

# Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

Readers of *The Sun Herald's* 'The Fitz Files' will have noted recent correspondence confirming the complete disappearance of koalas around Avalon, on Barrenjoey Peninsular, to Sydney's north.

So many readers recalled their koala experiences that Peter Fitzsimons wrote "...as recently as the 1960s they were thick on the ground and in the trees." One reader recalled often encountering koalas driving home "...the beast would amble at its own pace. Since you couldn't get past, you would be stuck behind it for as long as it wanted you to be. There would be just this great, shaggy koala arse in the headlights, although on occasion the koala might sit down for a minute and regard you over its shoulder. ..." Aaaaah, life's pace for all of us was slower in those days.

From the 1940s into the 70s Barrenjoey's koalas were perhaps the most numerous and best known population in the Sydney region. In 1970 there were over 123 koalas estimated but by 1989 the population had been reduced to only 8 animals. A survey undertaken in 2003 by the National Parks & Wildlife Service and the University of Western Sydney found no animals at all.

Although sightings are extremely rare, they do persist despite no current reports reaching Peter Fitzsimons. For me the thought of a few remnant animals living out their days isolated from each other by the density of urban development now characteristic of so much of the Peninsular is arguably worse than there being no animals at all.

North of the Tweed River and much closer to home, koalas are facing a similar prospect. The 2011 Tweed Coast Koala Habitat Study commissioned by Tweed Shire Council reports "...small, relic populations in the Terranora-Bilambil Heights and Tweed Heads South areas, however the short to medium-term viability of these populations is considered low in the absence of recruitments and is further reduced by the escalation of threatening processes arising from development."

At various public forums in Tweed, I have heard stories about koala numbers and their decline very similar to those related about Sydney's Northern Beaches. How miserable it is that in forty to fifty years, we have done for them.

Here in the Lismore LGA the koalas' chances are somewhat more optimistic provided we address

the threats to which they are presently exposed, namely clearing their food-source (and homes), the stress and genetic factors which predicate their susceptibility to disease, the incidence of road-kill and attacks by dog. The most transparent way in which this can be undertaken is through the development of a comprehensive koala plan of management.

The NSW government listed the koala as a species vulnerable to extinction in the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995. At the same time it enacted State Environmental Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44) which regulates how developments are assessed on land where koalas and/or koala habitat exists. This legislation has been in existence for sixteen years. At present a development proposal on land identified as supporting koalas must be accompanied by an individual koala plan of management paid for by the developer.

Not only is the present system costly, it is a piecemeal approach to managing the threats faced by koalas because the SEPP itself does not take into consideration local circumstances nor does it achieve consistency in the assessment process – there is no certainty to anyone about the information required and the conditions of development consent which might eventuate.

Lismore Council has developed a Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South East Lismore. There are two components to the Plan – the regulatory provisions which are only triggered by lodging a development application and which do not apply to activities that are already permitted without Council consent. The other component is non-regulatory – thirty-two management actions dealing with the Plan's implementation and monitoring; habitat conservation, restoration and management; community education; roads and traffic; dog and bushfire management; sourcing funding; identifying research opportunities as well as opportunities for koala-centred economic development and tourism.

Friends of the Koala's view is that the Draft Plan is balanced and that over time it will, if implemented, achieve positive outcomes for koalas in the south-east. Clearly it is



Joeys in care, Mothball, (left) and Cadel (right) – their future is entirely in our hands.

important for community members to read the Draft and to make comment over the period of its public exhibition as Council intended. We understand that opinions vary and we regret that there is already misunderstanding of some aspects of the Plan in some quarters. Council needs to hear from those who favour the Draft Plan as well.

At the time of writing the Draft Plan is available on the Lismore Council's website ([www.lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au)) under Business Papers. Look for the Business Paper of the Ordinary Meeting 8 November 2011 and click on Attachments to Report – Adoption of the Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management. For the koalas' sake, we encourage everyone to make the time to read, discuss and to let the councillors know how you feel about it.

