

# Walking track nears completion



**From the Mayor's desk**  
by Steve Krieg  
Lismore City Council

The long-awaited Nimbin Rainbow Road Walking Track is fast nearing completion.

Council recently held an on-site meeting with the project's Steering Group to walk through the construction of the track.

The Steering Group, made up of key Nimbin community groups and

stakeholders, were happy to see how much progress has been made.

The inspection also provided the opportunity to look at park furniture, way-finding signage, planting and landscaping, as well as decide the future of existing structures along and near the track. It was decided that possible plantings were preferred over turfing.

A meeting between the bush regenerator and the Nimbin Community Centre will take place later this month to discuss opportunities for identifying revegetation areas and areas for landscaping.

Key stakeholders will also be involved in an up-coming workshop to walk through the site to discuss artworks and wording for wayfinding signage now that designs have been finalised.

A number of other items

were also proposed for consideration to improve public amenity such as additional shade, seating, fencing and improving accessibility, all of which will be considered based on quotations and budget.

Thank you to the Nimbin community, Community Centre, Nimbin Chamber of Commerce and private landowners for making this project possible and for their continued support throughout construction.

The project is fully funded under the NSW and Federal Government Bushfire Local Economies Fund.

## Student exchange

Students from our Japanese sister city Yamato Takada visited Lismore as part of our student exchange program in July and had great time in Nimbin.

They went to Nimbin



LCC General Manager Jon Gibbons and Mayor Steve Krieg with students from Yamato Takada

Dairy, the Candle Factory, Bush Theatre and the Artists Gallery.

Thank you to the community who made them feel very welcome.

## Roadworks

Here is a quick update from our Roads team.

Works on the Blue Knob Road landslip project are progressing well.

The drilling and soil nail installation at the first site are complete, and testing

is scheduled for early this month.

Meanwhile, drilling has begun at the second site, and clearing and excavation work are underway at the third and fourth sites.

On Newton Drive, repairs are continuing for the installation of a new culvert after the previous culvert failed. The road has been slightly diverted as works take place.

Works are now completed for Bridge 3 on Terania

Creek Road. Crews have completed the concrete approaches at Bridge 2, with installation of structure restraining brackets and concrete footings for guardrail completed.

The temporary side track was also removed, and installation of the guardrail is scheduled in the coming weeks. Bridge 1 has works commenced on the concrete approaches following successful installation of a side track.

# Flood waste clean-up grant

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has awarded Lismore City Council a grant of \$928,350 to support the on-going 2022 flood clean-up and recovery work.

Member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin said, "Natural disaster clean-up and recovery is a long-term process. Those with experience of disaster recovery will know that bulky and contaminated waste often remains for some time after the initial clean-up.

"Often this waste isn't revealed until way down the recovery track, so this money is very timely."

The council has been awarded the grant under Round 2 of the EPA's Illegal Dumping and Flood Waste Recovery Program, and will use the grant money to safely remove and dispose of residual fragments of flood waste containing asbestos.

The clean-up works will be project managed by the council using specially trained local contractors, and are expected to be completed in 2025.

The EPA has led several clean-up and recovery programs in the region to ensure waste left behind following the floods is removed safely and efficiently.

# Vision and hope for the future

by Vanessa Ekins

I am keen to be the next mayor of Lismore when we vote for a new council this September.

With 20 years of experience as a city councillor, I have demonstrated responsible and community focussed commitment to this place we love.

My achievements as former mayor include bringing a conflicted council into harmony, ensuring a surplus budget with no rate rise, adopting an affordable housing strategy that is being implemented today, and initiating the hand back of sacred sites to the Widjabul Wiabal people.

The first time I met the mayor of Lismore, I showed up in her office with my toddler, and complained about petrochemical industries in South Lismore that filled homes with fumes and closed classrooms in the primary school across the railway tracks. Ros Irwin, our first female mayor, listened and sent an authorised officer to detect the odours with their nose. For real, this is the actual process!

After six months of odour monitoring a report came to the council with mitigation recommendations. By this time, I had a new baby and we went to the meeting to hear the councillors discuss the report. First on the agenda was a fascinating debate on horse manure and the public gallery erupted with emotional accusations.



I could not believe this happened every Tuesday night and I was hooked on the real life drama of council meetings, attending them all and getting to know the local issues, the jokes and the personalities in the room.

The South Lismore matter was resolved by a responsive council and a compliant industry but the lesson I learnt is that Lismore City Council has a direct role in our daily lives and the liveability of our communities. I want to be the mayor that opens the door to anyone with an issue or idea so that together we can revive Lismore and our villages.

I love this place and my heart is full of hope for the future. Our community has faced unprecedented challenges with floods, landslides, fires, and yet we have an opportunity to thrive. Under my leadership, council will be responsive to community needs and ensure services are affordable.

For example, core functions such as waste, must be managed efficiently by our own people not handed over to big out of town companies. Nimbin's water supply must meet local needs and be sustainable. Local businesses need as much access to council's \$200million budget as possible; this is how we invest in the local economy.

Practical actions and community-focussed leadership will make a difference. My commitment to you is that I will do the work, show up and focus on what you say is important.

Come and meet the team and kick up your heels at a lively Bush Dance, Nimbin Hall on Saturday 17th August from 5.30 pm, featuring the band Ragged Blossoms.

For more information about our campaign, upcoming events, and how you can get involved, please visit the Lismore Greens socials, [greensoncouncil.org.au](http://greensoncouncil.org.au) or contact Deb Nicholls: [debviett@hotmail.com](mailto:debviett@hotmail.com)

## Meet your 2024 Council candidates

Elections for local government in NSW will be held on 14th September.

So that we can be better informed about candidates for Lismore Council, the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce is organising an opportunity for you to meet, listen to and ask questions of candidates who, if successful, will be elected for a four-year term.

All candidates will be invited, and the meeting is open to everyone.

Lismore City Council has an important role to play in the future of our village and surrounds, and the Chamber is keen to see a Council that listens to and respects our views, while providing effective mechanisms for our voice to be heard.

Your vote is important.

Meet the candidates at Nimbin Bowling Club on Thursday, 29th August, 6-8pm. Sibley's Bistro will be open for dinner from 5pm if you want to get in early.

For more info, contact: [chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au](mailto:chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au)

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## On the same Page

by Kevin Hogan, MP for Page

I held an event to celebrate young sporting champions from the Northern Rivers. They have all excelled at their sport and represented us at a state, national or international level.

Congratulations to the Frey siblings from the Nimbin area who were successful: Mikayla Frey for triple jump and Daniel Frey for shotput.

Mikayla recently travelled to Perth to compete in the National All School Titles where she won her event. An amazing effort. After this she went to Adelaide for the Australian Championship under 16s where she placed 4th.

Daniel was called to Fiji for the Oceania Championships under 18s. Placing 2nd here, this qualified him for the Nationals event. Here Daniel represented Australia and our local area incredibly, putting him in the top 20 juniors in the world for shotput.

Congratulations to the Frey siblings for their amazing efforts representing our local community in their athletic pursuits.

The Local Sporting Champions program provides financial assistance for competitors aged 12-18. If you visit: [www.sportaus.gov.au](http://www.sportaus.gov.au) and go to 'grants and funding', you can apply there.

### Crowd Strike failure

The Crowd Strike failure reinforces the importance of cash. Many organisations are pushing to remove cash and move towards a



full digital payment system.

We have also seen some banks removing over the counter deposits and withdrawals from branches.

I will never support the removal of cash from our communities.

