



# THE NIMBIN GOODTIMES

The joys of Spring, for FREE

Pittosporum Edition  
September 2013

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## Stalking the alpha Australian

by Omega Breakpear

Prime minister Kevin Rudd was in Lismore last month to announce a \$50 million upgrade to improve services to stroke survivors.

The plan was announced at a press conference at Tarmons House, St Vincent's Hospital.

I'd managed to get in with my RiverFM membership card and by being early, arriving before the chartered bus of mainstream media journalists, who had flown in for the event.

I sat there waiting for the PM to appear with my handheld audio recorder and cheap camera while the rest of the press set up tripods, expensive camera gear and boom microphones. The only other locals I recognised were Andy Parks and a cameraman from NBN.

A few minutes later there was a commotion outside. The PM had arrived. Mr Rudd stood behind a microphone-covered lectern and talked for 20 minutes about his plans and about how bad Tony Abbott's plans were. Then we were allowed to ask questions.

Andy got in before me with the CSG question. "Mr Rudd, the Labor Party platform seems to be supportive of the unconventional gas issue, would you like to comment on that please?"

"No," Mr Rudd replied, "what we support is the system whereby our country's environment minister, the national environment minister, makes that decision. That means in critical



Janelle Saffin, Omega and PM Kevin Rudd

areas like northern NSW, and the Northern Rivers in particular, you're going to have our environment minister making the decision, not some state government minister in Macquarie Street. "I fully respect that passionate local representatives, like Janelle Saffin and others, are standing up for their communities. We've a system of laws in this country that provides proper protections for critical local issues such as this." Oh.

The PM was then asked why should we vote for Labor when things like increasing the dole, processing asylum seekers onshore and stopping live exports that Ms Saffin's passionate about aren't reflected in Labor's policies. Rudd's answer was that Janelle is so hard-working that "she makes me feel like a slouch" and that Labor's a broad church and not about to stamp out any views that local members might have.

The next question was about Mr Rudd's productivity

statement, specifically getting energy prices down and the role of CSG in doing so, and included comments from Chevron that morning about the resources boom not being over and that what we needed is a structural change in the cost base.

Mr Rudd said that he'd studied China's plans regarding resource and energy demands and investment and trade, and that these were facts unless you wished them away by realigning with China's changing demands with an attack on the provisions of the Fair Work Act that would affect not just miners but every worker, and he didn't think that was right. But maybe Mr Abbott might.

The PM had again avoided talking about Labor's CSG plans.

The rest of the media's questions were about gay marriage, asylum seekers and opinion polls written by wombats, according to an old Labor local who'd warmly greeted the PM outside earlier, and one question

about Peter Beattie.

As for me, with the CSG issue well raised and avoided, and being on the St Vincent's Hospital campus, I asked if the Government was going to decriminalise recreational drugs and put them in a medical category instead of putting people in jail. The answer was no.

Mr Rudd left the Press Conference with my friends the No CSG activists, chanting and waving the now iconic yellow triangles at him. I found the PM shortly afterwards having tea with Janelle and the much-revered political commentator Mungo MacCallum at a cafe in Lismore's CBD.

A couple of days later, buoyed by my brush with the politically and journalistically famous, I rang Janelle Saffin's office to talk about the campaign and maybe get a comment for this article, but she wasn't there and they were all too busy to talk to me. I was reassured that someone would ring me back, but they didn't.



Photo: Kiran Shah

## Fun Run a community affair

Around 150 people turned up at the end of August for the fourth annual Nimbin Fun Run around the village, organised by Cassandra Jefferys to assist her Discover Fitness facility at Nimbin Showground.

"The Nimbin Fun Run has always been more than a competitive race. It is about promoting physical fitness, bringing families together and in turn improving and maintaining a valuable community asset," Cassandra said.

There were plenty of challenges for the kids in the morning, in the lead-up to the race proper.

Overall winner Tony Curtis (pictured below) completed the 5km course in 17min 22sec, beating the time that he won the event in last year.

"This is one of the best courses to run," he said, adding that being at the head of the race meant some negotiation with pedestrians on the Cullen Street section.

But this didn't prove a problem for Lismore-based Tony, a multi-sport and triathlon enthusiast who trains before and after work, running over his paddocks and doing circuit work at Group FX gym, which is his sponsor.

This year Tony took up obstacle course racing and is a big fan, as are all three women in the team sponsored by the 9-12 Fitness Centre, one of whom, Kirin Apps, took out the Open Female section, with \$250 prizemoney.

It was the first time they had competed in the Nimbin fun run, and they commented favourably on the track. "It's got good scenery and varied terrain," they said, promising to return next year.



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FOR RICHMOND

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## YOU CAN'T TRUST THE OLD PARTIES



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