Christmas being just around the corner, you may be thinking of shopping for presents. Friends of the Koala's Support-a-Koala program is a thoughtful and satisfying gift for both giver and receiver. We also offer gift vouchers to the amount you nominate from the Friends of the Koala Plant Nursery, and a range of koala-motif jewellery and other merchandise. Call in to the Koala Care Centre, Rifle Range Road, East Lismore and look for yourself because by purchasing those presents you benefit Friends of the Koala as well.

Wildlife rehabilitators are on call 24/7, 365 days a year. Over this Festive Season, spare a thought for those wonderful individuals who voluntarily forego a drink and even leave their Christmas lunch to attend to a distressed koala or other critter.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting, please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02) 6622 1233. For information about koalas, their food trees, and other ways in which you can assist the koala conservation effort on the Northern Rivers, visit: [www.friendsofthekoala.org](http://www.friendsofthekoala.org) or email [info@friendsofthekoala.org](mailto:info@friendsofthekoala.org)

Until next time, happy koala spotting.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

### Black Tea-Tree *Melaleuca bracteata*

by Richard Burer, Project Officer, EnviTE

Black Tea-Tree is a medium sized tree that grows throughout the Nimbin area. Common on the creek flats and along the riparian zone this tree also likes wetland environments. It grows to 15m, has green leaves and white flowers in spikes, that mass flower in spring/early summer after rain.

Check out the groups of trees that grow along Stony Chute Road close to Green Bridge. On the flats below the Nimbin Rocks there are massive trees that look to be hundreds of years old, that possibly were significant to the Bundjalung people as the leaves are highly aromatic and may of been used for insect control and medicinal purposes .



This is a great tree to plant on those wet areas and it can cope with frosts and full sun. Its form also lends itself to being a good landscape plant, wind break and street tree. It is a very common street tree throughout the South Lismore area, as it copes well with floods.

## Stu's view from the Loo

by Stuart McConville



Apparently there is some confusion as to whether I am actually sitting on my loo, lap top on bared thighs, tapping out this prose on poo, or am I comfortably in front of my PC with an empty bowel and squeeze free scowl. Good. I'm glad, it is always best left to the imagination don't you think? All I can say is these wooden seats beat the plastic ones hands down in this sweltering heat. When did we start sitting on sweaty plastic anyway? My first memories of going to the loo always involved running my fingernails along the aged timber bench seat that spanned the width of the outhouse. It was only a short hop skip and a jump from the back door (thankfully) and it had a rusty old cast iron cistern with a long chain mounted a good meter and a half above the rust stained ceramic bowl. The bowl looked like someone had smashed it into tiny pieces and then painstakingly put it back together with araldite and a lot of patience. The force of the flush was like a mini Niagara Falls! Heaven forbid if anything fell in unintended. It'd be half way to Werribee\* in no time at all. I loved flushing that toilet. It was like having the beach in your own backyard. The wooden timber bench seat was somehow soft. It was probably hoop pine or similar, a lovely texture around the rim of the seat, where tiny little fibres of timber created a velvety feel for the delicate bottoms that sat there. It was also ancient, with grooves along the grain that ran deep and shallow

like estuarine channels eroded through the ages. Eventually we had extensions built that included a nice new plastic toilet inside the house. I remember feeling claustrophobic in the new toilet that had a door (the old one never had a door). Consequently I didn't use it that much, just for peeing at night and maybe on a really cold winters day. I loved to go out to the old loo, where the wood was always warm, the flush a lot louder and the rust stains on the crazed ceramic were racing each other slowly to Werribee.

These days there is a paucity of choice for the true toilet seat connoisseur. The cheap brass and timber fold down lids are poorly made and seem to de-laminate or warp regularly and there is very little else available. I've started offering full width cabinet timber bench seats with my tilt panel concrete composting toilets so now you can have your throne made to order, as beautiful as befits the behind.

\* Werribee is the destination for most of Melbourne's sewage.

