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Fair-minded and FREE

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New mural tells creation story

by Bob Dooley

It was a very hot morning on Friday 12th January, but that didn't stop a large crowd assembling in Nimbin's Allsopp Park for the unveiling of the new billboard-size mural, depicting an important local Dreamtime story.

The mural was created collaboratively by Bundjalung artists Gilbert Laurie, Louis Walker and Oral Roberts, who had been working on it since October.

Unveiling the mural, Gilbert Laurie (pictured) described its central creation story of Dirrawong, featuring the fight between Ngumahl, the spirit goanna and Nyooingbah, the snake. The snake had stolen the goanna's poison, and as the goanna chased him to get it back, landforms, waterholes and significant places were created. The chase ended on the coast at Goanna Headland, Evans Head.

On the billboard, the images of the snake and goanna are raised up from the background, which itself consists of Dreamtime stories. To be read from bottom left to top right, the symbolism of Original spiritual culture can be seen transitioning from under the water, onto land and into the sky.

Notable local features at the top of the mural include, from left to right, the Southern Cross; the seven sisters (for the seven seasons); the three brothers (the Richmond/Wilson,



Photo: Sue Stock

Clarence and Tweed rivers); and the Mt Warning spirits, Gaugan the beautiful princess and Balagan the great male warrior.

"This will be one of the most photographed pieces on the North

Coast," Gilbert Laurie predicted. He was hopeful that an interpretative plaque would be added in the future.

The project, which included replacement of the old mural structure, was funded by Lismore

Council, and Mayor Isaac Smith was there to congratulate the artists, saying Council's involvement showed its respect and support for Bundjalung elders.

As the mural's temporary cover,

designed by Benny Zable, unevenly drooped and fell away, there was prolonged applause for the new mural from the 100 or more people present – admiration that will surely be shared by all who view it.



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