



Decriminalisation call

Julia Gillard says that decriminalising illegal drugs, suggested in the Australia 21 report, is not the answer. One wonders if she has read the report, which suggests that the only people benefiting from the drug laws are those in league with organised crime and those corrupted by it. Julia thinks that allowing organised crime to continue to make millions is the answer.

This is the problem with many politicians at the moment. It doesn't seem that they read any of the scientific information, research or reports they've requested. They're just not interested in finding out anything that doesn't back the stance they've already taken. The Australia 21 report shows how the drug laws cause harm, suffering and death in our community.

The Australia 21 report says that by maintaining prohibition and suppressing or avoiding debate about its costs and benefits, it can be argued justifiably that our governments and other community leaders are standing idly by while our children are killed and criminalised.

Apparently there are 400 unnecessary deaths every year because of the lack of regulation of illegal drugs. People are actually dying because of the belief that punishing people for self-medicating with drugs will make them stop doing it. For how many years do people have to say this isn't working before these politicians can hear it?

This report is very clear about the need for change and yet it's ignored, changing anything is not the answer. Your answer, Julia and

Tony, is that people should continue to be discriminated against and have their lives destroyed by being criminalised for marijuana. That is the main impact of the drug laws - otherwise harmless people suffering criminal convictions for marijuana. Young people and Aboriginal people suffer the most convictions.

It is time that our politicians, the Julias and the Tonys, started reading the reports and scientific studies about important issues so they can make progressive and constructive decisions. The Greens are the only party that takes a rational, evidence-based approach to the subject of illegal drugs. It's time for a change.

Beth Shelley
Booerie Creek

Medical supplies

The *Nimbin GoodTimes* carried an article about the 'armed terrorists' (police) seizing 'medical supplies' (NGT April 12, p1). They quoted the grower/supplier, Mr Tony Bower, saying, "... leave the sick alone". Good for him.

Same as I've been saying and been an activist about since I swore my Oath to Humanity in 1971. Which is why the first personal attack against me was in 1974, by a health minister from the Australian NAZI Party (you invariably call them Labor?), the year preceding the significant betrayal (by the AMA) and defeat of the medical profession (turned stealthily to KKKapitalist contempt for 'Middle Australians', and we and our patients degraded and warred against, by the State).

Only we deprived of 'freedom', 'democracy', 'rights', 'justice' (a single word



anti-logism of long standing - 'the best justice money can buy', only we have nothing compared to the states' plunder from taxpayers), and 'security' can have any inkling of what these things are!

For starters, I'd suggest that us silenced majority are given a safe voice.

Maarten de Vries,
Bangalow

Feminazis (1)

Re Liz (NGT April 12, Letters), your piece made me feel sad for women who assert themselves. We are all products of patriarchy.

Until there are 50% women in parliaments, global, federal and state, and on local councils, I think women have no choice but to use 'the groove' produced by men in terms of mannerisms. Again, that's sad.

The word you use is derogatory to all of your gender. Please tell me what is the equivalent of 'Feminazi' for men. Nazi? There isn't one that I know of that is so sick, being the real history of the Nazi regime.

Liz, look at the NGT front page top left corner - a silhouette of a colonial male - female absent. The status quo for gender equality is a long way off in the big world.

Women can be bullies no doubt, but aren't we a reflection of the world at hand?

I am not on many committees, and don't have your obvious experiences, but I am glad that women are there. There are gossips and naysayers in both genders - some don't need a visual community network to be damaging to others. I don't feel the title Nazi is fair on women, and to wantonly join it to fem as in feminine, only services community fear of women who at least try. I suggest that if you know

a woman or women that are in your estimation Nazis, you might like to tell of your concern. I reclaim the word feminine for all readers who after reading the word feminazi were, like me, wondering where we are going publicly attacking our own.

Now will some male please write a story about male Nazis in the community please? Would that be bad taste? No, it would just never happen. When you're on top why rock the boat?

Well might we say women hold up half the sky. We still only hold one eighth of global equality, equality and liberalist conversation.

A. Gustavsson,
Green Pigeon

Feminazis (2)

It would be naïve to assume that a journal titled 'good times' would be all of a sugar-coated pill, but to be an actual conduit of hate-mail is just much too much. What's the point? Do we really need this stuff?

The 'feminazis' letter in your April edition was just a nasty piece of work. I don't know who this Lis Miller is, or who she's locally aiming this diatribe at, but is it really necessary to print such attacks?

Then there was the letter attacking our much-needed new 'good doctor' from Darcy McKee of Alstonville. Do you print every letter that you get? Is it meant to stir up some meaningful responses?

There's plenty of hate going around our tiny planet. It's just not necessary to air this dirty laundry in the 'good times'.

David Hallett
Nimbin

I guess we can't win. Last year we were being accused of censoring letters, as if it were a hanging offence!

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.

It certainly would be naïve to think that if we ignore divergent views, they will go away - surely it's more useful to submit them to scrutiny and feedback, like yours, David. - Ed.

Saints

D McKee's letter (NGT April 12) inferring that Dr Leahy must have a fascination with death because he has moved to Nimbin and has previously worked with a high AIDS population, is absolutely disgusting. I am shocked that it was considered worthy of printing.

Does D McKee also place doctors who work with cancer and palliative care patients in the same category? They are saints in my opinion, who should be awarded medals for their difficult and compassionate work.

Dave Lambert,
Nimbin

Mouthing off

So Andrea and Numina, your unleashed dog 'mouthed' a boy riding a skateboard? (NGT Letters, April 12)

What I think may have happened is that your gentle creature was actually trying to positively engage with the boy in question. I think the 'mouthing' was actually a way of establishing a meaningful connection, much in the way a mother dog mouths her pups. Being closer to the ground, she was obviously seeking a means to understand and interact with this fascinating young man.

