

Honouring election promise for older Australians

by Justine Elliot MP

Almost 1,350 (1,348) new nursing home beds and 107 community care places are set to be allocated in areas of high need – as part of the Australian Government's Zero Real Interest Loans and Associated Places Round.

As Minister for Ageing, I announced that there would be in total 1,455 beds and community care packages nationally. This is Stage One of the Australian Government's \$300 million two-part election commitment.

The round announced includes 375 beds and community care packages in Western Australia (\$46.6 million) and 154 bed and packages in Tasmania (\$16.07 million). WA and Tasmania were previously under-subscribed in last-year's ACAR (Aged Care Approvals Round) process.

In addition, NSW received 293 beds and packages (\$30.1 million); Victoria received 246 beds (\$19.7 million); Queensland received 259 bed and packages (\$24.7 million) and South Australia received 128 beds (\$12.8 million).

The aged care providers will obtain the loans and the Federal Government will cover the cost of the interest on those loans. This is expected to be about \$11.5 million over the forward estimates.

This is about providing nursing home beds for our nation's older frail and aged through low-cost finance in areas where they were previously unlikely to be established.

The applications were assessed independently by Department of Health and Ageing. It also worked closely with a probity adviser on the assessment and negotiation process. The loans were an election commitment and the Government has pledged to cover the cost of the interest on the loans.

Following a review of the first stage of the loans, Stage Two would provide the remaining \$150 million in loans and the balance of the places. The review will examine the effectiveness of the first round and nominate areas for refinement such as new areas of high need and



Fuelling up. Justine with Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and two volunteers.

definitions.

Applicants needed to have a sound financial base and proven experience in residential aged care, as well as a willingness to provide aged care services in areas of high need. Successful applicants have been offered a loan to build or expand nursing homes and respite facilities to which only CPI is applied.

Details of the offers made to the recommended applicants will be published on the Dept of Health and Ageing website at www.health.gov.au

Helping volunteers pay for petrol

Community organisations in Richmond can now apply for a share in the Australian Government's \$21 million Volunteer Grants Program 2008.

Recently I welcomed the opening of the funding round, announced by Jenny Macklin, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The Government will expand items eligible for funding under the program to include petrol for volunteers who use their vehicles for volunteering purposes.

By subsidising fuel costs, the Government is delivering on its election commitment and acknowledges the pressure of rising fuel costs on not-for-profit organisations and volunteers.

We recognise the enormous contribution made by the more than five million volunteers who work tirelessly to help the elderly,

disadvantaged children and those who've hit hard times.

For the first time, organisations will be able to apply for a contribution to reimburse volunteers for fuel costs incurred during their volunteering work.

This new measure will assist volunteers who use their vehicles to support people in the community, including delivering food to the homeless, taking disadvantaged children to Saturday sports and visiting the elderly.

The Australian Government has also expanded the eligibility rules for the Volunteer Grants Program to include school Parents and Citizenship Associations for the first time.

Organisations can apply for grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to purchase equipment – including computers, air conditioners, mowers and sporting items used by volunteers.

These new funding arrangements are one of the ways the Australian Government can thank community groups and volunteers for their contribution.

For more information or to obtain an application form and guidelines visit www.fahcsia.gov.au or call the toll-free hotline on 1800-183-374.

Applications close Friday 17th October 2008.

Til next time.

Federal Member for Richmond
107 Minjungbal Drive
Tweed Heads South
Phone 1300-720-675

Janelle's Page



Local input. Janelle Saffin discussing concerns about pensions with Jim Fickling of Kyogle at a recent Income Support Forum in the Page electorate.

Income Support Forums help inform review of pensions

by Janelle Saffin MP

I've had a wonderful response to the Income Support Forums I hosted around Page.

The forums gave locals an opportunity to have input into the Government's review of pensions, which is part of the Henry Review of Australia's future tax system. Dr Jeff Harmer, secretary of the Department of Families Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has carriage of the pensions part of the review, which is what I am focused on.

Around a thousand people came along to the forums in Grafton, Ballina, Lismore, Yamba, Casino and Kyogle voicing their concerns, asking questions (there was an officer from Centrelink available at each session) and making written suggestions as to what could make our income support system fairer.

It's clear that single pensioners in private rental accommodation are doing it particularly tough, and this was raised frequently at the forums, but they are not the only ones. The impact of cost of living that had gone up dramatically over the past five years, was putting pressure on all pensioners, with many people struggling with the cost of chemist bills, and grocery prices.

