

# F O C U S O N NANANANGO

This town thrives on the stories of its people descendants of the pioneers who built it and newcomers who add fresh energy every day. It's history lingers in the restored shopfronts along the main street, where family-run cafes, quirky boutiques, and long-standing trades still open their doors with pride. Walk a few blocks and you'll feel it a community shaped by its past, powered by its local businesses, and held together by the kind of friendly faces that make strangers feel instantly at home.



# FOCUS ON NANANGO

12845040-1/018-26

## Jane shines light on town

By Jessica McGrath

Nanango is one of Queensland's oldest towns and has cherished a special sense of community spirit over the decades.

The South Burnett town, which was officially recognised as the settlement of Nanango back in 1848, marks 178 years in 2026.

For councillor Jane Erkens, the Nanango community has always been very welcoming.

Living in the South Burnett town for 45 years now, Cr Erkens arrived during the Tarong Power Station construction. At the time when there were many short-term workers, locals were extra excited to find out she was buying a house and staying in the region.

"I was made to feel very welcome and I got very involved in different organisations," she said.

Cr Erkens quickly got involved in various clubs including squash, tennis, pony club, golf, the school p and c, the tourism association and darts club.

"All those committees were very welcoming, especially if you were prepared to take on a role," she said.

The councillor appreciates the generous heart of the Nanango community.

Her favourite initiative was witnessing the community raise funds to build the Nanango All Inclusive Butter Factory Park playground. A Nanango family had a child with a disability and noted there were no suitable parks for them, so the community fundraised for one.

The Shed Nanango headed up the initiative, with many different organisations and busi-

nesses holding their own events and Heritage Nanango Bank committing to donating three dollars for every dollar raised after the community had raised \$20,000.

Another standout moment was when the Nanango community raised \$8,000 in one evening for the bushfire ravaged community of Colbargo, where Bega was based. A jumbo market stall was held, and local businesses donated portions of earnings towards the cause.

These moments of outstanding generosity inspired Cr Erkens to run for council.

"I see the community give and I just want to give back," she said.

Cr Erkens is proud that the Nanango community had the strongest attendance for the council's 2025 community consultations tour, and looks forward to the 2026 session.

"To me that showed the community has an interest in what happens - as councillors we need that feedback from the community," she said.

The Nanango councillor shared there were some exciting projects in the works for the community including getting the blue light skating rink back open to the community.

She also looks forward to seeing the Nanango Theatre Group's expansion come to fruition and is organising a sing along event at the Nanango information centre's community piano which may become part of the ABC's next Piano season promo.

Cr Erkens has decided to use her division's share of the Works 4 Queensland funding to upgrade the shower and toilet block at Reg McCallum Park.

The refurbishment, which will include one

family shower, will be helpful for families struggling with homelessness, and those on rural properties relying on tank water during dry times.

The upgraded shower and toilet block will also entice travelers to make Nanango one of their stops, spending time and money in the town during their rest stop.

Cr Erkens noted that Nanango does not have any fast food outlets, which always made travelling a treat for her family. Now, these are all just down the road in Kingaroy.

A lack of transport remains a problem in the Nanango community.

Cr Erkens pointed out that it was an aging population, with many now widowed and with-

out family in the area.

"A lot of people have issues getting into town, which is a major concern for me -we're trying to work out how we can address that problem, it's not easy to work that out," she said.

At the heart of Nanango is the Heritage Community Bank who often sponsor events, projects and initiatives in the community.

"For Nanango that is an absolutely amazing asset," Cr Erkens said.

"In the end the best thing for this community was losing those big banks...I'm very proud to be an original member.

"I'm so pleased to see what it brings back to our town, they are absolutely so supportive."



Jasper Hamer, who was the under-5s thong throw and gumboot champion at the Nanango 2026 Australia Day celebrations, was congratulated by Sharon Johnson, Mayor Kathy Duff and Cr Jane Erkens. (530821)



Nanango musician Shayla Plosko is introduced by MC Cr Jane Erkens at the community concert on 31 October 2025 to celebrate Nanango's community piano. (Jessica McGrath: 515063)



The Nanango Show Society is about to hold its 117th annual Show - 18th April. This year there will be entertainment for the whole family with a sideshow alley providing rides for children, teenagers and adults young at heart. It is certainly shaping up to be a fun-packed day. Other events run by the Show Society are: Heritage Country Music Muster - 10th to 13th September 2026 Heritage Waterhole Rocks 15th to 19th October 2026 Nanango Campdraft 13th to 15th November 2026



office@nanangoshowsociety.com.au



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## Agents keen to help families

South Burnett Real Estate is proud to serve the Nanango community.

