

Locals acknowledged on Australia Day

Several Nimbin people and organisations were among those given recognition with Australia Day nominations this year: Cedar Crompton and Rose Cubis (pictured left) from Nimbin Aged Care for Services to the Community; Krista Mathews who helps with domestic animal issues in Nimbin for Community Services; Natalie Meyer (pictured right) of the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre for Sustainable Environment and Services to the Community; Nimbin Chamber of Commerce for their many and vast Services to the Community; Pam Bourne who has been assisting with

many animal care issues and projects for Services to the Community.

In her occasional address, Mayor Jenny Dowell surveyed the mixed emotions towards Australia Day in the community.

"Some shun it, as they see it as a day where civic pride, often fuelled by alcohol, becomes jingoistic nationalism, with an overblown sense of entitlement that sometimes results in violence," she said.

"I would hope that we all reflect upon this day and gain some insight into our relationships with this land, and all the people who call it home."



Photos: Pampussycat

Super Mario to the rescue

by Eugenie Stephans

In the late afternoon of Wednesday 25th January, Wallers Bus Services driver Mario (pictured) was transporting passengers from Nimbin to Lismore when he found Bishops Creek was inaccessible, so he turned the bus around and went to Lismore via the Channon, where he successfully crossed rising creek waters and managed to get all commuters to Lismore safely.

Mario then collected commuters in Lismore who were eagerly awaiting the 5.30pm bus service to Nimbin. Although running very late, he allowed the passengers to get a quick meal, and then all boarded

the bus to Nimbin via Goolmangar. Unfortunately the creek had risen



near Goolmangar, where a Nimbin resident's 4WD was submerged underwater.

Mario then kindly offered to take those stranded people who were heading for Nimbin. The only way to Nimbin was via the Channon (again!).

Again, braving rising floodwaters, the Wallers bus arrived at Nimbin at approximately 8.15pm.

Thank you Wallers and Super Mario for a brilliant bus service and an exciting journey as well – we all arrived home safely, dry and well fed.

Nimbin Pool Olympics



The Friends at their planning breakfast getting ideas for watersports

The First Nimbin Pool Olympics will be held on Saturday 25th February at 3pm.

The programme has plenty of fun events, like egg and spoon racing, speed boogie boarding, diving for treasure, synchronised swimming, dancing with brooms, relays in clothes, maybe a marathon and a time trial around the poles. All these events will happen in the water.

There are lots of ideas washing around, and crowds of enthusiastic participants and spectators are expected to fill the arena.

On land there'll be a

sausage sizzle and drinks including tea/ coffee and cordial, a raffle, and a swimwear parade for juniors/ intermediates and seniors. There's a separate award for the best Hawaiian shirt.

The Olympics are a fundraiser for the pool. It's being organised by The Friends of the Nimbin Pool and all money raised will be used on the infrastructure, for example more seating.

So come along and join the fun, get wet, stay dry, laugh and cheer. Bring your own boogie boards and noodles if you have them.



WET WET WET



Concerns about development and drainage problems at Nimbin skate park have been lodged with Lismore Council.



Family time

Popular Nimbin Bowlo barmaid Robyn Regan with daughter Vicki-Lee Anderson and granddaughter Jada, who are enjoying a month's break from their home in Mudgee.



World's Greatest Shave comes to the Bowlo

The Nimbin Bowlo will be hosting the World's Greatest Shave for a Cure on Friday 16th March this year. They are promising a band or two, comedians and other entertainment. You can be part of this major event by shaving (or colouring) your hair, or by sponsoring someone else.

All money raised goes to the Leukaemia Foundation and is spent on the search for a cure for blood cancers or to support patients and their families. Just go to www.worldsgreatestshave.com and follow the 'Search for a Shaver' link. Choose 'Team Search' and look for 'Nimbin Head Snippers'. Once you have found us you can then choose what you want to do.

Watch this space for more news next month or contact Michael Winston on mwinston1@hotmail.com or Martin Gill on lillianrock@bigpond.com



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Arrow crushes Akubras



Photos: Lisa Costello

by Wanda Halden

Drilling rig trucks crushed Akubra hats into the dirt as Arrow Energy sought to end a 10-day standoff with angry farmers and landholders in the Scenic Rim, in Queensland's south east earlier in January 2012.

