

Ancient language of the land

by Binnah Pownell

The days that we are living through have been prophesied to be interesting times of change. We are now being called on to adapt or perish.

We are in the middle of the Venus transit, an event that happens twice every 208 years where – from the Earth's perspective – Venus passes over the face of the Sun. It did its first pass in June 2004 and does its second in June 2012. Venus becomes prominent in our minds and also in the minds of many other cultures – including the Baigal Originie (Australian Aboriginal) of this area.

The ancient cultures regard Venus as not just the morning star, and all that signifies, but also as the feminine principal, and the principle of absolute truth.

Other cultures around the world regard these times as the return of ethics and co-creation; the end of the Hindu age of Kali Yuga is nigh, if not already upon us, and the Age of Aquarius beckons.

Gradually, as more people are offered access to more specific information and knowledge, the truth can be more easily sourced. This is a time of word specificity, doing and saying things "right" or true.

This age of truth and ethics is believed to be the reason underlying the recent discovery of old information in academic archives (all available on the web) about the original names of all the (so-called) Aboriginal tribes of the North Coast, and where their areas were and are.

The information has always been there, it has just been buried, and its rediscovery is quite controversial, considering the way tribes have been shifted around, and forced onto other tribes' land. But if white authorities stuffed it up, they can help to straighten it out again by referring to documentations dating to just after colonial invasion.

With great respect to songs and stories handed down and secrets kept, it seems old words for certain areas were sometimes taken wrongly or misinterpreted. In the fine science of vibration, the



The representation of Aboriginal language on Nimbin Community Centre's sign has been in contention since it was erected

ancient language of this land is more important than most new settlers knew.

We all now live on this land.

The academics registered observations through the judgmental eyes of the western/materialist mind that missed so much of what was actually happening in the society that so interested them.

Leaving out prefixes and suffixes on ancient words in their writings because they were thought to be too hard for the English tongue, such as "ng" at the beginning of a word, or a simple "i" or "y" left from the end of a word, because it was assumed they didn't matter that much was, in retrospect, a big mistake.

It often gave the word – and therefore the place it was describing – the wrong gender, or worse, created another word altogether.

In the past, many researchers have been responsible for much damage when attempting to understand ancient languages, because of their ignorant and judgmental interpretations.

At times they even made up words that have since been accepted into today's mainstream understandings.

The positive side of their mostly innocent studies is that some of their base research material can now be used to maintain and even revitalise dialects and languages whose intricate interconnections through different tribal tongues are so important to maintain in the interests of a healthy family and country.

If not for the

documentation of the researchers, many languages would have been lost by now. This can help the families hold their own language.

A lot of it is held in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library in Canberra.

Those ancient words and songs in the tongue of the tribe are very specific to the particular area where they were or are spoken. They contribute more than we realise to the wholeness and health of every being and creature of that country where those vibratory sounds came from.

This is very sensitive, subtle and delicate stuff – beyond most western/materialist people's understandings.

We have traditionally tended to see things on a surface level and have not been encouraged to feel beyond our reactionary emotions.

Not many people know that it is documented by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) that Blue Knob is known by the original people of that area as Biorgini (*sic*) and that the less-significant rock in the south-western corner of the Wollumbin(i)/Mt. Warning caldera some call the other Pinnacle or Hanging Rock is Mebbini, the Brown Hawk.

This rock is one of the most significant formations for the Ng'Araakwal (*sic*) people of the so-called Tweed Valley and coast, and the Githabal (*sic*) people of the so-called Woodenbong area and wider.

Our understanding of the significance of vibration is deepening. The original people's names and songs for

particular places vibrate in harmony with that place. Just like the English language vibrates best in England.

This is very delicate science and demands a shift in attitude.

But the Originies of this land understood the importance of these things, which is why they spent most of their days studying and refining this intimate contact with the land.

They did this through focusing on and practising art and culture and defining songs and dances. These were done at certain times of the year to assist in the co-creation of the creatures that they felt the responsibility for assisting into this everyday creation, in what they believed were the interests of unity.

We have the opportunity to understand, beyond our western scientific minds, the finer points of nature connection, and what it really means to commune with the living Earth on a deeper level.

We live with one of the oldest living cultures on the planet. We have been wasting time up until now, not paying enough attention to this bank of very important knowledge.

In the present-day climate, we must work with what is left. Rest assured that there is plenty of culture connection in the old tribes yet.

Spaceship Earth is barrelling through our little part of the constellation and Venus is showing herself across our mighty Sun, bringing truth and balance.

Change is never easy, and changing the name by which you have known yourself comes as a shock. Adaptation is key.

Another language comes from this land we now call home.

It is said that the birds taught it to the Original people. We must help as much as we can in enlivening the language of this land we now call home.

This will greatly assist in allowing the land and our lives to hum in harmony, without any of the sharp edges we have experienced in the past. It will provide for the peaceful existence we all dream of in our heart of hearts.

Toxic spill raises questions



Photo courtesy ABC News

by Senator Christine Milne

The spill of toxic copper concentrate from a train derailment on a privately-run rail line in central Australia raises substantial questions for Environment Minister Tony Burke about the environmental assessment for the expansion of the Olympic Dam uranium mine.

Since the use of this rail line is critical to BHP's massive Olympic Dam expansion, Tony Burke needs to urgently reconsider his approval of the project in the light of new concerns.

A spill of toxic copper concentrate into the central Australian environment is bad enough, but Olympic Dam would be a radioactive disaster waiting to happen.

The private operators of this rail line apparently thought that sending a four-wheel-drive vehicle across the bridge seven hours earlier was sufficient testing before the train came through.

Clearly this is not reasonable and cannot be considered sufficient if uranium oxides are transported along the line. Scientists are predicting that extreme weather events like the one which triggered the flash flood that led to this derailment will become more frequent and more severe as the globe's climate continues to worsen.

Does Mr Burke require any more stringent controls on the transport of uranium oxide across the country?

If not, then he has placed both the environment and local communities at great risk and needs to reconsider immediately.