Currently the Nanango team includes Grant Spring as the Sales Agent and Tiarne Emmett as the Property Manager and overall team member in charge. They are supported by Sales Associate Jono Schloss.

South Burnett Real Estate owner and principal-licensee Janelle Baisden-Emmett shared why Nanango is such a special spot to base one of their real estate offices.

"The community support and spirit and a wonderful sense of appreciation for what we do in the area," Janelle said.

Over the years the real estate team have seen Nanango bloom into a great place to live and work.

"Nanango offers a rural sense of community, the small-town country vibes allows anyone who lives in Nanango to feel like they have stepped back to an easier way of life, one that used to exist 'back in the day,'" Janelle said.

"In saying this, it is a wonderful area for younger families, couples and first home buyers because affordability is still possible and the journey to Kingaroy for shopping, entertainment and community events is only a stone's throw away."

Initially Janelle arrived in Kingaroy equipped with a broad career in real estate management, sales and property management after working in city and regional offices.

She partnered with real estate agent Trent Faunt to establish Faunt and Emmett Real Estate, buying their first rent roll in 2018 at the Kingaroy real estate office. As part of this partnership, Janelle brought her property management knowledge, expertise, experience and passion for all aspects of real estate to the table.

The Faunt and Emmett pair soon purchased Raine and Horne in Nanango and rebranded it to Faunt and Emmett Real Estate in 2019.

However, by 2022, Trent Faunt decided it was time for a seachange and left the business.

Janelle's husband Ken left his job at Riverina as their Territory Sales Manager and joined Janelle to create a dynamic husband and wife duo. The family business was rebranded to become South Burnett Real Estate to reflect the change.

Janelle's son Grant Spring now forms part of the team on the ground in Nanango.

In 2023 an office at Wondai was opened, however it was closed at the end of 2025 to allow Ken to be on the road to service clients more readily.

"Going from strength to strength the property management and sales division kept growing allowing the staff network to expand and the need to bring on a sales associate," Janelle said.

Reflecting on the business journey, Janelle shared South Burnett Real Estate is an agency built on family spirit, ethics, honesty and integrity.

"Losing my parents in 2018 and 2019 allowed me to be able to enter into the market to buy this agency and everything I do is built on the amazing way they raised me and my brother, their business acumen I learnt working for them in their businesses and I have always had deep de-



Tiarne Emmett - Property Manager.



Jono Schloss - Sales Associate

sire to honour who they were through all I do," she said.

"This business is their legacy through me and I pray it continues this way." Staying true to the family business, the Emmett family envision the next generation will take over the business in the future. "We see continued growth for the business and our goal is to see Grant and his partner taking over the business allowing Ken and Janelle to live the dream and travel around Australia in their caravan," Janelle said.



Grant Spring - Lead Sales Agent

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12845033-1007-26



St Patrick's runs a 'Step Into Prep' program to assist a student's transition into school.

## Small rural school pride

By Jessica McGrath

St Patrick's have had a smooth start to the school year, proud to guide Nanango students through their education.

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Nanango is a co-educational school offering classes from Prep to Year 6.

Principal Sarah McCarthy shared they currently have 79 children enrolled across five classes.

"We're still enrolling, it's been a great start, we've got some experienced teachers who have come on board with us," she said.

"We've got some very giving staff who are happy to put into the community events as well as great teaching and learning."

The school has proudly served the Nanango rural community since 1912, when the school was entirely staffed by Mercy Sisters.

"We're a small tight-knit community and we really care for our students," Mrs McCarthy said.

"Our families are very supportive of what we do, we really want the very best for our students



Students embrace plenty of fun, laughter and play at St Patrick's Nanango.

and we give them every opportunity to learn like the other schools in the city areas."

St Patrick's Primary School classes have a big focus on literacy and numeracy.

"Through teaching these skills - we've got this warm, caring community," the principal said.

Beyond the curriculum the school teaches the students what it takes to be a kind person.

"We're a small, catholic community," Mrs McCarthy said.

"You don't have to be Catholic to come to our school, but we follow the stories of Jesus.

"We follow the Australian curriculum, but we teach that through a caring and compassionate environment."

