

## The embassy's camphor comes down: Which tree is next?



by Cassie Hall

I normally wouldn't say nothing. Just when decisions impact on others in our community in a negative way, then it's fair enough I say something.

I feel strongly about the benefits of all trees upon this tree-depleted world. All the people who work in the Hemp Embassy appreciated the benefits that this tree brings. We didn't want it chopped down.

This tree cooled by shading the back wall, all morning and all year. Oxygenating our air. Other beneficiaries were a family of dragon lizards, the odd snake, a summer goanna, birds, butterflies, bugs, grubs and bities. And the green tree frog that lives in the cool of our back dunny. Our customers like a cool reprieve.

This tree provided a canopy for the rainforest trees and palms that have been planted and keep getting planted around it.

This tree watched my children, our children, grow up. I remember it 25 years ago when I first moved here in me tent. I felt the same way when they said 'They're gonna chop down Mt Nardi'. Oh! No! What can we do to stop them? Anyway, we won.

I still feel saddened to have lost the tree out the front of Neighbourhood Centre. One more piece of lung gone. Less shade – more heat. Nimbin hasn't really got too many trees.

What really worries me now is – what trees are next? I know camphor laurel has been demonised. I've wised up. I know this tree's contribution to the atmosphere far outweighs it not being there.



Going, going, gone. The established tree behind the Hemp Embassy (left), and during felling (right and below).

## Camphor control

by Janet Townsend,  
Stokers Siding

The next Camphor Laurel Control workshop will be held at Chillingham on Sunday 25th February from 9.15am-12.30pm, and it's free!

These popular workshops, organised by Tweed Landcare, are for landowners feeling overwhelmed by the numbers of Camphors on their properties and seeking help with a Camphor management plan.

The workshops recognise that Camphors are now a major and reliable winter food source for many fruit-eating birds and often form the first protective canopy over what can later be healthy native rainforest. Thus it is useful in your yearly culling programme to deal first with those Camphors performing no useful function (eg Camphor saplings along fencelines on a

grazing property or Camphors that have managed to sneak into stands of eucalypts).

Another priority is where they are crowding a mature native tree; the next where young rainforest beneath Camphors has reached a height where it now needs more light.

Ask yourself: what do I want to replace the Camphors with? It can be self-defeating to kill a Camphor just for the sake of killing it – there are many worse weeds to take its place if replacement is not considered, or if too many Camphors in one area are killed at once.

Techniques of effectively stem-injecting a Camphor at the first attempt will be demonstrated. Efficient Camphor control, whilst needing to be regular and persistent, does not have to take up your whole life!

For bookings and more details on venue ring Janet Townsend on 6677-9326.



## Work Choices protection urged

The NSW Office of Industrial Relations has received more than 8,000 calls from residents on the Far North Coast since the introduction of Work Choices, with many people complaining about wage cuts and loss of entitlements.

This information was made public by Country Labor candidate for the state seat of Lismore, Peter Lanyon, at his campaign launch in Kyogle, where he congratulated Kyogle Council for voting to reject Work Choices and protect the wages and entitlements of its employees by placing them in the NSW industrial relations system.

"The majority of NSW councils are to be congratulated for rejecting Work Choices, an option that was made available by recent amendments to the NSW Industrial Relations Act by the Jemma Government," Mr Lanyon said. "Their actions mean frontline council workers such as librarians, gardeners and road workers will be protected."

Mr Lanyon seized on the council decision to castigate the sitting member for Lismore, Thomas George, for being "hopelessly out of touch" with community concerns over the new Work Choice laws.

"The policy of Thomas George and his coalition leader Peter Debnam is to hand over the one million workers still protected by the NSW system to Work Choices if elected in March," he said. "This would overturn the protections of workers wages and entitlements, despite mounting evidence Work Choices is bad for businesses, workers and families."

The latest ABS quarterly publication shows the average weekly wage in NSW has fallen in real terms by \$33 under Work Choices.