There were also valuable points raised about bonuses either one-offs or such as pharmaceutical ones, versus pension increases, and calls for safeguards so that pension increases aren't immediately swallowed up by increased fees for those in retirement and aged care accommodation.

Thanks to everyone who took part. All the local input is included in my Page submission to the Harmer review, which will be completed this week. It will be sent to all who attended, can be accessed on my web page or by ringing my office on 1300-301-735.

Dental services

Dental health is a huge issue for pensioners and health care card holders, and in Page there are thousands of people on the public dental waiting list.

At the last election Labor promised to abolish the Coalition's poorly targeted dental system, that millionaires could get and redirect the funding to provide public dental care to the most vulnerable in the community.

In the Budget the Rudd Government announced its \$290 million Commonwealth Dental Health Program.

This would provide an extra 327,200 public dental consultations in NSW, and I estimate that Page would get about \$2 million to greatly reduce public dental waiting lists.

But the Opposition and Greens have now voted in the Senate to keep the Howard Government's failed dental scheme. Those Senators need to explain why they are turning their backs on the hundreds of thousands of Australians on public dental waiting lists.

Rental Affordability Scheme

The Australian Government will provide close to \$1.7 million over the next two years to fund products, activities, resources and tools to help deliver improved housing affordability through a National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) Capacity Building Strategy.

The Strategy's tools and products will be available to any interested applicants and partners in NRAS through a Business Development Clearinghouse, which will operate from the Community Housing Federation of Australia's website at www.chfa.com.au.

Federal Member for Page
63 Molesworth Street Lismore
Phone 1300-301-735

BLISS OUT
Happy High Herbs
58a Cullen Street Nimbin
Open 7 days
phone/fax 6689 1365
www.happyhighherbs.com
Also in Newtown, Fitzroy and Surfers Paradise

RVBYESQUE
ALAN MORRIS
PROPRIETOR
SMOKING PARAPHERNALIA & FINE USED BOOKS
21 CARRINGTON STREET LISMORE 2480
PO BOX 1184 LISMORE (02) 6622 4676

Nimbin HEMP Embassy
NIMBIN CANNABIS LAW REFORM RALLY and **MardiGrass**, the annual gathering on the first weekend of MAY.
FOOD FUEL FIBRE
MEDICINAL
'JUST SAY KNOW' CANNABIS EDUCATION, INFORMATION & PRODUCTS
66891842 www.hempembassy.net



Police Beat September 2008

Local Crime Report

Break and Enter

On the Tues 23rd at the Nimbin Bowling Club. Three male persons fled the scene after police disturbed them breaking into the club, leaving behind an amount of alcohol and a pair of shoes. Police seized a number of bottles for fingerprinting and the shoes for DNA testing. Police are making further inquiries in relation to the matter.

Drug possession/Malicious Damage

On Tues 23rd at the Nimbin Museum. A young person residing in Nimbin was charged by police for the malicious damage of property at the Nimbin Museum in the early hours of Tuesday morning. Whilst in police custody, an amount of cannabis was seized. Strict bail conditions have been placed on the young person. The young person has been placed before the next local court sitting in Lismore.

Breach of Bail - WANTED

On Wed 3rd September, Nimbin Police received an anonymous phone call regarding a male person wanted by police stating he is at the rear of the Nimbin Museum. This person has fled the scene prior to police arrival. This person is still wanted by police for a number of outstanding offences.

Disqualified Driver

Tues 23rd Sept. Police were conducting random breath testing on Blue Knob Road, Nimbin when the driver of a red commodore was seen by police to exit the vehicle and run into bushland carrying a bag. Police gave chase and apprehended the male driver where he was issued a Court Attendance Notice for various driving offences to appear in Lismore Local Court.

Drugs seized

A ½ kilo of cannabis was seized from bushland, Blue Knob Road Tues 23rd Sept. Police later returned to the area where a male person was apprehended in relation to an earlier incident. Police conducted a search of the bushland where police seized ½ kilo of cannabis wrapped

in a plastic bag. Further investigations are continuing.

Supply prohibited drug

Tues 23rd Sept, Nimbin Museum. During a high visibility patrol of the Nimbin township, police have charged a 61 year old man for supplying an amount of cannabis to a tourist from the Nimbin Museum. The man is to appear in Lismore Local Court.

