parton, Sophia Loren, Shazza the ballroom dancer or even a queen or princess.

It’s all part of the career she’s been carving out for herself over the past two and a half years – working at regional, rural and remote festivals. And with a lot dying due to lack of funding or volunteers, it is something she is really passionate about -trying to keep these unique, quirky and vital country events alive and kicking.

“Basically what happened was that I was in the media and I loved the promotion and marketing side but there is a lot of paper pushing and I didn’t like that as much,” the vibrant performer explained.

“Once I left that I thought this (MC’ing) is something I love.

“I lived and worked in Toowoomba and loved the farming side, came from a farming property originally.

“So, I thought I want to do all the festivals that are rural – rural, regional - anything that’s rural regional and remote, that’s where I want to be.

“Then the characters came about because I noticed that people just weren’t smiling and laughing enough so I really wanted to bring a point of difference. As soon as you get up and say that you’re going to sing and you can’t sing a note, people love it.”

So, where do all the characters come from who have been turning up at festivals and events around rural and regional Queensland and Australia in the past two and a half years since she started who “Rooral MC” job?

“Well, I sort of tie them up with the different festivals,” Madison explained.

“For example with Dolly Parton I had to come up with a character for the Kingaroy Bacon Festival and I sort of thought Dolly Bacon Parton and she’s great because she can work in with nearly every festival, you just wack in a different name.



Home among the vines.

“I actually write music so say for example Island’s in the Stream I’ll put the words in to suit that festival so “baby when I met you there were pigs all round I set out to get you with a crispy sound” you know – I sort of change all the words and I’ve done the same thing with Stanthorpe Apple and grape.

“For Sophia I’ve just been penning up the song “When the moon hits your eye like a pizza pie”. I made it “when the apples are ripe all you want is a bite it’s a Stanthorpe. I change all the words to different things to make it fun. Then what I usually do is hand out song sheets and I say to people if you like a sing-song we can have a sing-song and I encourage them all, I put on accents – I speak a little bit of French, I speak a little bit of Italian.

“I’ve found people don’t want to sing the song once, they want to sing it two or three times. “Generally we get them all going and they love it. I usually say make sure you sing loud and drown me out because I actually can’t sing.

“But we have fun.”

While she has turned up at festivals from Kingaroy to Ceduna. the Apple and Grape Harvest Festival at Stanthorpe is one she obviously enjoys, performing there last year and coming back for a lot more this year.

“Sophia Loren is going to up the long lunch, she was at Heritage Winery last year and she’s doing that again this year,” Madison said.

“Lucille Ball is doing the public grape crush, for the first time ever Marie Antionette will be in Stanthorpe and she’s doing the new Bubbles and Brush event and Shazza’s making another appearance this year. She was at the ball last year, she’s really popular now across Dalby and Kingaroy. She’s

Shazza the ballroom dancer from Bungadoo -Bungadoo is inland from Bundaberg and it’s the township the size of a peanut or maybe less. You can’t even call it a township, it’s basically nothing. I love those names that’s why I picked that one.”

This year the Princess Royal, Princess Anne, complete with horse – which also promises to be interesting.

“I’ve got some guest appearances as well – I’ve got a new one – the tap dancing ballerina from Bangadang,” she laughed.

“There’s a few more still coming out including Eliza Do-very-little from Lamaroo, Tracy the A Grade Tennis player from Tallangatta, Scarlet O’Hara from Tara and I’ve already done Aphrodite once or twice. I did her at as the full Greek Goddess down in Ceduna in South Australia – I learned a bit of Greek for that one. I had to carry my two sea horses Zeus and Poseidon across the ocean, people loved that but it was the coldest day in South Australian history when I was there with practically no clothes on so that was interesting.”

Madison started playing her characters and MC’ing across the rural and regional events about two and a half years ago.

“I thought it was going to take off a bit quicker than it has but I have found that it’s a real struggle for some of the festivals,” she said.