St Patrick's is proud to be part of the Nanango community, and takes opportunities to be involved.

Mrs McCarthy noted Nanango was a 'great community', with their parents and staff very embedded in the community.

"The businesses and the schools, we're all supportive of each other being a small town, your paths cross in lots of different areas," she said.

"We've got staff that volunteer for the ambulance or red cross or help run the football club.

"There's lots of opportunities to network and be supportive of each other."

This year St Patrick's is making reading their priority, working hard at achieving top literacy skills.

The teachers are planning to upskill and do some further work on trauma-based awareness, and the school hopes to strengthen their partnerships with the early years centres in Nanango.

St Patrick's Primary School has lots of commu-



Students learn from getting creative at St Patrick's Primary School Nanango.

nity events throughout the year.

Their calendar highlight is their St Patrick's celebration day held on St Patrick's Day, 17 March.

"We invite the young school age or kindy age children to join us," Mrs McCarthy said.

Families are encouraged to contact the school office for more information about St Patrick's day celebrations.

The school is also holding an open day in Term 2, and encourage interested families to keep an eye on the school's Facebook page for more details.

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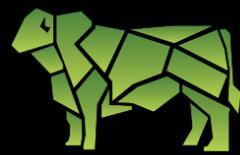
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Check out our virtual school tour



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## ENROLMENTS NOW OPEN!



# Butchers are a cut above

By Julian Lehnert

The team at Nanango's Paleo Beef Direct have made it their mission to provide the Burnett with the highest-quality meat in all of Queensland.

Ian and Karen Newson opened their butcher shop store front on Nanango's Fitzroy Street in December 2025 - but for the past decade the pair have already mastered their craft as producers of 'paddock to plate' beef, lamb and pork, delivering fresh cuts of meat as far north as Cairns and as far south as Sydney.

Paleo Beef Direct's beef is advertised as grass-fed and grass-finished, free of hormones and MRNA vaccines. The Newsons hold all of their shop's meat products to the highest freshness standards, with the pair personally raising and transporting all animals to local slaughterhouses for processing.

"Our business started small, out of necessity to provide economic stability to our small-scale beef operation which was becoming unviable," Mr Newson explained.

"We were attracted to this 'purpose built' butcher shop [on Fitzroy Street], built by the well-respected Gaedke family some 30 years ago.

"With our upgrades it is now considered one of the best butcher shops in the Burnett, and it can accommodate the growth of our business both in quantity and presentation.

"We have been able to open our doors (...) to local customers who haven't had a butcher shop in town for at least eight years," he said.

Ian and Karen are joined at their shop by their son Fletcher, master butcher Shayne Legge and his wife Belinda, local apprentice Rohan Maher, and a casual butcher.

Together, the team prepare and sell traditional cuts of beef, pork and lamb, a wide range of sausages, and as of late also chicken.

"[Our team] take immense pride in preparing a vast variety of cuts to stock our display fridges with the very best and fresh products from our farm," Mr Newson said.

"Shayne makes the best ham and bacon smoked in-house; we also have nitrate-free pork, bacon and ham, plus beef bacon.

"He also tantalises customers with an array of house-made plain and cheese kabana, pepperoni and cheerios made the 'old fashioned' way.

"To make our butcher shop stand out Karen provides customers with four new boutique sausages every week, together with our signature Paleo Beef and Paleo Pork sausages," Mr Newson said.

"This week's special varieties are cracked pepper and worcestershire sauce beef sausage, fig, brie and macadamia pork sausage, sun-dried fruit lamb sausage and chicken kilpatrick sausage.

"Ultimately we hope to put Nanango on the map with our specialty real meat sausages - think Kenilworth donuts and Blackbutt pies.

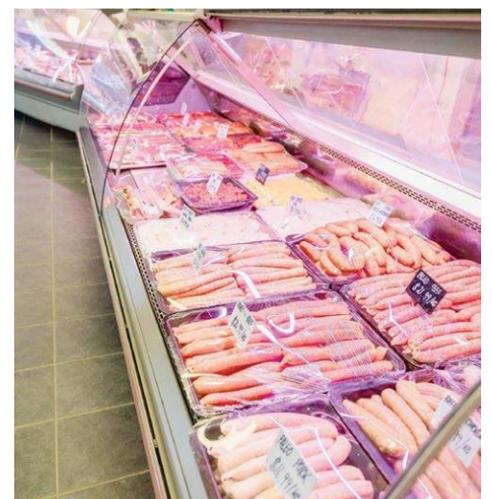
"Because we kill our own we [also] have limited supplies of fresh offal and other 'nose to tail' specialities that are hard to procure in some



Karen and Ian Newson are the faces of Nanango's Paleo Beef Direct. The pair promise fresh cuts of beef, pork, lamb and chicken produced and processed in-house. (Johnstone Contracting)



Paleo Beef Direct on 42 Fitzroy Street in Nanango is quickly gaining renown in the community.



