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# New rainforest 'bible' launched

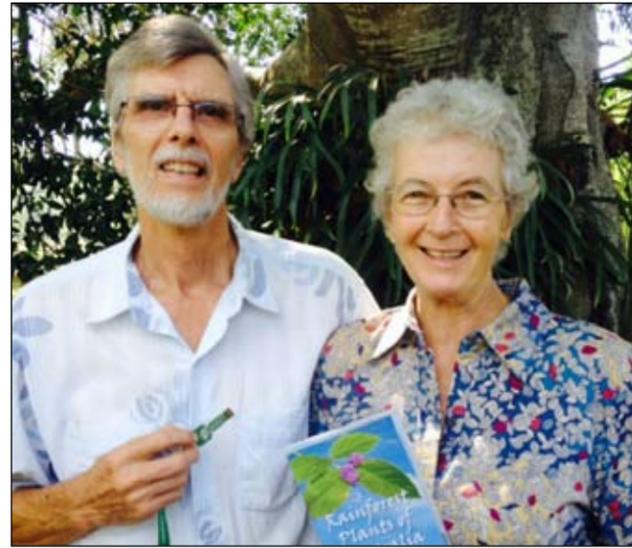
Local rainforest identities Hugh and Nan Nicholson (pictured) have just released the result of 13 years work on rainforest.

Their new computer-based interactive identification key *Rainforest Plants of Australia - Rockhampton to Victoria* will revolutionise identification of rainforest plants.

Nan said, "For the first time people with little or no botanical knowledge will be able to work out the names of plants that they see around them. Even fruits or flowers picked up from the forest floor can be identified to species."

"This USB key will make life a lot easier for landcare workers, consultants, researchers, gardeners, environmentalists, professional botanists - in fact anyone interested in rainforests."

Hugh is the photographer for the new key and has contributed or collected over 12,000 photos of the



1139 species of trees, shrubs, vines and mistletoes. He and Nan have travelled 1000's of kms to rainforest sites in Queensland, NSW and Victoria to gather the photographs and collect herbarium specimens.

Hugh and Nan Nicholson are the authors of the popular series *Australian Rainforest Plants, in the forest and in the garden*, Vols 1 to 6. They have been strongly

involved in rainforest for 40 years as forest activists, as propagators and growers of rainforest plants, as publishers and as teachers. The iconic battle for the rainforest at Terania Creek was launched from their farm next to the famous forest.

The new key has been a mammoth unpaid effort by four colleagues. As well as Hugh and Nan, Gwen Harden and Bill

McDonald, the authors of the well-known "Red Book" and "Green Book", have been involved from the outset. Gwen is a retired botanist from the National Herbarium of NSW in Sydney and editor of the 4-volume *Flora of NSW*. Bill is a retired ecologist from the Queensland Herbarium with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Queensland flora.

Hugh and Nan conducted a free training session for the key at the Environmental Education Centre at the Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens, which was a fitting place, since Nan's father Laurie Chelsworth was one of the founders of the Gardens.

The USB will soon be available for sale.

"People will discover that this is much more than a key - it is an information system about rainforests, said Nan."

For more information on the key and how to buy it go to: [www.rainforestplantsaustralia.com](http://www.rainforestplantsaustralia.com)

## IMAGINE...



A gathering will take place on Monday 8th December from 6pm, at the replicated IMAGINE ground memorial from New York City in Allsopp Park (a proposed Nimbin Garden of Peace), to remember John Lennon, on the day he was assassinated in front of the Dakota Hotel in 1980.

Bring flowers, memorabilia, candles and your music.



by Paul LeBars

Thanks to everyone who attended the Remembrance Day service at the Nimbin District Memorial. Special thanks go to Pastor Jim Gallagher and Bob Dooley, with extra special thanks to the teachers and pupils from Coffee Camp School and Nimbin Central School for their wreaths and flowers.

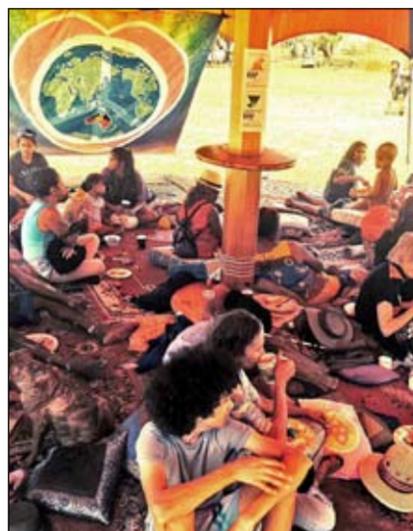
Thanks also to Gay and Darvy for the work on the memorial gardens.