“I don’t want to say it was after Covid, I think it was happening a little bit before that but grants for these little festivals are hard to come by as are volunteers. I’ll tell you what if I had some sort of superpower I would give everyone of these guys a hundred volunteers. Between the volunteers, the grants, not enough money coming in, council help and trying to get people to join committees they



Aphrodite the Greek Goddess felt right at home in Ceduna, South Australia (if a little cold).

are struggling.

“A lot of the people organising these festivals are in their 60s and 70s and the next generation down don’t want to do it. It’s a lot of work and they’ve got farms and families and commitments. I’m in awe of all of them when they get it done.”

For that reason, Madison tries to give each festival a lot of her attention, giving the committees a lot of value for money, doing media opportunities and trying to help where she can, often going in several days before so she can learn what’s happening in an area and infuse more local character into what she does.

Before she started her business she had visions of turning what she does into a television show.

“I actually applied to have a tv show seven or eight years ago when there were no women on night-time television,” she said.

“The only women who were on at night were Amanda Keller on Living Room and Chrissy Swan was doing Can of Worms or whatever it was called.

“My whole vision, my whole life has been to create a female variety show similar to the Graham Kennedy, Don Lane, Hey Hey It’s Saturday.

“But I wanted to have it at Festivals. So basically I’d go out before an event like Stanthorpe and record a show out there and use the locals. So rather than Plucka-duck you’d have plucka apple. My vision has always been that because I think we need family funny entertainment on a Saturday night and I want to provide it.”

Watch out for Madison and her alter egos at this year’s Apple and Grape Harvest Festival.



WEDDINGS



2020/01/02 18:07 T-W44-20

A lucky day for Grace and Harry

A “scratchie” under two random chairs at the wedding ceremony helped decide who would act as witnesses for the signing of the wedding certificate when Grace and Harry Frizzell were married on 18 November.

Grace is the middle child and only daughter of Glen and Kerry Easey while Harry is the youngest and only son of Paul and Julie Frizzell.

The pair were married at Glenbridge Country Weddings with Grace attended by bridesmaids Samantha Dwan, Jade Davies, Caity Savovski and Ashleigh Brown. Harry's groomsmen were Sam Falls, Nick Dwan, Michael Van de Sande and Nathan O'Leary. Oliver Easey and Finnegan Peters were the pageboys.

“We couldn't decide on witnesses for our ceremony certificate (we didn't have a maid of honour/ best man) so we opted to tape two scratchies under random chairs and let luck choose our people,” Grace explained.

“One of the people who found a scratchie

was a part of Harry's parents wedding and also signed their ceremony certificate; the other was my friend from Taiwan witnessing her first wedding in the western world, pretty special for all of us.”

The lucky chair wasn't the only unique touch the couple chose to use in their wedding.

“We are both country people, having a big love for our cattle, sheep and horses, as are our families,” Grace said.

“To symbolise our families becoming one we performed a branding ceremony just after signing our certificate. We branded a sign that Harry and I both made ourselves. It had our brand in the middle, my parents on the left and Harry's parents on the right.”

The couple have been together for almost eight years.

“We originally met at school and did rodeo prac together but he was always too shy and would often ignore my attempts to talk to him other than a quick hello,” Grace laughed.



The elegant bride.



A windswept arrival.



The wedding party.



The happy couple, Grace and Harry.

BRIDAL DIRECTORY

Does your business help couples create a day to remember?

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12637997-RR40-23

A bit of Berlin in Dalveen

More than a hundred years ago you could watch silent films in the hall in Dalveen and four years ago a filming-loving group of locals decided to do it again. Now not only has the bi-monthly event built up a bit of a following and now the group has become the second home to an annual international short film festival.

For the second year in a row the Dalveen Film Society will screen the Orion Film Festival – brainchild of Warwick local Elliot Spencer who also screens it in Berlin later in the year.

Dalveen Film Society committee member and president of the Dalveen Sports Club Nathan Parkes says this year's event will be held on 24 February with doors opening at 4pm, a feature film at 5pm and the curation of short films from all over the world from 7.45pm.