Cyberattacks and other system failures such as electricity and telecommunications outages are common. Everyday basics such as buying food are impacted. Our communities must always have the option of using cash.

## ANZAC Day trading and on-line hazards

by Janelle Saffin MP  
State Member for Lismore

I welcome the announcement that the NSW Government will extend retail trading restrictions to cover all of ANZAC Day to ensure the service of veterans is recognised and people are able to take part in services throughout the day.

Currently, retail traders such as supermarkets and fashion retailers are only required to stay closed until 1pm under the *Retail Trading Act*. From next year, the change will see them remain closed until midnight.

The restrictions do not apply to small businesses and business not considered retailers or with exemptions such as markets, cafes, chemists, newsagencies and takeaway restaurants.

As Premier Chris Minns said, "It might be inconvenient for a few hours, but closing our biggest corporate shops for a single day is a small price to pay for living in a free and open democracy."

### Dark patterns on-line

NSW Fair Trading is warning consumers to beware of 'dark patterns' when shopping on-line.

Dark patterns are tactics websites or apps used to manipulate or trick you into spending more money than you'd planned or providing personal data that's not needed. These are some common dark patterns to look out for:

**Hidden costs** – are extra costs you only find out about towards the end of your purchase, or which are made less obvious. They include pre-selected extras you may not want. Some hidden costs are even sneakier, such as a pre-selected free trial period for a service that renews automatically if you don't cancel before it ends.

**Forced continuity** – refers to subscriptions that are easy to sign up to, but hard to get out of. You may only have to provide basic details to subscribe for a product or service, but to cancel you may need to go through multiple steps.

**Trick questions** – are commonly used for subscriptions, auto-purchase agreements and data collection. For example, if you're trying to cancel a subscription, you may be asked if you really want to cancel and given two options: 'continue' or 'cancel'. This may be intentionally unclear, where 'continue' means continuing the cancellation process and 'cancel' means stopping the cancellation process. You may think you've cancelled the subscription until you are charged another subscription fee.

**Scarcity cues** – are designed to create a fear of missing out, which pushes you to make rushed decisions about buying or spending more than you planned. Examples are countdown timers for shopping carts or notifications about low stock (e.g. 'Only 4 left').

**Activity notifications** – tell you what other people are doing on a website or app (e.g. '15 people are currently looking at this hotel room'). These notifications will appear seconds apart and often be bundled with scarcity cues to create a sense of urgency.

**Data grabs** – are when businesses ask you for more information than they need to process your request. Have you ever had to provide your full name and postcode when subscribing to a newsletter? Or had to provide your date of birth for a purchase? That's a data grab and you should be concerned about what the business plans to do with your information and how securely are they storing it.

**Disguised advertisements** – are often 'clickbait', a sensationalised or misleading headline or link, designed to make you click through to online content. They are designed to look like genuine content or search results but will instead redirect you to a product or service.

These are just some of the 'dark patterns'. The NSW Fair Trading website has more info: [www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/fair-trading/dark-patterns](http://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/fair-trading/dark-patterns)

## The Labor team for Lismore Council

The upcoming Council elections on 14th September are crucial for creating a path forward for the Lismore Local Government Area. That path must unify us, make us proud, and lead us forward.

Next month, we have an opportunity for a new council that can and will shape the future of our community. Voting for the Labor team offers that vision and voice for the future.

Harper Dalton, Jasmine Knight-Smith and their team follow principles that guide their actions as candidates and future councillors.

### Putting community first

Labor has always prioritised everyday people. This Labor council team is committed to ensure that everyone has access to transparent council processes and is as informed as possible.

The Labor Council team is committed to no reduction in funding or waste services currently offered by the Nimbin Transfer Station.

With a priority focus on ensuring that work continues through state government disaster funds to fast-track roadworks, the Labor team wants to keep all our villages connected and people safe on the roads.

### Protecting our environment

Our residents are lucky to live in an area with some of the last remaining old-growth rainforest in the world and rich biodiversity. It is a legacy and treasure



that must be protected.

The Labor team is committed to sustainable practices and preserving our native forests by continuing to lobby the state government to end the logging in our old-growth rainforests.

Our belief is that a balanced approach to development and conservation means we can enjoy our natural beauty and retain our heritage while planning for a sustainable future.

### Supporting local farmers

Agriculture is the backbone of the Lismore LGA's economy. Labor's policies support our local farmers by promoting sustainable and organic farming practices.

By providing resources and backing local agriculture, Labor ensures that supporting our farmers means that farming remains a vital and thriving part of our community.

Council cannot overlook our rural ratepayers and the Labor team is committed to ensuring their voices are heard on council.

### Proven leadership

With experienced Labor leaders like Janelle Saffin and Jenny Dowell, Labor has a proven track record of effective leadership and advocacy for our region.

Labor's dedication to listening and engaging communities in the processes that impact them make the Labor team a trusted choice to address the challenges we face.

"You can count on Labor representatives to stand up for Lismore, Nimbin, other villages and rural areas. We are a team that will work for you," Jasmine Knight-Smith said.

The Labor team encourages you, on 14th September, to use your vote to shape our community for the better.

Don't miss the chance to vote and make sure your voices are heard loud and clear.

*The Labor council team acknowledges the Widjabul-Wiabal people of the Bunjalung nation and pays our deepest respects to elders past, present, and emerging and to the land on which we live, work, and play.*

## Councillor bows out

by Cr Darlene Cook

I have been very privileged to have served two terms as a councillor on Lismore City Council, representing the diverse communities who live throughout our city, rural lands, and villages.

Over the past eight years I have endeavoured to work co-operatively with the other elected councillors, regardless of political persuasion, to achieve the best outcomes for the city and villages, its businesses and residents, and our local environment.

In my time on council, I am proud of a number of achievements, for example: getting council to support the marriage equality campaign in 2017 and to fly the rainbow flag over Chambers.

To have council provide water tankers and low loaders to transport water and hay out



to drought stricken farmers and communities near Glen Innes and Inverell in 2019.

To advocate for the creation of a NSW Reconstruction Authority to oversee the recovery and rebuild of our city and region in 2022.

I have supported developments where I believed they were well sited and would not adversely impact local environment, water courses, or native flora and fauna. I have vigorously opposed developments where it is obvious that they would

devastate koala colonies, or were located on steep lands that would erode or slip.

I am proud to have advocated for many individual residents who have had complaints or issues with council, and tried to find solutions that work for all parties. I am also proud of the number of people I have met over the years who have become good friends as we shared tales of interactions with council bureaucrats.

And thanks to the many Nimbin identities who made me welcome and gave me insights into how I could best support the Nimbin community to retain its culture and identity.

Our region has been hit with a number of natural disasters over the last eight years and a large part of my role in recent years has been to strongly advocate for the urgently needed government funds to support our businesses and residents to recover, and to rebuild our homes and the city infrastructure – an effort that will take many years to

complete.

But now I'm at the time in my life where I want to spend more time with my partner, and to do some travel and see the world. It's time to take a step back and let a new team come forward to represent progressive voters on Council. So, I will not be contesting the forthcoming council elections.

I am handing the mantle for Labor representation on Council to a new group of Labor candidates to contest the election. This team, led by Harper Dalton and Jasmine Knight-Smith, are enthusiastic and passionate about rebuilding and growing our city, and bring a mix of youth and experience to their team.

I thank all the many wonderful people who have supported me, offered advice and coffee, and been there along the journey of the past eight years. I ask that you extend your support and help to elect Harper Dalton for mayor, and Harper, Jasmine and their team as councillors on 14th September.