To lobby Mr Burke on this issue, email him on Tony.Burke.MP@aph.gov.au or write to the Tony Burke MP, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities at PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600. Phone (02) 6277-7640.

Broadband problems? It's no surprise

Nimbin artist Rob Harle discovered he was not alone in having broadband connectivity problems, and found they were mostly due to Telstra's poorly maintained phone line network.

So he started taking photos, and sending them to Justine Elliot's office.

Two examples from Stony Chute Road: (left, top) a cable taped to a barb-wire fence, then into a plastic shopping bag, then up the pole; (below) bag in tree is the phone cable connector in a plastic bag, duct taped to a fig tree near Green Bridge.

Ingenious solutions to temporarily fix problems indeed, but surely not acceptable long term secure phone and data installations.

Send your favourite photos to Justine.Elliot.MP@aph.gov.au



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Give gas a resounding 'no'!

by **Wanda Halden,**
Rock Valley GAS Rangers

Mergasco CEO Peter Henderson wants us to 'give gas a go'... well, I do believe the Northern Rivers clearly says NO!

We are all entitled to fresh air, clean water and an unspoilt landscape. CSG has no place in our fruitful relationship with our region. Our valley neighbours and surrounding areas are all under threat by CSG mining proposals, exploration licenses and the potential for CSG

pipelines to be scarring our picturesque lands, paddocks or crown lands.

Ballina is next in the line of fire, with whispers of a proposed LNG facility application in the pipeline.

Anti CSG community groups are blossoming like wild flowers. Advertising campaigns and websites are being launched, facebook and other social network media efforts are becoming more and more popular as a source of support and information.

This is a dirty, dangerous industry that should not

be near any agricultural land, aquifer, community or business arena.

We are forced to protect our lands. We must protect our water. It is our duty and our children's future generations deserve this right.

Lock the gate! Be prepared to blockade. We will stop this from ruining our beautiful region. The Rock Valley Gas Rangers will be hosting a symbolic blockade on the 21st January 2012. Please phone Wanda on 0427-302-725 or email rockvalleygasrangers@hotmail.com for further info.

Darling Downs – all mine?

By **Heather Brown**

Around ninety-five per cent of the Darling Downs is covered by coal mining permits, and environmental activists warn 30 open-cut mines are planned for the Downs over the next decade.

It's not just the rich farming land that will be turned into a worthless lunar moonscape, there are also plans to mine suburbs and towns.

While many mines are still in the permit stage, no coal mine has ever been blocked on environmental grounds in Queensland.

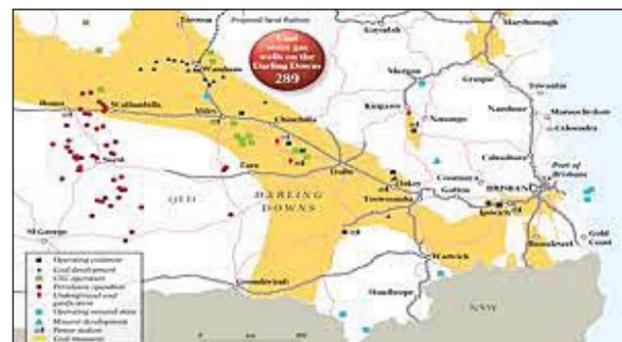
Why is the state government allowing mining in an area of prime farmland and scarce water resources?

The simple truth is that after nearly 20 years in power, the state government is broke.

It has already sold off assets such as the railways and the ports. It is now determined to give the mining companies everything they want, no matter the human and environmental cost.

Governments need money from mining royalties to spend on social programs for their favoured city voters, the ones who keep them in power. These politicians believe that the Bush no longer matters, that country people are expendable and can be driven off their own land.

The sovereign right of land ownership is being systematically withdrawn. There is nothing you can do to stop miners entering your



land and doing exactly what they want, right down to the destruction of your land and water.

You can go to court and make a fuss, and spend all your money on lawyers, but the truth is that the Government simply doesn't care.

In fact it will send you a special little handbook on how to behave when the miners enter your land.

There will be 30,000 to 100,000 wells across the Surat Basin. The land will resemble a pin cushion, and the effect on farmers and their vital water resources will be catastrophic.

These are some of the mines planned for the Darling Downs: Acland (New Hope mine) currently in Stage Two which covers 2,200 hectares. By Stage Three – with the Environmental Impact Study now awaiting rubber-stamp approval – it will include an additional 5,400 ha, giving the mine a total area of 7,400 ha.

Other mining leases in the East Acland region cover about 40 sq km.

Ambre Energy has a mining lease application over 2,000 ha of Felton Valley, which would include a large open-cut mine

and a petrochemical plant, as well as around 70,000 ha under exploration permits all the way from Toowoomba to Warwick.

There are now exploration leases or applications for leases over almost every major grain farm, thoroughbred farm and beef farm on the Darling Downs.

There are exploration leases or applications for leases over the entire Toowoomba suburbs of Cotswold Hills and Wilonton, as well as many other rural towns and villages.

Why is so little known about this? It seems that democracy is dead in Queensland and the media are too afraid to speak out.

We have decided to truthfully and fully inform the people, working closely with Alan Jones and other prominent Australians who have joined the fight to protect the Darling Downs.

For further information, you can contact Friends of Felton: www.fof.org.au

Toowoomba Coal Mine Action Group (Glen Zimmerle): <http://twmbacmag.wordpress.com>

Lock the Gate Alliance: www.lockthegate.org.au

Environmental Defence vs CSG

The Environmental Defender's Office NSW has issued a paper titled *Tick the box; Flaws in the Environmental Assessment of Coal Seam Gas Exploration Activities*.

In it, the EDO clearly states that the legal processes applied to CSG exploration lack independence and rigour in terms of the assessment of potential impacts. Reviews of Environmental Factors (REFs) often submitted by CSG mining companies appear to be poor quality and generic in their lists of impacts. CSG exploration and mining in NSW is regulated by the *Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991*.

