

OCTOBER 2023

Top News



**NEWS FROM THE TOP END OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
IN AUSTRALIA**

Editorial

Burning Bright!

Feature

*9 Baptised at Aboriginal
Community*

Good News

*An Answered Prayer -
Literature Evangelism*

BURNING BRIGHT!

In Revelation 14:6-12 the Bible records a significant passage of scripture for Seventh-day Adventists – ‘The Three Angels Message’. The proclamation of the Three Angels Message, Christ’s final warning message before He comes (Rev 14:14-16), has long been seen as the mission and mandate of our church.

Ellen White wrote on this, saying, “In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention”¹

For some, this is old news. The importance of the Three Angels Message is glaringly obvious! For others, however, things haven’t been so clear, and the question remains – what are these ‘Three Angels’ all about?

To that question, I would respond, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and a call to worship. If you really look at the details of the Three Angels Message, you will find that this is indeed the core of what they, in fact the whole book of Revelation, are about. And, that means therefore, that this is what our church should really be about.

Seventh-day Adventists should be about proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, and, in view of who He is and what He’s done, calling people to worship Him!

The big question is, is that what we are about? Or put another way, are we living like that’s what we are about?

In our time, there are many things that contend for our attention. For some it’s the daily pressures of life. For others it’s the bombardment of information that pours out through the digital world. And then, of course, there are those who are being sucked into the pursuit of building the ‘dream life’ on this earth, at the expense of paying any attention to the life to come.

I wonder where you are at. I wonder what is getting your attention. And I wonder what you are about.

I’m certainly not perfect, and at times I can get distracted too, but I know what I want my life to be about. I want my life to be about sharing the love of Jesus Christ and calling people to worship Him.

In order to do that, however, there are two things that I really need to get right. An unreserved love for God, and an unreserved love for people (Mark 12:30-31).

Could you imagine, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Australia full of people whose heart’s burn for Jesus and are filled with love for people. When that becomes us, our church will burn bright as we carry the Gospel of Jesus, in the context of the Three Angels Message, to the people in Northern Australia.



Simon Gigliotti
President
Northern Australian Conference

¹ Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, page 19.

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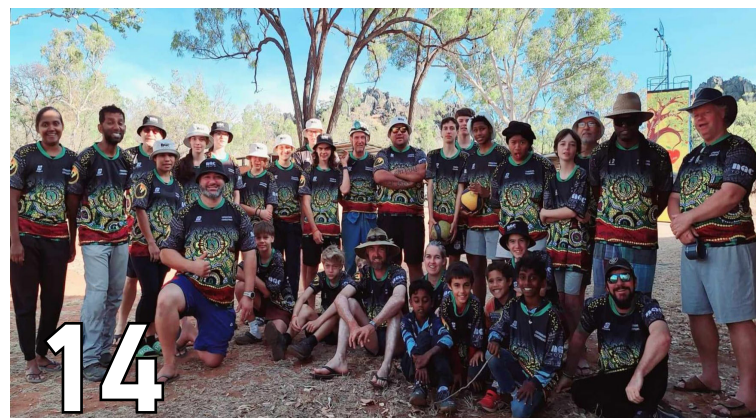
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GENERAL SECRETARY/CFO REPORT

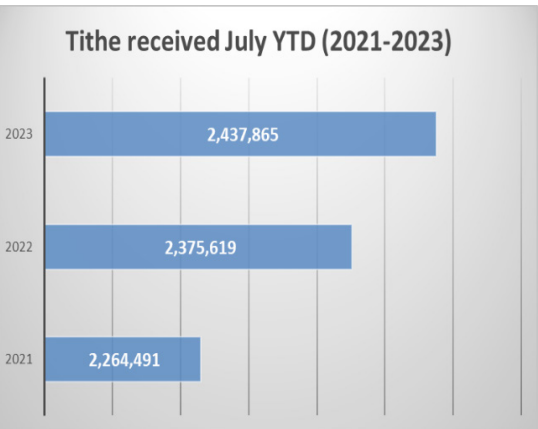
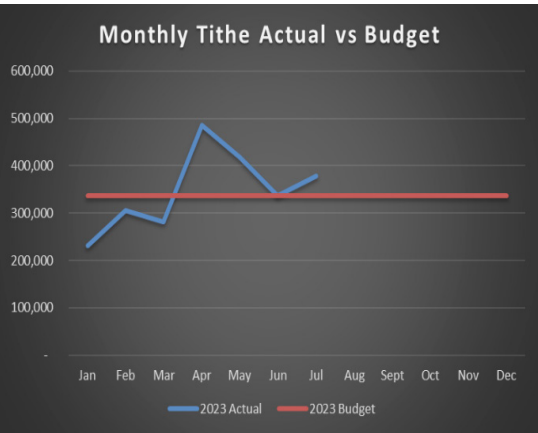
MEMBERSHIP & BAPTISM AT THE END OF JUNE 2023