"The Jemma Government is the last line of defence against Work Choices. The Government has put in place new laws to protect young workers, injured workers and frontline public sector workers, such as nurses and TAFE teachers," Mr Lanyon said.

"These protections would be wiped out by Peter Debnam," he added.

## Garrett's Labor pains

by Andy Gough

The whispers spread quickly around the Woodford festival. "Peter Garrett is here". I dismissed it as a rumour, as he wasn't featured anywhere in the program, and if he was there, it was an incognito visit. This was confirmed when I saw the tall bald one stroll past the cafe where I sat sipping my morning coffee. He was unaccompanied by any Labor minders at least.

The whispers spread again as I enjoyed watching Bob Brown's comedy show "Mr Brown and Me", that he was backstage listening to the show from the nearby Committee Room. When the show concluded I raced back to the 'Retox Centre' which was our base of operations. I told the crew that Garrett was at the Committee Room, possibly going to have it out with Bob. (Garrett had been campaigning against the Greens in Melbourne during the Victorian elections and it got a bit personal). Fired up, three of us headed down to back Bob up.

We got there to find Bob surrounded by a crowd of admirers, and Garrett sat off to the side chatting to a woman. I approached Bob and congratulated him on the show, then asked "Did you have words with Peter?". Bob told me they had had a 'brief chat' and had agreed to meet up at a later date. No fireworks.

Bob left shortly after, he was staying with relatives nearby, and we looked around to see the woman had left Garrett all alone on the couch. So we jumped at the opportunity. The last time I'd spoken to Peter Garrett was at the blockade of the Jabiluka uranium mine in Kakadu back in 1999.

Jenny took the first shot. "Peter, Peter, Peter. What on earth has happened to you? How could Peter Garrett join the Labor party and be advocating uranium mining and export?"

"Er... well...you see...I'm trying to..."

Then Laurie chimed in with "What the hell were you doing campaigning against the Greens in Melbourne?"

"The Greens were preferencing the Liberals," he offered.

"Bullshit," was our response in stereo.

"The Greens offered a split ticket. The punters chose who they wanted to preference. We did NOT preference the Libs."

"Well I will expose dodgy preference deals whenever I see them," he extorted.

"What about Stephen Fielding?" I quipped.

A blank look. Laurie kept goading him as he scrambled for excuses.

"What about Stephen Fielding?" I asked again. Another blank look. I explained.

"Stephen Fielding, the Family First senator, whose election, as a direct result of Labor preferencing Family First over the Greens, gave Howard control of the Senate. What about that dodgy deal, Peter?"

"Oh, I wasn't a member of the Labor party then, I had no say in that... Of course I am going to campaign for my party, the Labor party..."

With this we began to tire of the conversation and his weak excuses and short memory. Fortunately, our inquisition was cut short by a young fella who came up to Peter and said "Hey Peter Garrett, do you remember playing with a band back in the 80s called 'Funky Chopstick' (or some such)..." and he took the opportunity to change tack and reminisce about the old rock 'n' roll days.

Bob Brown was right. This is not the Peter Garrett we all remember as champion of the environment, indigenous issues and anti-uranium campaigner. He is now Labor's Peter Garrett. He's compromised his principles and allegiances and as far as I can see, his logic.

I looked at Laurie and Jenny. Their expressions said it all. Disbelief and disappointment.

"Let's go. We're wasting our time here."

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Classes at Nimbin Central School are off and running, with high expectations of a productive and successful academic year ahead.

Infants students and their teachers (above) welcomed the new kindies on their first day, and showed them around the leafy school grounds.

New principal Dot Panaretos (inset) gave a positive report of her first impressions, and said she is looking forward to playing an important role in the school community.

Year 11 and 12 students have a new study room, conveniently close to the computer lab and library, and with a powerful air conditioner!

And the canteen would welcome extra volunteers to help prepare and serve the healthy food (and real coffee).



