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School's prescription for being well

Nimbin Central School held its annual Wellbeing Day on 22nd May. This important day in the school calendar is an exciting event that brings together a range of presenters and activities to the school providing the students with information, strategies and skills to deal with the pressures and demands of being a young person in today's world – as well as to have fun!

The keynote address was presented by Tony Gilding from Borneo Orang-utan Survival. Tony presented a fascinating, sad yet hopeful presentation on the plight of the orang-utan in the face of decimated forests in Borneo. In response, the school has so far raised enough money to sponsor two orang-utans for 12 months, and is looking forward to an ongoing commitment to this project.

Throughout the day, the students attended other workshops run by The Buttery, Youth Connections, Nortec and specialized school staff, engaging in activities ranging from quiz shows, collaborative artmaking, rap song writing and storytelling with puppets.

Themes covered by these activities included anti-bullying, friendships, drug education, sex and healthy relationships, resilience, peer support and teamwork.

After a delicious BBQ lunch, professionally catered by the new Nimbin Central Hospitality class, the day was topped



off with performances by the Cultural Infusions Collective. These included interactive Bollywood-style dancing, a comedy loosely based on French history, and an Italian-based play filled with fun audience participation.

A very enjoyable and worthwhile day was had by all, with the general consensus being that these events are providing all students with valuable learning and life experiences.

We are already looking forward to more of these days in the future.

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Costa joins Djanbung to celebrate milestone

Costa Georgiadis, host of ABC's Gardening Australia, will help Nimbin's Djanbung Gardens celebrate its 20th anniversary on the Queen's birthday long weekend. Costa studied permaculture with Robyn Francis in Sydney in the 1980s.

A compacted and degraded cow-pasture purchased in 1993 was transformed by Robyn into the permaculture gardens that now have a global reputation as an innovative and vibrant training facility

and demonstration farm.

"The vision was to create a living classroom and environment for people to visit and learn skills to make a real difference in the world," Robyn said. "I'm looking forward to Costa joining us for this milestone event."

The Saturday Open Day and Expo will feature workshops and presentations, ending with a special fire ceremony before the evening AbunDance gets into swing with a great line up of local bands and performers.

Sunday's program includes an in-depth tour and history of the gardens with founder/designer Robyn Francis; story telling and an open-mike talent show in the evening.

The Monday Family Funday will be MC'd by Costa with a packed program of fun events including scarecrow making, vegetable critters, permalympics 'Manic Mulchers' Championship and gumboot throwing. Local Food will be a key theme with an expo by local farmers



markets and a big communal pot-luck lunch, for everyone to bring dishes to share.

For more information visit the PCA/Djanbung Gardens website: www.permaculture.com.au

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Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre news



www.nnic.org.au

Bentley and Beyond

Many congratulations to everyone who participated in any way in the Bentley campaign. A massive team effort. It's not over yet but maybe someday soon the NR will be declared Gas Field Free by the NSW Government. In the meantime the Sibley St project aims to BUILD on what we know about doing things differently and to influence change and thinking outside the square in terms of a sustainable future. The events of this year have only strengthened our resolve to plug onwards and upwards with the project.

Budget Pain

Exactly what the impact of the budget will be on NNIC is yet to be made fully clear, but we suspect we will not come out of it completely unscathed. We are concerned about the impact of the budget upon our organisation, our clients and the community in general. As info comes to hand we will let you know about it.

'Our Pets, Our Wildlife'

Workshop at Nimbin Town Hall on Sunday 29th June at 11am.

This workshop is about responsible pet ownership and living with wildlife, and will include information about chooks and snakes – how to keep them all safe. There will be experts there to advise you on practical solutions. Don't miss it! (See article on facing page)

Sustainable House Day 2014

See the Sibley St project website for

all the info you need about the AHD events in September, including entry forms and guidelines for the Design a Granny Flat Competition. Entry forms etc also avail at NNIC during our opening hours. www.sevenonsibley.com/shd2014

7 Sibley Street Fundraising

About \$13,000 and a bit to go. Many thanks to the anonymous donor who donated \$5000 during May. And thanks also to David Hallett and all the performers who helped make the Aquarius Anniversary Folk Concert at the Town Hall on Saturday 10th May a lovely event. That event raised a little over \$1000.