An ever-changing variety of sausages plus all the traditional cuts of meat can be found in the displays of Paleo Beef Direct.

butcher shops this day and age.

"At Paleo Beef Direct, we break down our own carcasses into individual cuts which provides for a much higher quality, more consistent and certainly fresher product.

"Very few butchers are qualified to continue this traditional butcher trade the old-fashioned way," Mr Newson said.

The owner of Paleo Beef Direct said he and

his team were overjoyed by the positive reception Nanango's newest butcher shop has received since opening in December.

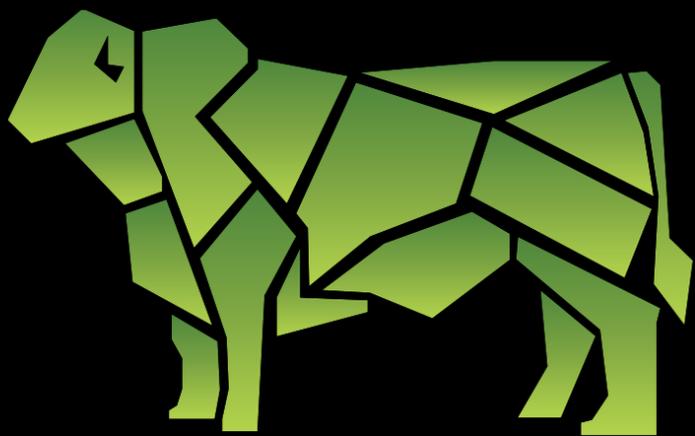
"The support of the Nanango and wider South Burnett community has been fantastic, with customers increasing 4.1 per cent in the first month alone and sales increasing 14.6 per cent in the first month also," he reported.

"We are on track to see our turnover double in

our first year of operation. [That's] testimony to the support we are receiving from our customers.

"In my belief the customers are turning back to 'real meat, real flavour and real local' beef, pork and lamb that local butcher shops provide," Mr Newson said.

Paleo Beef Direct is open to the public between 8am and 5pm on Thursdays and Fridays, and from 8am to noon on Saturdays.



# PALEO BEEF DIRECT



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Real Meat

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Real Local

# FOCUS ON NANANGO

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## Sami's a Local Achiever

Nanango's town hero Sami Hill has been working behind the scenes at as many community events as she can.

At the 2026 Australia Day Awards, held on 25 January at Proston Hall, local achievers from across the region were recognised. Congratulations to Sami Hill, who was named Nanango Local Achiever 2026.

Take a read of her nomination below:

As a new resident to Nanango, Sami instantly became involved with the local Tourism and Development Association and was ever ready to lend a hand when needed.

She epitomizes the objectives of the association and contributed to the advancement of communities in Nanango.

For the last two years she has been the vice-president of the group and has taken this position very seriously attending Visit South Burnett meetings to represent the Nanango Tourism and Development Association (NaTDA).

Her outgoing nature is very suited to networking and she is more than willing to impart any information gathered at the monthly NaTDA meetings.

Sami was a volunteer for the annual laneway Halloween Festival preparations and celebrations, taking great delight in dressing up for the occasion.

She also routinely assists at the Annual Christmas Carnival and the Australia Day breakfast.

When there are functions organised at Ringsfield she has been a part of the team who have successfully catered for showground market day devonshire teas on the verandah.

She has also become a member of the Nanango RSL Auxillary and most Wednesday nights she can be found assisting the group at the Club night.

In a relatively short time Sami has become a well-known and respected member of the community whose contribution is worthy of recognition.



Cr Jane Erkens presents 2026 Nanango Local Achiever Award to Sami Hill. (Maddison Richards. 534533)

## Big morning out in Nanango

By Jessica McGrath

On the first Saturday of each month Nanango comes alive.

The iconic Nanango Country Markets are held at the Nanango Showgrounds from 6am to 12noon, offering a range of stalls from produce and plants to creative handmade pieces and second-hand items.