The Act does not contain any environmental assessment requirements. Rather, these are set out in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). No other requirements of the EP&A Act apply.

The Northern Rivers appears to have a very good chance of demonstrating to the decision maker who assesses each CSG development under Part 5 of the EP&A Act, as that person must "examine and take into account to the fullest extent possible all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment by reason of that activity".

This decision maker must consider the very real environmental impacts of the CSG activity. The decision maker is legally required to take into account a number of factors, including:

- (a) any environment impact on a community;
- (b) any transformation of a locality;
- (c) any environmental impact on the ecosystem of the locality;
- (d) any reduction of the aesthetic, recreational, scientific or other environmental quality of value of a locality;
- (e) any impact on the habitat of protected fauna (within the meaning of National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974);
- (f) any endangering of any species of animal, plant or other form of life, whether living on land, in water or in the air;
- (g) any long-term effects on the environment;
- (h) any degradation of the quality of the environment;
- (i) any risk to the safety of the environment;
- (j) any reduction in the range of beneficial uses of the environment;
- (k) any pollution of the environment;
- (l) any environmental problems associated with the disposal of waste;
- (m) any increased demands on the resources (natural or otherwise) that are, or are likely to become, in short supply; and
- (n) any cumulative environmental effect with other existing or likely future activities.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is responsible for approving the REF. Contact them by phone: (02) 4931-6705, email: greg.summerhayes@industry.nsw.gov.au Web: www.trade.nsw.gov.au

Red Sky mining in Whiporie

The Clarence Environment Centre (CEC) is calling on the NSW Government to place a moratorium on all coal seam gas (CSG) exploration and extraction until guarantees are obtained that these activities will not pollute groundwater, or disrupt aquifers.

This renewed call comes as Red Sky Energy moves into the second phase of its CSG exploration in the Whiporie area north of Grafton. In a letter to the premier, the CEC has expressed concern over the lack of community consultation in relation to Red Sky's proposed drilling and flaring of a pilot well at its Talma site, about 1.8km north of Battens Bight. "Neither the Environment Centre, nor the region's peak environment group, The North Coast Environment Council, have been contacted directly by Red Sky," CEC secretary, John Edwards said.

He also expressed concern over the lack of rigour required in the environmental assessment process. "One of the greatest concerns for all communities impacted by CSG mining, is the



potential for water pollution, but the original Review of Environmental Factors (REF), released six months ago for the test core drilling, failed to even mention ground water", he said.

The CEC points out that the Talma well, while on cleared land itself, is surrounded by public native forest, adjacent to an indistinct line of billabongs and wetlands which drain directly into Bungawalbin Creek by way of Myrtle Creek. This area is considered to be part of the 'Lower Bungawalbin Catchment Wetland Complex', a recognised wetland of national significance.

Despite the sensitive nature of the area, Red Sky admits that polluted run-off is possible, with its earlier REF explaining that any unexpected spills of pollutants will trigger an unspecified

Emergency Response Plan, which includes reporting the incident to the relevant determining authority. "This simply isn't good enough", Mr Edwards said.

While cleared land can be found to accommodate a single exploratory well, an expansion into full extraction will see hundreds of hectares of native vegetation, including threatened species habitat, destroyed to construct dozens more well-heads, roads, containment dams, and pipelines. "Despite all of that, Red Sky's earlier REF claims its proposal will have no cumulative impacts, and the government allows this deliberate peddling of misinformation to occur," Mr Edwards said.

The CEC strongly believes that, in fairness to both the mining companies and local residents, the overall and cumulative impacts of full production should be fully assessed before any more exploration is allowed. "There is no point in allowing exploration if future extraction is deemed undesirable" Mr Edwards said.

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Healers

After succumbing to illness last summer, I have spent the past 12 months on a healing rehabilitating journey.

Some of the journey has been using regular doctors, some personal self medication, and some using 'complimentary/alternative' therapies.

I have a beef with some (certainly not all), but some of the local 'healing arts' practitioners, well not them personally, but the exorbitant fees they are charging for their services.

Massage = \$60 +
Kinesiology = \$80 + per consultation

One on one Yoga tuition = \$80 per hour.

Where do these practitioners get off asking for so much money from injured sick helpless people, or is this not who they are targeting as clients, perhaps they are targeting the rich and famous?

If that be the case get out of here, and take your designer label feral hippie attire with you, perhaps move to Byron Bay, because the fees charged are offensive to bread and butter salt of the earth 'Nimbin Battlers'.

Omar Cat Hart
Wadeville

Vaccination

As of July 1st, 2012, families who have not immunised their children will lose their Family Tax Benefit of \$726 per child per year.

If this applies to you there is an easy way around this. All you need to do is fill out a simple one page form and have your doctor sign it saying he has "explained the benefits and risks associated with immunisation".

Note, he does not need to agree with your decision to

Graham John Way

16/3/37 – 20/12/11



Long time member of the Nimbin community, deeply missed by family and friends.

sign the form.

This is a particularly insidious direction our government is taking and needs to be countered in any way possible!

You can find the form by Googling "Immunisation exemption conscientious objection form" or simply going directly to www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/pubs/forms/files/macoscientious-objection-form.pdf

If you are considering immunising your children I highly recommend you do some research first. NaturalNews.com is an excellent place to start.

Myles Davidson
Barkers Vale

Weeds and food

Omar Cat Hart writes (NGT Dec 11) in support of Triny Roe's statement, "If there were no introduced plants (weeds) present, the native plants would step up to the job." But what is "the job"? If "the job" is to present an above ground vista of just native plants, then obviously it is true that if the weeds weren't here, the natives would be.

Letters to the editor

NGT welcomes letters by email or post by deadline, the last Wednesday of the month. Letters longer than 300 words may be cut. Letters already published in other papers will usually not be considered. Please include full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not necessarily those of NGT.



However, I would suggest "the job" has to do with more than just the species above ground. It also has to do with soil, and it has to do with air, that is, climate change. Not surprisingly, the major variables creating any ecosystem change are soil and climate.