In fact, I think more dogs should be left off leashes to roam the streets and alleys in search of other children to 'mouth'. Perhaps dedicated 'mouthing' days at local preschools could be arranged by council?

To deny these precious pooches their freedom would truly be a sin.

Max Brown
Modanville

Right on Geoff

I would like to thank Geoff

Dawe for (1) sticking to his guns and (2) for speaking (writing) the truth about weeds and bush regeneration and poison use in the April edition of NGT.

I totally agree with Geoff on the war on weeds with toxic poisons preventing true regeneration.

Years ago I worked with NPWS at North Brunswick on bush regeneration under a tutor of the Bradley method of regeneration (non toxic). We did a comparison (documented) with the Roundup method of bush regeneration.

I went back to the same site two years later and the NPWS team was still using herbicide. Why? If herbicide use is effective, why is it used continually used?

Because the chemical companies are making a fortune out of still selling it to the gullible. Hence my previous letter in the NGT in April.

Paul Brecht,
Mullumbimby

Nimbin Revisted

I returned to Nimbin recently for the first time in over 30 years. I lived at Bishops Creek in the late '70s and used to drive the 6 km to Nugent's bakery to buy an Aquarius loaf.

We used to love the Sunday night music sessions at the Tomato Sauce factory... there were some great musicians who were writing some really inspiring original music... and some amazing women singing sweet harmonies.

I've carried with me one particular song, Firelight, the lyrics of which I scribbled down one night... and the name of the songwriter, Brendan Hanley. I have been singing that song for all these years, and still it gives me shivers.

Walking the main street, I had the unsettling experience of my two lives running parallel - a time traveller thrown into the future to a familiar place but where everything had changed. I

About us

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Photographers: Sue Stock, Len Martin, Thorsten Jones, Greg Soward, Pam Bourne.

Distribution: Angus, Sue, Coralie, Daniel, Faerie Laura's (Bellingen), Dave (West End), Ken (Maroochydore).

Bookkeeper: Martha Paitson

Website: David McMinn
www.nimbingoodtimes.com

NGT is auspiced by the Nimbin Community School Co-operative Ltd.

Next deadline:
Wednesday 30th May

Email: nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Please limit contributions to 600 words or less.

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Business Arising

could just make out the remnants of the old Tomato Sauce factory sign.

I was so excited that I could still buy an Aquarius loaf, and on my way out picked up a copy of the *Nimbin GoodTimes*. On my return to the south coast, I had a chance to sit down and have a good read and there to my surprise was an entertaining article titled Religion by Brendan Hanley... surely the same person... have just googled the name and found all the songs.

Thank you. That extraordinary, inspirational, magical time really did exist!

Diana Black,
Milton

Thanks

It gives me great pleasure to take this opportunity to say

a big thankyou to everyone who sent me cards, flowers, phone calls and prayers, and who came to visit me while I was in hospital as a result of a fall in which I fractured my hip and had to have a hip replacement.

Fortunately I'm now well on the road to recovery. Once again, thank you to all, and may God bless you.

Faye Scherf,
Nimbin

Old road

Is someone able to enlighten me to the whereabouts of the old road between Barkersvale and Horseshoe Creek/Green Pigeon/Collins Creek?

I believe the road cuts off 40km of the coastal Murwillumbah-Kyogle Road for these valley dwellers. (I am not talking about the

Pinnacle/Border Ranges NP Road.)

A Gustavsson,
Green Pigeon

Gladstone trip

For Nimbin Environment Centre to be truly successful, it takes a whole village, and that community support is what sustains us all. When NEC travels to places under threat from coal seam gas and new coal mines, we know we are taking the spirit of the people of Nimbin and the Northern Rivers with us.

So many people and businesses contribute to this ongoing work, which means thanking everybody.

In particular we would like to thank Karen and the Rainbow Power Company for organising and lending us their set of three solar lights with panel, which kept us out of the dark during our recent foray into Gladstone.

All camping facilities in Gladstone have been bought out or reserved for the next four years by mining companies. The only available site for us was 20km away on a river bank. Each night solar lights lit up the camp, which swelled to around 40 people at one stage.

Kodi Twiner, based in Gladstone but from Byron Bay's Positive Change for Marine Life arrived after dark bringing paint and cardboard to make signs to gain UNESCO's attention.

Without the solar energy the camp artists could not have worked day and night to achieve what we did. Thanks to Kodi were able to exhibit our work in the Gladstone Library's outdoor amphitheatre in the centre of town, where she had organised for an environmental awareness party at which musicians such a Pacha Mama travelled from Byron to perform.

Thanks must also go to Jyllie Jackson for entrusting us with three of the Lismore Lantern Parade's reef fish, to the delight of Gladstone locals - especially a bus full of school children.

Thanks also to Sam's Café next to the NEC, which sustained us on the long bus trip north with a picnic basket full of goodies.

And thanks to all the individuals who generously donated the bus fare for

others to use, because they were unable to travel themselves.

Thanks also to all local media for getting the words out that the politicians and mining companies refuse to say. To experience people power at work for the benefit of the land, our water, air and unique flora and fauna is so heartening.

The future must be in renewable energy, good farming practices, green housing, green cars, very-fast-trains, creative manufacturing, industrial hemp, the arts and tourism. This creates real jobs and pride in one's work.

The fossil fuel industry will only send us back to the dark ages from which we will never recover, either environmentally, economically or emotionally.

Coralie Summerton,
Tunttable Falls

Handpicked thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all 19 local artists who contributed to the Handpicked Homegrown Album 2, made and financed by Nimbin Community Radio (Nim-FM).

