

SE Lifestyle
HD **WORM OUT OF FIJIAN FIASCO**
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AT Country Beat, we are calling it WormGate and it's a scandal obviously hatched by Fiji's new leader Frank Bainimarama to get back at us.

Country Beat spent a couple of weeks in Fiji covering ol' Frank's coup d'etat and while we think the lights are on upstairs, they are flickering a fair bit.

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Seriously, though, it appears there was a huge lapse of our biosecurity and a few round worms were found inside the first imports of ginger from Fiji, and in the whole good/bad thing, round worms definitely fall on the bad side.

Just why we are importing ginger is beyond Country Beat, but there's a lot we don't understand – the entire Katter family, how Howard Hobbs keeps getting elected and what Bill Heffernan takes are just a few issues that have defeated us. Apparently if these round worm buggers get out, all hell will break loose and entire crops could be wiped out, the Australian Ginger Industry Association says.

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FOR sheer audacity you have to give it to the NSW town of Casino – the town, which has played justifiably second fiddle to Lismore for ... well, forever, wants to take the title of Australia's beef capital from Rockhampton.

The Casino council has even asked to **buy** one of the beef statues that adorn the streets off Rocky to place in their own main thoroughfare.

A stern no was the response.

Speaking of audacity, the Colossus of Mines (aka Mines Minister Andrew Cripps) went to Dalby recently to talk about his pride and joy, the controversial legislation that removes the right of most people to legally object to a mining lease.

Just as the meeting got under way with the Basin Sustainability Alliance, its new president Lyn Nicholson shot out a press release calling for the Big Fella's sacking over the legislation. Not happening, Lyn.

Country Beat loves a bit of cheekiness and full marks to her, but George Street was not impressed. The BSA is getting a little bolshie under Nicholson and it's a good thing, too. Rural politics is in desperate need of a bit of diversity.

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YOU may be aware that central Queensland is struggling at the moment. The collapse of the coal industry combined with the drought has not been good for many towns. The mining town of Moranbah is among the hardest hit.

Rents in the town got close to \$4000 a week during the boom. Last week, the most expensive rental property was about \$900 a week.

Down the road at Emerald, Central Highlands Mayor Peter Maguire said about 400 houses were empty and about 60 businesses had closed since the start of the year. Bandanna Energy's collapse won't help confidence either.

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GO online to find out which MP was left off the invite list of a recent Labor health forum. This insider gossip and more from our experts Steven Wardill, Tony Keim, Anthony Marx and Nathanael Cooper, but only for members of couriermail.com.au/club

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THE CSIRO may be pretty good at science, but its timing sucks. The nation's boffins chose the day of the biggest terror raids in Australia's history to put out the results of an extensive survey in the Surat Basin of perceptions of coal seam gas. Needless to say the coverage was pretty scant.

The key points were only 9 per cent of people were opposed to CSG, but that's not the whole story. There was a lot of dissatisfaction with the community's voice, decision-making and environmental management.

Not surprisingly, the folk of Tara are the most miffed of all.

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SOME good news for the folk at **Chinchilla** is that their airport is about to be upgraded. The Western Downs Regional Council and QGC have signed an agreement to two phases of upgrade.

QGC will invest \$200,000 in an engineering design study to determine the level of maintenance required and has allocated another \$4.5 **million** for a work program next year to strengthen the runway, improve runway lighting, upgrade terminal facilities and install a solar weather station to enhance the airport's operability in poor weather.

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THE Queensland Farmers' Federation has two new directors, who will no doubt spend the next 12 months pulling out their hair trying to deal with the issue of electricity prices.

Bundaberg cane farmer Allan Dingle and Wamuran pineapple farmer Les Williams jumped on **board** the QFF as directors at a recent **board** meeting. They take over from Joe Russo and John Bishop, who will no doubt be relieved.

Joanne Grainger remains as president and Brian Tessmann vice-president.

■ ■ ■ NOW we know. According to **Dairy** Australia the higher performing farm has a high level of operational performance with "skin in the game", a strong balance sheet, an owner operator providing 30 per cent of the labour, 400-800 cows, high-performance pastures, cost-efficient feeding systems and high labour efficiency.

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