Emotions poured over as Kerry Valley farmer Rod Anderson addressed the crowd of more than 100 people, who had been blockading a coal seam gas exploration well.

Before throwing his hat in front of the departing drill rig in the traditional Australian challenge to a fight, his message was clear:

"I've been standing over by that strainer post for the last bloody 10 days quietly behaving, like all of us locals have.

I've got a little place up the top

there, its only small, might be insignificant to some, but its my house and its my home. There's plenty of farmers around here, and no-one's listening to us, treating us like there's no-one underneath these hats. They don't give a shit. We've had a gut-full..."

13 protesters, including myself, were arrested and face charges at Beaudesert Magistrate Court on the 1st February.

Keep The Scenic Rim Scenic demands a halt to drilling until:

1. all landowner bores are tested, so if contamination/draw-down does occur, landholders are able to prove their bores have been affected;
2. an independent study into aquifers below the Scenic Rim and interconnected water systems – with the study to be undertaken by a mutually agreed party, and the report made public;

3. genuine community consultation – including public meetings where you can hear people who know the issues ask questions you might not have thought of; and

4. Arrow Energy not press charges against Daniel Robins – the person who staged a 24 hour protest at the top of the drilling rig – Daniel is still facing police charges.

Members from Nimbin Environment Centre, Northern Rivers Guardians, Rock Valley Gas Rangers, G.A.G Kyogle, Richmond Valley G.A.G, Lock The Gate Walgett, The Barrington-Gloucester-Stroud Preservation Alliance, Caldera Environment Centre and Occupy Brisbane participated in the blockade.

Further information can be found at: www.keepthescenicrimscenic.com

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Court in the act



Anti-CSG activist Wanda Halden (pictured) appeared in the Beaudesert Magistrates Court on Wednesday February 1, charged with contravening a police order at the Kerry blockade (see story above).

Wanda phoned NGT just before going to press to let us know she had been treated well by the magistrate.

"I got a \$200 fine, with no conviction recorded, so I'm pretty happy," Wanda said.

"I represented myself, and I quoted the Geneva Convention, citing the right to clean water and clean air. The magistrate affirmed my right to express my opinion about those matters," she said.

Five arrestees from the Kerry protest faced the magistrate on the day and all received similar slaps on the wrist.

About 80 supporters were present from south-east Queensland and the Northern Rivers.

US report examines health effects of CSG

A US report, titled *Impacts of gas drilling on human and animal health* highlights the risks posed by gas drilling operations to humans, companion animals, livestock and wildlife. "This study, based on evidence from the US shale gas industry, details adverse impacts that can occur when large scale gas industrialisation takes place in populated rural areas which is what will occur in the Northern Rivers if the gas industry is allowed to expand here," said Group Against Gas (GAG) Kyogle spokesperson, Boudicca Cerese.

"Whilst we recognise that the study focuses on shale gas extraction not CSG, many similar exposure pathways to air and water borne contaminants also exist in CSG operations – for instance, closer to home at the Pilliga CSG operations in north west NSW there have been reports of wildlife deaths from exposure to CSG wastewater," Ms Cerese said.

The report's authors detail case studies of the serious health impacts on humans and animals when chemicals or wastewater from drilling operations have polluted soil, water wells/bores or surface waterways, as well as instances where exposure to toxic gases from leaks and flaring has occurred.

"Many of the farms documented in the report raised cattle and the adverse effects on livestock included death just days after exposure, failure to breed, and reduced growth rates," Ms Cerese said. "This study rings alarm bells for our region and vindicates the grave concerns of many of the cattle farmers in the valleys around Kyogle."

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World Naked Bike Ride rolls around again



Photo: Brian Alexander

by James Fuller

It's World Naked Bike Ride (WNBR) time again. Get out you bikes, check the wheels go round, the chain is present and correct, and the tyres are up. We ride on the first Saturday in March.

We face automobile traffic with our naked bodies as the best way of defending our dignity and exposing the unique dangers faced by cyclists and pedestrians plus all the negative effects of oil, cars, war, consumerism and non-renewable energy.