WANTED... Houses, Farms and Gardens

We are putting out the call for people who are interested in opening up their homes, farms or gardens for this year's Nimbin's House, Farm and Garden Weekend, likely to be held in September. We are especially keen to hear from people who have straw bale, mudbrick, sand-sawdust-cement, bamboo, hemp or earthship buildings. Contact Cat at the Neighbourhood Centre on 6689-1692 or email: catanderson6@gmail.com

Angels for Auction

Thanks to all the Angels who have applied so far. We are still taking Angels (see our website). The (On-line) Angel Auction will start up pretty soon so watch out (esp on Hook Ups) for

more info during June to ensure you don't miss your chance to bid on one or more of the Angels of your choice.

Struggling with unpaid fines?

You may be eligible to apply for a Work Development Order which enables you to pay your fines down by doing volunteer work at NNIC. Make an appointment with one of our Community Workers to find out if you are eligible.

Are you a local health practitioner?

Are you listed on our website? If not and you would like to be, simply complete the form (avail on the website – see Health) and send back to us and we can add you on. This will assist local people to find you.

NNIC website

Our website aims to serve the community. It is updated on a weekly basis and is always worth a visit. If you think something should be on there but is not, or for any other feedback, email us at NNIC: admin@nnic.org.au

NNIC is a local charity and community organisation run by locals for locals, and is funded by NSW FaCS as a Community Hub to provide information and referrals to disadvantaged community members. For information about all services available in Nimbin, Lismore or the Northern Rivers region drop into NNIC and ask at our front desk, or make an appointment with our Community Workers for referrals, support and assistance.

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Our pets, our wildlife

Practical tips and information about how to avoid problems between pets and wildlife will be provided at a free public seminar in Nimbin this month.

The "Our Pets, Our Wildlife" seminar has been organised by the Animal Law and Education Project (ALEP), EDO NSW, and Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre.

The seminar will include presentations from ALEP, EDO NSW, Friends of the Koala, Gomo the Nimbin cat, and Ron Porter (poultry breeder and judge). The presentations will be followed by discussion, led by a panel of experts, of issues such as wildlife-friendly fencing, living with snakes, and koala protection. Lunch will be provided at the end.

EDO NSW solicitor, Nina Lucas, said domestic pets and pet ownership practices can have a big impact on native wildlife and vice versa.

"In Nimbin, there has been an issue with pet chooks being taken by snakes, and with dogs chasing native wildlife," Ms Lucas said.

"In these circumstances, it is important to know your obligations as a pet owner. Being a responsible owner also includes caring for your pet's needs, including regular off-leash exercise in a safe environment," said Angela Pollard of ALEP, which is a project of the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre.

The seminar will be held on Sunday, 29th June from 11am to 2pm at the Nimbin Town Hall. Lunch is included. For more information, please contact Natalie at Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre on (02) 6689-1692 or email: admin@nnic.org.au



by Cr Danielle Mulholland, Mayor of Kyogle

Following on from the success of the last two mayoral meetings at Mallanganee/Mummulgun and the Cawongla Community Centre, the next mayoral meeting will be held at Wiangaree Hall on Wednesday, 11th June, from 10am to noon.

Residents from the Wiangaree, Grevillia and Old Grevillia areas who have issues they would like Council to know about, or who would just like to say hello, are welcome to come along. Please ring and book a time with Ms Janelle McLennan at Council on 6632-0214 so that you won't be kept waiting.

If you can also advise her of your issue and contact details (i.e. phone numbers, email, etc.) this will help me to make some background enquiries so that any information you receive is correct and up to date.

It's certainly been a busy few weeks. I can't cover it all, but here's just a snapshot.

I had the wonderful privilege of attending a very moving Anzac Day dawn service in Kyogle, then the combined march at Mallanganee, and then back again to Kyogle for lunch at the Seniors cNtre, hosted by our very capable Kyogle RSL.

A special thank you should go out to all the participants and volunteers who worked so hard to make this a very special occasion.