"Lest We Forget"

## New NAFI President to inspire a younger generation

by Benny Zable



The Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc. held its 2013-14 AGM in November, and Adam Bell was elected new president with Katie Cawcutt treasurer, and Peter Wise, President of the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce, on the committee.

As outgoing president, I wish to first thank Katie Cawcutt and her helpers in keeping the whole thing going over these years. I hope the Nimbin youth will rally around the new President, Adam Bell to help shape and build on the foundation of the old Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc. Collaborate and adapting with the times ahead.

The youth I feel have a big challenge ahead of them, because of the climate change crisis,

mainly to find creative innovative ways to inspire and survive through these transition times: to find solutions to heal the damage done by my generation.

Well, on the lighter side... The Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc. presents Fantuzzi the Global Rainbow troubadour and Kat Dancer, who will be back to do a show for us here after the Woodford Festival at the Nimbin Bush Theatre on Saturday 10th January.

Then the next day on Sunday 11th January, he will be playing for the Rainbow Cha Tent at the Channon Market. Hopefully we will have a good Nimbin turnout for this event, which is both a fundraiser and a meeting of mind, body and souls in the spirit of Aquarius.

# Political compass shift in Victoria ousts Liberals, rewards Greens

It was a heartening result in the Victorian election, just months out from the looming NSW State elections in March 2015, with the conservative Napthine government being voted out after a single term.

New premier Daniel Andrews' Labor party received a swing of approximately 2% and will likely claim 48 seats in the lower house to the Coalitions predicted 31. The Nationals vote was down 1.4% yet they managed to retain seven seats. There will be only one independent, from regional Shepparton.

Tony Abbott has been under pressure as federal issues and the poor performance of the Coalition at a national level has been blamed for contributing to the defeat of the Napthine government.

Have the people of NSW had enough of the Liberals already, and can they forget



Photo: Julian Smith

The Victorian Greens have had their first lower party victory with Ellen Sandell (pictured with federal counterpart Adam Bandt MP) claiming the seat of Melbourne and Green candidates polling especially well in Richmond (36%), Brunswick (46.1%) and several other seats. INSET: New premier Daniel Andrews.



the procession of Labor snouts in the trough (and lets not forget that bottle of Grange...) through ICAC so soon? Could the Greens be

poised to capitalise on the unpopularity of both major parties? Stay tuned... and roll on the March NSW elections.

# What's happening at Gloucester?

by Scott Sledge  
President of Northern Rivers Guardians

AGL has announced that they have finished fracking the four test wells near the small scenic town of Gloucester NSW (population 2500.) They claim there was "no environmental damage." Naturally, AGL did not allow anyone onto the test sites to examine their claims.

On Saturday 29th November, 310 Gloucester protectors marched and about 100 walked onto the land fenced off for fracking, risking arrest for trespass, but it seems no one told the Police. Only two local officers turned up and peacefully escorted the crowd off the property which has been purchased by AGL.

If indeed the convoy of trucks which disturbed the peace for months along Fairbairns Road have ceased, then the daily demonstration of opposition by local residents and their supporters will probably diminish. The Halliburton employees were not local residents, for the record.

The company plans to test the flow rate of gas after fracking the four wells to determine whether they will go ahead with their stated intention of building a gasfield of 330 wells. They have approval already to drill 110 wells as Stage One, but the geology underlying the region is said to have fault-lines and very irregular layers which could make horizontal drilling into coal seams difficult.



I believe that the outpouring of community opposition will sway the gas getters away from Gloucester. AGL had to pay dearly for 24/7 security with a series 3 gates at each entry, plus video cameras on the guards and on towers. When I was there security guards constantly prowled the neighbourhood in their utes with yellow lights to watch out for whatever the residents might be devising. Any car showing up at the gates was followed and police were called each time any of the public stopped. It felt like a war zone. I got cited for slowing the convoy down riding a bicycle on the public road!

The government pressured Council to put up "No Stopping" signs the entire length of Fairbairns Road and even along the lane adjacent to the Protector's Camp established on private land at Jacks' Lane. All this doesn't come cheap, and AGL knows that they will be opposed every step of the way if they try to ruin this beautiful

landscape with their gaswells, security fences and pipelines.

The NSW government, responding to the Chief Scientist's Report, has said that it will not force gas exploration and mining on any community that "violently opposes it." I'm not sure what criteria will be used to assess levels of violent opposition, but the Resources Minister was at pains during an ABC radio interview to point out that Gloucester was an exception because this new policy will not apply to places where mining operations have already been approved. So... we have a problem here and with Santos in the Pillaga too.