# Nature needs your vision and your vote

In 2016, the Liberal National Coalition Government declared war on nature here in NSW.

They repealed our nature and native vegetation protection laws, loosened the rules around logging in our forests and allowed the biodiversity offsets system to become a cover-up for extinction.

This war allowed the coal corporations, the big end of town property developers, agribusiness and the state's infrastructure partners to continue to profit while they bankrupt us of nature and ecosystem function as well as a stable climate.

NSW Labor have now shown their hand, and they're not going to end the war or undo the harm.

The legal and policy regime that drove the Coalition's war on nature was reviewed by a team led by Dr Ken Henry AO, the former Australian treasury secretary.

They tabled their comprehensive report last August. It was unsurprisingly chilling. It found that our laws are not only failing to protect nature, but they are also driving the extinction crisis.

The review recommended that our laws change to be nature positive, so that they protect and repair the environment, and importantly, that these laws be given primacy over other laws that facilitate



by Sue Higginson,  
NSW Greens MLC

the destruction of the environment for development and land clearing.

Finally, almost 12 months later, the NSW Labor Government has responded to the Henry Review and despite promising, when in opposition, to stop the extinction crisis, the critical elements of the review haven't been addressed.

The most significant take-home from the Henry Review is that if we don't give nature laws primacy, the extinction of species and the breakdown of ecosystem function will become irreversible, for those not already on that trajectory.

Many of us understand what this really means, we know it through our connection to the living planet and our love for nature and each other.

We know it as a deep

injustice, for many of us, the destruction of nature and extinction is the deepest injustice of all.

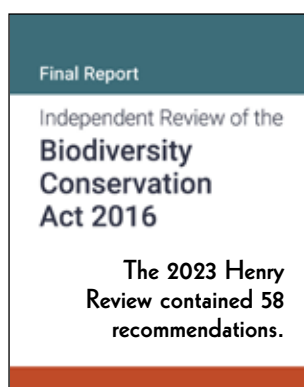
Labor has not heeded Henry's clarion call; they will not give the protection and regeneration of the environment the necessary primacy.

They will introduce some changes to the entirely broken offset system, which we Greens will of course support, and do what we can to make any changes stronger, as Labor plans more reviews and strategies.

The reality is that under Labor's plan it will be, for the most part, business as usual. A shocking juxtaposition considering that upon releasing their plan they claimed, "We cannot ignore the truth: biodiversity in NSW is in crisis."

The need to immediately end destructive native forest logging was not mentioned once in Labor's response. Even though the industrial logging of our public forest estate is a key threatening process driving biodiversity loss and forest dependent species to extinction and is costing taxpayers millions every year.

I can't describe how much of a missed opportunity this is and how gutted this makes me feel. Labor sat in opposition for over a decade while the Coalition waged their war on nature; they know the harm caused and



the frightening reality of the extinction crisis here in NSW.

Labor have their hands on the levers now, and they know they would have the Greens support to bring in the changes that Henry said we need for nature.

The Henry Review made strong recommendations about the need for NSW to move to a nature-positive

approach, in line with the Global Biodiversity Framework and what so many earth systems and ecological scientists have been calling for.

Labor has responded with a terribly weak plan that will apparently seek to be net positive for nature over time, but will not stop the degradation and destruction of biodiversity in the short term.

It is a political response that either doesn't care or wrongly assumes nature can wait. It ignores the science and evidence of the problems that nature faces and the fact that we are experiencing tipping points in ecosystem decline and dysfunction.

Labor has laid bare that it is not a party for nature and the environment, nor are they a party of evidence-

based policy – what is clear, and unbelievably disappointing – is that Labor is a party concerned with power and holding on to it at the cost of nature.

To turn the extinction crisis around and move to a truly nature positive framework, we need strong laws, to end native forest logging and to build our protected area network to protect at least 30% of the land of NSW by 2030.

To do this we need more voices for nature on Council and in our parliaments.

If you care for nature and you want to see us do what we must do to turn the extinction crisis around, you must vote for nature, and there is only one party who always has and always will stand up for nature, and I reckon you know who that is.

## Inaugural Lismore People's Council to discuss housing

by Andrew George

Do you feel that everyday people are represented by existing political institutions?

That's what we've been asking people, on the streets and in the parks of Lismore, in shops and in homes, (and while hitchhiking to Nimbin), and guess what the answer is?

Whether it's local, state or federal government, people are consistently responding with: "No, everyday people are not represented."

What has also been nearly unanimous from the conversations we've been having is the answer to the question, 'who do you think is being represented by the political institutions?'

Answer: the top-end of town, those with power, the elites, the rich, self-interested politicians.

So what are we going to do about it? We as in, you, and me, and more importantly us. Let's take some responsibility, beautiful responsibility and collective agency.

Because this is a pretty serious situation we are in, with very real and terrible consequences (eg top-down flood recovery fiasco, wars that no-one consents to except the weapons companies, ceaseless economic growth and ecocide, etc).

Well, we have a plan. We (that's all of us) are going to reinvent, recreate, rebuild, reclaim (did we never really have it?) democracy. Starting from the ground up, starting in Lismore, with all surrounding communities heartily invited.

And not just any kind of democracy, but participatory and deliberative democracy, and you're warmly invited!

Starting on Saturday 10th August, come have your say, meet other members of our diverse community, find common ground, and be part of history as we come together for the first Lismore People's Council.

We've asked people what they love about the area and the response is often 'community' and 'diversity'. Let's embrace

what this region is renowned for and strengthen it.

So, if you don't feel represented by the existing political institutions, now is your chance to be part of something new, something genuine, and something different to top-down decision making.

Taking place on the unceded lands of the Widjabal-Wiabal People of the Bundjalung Nation, The Lismore People's Council is for everyday people to come together, in a constructive and participatory format that supports everyone to share ideas and listen respectfully to each other as we answer a specific question.

After a couple hours of facilitated discussion, where every voice is heard and we deliberate to come up with ideas and solutions, we will then decide collectively what to do next.

We propose that at the very least we take the results of this assembly to the Lismore City Council (LCC) meeting the following week, and see what their response is to the grassroots community voice. We believe by bringing everyday people together we can get better outcomes for our community.

So, on Saturday 10th August, at 1pm at the Red Dove Café, 80 Keen St, Lismore, we will gather for the inaugural Lismore People's Council Meeting, and the topic is: Housing.

After many chats we have learned that housing is the pressing issue on many people's minds. Availability, affordability, safety from floods, there is so much to explore in this topic, and so much common ground we can find.

It is complex and yet we are sure there are solutions out there that this community has, and important perspectives that aren't heard, and we want to hear them.

For more information about the event find us on Facebook by searching ReclaimOurRecovery; email: [reclaimourrecovery@protonmail.com](mailto:reclaimourrecovery@protonmail.com) or just show up on the day.

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Nimbin is looking pretty good at the moment. Without focusing on what is going on in the outside world, we can all relax and enjoy the bubble that is our community, a place where people care for each other.

How stunning is the climate in the Northern Rivers at this time of year? Southerners are flocking here in droves, smugly enjoying that they have escaped the vagrancy of the winter months down south.

They mostly marvel at the lushness of our environment, overcoming preconceived perceptions of the village of Nimbin and being surprised at the community's depth and its residents' welcoming nature.

We have a few things happening. I will summarise the Chamber's actions and the business community's opportunities.

### Mural action

Thanks to the 12 local businesses that have provided space on their front counters to display mural collection tins. The money raised will fund the reparation of existing murals and the creation of new artworks, a cornerstone of our cultural offering to the broader world.