Kyogle Council jottings

As always, I am surprised at how many outstanding people we have in our community who give so much of themselves to make these occasions memorable for us all. Their spirit of self-sacrifice should inspire everyone.

I had the chance to get out to the 6th anniversary of the Woodenbong Country Markets and what a wonderful day it was. If you get a chance to get out there, take it, as I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

The markets are held on the last Saturday of each month and there's always live music, food, airbrushing and spinning wheel workshops and exhibitions, kids jewellery working and other fun activities.

Those of you who follow my adventures on Facebook would have seen me at the very wonderful Mummulgun Public School Fete, our outstanding Australian Military and Red Cross Day at Kyogle, or the Wiangaree Dog Trials – all in the same day!

I also make special mention of the Quota dinner I attended on the evening of the May 10 and would like to extend my thanks for the invitation, ladies. I hope to spend some more time with you again shortly.

Council's focus groups continue quietly behind the scenes helping to set some goals that we can work towards for the future.

If you want to be involved, just let me know. We'll keep the momentum going to achieve some real outcomes and I'm hoping that while gradual, you'll see some tangible positive changes in the near future.

I'd like to let everyone know that the Mayor of the Tweed Shire and I went out to visit the camp at Bentley so I could see for myself what

was going on, and to meet with a number of residents and businesses who have lent their support to the cause.

I understand that some of you may disagree with this kind of action.

I don't mean to cause any of you distress, however the potential and irreversible harm that the CSG industry can cause to our area is not, in my opinion, worth the risk and I will continue to resist its presence in our LGA as much as possible.

I want you to know that I will always stand by my pre-election statements regarding CSG. You may not always agree with my position, but I assure you that when I make a promise, I keep it.

Being at the Mummulgun Public School recently got me thinking about the wonderful work done at our local schools by all the committed principals, teachers, parents and a host of community volunteers.

It reminded me that for many smaller communities, the school plays a central role in their lives and in some cases acts as a centre for the community. So I was thinking – I wonder if students of those schools might find it useful to have direct contact with Council?

Maybe a one-hour question and answer session with me, possibly as part of the Mayoral outreach program, or maybe a separate initiative. Young people are our greatest asset and future of our region so maybe helping them to connect with Council when they're young might encourage active citizenship when they're older.

Kyogle Council: 6632-0214
Danielle.Mulholland@kyogle.nsw.gov.au

A country practice

by Noelle Lynden-Way,
Community Representative,
BUNK

Well, we'll have to wait until the new Federal Senate take their seats in July to understand how the changes in the budget pertaining to Health apply to Australian families and individuals. Hospitals and health administration are the responsibility of the State, and the Federal Government provides the funding.

According to information published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 17th May, the Federal budget has forecast:

- All Australians to pay at least \$7 for GP visits, blood tests and X-Rays (from July

2016).

- General patients to pay \$5 more and Concessional patients 80cents more for prescription drugs (from January 2015)
- Hospitals will be free to charge for emergency department access.
- More people to pay the Medicare levy surcharge if they do not have private health insurance (from July 2015)
- Fewer people to qualify for a rebate on their premiums due to a freeze of income thresholds (from July 2015)

Kyogle MPS

BUNK Health News will devote two columns to the history of Kyogle MPS because it is such an involved story. Tom FitzGerald OAM (left) has been a valuable resource, together with the book 'Health Services in Kyogle 1903 – 2005' written by the late Helen Flower (above right), available in the Kyogle Library.

It's a story of community tenacity and determination, one that residents can be very proud of.



Helen writes that "the story of the Kyogle Hospital really parallels the history of Kyogle ... with the breaking up of the large station properties, the beginning of closer settlement and the formation of a village providing some amenities to the surrounding farms." In 1904 two nurses, Sr. Agnes Knaggs and Nurse Mabel Henshall arrived in Kyogle from Melbourne. They had travelled by boat to Byron Bay and up the Richmond River to Casino where they boarded a coach for Kyogle. Around this time, a number of doctors had set up practice, and in 1906 Kyogle was constituted a township with its own Shire Council.