Thank you to the crew who helped in its compilation with special mention to Peppa Rose for her very generous contributions and to Neil Pike from Pagan Love Cult for his outstanding craftsmanship on the whole project.

As the producer, I have to take responsibility for a major gaff in leaving out the complete details of the contributors from Sisters Healing Earth. Their song, 'Maiden, Mother and Crone' is from the album Earth Mother with Raine on harp, Nathalie on frame drum, Regina on recorder, Lisa on cello, Sue McKenna on djembe and vocals by Raine, Nathalie, Regina, Sisca, Kavi, Zelula, Jahmaia, Drasila,

Dannidoo was mixed and produced by Jake Mann from Kitnkaboodle production. I would like to publicly apologise to these musicians and artists.

We in Nimbin have a fantastic array of musicians and artists and would like to share their talents with the rest of the world. Handpicked Homegrown albums aim to share the music of those

talented locals.

This limited edition album was distributed to 80 community radio stations across Australia via AMRAP. These albums were lovingly wrapped in handmade hemp covers which were made by Mim Handley. A web page is currently being made for Nimbinhandpicked.com

This eclectic album can be found at some of our local businesses such as Perceptios, Hemp Embassy, Rainbow Love, Happy High Herbs and Nim FM.

I seek others who would like to be included in the next album. I'd also ask each of you to share this CD with friends, family and visitors. It would be the highest compliment to the artists. I'd also like to thank Hellena Post for the review in the last *Good Times*, which I felt was honest and true.

I would also take this opportunity to plug my show on Nim-FM. It is on Fridays between 11am and noon.

Martin Preedy,
Nimbin

Federal responsibility for CSG

Dear Ms Saffin, thank you for showing leadership and representing the community's concerns on the issue of Coal Seam Gas mining (NGT April 2012, p10).

However, I am reluctant to accept that your Government can absolve itself of further responsibility based on the claim that it is a "State issue". May I point out that the Commonwealth Government is far from "limited" in its power to legislate on CSG mining and its effects.

It has a number of heads of power under the Australian Constitution, and could, if it showed real political leadership, act to limit the effects of mining and protect landowners and the environment. It could in fact stop the rampant takeover of the people's resources by largely foreign owned mining corporations.

These heads of power are as follows: 'The interstate trade and commerce power': s51(i) Trade and commerce with other countries, and among the States: 'the corporations power': s51(xx) Foreign corporations, and trading or financial corporations formed within the limits of the

Commonwealth 'the external affairs power': s51(xxix) External Affairs.

The numerous Treaties, Covenants and Agreements that the Commonwealth has signed and/or ratified to protect water, wetlands, as well as reduce GHG emissions to avert catastrophic climate change, would allow the Commonwealth to rule out CSG mining, if it so chose.

Instead, the Federal government has driven the CSG takeover, through its Federal Energy Policy, enshrined in the Energy White Paper, which reads like a fossil fuel industry-written document.

www.ret.gov.au/energy/facts/white_paper/draft-ewp-2011/Pages/Draft-Energy-White-Paper-2011.aspx

Furthermore, could you please confirm the date this scientific assessment will be completed? Will it be after the drilling rigs have rolled into town, ruining our roads and puncturing our aquifers? In fact, drilling has already started!

Are you supporting the call for a moratorium on all CSG activities (exploration and production) before the mining companies start interfering with our underground aquifers? Or will your Government ignore the precautionary principle and continue "business as usual", whatever the consequences?

Are we to give the fossil fuel industry another 20 years grace rather than making the immediate switch to renewables like solar, thermal and wind, which are technically proven and affordable now?

I disagree that the needs of the area have "now been recognised". What about the need for renewable energy investment in solar, sustainable biogas and micro-hydro, rather than handing out so-called "Clean Energy" investment grants to the fossil fuel industry?

Please Ms Saffin, represent the electorate's entire concerns on this issue, and don't toe your Government's line of promoting a "golden age of gas", because it inevitably means we will be living in 'Gaslands'.

Adam Guise
Lismore

Notices

Vacant Office at Community Centre

Tenant wanted for large office space at the Nimbin Community Centre, was the CTC room, a lovely airy room that could work for a number of purposes. The current base rent is \$382 per month, more if the tenant wishes to run a business from this space. This office space is easily accessible from Cullen St. For more information please contact the co-ordinator on 6689-0000 or email ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au

Unity Bhajans

Sundays 13th and 27th May, 10th June, 11am May, 11am at Birth and Beyond, Nimbin. Enquiries contact Maria 6633-7261.

Yoga with Sam

Sacred, supportive and nourishing time for you in the Yoga/Dance space of the Nimbin Community Centre: Tuesdays 9am, Wednesdays 5.30pm (Restorative) and Friday 9am. Enquiries: 6693-0160, www.anuraktiyoga.net

Nimbin Environment Centre

Annual AGM at 6pm, 22nd May, Birth and Beyond Building, Cullen Street.

Poetry at The Oasis

Is now on the first Thursday of the month. New readers always welcome and encouraged, this is a great venue to practise for the upcoming Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup 2012. From 7pm, dinner available. The next Poetry at the Oasis will be on the Thursday before Mardigrass, should be a fun filled evening of sharing, with music to follow the Poetry. The Fun and Games night, major fundraiser for this year's Cup will be held in June.

Ukitopia's popular Cabaret 360

Is on again in June. This event has sold out for the past three years and they are now looking for performers (professional and amateur) to audition for the 2012 event. Auditions will be held on 7 and 13 May in Uki for young and old performers from dance, circus, music, comedy, physical theatre, performance poetry, wearable art and more. They are looking for five minute acts and usually feature 20 to 30 acts in the production, in the Uki Hall.