Stuart runs Pooh Solutions Compost Toilets and Consultancy Services, for more info: [www.poohsolutions.com](http://www.poohsolutions.com)

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# Weeds

by Triny Roe

People choose to live in rural areas for a variety of reasons. Country dwellers come from many backgrounds and may have different ideas of what constitutes a country lifestyle. Some folks are full-time farmers and run stock or grow fruit trees or crops on their properties. At the other end of the spectrum are those who come to simply do nothing but enjoy the presence of birds and other wildlife and the peace and quiet (when the farmer next door isn't driving the tractor). And everyone in-between – hippies, hobby farmers, 'life-stylers', bush regenerators and city escapees.

Amongst this diverse range of rural residents are numerous and varying attitudes to weeds. Some want to let them be. Weeds are part of nature's cycle. The Goddess sent them to restore the earth. Others want to use chemicals to eradicate and destroy every last one. Depending on how you want to use your land will also impact on your attitudes and practices. Horse owners, for instance, may want to keep their properties free of Crofton weed to avoid their horses getting sick.

All weeds are different. When talking about weeds it's useful to be specific about which particular plant is being considered. 'Weeds' is a vast range of plants and need to be addressed as



Rainforest established under canopy of wild tobacco

individual plants on their own merits. It is not a homogenous category.

There are old weeds and new weeds. Plants such as Camphor Laurel and Lantana have been on the weed lists for a long time. These species are well established in the landscape. New weeds such as Giant Devil Fig and Golden Rain Trees are more recently recognised 'bad guys' and can be found in pockets, often spreading thickly in the vicinity of the parent plant as well as being distributed further afield by birds and other agents.

Weeds too, behave differently according to their nature. They might be vines, trees, shrubs, grasses or forbs (herbaceous plants). Some vines, such as maderia, cats claw or morning glory smother trees and bushes eventually killing them. Other types of weeds grow in bushland, pasture or the garden, competing for light, space and nutrient. Some are more aggressive than others and easily outgrow the desired species.

Weed management is not a 'war on weeds'. It is more about helping redress the imbalance in the environment caused by generations of damaging farming and clearing practices. Salinity and erosion are major problems in many areas. The Australian landscape has taken a beating. In some regions the land is so severely degraded that only the hardiest weeds can grow there. These pioneers are the first stage to land rehabilitation, helping protect and repair the soil.

Sometimes weeds can play a role in restoring the environment.

Rainforest trees can establish under canopy of wild tobacco. As the trees grow in size and the canopy develops the tobacco plants can be removed in stages. Slashing some weeds and letting them mulch down adds nutrient and organic matter to the soil. Note here that a number of weed species will simply keep growing even after cut especially in this high rainfall area. From these plants a weed tea can be made by steeping them in a barrel of water. When the plant material has rotted the nutrient rich tea can be diluted and used as a liquid fertiliser.

Learn to identify the plants on your property and be on the lookout for new ones appearing. If it grows quickly or thickly, responding in a timely manner may prevent a new species from becoming firmly established and lessen the adverse impact that particular plant may have.

## Weeds and the Path of Life

by Geoff Dawe

It is a common belief in society that weed seeds should be prevented from spreading. It is a belief based in little understanding of the value of immune systems.

In agriculture for example, Anthracnose as a fungal disease in papaya is conventionally treated by spraying to kill the fungus. Even in organic production of papaya, spraying is carried out. There is not primary emphasis given to looking at what is absent in soil that prevents papaya gaining immunity to fungal infection.

In medicine also, the response toward bacteria and viruses is toward directly killing them in the bodies of people and other animals with antibiotics, or in the nearby environment by sterilizing surfaces. The causes of inadequate diet, excessive toxins and stress are not looked at with any depth in our society; that is, they are not looked at with sufficient depth to ensure their gradual non-existence.

With the three disciplines dealing with European

consciousness's connection to the land – medicine, agriculture and bush regeneration – the thought of creation of environments that are generally not conducive to pathology has not been the primary response. Instead, their primary response has been to engage in the short term view of a perpetual war with the symptoms of a degraded environment.