To coincide with market day, several groups have decided to open their doors to make the most of the extra visitors in town.

Down at the Nanango Energy Information Centre, the original motors which powered Nanango are stored.

"On the first Saturday of the month they start it... your engineer or motor buffs can go down and have a look at that motor run," Cr Jane Erkens said.

Also at the information centre is Nanango's own ABC community piano, available for community members to come and play.

Over at the old Nanango Ringsfield House a devonshire tea is served by volunteers.

The former maternity hospital which has been turned into a museum is open for people to explore alongside their tea and scones from 9am to 12noon every first Saturday of the month.

Finally, the old Masonic Lodge is also open to the public on the first Saturday morning each month.

The lodge now belongs to the Nanango Heritage Bank who have appointed the Nanango Tourism and Development Association as stewards.

"It's available for hire for any Nanango community group at an affordable rate," Cr Erkens said.

"We've now got it open on market day for anyone who wants to have a look at the masonic lodge -we have some masons in the area who can tell people the history of the freemasons in Nanango."



Member for Nanango Deb Frecklington, Judy Bryant, Julie Robinson, Mayor Kathy Duff, Cr Jane Erkens, and Cr Linda Little open the Nanango CWA's centenary celebration. (Maddison Richards: 521630)

## Nanango's hidden gems

By Jessica McGrath

From a weir and mountain bike tracks to the pool, Nanango has many hidden gems to discover.

South Burnett Regional Council's Nanango councillor Jane Erkens shared her top hidden gems for her town.

Nanango's McCauley Weir is the perfect escape for fishermen or families.

"It's not somewhere everyone will go," Cr Erkens said.

"If you're a young family, take them out for a couple of hours with no technology and enjoy a trip out to the weir, sit out there in the bush."

The road out to the weir is not a bitumen road, but it is not far from the Nanango CBD and is quite the adventure.

Mountain biking is also a surprisingly popular activity in Nanango.

"We've got a really strong mountain bike

club - they go out a few times a week on the forestry tracks here... I used to love going out," Cr Erkens said.

The only indoor all-year round pool in the region, Nanango's swimming pool is a great asset to the town.

"The hydrotherapy is great," she said.

The pool is now open later on Tuesdays and Thursdays so people can get an hour at the pool after finishing work.

Meanwhile, the community centre in the old scouts hall is a hub of activity.

"They are a great, welcoming group, they do all types of craft down there," Cr Erkens said.

The councillor added the Nanango CWA group was also a true gem in the Nanango community.

The group just celebrated their centenary and are a great chance to meet new people and learn new skills.

### South Burnett CTC Nanango Neighbourhood Centre

The Nanango Neighbourhood Centre is a welcoming community hub where you can connect, ask questions, and find the right support.

We can help you access a range of South Burnett CTC services, including:

- Youth and family support
- Housing and homelessness assistance
- Domestic and family violence support
- Seniors programs
- Community activities and events



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Nanango's Simone Kucyk is dedicated to serving her community through her business Heartfelt Ceremonies With Simone. (Goldfinch Photography)



Simone makes every occasion - like Matilda and Evan's wedding at Ringsfield House in Nanango - a truly personal experience. (Sister Sister Photography)



Bailea and Matthew's wedding at Colinton Country Lodge and Barn was a highlight for Simone. (Tins Photography)

## Ceremonies done right

When life's most important moments arrive, having the right person to guide them makes all the difference.

Simone Kucyk, the celebrant behind Heartfelt Ceremonies With Simone, is known across the region for creating ceremonies that feel warm, genuine, and deeply personal.

A generational Nanango local, she brings professional experience forged from a lifelong connection to the community she serves, work-

ing with families, friends, and familiar faces she's often known for years.

With a calm presence and down-to-earth nature, Simone has a natural ability to put people at ease.

Whether she is officiating the wedding of a couple, welcoming a new baby at a naming ceremony, or supporting a family through a heartfelt farewell, her approach is simple: listen first, speak with intention, and honour every story

with care.

"I believe ceremonies should feel real and relaxed, not scripted or stiff," Simone said.

"They should sound like you and reflect what matters most."

Through Heartfelt Ceremonies, Simone takes the time to truly understand each person or family, crafting words that capture the little moments, the history, and the heart behind every milestone.

The result is a ceremony that feels authentic,

meaningful, and memorable for all the right reasons.