The Chamber received four expressions of interest from local artists interested in creating the mural in the laneway beside Birth & Beyond.

After careful consideration by the panel, local artists Jen Harkness, Julie de Lorenzo, and Gaia Heart have been selected to bring this mural to life.

The Chamber is excited to see their artistic vision enhance our community space.

### Nimbin brochure

The final draft of the Nimbin Brochure is ready. This brochure provides a detailed map of the streetscape, including businesses and services available in the village, along with historical and cultural outlines.

The Chamber funded this update, and over 2,000 copies will be distributed to local businesses. It will be a valuable resource for promoting our town and its attractions.

### Women in Business winter event

The recent Nimbin Women in Business event, 'Harmony in Finance', provided a thought-provoking and reflective discussion on business and money.



## Chamber Chat

by David Hyett, president

This intimate women's talking circle, masterfully facilitated by the Chamber's vice-president Aline Binetruy, created a space for deep and meaningful conversations.

The success of event was evident in the enthusiastic response from all who attended. The conversations sparked ideas and inspiration, leaving everyone eager for more.

As a result, plans are already underway for future gatherings, promising continued exploration and support for women in business within our village.

Stay tuned for more Women in Business events as the Chamber continues to build a vibrant and supportive community here in Nimbin.

### Out There book donation

The *Out There* books have been donated to the Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) for their mobile library service. This initiative was made possible by the Nimbin Chamber.

### Public speaking workshop

The Chamber is developing a workshop to enhance the speaking skills of local community members. The Chamber will partly fund the initiative with the remaining costs covered by participants. The focus will be on learning how to construct and articulate thoughts meaningfully whilst holding stage fright at bay.

### Meet the councillor Candidates at the Bowlo

The Chamber is organising a Meet the Candidates event for the Lismore Council elections. Join us at the Nimbin Bowling Club on Thursday, 29th

August at 6pm. The event will focus on Nimbin-related issues and allow community members to engage with political candidates and discuss key issues.

This is a crucial event for our community as it provides a platform for open dialogue between the candidates and the residents. It is an excellent opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and understand each candidate's visions and policies.

The Chamber encourages all community members to attend and have their voices heard.

### Upcoming NCoC meeting

Our next general meeting will be held on 17th September 17 at 5.30pm at the Nimbin Bush Theatre.

Guest speakers will include a staff member of the Lismore Council Economic Development team, a member of the Rainbow Power Board, and other Nimbin business leaders.

Further details will be forthcoming. Please make a note in your diary.

This will be a great opportunity to network and discuss important matters that impact Nimbin businesses and the wider community.

### Resignation

Chris Ardill-Guinness, Chamber committee member and owner of Jerra Park luxury farm-stay tourist accommodation, has decided to stand down from his role. The committee thanks Chris for his contributions, particularly his excellent work supporting the Out There book launch.

If you have a local business and wish to be closer to the pulse, the Chamber welcomes interest in filling committee roles.

### Membership

The Chamber is excited to welcome new members:

- Liz Wilson (Liz Wilson Art);
- Wick & Rain (The Aether Agency);
- Anna Conley (Ethos Digital Agency);
- Stuart Bright (Arunga Farm Stay); and
- Jenny Cornish (Church of Aquarius).

On a final note, there is a palpable appreciation of Nimbin's authenticity as the alternative capital of Australia, which people are becoming drawn to.

It is up to us to keep it real, as that is why we are here and what we do well.

# GROW out of loneliness

by Jo Young, Program Worker

The Nimbin GROW group celebrates their first anniversary on Wednesday 7th August. Everyone is invited to call in for a cuppa and a piece of birthday cake at 12.30pm at the Dance Studio, Nimbin Community Centre.

For a year now, every Wednesday, members of the community get together to build friendships and support each other in working on their social and emotional wellbeing using the wisdom of the GROW program – a 12-Step program of recovery.

The Nimbin GROW group recently teamed up with the other Nimbin 12-Step Fellowships, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous at the highly successful Mental Wealth Expo in the Nimbin Town Hall. I gave a speech at the event about Friendship as Mental Wealth in light of the ever-growing pandemic of loneliness.

In 2023 Australia's first State of the Nation Report on Social Connection collected responses from over 4000 people, finding that nearly 1 in 3 of us experience moderate loneliness, with more than 1 in 6 of us reporting severe loneliness.

Loneliness was defined in the study as a distressing feeling we get when we feel disconnected from other people and we desire more (or more satisfying) social relationships.

Loneliness can be described as a natural hunger, but instead of for food, the hunger is for connection. We can think of loneliness as an inbuilt alarm system that alerts us when we are running low on something we need to sustain us.

Loneliness is a serious risk factor for our health and wellbeing. Lonely people are:

- twice as likely to have chronic disease
- 4.6 times more likely to have depression
- 4.1 times more likely to experience social anxiety

So our wellbeing and psychosocial quality of life is very affected by being lonely.

So who is more likely to be lonely?

Young people, carers, people with poorly-met financial needs, people in rural areas, people who live alone, people who have chronic disease and people who have poor mental health.

But the study also found that community misconceptions and stigma around loneliness prevents people from talking about it, and most importantly stops us from seeking out the connection we need.

About a third of us feel ashamed when we feel lonely, and almost half of us are too embarrassed to admit it to others so we hide it.

- People who are lonely are often perceived as having negative traits,
- 50 % of people said they don't want to be friends with a person who is lonely and
- 57% said they wouldn't like a person who is lonely.
- 1 in 4 people think people who are lonely are less worthy
- Almost a third said that being lonely is a sign of weakness – no wonder we hide it.

Is it any wonder we find it hard to reach out and ask for help. So what can we do about it?

Well right now we are doing the first step which is talking about it. It seems we need to be talking more about it. It seems like a good idea to bring this national health problem out into the open and start staring down the shame that exists around being lonely.

We often give (and get) well-meaning advice that we should get out more and meet more people, take a class, or join a gym however even those who are attending lots of cultural



Jo and Rob from the Nimbin GROW group

and community events can still experience loneliness.

The State of the Nation report on Social Connection found that while cultural and community engagement activities hold great value, to remedy the loneliness problem we need to focus on nurturing community, where we feel like we can rely on others for support and assistance.

My lived experience certainly lines up with that. It didn't matter how many times I attended my kid's school events, went to the Lantern Parade, or helped out at the swimming carnival, I often felt lonelier at these events surrounded by people than I did at home.

The alarm signals of loneliness were squeezing my insides but I had no idea how to break through all that shame and self-stigma and get my hunger for connection met. It felt like a chasm that I did not know how to cross. I needed people to help me learn how to connect and feel like I belonged somewhere.

That's what I found at GROW – people who had also faced a chasm and learned the ropes for crossing it. People who then helped others who came after them by writing down their experience and crafting tools and principles that builds an intentional healing community.

The GROW program's principle of community says that decentralisation from self and participation in a healthy community is the very process of recovery and personal growth.

For me, it's a no brainer: GROW has helped me practise friendship and learn how to connect – with myself, with my family, with friends and with the wider community. This mutual help model, based on the principles of truth, character and friendship, nurtures caring and sharing in the community and has worked for tens of thousands of people since the GROW movement began in Hurstville back in 1957.

GROW is one of three 12-Step fellowship happening in the Nimbin area. AA and NA are fellowships where people help each other recover their lives from the ruins of addiction. In fact GROW grew out of the AA movement.

12-Step fellowships are free, confidential and effective. There is no referral needed and no wait list – people can simply show up. They will find humble people who have suffered and sought help themselves and now have their hands out ready to help others and walk beside them on the road to recovery, connection and community.