Church membership increased by 15 people at the end of June 2023, from 2,874 to 2,889. The increase in membership was primarily due to baptism and transfer of membership. Praise the Lord for 24 baptisms in the June quarter.

TITHE REPORT - AS OF JULY 2023

We thank God for His blessings within our Conference and the faithful stewardship of church members in returning their tithes. The cumulative tithe received up to July 2023 is higher than the 2023 budget by \$80,902 and also higher compared to last year by \$62,246.

The first chart shows the monthly tithe received versus budget and the second chart shows the cumulative tithe received up to July compared against 2022 and 2021.



NAC SCHOOL STRATEGY & PLANNING MEETING

Key leaders from the Schools met to discuss the strategy and development plan for the next ten years. We reviewed the school work program, brainstormed and reprioritised the project that requires a financial commitment based on the church and school mission and financial capacity. The development proposal was approved by the School Board in May 2022.

The key decision that was approved by the School Board was to build Cairns High School in the near term to create a thriving Christ-centred learning community in greater Cairns, shaping the student character for eternity and sharing the love of Jesus with the community.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Riverside Estate Development – The project to demolish and replace the ablution block and expand the commercial kitchen was delayed because of the cost increases, change of scope and delayed approval from the Government. Finally, after a long delay, the project started on the site on the week of September 18.

CHURCH STRATEGY & 2024 BUDGET MEETING

The NAC will meet with all the departmental leaders on October 12 to discuss the vision, purpose and strategy of the church. It will be the first meeting with Pastor Simon and some new departmental leaders.

REFLECTION

Lately, I've been dealing with some stressful issues that are out of my hands. Firstly, I have been uncertain if the government would approve our second request to extend the Riverside Estate development project completion date. The builder informed us that the project will not be completed until March 2024 due to issues with materials and worker availability, despite the government's note that there should be no further extensions after our first request to extend the project to December 2023. Secondly, two of our admin assistants have just submitted their resignation letters. They were both experienced and capable workers, and their absence will affect the office, as we have few employees.

I have been reading the book of Psalms as part of my daily devotionals. Something that stood out to me was how frequently King David used the word "trust." In Psalm 31 alone, he uses it three times (in verses 1, 6, and 14). Despite facing many challenges and uncertainties, he always put his trust in the Lord. Overall, the word "trust" appears 45 times in the book of Psalms, emphasising King David's unwavering faith in God. I felt the guidance of the Holy Spirit and was filled with peace. It reminded me that God is always in control, and we just need to trust Him and bring our requests and gratitude to Him in prayer each day.

As I write this, I am thrilled to share that our prayers have been answered this week. The government has approved our request for an extension, and I had great interviews with strong candidates for the admin assistant positions. One lady came to the office and met me after morning worship. She came to ask about the position and expressed her strong desire for the job. Later that day, I interviewed another lady who had a great experience and we had a great conversation. We serve a living God who knows our needs, and I am grateful for His timely and perfect provision. The trouble that I had made it a sweet experience of seeing God answer my prayer in His time and His way. We just need to trust in Him because He is good and faithful. "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the sons of men!" (Psalm 31:19).

NORTH MACKAY CHURCH

WOMEN'S RETREAT

14 women from the Mackay area attended a woman's retreat at Dalrymple Heights from September 8-10. The event was organised by North Mackay Church and guest speaker, Mere Neil, shared messages on the theme *Surrendering All* (John 10:10). On Sabbath morning the ladies were uplifted spiritually after sharing their testimony based on their favourite verse. In the afternoon, they explored the beautiful surrounding nature by having a buggy ride to the look out at a massive gorge. It was a fun but rough ride for some ladies. After closing Sabbath they ended the night learning to macrame. The weekend ended with another talk on Sunday morning and brunch before heading home. It was a blessing to study God's word and pray together. Those that attended left the weekend with a gift bag that included a small bottle of oil representing the Holy Spirit, a ring of favourite Bible verses and a journal to write what they are grateful for each day.