What will happen if the Court finds in favour of Metgasco? I really doubt they want to kick the hornet's nest by coming back to Bentley. The government of NSW withdrew permission for drilling in May this year when public opposition reached an estimated 10,000 people who were prepared to stand in the way of the fracker's convoy. The very word

"Bentley" is now synonymous with successful community action to defend the environment. There is talk of government compensation to cancel Metgasco's licence for the Bentley area.

I believe that the Coalition really wants to keep the lid on this issue until after the election in March 2015. They want campaign contributions from the mining industry, but don't want to alienate the voters who are overwhelmingly opposed to this insane waste of our fresh water resources. I am appalled that anyone might think that a few years of increased fossil fuel extraction will be worth the damage to our future environment of generations to come.

Some people argue that fracking is proof that humans are too stupid to be trusted with care for this planet, but I think we have been hoodwinked by greedy corporations and are just now getting up to speed. When will the tipping point be reached? I really don't know.

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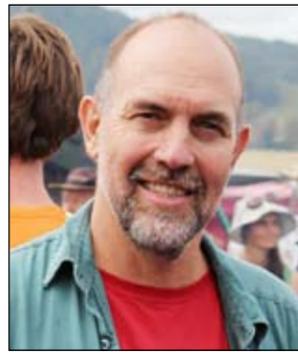


## Before election: hot air. After election: mining under martial law

by Aidan Ricketts

The NSW government has swung into pre-election mode, pumping out a lot of hot air, marketed as the new 'NSW Gas Plan', whilst at the same time making it abundantly clear to their mates in the mining industry that once the election is over they will get straight down to the business of fast-tracking mining and gas projects and enacting legislation to clamp down on the rights of communities to protest against the impacts of the out-of control mining and gas industries.

In classical political double-speak, we have seen the four Northern Rivers National Party MPs trying to put a positive spin on the Gas Plan by labelling it as a 'framework for a Gasfield Free Northern Rivers', when it is no such thing. The Gas Plan contains almost nothing of substance for the region, with its plan to temporarily suspend the processing of applications for gas exploration licences. The gas licences that most threaten the Northern Rivers are not mere applications, they are exploration licences that were renewed by the current government in September 2012 only days after the Lismore poll recorded a massive 87% opposition to the unconventional gas industry. Since that time the four



Northern Rivers MPs (the gang of four) have done little more than sit idly by whilst their government planned to unleash nearly a thousand riot police against the local community.

If they have really seen the error of their ways then there is only one useful thing that our sitting MPs could do to progress a gasfield free future for the region, and that is to unambiguously commit to the cancellation and/or buy back of all of Metgasco's and Dart's licences in the region. Slim chance though; in late November, the Greens and the ALP proposed legislation in the Upper House to cancel all of the relevant licences and the Liberal and National party members voted the proposal down, so we know exactly where they stand on the issue.

Let's be clear here, the Northern Rivers will remain gasfield free, but it will be despite the NSW government, despite the industry and

despite the abject failure of our four regional MPs to stand up for the region. Our community is strong and united and unfortunately if (as predicted) the current NSW government clings to power we will again need to defend ourselves from the combined force of mining corporations and their backers in government.

Only days after the release of the gas plan, the Premier obediently turned up at a dinner hosted by the NSW Minerals Council (mining industry lobby group) to announce, not only the post-election fast tracking of mining approvals but worse, new legislation to target communities that protest. In the words of Greens MP Jeremy Buckingham, "The Liberal and National parties are essentially just the political arm of the mining industry". And, as if we have learnt nothing from ICAC and the revolving door between the mining industry and high political office, Premier Mike Baird's former Chief of Staff, Stephen Galilee is the current head of the NSW Minerals Council.

Given the determination of the Northern Rivers community to remain gasfield free, one would think that the position of our government MPs would be very shaky at the coming election,

but unfortunately they are protected by a state voting system that favours the sitting members. Optional preferential voting in the local seats (lower house) means that the only effective way to record a vote against the sitting members is to make sure that you "number every square and put the sitting member last". Any failure by Greens or ALP voters in particular to fully exchange preferences with each other will favour the sitting MPs.

Voting doesn't change everything but it can change some things, so make sure now that your enrolment is up to date and that you vote against gasfields next March.

Our power and our resilience as a community comes from the fact that we are united in our determination to remain gasfield free and we are prepared to fight for our way of life whoever is in government. A change of government would make it easier on this occasion, but we will remain gasfield free and the NSW government is only buying into a world of pain by continuing to ignore the clear wishes of our beautiful and empowered region.

Thankfully we have learned through our experiences at Bentley that uniting for our region is an enjoyable and exciting experience and one that we can repeat if need be.