This will be our fourth ride, and they have all been superb. Last year, even though the day started out quite wet, a reasonable crowd turned up at Peace Park under umbrellas. When we got to the paint-up spot, there were more people there. An estimate was over 35 – but the real improvements were a better gender mix, and better art.

We had to wait for a break in the weather for the ride, but we got it, and the ride

was excellent. So, don't be put off by the rain, or the distance – it is really quite short and easy – and come and be a part of it. We want no spectators – everyone should be in the ride. As much fun as the spectators get, the real fun is in the painting and the after party.

It's as bare as you dare. If you want to ride clothed, come along as you are. Get some bling for your bike! Bring some paints to share – if you have none others will. Bring bikes to share if you have them. So come along even if you do not have a bike.

Meet at Peace Park from 10am, and then proceed to the (not really) secret paint-up location. Please try to be in a reasonable time span, as we have to prepare as well. We usually start the actual paint-up at about 10.30, and ride at 1pm. The times are rubbery. Give yourself a lot of time, to get the best paint. You can ride without paint if you want as well. Don't miss it!

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Fresh produce at Blue Knob

Stallholder James Creagh



The Saturday morning Blue Knob Farmers Markets are attracting an ever-growing throng of regular customers this year

Rainy day markets

Occasional heavy showers on both Nimbin market days in February meant the reserve venue, Nimbin Hall, was transformed into a colourful Aladdin's cave, with the harmonious Doug and Biskit further enhancing the market experience.



Showground Golf, anyone?

The Show Society is seeking ideas from local residents on how best to utilise the Bellevue Park area for sporting activities.

The area is leased from Council and makes up approximately a third of the area maintained by the Show Society. The Showgrounds and playing area total 13½ acres.

At this time of year, the whole area has to be mowed at least every fortnight, whether or not the ground is used. This requires manpower, machinery, maintenance and fuel. If the maintenance of the grounds is neglected, the taller species of grasses shade out and kill the finer short grasses needed to produce

a good playing surface. In order to keep up with the cost of outgoings, we need to encourage usage of the area.

If one takes a helicopter view of the village it is easy to realise that the Showground is a large part of the green centre of an expanding village – something we need to look after and preserve as a green recreational area for the future.

The Show Society's chief mower, cogitating from within his hearing protection devices, thought a small (9-hole) golf course or driving range would be a good way of utilising the grounds. The idea was brought up and kicked around at the regular

Wednesday volunteer work day, and all agreed it was worth following up.

The committee is keen to find out how much support this idea would get from local golfers. They would also like to hear from anyone who either supports the idea, or has other suggestions for sports-oriented use of the grounds.

The idea would be to invite those interested to a 'walk over the area' planning day in the near future, where their ideas can be discussed and recorded.

Those with constructive ideas and suggestions are asked to contact Mal Rothwell on 02 6689-7228 or by mail to PO Box 202, Nimbin 2480.

In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

Website: www.nnic.org.au



Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre is a local charity and community organisation run by locals for locals.

Flood closes NNIC

Many apologies to anyone who was inconvenienced on 24th January when we were unexpectedly forced to close, due to most staff and volunteers being flooded in. Sorry about that. We hope it doesn't happen again!

Legal Aid in Nimbin

Every second Friday at NNIC. Advice on Centrelink issues, renting, discrimination, debt, insurance contracts, employment, victims of crime tribunal, wills and

estates, responding to Court documents Court procedure, guardianship tribunal, and more. The advice is free to all and is not means tested. (Means test will apply if a grant of legal aid is applied for). Also some family law advice and limited criminal procedural advice.

Centrelink Agency

There are very long wait times for calls to and from the Call Centre so be prepared! For the latest info on changes to disability allowances and family tax scheme drop into the agency between 10am and 2.30pm weekdays. Medicare forms and business can now be conducted using the agency fax and phones.

Towards a Sustainable Nimbin

Survey Results: Now available on our website > sustainability > surveys.

NNIC Website: now has a section/page for each Key Result Area in the Nimbin Sustainability Plan.

Community Forums: we are looking to do three forums in 2012 to follow up from the Planning Day held in June 2011: Community Energy Plan forum, MO/Intentional Communities Forum (where have we been, what has and hasn't worked, strengthening existing MOs, future MOs), and Bushfire/Disaster planning forum.

