



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

Full of fun and FREE

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Nimbin Community Solar Farm plugged in and switched on

The official launch of the Nimbin Community Solar Farm on 31st March at the Nimbin Bowling Club celebrated not only the success of the project but also the power of the Nimbin community.

"The project could not have proceeded without the goodwill and tenacity of the Nimbin community," said Natalie Meyer, Team Leader of Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC), at the launch.

"It's taken us over a year to get this up and running, but really Nimbin has been on a 35-year journey of sustainability," she said, adding, "The project was only made possible because of the many community-owned buildings in this village."

The project, a partnership between NNIC and Rainbow Power Company, consists of a solar system totalling 45kW spread across 6 host sites in the Nimbin village - Nimbin Bowling Club, Nimbin School of Arts (Town Hall), Nimbin Community School, Nimbin Headers Sports Club, Blue Knob Hall and NNIC itself.

The arrays will generate around 61,000kWh per annum, which amounts to around 22.5 average Nimbin households' annual consumption, based on a local sustainability survey conducted in 2009.

The project received \$313,596 from the Commonwealth Government as a social enterprise/job creation project, and has created three long-term jobs, ten short term/casual jobs, one traineeship, and three work experience placements.

Justine Elliot, MP for Richmond said that the project will be of great benefit to the community, as local organisations will share in the income generated by the systems, as well as supporting the functioning of the NNIC.

"Congratulations for leading the way, and providing a model for environmental sustainability for our region, our nation and our planet," said Ms Elliot, who



Justine Elliot MP flicks on one of the Solar Farm's many switches, watched on by Paul O'Reilly of the Rainbow Power Company.

symbolically threw the switch. "It's great to see it now in action - It's a real credit to you all."

The project encountered many barriers along the way - including four policy changes in NSW relating to the solar industry since the commencement of the project in late 2009 - but these were overcome thanks to the patience and flexibility of the Commonwealth in relation to changes to the original project concept, many hours of hard work by staff at NNIC and Rainbow Power Company, assistance from Lismore Council in relation to the six Development Applications that were ultimately required for the project, and support from Country Energy to get the arrays connected in time.

Mark Byrne, of the Environmental Defenders Office said, "It shouldn't have been this hard. There need to be reforms to assist this sector - a renewable energy strategy is urgently needed."



The system's performance can be monitored on-line, and an on-going display is also being set up at the Rainbow Power Company.

Ms Meyer said, "It is a great shame that the current policy vacuum in NSW in relation to the solar industry and the feed-in tariff has effectively stalled the local solar industry, and the quagmire of regulations at local government and state government levels operate to effectively render duplication of our project in other communities almost impossible in NSW at this time."

She called for a cohesive national approach to the increase in renewable energy sources, adding, "Until such time as there is a realistic value placed on energy, projects such as these will likely be commercially unviable and will not be able to attract investment."



Mr George was proud of his support for additional police.

Four more years by George!

Yes, Thomas George is back as the member for Lismore, and this time he's part of a new Coalition government.

There's no beating 61.2% of the primary vote, no matter how many preferences you got.

Mr George's vote rose about 7% from his already impressive 2007 result, as the Coalition decimated Labor at the polls across New South Wales.

The Greens Susan Stock came second with 20.5% of the vote, and the ALP vote collapsed to 13.2% for their candidate Andy Moy.

Andrea Vickers raised the Green vote in Tweed by an impressive 6.3% to 14%, and Simon Richardson in Ballina received 21.7%, also eclipsing the Labor candidate on 12% to take second place.

Sitting Nationals members Geoff Provest and Don Page were also comfortably returned in neighbouring seats of Tweed and Ballina respectively. Mr Page will be Minister for local government and Minister for the North Coast.

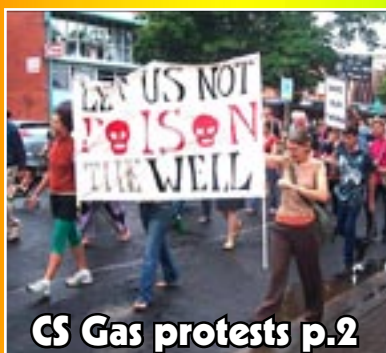
The new parliament will see the Coalition holding 69 seats in the lower house to Labor's 20, with one seat going to the Greens Jamie Parker in Balmain, a first for the party.

Interestingly, the Greens received 10.3% of the primary vote and narrowly gained one seat, while the Nationals, with 12.6% of the total vote, had 18 members elected.

The Legislative Council results are still not finalised but it appears that the Greens Jeremy Buckingham is ahead in the race to pick up the final spot, nudging out Pauline Hanson's chances of a seat, and taking the Greens total to five.

Still, the upper house promises to be interesting with the Shooters and Fishers Party and the Christian Democrats holding the balance of power.

Byron's Green mayor Jan Barham was successfully elected to the upper house, maintaining the Greens north coast representation that Ian Cohen has provided since 1995.



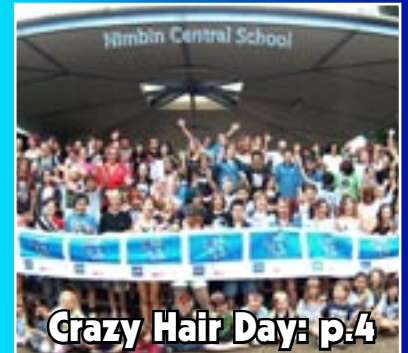
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