## Sports field targeted by vandals

Once again the Black Rocks sports field at Pottsville has been targeted by vandals.

On 12th November a barrage of approximately 180 golf balls was rained down on the sports field. The intent seems to have been to focus on causing damage to Tweed Council's pump shed, water tank and shelter sheds, with dents in the roofs and walls of this infrastructure. The Chinderah Golf Club have confirmed that the markings on these balls verify that they belong to their Club, and that golf balls had recently been stolen from their golf range.

Resident David Norris, who sighted a koala in a sapling on the edge of the sports field earlier that morning, said, "I have been visiting the sports field and surrounds twice a day since 7th November in order to document koala sightings for the Great Koala Count. After discovering the golf balls, I checked to see if the koala was still in the tree, but unfortunately it had gone. There is a 'no golf' sign at the sports field entrance, but golfers ignore the sign and are often seen hitting balls on the sports field and into koala habitat."

On 11th November, residents found a large number of screws scattered on the sports field access road, and it has been suggested that they could have been distributed by vandals with the intent of causing damage to car tyres.

The sports field has been open since 2010 and, according to Mr Norris, there have been ongoing illegal and inappropriate activities which are not only impacting koalas but also costing ratepayers needless expense in repairing Council infrastructure and providing



increased Council ranger surveillance. Fifteen months ago, a locked boom gate was installed in an attempt by Council to protect resident koalas and stop hooning, vandalism and theft. In September 2014 the boom gate was replaced by a koala/dog-proof vehicle gate which Council has decided to close at dusk daily.

"Now that there is easy vehicle access during the day. Cars drive 300 metres down the access road in the middle of the bush, and people do what they like. The hoons have returned, unleashed dogs exercise on the sports field and in the bush, and now it's easy for vandals," said Mr Norris.

Council has agreed to prepare and lodge a development application on behalf of the Pottsville and District Men's Shed to be constructed on the Black Rocks sports field. Mr Norris

said, "I cannot understand why men would want to come to such an isolated location, knowing that it is highly likely that their shed will be broken into and/or vandalised. There is also a risk of fire if vandals access flammable commodities housed in the shed. As the sports field is at the junction of three koala corridors, the rural fire service could be faced with fighting fire on three fronts. The koala population would never recover."

Other sites are being investigated, including the Barry Sheppard sports field, which is more centrally-located within the Men's Shed's membership catchment between Kingscliff and Pottsville. According to Mr Norris, the AFL and Pony Clubs are happy to have them, and there would be far less impact on the coast's koalas, which are now listed as endangered. There would also be far less security risk.

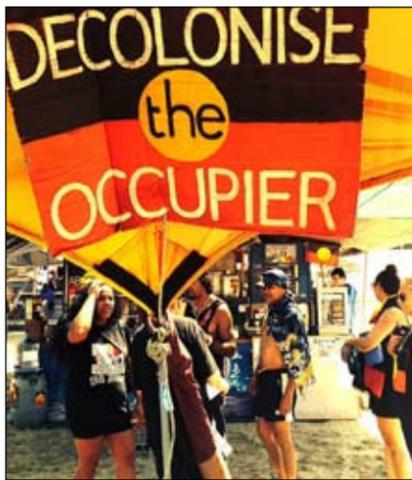
# Embedded G20 reporting in Musgrave Park

by Michael Puck

To all the world, it seemed like G20 Brisbane went off quite smoothly. Unlike Pittsburgh, there was no tear gas at every march – in fact the worst the protesters had to deal with was the heat. There were a lot of police patrols around Musgrave Park, but the Elders kept pointing out they were keeping the peace, and we came to an accommodating understanding. When your erstwhile reporter was called 'Brother' by a Queensland policeman (unprovoked) he knew things could be worse with 6000 cops in town.

Ceremony was followed, which is important. Assistant Commissioner for G20, Katerina Carroll, was smoked in and smoked out, and was more than respectful in her dealings with the Jagera mob. The Aunties sang Bob Randall's 'Brown Skin Baby' about Stolen Gens, and Katerina was tearing up, because she knows it's her office that has conducted the genocide, and still does. As far as practical reconciliation goes, she and her mob went some way to healing old wounds. When it was pointed out to her privately that never before had I seen a soldier of the occupying power treat or be treated with such respect, you could see new understanding dawning in her eyes. Here's a gig that will change her life.