TOWNSVILLE CITY CHURCH

COUNTDOWN: BACK TO THE FUTURE

Jane Campbell

An evangelistic series run by the Townsville City SDA Church, in July, has resulted in nine people stepping forward for baptism and five others requesting to be rebaptised.

“Countdown: Back to the Future” was a four-week series of public presentations by Pr David Gilmore, of Alice Springs Church, on the Bible and its prophecies. It was a packed program that consisted of four nightly sessions on weekdays and two sessions each Sabbath.

More than 50 people attended every meeting with at least a third of this number comprising the people from the community. Many of the attendees coming from outside the City Church had already been touched by previous connections with Adventists or had been exposed to Adventist understanding of Bible truth, including four people who came from the local connect to Faith FM.

Much was made of the limited time Pr Gilmore was in Townsville. The sermon each Sabbath was set aside for him to evangelise so that members or visitors in the congregation, who might not have been able to attend the seminar program, were provided opportunity to sample the Countdown series.

Following a noontime luncheon, seminars held each Sabbath afternoon featured a Q&A session. Many deep questions seeking clarity and biblical understanding were given to Pr Gilmore in written format and treated with respectful and considered responses by him.

Pr Gilmore’s presentations were a reflection of his personal walk with Jesus. His presentations overflowed with personal stories and object lessons from nature which enhanced the Bible themes placing Jesus at the centre of every message. Local church Pr Alredo Campos and Pr Gilmore spent much time doing personal visits and follow ups with attendees during the four-week program.

The program was successful due to prayer. In preparation for the evangelistic series individual prayer, a scheduled weekly prayer meeting, and corporate prayer every day at dawn for six months prior the program’s commencement was very important. The outcome of this attracted people from different Christian denominations as well as people who had no previous in-depth exposure to the Word of God. Due to the fortunate availability of Pr Gilmore and his family to stay longer in Townsville, and the receptive welcome of the attendees to hear more, it was apparent that as the countdown to the final Sunday evening session drew nearer the future was certainly looking brighter.

The work of seeding, planting and growing will continue with weekly presentations by Elder Richard Warden on Friday evenings where the community can dig a little deeper into the Bible topics that Pr Gilmore presented. A small group Bible study on Sabbath afternoons is also being offered, especially to our new friends interested from outside our church.

We give thanks to God for His goodness in all that He has done and is doing to prepare His people for Jesus’ soon return.



DARWIN CHURCH

TIMOR LESTE VISIT

Recently, Darwin Church hosted a group from the Greater Sydney Conference returning from Timor Leste. Some of the Darwin Church members were so impressed by the stories and slides of their mission trip, that Pr Ray Hobbs offered to travel to Timor Leste to check out any future service opportunities.

The Northern Australian Conference (NAC) Board of Directors recently adopted Timor Leste as a Mission Partner, and so, with our outgoing and incoming Conference Presidents' blessing, Pr Hobbs undertook this trip to see first hand the dynamics of life in Timor Leste and to hear from the local Mission staff about possible future projects Darwin Church could be involved with.

While there, Pr Hobbs lent his electrical skills to make life a little more comfortable for the staff at the newly constructed Church School in the city of Baucau, Timor Leste's second largest city. The Adventist schools in Timor Leste are the only ones offering tuition in English and the Timor Adventist International School, in Dili, has grown from 6 students to 370 students in 6 years!

Pictured is Pr Hobbs meeting with Timor Leste Mission staff in Dili, with their Mission President, Pr Chris Anderson. It is hoped that in the future they can find a suitable project for NAC members to support and connect with the Timorese people.



Far left - Mission President Pr Chris Anderson. Far right - Pr Ray Hobbs



Pr Ray Hobbs with a local Adventist pastor and his family



Timore Adventist International School sign

CAIRNS CENTRAL CHURCH

OP SHOP EXTENSION

On September 6, work towards the extension of the Cairns Central Church Op Shop commenced. With a flurry of machines, trucks and tradies, the foundation slab was poured and they couldn't be more pleased. This extension means that the extra 80 square metres at the front of the property will allow the current Op Shop operations to move to one building rather than be spread across two buildings; and the Junior Sabbath School group can make use of their own room, now only sharing their space with the church for functions and special events. Watch this space for updates on the extension.