If you are interested in any of the above forums and have ideas for agenda/discussion items, or expertise in any of the above areas or would be willing to help us coordinate them, please get in touch with us on nimbinnic@yahoo.com.au or else phone or drop in and leave your details.

Post Harvest Processing Equipment Library:

we are still awaiting delivery of the last equipment and finalisation of the details... watch this space.



Chamber Chat...

At the handover of the reports (left to right, rear): Pieter Verasdonck, DTI; Gary Murphy LCC GM, David Martin, Lismore Chamber of Commerce; Peter Wise, (front): Jane Laverty, Peter Hughes, Alfredo Bonanno; Eugenie Stephans, and Mark Batten, LCC

by Peter Hughes

The Nimbin and Lismore Chambers of Commerce were recently invited to attend the Business Retention and Expansion Handover and SEDS Introduction at Lismore Council Chambers.

This was attended by Lismore Chamber Chairman David Martin, Eugenie Stephans, Peter Wise, Alfredo Bonanno and myself.

The handover was coordinated by Council's Business facilitator Mark Batten and included a presentation by consultant Jane Laverty of Lighthouse Marketing and Projects. Also attending was Pieter Verasdonck from NSW Dept. of Trade and Investment, with call-ins by Mayor Jenny Dowell and Council executive staff.

The report contained a plethora of economic data regarding Lismore City Council area, which of course includes Nimbin.

The meeting also showed the need for greater cooperation with the Lismore Chamber of Commerce, which the executive will pursue in the New Year.

An Addendum to the report contained information relating to healthy rural communities. Included was a table showing the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy communities.

Members and others interested in community might want to tick the boxes and see what side of the ledger Nimbin comes out on. Food for thought for 2012.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone best wishes for the coming year.

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Tina Fuller (B. AppSc - Optometry) Now at Nimbin Community Centre

Indulge yourself in a felting retreat



Born and bred in Germany, Suzanne (pictured) has been living in Nimbin for the last 10 years. Having painted and made ceramics since childhood, a brief stint at Lismore TAFE for Fine Arts set the tone for a creative life at Black Sheep Farm.

Finding time to continue painting became more difficult when her two daughters Keera and Ruby were born. After an opportunity to attend some felt making workshops she was hooked.

Slowly her own style of "painting" with wool emerged, and the meditative process became essential to balance work and motherhood.

Starting her own daughters on felting at a young age, Suzanne initiated workshops for kids at Black Sheep Farm Learning Centre. Most felt creations are completed in a

one-day workshop, and soon there was enough demand to start creative felt making workshops for adults.

Typically a workshop day starts at 9am. All materials are provided including a large variety of dyed wool tops, cotton, muslin, silk and decorative materials.

The first half of the day is working out the project and laying out the wool. After lunch the actual felting part begins with rubbing, rolling and rinsing of the work piece. By 5pm everyone has completed their project and can take it home.

After 30 years of Black Sheep Farm's creative development and 17 years of offering accommodation, Suzanne and her husband Mac have decided to combine both into Weekend Craft Retreats in the recently completed Learning Centre.



The first Feltmaking Weekend will be on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th March, with two nights shared self-contained accommodation and two full days of felting. Locals who do not require

accommodation may participate for only the felting activities on either one or two days.

For more information and bookings: www.blacksheepfarm.com.au

Open Learning Centre

Nimbin Community School's Open Learning Centre program for 2012 again offers a mix of repeated popular courses and some interesting new offerings.

Popular classes in Yoga, Art and Writing will continue, along with Sewing, Myths & Legends and Astrology. New subjects include African drumming and Sustainability/Aboriginal Knowledge.

First Term runs from 8th February to 28th March, with classes scheduled for Wednesdays and Thursdays at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Enrolments are on 1st and 2nd February, 10am to 3pm at Nimbin Community School's room in the Community Centre, but latecomers can be accommodated.

Fees for the 8-week Term are \$55 for one course, \$100 for two. Look for the blue course programme, which includes an enrolment form, or phone 6689-1477 for more details.

Woodwork for women



Sophia, Pat and Amber

by Pat Gregory

Lots of women would love to learn a little woodwork. They're looking for confidence to fix things around the house, to put up a few shelves, maybe even make the shelves themselves.