Not to dwell too long on how one woman has doomed herself to a career expounding to world leaders in policing how to have a really boring weekend by respecting lore and let the First Nations mob keep the peace for you - the action was really among the Brisbane Blacks. Musgrave Park is Jagera land, a sacred meeting place, a place where the battle for fire-keeping has been fought for years, and where ashes are now going across the country. Your erstwhile reporter arrived



green-skinned from a motorcycle odyssey from Melbourne not really expecting to meet any blackfellas, and was blessedly in the minority – not far off two per cent – of whitefellas being treated to paradise in the red zone. There were toilets that stayed pristine for two weeks, hot showers, electricity, a stage in a truck, the Bentley kitchen – Uncle Coco and the crew didn't pull this off in a weekend. And the scene it fostered was something else.

For me, the central event was the Youth Forum on Thursday 13th November. There four youngfellas told of their journey through sovereign Canada, seeing first-hand First Nationalism, Elders leading tribes building ceremonial structures on gas pipeline routes, and keeping the helicopters out. They were gifted with a vision, I get the feel, and they are using it.

Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance – WAR – is their grassroots beginning, launched at the Forum. They are getting serious about sovereignty, and there were truths spoken that day, so eloquently by children of the Millennium, Elders

of tomorrow before the smiling Elders of today – truths so self-evident and so unrelenting that I had to leave the room. We're getting serious about sovereignty. It's happening. Aboriginal people are stating quite clearly that sovereignty was never ceded, that Cook's claim was unlawful annexation, and that the fruits of an illegal occupying power oppressing the Land and her people, are borne out by black deaths in custody, by continued forced removals, by the botanical genocide, as Auntie Donna Ruska put it, that sees not a single eucalypt in Musgrave Park. Everything we see, the edifice of the State, is built upon a lie and a war crime. This is what is up for discussion.

And a lot more besides. To tell the truth, your erstwhile reporter was too busy at the Park to get to the People's Forum, or to a rally. I'm sure a lot of fecund discussion was had, because I was party to much and not party to much, much more. I get the strong feeling that something was begun in Musgrave Park. We didn't get Putin there, but the fact, was we explored the possibility. We explored so many possibilities and sowed seed in such fertile ground that, in the opinion of this embedded reporter, we will be asking each other in years to come: "Were you there, man? Were you there in Musgrave Park, where the new blood of activism got together and served coffee to the Elders, kept the fire and spread the ashes?"

As I sit in a van in Nimbin, toking up in the first rain since I left Melbourne, I think of Katerina, and of telling her a major reason things were so peaceful. Yandi. I had to clarify she knew what I meant, and she does. Yes we're going to have to talk about that too, but there's time. The conversation has begun.

# Rail campaign on track at public forum

by Garth Kindred

The Save Our Tracks Forum in Lismore held on November 22 was by all measures a great success. A wide range of presenters provided some enlightening history and deep insights, dispelled some commonly held misconceptions and inspired those attending to maintain their outrage.

Byron Shire councillor Basil Cameron presented a regional view of transport potential and limitations according to the topography and population areas of the Northern Rivers. One myth dispelled was that there is not enough population along the corridor to justify a rail service. Some 240,000 people live within 4kms of the rail line. This population is rapidly increasing. Added to this we have a staggering 4.5 million tourists annually streaming through Byron. This is also rapidly on the increase. There is huge potential for both regular rail commuter services and for specialised tourist train services to disperse the visitors out from the coast and into the hinterland towns and villages and cities like Lismore. This would bring tourists and tourist dollars in far greater measure than what



Presenters at the rail forum included Cr Basil Cameron, Senator Lee Rhiannon, Matthew Townsend and Dr Mehreen Faruqi MLC

Rail Trails could ever deliver. NSW Greens MLC Dr Mehreen Faruqi cleared up the myth that the rail trail would save the rail corridor in public hands. She said that NSW has some of the strongest legislation in place right now protecting the rail corridor and any other legislation would only weaken this protection. There was discussion about the huge amount of land owned by State Rail in Byron and Bangalow and how much money could be made by property developers if the legislation was changed. Also discussed was the huge amount of political donations from the road lobby and the government's obsession with roads over public transport. Dr Faruqi shared the terrible fact that the 2014/15 State budget provides for zero cents for public transport in all of regional NSW.

Neale Battersby, a locomotive engineer,

discussed the history of the line and the manner in which successive governments had downgraded the capability and timetabling and cut the number of seats available while selling off or neglecting profitable freight services. It is clear that from 1980 the rail service to the Northern Rivers has been run down and this has been greatly to the detriment of our region.

Phillip Hill, a local State Rail employee for many years, has built tracks and bridges all along the local branch line. He described the ARUP study costings over \$900 million as ridiculous. Phillip said that the re-sleeper program that occurred just prior to closure meant that from Casino to Lismore steel sleepers had replaced wooden ones one in four on a straight and one in three on a curve which fits within safety standards and some parts of the track between Lismore to Bangalow had three or four

steel sleepers in a row. He said that you could virtually put a train on that tomorrow. Also prior to closure, the bridge replacement and repair program meant that the cost of restoring a few bridges now was minimal.