By prioritising natives above incoming species, there is an assumption that current air and soil degrading conditions are more perfect for the natives than for the incoming species. A quick look at the situation shows that this is not always true.

The concern for the loss of natives as ecosystems change is hopelessly spent in fighting what is major ecological change created by the excessive needs of humankind. Concern is better spent, I would suggest, in humankind adopting living conditions that are different to those which caused the need to clear land in the first place.

While bush regeneration has a place, it is secondary to the endeavour to supply oneself with human food. The "rampant weed infestations" that Omar sees, are not that. They are the much needed organic matter for a soil that cries out for it, and when well supplied with it by being cut and carried into position, grows the fruit, leafy greens, vegetables, seeds, nuts and tubers of human food.

It is in this use of so-called weeds, plus population shifting to rural

interdependence rather than continuing in unsustainable urban ribbon development, that natives gain some respite from the rampancy of the exotics which, with the natives, are busily laying down organic matter for soil carbon sequestration.

Geoff Dawe
Byrrell Creek

O'Farrell's energy hypocrisy

I'm deeply concerned about the double standards apparent in the state government's attitudes to the most efficient form of renewable energy, wind farms, and non-renewable energy sources such as coal seam gas (CSG) and coal mines.

Under draft guidelines proposed by the NSW government, anyone living within two kilometres of a planned wind farm would have a right to veto it and delay its development. This gives residents near proposed wind farms far greater powers to prevent development than those facing a CSG well or even an open cut coal mine on their doorstep.

The draft wind farm guidelines require a careful assessment of the impact on landscape character, landscape values, visual amenity and any scenic or significant vistas. This includes a requirement for the proponent's Environmental Impact Statement to detail turbine heights, design and layout, key landscape features and values in a

Notices

Position Vacant

Nimbin Community Centre Administration Assistant, Part time 7 1/2 hours pw. Please contact Nicola Garnsey for the position description and selection criteria, which must be addressed in your application. Closes 21 January 2012. ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au or 6689-0000.

Nimbin Market meeting

On 19th January, there will be a meeting for the Nimbin market, held at 3.30pm on the day of the January market, at the market stage.

The purpose of the meeting is to bring together community members and stallholders alike to help in a small way in the running and growth of the market, as many hands make light work.

Even if people do not want to walk away with a small task, they are most welcome to attend and contribute to feedback. There are lots of plans for the Nimbin market, but more than one person is needed to pull it all together... and now is the time. Contact 0458-506-000 for enquiries.

Regular lift to Murwillumbah sought

Richmond River High School year 11 student Connor Anderson is looking at doing a graphic art traineeship in Murwillumbah every Wednesday in 2012. Is there anyone who travels to M'bah on a regular basis on a Wednesday morning, returning in the afternoon, who could give him a lift? He would have to be there for work approx 9-5pm. Please contact Laurelli 0447-891-119 or 6689-1119.

Unity Bhajans

Meetings on Sundays 8th and 22nd January and 12th February at 11am at Birth & Beyond. Enquiries, phone Maria 6633-7261.

Yoga with Sam

Yoga classes with Sam have returned to Nimbin and will recommence on 3rd February 2012. Fridays 9am -10.30am at Nimbin Community Centre (more classes commencing in March). Enquiries www.anuraktiyoga.net or phone 6693-0160.

local and regional context, visibility of the development and cumulative impacts on the landscape. There are no such requirements on CSG mining, which many would argue has a much greater negative impact on the landscape.

With its well heads every 750 metres, maze of roads, pipes and large water storage ponds, CSG destroys any possibility of agricultural production. Not to mention the impacts on food security and surface water with fracking fluid or natural occurring toxins. On the other hand, wind turbines after the initial construction phase are compatible with many agricultural activities. Yet there are virtually no legal restrictions on CSG mining, and certainly not in prime agricultural areas.

The noise requirements

for wind turbines in NSW are for less than 35 decibels, that's less than the noise level in some wilderness areas and certainly significantly lower than the 48 decibels most urban dwellers experience. Yet CSG miners are notorious for running gas compressors 24 hours a day and destroying their neighbours' peace of mind.

It is clear that the O'Farrell government has launched a serious attack on renewable power generation. Not only will these proposals threaten billions of dollars worth of investment, they are a gift to the fossil fuel industry.

If you wish to look at the draft guidelines and make a comment prior to 14th March 2012, you can find all the relevant material on the web at: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Development/Onexhibition

Cr. Simon Clough
Lismore

About us

Editor: Bob Dooley
Assistant Editor: Sue Stock
Sub-editor: Hal Williams
Layout: Peter Chaplin, Andy Gough, Bob Dooley
Photographers: Sue Stock, Len Martin, Warwick Fry, Pampussycat Bourne.
Distribution: Angus, Sue, Coralie, Daniel, Faerie Laura's (Bellingen), Dave (West End), Roger (Glebe), Ken (Noosa).

Bookkeeper: Martha Paitson
Website: David McMin
www.nimbingoodtimes.com
NGT is auspiced by the Nimbin Community School Co-operative Ltd.
Next deadline: Wednesday 25th January
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Please limit contributions to 600 words or less.

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For Information contact Faye (02) 6689 1440

From the Mayor's desk

by Jenny Dowell

Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au

I hope all of you had a joyous Christmas, Hanukkah, Summer Solstice or Festive Season with family and friends and had the opportunity to reflect on the importance of people and community in your lives.

I understand that we may be in for a period of wet weather so I take this opportunity to urge everyone to drive to road and weather conditions and not to enter flood waters. Please take care to ensure the start of 2012 is a safe and happy time for you and your loved ones.

In the new year ahead, I look forward to sharing Council news with you and reassure you that this Council is always interested in receiving feedback, questions and opinions from residents so that we can maintain the strong connections that epitomise local government's relationship to the community.

In wrapping up some of the Council decisions of December 2012, the main items that stand out are the Draft Koala Plan of Management and the issue of Coal Seam Gas.