That same year Dr. Greer converted a house to become the town's first Private Hospital. It was named Kyogle

Cottage Hospital and the two nurses began work there. It was quickly filled, and by 1907 had fifteen patients and an extra patient had to be put in a tent nearby.

Dr. Greer purchased three allotments and built a new, larger private hospital finished in 1907 on Campbell Road backing on to Irwin Street, which became known as the Loretto Private Hospital. He built himself a large house on the property and the present Greer Street was named after him.

Prior to World War 1, the community started to fundraise for a public hospital and more health workers arrived in Kyogle. A Kyogle Public Hospital Movement was established and liaised with the Department of Health for a grant for land. After the War, the Returned Soldiers' League, who wished to see the hospital made into a Memorial for fallen soldiers, joined them in their efforts.

On 20th February 1919, a town meeting gave support to a Public Declaration of the citizens' desire to erect a public hospital. The community continued to raise funds from dances, concerts, boxing events, races and

sporting events of all sorts.

There was a lot of back and forth over the next few years re the amount to be provided by the Government, the monies to be raised locally, the location of the hospital and the architect's plans.

In 1922, the Hospital Committee signed a guarantee to raise 1,000 pounds per annum to maintain the hospital. It was agreed that the new building would be called Kyogle Memorial Hospital and the foundation stone was laid by Mrs. Southam on 5th November 1924 on behalf of the mothers of deceased soldiers who had been killed during the recent war. Mrs. Southam had been chosen by ballot from mothers of deceased soldiers in the district.

The erection and completion of the Kyogle Memorial Hospital marked the culmination of a movement started prior to the First World War. The hospital was opened free of debt. The fund had started with 384 pounds and had grown in 13 years to 6,000 pounds.

On 2nd May 1925 the first patient, Mrs. Kennedy was admitted to the Kyogle Memorial Hospital.

Wellbeing Expo

Kyogle Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Ageing and Wellbeing Expo is to be held on Tuesday 17th June from 9.45am to 2.15pm at the Kyogle Memorial Institute Hall, Stratheden Street, Kyogle.

This Expo is being organised by Alzheimer's Australia NSW in collaboration with local community and aged care services. It will promote healthy mental, social and physical ageing and family, friends and carers are welcome to come along and enjoy the day, which includes morning tea and lunch.

General Information

Remember to call the Health Advice Line if you have a health issue. It's a 24-hour, 7 days a week free service on 1800 022 222. An RN (Registered Nurse) will speak to you and assess whether or not you need to go to the Emergency Dept. at your local MPS.

Read more information about this service on: www.healthdirect.org.au Mental Health Helpline, phone 1800 011 511



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Liberal Government's budget 'cruel and unfair' says Elliot

by Justine Elliot MP,
Member for Richmond

I recently spoke in Parliament about the Liberal National Government's cruel and unfair budget. Below is an extract from my speech and you can watch the full speech on my Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/JustineElliotMP

"I am very pleased to be speaking on this matter of public importance today, namely: The hurt and division caused by the Government's unfair budget and broken promises. That is exactly what it is – an incredibly cruel and unfair budget based on a whole series of broken promises.

We all remember all those commitments we heard before the election about no cuts to education, no cuts to health, no new taxes. That is exactly what has happened. They have reneged on all those commitments they made prior to the election. How do Australians feel? They feel completely and totally betrayed by the Liberal and National parties.

Seats like my seat of Richmond in regional Australia have been really hit hard. I have been inundated by appeals, particularly from many older Australians, who quite frankly are devastated and in total fear about the implications, particularly in relation to the health measures.



First of all we are seeing this government dismantling Medicare, pulling apart those very important parts of universal health care with their \$7 GP tax.

We have also seen it with their \$80 billion cuts in funding to schools and hospitals. When we look at seniors, first of all they will be hit with that GP tax. We have the Prime Minister saying today that it is a 'modest' amount. How appalling and arrogant is it that that he speaks like that of the GP tax? People are terrified of this. People are cancelling their appointments to doctors now because they are so concerned about the impact of this tax. Seniors will also have their pensions cut. They will have them cut with the changing indexation rates.