WUJAL WUJAL

9 BAPTISED AT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

Eddie Hastie/Kymerley McMurray

Ten people from the Aboriginal community of Wujal Wujal (Qld), located 71 kilometres south of Cooktown, became members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on September 3. The nine baptisms and one profession of faith were the result of ongoing ministry over the past six years, supported through Global Mission funds.

A highlight from the baptism was the testimony of baptismal candidate Dion Williams, who has a history of substance abuse and, before knowing Jesus, described himself as an “angry person.”

During the program, Mr Williams shared a video of his “cardboard testimony”. Recorded at Mamarapha College, the video is a visual account where he used pieces of cardboard to highlight key moments from his life before and after finding Jesus, as people who had no previous in-depth exposure to the Word of God. Due to the fortunate availability of Pr Gilmore and his family to stay longer in Townsville, and the receptive welcome of the attendees to hear more, it was apparent that as the countdown to the final Sunday evening session drew nearer the future was certainly looking brighter.

The work of seeding, planting and growing will continue with weekly presentations by Elder Richard Warden on Friday evenings where the community can dig a little deeper into the Bible topics that Pr Gilmore presented. A small group Bible study on Sabbath afternoons is also being offered, especially to our new friends interested from outside our church.

We give thanks to God for His goodness in all that He has done and is doing to prepare His people for Jesus’ soon return.

Currently studying pastoral ministry at Mamarapha, Mr Williams is also a full-time carer for his brother, who has a disability. Since getting to know Jesus, Mr Williams has been a source of encouragement and support to those around him.

Mareeba Adventist Church elder and former Northern Australian Conference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries director Pastor Eddie Hastie said Mr Williams’ journey is a “testament to the power of faith. His life has been transformed and the community can clearly see the positive change that Jesus has brought into his life.”

“Dion’s cardboard testimony speaks volumes about his journey. It tells of his life before he found Jesus and the joy he now experiences in following God,” Pastor Hastie explained. “His story serves as an inspiration to all who witness it, reminding us that faith can truly transform lives for the better,” Pastor Hastie said.

Wujal Wujal, is located on the Bloomfield River, has a population of 280 residents and is known for its local saltwater crocodile inhabitants.

This story was published on <https://record.adventistchurch> on 7 September 2023





SCHOOLS

BOOK WEEK

Book Week was held from August 19-25 with the theme 'Read, Grow, Inspire'. Our three schools celebrated their Book Week Parade on different days but they all had a great time dressing up and showing off their favorite book characters that inspire them.

The schools did various activities throughout the week with Cairns Adventist College making crafts including Pig and Trevor puppets, The Very Hungry Caterpillar stuffed toys and Macca the Backpacker hats!



Cairns Adventist College Crafts

Riverside Adventist School Parade



Cairns Adventist College Parade

Carlisle Adventist College Parade





Photos: Kim Rawlings Photography

RIVERSIDE ADVENTIST SCHOOL 2ND ANNUAL BILLY CART DERBY

Riverside Adventist School held their 2nd annual billy cart derby on Sunday, August 13. The community event welcomed families from the school, guests at the Riverside Convention Centre and the wider community. The morning consisted of student races and family races, while the afternoon allowed the local Pathfinders and youth to race for their trophies. There was plenty of food and entertainment to keep everyone happy with facepainting and entertainment by local musicians.



CAIRNS ADVENTIST SCHOOL TERM 3 UPDATE

Term 3 was a busy one for Cairns Adventist College. With Cross Country, Service Week and Book Week being just some of the exciting events scheduled; students have had a thrilling time this term.