Of course there were other items debated including modifications to the Perradenya development, approval of a boarding house, entry fees to Lismore Memorial Baths over summer and many others. If you would like more details, please go to www.lismore.nsw.gov.au and click on the Business Paper link to see the Agenda and the draft Minutes.

KPoM

After a hiatus because a rescission motion was lodged after the November



meeting, the Draft Koala Plan of Management is now on exhibition for public comment. The defeat of the rescission motion that would have sent the Draft back to the Stakeholders Reference Group for further work, means that finally the community can look at the Draft and provide feedback to Council by the close of the exhibition period on February 3. The Plan only relates to the southern section of the Lismore Local Government Area.

Coal Seam Gas

No issue in recent times has raised so much broad-based community concern as coal seam gas exploration and mining. While Council has no legislative power to stop CSG exploration or associated activities, we have refused the current application by Metgasco for seismic testing on Council road reserves.

In addition, Council has imposed a moratorium on all further applications and will seek further legal advice on our options. In the New Year, we will also invite representatives from various stakeholder and industry groups to a

confidential briefing.

Since Lismore Council's decision, Kyogle Shire Council has also imposed a moratorium. Stay tuned to see how other Councils respond to this important issue.

Community Strategic Plan

Apart from our Local Environmental Plan that guides land development in the Council area, the most important plan that any Council develops is the Community Strategic Plan.

The SCP is the 10 year big-picture plan that is developed in conjunction with the community and will involve community engagement through forums both in various locations and on-line. The first stage of the engagement strategy will take place in the first six months of 2012 and will involve asking you, the community, about how you see our area's future.

The process will culminate in the adoption of the CSP in June 2013.

Roadworks

In addition to the works progressing on Blue Knob Road, Council has awarded a tender to install wire safety barriers

on Site 1: Stony Chute Road – 1000m west of Hutchinson Road, Nimbin (2.5km north west of Nimbin Road intersection), to improve safety. Some concern has been raised about the risks to motorcyclists from these barriers.

Council will also discuss these concerns with the Roads and Maritime Services (the old RTA) to determine if there are better options for the future.

Treasure Map

Congratulations to the staff at our award winning Lismore and Nimbin Visitor Information Centres on the launch of a new treasure map designed to unlock the hidden treasures of Lismore, Nimbin and the surrounding villages to the 500,000 visitors to the region each year. The map is available from the Nimbin VIC for \$2.95.

Although it is aimed at guiding the 40,000 visitors who are known to visit Nimbin on day trips from Byron Bay each year, it is also great for when our family and friends come to stay, so pop in and grab a copy.

Happy New Year to all *GoodTimes* readers!

Simon says...

by Cr Simon Clough

The end of the year seemed to come at quite a gallop, with many major issues to resolve at the final Council meeting for the year.

Metgasco requested to use the road reserve along three rural roads, Rock Valley, Chelmsford and Bungabbee for seismic testing. Council by a majority of 9/2 (Councillors Battista and Graham voting against) refused Metgasco's request. I raised a number of issues in debate including:

- Metgasco's review of environmental factors (REF) appeared to be a badly edited computer template which incorrectly declared Casino to be the nearest major town and failed to mention the Bungabbee State Forest which adjoins the site;

- Metgasco is obliged to receive permission in writing from every landholder within 200 metres of the survey and depending how this permission is worded it could allow Metgasco to do exploratory drilling. Interestingly one of the Councillors claimed Metgasco had already done a seismic survey on land adjoining his family farm and had failed to get permission in writing from his family;

- Council has made it abundantly clear to all coal seam gas (CSG) companies

that they will be opposed as long as there are genuine concerns about the impacts of CSG on water, air, tourism and rural land.

One issue which leaves me shaking my head is just how much legal power miners have in this state. Currently CSG miners do not have to account for their activities to regional water authorities such as Rous Water and they have virtually unfettered access to almost all lands. Council in taking its decision to refuse permission may have no legal grounds for doing so. But I and eight other Councillors felt it was extremely important as a local representative to take a stand in line with strong community opinion.

The Koala Plan of Management for the south east of the local government area (LGA) is now on public exhibition. Councillors Meineke, Marks, Battista, Graham and Chant opposed the 'plan' going out for public comment in its current form.

I strongly encourage all of you who have concerns for the long term future of our local koalas to get on Council's website and make a submission supporting the protection of these iconic creatures.

Regular readers will know I've been pursuing Essential Energy (formerly Country Energy) to install energy



efficient street lighting instead of the mainly mercury vapour lights which are grossly inefficient, not to mention containing a toxic substance. Essential Energy is running six months behind in its replacement schedule which is very disappointing as the delay will cost Council approximately \$100,000 and almost 450 tonnes in greenhouse gas emissions. Nonetheless from March 2012 Council should be saving nearly \$200,000 and 900 tonnes of carbon emissions per year and hopefully with further efficiency bonuses to come. For those of you concerned about the mercury, it is to be disposed of by Essential Energy in a 'responsible manner and the various metal components of the lights would be recycled'.

At this time of the year my mind keeps thinking about the new year. It promises to be a very challenging year for Councillors. Not only will there be local government elections next September, but I confidently predict that our budget situation will

deteriorate. Largely because Council will finally know how much it needs to put aside to maintain over \$1 billion in assets.

In 2012, I would like to see a bio-diversity plan of management developed for the LGA. It has always struck me as absurd that as custodians of one of the richest areas of bio-diversity in Australia Council has little knowledge of what is important, where it is and how we can protect it. I'm also very keen to see Council do more preparation for the impacts of climate change. The latest scientific data suggests that if the current growth in greenhouse gas emissions continues (noting they grew by 6% last year) the world will be looking at average temperature rises of 6° Celsius by the end of the century (US Dept. Energy).

With such grim predictions I can only jump on my bike and knock up a few kilometres. I'm trying to do at least 130 a week in the coming year. I've also come across another description of the ageing male cyclist. Middle Aged Men In Lycra – MANIL was my last one, now I have Cranky Old Blokes With Expensive Bikes – COBWEB.

Wishing you all a happy and sustainable new year from the 'Our Sustainable Future' local government party.