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Janelle's Page

by Janelle Saffin, MP

I was very pleased to bring the newly appointed Minister for Small Business, Brendan O'Connor to the Page electorate in April for two reasons.

Firstly, small business is the backbone of our local economy with more than 10,000 registered small businesses in the Page electorate. Secondly, I wanted the Minister to meet with local people in small business and listen to their needs and concerns as well as talking about some of the Federal Government's small business initiatives.

Some time back, I started lobbying for two things: the Minister for Small Business to be in Cabinet; and for a Federal Small Business Commissioner. Both have been achieved.

It is important for small business to be represented at the Cabinet table when major decisions are being made about our economy. The Industry minister is there so it makes sense for small business to be there too.

I lobbied for a Federal Small Business Commissioner so there can be one person at national level who is an advocate for small business sector.



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

Local business events

As soon as Brendan O'Connor was appointed to the Small Business portfolio, I immediately invited him to our electorate and he immediately accepted the invitation to speak at a business breakfast in Lismore and a business lunch in Grafton.

There was a strong turn out at both events. Unfortunately the Minister didn't make it to the Lismore breakfast because his plane couldn't land due to a heavy fog. However, I fielded questions from the audience and raised their particular issues later with the Minister and they are being followed up. And Minister O'Connor has promised to come back soon.

At the Grafton business lunch Minister O'Connor fielded questions and detailed some of the Federal Government's small business initiatives including:

- the new \$6500 asset write-off threshold from 2012-13
 - the list of measures already being introduced to reduce red tape including national business registration and the small business superannuation clearing house and support for Standard Business Reporting to give businesses a simpler way to complete financial reporting.
- I want to thank the Regional Manager of the Northern Rivers NSW Business Chamber, John Murray, for the Chamber's assistance in organising the functions. And I also acknowledge the work of all the local business chambers and those members who volunteer their time to support our local business communities.

Rudd stresses community at Lismore Labor launch



by Pampussycat

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd visited Lismore on April 19 to launch the campaign for Lismore's six Labor council candidates. Jenny Dowell, Isaac Smith, Ray Houston, Glenys Ritchie, Naomi Worrall and Kevin Bell will be standing at the local government elections to be held in September.

The launch included a performance by the Hearing Voices Choir with original pieces that reminded us that about 45 percent of adult Australians will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives - including alcohol or substance abuse - while one in five Australians will experience a mental disorder in any 12-month

period.

Mr Rudd expanded on the theme by speaking about the role of community "If you roll around the country a fair bit, as I do, or you roll around the world as I have done, you know when you arrive at a place where there is a sense of community and a reality of community," Mr Rudd said.

"Certainly it's a sense of attachment. What impresses me about this place, Lismore, and I think I've been here six or seven times in the last several years, is that there is a real and genuine sense of community."

"Community is not just a gooey feeling, however, community means I like the place I live in. Community means I want to protect the place I live. Community means when someone is hurting I go out and I find out about it."

"Beyond a sense of place it is a sense of people. We are only complete as human beings when we are a part of a community."

Many of the 150 attending spent time chatting with candidates, local members and Kevin Rudd to discuss their concerns and issues, while enjoying refreshments provided by the volunteers at the Red Dove Centre. When I told Kevin I was from Nimbin he spoke fondly of our village and jotted down a few words for our community.

More choice, easier access and better care for older Australians

by Justine Elliot MP

Under landmark changes to the aged care system, more older Australians will get to keep their home, and more Australians will get to stay in their home as they receive aged care.

The Gillard Government has announced a 10 year plan to reshape Australia's aged care system, beginning 1 July 2012.

Local MP Justine Elliot said Labor will spend \$3.7 billion over five years to deliver Living Longer Living Better which will give older Australians and their families more choice, easier access, and better care.

"These reforms will enable older Australians to get the help they both need and deserve so they can remain living in their own homes for as long as possible. Labor's plan will help older Australians keep their own home for as long as they want," Justine said.

The Government will increase the number of Home Care packages by two thirds and provide tailored care packages to people receiving home care. There will also be new funding for dementia care.

"Costs will be capped, so that full pensioners pay no more than the basic fee," Justine said.

The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, said the reforms would introduce fairness into the payment system for aged care for the first time.



"Many pensioners with meagre savings and few assets are paying more than people with hundreds of thousands of dollars in assets and private income. As a result, pensioners are subsidising the accommodation and care costs of millionaires," Mr Butler said.

"These reforms replace an aged care system designed a quarter of a century ago and which is now ill-equipped to meet the needs of retiring baby boomers and their parents who are living longer and healthier lives."

Mr Butler said the changes will have no impact on the million people already in the

aged care system - they will not pay any more than they would have under the current arrangements.

"This package reflects in large part what older Australians, their families and carers, and aged care providers have said is wrong with the system, along with the valuable input of the Productivity Commission report, Caring for Older Australians," Mr Butler said.

Implementation of the reforms will be overseen by a new Aged Care Reform Implementation Council. The new reform package will be implemented in stages to enable providers and consumers to gain early benefits of key changes and have time to adapt and plan for further reform over the 10 years.

Key reforms in Living Longer Living Better

To make it easier for older Australians to stay in their home while they receive care, the Government will:

- Increase the number of Home Care Packages by two thirds - from 59,876 to almost 100,000 (99,669).
- Provide tailored care packages to people receiving home care, and new funding for dementia care.
- Cap costs, so that full pensioners pay no more than the basic fee.

