

History



Bunya Harvest: A time for gathering

The Bunya Pine is symbolic to SE Qld's Indigenous people. Every three years a bumper harvest of the cones saw messengers sent out inviting all

tribes and family groups from Bundaberg to the Tweed River areas to gather in the Bunya Mountains, often in the Baroon Pocket region.

Families met with distant tribal relatives and others from neighbouring regions at regular meeting spots to share the journey to the final location. Local folklore has Mount Eerwah being one such spot with men and women having separate camps. Then they moved down to what is now "Bunya Rd", meeting up with more groups until finally a thousand may be camped at the destination.

Bunya trees can be 50m high and live up to 600 years. Every family owned its own tree en-route and no-one took the nuts from another's property. Owners used vines to climb and reach the cones weighing up to 10kg. Once roasted over live embers or opened and eaten raw, the nuts were shared along with fish, wildlife or fruit gathered along the way.

Tribal quarrels and laws were settled, marriages arranged and punishments metered. It was a celebration of community, stories and history

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told, goods exchanged, and initiations and dances learned to ensure the continuation of culture.

Scottish immigrant Andrew Petrie was enticed as the first free settler to the Moreton Bay Colony in 1837 to repair the windmill and erect new buildings. As an explorer he made friends with tribes and in 1842 at the Mary River he “rescued” escaped convicts Durumboi (James Davis) and Wandi (James Bracewell) who were surviving with the locals. Fascinated by the Bunya trees he gave samples to botanist John Bidwill to take to London. Bidwill was acknowledged as the discoverer of the *Araucaria Bidwilli*.

Petrie’s son Tom, lacking European friends, went walkabout with the Turrbal tribe when not accompanying his father. He recalled attending the Bunya Festival to his daughter Constance who wrote his memoir. He was impressed with the Indigenous people’s understanding of nature, their sharing and commitment to traditional lore. He remained their firm friend becoming Indigenous Welfare Officer in Brisbane. Petrie Park in Nambour and Brisbane’s suburb of Petrie commemorate his service.

Kabi Kabi Elder Aunty Beverley Head initiated the Bunya Dreaming Festival in 2007 “reimagining the past with a modern twist”. Crowds gathered at Ewan Maddock Dam enjoying traditional dances and songs, hearing stories and history, racing to collect Bunya cones, making art from natural objects, and joining the final corroboree dance in a spirit of reconciliation. The last festival was in 2019 with Covid restrictions halting plans for a revival.

View SBS story: www.bit.ly/3qGCHON. Also: www.bit.ly/3qBZAD6 and www.koorihistory.com/bunya. Eileen Walder



Dan
PURDIE MP
Member for **Ninderry**

This week I headed back to Parliament, where there was a great deal of discussion on the crisis gripping our state’s health services, and impacting locals’ access to timely medical care. It was alarming to learn that elective surgery patients here on the Sunshine Coast now have to wait longer than anywhere else for their procedures.

More than 1 in 3 elective surgery patients don’t get their surgery on time at SCUH and Nambour, while nearly a quarter will wait longer than they should in Gympie.

The figures also show that ambulance ramping remains at crisis levels, with almost 1 in 2 patients left waiting on ramps, in hallways and along corridors. This is simply not good enough, and I will continue to call on the Government to fix the system, including better resourcing, data shared in real time, and cultural change. Queenslanders, regardless of where they live, are entitled to receive the health care they deserve, when they need it.

Recognition for community champion

Congratulations to our very own community champion, Joyce Turnbull, who was a finalist in the Sunshine Coast Australia Day Awards 2022 announced last week. Joyce, a long serving member of Eumundi Rotary, also played a very significant role in the success of this publication, *Eumundi Voice*. If not for her hard work and persistence, this important vehicle for community news and events may not have been realized. Thank you Joyce, and congratulations on this special recognition.

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