12-Step meetings in Nimbin are all held in the Dance Studio at the Nimbin Community Centre:

- GROW Mental Wellbeing Program – Wednesdays 12.30pm
- Alcoholics Anonymous – Saturdays 3pm
- Narcotics Anonymous – Sundays 3pm



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# Retirement age

by Michael Brooke

We live, we age and we will die. Which none of us can deny, unless you happen to be President of the USA who is (he appears to believe) exempt from ordinary human frailties.

You'll know immediately I'm thinking of the weary and confused old man who at the time of writing this, still remains the President of the United States.

And I'm thinking, too, of that other would-be-prez – the one with orange hair – an embodiment of the legendary American snake oil salesman. Both are sad.

Both personify the link between fear of death and fantasies of demiurgic power – a mindset that

wreaks havoc both personally and politically.

Biden clung to power despite his evident (surely self-evident) crumbling intellect. His mental incapacity imperiled our collective future. Biden's frailty made it clear that far too much power is in the hands of one person: the dominance of presidential power weakens American democracy.

I have a dear friend who endures the mental and physical decline that comes with old age. She struggles with bending over, getting up from her chair, and she totters on uneven ground. Her memory is shot to pieces.

Sometimes she is lost. She is fragile and honest and courageous. I contrast her against the most powerful man on the planet: she



has the courage of acceptance; manifestly he does not.

We accept with compassion that Helen's mind is failing. Likewise those close to President Biden must have known he was disenabled, and yet they denied it.

This is what Helen says about her life: "I'm tired late in the evening but not tired of anything or anyone. I'm finding the process of ageing mysteriously different

from what I had imagined. Everything grows less.

"Not so much anxiety about anything in the future, nor about what anyone else 'thinks' about me, and I'm trusting my future or no future now that I make hardly any plans. And I'm very thankful for the learning process that was my experience of a human life.

Thank you Whoever sent me to Earth!"

Simple honesty, so important. Urgently we need the same integrity from our political masters.

There's a smidgeon of hope. It is hopefully possible Kamala Harris will become the first woman president of the United States. Perhaps she will be a different, better kind of American leader...

I'm not much into praying, but I do pray for that.

## Finally, another Drug Summit to attend

by Michael Balderstone, president Nimbin HEMP Embassy

Premier Bob Carr's 1999 Drug Summit in Sydney was a big deal. For five days, all the NSW Members of Parliament focussed entirely on drugs with various "experts", not necessarily with any experience, from overseas as well, talking about illegal drug use and how to deal with it.

Now I think about it, it was really a review of the Drug War, how it was going, and how to deal with its fallout. No-one wanted to hear that drugs would win, which was obvious to all of us here in Nimbin.

When it was announced there was to be pre-summit regional meetings to establish an agenda and one was in Lismore, we went. It was at the Workers Club and we drove back to the village that night furious that cannabis was not even mentioned.

It was all about smack, how to deal with the heroin problems and the thousand odd deaths each year from overdoses. We were well used to it in Nimbin, and had a stretcher always handy in the Museum for carrying people from the toilets mostly, to the hospital. A bloody long way if they were fat!

We decided the next morning we had to go to Sydney and get cannabis on their agenda. A Kiwi called Popeye offered to drive us in his old school bus. It was good no-one thought to ask him if it was registered or if he had a licence!

Elsbeth painted the bus with a giant peace dove trailing a rainbow and with the Big Joint strapped on top (pictured): we were going to get noticed. The SMH sent a journo up to drive down with us and we did a big farewell outside the HEMP Embassy leaving in a cloud of smoke to big cheers.

We broke down almost immediately, fortunately just out of sight over the hill. I think the ancient bus stopped three more times before Lismore, but Popeye kept coaxing her back to life. Then we got jammed under that low bridge as you go into Lismore, the Joint didn't quite fit.

Fortunately we had heaps of weed so I could keep dreaded thoughts like "No way we're going to get to Sydney" at bay. Even if the journo was looking at us like we were nuts, we were all positive.

We unjammed the joint from the bridge and drove another route getting as far as New Italy before the old girl died again. Popeye worked his magic



Nimbin Bill outside the Drugs Summit at Parliament House, Sydney 21st May 1999. Photo courtesy Robert Pearce, SMH

and we set off once again. I forget who was rolling the joints, but it was like a conveyor belt.

I did an interview with Triple JJJ at the Big Banana (we were getting pot on the agenda) and almost immediately after that as we headed down the hill into Coffs, Popeye calls out, "I've got no brakes, I'm gunna have to hit the wall".

There's dozens of cars in our lane in front of us, but fortunately the lane on our left is empty with massive eight-foot tall permanent signs on it saying LANE CLOSED.

They disappear under the bus with a crunch as he steams over them, seeking the concrete wall at the edge. It's a perfect landing as the bus grinds to a halt, digging into the wall. The marks are still there 25 years later!

The cops come, but I think they were on our side and they tell us to use the handbrake and get down the hill into the big supermarket car park at the bottom, which we did. It's Saturday and we're meant to be in Sydney on Monday for the first day of the Summit. The journo reckons we won't make it and catches a plane.

Honestly, several miracles occurred. We sleep in the carpark and Chicken George's mechanic mate from Woolgoolga tells us where we might find the brake part we need but they won't be open 'til Monday.

Next morning we were standing outside when the owner happened to drive up showing a visitor his business. He found the brake part for the old Leyland covered in dust on a high shelf up the back of his shed. Gave it to us! Chicken's mate put it in and we were off again.

It's possibly 4.20am, certainly about that time and I'm sleeping on the floor in the bus when there's an almighty

shocking terrible noise coming from beneath me and we grind to a shrieking halt again. The universal joint had broken!

We're on White Mountain, an hour or less from Parliament House in Sydney, Popeye has driven through the night. As dawn breaks, the traffic jam behind us grows to kilometres long.

I just remember Graeme Dunstan sitting astride the giant joint on top of the colourful bus with several helicopters circling above us doing the morning traffic reports. We're all over the news and everyone in Sydney now knows we're coming to put pot on the agenda.

Millionaire Tony Spanos rescued us in his green bus while the Leyland got towed away turning up later in the day all fixed yet again. We camped in the gardens behind Parliament House and had lively interactions all week with journos and polities.

The summit recommended decriminalising cannabis, but the polities squibbed. They did open the first injecting room though.

Our current Premier Chris Minns has been promising another Summit for years and finally announced that it will go for two days in Sydney this December with another two days in October at regional centres yet to be named.

Meanwhile NSW Legalise Cannabis MP Jeremy Buckingham has his own little Summit happening, an inquiry into how the war on cannabis is going, and a hearing will be in Lismore for two days, 20th and 21st August.