To make sure more people can keep their family home, and to prevent anyone being

forced to sell their home in an emergency firesale, the Government will:

- Provide more choice about how to pay for care. Instead of a bond which can cost up to \$2.6 million and bears no resemblance to the actual cost of accommodation, you will be able to pay through a lump sum or a periodic payment, or a combination of both.
 - Give families time to make a decision about how to pay, by introducing a cooling-off period.
 - Cap care costs, with nobody paying more than \$25,000 a year and no more than \$60,000 over a lifetime.
- To ensure there are immediate improvements as well, the government will also:
- Increase residential aged care places from 191,522 to 221,103
 - Fund \$1.2 billion to improve the aged care workforce through a Workforce Compact.
 - Provide more funding for dementia care in aged care, and more support for services.
 - Establish a single gateway to all aged care services, to make them easier to access and navigate.
 - Set stricter standards, with greater oversight of aged care.

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From the Mayor's desk



by Jenny Dowell
Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au

This month's deadline was Anzac Day, and we've just heard the news that the Federal Government will allocate funds to help communities throughout the nation commemorate the centenary of the landing on Gallipoli on April 25, 1915.

Like many of you, I have no wish to celebrate war. Anzac Day is a day of reflection and memories. I wear my grandfather's medals including his Military Cross awarded for bravery on the fields of France.

Grandpa was a signaller who delivered dispatches under fire. He was a peace-loving 32-year old when he enlisted. Fortunately he returned to marry his fiancé, my grandmother. Many other young men did not return.

Councillors attend functions in our community halls and note the Honour Boards of names of those young men, many from the same

family, who did not come back. Then there are those who suffered from physical and psychological wounds.

So on this Anzac Day and as we move towards the Centenary, thank you to the community members who keep Honour Boards and memorials in a worthy condition. May we all remember our past and commit ourselves to peace for our future.

CSG

When I spoke at The Channon last month, I quoted an elderly man who told me he believed Coal Seam Gas (CSG) was the biggest threat since World War 2. He did not make this comment lightly or with any intention to be offensive to those who lost loved ones in war or to imply that physical combat is required to stop CSG. He was drawing the link that CSG, like WW2, is a threat to our way of life, our land, our water, our food and our community.

At the April Council meeting I proposed that Council holds a poll in conjunction with the September 8 election, to assess the community's attitude to CSG. The motion was carried narrowly 6-5 (Crs Chant, Battista, Graham, Marks and Meineke against). Some of the Councillors who voted against my proposal said they were opposed to CSG but felt that the poll was an unnecessary expense because we know the level of

community opposition to CSG.

The cost of the poll is an issue. It may cost as high as \$42,000 but I am confident that we can bring that cost down as we negotiate with the Electoral Commission, the organisation that runs our election. Council has been budgeting for this election over the past four years so there is unlikely to be a financial cost to other Council activities.

Until we conduct this poll, albeit with non-compulsory voting, it is too easy for the pro-mining lobby to dismiss opposition as a 'noisy minority' led by 'professional activists' as some have claimed.

Speaking of CSG, I had the privilege of being at the Goolmangar community meeting and saw the photo and reports of the Nimbin meeting. What a wonderful show of community strength! May it long continue.

Hardship and Sale of Land for Unpaid Rates

Following the well-publicised sale of a South Lismore home for unpaid rates, Council has reviewed its policies in relation to hardship and sale. The new policies were on exhibition for a month with no submissions received. They were adopted at the April meeting and reflect better practice and checks and balances.

Plastic Bags

There were other items on the April Council agenda. Cr Vanessa Ekings gained support for Council to take

steps to reduce the use of plastic bags in our Local Government Area. These bags are a major litter problem on land and cause deaths to marine life. Council will take the lead here and work to encourage retailers to voluntarily move away from these plastic bags that are designed for single use and then thrown away to add to litter and our landfill.

Peace Park

The proposal to change the classification of Peace Park from Operational land to Community land was carried unanimously. This was done at the request of the Nimbin Community Centre who were the previous managers of that land. Council now manages the Park.

Performance Poetry

Council supported my recommendation for a modest donation for the Nimbin Performance Poetry Cup with the \$200 coming from the Mayor's Discretionary Fund. The organisers of the Poetry Cup are aware that the Nimbin community is being asked to donate towards the proposed purchase of the Sibley St house beside Peace Park so I hope that this small donation eases the fundraising burden for the Poetry Cup a little.

Nimbin Murals

It was a wonderful honour to be asked by Jimmy Willing to 'open' his murals on the Nimbin Hotel. These seven murals hark back to

'Before My Time' or to be precise 1948. Viewers of the murals will see farm machinery, a truck, a cart, people dressed in clothing of the age and lots of animals set in the backdrop of the Lillian Rock to Nimbin landscape. At the opening I suggested a children's activity sheet to find all the hidden gems in the murals. What do you think?

While on the murals, it is a shame that other murals are faded, flaking or covered in mildew. I encourage building owners to invest in the restoration of these works especially while some of the artists are alive. Yes, the OH&S considerations make it difficult and expensive to restore the works that are painted directly on the facades. Perhaps new works or replicas of the old works can be painted and hung in place so that they can be removed and restored more readily in the future. The murals are an important part of the community and the visitor experience. They are gems worth treasuring.

May

The May 8 meeting will bring the Draft Koala Plan of Management before Council. This is an important planning document that has been the subject of much debate. The Plan was on exhibition in the community for months and has generated hundreds of submissions mostly in support of the Plan. Staff, a strategic reference group and a technical advisory group have worked tirelessly to develop this essential Plan.



Simon says

It's one of those afternoons with a stillness so deep that I can almost hear the earth breathing. It's at about this point that I realise I'm a day late with my *GoodTimes* article!