They are also worried about the petrol tax. In regional areas the petrol tax will really hurt. Families are concerned as well because of the freeze on the rates of family tax benefits. Families are also impacted by the cuts to funding for

hospitals and the \$30 billion for schools. What sort of values do the people who make these sorts of funding cuts have? For those in regional areas it is a real betrayal by the Nationals. We see that so many times but this is a complete betrayal by them.

I also want to touch on the impacts on young people. Young people in the regions will be severely impacted not just through the cuts to schools but also through the cuts to training. There have been billions of dollars taken out of youth training and apprenticeships. For kids in the country who aspire to go to university the government has taken that opportunity away. The Liberal Party and the Nationals have taken that away from regional Australia. The changes to university fees will make it almost impossible for those kids to get to university and to afford it.

If you look at regional areas right across the country you will see that this is a cruel, nasty and unfair budget. It is unfair on seniors, families and young people. It is based on the broken promises by each of those members on the other side of the chamber. I say to all those Nationals members from regional areas: Shame on you for betraying regional Australia. You walked around telling people that you would not do this, and each of you did it. It is unfair and cruel, what you have done."

Community must respond to ensure North Coast environmental protection

Green Scene

by Jan Barham MLC

The decision by the State Government to halt the inclusion of environmental zones in the north Local Environmental Plans in September 2012 was based on the assertion that there were unreasonable constraints being placed on landowners by environmental protection zones.

The report released by the Government last week confirms the importance of the zones to protect the region's significant biodiversity.

The community now has until the 5th June which is World Environment Day to make submissions on the report.

I encourage the North Coast community to make submissions to this report and its recommendations. The planning process for the region must protect the significant biodiversity which is such an important element of the North Coast character and economy. There is recognition of the need for councils to undertake more detailed assessments of the values of their local government areas to ensure that the planning process provides clarity for all landowners and the community.

The Government must



Greens MLC's Jan Barham and Jeremy Buckingham with Protectors of Bentley at Parliament House, Sydney in May.

now release some of the funds it has collected from development applications under the Planfirst program to councils to allow the scientific analysis to be done. The assessment of the environment requires detailed and time-consuming work by scientists. Local Government is already burdened with many cost-shifting programs from the state and the Minister should now provide the funding support for this process to be finalised urgently, especially considering the delay that was created by the previous Minister's intervention.

The changes proposed to the E zone report whilst recognising the importance of North Coast high conservation values, does not afford them the highest protection under the planning scheme. The community of the region should be demanding that

the most rigorous protection should be applied to high conservation value areas including old growth forest, rainforest, wetlands, mangroves and riparian vegetation. An ongoing contentious issue with the revised planning process that is being forced onto councils by the Standard Instrument LEP has been the removal of the coastal zones. The current Standard LEP does not address climate change and the North Coast areas with a history of coastal risk identification should continue to be recognised by a zone.

The report has also failed to recognise the priority of protecting core koala habitat. As koalas are an identified at risk species under Commonwealth legislation and the North Coast has significant populations threatened by the ongoing clearing of vegetation and

loss of habitat, it is essential that the known areas of habitat are afforded the highest possible protection and covered by an E2 zone. The suggestion of overlays to protect important ecological values is not clear, as it only requires 'consideration' of matters. Unfortunately there are too many experiences of matters of consideration being ignored and it is unclear if such matters would be able to be challenged legally.

As the original dissent about the environmental zones emerged from rural landowners who believed their agricultural practices were impacted by environmental zones, there is now an opportunity for the Government to take the lead and support those farmers to protect the biodiversity on their land. There is no doubt that for North Coast farmers there is a market advantage in protecting the environment alongside their commercial practices. The success of businesses such as Brookfarm, which produce Macadamia Muesli as well as other products, has proven that a business model that supports the enhancement and protection of the environment can deliver positive commercial results.

The Government should be prepared to consider new creative ways to support dual goals for land use management.



by Cr Jenny Dowell

From the mayor's desk

joy to our region, there remain many threats from this industry. If Metgasco or other Petroleum Exploration License (PEL) holders try to act on those PELs in the future, our community is united to oppose them and will remain alert to any attempt.