Women (and some men) have been going to Woodwork for Women workshops in Mullumbimby to learn basic skills and furniture making for the past 13 years. During that time they have created a vast range of furniture for their homes, some practical, some beautiful, some both.

Sophia and Amber, who live in Nimbin, enthusiastically enrolled when they heard

about the four-day course. They learned to use both hand and power tools and they crafted a small shelf of their own design.

They also learned about wood, about how to choose and buy it, and they're now equipped to measure and make things to the design that suits them.

Being able to make your own furniture to your own specifications and design is a boon to women – because we never find exactly what we want. Thanks to Woodwork for Women, we can make it ourselves!

For further information about upcoming workshops visit www.woodworkforwomen.com.au

Tunable School wins garden grant

by Simone Rutley

Even before the return of school, work has commenced on an exciting new project that expands the Tuntable Falls Community School curriculum. A successful bid for the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Grant (SAKGG) enables the school to build a huge vegetable garden and a new kitchen. It will give the children a 'garden gate to plate' knowledge and understanding of growing and preparing home grown veggies into delicious meals. The emphasis on environmentalism is being expanded with the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Grant.



The project is off to a great start. Thanks to the generosity of Mick Park of Adampark Construction, the new large kitchen area has been tiled and the plans are in to start fitting it out. The new fully netted vegetable

garden and learning space is also becoming a reality with the amazing input of parents and community. We will keep you posted on the progress of this inspiring project. Anyone who is interested in becoming part of it, please contact the school.

The school is also off to an inspiring start with enrolments. The numbers are up considerably compared to this time last year. Whilst the junior class is nearing capacity, there are a few more places available in the senior class. All interested families are invited to come and explore the Tuntable Falls Community School's alternative to mainstream education.

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A protest is good, but a blockade is better

by Michael McNamara

The first day of the blockade at Kerry saw nine local landholders arrested and charged with failing to follow police directions when they tried to block entry to the site.

Day two saw a young teacher from Walgett, Daniel Robins, exploit an opportunity while his comrades were being arrested. The gate was left open, so he made a bolt across the compound and scaled the rig like a monkey with only one policeman in pursuit. It was a snap decision, he had only said five minutes before that he couldn't afford to get arrested as it may affect his employment, yet there he was. He was now sitting on top of a rig, with no hat or water. He had taken nothing with him. The day was getting hotter, and we soon started asking police to get him water, but for 23 hours they refused.

Daniel was our hero. Not once did he complain or indicate he wanted to come down. We couldn't have asked for a better person to get attention. He was well educated on CSG issues and well spoken, and was soon heard to be educating the police who surrounded him, and was keeping himself busy speaking to the media via his mobile phone, the only thing he had with him.

Excitement turned to concern as the day grew hotter, and later as the sun started to settle on the horizon with neither the police nor Arrow prepared to supply him water, or offer a resolution. A roster was arranged so that he would always have someone nearby during the night, and thankfully so, as at about 3am huge spotlights were turned on him and Daniel was soon screaming and threatening to jump if they didn't get the lights off him. The camp below was in uproar, chanting "get the lights off", and soon they were.

Northern Rivers locals were very prominent in the blockade. Alan Roberts and Wanda Halden were arrested when they blocked the gate. It was a real hoot seeing



A Northern Rivers contingent joined the blockade of an Arrow Energy CSG drill site in Kerry, Queensland.

Right: Daniel perched atop the drilling rig. Photos: Lisa Costello

them taken away, especially as Wanda laid limp on the ground and it took five police to carry her away. Alan's experience and advice was very much appreciated by the organisers. Wanda's character and humour were a hit. It was a brilliant image when someone managed to place a Lock The Gate sign on the back of the paddy wagon as they were driven away.

The next morning, Bob Irwin arrived and a meeting was organised with Arrow, attended by the local Scenic Rim blockade organisers and Scott Collins and I representing Lock the Gate. Locals were asking that water bore testing, aquifer testing and genuine community consultation be undertaken before drilling commenced, so if there was damage done, it could be proven. Arrow undertook to answer the requests from the local community and return to the site and provide answers within 24 hours, but they never did.