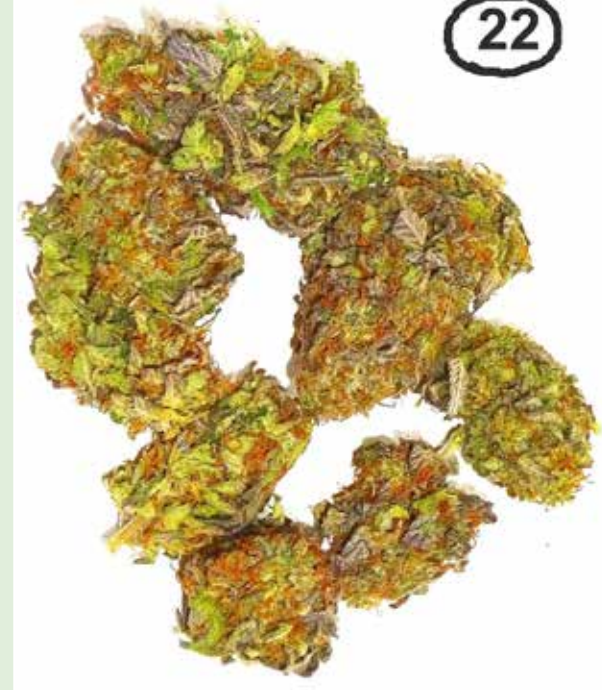
The 'Inquiry Into the Impact of the Regulatory Framework for Cannabis in New South Wales', it will be webcast live at: [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Pages/webcasts.aspx](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Pages/webcasts.aspx)

## Cannabis Cup results



### Best Overall

22



by our special correspondent

The 2024 Cannabis Cup was recently held in the marquee erected in the backyard of the Nimbin police station.

This new spacious secret location proved a winner with the lucky local and international judges in attendance.

There were 40 buds entered, 11 samples of hash and five extracts that kept the judges in extremely high spirits throughout the competition.

First place for buds results was entry 22, Midnight Kush with 48 points, grown outdoors by Dr Healsgood. Second was entry 12,

Cherry Crescendo with 44 points, grown indoors.

Best International was entry 37, Sundae Breath with 17 points.

Hashish Dish winner was entry 2, T-Bubble with 70 points, an amazing effort by Dr Healsgood to pick up a second trophy.

Extract prizewinner was entry 5 with 73 points.

Many thanks to the organisers and of course the local constabulary for providing the judges with a safe and secure environment away from the dangers of any criminal elements.

Police are now taking entries for the 2025 Cup, but it's best to hang onto them yourself until next year.

# Roxby Downs

by Annie McGovern

Meanwhile at Roxby Downs... the drives are dug, the ores extracted, the processing plant built, the mullock heaps and tailing dams growing and filling... the trees are dying. The sand dunes are flattened, Roxby Downs township is built... the State Bank collapses. Water is pumped and then piped from their Borefield A 90ks to the north; water from the Great Artesian Basin. The artesian pressure of water has fractured then collapsed Roxby bore casings, leading to uncontrolled bores flowing into the landscape.

Industrialisation of this region is now entrenched. The water for the mine is provided gratis... more than 10% of SA's power grid is directed to Roxby... it is huge and its presence is overwhelming.

Roxby is reputedly the largest uranium deposit in the world. Its complicated geological structure requires complicated extraction of the uranium, copper, gold and other rare earths, which necessitates the use of vast amounts of water for processing.

The original water licence of 33ML/day has progressively grown larger as the years roll on (to > 50ML/day), while perceived safe water drawdown levels (ie the drops in the water table) are permitted to go deeper with permission from the state government to accommodate the needs of the mine.

The area of Lake Eyre South, including the unique artesian Mound Springs (in close proximity of Borefield A), is nominated for World Heritage, such is its vital significance. The nomination has failed based on the presence of the mining industry.

Back at Roxby mine, workers wear



Satellite map of the monstrosity that is the Roxby Downs uranium mine site (Olympic Dam) covering over 60 sq kms. It never sleeps. The glow of the lights from the mine site can be seen 95kms to the north on the Oodnadatta Track. All wildlife were poisoned with 1080 within this area. The plastic linings of the tailings dams (top left) have a warranty of 15 years. Radioactive particulates from the dusty mine site under the influence of strong westerlies deposit these particulates in a plume eastwards, completely engulfing Andamooka 30kms to the east. How far this radioactivity travels depends on the strength of the prevailing winds.

dosimeter badges which record their exposure to radiation. They are denied access to the actual data collected. The air is filled with dust and debris as vast quantities of rock are pummelled into processing material. The tailings dams which hold large quantities of contaminated water are leaking back into the local aquifer.

The Arcoona Quartzite Aquifer is constantly draining into and through the ore body and the mine. Kungka Wamba had told us: "There's an underground river down there." Water John has forced them to recognise that the transition of flow is through the mine and in a north-easterly

direction to the top of Lake Torrens, which acts as a spillway to the Spencer Gulf. There are reportedly injection stations located on the Borefield Road where excess water from the mine is transported and re-injected into the aquifer along this transition pathway.

Levels of radioactive contamination of the air, earth and water within the mine site are largely unknown, while data collected is either owned by the corporation or is classed as inter-departmental government information... both of which are only made public at the discretion of one or the other... neither of whom choose to do so.

Requests for monitoring of the workers and

the children at the Andamooka Area School (directly downwind 30km to the east) have been denied by the Minister for Health.

Despite the strong reservations held by the Commonwealth about proceeding with this mine, since finally succumbing, have been decidedly silent on Roxby. The consultative committee, originally deemed necessary to monitor this mine, has never met.

Roxby Uranium Mine, the "thin edge of the wedge", made it easier for Beverley, Honeymoon, Lucas Heights, a national dump, nuclear submarines (together in a deal for International Radioactive Waste Disposal), to be projected onto a non-nuclear country which is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

For the past 30+ years there have been several attempts, by the nuclear lobby, to establish outback Australia as a potential dumping ground for the world's nuclear waste.

The 'Pangea' Project, a proposed international waste dump in WA was resoundingly defeated by the Australian people. A national waste dump in SA was denied through the profound work of the Kungka's 'Iranti wanti' stand. They have been chased out of the NT and again in SA last year with defeat of the proposed Kimba waste dump.

Nobody wants this in their backyard. The associated legacy and responsibility of housing nuclear waste for 100's and 1000's of years (depending on the level of radioactivity contained in the waste) is an impossible assertion to guarantee any assurance of absolute safety.

Roxby, through its provision of uranium across the world for nuclear power plants is potentially and indirectly providing the supply chain for nuclear weapons.

The only way to curb this proliferation is to stop it at its source. We must stop Roxby for life. Leave it in the ground.

## Thoughts on peace in a conflicted world

Love roots in peace. The balanced symmetry of energy flow between parent and child is the primary source of peace. From here peace extends to our relationships with other people and the rest of the world.

Peace is the soil where love originates, from where we cultivate love. Peace of mind is the foremost harmony creator, and feeling in harmony is when you can sprout and grow. Imbalances in energy fields inherently thrive to equalise, it's a universal law that's part of every living creature's make-up.

The war on nature leaves us completely out of balance with Earth's own principles. If there is a remedy to cure the once perfect living entity we call Earth, we first must remedy ourselves by restoring the balance within.

What is it with peace that it is so longed for and so little observed, in our daily lives or on the world stage? Don't most of us prefer peace to quarrelling and squabbling? Yet and despite that desire, we keep on fighting on so many levels.



by Antonette Ensbey

Armed combat is not only a horrible reality but should never be even the last resort. Nobody wins, loss is immeasurable. Pass up alternative solutions to dispute and lost is the opportunity to make peace, lost is the real possibility to turn conflict into resolution and prosper once again on both sides and for the whole of the nation.

Sadly there is another war, more silent, more elusive and nevertheless very real for the exploited and underpaid majority, who are haphazardly regraded by the elite as

human resources. Power and growth are worshipped while there is no indexing the degree of wellbeing for the people who are robbed of peace, ever struggling to feed their children, to receive medical care, to live decent existences.

The continual fight for rights and fairness, the state of upheaval and inner upset is detrimental to achieving peaceful lives, and fighting a personal battle becomes entwined with fighting for a nation's ideological and political cause.