At the May meeting Cr Clough successfully moved that we request the state government not to allow mining unconventional gas exploration or production in areas that have been identified by Rous Water as having the potential as groundwater sources for the region's future water needs.

MRF

The biggest news of May was the opening of the \$3.65 million Materials Recovery Facility (MRF pronounced 'Murph') and Glass Processing Plant. This exciting development puts Lismore up there with the national leaders in waste management. We can now stockpile and sell bales of plastic, paper, aluminium and metal and crush and use glass as a roadbase. The MRF is also a social enterprise employing a crew of nine workers and two supervisors from House With No Steps.

We are the first Council to include a household collection pouch for specific items such as CDs, corks, Xrays, spectacles, printer cartridges and mobile phones. Even if you do not have a yellow lidded recycling bin, you can collect a pouch at Council, Lismore Library or the Wyrallah Rd facility, fill it and drop it off at the Nimbin Transfer Station or Brewster St drop-off centre.

On the council website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au or in a recent Local Matters, readers can find out more about the extra items that can now be recycled. See Dirty Dozen: 12 recycling rules for your yellow bin.

Waste Nimbin

Council is very pleased with the high number of responses to the recent survey on waste and recycling practices and needs in Nimbin. Staff are collating the survey responses and will present the findings to the Nimbin Advisory Group (NAG) at its next meeting in August. If any changes are recommended, it is possible that some may be introduced this year while others may not come into effect until the 2015/16 financial year. In the meantime, Nimbin residents should be aware that there are proposed increases in the waste levy for Nimbin in the 2014/15 One Year Plan (Budget) that is on exhibition until June 11.

GMS

Over the past 12 months, Council has been preparing a draft Growth Management Strategy (GMS) that outlines where we want to see housing, industrial and commercial development. The Imagine Lismore process in 2012/13 gathered the ideas of many residents in various forums on how they see Lismore, Nimbin, other villages and our rural areas in the next 20 years. Recently Councillors provided guidance to the staff in the rate of growth we would like to see. The options of A. low growth (as we are), B. medium growth or C. high growth each have

their pros and cons. Council has indicated to staff that we want to see the GMS written using a medium growth scenario. We do not want the current population burdened with the additional up-front costs of new infrastructure such as water and waste water that would be required by the high growth scenario. While there are some who will accuse this Council of being timid in not aiming high and others who will argue for no or low growth, the next Council will revisit the GMS to measure take-up of land to recalculate future demands.

The medium growth scenario or Option B involves urban and village expansion and restricted rural housing to protect our farmland. It is anticipated that the Draft GMS will come to Council in August before going on exhibition for public comment.

Budget

As indicated above, Council's 2014/15 One Year Plan or Budget is on exhibition until June 11. The document and supportive lists of fees and charges is complex but I urge readers to look at it. Comments from community will be collated by staff with any late applications for change and all will be presented to an extraordinary meeting of Council at 6pm on June 17.

E zones

Finally, the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) has released the independent review by Parsons Brinckerhoff into Environmental (E) Zones across Far North Coast Councils. Mayors and Senior Staff



were invited to a one hour briefing of the findings and the draft DPE responses in Ballina on May 14, the day the report was released, and it is fair to say there was a mixed response to the recommendations.

Before the *GoodTimes* is on the streets, our Councillors will hear directly from DPE and the independent reviewers but unfortunately the DPE has requested that the briefing not be public.

The Review of Environmental Zones in Far North Coast can be found on the DPE website: www.planning.nsw.gov.au The report released on May 14 is currently open for comment until June 5. Our Council has been joined by others to request an extension as three weeks is simply not enough time for Council or community to digest and respond to the report.

Roadworks

A number of road maintenance activities including gravel maintenance grading, roadside slashing and bitumen pothole repairs are scheduled for the Tuntable Creek and Terania Creek areas in the next month, weather permitting.

Local Matters

If you are not getting Local Matters each fortnight, please ask your local post office or contact Council. We pay Australia Post for every address or Post Office Box or Post Office to receive this important Council newsletter, so we want to make sure it reaches you.