You can follow me on Facebook
– Cr Simon Clough
Lismore City Council
Phone 02 6624-2894

It's official, Nimbin is a treasure



Mayoral unveiling of boxes of the new map

Christmas drinks at the Nimbin Visitors Centre came with a nice surprise – the launch of the much anticipated Byron to Nimbin Treasure Map.

A joint project between Lismore and Byron Councils, the colourful map was launched by Mayor Jenny Dowell, who confessed it may have given some people the wrong idea when she told ABC radio that the map contains nine trips.

The map's nine tourist drives cover most points of interest in the Byron hinterland, with informative accompanying notes.

The Lismore and Nimbin Tourism Treasure Map is now available for sale for \$2.95 from selected outlets, including the Lismore, Nimbin and Byron Visitor Centres.

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Concerns regarding petrol prices in the region

by Janelle Saffin, MP

Just prior to Christmas, I wrote to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) asking them to conduct a review of petrol prices in our local area, given that there are many concerns being expressed by many locals who feel that they are being ripped off. They question why the prices stay up, when the wholesale price drops and prices go down in the city and it seems to take a long time for the price drops to flow through to here. This gives people the impression that they are being ripped off.

Every few months we get the media headlines telling us that we are being ripped off. Unfortunately, a lot of the methodology used to suggest that we are paying too much for petrol doesn't provide what I would consider to be a rigorous analysis, to make such definitive conclusions. Some pundits assert that Australia has the world's weakest competition laws and by implication, that this is a factor in this issue.

When people read these headlines it confirms their impression that they're not getting a good deal. There are local concerns and I would like this to be investigated.

I note that the independent consumer information website www.motormouth.com.au has regular update of average prices in Sydney and in country towns around NSW. Those figures tell a different story to that being suggested by the less than rigorous analysis, and show that the Northern Rivers is not being singled out and that in fact prices here are on a par with, or lower than, other regional centres.



File photo: courtesy ABC News

For example, the average price in Lismore on Sunday 18 December was 144.4 cents a litre. That is less than one cent higher than the listed average price for Sydney on Saturday 17 December, of 143.7 cents a litre.

But on December 27, the cheapest fuel on the Northern Rivers was still 144.4 cents per litre in Lismore, while the cheapest fuel in Sydney cost just 130.9 cents per litre at Old Guildford.

I do not like it that we have to pay more, but given the factors affecting country fuel supplies (lower sales volumes, storage and transport costs), we know about this already. We have a near absence of competition as well. I am not sure if the fact that Coles and Woolworths now have a big market share of service stations as well is a factor, but again, we all feel it is.

Strong competition and high sales volumes in the city do bring down prices dramatically on some days of the week,

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

where there is a cycle of highs and lows.

We could benefit from stronger competition in regional centres, and I have commended the recent action of an independent service station owner in Grafton joining forces with a local fruit and grocery market to offer fuel discounts, in an effort to counter the market dominance of Woolworths and Coles who reportedly own 53 per cent of all fuel outlets.

I have invited the ACCC Commissioner to visit our area as part of the review which may go some way to settling the matter on whether or not we are being ripped off and whether there is anything we could be doing locally to improve petrol pricing here.

Making flood insurance fairer and simpler

by Janelle Saffin, MP

I am inviting local people to comment on the Australian Government's latest efforts towards making flood insurance simpler and more effective.

Our region has been through its share of devastating floods, and after every flood there are local residents caught up in disputes over what is covered by their insurance policies.

In November the Government announced its response to the Natural Disaster Insurance Review, which was commissioned to examine insurance for flood and other natural disasters following the summer floods of 2010 and 2011.

Draft regulations have now been released, which include a proposed standard definition of "flood" for insurance contracts of home building and home contents (combined and individual policies); small business; and strata title insurance policies.

The proposed definition is: Flood means the covering of normally dry land by water that has escaped or been released from the normal confines of A) any lake, or any river, creek or other natural watercourse, whether or not

altered or modified; or B) any reservoir, canal, or dam.

People are entitled to know exactly what is, and what is not, covered under their insurance policies. In the past, too many of those affected by floods have been unaware that their insurance policy didn't cover flood.

I would like to see a system where all insurance policies must offer flood cover for the home and contents, unless the customer specifically decides to 'opt out' of flood cover. Also I don't want them to raise premiums too much though, so flood insurance is not affordable.

The release of the draft regulations is an important step in ensuring people can make informed decisions about the level of flood cover they need.



I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all the Nimbin GoodTimes readers a safe and happy 2012!
Janelle

Designing a National Disability Insurance Scheme

Local MP Justine Elliot (pictured) welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement of a new Commonwealth agency to lead the Australian Government's design work on a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Justine said that 2012 would be a critical year in which the Federal Labor Government will work closely with state and territory governments, people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and the disability care and support workforce on design and development work.

"In 2012 the Federal Labor Government will continue our work to lay the foundations for the launch of a National Disability Insurance Scheme," Justine said.

"This is fundamental reform for our community because we know the current disability services system is not delivering the kind of care and support Australians expect." The Prime Minister has announced an extra \$10 million to

examine how the design elements of an NDIS will work in practice," Justine said.

Justine said the practical projects funded will give disability service providers and the disability care and support workforce the opportunity to trial ways to adapt positively to new ways of providing care and support for people with disability.

"For example, a project could examine how service providers can adapt their business model for a move toward individualised funding arrangements," Justine said.

"An NDIS will involve fundamental changes to the way disability care and support is provided in Australia."

"It will operate on insurance principles and give people with disability greater control and choice over the services they receive."

The announcement builds on the commitment made by the Federal Labor Government and state and territory governments to lay the foundations for the launch of an



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

NDIS by mid-2013 - a year ahead of the timetable set out by the Productivity Commission.

This design work will help inform the launch of an NDIS in select locations around the country.

To find out more visit www.ndis.gov.au

Extra help for local families with teenagers in school

Justine Elliot said around 5,500 local families may benefit, if their teenager stays in school, from an increase of up to \$4,200 per year in family payments.