CSG has been my main focus this month. www.csgfreenorthernrivers.org is the website to go to find the Northern Rivers Pledge and all sorts of resources for running your own anti CSG campaign.

I've been helping the large Lismore group find its feet. I was totally impressed with how well the Lismore working groups have been developing. There are at least five working groups including CSG The Musical, the Regional Rally Group (the Rally is on Saturday 12th May 10 am Riverside Park, Lismore), the Non Violent Direct Action Group and the CSG Free roads group. Each group

has been self organising and taken brilliant initiatives.

Hopefully you have seen the youtube video at <http://crsimonclough.wordpress.com/> (my new blog site) of The Channon community on 14th April 'people vs CSG'. It's an amazing and uplifting testament to the power of community. Annie Kia from The Channon has done an extraordinary job of organisation and coordination making this video possible. Currently it has been viewed 6,500 times, that's nearly a 1,000 a day.

I was at Goolmangar Hall last Saturday for that community to consider doorknocking all the houses along their roads and declaring them CSG free. Over 120 people voted unanimously to close their roads to CSG. It really showed the ability of this issue to bring people together to see Len Martin (self confessed Nimbin hippie) chair the meeting with two National Party 'elders' beside him.

Council resolved at its last

meeting to hold a poll at the next local government election to assess support for its anti CSG stand. Unfortunately the NSW Electoral Commission is in a monopoly position and its first quote for the poll was \$42,000. Council's estimate was less than \$10,000! Five Councillors voted against the poll on the basis that it was too expensive and that we all knew that the community was opposed to CSG. I felt strongly that without the poll our anti CSG arguments are always vulnerable to the 'its just a noisy minority of ratbags' argument. As for the cost, I'm confident that Council can negotiate it down and if it helps protect our roads from massive mining vehicles it's money well spent. Not to mention the protection of our priceless water and environment.

I attended the meeting local state MP Thomas George organised about CSG at Casino with the State Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. Rather

than a meeting to hear local people speak about CSG it was a very defensive and I felt at times overbearing performance from the minister trying to justify the government's position. I can't be convinced that there was a genuine willingness to take account of people's views when the minister said categorically that not mining CSG was not an option.

I believe that this region will have to battle on all fronts if it is to protect its magnificent landscapes from

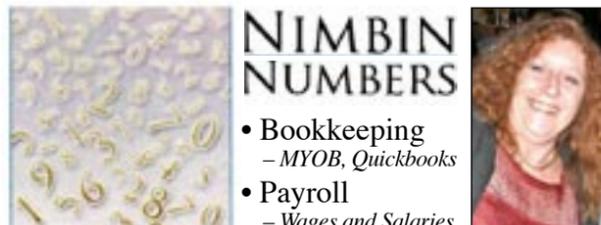
industrialisation, and if it is to protect its water and air. We have very limited legal power in this situation and have to develop a huge social movement such as the ones that ended the Vietnam War, protected our rainforests and in this way show the mining companies that they have no social licence from our community to mine our region.

You can follow me on Facebook
- Cr Simon Clough, Lismore City Council. Phone 02 6624-2894
Mobile 0428-886-217

by Cr Simon Clough

It's a sunny autumn afternoon and I'm totally enjoying the warming sun on my back as I plant carrot, parsnip and radish seeds.

I'm working in our suburban street garden which I initiated a couple of years ago. Not even that bastard nut grass is upsetting me this afternoon.



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Best of the Byron Bluesfest



by Pampussycat

Bluesfest 2012 brought blues legends to the North Coast – the likes of Buddy Guy, Anjelique Kidjo, Melbourne Ska Orchestra, Vusi Mahlasela and John Hiatt.

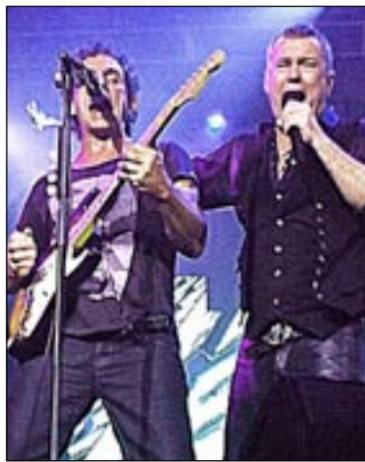
The five day festival also featured artists from another era, such as Crosby Stills and Nash, Donovan, Ziggy Marley, Nick Lowe, John Fogerty, Yes, Earth Wind and Fire, and Canned Heat.

There were local acts such as

Mama Kin, plus rock and roll surprises such as Richard Clapton and Cold Chisel, who were the closing act on the first night.

Cold Chisel was my hit pick, and the crowd sang along with classics 'Khe Sahn' and 'My Baby'. The band also featured songs from their new album.

This year, Bluesfest organisers also circulated a petition to present to the Byron Shire Council regarding the future of live music festivals in that Shire.



Bluesfest is better set out in its Tyagarah Home, for the third year now. It's a fantastic smorgasboard of music, both international and local. If you haven't been and sampled the vibes of Bluesfest, do yourself a favour in 2013.

Happy snaps (clockwise from top left): Local acts Melbourne Ska Orchestra, Ian Moss and Jimmy Barnes, and international stars Ziggy Marley, Donovan, David Crosby, Vusi Mahlasela



New Rob Harle poetry book

Reviewed by Gail M. Clarke

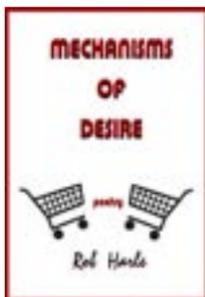
Rob Harle, a local artist and writer coined the term techno-metamorphosis many years ago to describe the changes taking

place in society, and what some have called the transition from human to post-human.