"Elliot approached us when he found out about our little film society, to have a look and see if we would be interested in screening his international film festival," he said.

"Last year it was also screened in Berlin,

it's just a quirky little thing." While they are not part of the Apple and Grape festival, since their first screening of the year often coincides with the festival, the organizers had asked if they would show something that might interest attendees. Two years ago it was an Italian film and this time around it's the film festival.

"This way people who might be visiting the area can come along and save the cost of a plane ticket to Berlin," Nathan joked.

"Elliot is still curating I'm told there is quite a European contingent including some Italian films and some Australian films as well – it should be an interesting mix. I think that's one thing that was really successful last year, it was a mix of films that really got people talking.

"These are all up and coming budding film makers and it's just a chance to showcase the wonderful talents. It's a fantastic opportunity and to see films from all around the world, the amazing versatility of the film and in Dalveen of all places.

"Last year was a sell out and the film society has a fairly good following now I

don't think it will take much to sell out. "We started four years ago and we were hopeful we might get enough people at our first movie to just cover our costs and break even and I think we sold out. I think we've only had two or three movies that haven't been sold out in the four years. We've had a really good following from the community. We've got a really broad mix of people that come along and we've got some different people every time. The same general group of people but they don't necessarily come all the time.

"It's a fantastic hall and it's a fantastic group of people we've there to run it and it's fun, we have a good time."

Nathan said the film festival is their first screening of the year with another five due through out the year.

"We have some good ones planned though we're still working our way through the list," he said.

"We advertise bi-monthly when we've made our decision and had our arguments and worked out between us what we're going to screen," Nathan added laughing.

"We only have about five or six on the committee – it's a nice little committee, we've all got similar taste and we're mindful of the audience and trying to provide something a little bit different.

"We get people from all over the place, we've had people from Toowoomba and Brisbane and people who have just been travelling through, have heard about it, and popped along.

"I've noticed now there are a couple of halls in the area too that have started up a similar thing so it seems to be kicking off a bit and the little halls are becoming venues for things like this.

"It's much cheaper for people to come along to Dalveen than to go to Berlin."

According to Nathan the film society is just one of the ways the hall is being used these days including concerts and every Friday night a licensed bar and a meal provided by members of the community.

For more information on the festival and the film society head to their facebook page.

Around the world with film

BY TANIA PHILLIPS

In a way everything film-maker Elliot Spencer has done in his life has led him to where he is now – running a highly successful short film festival that attracts interest and crowds in Berlin and Dalveen. Yes – that Dalveen - here on the Granite Belt.

Elliot, who is doing up an old house back home here in Warwick when he's not creating films and bringing other people's work to larger audiences through his Orion Short Film Festival, is currently curating the festival going through a large number of films and preparing two slightly different festivals for the two venues.

The Festival is held later in the year in cosmopolitan Berlin and now, for the second year in a row, a country hall in Dalveen in February. And after last year's event in Dalveen he is tailoring the local version to local tastes, a little more Australian content and comedies then what will be seen in Berlin.

In a way though the Festival brings his two worlds together – the Warwick boy he was and the film-maker and film festival convenor he is now. Creating a film festival is something he obviously relishes and the idea of bringing it home to this region seems to be a big part of his enjoyment. However, the idea for the festival wasn't born in Warwick or Berlin.

"It first started in 2017 and I was living in China and filmmaking there, it was a great base and vantage point for going over to Europe for film festivals," he said.

