

THE NIMBIN GOODTIMES

Your FREE community paper

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NAIDOC Week celebrates Original culture and language

by Leanne Clark, Event Officer, Lismore City Council

The annual NAIDOC Celebration Day is a chance for all community members to learn about the world's oldest living culture through sharing, fun and friendship.

The 2019 NAIDOC theme is 'Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's work together.'

At the heart of this theme is a call for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to have a greater role in decision-making within the Australian Parliament and for a meaningful treaty process to take place that facilitates truth-telling and healing.

NAIDOC Celebration Day is about providing a space where the whole community can proudly celebrate the richness of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Events like this provide an opportunity for people to talk to one another, learn from one another, laugh with one another and ultimately, leave with a greater appreciation and understanding of one another's culture.

Lismore's NAIDOC Celebration Day runs from 10am to 2pm on Thursday, 4th July at the Lismore Showground.

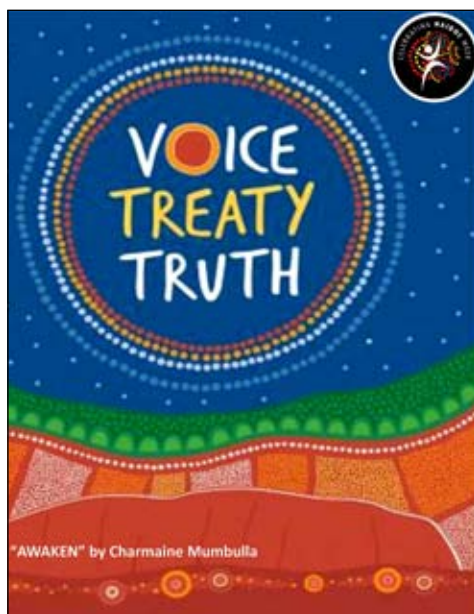
The day will feature a formal Welcome to Country and information stalls from more than 30 local service providers, Aboriginal business displays, as well as family activities including sports games, children's activities, face painting, food stalls a sausage sizzle and a talent showcase by local schools.

The Nimbin celebration will be held on Friday 12th July, starting at 10.30am with a Reconciliation Walk through town, then the unveiling of a bi-lingual interpretative sign at 11am at Allsopp Park, proceeding to Peace Park for music, dance food and fun for kids.

Entry to both events is free and the whole community is welcome.



Gilbert Laurie will lead smoking ceremonies in Lismore and Nimbin



Code-based land clearing is a failure and should be stopped

Photo courtesy NEFA

The Nature Conservation Council has called for the immediate suspension of code-based land clearing and a rigorous independent review of the codes and resources available to police them, after a scathing report by the NSW Auditor General.

"This is disaster," NCC CEO Kate Smolski said. "Hundreds of thousands of hectares of wildlife habitat are being bulldozed under these laws with virtually no oversight, accountability or enforcement of environmental protections."

The Auditor General found:

- Land clearing is not effectively regulated because government processes are weak.
 - There is no evidence clearing of native vegetation is done in accordance with approvals.
 - Responses to incidents of unlawful clearing are slow, with few tangible outcomes.
 - Enforcement action is rarely taken against landholders who unlawfully clear native vegetation.
 - There are processes in place for approving land clearing but there is limited follow-up to ensure approvals are complied with.
- The report also found that "unexplained land clearing" can take over two years to identify and analyse, making it difficult to minimise environmental harm or gather evidence to prosecute.

"Despite around 1,000 instances of unexplained clearing, over 500 reports to the

environmental hotline each year and around 300 investigations in progress at any one time, there are few prosecutions, remediation orders and penalty notices for unlawful clearing," Ms Smolski said.

Research by the Nature Conservation Council shows an area of bushland bigger than the Australian Capital Territory has been approved for bulldozing since Premier Gladys Berejiklian relaxed land-clearing laws in November 2017.

"Our worst fears are now being realised," Ms Smolski said. "Government data shows approvals have been granted for almost 280,000 hectares of bushland to be bulldozed under laws that let landholders decide for themselves whether the ecological harm of clearing is acceptable."

"The massive amount of deforestation now in the pipeline in NSW is similar to what we saw in Queensland when former premier Campbell Newman scrapped deforestation controls there."

Ms Smolski said this report was a key test for the new Environment Minister Matt Kean and the Berejiklian Government.

"They must not sweep this scathing report under the carpet."

"We call on Premier Berejiklian to place a moratorium on code-based land clearing and to institute an independent review of the laws and the resources available for government authorities."

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