



THE NIMBIN GOODTIMES

Independent and FREE

Azalea Edition

July 2008

81 Cullen Street
Nimbin 2480
phone: 6689-1148
email: nimbin.
goodtimes@gmail.com

Media ownership concentration = Fewer viewpoints



Media conglomerate. Just some of the stable of regional newspapers owned by APN Ltd.

Concerns about increasing concentration of media ownership are not new, but they have been brought into sharp focus recently with negotiations reported to be taking place for the sale of *The Northern Rivers Echo* to the giant Australian Provincial Newspaper (APN) group.

APN runs a stable of provincial newspapers along the east coast of Australia and in New Zealand.

The Murdoch family's News Ltd has long shown the capacity of media barons to influence election outcomes, and indeed to set the agenda for the political issues of the day, using their extensive cross-media ownership.

Kevin Rudd's recent criticism of the opposition for practicing 'tabloid politics' refers to the way politicians can use syndicated news services for their own political ends. In these circumstances, mass communication becomes the lowest common denominator, and it is up to the independent media to present alternative views and dissenting voices.

This is particularly important at the local level. Free local newspapers provide real opportunities for grassroots expressions of opinion on local issues, sharing skills and services and helping build the cultural life of a community.

Local media owners and

operators have an empathy with the the local district, rather than a distant overview, as they live and work in the district.

There is an onus on independent newspapers to maintain an integrity to the social construct of the area, and this is felt strongly by the people who work for the independent press.

Staff at *The Northern Rivers Echo* have expressed their dismay at even the thought of selling the paper to APN, let alone their lack of involvement in the process.

Commercial dailies offer a product, whereas to survive commercially, free newspapers must offer a service. That means local news, parish pump issues, not simply re-writes from a wire service that carry the company line.

Humphrey McQueen has written extensively on the evils of media concentration, citing a sad and sorry case history of manipulative and collusive episodes, but sensationalist circulation-boosting content is equally dangerous.

Any diminution of the diversity of a community's media is an undemocratic force, which lessens the power of individuals to have their viewpoints heard.

With the continued support of its readers and advertisers, *The Nimbin GoodTimes* will remain a truly independent community newspaper.

Cut the ties that bind us to US imperialism

The eighth annual Independence from America Day will be celebrated in Byron Bay next Friday 4 July.

Organiser Graeme Dunstan is calling for local people to join him in being visible in their opposition to the US Alliance.

"Make a sign, wear a costume, carry a flag, beat a drum," he says.

"Like past years our parade will be a pre-emptive strike for peace, a colourful and loud expression of our deep dissent and bottomless contempt for the subservience of our government to the US and its imperial wars," said Graeme Dunstan, captain Peacebus.com.

"Since we started celebrating our independence from the US in Byron Bay, there has been a huge ground shift in public opinion right across Australia on the perceived benefits and costs of the US alliance," Graeme notes.

"In that time Howard's absolute subservience has been replaced by Rudd's moderated subservience. But it is a policy of subservience none the less."

"The disastrous Iraq invasion has cost Australian tax payers \$2.5 billion and our armed forces, though reduced, are still there supporting the US, despite the lies we were told about its necessity at the time and the lies we have been told since about its operational success," he said.

INDEPENDENCE FROM AMERICA DAY 4 JULY 2008



BYRON BAY

Rallying in Apex Park, Main Beach, from 12.30 pm

DETACH FROM TYRANNY END THE US ALLIANCE

www.Peacebus.com/FourthJuly

"Back in 2003 Rudd was gung-ho for the Iraq invasion choosing to believe the US Ambassador rather than the masses of Australian citizens who went onto the streets protesting the US deceit," said Dunstan.

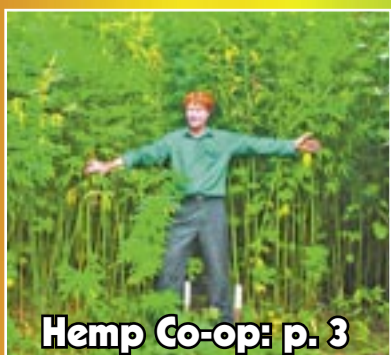
"No sorry has been said yet for that."

"Now Rudd bolsters the US War on Afghanistan as if it has the promise of more success. Lies, lies and more lies."

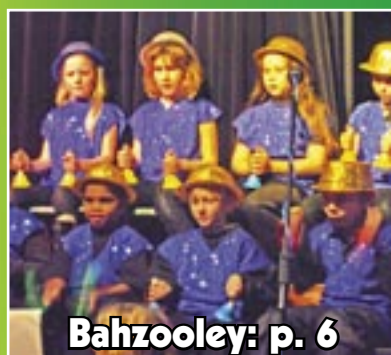
The rally will assemble from 12.30 pm Friday 4 July in Apex Park, Main Beach, Byron Bay.

Dunstan says the rally and parade will be an activist complement to the Activating Human Rights and Peace Conference happening at the same time in the Byron Community and Cultural Centre, the parade coinciding with its lunch break.

Further information at www.peacebus.com/FourthJuly



Hemp Co-op: p. 3



Bahzooley: p. 6



Cybergames: p. 22



Bushwalkers: p. 23