"I was competing with my own work and I started to get to know a lot of the curators and the festival directors for a few of the major film festivals. That led me to



Image from the short film "Not to Be" Directed by Australian Filmmaker - Katrina Channells.

create my own." So how does a young film maker from Warwick end up in China and then Berlin? "When I was a teenager, I use to compete in martial arts and I always wanted to go over to China," he said. "I went and did university first and then went to the Solomon Islands. When I was at university I actually studied the Mandarin language as electives. It was delayed for quite some years but eventually in 2010 I decided to make the big move to actually to get myself to China, basing myself in Zhuhai

City which is directly opposite Hong Kong and on the border of Macau. I thought that was a good base for film making. I had a choice of three international airports." "Film making is something I've always done and I've always loved, right back to when I was 10 years old. I was competing and entering film festivals." When he was 16 he gained a full academic scholarship to study his craft at Bond, graduated in 2009 and it just carried on from there but with a sister who studied animation and is a filmmaker and a father



Image from the film "Facing the Silence," Directed by Emilio Ruiz Barrachina.

who has written a couple of feature films it really is in his blood. "There is a big love of cinema in the family," he said. He said it was a conscious decision to base the film festival in Berlin after screening his own work in the city and loving the experience. "It's such a cultural creative hub," he said. It was also important to find somewhere back home to screen as well finding the Dalveen Film Society on facebook and the rest, as they say in the classics, is history.



REAL ESTATE FOCUS

Multi-million-dollar views

This property is right on the Queensland-NSW border, only 20 minutes from Warwick, with sensational views back over the range and what agent Helen Harm believes is the “wow” factor.

She said the current owners bought the property as a multi-generational family getaway and are not using it enough now.

So they have decided to sell.

“This could be a company training centre, vocational retreat, glamping destination, paintball park, the opportunities are endless for innovative entrepreneurs,” Helen said.

“Border Fence Bar” will be a welcome for the intrepid travellers.

“Set on 64.77 Ha, the home has accommodated 20+ in the past and is fully furnished as part of the sale of the property.

“There are three designated bedrooms, two bathrooms, kitchen dining combo plus a huge lounge entertaining.

“Outside there is a big three-bay garage and storage along with three large water tanks, and two dams.

“The kitchen-dining area has a woodfire while the lounge entertaining area has reverse cycle air conditioning.

“Ride-on lawnmower goes in the sale too.

“Seeing is believing.”

Book an inspection today with Helen Harm on 0408 457 496

At a glance:

- 64.77 Ha
- Mains power
- Solar System
- Three bedrooms
- Two bathrooms
- Kitchen and dining with woodfire
- Lounge entertaining has reverse cycle air-conditioning
- Border Fence Bar, setup for entertaining
- Deck overlooks the play area and dam
- Three-bay shed
- Rainwater tanks
- Two dams

Contact Helen Harm on 0408 457 496 to arrange inspection. Go to www.helenharm.com for more photos



Address: 188 Border Fence Road, ELBOW VALLEY Description: 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 3+ car Price: \$890,000 Inspection: By appointment

Contact: Helen Harm 0408 457 496 Agent: HELEN HARM

Views on a hill

The city views enhance the elevated position on this 815 m² four bedroom brick home in Warwick according to agent Helen Harm.

With built ins in all bedrooms and a main bedroom with an ensuite this is a great family home. It features two open planned tiled living areas, a modern kitchen with stainless steel appliances designed for today's busy lifestyle. The bathroom has a bath and separate shower, separate toilet, laundry and outdoor entertaining.

Out side there is a garden shed and rain water tank in the backyard with vehicle access at the side and parking at the front.

Great buy in a competitive market place and for the investor it is currently renting at \$435 per week with a lease in place until 29 March.

Home features at a glance:

- Four bedroom, built ins, ceiling fans
- Master has ensuite
- Open plan living opens to undercover outdoor entertaining
- Modern kitchen with stainless steel appliances, pantry
- Family bathroom has bath, separate shower, separate toilet
- Large family rumpus with laundry in cupboard
- Air-conditioning



- Carpeted Floors
- Ceiling Fans
- Dishwasher
- Electric Stove
- Entertaining Area/Pergola

- Hot Plates
- Oven
- Rangehood
- Tiled Floors

Community Features:

- Playground/Park
- Public Transportation

Contact Helen Harm on 0408 457 496 for inspection. Go to www.helenharm.com for more photos

Address: 15 Boronia Drive, WARWICK Description: 4+ bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 car Price for sell: \$500,000 Price for rental: \$435 per week Inspection: By appointment
Contact: Helen Harm 0408 457 496 Agent: HELEN HARM

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Warwick and Stanthorpe Today Property Guide!