Positive breath test

On Friday 19th Sept, a male person was involved in an accident on Nimbin Road, Nimbin. After giving a positive roadside test he was arrested and returned to Nimbin Police Station where an analysis of his breath returned a reading of almost 5 times the legal limit. His driver's licence was suspended and was issued a Field Court Attendance Notice to appear in Lismore Local Court.

Search warrant

On Thursday 4th Sept, police received an anonymous phone call in relation to a number of cannabis plants at a local address in Nimbin. Police applied for and were granted a search warrant from Lismore Local Court. Later that day, police executed the warrant where various quantities of cannabis leaf were found. There were also a number of cannabis plants ranging in height that were also seized. The male person was arrested and taken to Lismore Police Station where he was charged with numerous drug related offences. The male person was refused bail to appear in Lismore Local Court the following day.

Assistance

Nimbin Police want to hear from you. We assure confidentiality where possible. However, we also believe that criminal acts and anti-social behaviour should not be tolerated. Please contact Police in person, or on any of our phone numbers available: Nimbin Police Station 6689-1244, Emergency 000, PAL 13-14-44, Crimestoppers 1800-333-000.

Prepared by Senior Constable Peter Irby - Nimbin Police.

Cannabis Clinic starts in Nimbin

The Cannabis Clinic program offers free, confidential treatment for people 16 years of age or over who are concerned about their own or family members' use of cannabis. Services provided include assessment, counselling, education and support.



This initiative is being funded by NSW Health and implemented by the North Coast Area Health Service. Cannabis Clinics are staffed by qualified health professionals and supported by medical staff as required. Treatment interventions to

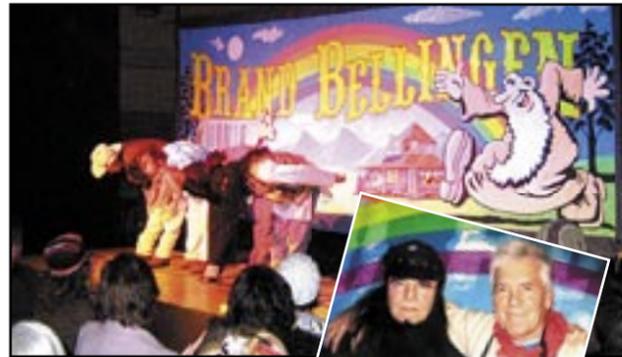
help clients stop or reduce their use of cannabis are based on sound psychological principles and tailored to individual needs.

This service is now available every Wednesday at the Nimbin Health Service.

If you would like to consult the Cannabis Clinic counsellor, phone 1300-664-098 for an appointment or call in at the hospital on a Wednesday morning between 9am and 10am.

For further information visit the Hemp Embassy and pick up a Cannabis Clinic brochure.

Bello musical slays 'em



Nimbin's master muralists and banner makers Graeme Dunstan and Vernon Treweeke (right) have lent their psychedelic flair to the hit musical spoof, *Brand Bellinggen*.

Their 20x7-foot banner formed the backdrop to the 90-minute production, which premiered to a 270-seat capacity crowd in the Bello Memorial Hall last month.

Playwright Pip Wilson said the starting point of his

satirical lampoon was a huge meeting in 1977, held in the Memorial Hall itself, when more than 600 locals tried to run the 'newcomers' out of Bellinggen.

He said, "The issue today is no longer Hippies Versus Locals, but the 'new order' of business management doublespeak."

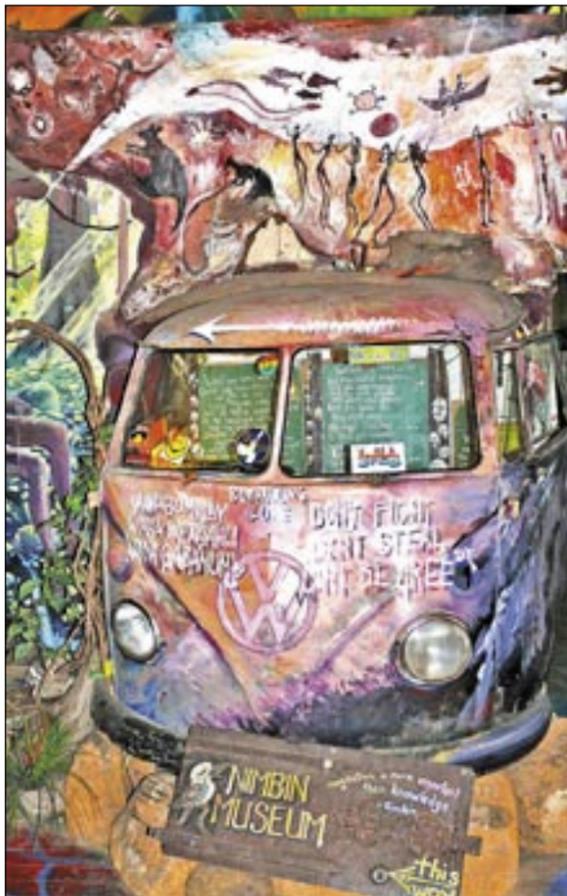
Nimbin Museum to be dust free at last!