Mechanisms Of Desire is Rob's second volume of poetry in which he contemplates the ever-changing society we find ourselves surviving in.

Surveillance, paranoia, camera, Google Earth, spy force in disguise - Rob's fusion of emotion and intellect is woven delicately throughout the book.

Complex thoughts draw together the physical and spiritual as we are taken on an exploration of supermarket society and technology's



infiltration of our daily lives. "Troll = supermarket trolley = dangerous weapon" features in many of the poems.

Rob's quirkiness of style is evident in the poems about the negative impact of organised

religions on our society and the post-modern hopelessness of being a follower as opposed to masterminding our own destiny.

Intermingled throughout the technology, religion and society poems are beautifully crafted poems of time, Nature and of course, Nimbin.

A book to have on the coffee table or desk to peruse at leisure, you are sure to find a piece to suit, to make you smile or get you thinking.

Mechanisms of Desire is available from the Nimbin Artists' Gallery & Perceptico for \$15.

Sir Joseph Banks and the question of hemp

Reviewed by Neil Pike

As Australians we're all taught at a very early age that this country was "settled" by the British as a convict colony. The Yanks threw the Poms out and they had nowhere else to send their criminal classes, so they sailed halfway round the world and formed a bloody big prison farm here in the Antipodes.

This is the popular history of how Australia was formed and it's always been enshrined in our history books right next to another familiar old tale. You know the one. The classic imperialist fairy story that has the indigenous inhabitants of this huge continent happily greeting the Great White Father, handing over the lease and shuffling contentedly off to die of smallpox. Upon such myths are national identities built.

Sometime in the last 30 years or so, people started questioning the second myth but until recently no-one ever queried the first. Dr. John Jiggins in his new book *Sir Joseph Banks and the Question of Hemp* finally does this.

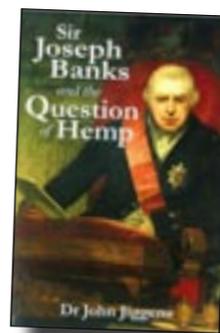
Jiggins is an author who has been kicking round the Australian literary scene (and Nimbin) for quite a few decades now. In that time he's written a number of very readable and often controversial tomes. His first published book was a gonzo telling of the Aquarius Festival (*Rehearsals For The Apocalypse* published 1983). Since then he's covered a lot of ground – the Hilton bombing (*The Incredible Exploding Man* published 1991), an Australian version of *The Emperor Wears No Clothes* with Jack Herer and an examination of the Don Mackay murder in Griffith and the role of the Nugan Hand bank in the whole sordid business (*The Killer Cop and the Murder of Donald MacKay* published 2009) among other writings.

He's also managed to become the leading expert on the history of cannabis in Australia. His research always seems to turn up new angles on the subjects that he covers, so it's no surprise that when he turned his attention to the British settlement of Australia he uncovered some unusual facts.

In his research, Dr Jiggins discovered that Sir Joseph Banks was the leading British expert in Hemp cultivation. He points out that hemp was the backbone of the empire in Banksy's time, the only known source of the fibre from which the sails and rope that powered the English fleets came, the equivalent of what oil is today. Unfortunately for the Poms, most of their hemp came from Russia and had to be transported through areas controlled by their mortal enemies, the French.

This lack of control of a primary resource played hell with the British ruling class' sense of security. They desperately wanted their OWN stash of hemp. Attempts to achieve this in America and Canada were unsuccessful and the price of hemp kept rising. Sir Joseph Banks (in his role as court genius and all-round Renaissance man) spent considerable time and effort studying Hemp and researching ways and locations for Britain to cultivate a large quantity of high quality cannabis. Australia seemed perfect for this task but because of the political nature of the mission (hemp being such a vital part of the war effort) it acquired a "top secret" category and was buried beneath an official cover story of the need for a penal colony.

But before we raise our bongis in salute to yet another historic stoner,



it'd be worth pointing out that Banks (like many a modern pothead) didn't know the difference between psychotropic cannabis and the industrial kind. In fact Banks didn't even realise there was a psychotropic kind until quite late in life and after several unsuccessful attempts to turn Indian dope into maritime rope. The

Australian hemp farm experiments also seemed to have suffered from the same botanical mix-up.

The bottom line seems to be that cannabis requires very different strains and methods of cultivation to achieve useable hemp than it does to grow smokeable pot. The Brits, it seems, just didn't get this. Eventually, Banks was astounded to discover that you could get very high off the stuff the Indians were growing and sent a stash of it to his good mate Coleridge the poet. What effect this had on Coleridge's already bountiful appreciation of opium remains unrecorded. You can imagine him commenting that the dreams weren't as good though...

Fascinating as these speculations may be, the main thesis of Dr Jiggins' book is that Australia was founded as a hemp colony and that ignorance of the difference between dope and rope resulted in failure in these attempts. Although this thesis becomes very believable and almost self-evident with unbiased close appraisal, no-one it seems has ever done so before. Jiggins (in doing this) has come up with a fresh and radical reappraisal of the strategies behind the colonisation of Australia.

A well-researched, informative and interesting read.

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Julius Hofstetter Quartet

The Lismore Jazz Club presents the Julius Hofstetter Quartet at the Lismore City Bowling Club on Sunday 27th May, supported them by the Northern Rivers Conservatorium Youth Jazz Ensemble.

The quartet – with guest vocalist Laura Nobel – is Julius Hofstetter saxophones, Peter Wilkins drums, Thierry Fossemalle bass and Ben Rogers guitar.

All have played together in different ensembles – Peter, Ben and Julius as students at SCU and with Laura in the Big Band, and Thierry, Peter and Ben in Captain Cod's Squad, to name a few.