Matthew Townsend presented his plan for an integrated transport system in the Northern Rivers under the working title of North East Transport (NET). Lismore City Councillor Vanessa Ekins discussed the local political situation, praising Byron Shire mayor Simon Richardson for pressing NOROC for a 'rails with trails' option in Byron. This could be extended to Lismore and to this end she intends to put a notice of motion up for her council to debate.

Australian Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon finished off with a very positive prediction – We WILL get the trains back. That is certainly the outcome that NRRAG and TOOT and rail supporters will continue to be working for, particularly in the lead up to the next state election.

Please visit and like the Northern Rivers Railway Action Group's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/nrrag](http://www.facebook.com/nrrag) for more info and photos of the forum.

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# Letters

*Letters to the editor*

NGT welcomes letters by email or post by deadline. Letters longer than 300 words may be cut. Letters already published elsewhere will usually not be considered. Include full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not

**CONtrails**

I recently read with great interest an article by Elowishus Mirkatroid titled 'CON-trails?' (NGT October 14)

Perhaps some actual scientific research could have been done and information gathered from credible sources, not a simple google search and copy and paste from Wikipedia.

I'm sure you are fully aware that newspapers are read by people from all demographics and all educational levels and some people will take what is written as gospel.

Having grown up in the Byron Bay area, I am passionate about our environment and preserving this great area. But as an airline pilot for one of the major carriers, I take great offence to what has been written, even if it is tongue in cheek.

Some factual truths about "CONtrails": they are formed by water vapour in the exhaust of aircraft engines, or by pressure differentials above and below a wing. As for the longevity after formation, this will depend on humidity, temperature and wind strength/direction.

Change of colour can be affected by pollutants in the air, particles or inversion layers. A recent volcanic eruption's ash cloud travelled around the earth three times, so pollution doesn't have to be a local thing.

As for the "accidental" spraying in America, such heavy metals would occur in airline jet fuel. Some jet aircraft have the ability to dump fuel in case of an emergency – now, I know this is highly undesirable, but when your aircraft is on fire or you have had a catastrophic failure,

sometimes dumping fuel is your only choice.

I spend every hour of my working day in an aircraft cockpit, and I have flown many different types. I am still searching for the "mind control" "sun covering", "Nimbin killing" switch, button or dial to dump chemicals.

I care for our planet and am environmentally conscious, I don't need people giving me grief, questioning my morals and ethics because of some ill-informed journalist.

Jordan Purdey  
Como, WA

**EMR**

I am writing as a doctor and a mother regarding the conversation around microwave phone towers, considering the council has approved an installation near Nimbin town, right next to the preschool that my daughter attends.

As a doctor I have seen my share of people who claim electromagnetic sensitivity, all with very similar symptoms of localised irritability, dizziness, palpitations, nausea, headaches and longer-lasting fatigue and effects on memory and concentration.

Those with metal-plated fractures have experienced pain in these areas, also recognised by other doctors, and it has been my observation that people with other undercurrent illnesses such as adrenal insufficiency or chronic fatigue and undermethylation are more prone to this hypersensitivity, as they are to the anxiety and depression on which their symptoms are often blamed, none of which most doctors are trained to bioenergetically or even biochemically analyse or treat.

In my training in public health, there are so many instances of misleading information being propagated by retail companies to protect their marketable product, that I would expect this to be their default position unless proven otherwise, a process that takes many years and financial support to study, especially as associated illness may take years to manifest.

*About us*

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**NEXT DEADLINE:**  
Wednesday 31st December

Email [nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com](mailto:nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com) or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Of the studies around EMF sensitivity and subsequent illness, many are open to interpretation, refuted due to study type or possibly influenced by financial backing. Regardless, the World Health Organisation has recently recognised this disorder, recorded with increasing frequency around the world, and in the world of biology, studies on animals are questioning the effects of such radio towers on echolocation in bees and birds in the area, affecting their population.

All I can surmise from the argument is that no-one yet knows the true effect of these towers on biological health and raises the question of their safety in our town, especially as a mother when they will be located adjacent to the thin young skull of my own child.

Dr Jacqueline Boustany  
Nimbin

**G20 protest**

Thanks to all who supported the Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy G20 actions.

It was great to see so many folks from the Northern Rivers region support the Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy in Musgrave Park, braving the heat and taking part in marches supporting Aboriginal Sovereignty.

