



Rural Rave

In 1972 when I first came to Mission Beach it was essentially a farming community. There was no township; no town water and dirt roads went to Tully and through Bingil Bay to El Arish(not even gravel).

The road to El Arish through Fenby Gap was a sandy track inaccessible except to 4WD. There was a post office which worked from a house – this is now Shrubbery, a few weekend cottages and a few old pensioners living unobtrusively in small shacks around the area; the South Johnstone Mill Workers Hut was still in use near Clump Point Jetty and Jack Romano had just built the Moonglow Motel (Castaways site) with a liquor licence for diners, selling fuel, milk, bread, and the papers. The general consensus was that Jack was crazy with no water and only a dirt road into the place.



There was however electricity and a strong community spirit. A tribute to this strong community is the progress hall, which was built by volunteers on land provided by the council. Indeed we felt fortunate when compared to the early settlers, for Cutten Brothers had offered land to anyone who would build and live at Bingil Bay.

The community of Mission Beach has since grown as less viable and unused agricultural land was subdivided, but a very large proportion of the freehold land at Mission Beach is still farmland. The farmers have lived in harmony with nature, in particularly, the cassowary for over 100 years and the birds here today have descended from birds which at one time or another have had contact with farmers with a few cassowaries and other wild things being nursed back to health at times.

One of the features of Mission Beach is the village and rural aspect of the environs. The road from Tully and El Arish come through state forest, or grazing country if via Bingil Bay. The drive down Seaview Street has a tree line on the northern boundary. This tree line is privately owned by the Campbell family, as is the grazing land directly behind the post office.

A look at a photo of the area will show that all farmers provide valuable habitat either from wind breaks, riparian belts or areas deliberately left and/or open space where wildlife may wander unimpeded. Many visitors comment on the calmness and rural nature of this area describing it as a lovely seaside holiday place with rural surrounds.

There is little or no reward to those who have preserved a piece of paradise. Indeed the reverse is true as the increased rates (due in a large part to

differential rating) and urban encroachment has caused extra problems with farming. Government laws continue to impinge on the ability to farm successfully and have led to pre-emptive clearing in the past. **History shows that those who cleared land have been well rewarded financially while those who preserved some natural habitat have been severely disadvantaged, with the value of the land severely eroded because it is uncleared and restrictions on maintenance clearing.**

There was a recent example of the clearing of a headland prior to the introduction of restrictions on re-growth clearing. The area in question was to be planted with more suitable windbreak trees. A less intrusive way to achieve this would have been to plant better species amongst the existing under-growth to be removed later. Given the risk that no removal would be allowed sometime in the future the option of total removal was taken. There has to be some balance and recognition given to farming.

One way of maintaining or even improving our environment and the attractiveness of Mission Beach is to encourage and support farmers to continue farming in this area and show appreciation for their efforts in providing open space and habitat. We all need to strive hard to keep the very things that make Mission Beach so special.

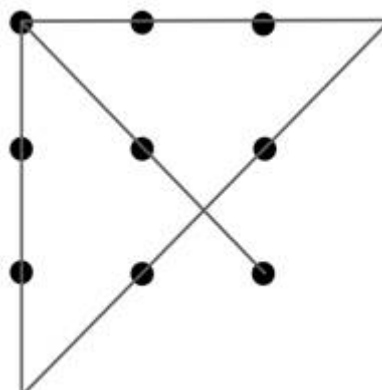
The views expressed here are those of our rural representative and not necessarily those of C4 Management

Maurice Franklin

As promised – a solution to the “nine dots” challenge printed in the previous Bulletin. Joining all nine dots with four straight lines, without lifting the pen would have to be easy wouldn't it? I found getting 8 was easy, though trying harder only resulted in more ways of getting 8 again. The luckiest number for some Asian cultures, but not in this case.

The only way to get the elusive 9 is to venture outside of the perceived box. This puzzle is where the “Thinking outside the Square” term comes from.

Though we often talk about thinking outside the square (or box) we clearly have difficulty putting it into practice, and will almost always follow predictable pathways when looking for solutions to problems, even when we know they have previously failed.



If nine black dots and four lines on a white page can stump us so easily, what opportunities in everyday life are we missing when we so often only exercise our same ol,' same ol' approach?

Peter Salleras.