This ensemble promises solid grooves, beautiful harmony and strong melodies. These musicians continue to develop their own skills and will add that special touch to this concert.

The quartet will play instrumentals by the likes of Miles Davis, Dexter Gordon, Coltrane, Parker etc. Laura will add standards like 'Angel Eyes', 'When Sunny Gets Blue', 'All of



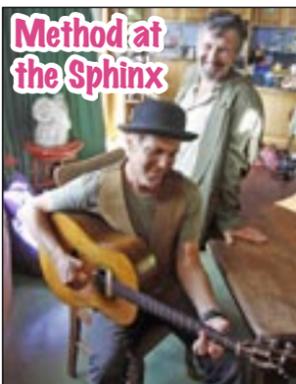
Me', and her own very beautiful version of 'Willow Weep For Me'. It will also be a rare chance to hear Julius improvise on baritone saxophone.

The afternoon start at noon with a sausage sizzle followed by music from 12.30pm, starting with a special performance by the Northern Rivers Youth Jazz Ensemble.

Be amazed at the skills of these young people. It is great to hear them and to know that the future of jazz is in good hands with these highly talented players.

Entry is \$10 for members and students and \$15 for non-members.

A great afternoon for the jazz lovers of the Northern Rivers. Be there.



Roots duo Method makes a welcome return from self-imposed exile this May with a string of shows around the Northern Rivers area.

Residing at opposite ends of the state, members Bill Jacobi and Frank Corby have kept this long distance musical relationship alive with regular bouts of touring and recording. While Frank is regularly seen in the drum seat with the Bondi Cigars, Bill maintains a long

standing involvement as bassist with Floyd Vincent and the Childbrides and is also regularly spotted in soloist and one-man-band mode. Put them together and you have Method.

Oz roots music in its purest form, Method bridge the gap between Americana Swamp and the Celts, evoking the journey folk music has made across the Atlantic and Pacific to end up with a unique Australian sound.

These are soundscapes and songs locked firmly in a gravelly groove, delivering a rhythm-driven roots experience with a lyrical heart. A new Australian Alternative Folk, played by two master musicians with humour, passion and world class Method.

Currently working on their fourth album, you can catch them live at the Sphinx Rock Cafe on Sunday 6th May.



Women of the Valley

Women of the Valley is a one-off evening bringing together Lil' Fi, Sue McKenna, Jo Satori and Nick Hanlon at 7pm on Friday 11th May. The common thread between these songbirds is that they all acknowledge music as a means to communicate with the Sacred Divine, so what better place than Uki's Holy Trinity Church to let the magic flow!

Nick Hanlon has been around the world as a singer and instrumentalist with various roots bands. Her ethereal singing was described by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as 'charm to burn'.

Dolphin award winner Jo Satori has a powerful and expressive voice reminiscent of the greats such as Ella Fitzgerald.

Sue McKenna is a musician, songwriter and performer with Mantlepeace, Imandan, Channelfree and the Rainbow Roots Roadshow, with an earthy style that has garnered respect and joy in the valley and beyond.

Lil' Fi is a multi award winning retro-punk vision described by Lucky Oceans as "an uncommonly convincing Blues-Mama...as good as it gets".

The 'congregation' for this soiree will be welcomed by Reverend John Tyman and refreshments will be by 'Bite Me' Gourmet Treats. Tickets are \$20 / \$15 for Ukitopia members, and are available from Happy High Herbs in Uki, the Uki Supermarket, at www.ukitopiaartscollective.com or on the door on the night, if available.

Bush Theatre screen previews

SAVING GRACE

Friday 4th & Saturday 5th at 7.30pm

Prim and proper English housewife Grace unexpectedly finds herself widowed, and she inherits the massive debts that her late husband had been accruing for years. When faced with losing her house, she decides to use her talent for horticulture, and hatches a plan to grow potent marijuana, which can be sold at an astronomical price, thus solving her financial crisis. Stars Brenda Blethyn, Craig Ferguson and Martin Clunes.

This film was the forerunner for the successful UK TV show, Doc Martin.

Brilliant, brilliant, brilliant! One of our favourite movies of all time! Don't miss this one!



TOMBOY

Family Friendly - rated G)
Friday 11th and Saturday 12th May at 7.30pm
Sunday 13th at 3pm
French with English subs

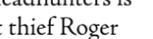
A family moves into a new neighbourhood, and 10-year-old Laure decides to deliberately present herself as a boy to the neighbourhood

children. This film focuses on the significance of gender identity in social interaction from an early age and the difficulties of being transgender and young.



HEADHUNTERS

Saturday 19th May at 7.30pm
Sunday 20th May at 3pm
Norwegian with English subs
Based on Jo Nesbo's popular crime novel, Headhunters is the story of art thief Roger



Reviewed by Belinda Marsh

Brown, who focuses on The Big One—the retirement score that will put an end to his financial troubles.



LE HAVRE

Friday 25th May at 7.30pm
Sunday 27th May at 3pm
French with English subs

When an African boy arrives by cargo ship in the port city of Le Havre, an aging shoe shiner takes pity on the child and welcomes him into his home. This film gives us hope for the human race.



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Sunday Gig Guide

May 1pm start

6th Method
Bill Jacobi and Frank Corby play roots, folk and rock

13th Kindling
A wonderful rollercoaster of moods, rhythms & vibes that is Loren

20th Vasudha and Jem
A sound that is diverse and intimately their own, drawing upon inspiration from around the world

29th Rebecca Ireland
A lyrical pot of rhythmic grooves and melting vocals

June 3rd Monkey and the Fish
Beautiful guitar and magical song craft, creating a special presence