Character Q'lander

2 blocks from CBD, walk to Schools & shops.
 • 3 Aircon bedrooms, 2 built in
 • Open plan kitchen, gas cook top, electric oven, dishwasher, 2 door fridge
 • Living/dining have double doors to E deck
 • Wood heater + aircon in living
 • Polished timber floors throughout
 • Stylish bathroom, dble vanity, walkin shower
 • Laundry under home • 2 carport 809 m² yard

\$ 400,000+



Parkland Views

Chamfer on brick base family home has extras.
 • 4 Built-in Bedrooms, ceiling fans
 • Aircon in open plan living
 • Family bathroom has bath, separate shower
 • Rumpus family accesses 809 m² back yard
 • 2nd toilet off Laundry
 • Electric appliance kitchen includes dishwasher
 • Fully lined, insulated 4 bay shed – 2 Tradie roller doors • 3rd toilet & storage

\$ 475,000+



New Duplex Unit

Only 12 months old, in elevated position with Strata Title. You pay half insurance for building.
 • NO body corp fees.
 • Rendered almost NEW duplex unit
 • 3 Built in bedrooms • Master - en suite, A/C
 • Open Plan living, vinyl flooring, galley kitchen, aircon
 • Bathroom has bath, separate shower & toilet
 • Private courtyard • Remote 2 car garage

\$ 430,000



Exclusive Address

• Aircon 3 Bed+ office, built ins
 • Living has aircon + woodfire
 • Dining opens to N patio
 • Tidy kitchen has electric appliances
 • Bathroom - bath, sep shower, vanity & toilet
 • Second living/games (converted garage)
 • Laundry/utility accesses 1750 m² backyard
 • 2 Carports, garden shed, vegie patch & more
INVESTORS: Rent \$650 p.w. to 16/01/24

\$ 625,000+



Suit Active Family

Larger yard for caravan, family, pets & hobbies.
 • Airconditioned living, ceiling fans in bedrooms
 • 4 Built-in Bedroom – king size master
 • Bath & separate shower • Separate Toilet
 • Separate laundry • Plenty of hall storage
 • Undercover entertaining
 • Double detached garage, 1193 m² fenced yard
 Elevated position -
 7 mins to CBD & 5 mins to Leslie Dam.

\$ 475,000+



Views on Hill

City views from elevated 815 m²
 • 4 Bedroom, built ins • Master has en suite
 • Aircon Open plan living opens to undercover outdoor entertaining
 • Modern kitchen - s/steel appliances, pantry
 • Family bathroom - bath, shower, sep toilet
 • Large family rumpus - laundry in cupboard
 Lease end 29/03/2024

INVESTORS: Renting at \$435 p.w.

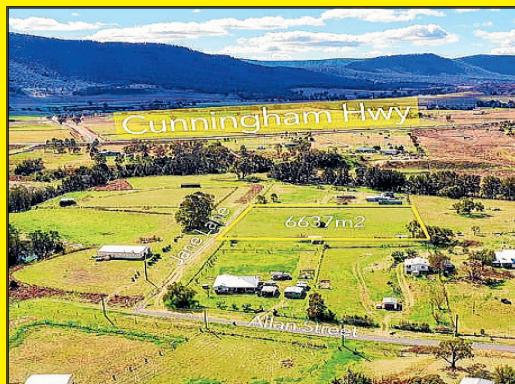
\$ 500,000



Simple Country Life

Short drive to Warwick – 9 mins or 6.9k – Livestock suits 11.8 Ha (29 Ac)
 • Large 5 Bay Shed • Smaller 4 Bay Shed
 • Cattle Yards, Thompson Longhorn Crush/ Race
 • Dam, 3 paddocks, water troughs & more
 • 3 bed, built ins – main ensuite & aircon
 • Separate shower & bath, separate toilet
 • Kitchen/Dining –storage, electric appliances
 • Lounge media has fireplace + aircon