Lots of things make us drift away from peace and the embrace of love. Greed, ignorance, envy, hatred, anger and fear of the unknown or the "other". It seems these are bound in human nature, but on closer investigation I believe, basically why peace is absent from the agenda is our disregard for Mother Nature and her processes, and so profoundly that we now talk of annihilation. Although we know better than destroying what is our lifeline, we keep doing the unthinkable.

Why make such a fuss around the necessity to keep human beings

aligned with the powers of nature? By restoring the balance of the planet we come to peace with ourselves. We are nature, made of natural material, bound in natural energy fields within earth's own system of survival. If that's destroyed we build an ever higher wall between us and the functions we depend on.

The natural and human spheres can't be separated. Nature is our indemnity for peace, harmony and love. From here love grows. In accord with our inner nature and outer natural world we are cultivating a mind in peace with its surrounds, and ultimately with other human beings.

Nobody exists outside the spectrum of life. Resting in nature, allowing nature to guide us, acknowledging that we are part of Mother Nature, part of the great adventure of life. Instead of kicking the planet's life supports, why not reconnect wherever possible and gain access to her spirit energy?

Be in harmony with the most powerful of all energy forms. Mother Nature is a leveller. Imbued with her pure spirit, it's hard to cultivate

division while we emerge unbiased, nonpartisan and unprejudiced. The spirit energy is particularly intense between mothers and babies.

Here lies the first experiment of peace making. Hold baby close, allowing the adjustment of energy fields. This is how we can learn to take on the world without fear or favour.

Do not believe for one moment that warring is in-built in the human psyche. Many indigenous cultures lived without tribal war-making, notably the Hopi Indians of North Eastern Arizona in America.

Remarkably, most peace-loving societies are matriarchal, ruled by a matriarch. The patriarchal system is at the base of cultures that lay the foundation for imperialistic and war-mongering governments, and countries that invade other countries and colonise other cultures. Countries that worship the Dow Jones Index.

Now here's a thought.

*I'm available for counselling. Please, contact me via email: newpacificpublishing@gmail.com*

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**NIMBIN**  
NUMBERS

# Spring piano recital



by Julie De Lorenzo

The Nimbin School of Arts will welcome Spring on Sunday 1st September with an afternoon classical grand piano concert featuring piano virtuoso Stephanie Hamlet (pictured).

The recital program will

present Chopin Barcarolle, Rachmaninov's transcription of Bach violin Partita in E major, and a Liszt Sonata in B minor.

The recital will begin at 2pm, and afternoon tea will be available following the performance.

Entry is \$10 at the door.

## Food, fun and fabulous music at the Nimbin Bowlo



Nimbin's own community club, the Nimbin Bowlo, is becoming quite the entertainment hub.

There are the regular monthly events including the long-running Open Mic on the second Wednesday of the month, kicking off around 6pm; and the Trivia night on the third Saturday of the month, which is a fundraiser for a (different each month) local community group, starting at 7pm with prizes, raffles and a themed dress up.

Bob Oort (pictured above) plays his beautiful Spanish guitar every Thursday night from 6pm, and some Friday nights you can catch Ted Cox playing some tunes.

At least once a month there's a Saturday night band guaranteed to get you up and dancing. This month it's David Davies (pictured at right) and the SKP's on 31st August, 6.30-9.30pm.

There is also the Nimbin



Storyteller's event held every second month (usually on the first Saturday) where personal tales of a life experience relating to that month's theme.

We've also just had a much-needed upgrade of the PA system, lights and stage equipment – many thanks to Tim Tonkin for helping organise that.

There's lots happening at our friendly, volunteer run club open Wednesday to Saturday from 2.30pm, and Sunday from 9am.

Sibley's Bistro is open Wednesday to Saturday from 5pm, bookings recommended (especially for large groups) Phone 6689-1473 to book in.

## Billy Joel vs Elton John

Billy vs Elton is guaranteed to take you on a brilliant fun and song filled journey through the incredible music careers of two giants of the entertainment industry.

With over 80 Top 40 hits between them, Billy Joel and Elton John dominated the charts for decades.

With a catalogue of brilliantly crafted songs, still on regular playlists around the world today, Billy Joel and Elton John are absolute masters of their craft. Their incredible music forms the soundtrack to so many people's lives. Most of us remember a Billy Joel or Elton John song underscoring major life and world events.

Delivered by a world-class live nine-piece band, featuring five amazing vocalists, Billy vs Elton is an incredibly immersive musical experience, with hearty sing-alongs highly encouraged.

We don't pretend to be Billy or Elton, we simply have a great night out celebrating their music. So, whether it's mega-



charting hits such as 'Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting', 'Crocodile Rock', 'Bennie and the Jets', 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road', 'Piano Man', 'Uptown Girl', 'You May Be Right' or iconic tunes such as 'I'm Still Standing', 'I Guess That's Why They Call it the Blues', 'We Didn't Start the Fire' and 'Tell Her About It', there's a favourite for everyone.

Billy vs Elton is on at Lismore's Star Court Theatre on Friday 9th August.

## Rhoda Roberts on stage

Powerful, enlightening and entertaining, *My Cousin Frank* is an unmissable experience with one of Australia's greatest artistic and cultural leaders, Rhoda Roberts AO.

Rhoda (pictured) will present a special evening of personal storytelling as she shares tales of her cousin Frank, a boxing champion who was the first Aboriginal Olympian, and the irrepressible Roberts family of Lismore.

"These are important stories about the places we call home, our shared past, and aspirations for a better tomorrow," she said.

The story of Lismore's Roberts family is set in a time where poverty and authoritarian control ruled, enforced by the policies of the Government's Aborigines Protection Board.

"Through the richness of love and the Roberts' work ethic, Frank rose above this and was the pinnacle of athletic achievement, entering the new world of the Olympic Games. I am so proud to be telling an element of our family

story," Rhoda said.

Directed by Kirk Page, Rhoda Roberts brings the fighting spirit of Frank and her family to life on stage in *My Cousin Frank*. This will be an unmissable event, and a chance to learn about the hidden history of our region from one of this country's most respected cultural leaders.

Rhoda Roberts AO is a Widjambul Wia-bal woman of the Bundjalung Nation. She is an award-winning producer, artistic director, journalist, broadcaster, actor and arts advisor. Among her many achievements, Rhoda co-founded Australia's first national Aboriginal theatre company, was the first Aboriginal presenter on prime-time TV, founded and directed the Festival of Dreaming and was Head of First Nations Programming for the Sydney Opera House.

She was awarded an Order of Australia in 2016 for distinguished service to the performing arts. Rhoda is NORPA's First Nations creative



director, curator of the Parrtjima Festival in Alice Springs and director of the Boomerang Dreaming Festival.

NORPA presents Rhoda Roberts in *My Cousin Frank* on Saturday 24th August at the Star Court Theatre, Lismore, and on Friday 30th and Saturday 31st August at the Byron Theatre, Byron Bay. Tickets \$25-\$59, see: [www.norpa.org.au](http://www.norpa.org.au)

## Informative documentary on Palestine

by Julie De Lorenzo

Northern Rivers Friends of Palestine held another successful film fundraiser evening at Nimbin Town Hall in July.

The documentary *The Last Sky*, directed by Nicholas Hanna and produced by Rihab Charida, offers a view into the armed resistance and extraordinary resilience and strength of Palestinian people.

Filmed in recent months in occupied Palestine alongside interviews in Lebanon with Palestinians and their families who were exiled to Lebanon and denied the right to return after the 1948 Nakba (Catastrophe), the film investigates questions such as:

- What is behind Israel's war (ethnic cleansing) in Gaza?
- Why do so many Palestinians support armed struggle?
- Why is Israel on the verge of a full-scale invasion of Lebanon?

