Paying tribute to young fisher



The event, in its second year running, is held in honour of Ashley McDowall Holm (pictured).

By KONNOR FURBER

A MEMORIAL fishing competition will be held this weekend in honour of a young local who is remembered as a fun, loving and avid fisherman.

The second Ash Memorial Fishing Comp and Treasure Hunt will be held at Tinaburra (Yungaburra), with proceeds from the event being used to kickstart the Ashley Mcdowall Holm Memorial Fund.

The fishing competition was started last year in honour of Ashley McDowall Holm, a young Tarzali local and "keen fisherman", who was involved in a single vehicle accident on 4 October 2022. After three days in the ICU, the 19-year-old sadly passed away.

His mother Megan McDowall wanted to keep his name alive by fundraising and donating to the community in his name, and after some time the Ash Memorial Fishing Comp was born.

The next step in the process was to decide who to donate the funds raised from the fishing competition to.

"Ash was fun, loving and carefree. Nothing was too much for him, he would give you the shirt off his back if he could," Megan said.

"He had a promising future ahead of him and was only a few months shy of finishing his apprenticeship with Aussie Marine in Cairns as a boat mechanic.

"When Ash was growing up, he played football for the Malanda Eels and he would always make it into representative teams, needing to travel to various towns to play football.

"As a single mother, I remember how difficult it was to keep finding the money for him to attend these events. So, I thought maybe we could help young children financially achieve their dreams," she said.

This is when Megan decided to launch the memorial fund. Once up and running, it will be open to all schooling and sporting events through a grant process that will contribute part of the fees required, alleviating financial pressure for parents.

The 2024 Ash Memorial Fishing Comp will be held this weekend at Tinaburra from Friday-Sunday.

There will be a "Home Base" set up at the end of Tinaburra Drive on the right-hand side, past the Avenue of Honour, and will be open from 3pm Friday.

Nominations are currently open and will close at 9pm Saturday. Adult nominations are $45, Juniors are $25 and Littlies are $10, there is a reduced price for family nominations.

Anglers are required to organise their own camping, if need be. They are also required to obtain their own SIPS (Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme) permit. These can be bought online, at all Queensland Australia Post outlets or via 1300 575 359.

The event is a catch and release competition confined to Tinaroo Dam. Fishing can start as of 6pm Friday and will cease at 8am Sunday.

There is a cash prize of $500 for the first 1-metre-plus barramundi caught, and over $7,000 in prizes for other categories.

There is also a treasure hunt held in addition to the fishing competition. There will be 50 Ash MFC flags hidden all around and on the dam with each flag worth a prize.

There will be a presentation held on Sunday at Home Base where there will be a range of prizes given to winners of each category from Open, Adult, Junior and Littlies, as well as the Team category.

Food and drink vendors will be present on the day.

Visit Ash Memorial Fishing Comp. on Facebook for more information.

Mt Garnet loses bid for new pool

A BID by the small community of Mt Garnet to get their public swimming pool fixed or replaced has failed after Tablelands Regional Council made the decision to remove the facility altogether.

The ageing pool has been closed to the public since March 2020 and has been the subject of numerous questions from councillors since that time as to why so much money was being used to keep the pool treated with chemicals and for other maintenance of the facility when it was not being used.

At its recent meeting, a report recommended the whole facility be decommissioned with no replacement on the agenda. The report indicated the cost of a new pool would be $3 million.

Before council made its decision, Mt Garnet Pool Association vice-president Heather Payne asked the council to find a way to fix or replace their pool and had provided council with an operational plan for the facility which included volunteers willing to provide maintenance and management of the pool as well as locals prepared to train as lifeguards.

The group also provided support letters from community organisations and had previously provided the council with a petition signed by 200 people.

One of Ms Payne's main arguments as to why a pool was so critical to Mt Garnet was that kids would have somewhere safe to swim and an opportunity to learn how to swim.

"Before the pool closed, all students – from prep to Year 1 – had 20 swimming lessons a year. Unfortunately now, children are forced to catch a bus for an hour just to access two lessons a year," she said.

Her words were not enough to sway the council, but resonated with Cr Annette Haydon who tried to convince her fellow councillors to support a new pool.

"Council is supposed to support a healthy, active, safe lifestyle until it comes to Mt Garnet," she said.

"We can throw millions towards Priors Creek (redevelopment) but nothing for Mt Garnet. The care factor for Mt Garnet from this TRC is nearly non-existent."

Cr Kevin Cardew said the decision to decommission the pool was a difficult one.

"If someone deserves a pool, it's Mt Garnet. We cannot come up with a viable solution to either build a new pool or fix the pool.

"My heart goes out to the community but I can't support a new pool."

Mayor Rod Marti said the capital investment that would be required for a new pool was too much of a challenge for council and he believed that despite the community's good intentions to run the pool, the ongoing operational costs of managing the facility would be beyond the capacity of the community.

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