Nevertheless the path of restoring the healthy immune system of people, other species and the land is partly known. In horticulture for example, it has been discovered that the use of mulch or close planting will cut out many weeds. That is, weed seed still lies dormant on top of soil but it does not germinate because the environment is not suited to germination. In effect, with mulching and/or close planting, the environment can be said to be producing an immunity from weeds.

In this North Coast sub-tropical region, soils are generally poor and under stress because rainforest has been removed. Of course, this is not always the case. In some areas rainforest never existed

at all. Where rainforest did exist, it 'learnt' to maximize conditions of sun, rain and poor soil by holding three-quarters of its fertility in the biomass rather than the soil. Leaf and wood drop of trees was quickly rotted on the ground with sub-tropical climate conditions, so that nutrients were taken through the roots back up the tree, and mostly held in the tree itself.

The spread of weed trees such as camphor laurel and now golden rain tree is a natural immune-building response to poor soils and the agricultures which attempt to exist on them, even as sub-tropical downpours cause the rapid leaching of minerals and nutrient. Trees come in to supply the missing biomass, and with their deeper tree roots are able to more effectively 'mine' the leached nutrients and bring them to the surface. The fact that the trees are often exotic is beside the point. They are establishing in response to existing environmental conditions primarily of soil and climate. They belong not because they have, or have not, the magical appellation 'native', but because they are currently the best vegetation in the world

to do this job. I say 'magical appellation' because the sort of thinking that holds that only native vegetation should exist here, has not considered soil and climatic (that is, global warming) differences from the time of the original rainforest, and it therefore pines for a past that is by definition, gone.

Chemical-free bush regeneration has found that in the serial succession to forest, grasses are the highest users of energy to control, followed by bushes such as lantana and groundsel. The least users of energy for control are weed trees. A chemical-free bush regenerator will use less energy restoring a camphor laurel monoculture to rainforest than pasture to rainforest.

Since pasture areas have their own resilience to tree encroachment in that stock graze newly emerging seedlings (even of camphors), the ideal, it is suggested for degraded land awaiting reforestation, is to allow tree weeds, along with natives too of course, to take up positions on them in order that they might begin to hold out exotic grasses and bushes and allow the chemical-free regenerator a 'free kick' when she/he gets there.



Protest at the Sofitel

by Rob Carroll, President

### Gladstone Bus Trip

The bus left the Bush Theatre at 10am on 22nd November in pouring rain and as we write this column is still away on actions. There have been many stops along the way first in Brisbane at the LNG share holders meeting which was a necessary protest because of the ongoing damage that has been done to the environment by these companies and shareholders alike. The marine life that has suffered so far is alarming, dolphins, turtles, fish and dugongs. Fishermen have also been affected from the contaminated fish and water.

*"The pace of this development, this LNG coal seam gas industry, is exceeding the capacity of science to understand what's going on, and exceeding the capacity of both the companies and government agencies to properly monitor what's going on."*

Michael McCabe from Capricorn Conservation Council.

We have had quite substantial donations and would like to thank you all for your kind support. Stay tuned for the full story upon return of the crew.

Benny's Banner

### Festival Of Hope

We at the NEC would like to thank Peace, Harmony, family and friends for a wonderful weekend of festivities and the musicians for their music and entertainment. All proceeds from the festival were donated to the NEC. Water is more precious than anything.

### Roundup

Getting the Drift is a new revised booklet that is now available free at the NEC. It was put together by The Environmental Defenders Office and National Toxic Network. The connection between glyphosate the main ingredient in Roundup and cancer has again been noted. Everybody should have one of these booklets to know the dangers of these readily available toxins. If these poison sellers told you the truth, they would not have a business.

### Footnote

It was great to dive through Rock Valley on Tuesday and see another community saying NO to the Coal/CSG environment criminals.