Clients often describe Simone as steady, compassionate, and reassuring - someone who feels more like a friend than a stranger at the front of the room.

Simone said she sees her work not as a performance, but as being for and about people, community, and creating moments that will be remembered for a lifetime.

Heartfelt Ceremonies WITH SIMONE

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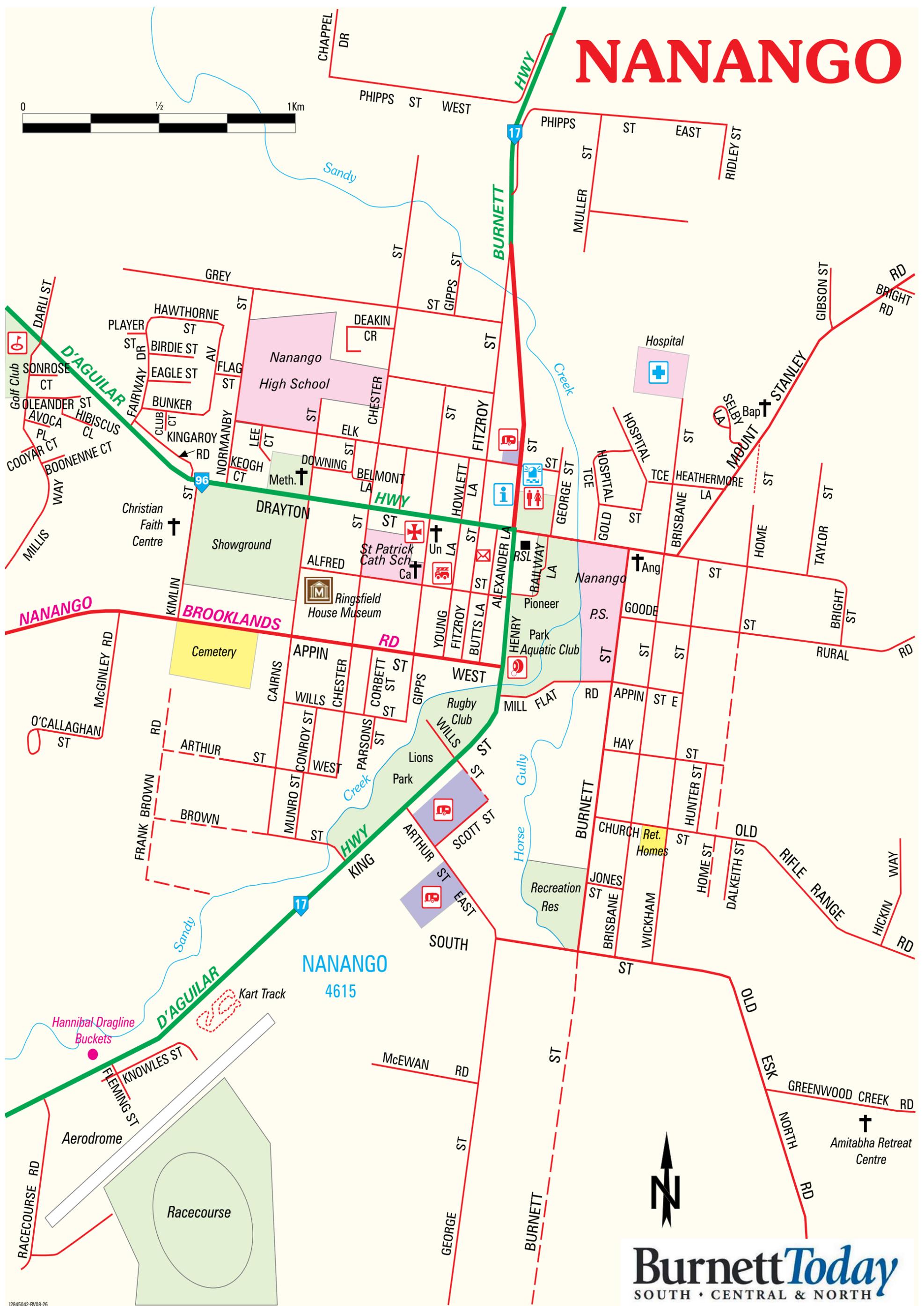
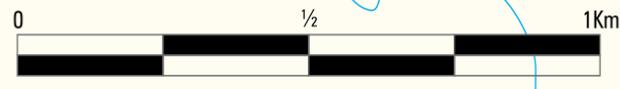
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