The film was followed by an insightful Q&A with Nicholas Hanna and Ahmed Abadla, a leading Gazan activist whose family is currently in Gaza.

The kitchen opened an hour before the film serving delicious, nurturing vegan food, desserts and hot drinks.

A heartfelt thanks to Palestinian man Subhi Awad, the founder and organiser of Northern Rivers Friends of Palestine for his dedication and commitment to sharing events in Nimbin.

These events would not be possible also without the support of passionate Nimbin volunteers to organise, print



posters, set up, sell tickets and cook and serve food and clean up at the end of the night.

We're also extremely grateful to the following Nimbin businesses who generously donated prizes and vouchers for the raffle: Nimbin Herbs, Nimbin Apothecary, Nimbin Food Co-op, Nimbin Candles, Narba Heights (CBD products) and Nimbin Pizza & Trattoria... that's a lotta Nimbin love.

So we have some happy winners and added donations for the Olive Kids Foundation and the International Solidarity Movement.

Extra special thanks to our local community who came along to confront and expand their understanding of such a difficult but necessary subject.

Gaza is a microcosm of the world and by learning from the unfolding events, we can foresee our future and learn to find our own sovereignty while supporting the people of Palestine.

By helping them in times of their utmost need, we may also learn to save ourselves from slipping further into the abyss of complicity and discover that resistance to oppression is necessary for



survival and thriving.

If you missed the film this time around, you can follow *The Last Sky* on Facebook and Instagram, as it may become available to view on-line.

Northern Rivers Friends of Palestine's two main goals are to support Palestinians by fundraising and to hold community events such as protest rallies and other events in solidarity to voice resistance to the occupation.

To stay in touch with up-coming events in Nimbin and surrounds, find Northern Rivers Friends of Palestine on Facebook.

# Nourish your mind at Byron Writers Festival

Slow down and immerse yourself in a weekend of literary magic at Byron Writers Festival, 9th-11th August at Bangalow Showground.

With over 130 sessions across six stages, there are conversations, performances and stories to delight everyone, from moving memoirs, enchanting poetry, incisive commentary, and expert analysis.

You don't need to be a writer or a big reader to enjoy the festival – it's all about being entertained and inspired by brilliant storytellers and big conversations across a myriad of topics.

Bask in the stories of some of the world's best writers, including Irish novelist Caoilinn Hughes, Indian activist Meena Kandasamy, and Booker Prize-winner Richard Flanagan.

Be delighted by best-selling author Trent Dalton, actor-turned-crime writer Bryan Brown, and award-winning novelist Charlotte Wood.

Be inspired by AFL legend Nicky Winmar, gain insight into international



politics with former BBC correspondent Nick Bryant and get behind the scenes with singer songwriter Kate Cerebrano.

A single day pass gives you access to more than 30 sessions on your chosen day for you to wander between as you choose. All sessions are under the cover of big marquees or in the A&I Hall.

There's delicious food and coffee stalls, an artisan market and a large festival bookstore where authors will be signing their books.

There's also the Kids Big Day Out program that takes over one marquee on Sunday morning. The festival also offers separately ticketed evening events featuring highlight authors from the festival, workshops, free satellite events and book launches.

Experience what makes Byron Writers Festival a globally renowned literary destination!

Tickets and full program at: [byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

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## The Bentley Art Prize: is art really necessary?

by Luca Barbieri

In Kyogle's suburb of Bentley, the Bentley Art Prize (BAP) has been a staple of cultural enrichment since its inception in 1985.

Founded by Reg Hartley, this event has grown into a day filled with art, music, markets and family fun, drawing over 500 entries that showcase incredible local talent. As the 2024 event, held from July 12th-14th, concludes, it begs the question: is art really necessary?

### An historical perspective

The BAP was created to promote local art and artists, offering a platform for creativity. Over the past 18 years, Helen Trustum has organised the event, with a brief hiatus from 2020 to 2022 due to Covid-19.

This year marks a new chapter, with Gordon Serone and a new committee taking over. In Gordon's words, "Helen's service to the community, for which we give heartfelt thanks, has been truly amazing." This transition ensures that the spirit and tradition of the event continue to thrive.

### The cultural significance

Art has always been a powerful medium for expression and connection. It transcends language barriers and communicates emotions and ideas that words often fail to capture. For the Bentley community, the Art Prize is not just an event; it's a tradition that reinforces local identity and fosters a sense of belonging. The 500 entries this year alone testify to the thriving artistic spirit within the community.

However, some might argue that in a world of technological advancement and economic uncertainty, art is a luxury rather than a necessity. They might



Judge Harry Westera and Helen Trustum



question the practicality of investing time and resources into an art event when there are pressing issues to address. But this perspective overlooks the intrinsic value of art.

### The Broader Impact

Art has a profound impact on individual well-being and community cohesion. Studies have shown that engagement with art can reduce stress, promote mental health, and enhance cognitive abilities.

For children and young adults, participation in artistic activities can boost confidence and encourage creative problem-solving skills. The Bentley Art Prize, with its inclusive approach, provides these benefits to a wide audience, making it a vital component of community welfare.

Moreover, events like the Bentley Art Prize stimulate the local economy. Market stalls showcasing local crafts and goods, food and beverages provided by local organisations, and the influx

of visitors contribute to economic activity.

The Wine and Cheese Night, live music, and various refreshments add layers of enjoyment, making the event a comprehensive experience that supports local businesses.

### A weekend of wonder

The Bentley Art Prize promises to be a spectacular event each year. Doors open at 9am, inviting attendees to immerse themselves in a world of creativity and fun. Live music throughout the weekend, including a performance by Luke Vassella, provides the perfect soundtrack to this artistic adventure.

From the BBQ fired up by the Bentley Rural Fire Brigade to the delightful cakes prepared by Bentley Community Preschool, there is something for everyone. Lisa's Two Wheels Cafe ensures caffeine enthusiasts are well catered for, while various market stalls offer

unique crafts and goods.

This year's event saw artist Harry Westera as the judge, who provided insightful comments to the prizewinners. The generous sponsors donated over \$13,000 in prizes across 14 sections, ranging from \$2,000 to \$5. This inclusivity allows artists of all ages and stages to exhibit their work and be part of this community celebration.

### Question of necessity

In considering whether art is necessary, it's important to recognise the multifaceted role it plays. Art enriches our lives, offering an escape from the mundane and a deeper understanding of the human experience. It fosters creativity, critical thinking, and emotional expression, all of which are crucial in today's fast-paced, technology-driven world.

Furthermore, art brings communities together. The Bentley Art Prize is not merely about showcasing talent; it's about creating connections and building a sense of community. It's about celebrating local culture and providing a platform for voices that might otherwise go unheard.

In this way, art becomes a vehicle for social cohesion and cultural preservation.

### Conclusion

So, is art really necessary? In Bentley, the answer is a resounding yes. The Bentley Art Prize is more than just an exhibition; it's a celebration of community, creativity, and culture. It's an event that brings people together, supports local businesses, and enriches the lives of those who participate.

As the community looks forward to the 40th anniversary of the Bentley Art Prize in 2025, it stands as a shining example of why art is, indeed, essential.

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**ADVICE FOR MEMBERS & GUESTS**

**Club opening hours:**  
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- Open Mic, Wednesday 14th August, 6pm
- Dave Davies & the SKPs, 31st August, 6.30pm
- Social Bowls, Sundays 10am, all welcome