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# Retain control by natural treatment for your child with autism/allergies/ADHD

by **Leandrah**

Autism, Allergies, Asthma, ADHD and Obesity are the new epidemics of childhood in this day and age. In Australia and NZ, ADHD is found in 1/10 school children, Autism is identified in 1/9, Overweight children make up 30%, Asthma and eczema have risen 5 times over the last 40 years. Many theories are out there explaining this change in disease trend, e.g. vaccinations, heavy metal toxicity, use of poisons, over medication, too clean an environment, climate change, trauma, malnourishment, overindulgence, stressful and unnatural environments, food allergies, weak genetics, supergerms, unbalanced diets, dehydration, toxicity, etc....

The stimulants and antidepressants (medication) used to 'treat' ADHD are known to cause hallucinations, delusions, heart problems, high blood pressure and suicidal reactions. How do we invest in our child's future health without being forced to treat them with damaging medications? ..... Natural alternatives which are non-harmful have been proven effective in helping a child with unwanted behaviour issues. Many children have been helped with complementary treatments.

Switch on to your kids and promptly address any concerns you may have with regard to their wellbeing and development. It is advised to initially seek a holistic practitioner, such as a Naturopath, in order to retain power in the management of your child's treatment. The child may be experiencing unexplained discomfort, being difficult to handle or behind

developmentally to their peers or even younger siblings. Obesity, asthma or other inflammatory diseases maybe an issue.

A most recently developed natural and wholistic protocol of common treatment is applied to those with Autism, Allergies, ADHD, Asthma and Obesity. This group of disorders all rest upon the common denominator of the Gut-Brain-Immune Axis, which is dependent on tissue integrity and fully functioning physiological pathways. The Gut-Brain-Immune Axis is facilitating our interaction with our environment and regulating our responses to external stimuli. If one element is dysfunctional it affects the other two promoting disease.

We can ensure a healthy Gut-Brain-Immune Axis by managing the diet, lifestyle and environmental factors and addressing any micronutrient deficiencies, dysbiosis, impaired detox capacity and methylation pathways, leaky gut, heavy metal exposure, trauma and allergies. Any concerns you have for your child's wellbeing are easily addressed early in order to stop inflammation damaging the developing gut, immune system, neurological or detox pathways and the resulting Autism, Allergies, Asthma, ADHD or Obesity being 'hardwired' for life.

One Newcastle family testify on Leandrah's treatment of their 3.5 year old son. His well regarded paediatrician had judged him as on the milder end of the Autistic Spectrum. His Speech Pathologist was about to teach him formal sign language as he showed little inclination to speak. The family initially

presented to Leandrah for allergy desensitisation of their son. They proceeded with a ten week program of homeopathic allergy desensitisation after several weeks of building his gut integrity. "His new Speech Pathologist is amazed at his verbal progress, and he is rapidly catching up to his peers with verbal involvement and use. After the allergy desensitisation began to take effect, the Child Psychologist we consulted considered there was no need for ongoing work...". His parents would have been content if it took until school age to be peer equivalent in speech, but allergy desensitisation produced several behavioural improvements, including speech almost immediately. Of course they are over the moon, "we are getting to know our son for the first time. We always knew he was in there. Every intervention we tried helped in some way, but the food allergy issue had been our biggest concern. Now we are much happier about the situation thanks to Leandrah".

A 2 year old boy presented with a mosquito allergy. Upon taking his case it was apparent this allergy developed after the significant trauma of having his roof being blown off in a freak storm. The trauma was addressed when a timely storm started on his way home from the consult and his mum asked him how it made him feel. The tissues and toxicity were treated with barley grass powder, colloid minerals, sunlight and an increase in water consumption. A four month homeopathic allergy desensitization program was commenced with tailor-made homeopathically potentised



mosquito remedies. His mother about a year later left a phone message saying: "You helped my son with mosquitoes. I'm just ringing up to say thank you so much... had complete success with his mosquito reactions, just gets them like everyone else just a couple of days instead of taking months (to get over mosquito bites)... We went to a different area with different mosies... but nowhere near as much reaction as he's had in the past (to a new strain of mosquitoes)... So thank you so very very much, my little boy is much more at ease because of you."