At Cross Country, held on August 18, students braved the warming weather as they took to the starting line, each giving their very best as they made their way around the course, competing and cheering, showing great sportsmanship and fortitude. No one showed more effort than their Prep/1 students who completed a 1km run with smiles and determination. It's the new tradition at CAC to end their Cross Country with a Colour Dash where students and staff are blasted with colour as they navigate an obstacle course, leaving everyone covered in rainbows! Book Week was in week 6 and comprised of daily literary-themed activities, a Book Fair, and a highly anticipated costume parade to close a week of book filled fun. Students went all out for this year for the parade, with wizards, princesses, sea creatures, Pinocchio, a unicorn, and even Mac and Cheese! Incredible effort was evident from students (and parents) as characters from beloved books came alive through colourful costumes. On Sunday, September 10, the school community gathered at CAC for a roaring good time at the annual Bonfire Night. There was food, games and a whole lot of fun had by everyone. It was wonderful to see families, staff, and students coming together to share food, laughs and fun all while supporting CAC and the Home and School Committee.



LITERATURE EVANGELISM

AN ANSWERED PRAYER

Willa Brough and Sandy Wallis first saw Vivian standing at her driveway gate, in conversation on the phone. Willa approached closer and signalled 'We can come back?' Vivian gave a nod of the head with an approving smile.

An hour later, after a few surprising rebuffs when Sandy was approaching homes, Willa indicated they should return to Vivian's place. Sandy was unsure, but they soon found Vivian who was now available, receptive and welcoming.

Vivian had spent hours at the hospital the day prior with her youngest son, 10 year old Gary who was underweight and had chest pains. The doctors had told her he needed to eat more, but that's not easy for mums with kids who are picky eaters. Vivian had come home the previous night and prayed that God would help her find changes to make, and was going to Google food ideas for her son.

Vivian couldn't help but see that the books presented - Foods & Their Healing Power, Healthy Juices, Today Tomorrow and You, 21 Days to Change and Cooling Down Teen Stress - were part of a miraculous visit; God had answered her prayer. They offered a prayer of thanks together for God's care for Vivian and her family. She wanted to share big hugs as they left.

Praise God for faithful Literature Evangelists who have worked before them over the years, as Vivian recalled that she first saw these very books at her aunts place and that she spoke highly of them.



L-R: Sandy, Vivian and Willa

Sandy Wallis is a Literature Evangelist in the Victorian Conference and Willa Brough is a Literature Evangelist in the Northern Australian Conference.

LITERATURE EVANGELISM

JUMPSTART TRAINING OUT-REACH

15 attendees joined the Literature Evangelist Jumpstart Training Outreach in Cairns in September. Brenton Lowe, Literature Ministries Director for Australia and New Zealand, and Georgia Kenny, Literature Evangelism Leader for the South Queensland Conference and Jumpstart Leader, lead out in the training. Four of the attendees were aged between 18 and 26. It was a wonderful week consisting of tears, frustrations and anxieties overcome, and joys exuberantly shared.

During the program, five new Jumpstart Literature Evangelists canvassed, selling books and making friends for Jesus.

While the Jumpstarters were training, the regulars were covering territory, connecting with people, inviting them to the ATSIM Camp in January, and selling books.

It was wonderful to be involved in flow-on communicating - where Jumpstart contacts were identified as potential regular customers - increasing sales volume and making for very happy customers.

Over \$8,000 in sales blessed the few days we were there, but there were greater blessings with precious souls receiving God-inspired literature. On Sabbath, September 9, all the leaders and supporting church members came to an afternoon program called "bread, bananas and books." 288 pieces of literature were given away that afternoon and a total of 412 pieces of literature were given away during the week. This doesn't include books that were taken by travelling Christians to share on their journeys.





YOUTH

YOUTH RALLY @ BASKETBALL COMP

We held our last Youth Rally on August 19 where Sharon Akui from Aitkenvale Church shared her story about how she came to really know God. Her testimony was set around the theme *If God Commands It, He Will Enable It* and gave those in attendance a lot to think about in their own personal walks with God.

The Youth Rally was followed by a lunch and then a basketball competition in the evening.

We had 14 teams enter the 3 on 3 basketball games and had a great time watching the skills of the players, some unexpected! There was also a 3 point competition and dunk competition.

The night ended with a Division A playoff between Mareeba Bucks (Mareeba) and 99 Problems - But A Swish Ain't One (Cairns). It was a close game with Mareeba Bucks winning by 2 points, 29 - 27.

The Division B playoff was between Play It Forward (Aitkenvale) and the MackTown OGs (Mackay Central) with the MackTown OGs winning 23 - 9.