From 1 January, Family Tax Benefit Part A will increase for families with teenagers aged 16 to 19 years who are still in full-time secondary school or equivalent vocational training - this means families may receive a total up to \$214 a fortnight for each teenager still in full-time secondary study.

Justine said, "All the evidence shows that young people who finish their education or get a trade are better off. The Federal Labor Government understands the importance of education in making sure young people get the best chance to get a good job."

"We want to encourage local teenagers to return to school next year, or get school-based apprenticeships, if that's what they want to do, because we know it will open doors, and give them a big leg up in life."

"This will be a big help to those families under financial pressure, who are finding it hard to support older teenagers to stay at school or in training."

Although the exact amount of benefit would vary for every family, most families with a teenager in full-time secondary study who is currently receiving Youth Allowance would be better off on Family Tax Benefit.

Families already receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A for children aged 16 to 19 years in fulltime secondary study will have their entitlements automatically adjusted from 1 January if they are entitled to the higher rate.

"This is good news for families who will be better able to meet their cost of living, it's good news for teenagers who will have a better chance at getting a good job, and, as a result, it's good news for Australia's economy," Justine said.

For more information, visit www.fahcsia.gov.au

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STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

by Undacuvva

Non Compos Unda Takeover

"I dunno what came over me. I just snapped and thought, I'm a sergeant and now they're gunna listen up and take notice of me. And did they what.

I was sick of them treating me like an idiot. The endless teasing as their daily joke."

That's from the informers statement after he showed sniffer dog Dougie (dog, over, unda, gouger, informer, exit plan) every stash hole in town. The talking dog made Dougie look very limited.

There's an old saying from the Undaworld bible, "pretend to be a fruitcake and you become a fruitcake."

Whatever role you play takes over, unless you hold on like araldite, we all know that. But still.

"Your job's on the line Unda". The boss is drunk and taking the piss at the Force Christmas Party. He's just won the TOY Award (Tactics Of the Year), for the second time this year. They said "exceptional circumstances merited a second award." I was there. I know the true story, and it was all unplanned, or so I thought.

This is what happened. The Bosses are in town just hangin around the top of the Lane. "Keepin' the rabbits down their burrow," as they call it. Suddenly a Section 32 that the hippies have

looked after for years (they even keep his medication in a well known local tourist attraction) walks up to the all too obvious rugby front rower with a gun in his pocket and offers him some weed. The Boss can't believe his luck but suspects it's a set up. He fingers his holster for reassurance and figures he may as well follow the mental defective. They set off at double pace and the 32 leads him straight to a Rasta and the easiest bust he's ever had.

If that was unplanned, it's not anymore. The Force Treasury was so excited by this innocent and inexpensive handiwork they wrote up a new policy on the spot and within a week it was in place. Some who shall remain un-

named went too far and started cultivating fruitcakes, visiting the clinics, searching for Unda recruits like football scouts cruise the junior clubs. The new policy meant work for nutters and unemployed homeless Unda candidates across the country they spruiked, carrying on like evangelista.

"Help us get rid of the evil weed and you wont be locked up anymore," was their catch cry. And no one seemed to mind if the demented got a handful of the evil weed itself as payment. Funny that.

And bingo, it's worked again. With my own eyes I watched myself snap, roll over, and over and over until in utter and complete confusion I lost the plot. A raving lunatic walking around exposing the secret stashes in the village. The Force followed me like Jesus and the Boss couldn't believe his good fortune. And for once they listened to me

At the Christmas Party he's looking directly at me with the trademark smirk. "We



Fruitcake

spend a fortune training Undas to play nutters, and this month we've got more weed from the real nutters than you got us all year Bethany. Tell us why we should keep you on the payroll?" In front of everyone. It threw me completely. Even he is confused about who I am. Or am I?

The Boss went on and on that night about his double TOY award. He reckons Nimbin came up trumps again in several areas of the global Village Economic Table (VET). "In the Bin we pride ourselves on the ability to house (well, not really) lunatics and criminals for a set fee of \$350 a week,

sickness benefits. Compared to the \$75,000 a year charged by any other mental or penal institution you'll agree we are outstanding value for money."

I've been trying to tell the Boss we are creaking at the seams and if the influx of loonies doesn't slow down soon things could get messy, especially if our non compos inmates keep being used as suicide bongers.

They estimate our tiny village is saving the government about \$14 million each year by not locking away half of itself.

When they give nutters and hobos the choice of the lockup or the Bin they always choose the village, of course, which is a win win he thinks and the reason for the double TOY award. "Saving money on all fronts, and exactly what's needed to keep the, "look what marawana does to you" image happening in the town. And now they work for us without even realizing what they're doing." It's all got way too confusing, he's forgotten who I really am, and so have I.

Occupy movement plans action on Australia Day

Story and photos by Benny Zable

We the 99% continue to occupy in 2012.

In spite of the brutal shutdown of occupation sites in the USA and Australia, the movement has grown to inspire further occupations around the world.

Time magazine December edition has taken note of this movement and gave it a front page face. An outcome of countless general assemblies, at #occupywallstreet, (#OWS) is "The Declaration of the Occupation of New York City". <http://sparrowmedia.net/declaration>.

We now have occupy hubs all over Australia, and Occupy Australia are planning actions in solidarity with the Aboriginal Tent Embassy to mark the 40th anniversary of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

Indigenous elders invite all Aboriginal people, supporters and other members of the general public, to occupy together at the 'Aboriginal Tent Embassy' site in Canberra on Thursday 26th January 2012, to celebrate "Sovereignty Day".



We at the Rainbow Chai Tent plan to go to the Aboriginal Tent Embassy gathering and the opening of Parliament House actions. We also are in need of funds to get us there to set up, feed the masses and do the actions. It ends up being several thousand dollars debt to Michael Jack, who is faced with paying the bills to make it happen on behalf of us all.

Please help us with this journey by making a cash donation to the Rainbow Chai Tent at the Commonwealth Bank, BSB #062-580, account #10278485.

