

Organic catering from the heart of Byron Bay

"There's not a lot of healthy products that taste as good as Marigold"... Bernadette and Peter Downes, Byron Organic Catering



Right in the heart of Byron Bay, **Bernadette** and **Peter Downes** simultaneously operate two complementary and very busy businesses: **Fundamental Health Foods**, and the **Byron Organic Kitchen**.

After having worked in the industry for about 25 years, and for **Fundamental Food Store** (known locally as "Fundies") for about 14 years in her capacity as a herbalist and naturopath, **Bernadette Downes** – with husband **Peter** (pictured above), took over Fundies franchised operation in Byron Bay, about two years ago.

Fundies is located right in the centre of downtown Byron Bay, next door to the Post Office and the new Byron Bay Community Centre, and right opposite the Byron Railway Station.



A beautifully restored heritage building, it's the perfect site for a combination health food store and café, with tables and chairs spilling out onto the wooden verandahs and grass outside. It's always crammed full of locals buying their favourite "good for you" products, and visitors and regulars alike pausing for some healthy refreshment.

Catering Service for the Community

And that 'healthy refreshment' is actually produced round the corner in the couple's other business: **Byron Organic Kitchen**. This is really Peter's 'baby'. The kitchen produces a range of organic, vegetarian, vegan, wheat-free or gluten-free foods for a variety of outlets starting with Fundies and the Kitchen's own bustling café, which adjoins Byron Central Apartments, one of Byron Bay's many holiday apartments. Of course it produces the food for all room service provided to Byron Central.

Offering possibly Byron's only organic catering service, the Byron Organic Kitchen caters for special events for **Byron Bay Yoga Arts** and the **Byron Youth Activities Centre**, for restaurants such as that at the **Crystal Castle**, a visitor magnet in the Byron hinterland,

and even for the health store in the neighbouring village of Brunswick Heads.

Using Local Produce

Organic produce for the Organic Kitchen is sourced locally, with fresh, quality veggies coming straight from the organic market gardens of **ReGenesis** in nearby Myocum, probably a 15-minute drive away. Organic waste from the Kitchen is taken away by the ReGenesis truck (itself powered by bio-diesel fuel) and returned to the market gardens, where it's turned into compost that's applied to help their prolific gardens grow so well.

Ever the enterprising entrepreneurs, this year the couple has also taken on the distribution for the NSW North Coast region of **Ginger Nektar**, with the thought in mind of using its outlets to expand their catering business.

For many years, caterer Peter Downes has been using **Marigold Swiss Vegetable Bouillon** powder in just about all the hot foods he makes. Peter says he uses Marigold because: "I like the flavour, and the clean ingredients".



Buying up Big

He likes it so much he's one of the country's top users, purchasing the economic 1kg caterers cans by the dozen!

"I use Marigold in the Vege Lasagne, in the casseroles, in soups of course", he said. "I sprinkle it on

the roast veges, and use it in the vege burgers and protein patties. Bernie loves it in pumpkin soup. One of our kids even uses it to make soup, adding some three minute noodles, having thrown away the flavouring sachet and substituting Marigold instead."

Bernadette adds: "There's not a lot of healthy products that taste as good as Marigold."

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