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Editor's note

It would be foolish for anyone to dismiss former Noosa mayor Noel Playford's concerns for the future of his former political patch as someone who just does not know when to let go. The former Cr Playford has lost none of the keen intellect that made him a local force to be reckoned with and, as a Tewantin resident, he very much keeps a close watch on the goings-on of the new regional council. And he is just pointing out the obvious in today's Noosa News. Noosa's hard-won gains are being swallowed up by a bureaucratic beast of the State Government's making. And two Noosa councillors and the best intentions of Mayor Bob Abbot are not about to keep it cowed, or even under control, for very long at all. Noosa needs to find its own way again. **– Acting Editor Peter Gardiner**

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Taking long way home

Couple enjoy life-changing 33,000km bike journey to raise funds for youth

By **BIANCA CLARE**

When you cycle 33,000km across four continents and 27 countries, tackling every type of terrain imaginable, no two days are the same.

Just ask Aussie couple Jules Cooper, 33, and Jess Macaulay, 25, who began their "long way home" journey in Argentina in November 2008.

Over 18 months they have crossed the Andes and the Alps by bike, cycled the infamous Tour de France passes and traversed Bolivia's Salar de Uyuni saltpan.

They have navigated China without being able to speak a word of Mandarin and spent three months journeying across Asia to Singapore before flying in to Darwin.

On Wednesday, they arrived in Sunshine Beach to catch up with family before embarking on their final leg to Melbourne.

"It has been amazing," Jules said.

"Finding food and shelter in the most remote parts of the world was a challenge



Jules Cooper and Jess Macaulay arrive at Sunshine Beach on their epic bike journey through 27 countries to raise funds for disadvantaged Australian children.

PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON/N24743A

but a life-changing experience.

"We discovered so much that you wouldn't without riding and being on the ground."

Jules said despite the ever-changing scenery, there had been one consistent.

"No matter how far you ride, you'll still finish the

day with a sore bottom," he said. "Every other muscle seems to adapt."

Jules was working as a stockbroker and Jess an osteopath in London, with not much cycling experience, when they came up with the "long way home" idea.

"We knew there would have been easier ways

home, but we just wanted to see if this was possible," Jules said.

"We also wanted to get to know ourselves and each other better.

"For me life as a stockbroker was all about numbers on a screen.

"Now I get up at sunrise and go to bed when the sun goes down.

"Riding around the world might seem like an impossible task but if you break it down in to small bits, it is achievable.

"We do 100km per day."

Jules said the Noosa leg of the adventure was sentimental.

"I grew up in Gympie and holidayed in Noosa every year," he said. "It is such a beautiful place."

Jules and Jess are expected to arrive in Melbourne on July 3.

As part of their ride, the couple is raising money for Ardoch Youth Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation working to provide better education opportunities for disadvantaged Australian students.

"For many of these kids, day to day life can be even more challenging than it is for us," Jules said.

"Dysfunctional families, homelessness and poverty make getting an education a constant uphill battle."

The couple's website is www.julesandjess.com and links to Ardoch Youth Foundation are available for donations.

Chance to be really creative

Opportunities will abound for eye-opening inspiration when the next Creative Alliance catalyst club connects with the Jewellery and Art Gallery at Carrington's next Tuesday, May 25 from 5.30pm to 7.30pm.

Julie Carrington believes in giving creative people an opportunity to be seen and heard. Spokesperson Sue Davis is delighted that this next event will be held in such a creative venue.

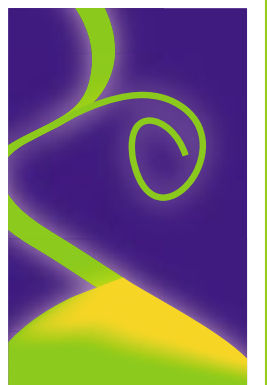
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