Please give your name and state that this money is for the Aboriginal Tent Embassy 40th anniversary journey.



Nimbin HEMP Embassy

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Participation in this study will require you to spend 7 days in an inpatient unit. Counselling will be available to those who request it.

For more information please call 1800 757 110

All calls are treated in confidence.



Perch Creek jugband plays Star Court

Psychologists have diagnosed them 'pathological liars', genealogists have labelled them 'inbred', and critics have, well, criticised them, but The Perch Creek Family Jugband just won't quit. Featuring Australia's top one-legged saw player, *Who* magazine's 'most handsome jug player', and more (equally notable) siblings than you can count, The Perch Creek Family Jugband will be rolling down the hill into old Lismore town on Thursday 12th January.

This Summer has seen the hillbilly siblings venturing beyond the sleepy hills of Perch Creek to tour their brand new album 'Tall Tales' from downtown Melbourne

up to the Sunshine Coast and now down to Lismore.

Come along to the Star Court Theatre on Thursday 12th January if frailing banjo, honky-tonk piano, jug (insert lame 'jugs' pun here), washboard, harmonica, saw, ukulele, geetar, double bass, tap dancing and 5-part vocal harmonies sound like a good time to you. They will be supported by the very lovely, very fabulous, Lil' Fi and the Candy Apples.

Doors open 7pm. \$15 Adults/ \$12 Concession/ Kids free! Tix at the door or at www.starcourttheatre.com.au

See www.perchcreek.com for more dates and info.

The Channon Folk Club



The next Channon Folk Club Open Mic. will be held Sunday 22nd January, from 3pm till dusk.

The Channon Folk Club is a local group of "folk" who volunteer their time and talents and hold an Open Mic. on the fourth Sunday of each month,

from 3pm till dusk during daylight saving.

Our motto is "folk and beyond", so we encourage an eclectic mix of musical styles, but still with an acoustic feel.

It's a great afternoon, so "Bring a song, Bring a verse, Bring a friend."



Tuneful folk: One of the many groups who performed last year at The Channon Folk Club.

Sing your way to fun and well-being in a Choir



Members of the Vocal Minority choir performing at Nimbin Central School's Carols by Candlelight

Singing in a choir is not just about having fun, though that is an important factor. Studies validate the positive impact of singing on physical and mental health.

Reports demonstrate that singing heightens breathing and body awareness, tones abdominal muscles, can bolster the immune system, lowers blood pressure, relaxes muscles and improves cardiac output.

Community choirs also encourage a sense of belonging. Getting together and creating harmony is an activity that is healing both to the individual and to the wider community – particularly important now as we are facing the challenges of the 21st century.

The Nimbin community choir 'Vocal Minority' was initiated by Val Mace after her school choirs performed extensively, including at

the Opera House. She had numerous requests to run a choir for adults, and since October 2000 singers have met every Tuesday during term time from 5pm to 6.30pm.

There is no prerequisite for newcomers to be able to read music; everyone who wishes to sing with others is welcomed into this friendly group, some of whom have been attending ever since the choir's beginning.

The repertoire of songs is extensive, ranging from contemporary and traditional folk songs through Beatles, Paul Simon, Tiddas and Doo-wop, with a taste of jazz and classical scat.

Choir will be starting up again after the long summer holiday on Tuesday February 7th in the library of Nimbin Central School.

More information from Val 6689-1700 – or just turn up.

Bush Theatre screen previews

Reviewed by Belinda Marsh

January is Documentary Month at Nimbin's Bush Theatre

THE 11TH HOUR

Friday 6th January at 7.30pm

Presented, co-written and produced by Leonardo Di Caprio, *The 11th Hour* reiterates what most of us are finally realising – that we have to stop living and consuming the way we are or there will be nothing left.

Information and opinions from eminent people such as Stephen Hawking and David Suzuki make for compelling viewing.



FORKS OVER KNIVES

Friday 13th January at 7.30pm

This fascinating documentary examines the claim that most, if not all, of the degenerative diseases that afflict us can be controlled, or even reversed, by rejecting our present menu of animal-based and processed foods.



HOME

Friday 20th and Saturday 21st January at 7.30pm

We are living in exceptional

times. Scientists tell us that we have 10 years to change the way we live to avert the depletion of natural resources and the catastrophic evolution of the Earth's climate.

The stakes are high for us, especially so for our children. Everyone should take part in the effort, and *Home* has been conceived to take a message of mobilisation out to all.



ZEITGEIST

Friday 27th and Saturday 28th January at 7.30pm

Jesus versus paganism, conspiracy theories on 9/11, and the power of the elite bankers...

It's all here in this compelling documentary. See why it has become a cult classic.



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Sunday Gig Guide

January 2pm Start

8th Nick & Liesl
Stripped back and intimate folk to alternate pop and soul

15th Bill Jacobi
Uki's own weaving his soulful and powerful sounds on a lush afternoon

22nd Bluescorp
Performing their good time rhythm & blues and infectious grooves

29th Sarah & Harry
Joining forces with Melbourne artist Andy Jans-Brown, blending groove with a pop sense of catchy melodies

Feb 5th Lucky Wonders
Warm beautifully crafted songs with quirky irreverent banter

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53 Cullen Street, Nimbin. Ph: 6689-1246



January Gigs

Thursday 5th
Friday 6th
Saturday 7th

Bill Jacobi
Khanage
Ritchie Williams

Thursday 12th
Friday 13th
Sunday 15th

Robert Saric
Ritchie Williams Band
Compass Rose

Thursday 19th
Friday 20th
Saturday 21st
Sunday 22nd

Round the Corner
Pappa Funk
Anna Smyrk and the Appetites
Bevan Spiers

Friday 27th
Saturday 28th
Sunday 29th

Manju with Less is Maw
Surf Report
Ritchie Williams

Gigs start: Thurs 6.30pm, Fri 7.30pm, Sat 7pm, Sun 4pm

Hummingbird Bistro
Bistro Specials: Mon \$10 pasta;
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