

# Mayoral Debates a Disaster. Townsfolk Left Shocked, Jaded.

**Candidates wouldn't stop insulting each other. It's un-Murrumbian!**

Murrimba's residents were shocked last night as the two mayoral candidates, Hooter De Clerque and Billy Boer, traded fiery insults in the first debate of the election campaign.

One resident, a wallaby named George Grogan, said he had just been walking through Hay's Park, where the debate was held, and noticed a commotion. "I heard these two guys trading nasty barbs - I couldn't believe it - it was downright un-Murrumbian!"

Mr. Grogan, a former international rugby player, went on to say it was worse conduct than he'd ever even heard in a locker room during his playing days. "I almost got tackled by a pack of pigs - they were running away, angry about something that was said, I guess," he added.

Many residents we spoke to

also felt that the policies put forward by the two mayoral hopefuls seemed self-serving, and not at all aligned with the needs of Murrimba.

"De Clerque was all about some sort of crime crack-down, which we don't need, and that Boer fella just wants to get tons of work for his construction company," said a small cat, who was clearly distressed, and wished to remain anonymous.

**Stunned townsfolk caught in crossfire**

Unhappy residents who stayed to provide interviews following the debate included Murrimba's famous bear clown duo, Fuzzy and Grizz. "I can't believe that Billy could be so insensitive about our noble profession. We've performed at his kid's birthday parties - several times!", Fuzzy said.

A pig named Vincent agreed,

claiming that Boer had "wantonly disrespected the award-winning ursine performers", and that De Clerque had "insulted all of pigkind, by using outdated, misinformed and unhelpful porcine stereotypes!"

Vincent added that the town's gnats also fell foul of the "blatant disregard and inconsiderate rhetoric" of De Clerque. No gnats could be found to provide a statement.

"In the end, who knows how many Murrimbians they alienated. We're used to much more civil behavior from our mayor. Shelly McGee is great!" Grizz said.

**Too early to gauge where the town stands**

Barny Chandler, owner of the Chandy Buffet, observed that the duo didn't do themselves any favors, with their rough talk, but says he's leaning



TOP: Hooter De Clerque at the debate; BOTTOM: Billy Boer (file photo)

towards voting for De Clerque. "He's a fellow owl, which I like, and he's not wrong about that Boer guy taking advantage of our 'all you can eat' specials. He and his workers might be the whole reason we can't seem to turn a profit", he said. A smiling snake named Sam

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**Mayor McGee calls for calm**

Murrimba's current mayor, Shelly McGee, who is soon to reach the end of her maximum-allowed two terms as mayor, under current law, called for cool heads in the wake of the unsettling debates. "We'll get through this - we always do. We just need to pull together as Murrimbians," she said in a statement issued by the Mayor's Office.



**Pig Farmers' Collective Threatens Hooter & Barns.**

Murrimba's most prominent law firm, Hooter & Barns, faces the prospect of losing a major client - the Pig Farmers' Collective - after Hooter De Clerque, the law firm's senior partner, inadvertently insulted pigs at last night's debate. "We'll just see who handles our upcoming corn sale agreements," said a spokespig.

## MONEY

HOW THE ELECTION  
COULD AFFECT YOUR  
HOUSEHOLD BUDGET

## BUSINESS

WHICH CANDIDATE IS  
GOOD FOR BUSINESS?

## THE ECONOMY

WHAT'S AT STAKE -  
LAWYERLY OWL vs.  
CONSTRUCTION GOAT?

## OFF-BEAT

BOOKS TO READ,  
PLACES TO GO,  
RECIPES TO TRY





Life coach Sam Brown, pictured here in one of the sand pits in Hay's Park. PHOTO: Staff Photographer Annie Adams

# Debates a Disaster

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Brown claimed he was seriously considering casting a vote for both candidates. When asked how he would be able to do so, given the rules around voting, he said "I'm going to vote for the goat, leave the polling station, shed my skin, and come back an hour later to vote for the owl. No one will recognize me!" he said with a broad grin.

When asked what his intention was, in cancelling out his own votes, he replied "these guys both seem very keen to be mayor - I wanted to show them each some support, and I figure they must be a little unhappy to have been lashing out like that, so I wanted to do something kind. Maybe it will catch on! I mean, imagine if each of them got no votes at all - they'd be really disappointed!"

Other than Chandler and Brown,

no other folks we interviewed at the scene of the controversial debate admitted an intention to vote for either candidate.

When asked to comment about possible alternatives, if neither candidate fits the bill, Murrimba High Court Judge Monica Duckworth said that there is an option, but it's unlikely to happen. She explained that the voters almost unanimously would have to choose to ratify Decree 3.14 (commonly referred to as the Pie Decree), which extends the mayoral limit for any individual to three terms, and includes an option to cast a vote for an incumbent who may be at their term limit.

"In other words," Duckworth explained, "although almost impossible, it's not solely an owl/goat situation. There may be another horse in this race!"

## MONEY & BUSINESS

The Murrimba Chamber of Commerce was asked by this newspaper to assess briefly how the two candidates' known policy sets could affect the average citizen's bottom line, both personally and at their places of business or employment.

Key takeaways from the 428-page report include:

- De Clerque's platform should increase the strain on the public purse, as spending on law enforcement and security balloons;
- As a result, taxes may increase, and inflation could tick higher; and
- Billy Boer's campaign ideas will produce exactly the same result, but the increased construction in the town will also lower productivity, due to road blockages and excessive construction noise.