Daniel finally came down hailed as a hero, and was quickly whisked off by the police, who charged him with three charges: Failure to follow police instruction, trespass and 'undertake unregulated high risk activity', and then took him to hospital for treatment of his dehydration. They kept him in custody until he faced court on the Monday, which upset the magistrate who said he could not understand why they had done that "over such

minor charges".

We had to leave the blockade on Sunday night to attend my mother's funeral in Sydney, but we got back asap on Friday morning, only to be told all had been pretty quiet, but Arrow was back in drilling mode, with three more arrests made. Morale around the camp was low, but news in the media going out across the country kept us together. We were all out of ideas until a local farmer offered that a blockade of local farmers could come on Sunday. He thought they might be able to make a difference. It was great to hear the local landowners were prepared to get involved.

We woke on Saturday morning to find the rig was already down, and again we had been deceived. With no notice Rod Anderson, the local farmer, couldn't get as many farmers to come at such short notice (cows can't wait to be milked) but they did give him their hats, symbolic of the people who work the land.

Rod made an emotional and inspiring speech that received national media attention. Even the police were heard to comment that they were not prepared to touch the hats that the farmers (and their supporters) had thrown down in front of the Arrow Energy trucks as a challenge. You can view his speech on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX8lRlucOWc

Communication with mining companies is always a web of lies and we can't trust a word



they say. Arrow insisted they had finished the exploratory drill then packed up, but even the police were caught by surprise when the drill came down overnight two days ahead of schedule. One police officer was overheard to say he didn't think they had got to the coal, as the slurry coming up was only a very pale brown, he never saw it turn black. It also seemed strange because they had lost 3 days work because of the blockade.

Whatever happened, the drilling at Kerry in the Scenic Rim was a public relations disaster for Arrow from day one, and the media had a field day with them for the ten days we were there.

The blockade achieved some remarkable results. It pushed the LNP to commit to not allowing any production wells in the Scenic Rim. It will also have an impact across Queensland by highlighting the failure of CSG companies to comply with the Queensland Petroleum and Gas Act requirement to obtain local Council approval for any "building" works.

It will never be said by Arrow Energy, but we are quite sure we got them to stop the drilling before they were finished and moved them out of town.

Walking for a future

by Lisa Costello

June Norman has decided to combine her passion for walking and her passion for leaving her grandchildren a sustainable and healthy future.

Over a beer after a successful protest at a Santos shareholders meeting, the 71 year old great-grandmother expressed her support for a protest walk along the proposed gas pipeline and coal rail corridor, to peacefully highlight the need to create a sustainable future, whilst connecting with communities affected by these industries.

"I've seen the impacts of the mining industry and I am really concerned. Where will my grandchildren source their food and what will the quality of their water be like? This industry needs to be slowed down and managed in a more sustainable manner," June said. "Sadly, I feel that my generation is allowing this destruction to happen at a rate that is out of control. I feel responsible to do what I can to stop this madness and influence our government to consider the long term impacts of what it is permitting."

Departing Kumbarrilla on 9th February, a 29-day walk of almost 500km will culminate



at Gladstone on 8th March, 2012, the same day that UNESCO will be assessing the impacts that these industries are having on our World Heritage Listed Great Barrier Reef and the surrounding areas.

The walk is endorsed by Friends of the Earth, Lock the Gate Alliance and Footprints for Peace. It is a drug and alcohol free event in solidarity with indigenous and non-indigenous people from around the world whose communities have been devastated by the effects of mining companies.

You are invited to be part of the journey by doing one or more of the following:

- every step counts – walk with us for an hour, a day or all the way;
- organise a welcoming event in your town;
- provide food and showers for those participating in the walk (we will have camping equipment);
- promote the walk through your networks; and
- any other contribution that you may feel appropriate.

The detailed itinerary is available on the Facebook group page. For further information please contact walk4afuture@yahoo.com.au

ALP endorses surveillance of activists

The Australian Greens have reacted strongly to confirmation that fossil fuel companies successfully pressured energy minister Martin Ferguson to enlist ASIO and the Federal Police in spying on climate change and clean energy activists.

"This is a deliberate abuse of the role of Australian security agencies, who have better things to do than follow the dictates of foreign coal and energy corporations," Australian Greens Senator Scott Ludlam said.