Especially Michael Jack and the Rainbow Chai Tent crew, who provided shelter and needed infrastructure for the duration of the week-long gathering.

Even though small, it achieved to help greatly the mob who were under great stress from the large police presence. In the end the police were full of praise for the conduct of the protesters.

Benny Zable  
Nimbin

**Police raids**

As a matter of justice, I am pleased to see that many people are protesting over excessive and heavy-handed police presence in Nimbin.

I was appalled to read of the police raid on the Oasis Cafe, featured in the November NGT. Surely eyebrows must be raised with the description of "heavily armed police officers".

The whole described process was sickening, traumatising patrons and staff and what for? Maybe the deadly drug, marijuana?

As I quoted in my letter (NGT October), my family and I experienced a similar frightening police raid in Nimbin, and were treated as guilty until proven innocent.

I would like to ask our dedicated mayor, Jenny Dowell, and the Lismore City Councilors how would they feel if visiting at this

time, like some non-residents were.

I will now ask the impossible. Could our Lismore Council write to the Police Department, on behalf of this council's peaceful residents, asking for respect for all people, at all times.

Maybe this has already been done. I would hope so.  
June Crawford  
Koonorigan

**No rail**

I attended the Rail Forum on Saturday 22nd November and was disappointed that local councillors and Green representatives are being persuaded by rail enthusiasts to pursue the expensive pipe dream of a railway.

The Northern Rivers region should be lobbying to get increased funding for public transport that will assist everyone, especially those who don't have access to cars.

One attendee, a senior lady, extolled the fantastic Northern Rivers Community Transport service that not only covers her shopping and medical visits but also runs a bus for social outings and will pick up from home and return. They cater for elderly and disability groups, indigenous and youth.

Promotion and incentives of car pooling, perhaps reserved parking spaces etc, particularly on the Ballina to Lismore route, funding to get smaller, fuel-efficient buses running more frequently to outlying towns and villages and the rapid development of an inter capital freight train would reduce large trucks and the need for so many single person vehicle trips.

While there is nostalgia for the old railway, it is a fixed track, which can't deviate to service towns such as Nimbin, Cawongla, Main Arm etc.

The development of North Byron may well be suited to light rail, given the dreadful congestion leading into Byron, and while I agree with subsidised transport for some people, there still needs a large volume of full-fare paying customers to alleviate the running cost to some degree.

Nothing has happened with the railway since 2004, and while there were some 'cherry picked' photos of a few sections which 'appeared' good, the physical evidence of deterioration is there for everyone to see in most other places.

Let's leave all this bickering and negativity behind and demand more services to more towns and villages more often. This can happen right away.

Richard White  
East Lismore

**Tweed koalas**

Under Tweed Council's watch over the last decade we have lost 50% of our Tweed Coast koalas. With an estimated 110 to 140 koalas left, there is no room for complacency if we are not only going to maintain koala residency, but also to increase numbers to a viable population size. This is the only way to stop localised koala extinction.

It is clear that Council is unable to implement effective management actions to protect our resident source koala populations. An example of this is the plight of Black Rocks koalas, where two individuals were euthanased this year due to the stress-related disease Chlamydia, but Council has failed to adopt measures to ensure there are no more deaths.

There is no point in embarking on highly commendable koala habitat regeneration projects if there are no koalas to take up residency. As stated in the Tweed Coast Koala Habitat Study, "While transient koalas ultimately contribute to overall population size, the primary focus of conservation and management efforts must be to maintain residency" (p60).

There are at least four individual koalas residing and breeding in the primary koala habitat trees adjacent to the Black Rocks sports field and access road site. However, Council has decided to leave the recently installed koala/dog-proof gate open in daylight hours, even though they have received many reports of koalas sighted on the ground during the day on and either side of the access road.

Since the koala breeding season commenced in September, hoons and unleashed dogs have had easy access to the sports field. Over 180 golf balls were rained down on the sports field, targeting and damaging Council infrastructure. Hundreds of screws were found along the full length of the access road, suggesting a deliberate attempt to puncture car tyres. There has been another attempted break and enter of the Council shed.

Council's answer to deterring these anti-social activities is to put a Men's Shed on the site (which will operate about 12 hours a week). Council rangers and police have been unable to enforce compliance, so what hope will our often vulnerable senior male citizens have? The answer is obvious: lock the vehicle access gate, which was installed for the purpose



of protecting koalas (with a key issued to authorised personnel).

David Norris  
Pottsville

**Renewables**

We live in strange times. The big picture is changing. It always has been of course and yet presently, it seems to be slipping a little more noticeably.