"So, in a ninny [sic] old nutshell," explained the effusive chipmunk in charge of producing the report, Clay Cheeks (pictured at right), "each crimby [sic] candidate looks like he'll be subjecting merry old Murrimbians to a zippity-bigger [sic] tingly-tax [sic] burden, hippety-high [sic] inflation, and poop-in-the-pants, err, excuse my colorful language, productivity, which kinda bumbly-buzzy-blows [sic]!"

Consumer advocate group CARES (Consumers Against Really Expensive Stuff) expressed its concerns that ordinary citizens will be "facing years of unnecessary crime crackdown or excessive construction if the owl or the goat, respectively, gets elected."



Clay Cheeks, of the Murrimba Chamber of Commerce, yesterday, prior to the debates in Hay's Park. PHOTO: Staff Photographer Ansel Liebovitz



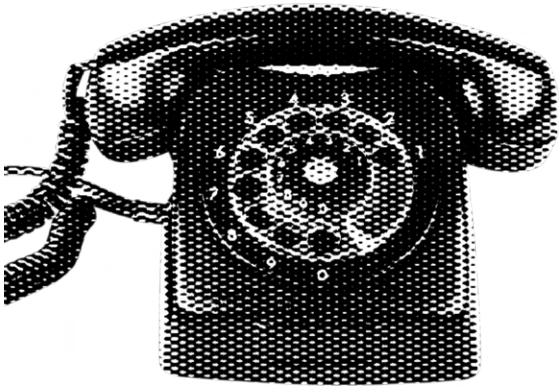


**Bloombird analyst Jay Falcon.** PHOTO: Courtesy of the Bloombird Corporation

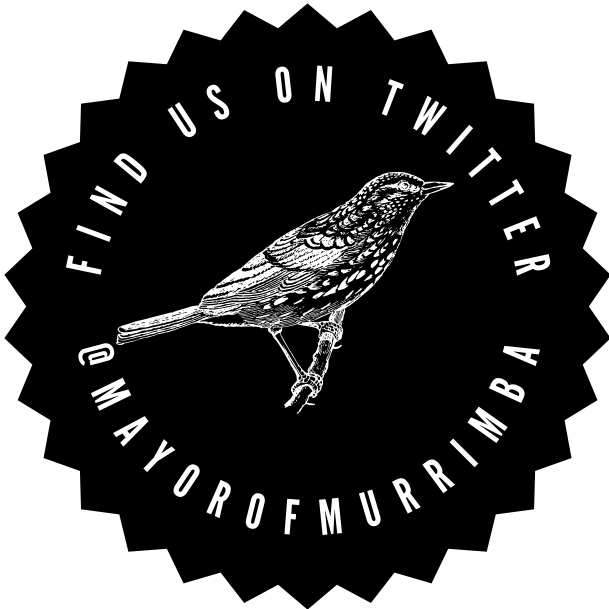
# THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

One thing that should remain robust under a new administration led by Hooter De Clerque or Billy Boer, according to financial news service Bloombird, is employment.

Bloombird analyst Jay Falcon explained that, "with as much spending as you're seeing these two candidates promise, the outlook is good for jobs. More jobs means happier and more prosperous Murrimbians. At least until we all, collectively, have to pay the piper. And I don't mean that snipe down on Shelly Avenue who's always busking with a collection plate out. I mean, it will all come home to roost one day, just like my uncle Bertrand did. And nobody wants to see that - it's not pretty!"



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# TRAVEL

Our travel correspondent, Joey "Big Red" Hopper (pictured at right), took to the open road on his scooter this week in an attempt to find picturesque locations and cozy B&Bs to recommend to our readers who might have been bitten by the travel bug (artist's impression pictured below right).

We look forward to bringing you his reports from the road as they come in.



**Travel correspondent Joey "Big Red" Hopper.** PHOTO: Anonymous member of Big Red's fan club.

# FOOD

Our recipe suggestion for this week comes from our fabulous mayor, Shelly McGee. She says you can't go wrong with a nice bale of hay, a bowl of oats, and a couple of apples for dessert.

Don't forget to eat healthy foods, and please keep sending in your fave recipes!





# BOOKS



***The Mayor of Murrimba***, by Jonathan Hall, 80-page hardcover children's book, ages 6+

This week we learned about a human named Jonathan Hall, who wrote his first children's book after more than 30 years in the strange world of human financial markets.

An Australian currently living in the U.S., Hall was apparently always drawn to creative pursuits throughout his life, saying he never took enough time to embark on a truly major artistic project, until late February, 2023, when the idea came to him for "The Mayor of Murrimba", a series centred around our very own quaint Australian town called Murrimba, our happy and quirky inhabitants, and our very special mayor, Shelly McGee.

Less than two months later, Hall published the 80-page hardcover version of the book with Amazon KDP. "All of the poetry, all of the writing, is mine, while the pictures were generated through AI engines, and then edited and enhanced by me," Hall said in an interview. Hall also did the typesetting and cover design. "I was just really excited to get this published as soon as I could," he said, adding "I've already finished the words for the second book in the series, just as I'm beginning to promote the first book."


The second book is about Murrimba becoming a finalist in the Town of the Year awards. Things start to go off track as some townsfolk lose their perspective, in their frantic pursuit of the prestigious trophy.

We can't wait to read it. If it's anywhere near as good as the first, then we're in for a treat of fast-paced, lyrical poetry, stunning pictures, a suspenseful and funny story, and plenty of extras, like coloring pages, a glossary of words and phrases, teaching resources, and inspirational quotes.



Human Jonathan Hall, author of *The Mayor of Murrimba*. PHOTO: Beth Madison Headshots

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