The Greens have called new Federal Attorney General Nicola Roxon to come clean on the degree to which Australian intelligence bodies are diverting resources into spying on environmental campaign groups.

ASIO chief David Irvine

indicated to Senator Ludlam in an estimates committee hearing in February 2010: "ASIO does not devote any resources to constraining legitimate protest. We are specifically prevented from doing so by our act, and we do not do it."

Subsequent to this exchange, the Government made substantial amendments to ASIO's act (the so-called 'WikiLeaks amendments') giving the agency unqualified powers to spy on civil society organisations.

"This is a dangerous expansion of the surveillance state, a wholly unhealthy cocktail of economic interests, privatised intelligence gathering, misuse of clandestine intelligence resources," said Senator Ludlam.

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Kings Forest development disaster

by Alison Polistchuk,
B.App.Sci. (Hort. Tech)

The proposed Kings Forest development will include 4500 housing lots, a golf course, two primary schools, and shopping facilities, and will occupy a large area between Kingscliff and Cabarita with a single entrance along Tweed Coast Road.

The social impacts of this development are huge. Just what will life look like with another 15,000 or so people driving around, looking for parking, jobs, needing infrastructure like hospitals, schools, libraries? Who will pay for the infrastructure – ratepayers?

While it is commonly believed by local businessmen that this will be good for business, the truth is that an increase in population may not automatically create employment, because most of the jobs created will be short term construction jobs and at the same time there will be an increase in job seekers.

There are many environmental impacts of this development, especially the risk to the remaining population of 144 Tweed Coast koalas, placing the population at high risk of localised extinction. Also at risk are 21 threatened species of fauna including the Wallum Froglet, Grass Owl, Bush Stone Curlew and Long-Nosed Potoroo, six species of flora and three endangered ecological communities.

Many changes will be needed to protect Cudgen Nature Reserve which could well be at risk. The developer should dedicate land to the nature reserve ahead of the development so that the flora and fauna can be protected from the bulk earthworks. Bulk earthworks will move one million cubic meters to flatten out the site for housing. The development application has not indicated when the land will become reserve, it may happen after it has already been seriously disturbed. Fencing of the nature reserve should also happen ahead of the development to protect fauna



that try to move through the development. The fencing should be of a different specification to what is proposed by the developer - it needs to be floppy top cyclone fencing, or the koalas will climb over it.

Friends of the Cudgen Nature Reserve is concerned about the water course to Cudgen Lake, and also the drainage pattern which appears to be using Blacks Creek as the major channel to drain KF which then goes through the nature reserve. Unless certain extra measures aren't taken, this development will threaten the viability of the nature reserve, a jewel in the Tweed Coast.

In addition to Section 94 contributions, there should be an environmental maintenance fund established by the developer because a lot of the environmental measures they propose have no monitoring, feedback or evaluation. It's not realistic to assume people are going to move in with their dogs and just obey a few signs.

Kings Forest has confusion and conflicting development application information. It has almost no Ecologically Sustainable Development 'footprints' concerning the future wellbeing of the people who currently live and work on the Tweed Coast. The demonstrated community consultation and awareness about this development is completely lacking.

The owner and developer of Kings Forest is not even a Tweed Shire resident, who has cleared and mismanaged valuable ecological wetland areas, native wildlife habitats and altered catchment profiles of Tweed coastal land. There has been no

invitation to qualified individuals with excellent local knowledge who could help the developer and workers on the property manage it in a sensible ecologically sustainable framework.

There should at least be a moratorium placed on this development by the NSW and federal governments until issues of past rezoning processes, past and current land and water management issues and illegal clearing of valuable ecological habitat are resolved. It is up to the NSW State and Federal governments to actively pursue these questionable issues.

Many in the community are voicing an urgent need for a remedy to the current mismanagement of this development and to the development's processes that need to be addressed before further works continue on the site. The habitat and ecological damage that has already occurred could take decades to repair (some may never be repaired) if the development goes ahead as per current planning documents. Nor do there appear to be any documented environmental benchmarks attached to the past and current development process by which environmental accountability can be assessed.

The cost of this urgent remedy should be borne by the developer, not the Tweed shire community. The valuable community of environmental volunteers who have been serving the Tweed Coast for many years appear to have been very poorly treated by the regime that is Kings Forest Part 3a development.