Leandrah (pictured) is available for appointment through the Nimbin Apothecary, Cullen Street, on Saturdays. She is a Naturopath and has been practising from the Birth & Beyond rooms in Nimbin for 8 years. Leandrah also has a country practice in Wiangaree at The Turquoise House. Wiangaree is only 10 minutes drive north of Kyogle. There is a medicine garden, colour healing studio, and well stocked dispensary of homeopathics, herbs, flower essences and supplements. Phone for appointments 6636-2356 or book in with Nimbin Apothecary for Saturdays on 6689-1529.

# Baby Massage at Birth & Beyond



6 pregnant women + 6 growing babies + 1 doula = 13 beings!

by **Kirrah Holborn**

Many of the sessions at Birth & Beyond this year have focused on birth preparation. However, it is always a delight to meet the little beings that inhabited their mothers' rounded bellies. Seeing women traverse their rite of passage to motherhood reveals an amazing transformation.

Emma Geraghty, baby massage instructor, will be coming to Birth & Beyond on 9th and 16th December. Emma writes: "Infant massage involves the parent or caregiver learning a series of strokes and massage techniques in order to enhance the baby's physiological and psychological development and to deepen the parent infant bond through nurturing touch. "Intimate contact with your baby leads to happier, healthier development. Massaged babies often sleep better and are more settled. Learning infant massage is investing in your child's health and wellbeing. The benefits will last a lifetime." It is hoped more sessions can be arranged for next year. Anyone wanting to hold a session at Birth & Beyond, please do make contact via [www.traditionalwisdom.com.au](http://www.traditionalwisdom.com.au) or [kirrah@traditionalwisdom.com.au](mailto:kirrah@traditionalwisdom.com.au) (phone 0429-308-851).

## Hello, possum...

by **Pixie Barrett**

We knew we had a ceiling-dweller when we moved into our home, and planned at some stage to make a box and then seal the ceiling off.

It turns out the lack of barge boards had nothing to do with the entry point.

A few months ago we had the ceiling exhaust fan fixed in readiness for winter. We were watching TV when the plastic vented cover hit the ground and we could see little eyes peeking through the fan at us.

With no ladder to replace the cover, I had to do a balancing act on the stairs involving a broom and a piece of cardboard with sticky tape attached to it. I managed to cover the vent and stop most of the heated air escaping.



The cardboard came off weeks ago and we were again enjoying seeing glimpses of the possum.

A while ago, again watching TV, the entire fan hits the stair rail, bouncing onto Peter's arm then hitting the slate floor. Amazingly it stayed in one piece – but we now had a hole to the sky which was allowing moths in.

This was the least of my worries as we were now a running sideshow for the possums, who would sit for hours watching us.

They have since started using another doorway, but the non-chimney remains.

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## Nimbin Hospital Info

### • Immunisation Clinic at Nimbin Hospital

Birth- 5 years. Clinics held on 2nd Tuesday each month. Next clinic 13th December. Phone 6620-7687 to make an appointment.

### • Nimbin Womens Health Service

Every 3rd Thursday of the month at Nimbin Hospital. Next clinic 15th December. Phone 6688-1401 to make appointments.

### • Physiotherapy at Nimbin Hospital

Every Monday and Thursday. Phone 6688-1401 to make an appointment.

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# Emotional Awareness

by Dave Reynolds

We humans live our lives on many levels simultaneously. We have our physical existence, defined by what we do with our bodies and we have our mental existence, created by our thought processes. Some people have a strong sense of their spiritual existence and are able to readily connect with something greater than themselves. We also have our emotional existence which is created by our emotional responses to people, places and events. Many of us spend the majority of our time strongly identified with what we are thinking and we can lose touch with our physical, spiritual

and emotional selves. This article is about developing emotional self awareness and increasing our capacity to experience our emotions without being overwhelmed.