Every month we think that the next Council meeting will be the big one keeping us in Chambers for many hours. May was such a meeting. We finished at 11.10 pm, more than 5 hours of deliberations and concentration.

The two main items of public interest involved a development application for a youth, community centre and church in Goonellabah that required the demolition of three existing buildings and the removal of some trees including a large eucalypt. Two of us declared conflicts of interest and left the Chambers for the vote that was unanimous.

The second item that aroused community interest was an application for a subdivision of two residential lots for an 11-unit development. That vote was also unanimous and is an example of development we can expect to see as we aim to increase urban density rather than urban sprawl. Not all the community is supportive of this increased density but Council is committed to meeting the demand for 1-2 bedroom units.

Gas mining

While the successful end, albeit at this stage temporary, of Metgasco's testing at Bentley has brought great



by Cr Simon Clough, Lismore City Council

Simon says...

state of the art and will save Council significant amounts of money and major transport costs. I was very concerned that previously our glass was going north to Queensland for landfill. It will now be crushed on site and used for road base. Similarly cardboard, which we previously had to pay to have taken, will now be sold.

For me the best thing about the MRF is that Council has dodged the real possibility of trucking 'waste' to Queensland where it would be placed in landfill. This totally absurd situation arises because NSW has an ever-increasing landfill levy while Queensland is levy free and it is much cheaper to pay Queensland companies to deal with our 'waste'. Currently there are trucks transporting 'waste' from Sydney Councils

to Queensland because it's cheaper than disposing of the 'waste' themselves. And people wonder why we have a problem with climate change!

The MRF has also created employment for people with disabilities. If you haven't received an info pack on the exciting new ways your waste can be recycled, phone Council on 1300 87 83 87.

Lismore City Council has also taken up the challenge of becoming 100% dependent on renewable energy by 2023. The city's consultants have suggested that the council could reduce its consumption of coal-fired electricity by 30 per cent over the next 10 years. Part of the initiative will be a farming the sun project which will encourage community investment in a large scale

solar project directly powering the Sewerage Treatment Plant. There are a whole bunch of other options presented to council by Sustainable Business Consulting.

The council will probably need a total of 4MW to 5MW of its own generation capacity to meet its demand. The options available include large ground-mounted solar PV farm, concentrated solar thermal, micro hydro, biogas, and landfill gas. All of these options will be assessed for efficiency and environmental impact. If Council can achieve its renewable energy goal, it will definitely place Lismore at the forefront of renewable energy in Australia.

I'm hopeful that the suspension of Metgasco's drilling licence at Bentley will be a 'watershed' that will see unconventional gas banned in the Northern Rivers. There are a myriad of reasons to

explain the community's victory. There was certainly no 'silver bullet' type one explanation. I believe that the three years of hard work by the community informing itself on the dangers of invasive industrial gas fields, holding countless meetings, going house to house surveying and holding some amazing events, was the foundation of the victory.

I was particularly conscious of the number of unsung volunteers who contributed to the Bentley blockade. At any one time I estimate that there were 60 to 70 volunteers contributing to the effort. People volunteered at the camp doing everything from providing information, greeting new people, operating communications, cooking, washing up, cleaning toilets, providing water, admin, traffic management and firewood, to mention a few jobs. Outside

the camp there were people on outlying vigils, blockade vigils, Simmos (those prepared to 'lock on' and possibly be arrested), support people and a host of others. Additionally there were dozens of people who cooked food and made significant financial contributions. With that support going to the blockade over a three-month period, is it any wonder that the blockade was successful?

I think it's also important to acknowledge the people who put their lives 'on hold' to be at the Bentley blockade, people coming to the 'greet the dawn' ritual before work, and also the families who have experienced all manner of stresses and strains to try and bring an end to this industry that threatens our land, water, air and existing rural industries.

Wishing you all a warm and safe winter.

All praise to everyone involved in the successful Bentley Blockade. Thanks specifically to the Nimbin Environment Centre and the people of Nimbin and surrounds who made a significant contribution to the protection of Bentley. More on Bentley later.

Council has launched its new \$3.5 million Material Recovery Facility (MRF). The MRF is

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