## Community Preschools Campaign

by Bianca Urbina  
Children's Choice

There's been a lot in the media lately about Kevin Rudd's promise to invest \$450 million in Early Childhood Education. In September 2006, a report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that Australia spends less on early childhood education than any other nation in the industrialised world. So if Labor is elected later this year in October we may see a long awaited improvement in the early childhood sector.

At the State level the picture is somewhat different, the NSW Labor party has committed \$85 million in funding over a four year period promising to make services accessible to all families in NSW and ensure the long term viability of community preschools. Despite the promises it is nowhere near enough money.

Nimbin preschool applied for extra funding and received absolutely nothing.

Dianne Gregory, one of the directors says they have been forced to increase their fees by 50% and "Families are reconsidering the number of days their children attend." The State Labor Government has a long way to go before preschools services are affordable for everyone.

So, the pressure is on all of us to make this issue get the attention it really deserves - NSW is on the brink of disaster. We pay the highest fees in the country but the ones who are paying the highest price are those children whose families cannot afford to send them to preschool.

Make a difference and come along to a public forum on Early Childhood Education on the 16th of March, in Lismore at the Star Court Theatre from 10am to 12pm. Children are welcome! Candidates for the NSW State Election will be attending - they need to know that we value our community preschools.

For further information please contact me on 6689-1103.

## Greens call for two years of free pre-school

Greens MP and education spokesperson, Lee Rhiannon today pledged the Greens' support for the call by welfare groups to provide at least two days a week of free preschool to NSW families, saying that the Greens policy would give NSW children two years of universal, free pre-school education.

"The Greens strongly support the call for at least two days per week of free preschool for every child in NSW," said Ms Rhiannon.

"In fact, the Greens policy calls for every child in NSW to receive two years of universal, free public pre-school education.

"The dollars NSW is putting into preschools is declining. We now invest less than any other jurisdiction in Australia and we have the lowest participation rates.

"This means preschools are becoming less and less affordable and harder to get into.

"Increasing numbers of preschool-aged children are being forced to use child care

## P5 is coming back to Nimbin

P5 stands for Participatory Program Promoting Pleasurable Parenting.

Kate Birch, a psychologist from New Zealand, developed the program 25 years ago and has been reviewing and improving it ever since.

This program has proven very helpful to many families. It is practical and can be applied to all ages. In 2006, Kate rewrote the program specifically to suit Australian families.

Nimbin Family Centre is offering a P5 parenting program starting 15th February. It will run weekly for 7 weeks on Thursdays from 10am to 12noon at the Nimbin Family Centre.

For more information about P5 and the Family Centre other programs, see Marie at the Centre - it's the purple building on Sibley Street - or phone 6689-0423 on Mon, Tues and Thurs 9am to 4pm. See you there.

## New term begins at Open Learning Centre



The programme for the first term (8 weeks) at the Nimbin Open Learning Centre has something of interest for everyone.

Among the new classes are Introductions to Painting with Margie Rojo, Massage for health with Daniel Keszler, and Animation and Music-making on Computers taught by Jamie North.

Christine Strelan has joined the team for Creative Writing and Lis Johnson will present her stimulating class Aboriginal People in Today's Society

Sankalpa Gentle, with her years of experience and practice will be leading the Yoga class on Wednesday mornings at 9am. Carole Barrett will continue her very successful Drawing classes and Daniel will lead you with fabulous Qi Gong movements.

The Open Learning Centre

The indefatigable Sue Edmonds, co-ordinator of the Open Learning Centre, seen here addressing the Women's dinner.

subsidises the classes with a programme of Golden Oldies, films from the 20's to 60's, on Wednesday evenings at the Community Centre for only \$7 a session (usually 2 full length movies) Cheap, wholesome, nutritious, appetising food is on sale at the Candy Bar. So pick up your programme of classes from the Community Centre, Neighbourhood Centre or in various cafes around town.

Enrolments are 7th and 8th February, 10am to 3pm at the Community Centre. Classes start the following week 14th February. Any queries or bookings ring 6689-1477.

The Nimbin Open Learning Centre is auspised by Nimbin Community School.

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