There is a difference between thinking and feeling. Thinking involves our interpretation and meaning making processes which often lead us into the future through anticipation or back into the past through memory. Emotions however are experienced in the present moment as sensations in the body and are an evolutionary guidance system that let us know how well our needs are being met. For example, fear can be an indicator that our need for safety is not being met and love is an indicator that we are being met in a particularly exquisite way.

Many people have learned to distance themselves from their emotions. Beliefs arising from our family of origin such as 'boys don't cry' or 'girls shouldn't get



angry', can lead us to lose touch with ourselves. Some events in peoples' lives have been so traumatic that their emotions have either shut down or been repeatedly numbed as a survival mechanism. Understandably, many people entering counselling have a fear that if they contact their emotions, they will be overwhelmed and unable to function in the world outside. These responses to 'unwelcome' emotions are to be respected because they have allowed the individual to make their way in the world up till now.

The truth is however that if we want to establish intimate relationships with others and if we want our decisions to be informed by what we feel as well as what we think, then some level of emotional awareness is necessary. Emotional states arise deep in the body, moving outwards seeking expression and acknowledgement before dissipating, they do not last for ever. Emotions that are suppressed or unfelt can remain as unfinished business in the body, irritating the mind and creating dis-ease.

If you want to increase your emotional awareness, you will need to practice tuning into your body. The simple act of breathing deeply and directing your attention to your physical sensations will bring you more in touch with your emotional state. Initially, you may struggle to name your emotions and that is okay, the important thing is for you to acknowledge their

presence with compassion. The act of acknowledging emotions in ourselves and others is often enough to bring great relief.

You may find that you are tempted to judge your feelings and divide them into good and bad categories. In my experience the emotions that are commonly regarded as negative have a significant place in the journey of personal growth. Sadness, for example, can be a call to slow down and acknowledge loss and grief. These feelings, once experienced and compassionately acknowledged can inform our choices and actions. When we connect with others from a place of emotional awareness, we are more likely to create honest and fulfilling relationships with the people we care about.

Dave is a Gestalt Psychotherapist working on Fridays in Nimbin.

For appointments, phone 6689-0426.

## Sweet smell of success

### Business Profile

Gai Reid and Christine Seymour worked together as gardeners, and after hours of heavy outdoor work, they knew the value of a good quality moisturising soap.

They were amazed to find that most commercial soaps contain palm oil, so they decided to make their own. After 12 months of development, they have made a business of it, the Nimbin Soap Factory.

"We wanted an indoor job," Gai said. "It's too hot to work outdoors," to which Christine added, "And we're not getting any younger."

The pair have carefully selected their ingredients, and use olive oil from Kyogle, organic coconut oil from a Lismore supplier, hemp oil from Tasmania, and local macadamia oil.

The perfumes of some of their soaps are made by steeping aromatic plants, while in others distilled organic essential oils made at Nimbin's Black Sheep Farm are added.

In all the soaps, ingredients have been selected for their therapeutic effects, as well as their cleansing properties and fragrance, so the Nimbin Soap range includes tea-tree, calendula, sandalwood, ylang ylang, lemon myrtle and eucalyptus blended with fragrances such as rosemary, thyme, sage, lemongrass, jasmine, lavender, vanilla bean, oleander and rose geranium.

The soapmakers have also experimented with embedding semi-precious stones in their



Christine Seymour and Gai Reid

soaps – which Gai said were not safe for children – and make gift boxes containing soaps, polished stones and candles from the Nimbin Candle Factory.

"We're very happy with our range of products," Gai said, adding that they were increasing production to keep pace with the demand as the Christmas season approaches, and now make around 200 tablets of soap per week.

Nimbin Soap Factory is supplying several tourist accommodation venues around the village, including the soap dispensers at the Nimbin Crystal Caravan Park and Lismore Caravan Park.