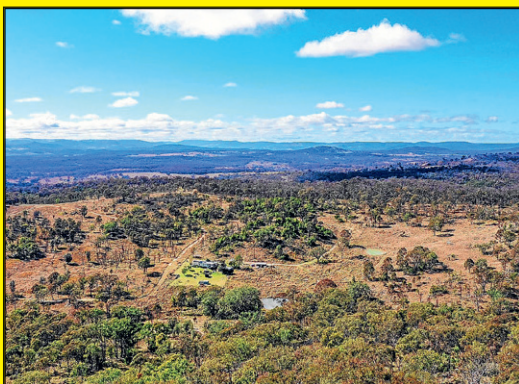
\$ 1,250,000



Price to SELL

MARYVALE – 6637 m² (1.6 Acres)
 • Views of valley back to Great Dividing Range
 • Flood Free and gently sloping
 • Ideal spot, privacy, relaxed country lifestyle
 • Escape the hustle & bustle of city
 • Nestled in the mountains
 • Direct access to main highway
 • 20 Mins east of Warwick
 • Well maintained acreage

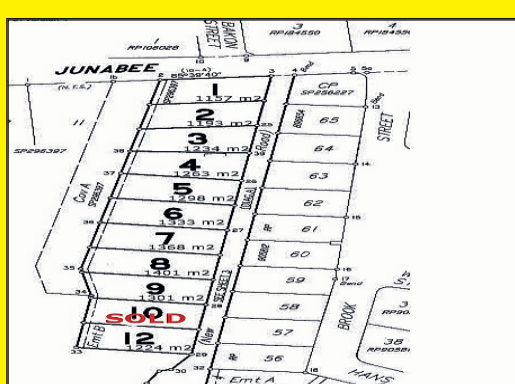
\$ 169,000



Multi-Million Views

On QLD/NSW border, 20 mis to Warwick
 Training centre, retreat, glamping, paintball park
 • 3 Bed • 2 Bath • Fully furnished
 • Air conditioning in living
 • Kitchen dining with woodfire
 • Bar setup for entertaining
 • Deck overlook dam & play area
 • 64.77 Ha • 3 bay Shed • 2 Dams
 • Solar + Mains Power • Rain Water Tanks

\$ 890,000



RIVERVIEW ESTATE

NEW subdivision off Junabee Road with all amenities overlooking the Condamine River. Country lifestyle only minutes to Warwick CBD.
 • 11 Lots - from 1157 m² to 1401 m²
 • Power available
 • Bitumen road access
 • Curb and channeling
 • Street lighting
 Price from \$180,000 to \$220,000

\$ 180,000



2 Street Frontages

Great opportunity for a light industry venture, establish new business or upgrade to higher profile site near Black Toyota, Top Two Motorcycles, Betta Storage.
 • Corner of Murphy Street & Ogilvie Road. Both are bitumen roads with 300m or more frontage.
 • Power, water sewerage nearby.
 • Zoning is Specialised Centre
 • 2.6 Ha off Cunningham Highway.

\$ 2,210,000

LAND	
WARWICK - 1157 m ² to 1401 m ² , Riverview Estate, NEW development	From ...\$ 180,000
WARWICK - 25930 m ² , High profile, 2 street frontage, Zoned specialised	\$ 2,210,000
HENDON - 2023 m ² , power next door, rural fence	\$ 65,000
MARYVALE - 4047 m ² , power nearby, level block, VIEWS	\$ 125,000
MARYVALE - 1012 m ² , power in street, corner block, all weather road	\$ 150,000
MARYVALE - 6637 m ² , RURAL, power nearby, level lot	\$ 150,000
MARYVALE - 8094 m ² , 2 Titles, power nearby, fenced, 2 x 1 Acre	\$ 199,000
MARYVALE - 4047 m ² , power nearby, level block, fenced	\$ 220,000
GREYMARE - 2251 m ² , bitumen road, power on street, on Greymere Ck	\$ 150,000