The world's climate is moving into one of its grand historic cycles, only this time it is balancing seven billion humans. The impact of human activity on this planet has been a problem for centuries and while we argue over the extent of this impact, the same problem continues unabated.

Countries across the globe are turning increasingly to renewable energy sources. Alternatives are being sought to the tradition of burning fossil fuels. Whatever the extent of climate change, there's a move towards something smarter, more sustainable.

Generating your own power rather than burning vast quantities of coal makes sense. This is precisely what China, India, Germany and many others are moving towards. So where does this leave Australia's reliance on coal for both our power and a source of income?

Answer: nowhere.

Failing to see the writing on the wall about renewables, could be one of those grand historic dangers that has Australia choosing Beta instead of VHS, or hydrogen filled airships in preference to aircraft. Or trashing our environment for a gas export that no-one will want!

It's ironic that a sunburnt country looks to the ground for answers, rather than the sky above, but I did say we live in strange times!

RJ Poole  
Lismore

**Technology and abundance**

The belief that movement



toward equality within the society is a call for people to be identical, is often the misconception of those who have done well out of an exploitative society and wish it to continue.

People are able to have equality of resourcing; that is, equality of energy or money, yet display their own personality and individuality.

The view that individuality has to take a back seat to the well being of the society, that is, become mere numbers or parts of a machine for the societal good, is a side-effect of malfunctioning of centralised control.

Scott Barlow says I deplore material abundance (NGT, Nov '14). He needs to quote me rather than inaccurately paraphrase.

The material abundance I most admire is healthy air, water and soil. The

idea that products from factories are abundance is an illusion based in not wishing to notice the damaging side-effects of technology. Planetary well-being is obviously based in give and take rather than the all-take of our economic system.

Scott suggests that a system of reciprocation is romantic. It was rational as pre-literate tribal people would generally attest until they were overtaken by the irrational view that all would be well with continual exploitation.

Tim Flannery has suggested that a means out of the environment crisis may be for humans to function as a super organism similar to ants. That does not mean human personalities are overridden. It merely suggests that we all understand it is best to head in a unanimously agreed direction in terms of action to

**Notices**

**Partner wanted**

Thom Culpeper is offering one sleeping or non-sleeping partnership in a bolshi-culinary effort, to bring into reality the finest 'Piccolo', dining table south of Moscow. I have the venue and the guts! You must have a blade, an apron, the dough and a heart! Contact: [thewholeearthveg@gardener.com](mailto:thewholeearthveg@gardener.com)

**Photos found**

In house in Paradise Valley, a collection of lovely family pictures and a great baby album dating from around 2004. Would love to trace the owners and return it to them. Contact Saskia Kouwenberg on 0474-809-677.

**Shout out to rollerskaters**

Nimbin begins a new skating chapter in 2015. On the recent strength of international and local roller skating sports, roller dance and yes, chicksinbowls.com; Nimbin Junior Rollers will be training kids in the principal skills of flat-track quad skating. As a freshly conceived association, Nimbin Junior Rollers are seeking local roller skaters, both young and old to see what depth of interest there is within the community. Contact: [njr@mail.com](mailto:njr@mail.com) for more information.

**Nimbin Flix**

Saturday, 13th December from 7pm at Birth and Beyond. Food and drink available.

**Embroiderers' group**

Meetings are 9.30am-2.30pm every 1st and 3rd Wednesday and every 3rd Saturday of each month in the function room at the rear of the Red Dove Centre, Keen Street, Lismore. Contact 0423-337-872.

**Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services**

- Senior Cits Christmas Party: Tuesday 16th December, 12-3pm at the Nimbin Bush factory.
  - Tuesday Seniors Social Group & Broadband Kiosk finishes 9th December 2014 and recommences 13th January.
  - Wednesday Senior Cits finishes 10th December and recommence 14th January.
- NACRS wishes everybody a safe and happy holiday. The NACRS office will re-open on 7th January.

**Christmas Carols**

Celebrate and sing Christmas Carols at St Mark's Anglican Church, Nimbin at 7pm on Tuesday 23rd December. Contact Faye at 6689-1440.

**Al-Anon family groups**

Are you concerned about somebody else's drinking? Al-Anon meetings are held at Ballina, Lismore, Murwillumbah and Grafton. For more details, go to: [www.al-anon.alateen.org/australia](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/australia) or phone 1300-252-666.

**Free listings**

Keep it brief and to the point and if we think it's of interest to our readers, we'll run your community notice for free. Email us by deadline (see box on opposite page).



avert the environment crisis. Nevertheless, dissent from unanimity is an individual option also.

That generally agreed direction cannot proceed

while it is irrationally thought technology dependence is intrinsic abundance.

Geoff Dawe  
Uki