The soaps are on sale at the Nimbin Visitor Information Centre, Nimbin Hemp Embassy, Annie's Tea Gardens in Wadeville, and will soon be at Nimbin Candles and Nimbin Pharmacy.

Look for the label.



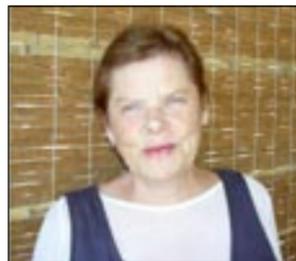
## Seeing new

by Dr Elizabeth McCardell  
M. Counselling, PhD

I've been travelling by sea around New Zealand getting daily intense glimpses of various places in South and North Islands. It's reminded me of ecology excursions that I used to go on when I was at school, where we threw small quadrants onto the ground as we walked and noted, in great detail, the minutiae of plants, soil types, rocks, and insects of each falling of the quadrant.

I loved these excursions and loved what I found: the excitement of seeing the variety and interconnectedness of each element in each microworld. This recent travelling has felt similar to me. Here we were hopping from place to place, getting a sort of anthropological view of things without much engagement in the daily happenings of the places – yet aware that our presence essentially changed things for the people and the places. Tourism injects big bucks to local economies, and the people – coming and being there - get a chance to share old things with new people. It was fun connecting to others in this way. Our footsteps up hillsides contributed also to the wear-tear of pathways and the ripples from our ship shaped shore lines as only ripples can.

As I mull on these things, two other parts come to mind. Each new day of life is like an extract in the process



of becoming life. And a therapeutic session is also in the process of becoming, and yet also an extract of life. These two ideas, I shall set aside for the moment and bring into play another idea that came up during this travelling time.

While away I set myself a daily task of seeing whether I could merely observe each new place, captured, as it were, in a quadrant, without bringing remembered other places, other geographies, into the picture. How hard that was, for each place evoked memories of other special places: the uplifted and valleyed lie of land, the angle of the trees, the smells of mangrove and seaside, the pattern of houses, the blossom here and there, the cultural blends of peoples, the lilt of voices familiar and unfamiliar, etc, etc. Is it possible, anyway, to hold away the memories one has in the face of new encounters; is it possible to see new, without the shaping of one's eyes by the old?

The early paintings of Australian and New Zealand animals and plants by visiting European artists show clearly the influences of the old homeland: kangaroos with deer faces and bandicoots

that look like large rats with stripes, and trees shaped by the sight of exotica found elsewhere in the world. Sorting the classifications of flora and fauna is still continuing: this from the more familiar that. So how possible is it to perceive things as new?

It occurred to me that this latter task is certainly a useful meditation, but though to see new maybe an admirable and barely achievable aim, the very awareness that one is not seeing new but rather through eyes that alight upon the new as though upon the familiar is a valuable part of the exercise. The exercise is essentially one of awareness, after all. Just knowing that the eyes we see with are the eyes we customarily use in seeing is perhaps useful enough.

Yet it isn't the whole truth of it. We can see new in increments, sometimes, and see new in leaps and bounds as well. The old European artists learned to see Australian and New Zealand critters and flora more truly to their actual forms, processes and types as they studied them with more knowledge and

saw them interacting in their environment. Knowing is a valuable key to seeing. The thrown quadrant is not an exercise devoid of previous learning, but a coming to knowing through previous comings to knowing. The knowledge acquired is a culmination of other knowledges, inside and beyond the discipline the knowing may (for this time) be located. Thus one piece of knowledge is shaped by many pieces of knowledge from a variety of disciplines.

All these musings have a profound parallel to the therapeutic process. When a client embarks on their journey of self discovery they bring their old, as well as newly discovered, ways of seeing into our conversation and I contribute my way of seeing, combined with the various other knowledges I have acquired, plus the experiments we might do together, and the blended insights forge a new alchemy, a new seeing and new, but not foreign, possibilities for an enriched life. No knowledge is ever wasted nor unacknowledged.

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