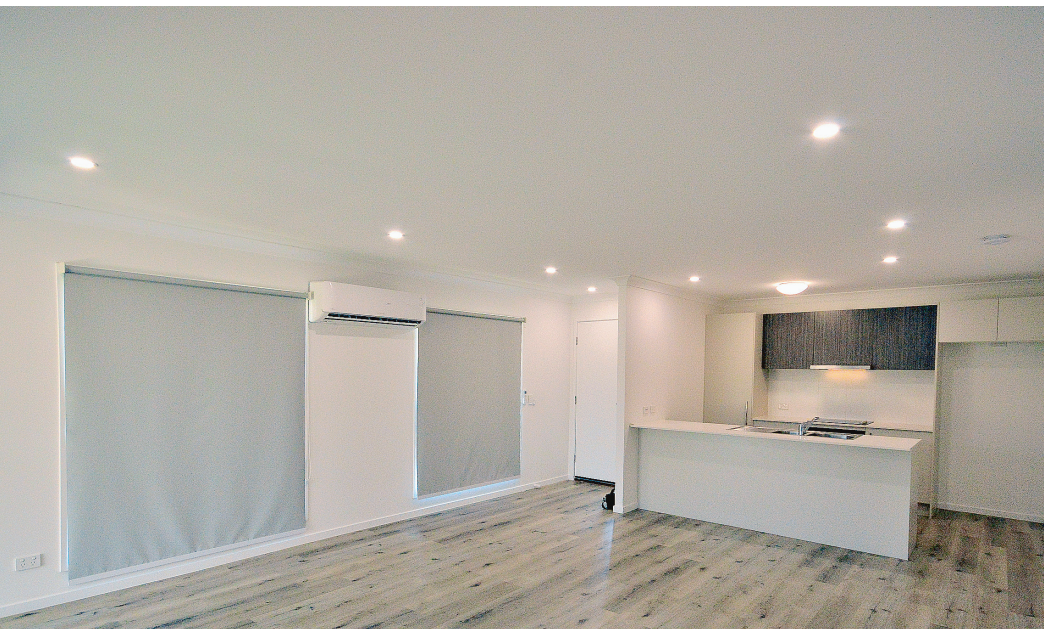
See www.helenharm.com for more listing

www.helenharm.com

0408 457 496

Helen Harm
Licenced Principal





New duplex unit

This duplex unit was constructed in 2022 and purchased in 2023 and is in an elevated position in the Orchard Grove estate with Strata Title.

It is a case of paying half the insurance for the building and sharing the cost for any maintenance and there are no body corporate fees.

The unit is rendered and almost new with three bedrooms all featuring built ins.

The comfortable master bedroom has ensuite with double vanity and is airconditioned - a must in the current weather conditions.

There is a practical open plan living area featuring vinyl flooring a galley kitchen and again that all important airconditioning.

The bathroom has bath with a separate shower and toilet while outside there is a privacy-fenced courtyard, two remote controlled garages and a concrete driveway and surrounds.

Contact Helen Harm on 0408 457 496 to arrange inspection. Go to www.helenharm.com for more photos



Address: 1/16 Chant Drive, ROSENTHAL HEIGHTS Description: 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2+ car Price: \$450,000 Inspection: By appointment
Contact: Helen Harm 0408 457 496, HELEN HARM

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**This comparison rate is based on a \$150,000 loan over 25 years with Principal & Interest payments. WARNING: This comparison rate is true only for the example given and may not include all fees and charges. Different terms, fees or other loan amounts might result in a different comparison rate.

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On a Creek

GREYMARE – 2251 m² (.55 Acres)

- On the banks of Greymare Creek
- Level block, slopes gently to the creek
- Bitumen road frontage
- Ideal spot, privacy, relaxed country lifestyle
- Escape the hustle & bustle of city
- Live in picturesque Southern Down Region
- Direct access to main highway
- 20 Mins west of Warwick

\$ 150,000+



Your Private Castle

Old Butter Factory full of history, now needs new owners.