DARWIN PATHFINDERS

STORMCO PREP - BALLOON ARTISTRY

The Greater Darwin Pathfinders were excited to learn about balloon twisting artistry on Saturday, September 10. Kristy Lee, a church member, teacher and local balloon artist, offered her time to help the Pathfinders who were preparing for the upcoming STORMCo project in Tennant Creek during the first week of school holidays. The Pathfinders learned how to make a variety of balloon animals, including dogs, cats, and swords. They also learned how to make balloon flowers and other decorations.

The Pathfinders had a great time learning about balloon twisting artistry and are excited to use their new skills to help make the STORMCo project a success.



NAC YOUTH

TEEN EX - CONQUERING CONQUERORS

Teen Ex 2023 was held at the Chillagoe-Mungana Caves National Park from September 17-21. Staff and teens from around the conference made their way to a remote campsite, 15KM north of Chillagoe. The week included caving, abseiling, swimming and games, and saw some of the teens, and staff, push themselves out of their comfort zone. NAC Youth Director, and guest speaker, Pr Travis Siutu challenged the teens each night as he gave messages on being Conquerors, that with Jesus they are 'more than conquerors' Romans 8:37. The teens were given some insight into Pr Travis' life as a teenager and were encouraged to hear that if God can use him, then God can use them too. All those who attended had a great week, spending time with each other and in God's beautiful nature. We would like to thank the team at Mungana Park Inc. for their hospitality and leadership.



YOUTH

WORLD PATHFINDER DAY

World Pathfinder Day was held on September 16 with the theme: *Go With Jesus*. Many of our clubs around the Conference celebrated the day by taking the local church service, followed by community service, a pathfinder meeting or a fun social at night!



Mount Isa Pathfinders



Cairns Pathfinders



Townsville Pathfinders

ATSIM & YOUTH DEPARTMENT

BASKETBALL COMMUNITY EVENT

The ATSIM (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Ministries) and NAC Youth Department held a joint Basketball Competition at the Mossman State High School on Saturday September 2.

About 100 people came to the event, 50 of those from the local community, to enjoy the basketball competition and a free sausage sizzle.

Adventist youth from Townsville, Tully, Innisfail, Cairns and Mareeba also attend this event to show their support and dedication to making community connections.

Pr Raymon Paletua, ATSIM Director at the NAC and the organiser of the event had this to say, “We started with Mossman because it is a small (Adventist) church with strong community connections, keen to reach out to young people.”

We are happy to hear that this event was a success and cannot wait to hear how this event and others positively affect the Mossman community in the future.

**We would like to say a huge thank you to the sponsors of the night: JSM Workforce Solutions Bathurst and Aztak Upholstery Cairns for their generosity and support of ATSIM work in the NAC.*



DARWIN & KATHERINE

PATHFINDER SABBATH CELEBRATION

On August 12, the Greater Darwin Pathfinder's and the devoted members of Batchelor Church joined together in a truly blessed Sabbath celebration. Led by Pr John Beck on the ukulele, the Pathfinders led a heartfelt service, while each family contributed delicious food and refreshments for a joyous lunch. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ros Jones for her dedicated service to Batchelor Church and prayed for her to have a truly special day. It was a beautiful day to worship alongside our church members, and were truly blessed.



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If you would like to contribute to *Top News*, please contact us using any of the methods on the left.
Please include photos with your submissions wherever possible.

Deadline

November 15 for the December edition.

Top News is the official magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Australia. All articles express the opinions of their authors and not necessarily those of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

OUR VISION IS TO BE
A “CHRIST-CENTRED
THRIVING DISCIPLE-MAKING
MOVEMENT”

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ATSIM NATIONAL CAMP

January 10 -15, 2024 

Djarragun College, Gordonvale, QLD

CAMP FEES

Accommodation + Meals

 Cabin + Meals \$290 - Adult \$262 - Child <small>Airconditioned ensuite cabins Linen, blankets & pillows included</small>	 Day Visitors \$15 - Adult \$10 - Child
 Classroom + Meals \$200 - Adult \$172 - Child <small>Airconditioned classrooms BYO mattress & sleeping gear</small>	 Camping + Meals \$190 - Adult \$162 - Child <small>Undercover basketball courts BYO tent & sleeping gear</small>

Secure your accommodation and meals in advance!

Registration Forms are available from your local
ATSIM Director or

aucatsim@adventist.org.au ☎ 03 9871 7555






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