

The Alternative Journal of the Rainbow Region



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Motel development plans get frosty reception



by Bob Dooley

A proposal to increase tourist accommodation has met with a mixed response from within the Nimbin community.

John and Jill Seymour, owners of 80 and 82 Cullen Street, have spent over five years developing their motel concept as a revival and update of classic affordable lodgings for travellers and tourists, designed to be "inexpensive and environmentally conscious, without sacrificing comfort or aesthetics".

They conducted a worldwide architectural competition to design a 2015+ accommodation complex. Over 36 entries were received and Juan Lacape, an architectural artist from Guatemala, whose work best mirrored the ecological and green initiatives of Nimbin, was chosen.

His work is the basis of a Development Application, which has just been lodged with Lismore Council, to repurpose 16 cargo containers into 32 queen-sized bed units that incorporate earth-friendly technology, including hyper-efficient A/C, energy-sipping LED lighting, conservationist showerheads, intelligent climate-control systems, solar panel roofs, and water collection, storage, and recycling systems.

The proponents envision a green project in all senses of the word, and have developed

a comprehensive sustainable approach for the eco-futuristic motel, which they say will create a much-needed boost to the commercial activities of Nimbin.

"We believe in offering low-cost holiday comfort that puts the spotlight on the local community," said John Seymour, director and co-founder of thecubes.co "We're not here to be a destination. Our goal is to give everyone a relaxing place to call home while they enjoy local businesses, cultural events, and environmental attractions."

John and Jill held several meetings in Nimbin to introduce their concept at the end of June, including a presentation hosted by the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce that elicited a surprising range of views about the development.

Concerns were raised about the impact on other accommodation providers and occupancy rates, in the light of the stated "guaranteed cost of \$99 per night, every night" (for two), which is aimed at "middle level tourists" and families, who could book an entire floor to provide sleeping capacity for five.

Mr Seymour was asked about the likelihood of it becoming long-term accommodation in the future, to which the pleasant and softly-spoken developer answered simply, "It's not designed for that."

Others were concerned about the effect on the "unique character of

the village" of a motel in the main street, including its interface with the streetscape and vehicular access, and after viewing a series of architectural renderings of the two-storey buildings, did not appear convinced.

Also at issue was a tree, known as the Singing Tree, a massive eucalypt behind the Oasis Café, which appears slated for removal in the plans.

A café customer commented, "It seems a well-thought-out plan, but it's a shame to see these backyards turn into a carpark for high-class tourism."

However, John Seymour's promotional material says, "thecubes@nimbin promises to be a perfect fit for Nimbin's friendly, eclectic atmosphere, offering comfortable, laid-back accommodation." Read more on-line and view detailed plans at: www.thecubes.co

Dates for the public exhibition period of the Development Application will be announced on Council's website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au and in its publication 'Council Matters'.

Comments can be made by emailing or posting a submission to Lismore Council before the closing date, indicating the DA application number and address. Reasons for any objection should be clearly stated.

John Seymour addressing the Chamber of Commerce meeting



Site plan for the 32-bed development; architectural rendering above left



Elsbeth, Simonetta and Jillian hug the Singing Tree



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