- 3,194 m² with leasehold title (application can be made to freehold).
- Easy access to rail line may suit astute investor with Inland Rail Project
- Current owner is disposing Inglewood asset due to family commitments and is ready to talk.
- Suit warehouse, tourism, museum or???

\$ 159,000



HENDON Half Acre

Investors opportunity!!

- 2023 m² (½ Acre) with rural views
- Power in Street
- 23K (20 mins) North of Warwick

Half Acre Lot

\$ 65,000

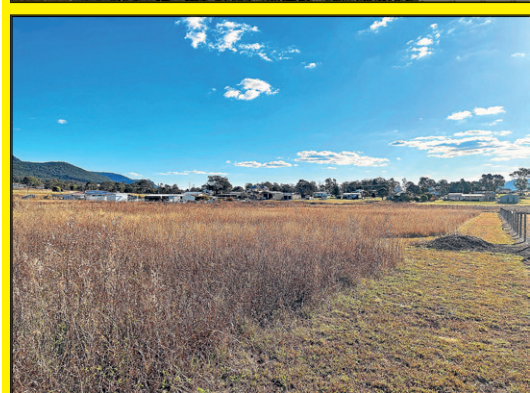


Country Acre

MARYVALE - Nestled in the Great Dividing Range near Cunningham's Gap. Only 90 minutes to Brisbane or the Gold Coast.

- Level 4047 m² corner lot
- Power available
- All weather gravel road access
- New Fencing
- Mountain views in that fresh mountain air!

\$ 220,000



Level Block

Sellers change of circumstance, need to move to Warwick. Your gain! Build your dream home.

- 4047 m² (1 Ac)
- Views are 360 degrees
- Costing for soil test available
- Costing for power pole available
- Road works required are listed by Southern Downs Regional Council

MARYVALE - 20 min Warwick, 90 min Brisbane

\$ 125,000



Ready to Build

MARYVALE is zoned township. No road work required to build your dream home on this lot! Less in rates - no town water or sewerage. Both neighbours' have their own bores.

- 1012 m² on all weather road
- Views are 360 degrees
- Road is to Council standard to build
- Power is next door in the street

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For Rent: 4661 3663

3 Brm, office/4th, 1 bath, kitchen/dining, lounge, laundry, entertaining, 1 car **\$ 430 p.w.**

4 Brm, 2 bath, kitchen/dining, lounge, outdoor entertain, 2 car..... **\$ 470 p.w.**

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Double Block

MARYVALE - Scenic Double block has 2 Titles. Quiet country lifestyle only 90 minutes to Brisbane or the Gold Coast.

- 2 x 4047 m² (Total 8094 m²) – 2 Acres
- 2 Separate Titles
- Sloping from front to back
- Power available
- New Fencing

\$ 199,000



ARATULA Markets

Ideally suited to owner operator with family

- Highway corner frontage established 30 yrs
- 2 Satellite liquor licences
- 18 products on consignment
- Coffee, smoothie, juice, crepe & waffle bar
- Extensive product instore beside fruit & veg
- Cold rooms, refrigeration, display units
- Delivery truck & Forklift

Price Reduced to SELL !!

\$ 120,000

- BUSINESS OWNERS -

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Workin' Wear

Workin' Wear WARWICK

- Sell products always in demand
- Main Street location
- Workwear, work boots, safety supplies & more
- Solid customer & account base
- Open 5 ½ days
- Steady growth since 2008
- Easily run by Owner + 1 or 2
- \$ 199,000 + Stock

\$ 199,000+



40 Wood Street

- Business Office with reception & rest room, concrete storage yard.
- Zoning is "Mixed Use" which permits – Residential, Low Impact Industry, Commercial Office, Childcare
- Home – 4 Bed, 1 Bath, carport
- General Development Requirements please contact our office
- Land Size is 1897 m²

\$ 1,300,000