Koala concerns for Kings Forest

Koala advocates took to the streets of Kingscliff recently to collect last minute submissions on the Kings Forest housing development from locals. In just an hour and a half almost 50 submissions were collected.

Menkit Prince, a Caldera Environment Centre member, said "It was so heartening to see children as young as 10 years old lining up to sign submission letters. A couple of mid-teen boys from Coff's Harbour involved in dune care were very unhappy about the lack of ecological controls in place, the illegal clearing of Blacks Creek still unpunished from over six months ago, and threats to our koalas by this estate."

"One businessman from the Gold Coast told me he had been planning to move down to the Kingscliff area but after being informed that 15,000 more people would be competing for parking spots and basic facilities, changed his mind."

She continued, "Several comments were made about the Queensland number plates of workers commuting to the Kings Forest site."

A couple from Brisbane were upset after having seen a distraught, confused koala running down the main street of Redlands after large areas had been cleared by a developer. They didn't know what to do or who to contact.

A few people hinted that there must be some collusion between developers and corrupt governments to allow such a huge development in an area with over 20 threatened species of animal, and why couldn't it be a Koala Beach style of development with a smaller footprint?

Northern River Guardians' spokesperson Scott Sledge spoke with one Koala Beach resident who reported that the Koala Plan worked extremely well there and brought the community together. Not only had the conservation measures been effective for koalas but also had encouraged new species of ground-nesting birds never seen before, like threatened Stone Curlews, to the area, thanks to the fact that there were no dogs or cats.

Al Polistchuk from *bluecray.org* noticed that quite a few



people said that there should not be any dogs allowed in the development due to wildlife issues. She was told, "Dogs have no place in sensitive koala habitats like Kings Forest." Many youths wanted to stop and have their say, some having incredible awareness of environmental, biodiversity and social issues.

People just over the border were well aware of the development pressures in Tweed and how it would impact them. In fact they had been talking with workmates about Kings Forest. "They could not believe that in this day and age people were still bulldozing the disappearing wetlands and wildlife habitats" Al said. "I did not hear a single person say, 'We need growth.' What I did hear was people saying, 'There is already too much traffic here on the coast' or 'I can't see that it will help homeless or disadvantaged people' and 'This will only further stress struggling young

families in the area."

Al was impacted by a few people who told her "It is important to speak up about Kings Forest because the animals there have no voice – they are voiceless." She said, "I am still questioning the terrible legacy of the NSW Government's Part 3a Significant Site Development Process. How on earth can such significant development be conducted with such limited public input, so little information given to the locals? It appears that there is no ecologically sustainable conscience or consciousness, no accountability to the people of the Tweed, by this big, powerful company that is developing Kings Forest."

"I have to wonder – why are people from Sydney having such a big, long-term impact on what happens here on the Tweed Coast (socially and environmentally) while not openly informing the locals about their actions and the consequences?"

Many who signed submission letters wanted to take copies of the submissions with them so they could show to family, co-workers and friends.

Submissions were due 25th January but Planning will accept late submissions up to 10 days afterwards. See <http://bluecray.org> for sample submission letters and email to plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au

LISMORE CITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Public notices, updates and information for the Nimbin Community

Nimbin Advisory Group

The Nimbin Advisory Group (NAG) has been running for over a year now with the aim of helping the Nimbin community and Council to work in partnership to address issues affecting the village and surrounding areas.

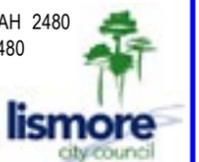
The NAG mostly concentrates on Council business that impacts on the Nimbin community and also provides Council with advice on suggested ways to effectively engage with the people of Nimbin.

The meetings are open to public observers, so if you are interested in what's happening in your community please feel free to come along to the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre between 6.00pm and 8.00pm on the following dates:

- Thursday 2 February 2012
- Thursday 3 May 2012
- Thursday 2 August 2012
- Thursday 1 November 2012

For further information on the NAG, please contact our Community Services team on 1300 87 83 87.

Corporate Centre 43 Oliver Avenue, GOONELLABAH 2480
CBD City Office 55 Magellan Street, LISMORE 2480
Phone 1300 87 83 87
Fax (02) 6625 0400
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