After a meeting with the Museum's landlord in Sydney, curator Michael Balderstone is optimistic for the future of the unique tourist attraction. "He's a nice guy and he seems keen for the Museum to continue. He's going to come to Nimbin for the first time, in the next couple of weeks during the school holidays, and he sounds prepared to spend the money on CCTV cameras, securing the building and a fence around the backyard etc, which is what the police are asking for."

"He wants to keep the Museum going as a tourist attraction but bring us hippies into the 'civilized new age', my words, but you know what I mean, wipeable surfaces 'n stuff like that!"

"He still hasn't seen the place but reckons maybe we have only a front and back entrance open, both covered by cameras, and fire doors that only open out as emergency exits on the other doors. Cameras in the backyard as well...and a fence around the block. Charge a proper entry fee instead of hippie donations and get with it. He actually made a lot of sense as a business man, and it would be good for the displays in the Museum, but I can't help feeling like we're being sterilized. Homogenized and pasteurized as well probably!"

"One of the police conditions is that I'm kicked out and just today young Grace found my 'Notice to Quit' letter, lost under the front Kombie in the Museum. So clearly some could say we need more order in the place, but actually I'm just trying to compensate for all the control freaks trying to kill



the few little specks of free expression left in the village."

"No doubt a lot of people will be happy to see the Museum tamed but they may not realize what they are losing until it's gone. Already this week some shopkeepers are complaining that business is down and the streets are quiet due to the adverse police media about Nimbin. Many people think the Museum is already closed. Let's hope they don't throw all the babies out with the bathwater."

"And no one is facing up to the reality of how to deal with the inevitability of

ongoing cannabis supply in the village. It seems obvious that the police have targeted the two establishments lobbying for debate on this issue. Both the Museum and the Hemp Bar, and anyone volunteering in those places have been lined up by undercovers who must have walked past offers on the street in order to try and buy deals on premises they wish to close down. It's a clumsy and expensive way to operate I reckon, not to mention the zero 'community consultation'. And will it make any difference to the amount of dealing in the village? It may well push it back onto the street more, the very opposite of what the police say they want."

Almost artist in residence Elspeth Jones is prepared to sign a new lease to ensure continuity of the Museum, but clearly we are in for big changes.

Elsbeth has been the most consistent artist in the Museum since it opened and in many ways it's her magic paintbrush that has made the place so special. She's put her heart and soul into it more than anyone.

There is a Comment Book in the café at the Museum for anyone to write their thoughts on the matter, and everyone is encouraged to walk the Rainbow Serpent's path through Nimbin's history, while they still can.

Performers and storytellers interested in contributing to a daily show in the Museums Mingle Park should get in touch with Elspeth.

Proposals for the reopening of the HEMP Bar kiosk are welcome, call the Embassy on 02 6689-1842 or drop in.

BLITZ
ELECTRICAL
Jürgen Israel

Country Energy Contractor
Lic. No. 88593C (NSW) 9406 (Qld)

- All installations
- Underground Power
- Overhead Power Supply
- Meterbox - Metering
- Data & Phone Points
- TV - Antenna
- Hot-water & Pumps
- Solar Energy installation

Phone: 02 6689 7022 Mob: 0419 772 897

BUILDER

Lachlan Gibbons
0427 100 874
6688 8179
185 Billen Road
Georgica
Licence No. 92563 C

Mr BOBCAT

6689 0044
0427 946 823

• 4-in-1 bucket • trencher • auger • 4 tonne tipper

DRIVEWAY REPAIRS