



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

I recently had the honour of showing Her Excellency the Governor General Sam Mostyn AC around Lismore.

# G-G visits Lismore

I was the first Mayor to meet the Governor General after her appointment in July, and she made a commitment to visit Lismore as soon as she could, and she was good to her word.

Her first stop was JarJum Preschool in Goonellabah where she delighted the students by reading the book *Welcome to Country* by Aunty Joy Murphy.

This was followed by a visit to SCU so that she could get a better understanding of the supportive role the university played after the

2022 natural disaster.

Next was a visit to CONVERGE, Lismore's temporary artist-in-residency space and professional development program, to speak to artists, followed by inspections to disaster repair works at the Lismore Library, the Old Municipal Building (Richmond River Historical Society) and the Water Treatment Facility on Wyrallah Road, ending with a Civic Reception.

Visits like this helps to keep Lismore in the nation's

attention as we continue to rebuild our community and lives, ensuring the Lismore Local Government Area is even a better place to live, work and raise a family.

## New sites for house relocations

To assist with relocating dwellings purchased through the NSW Reconstruction Authority's Resilient Homes program, Council has received an exemption that could potentially open up additional rural sites for house relocations.

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)



CONVERGE artist Chris Lego, Governor General Sam Mostyn and Mayor Steve Krieg

has granted Council an exemption allowing staff to consider the suitability of existing rural allotments where no dwelling entitlement currently exists. Minimum lot size

requirements of 20 or 40 hectares apply.

If you would like more information on this, go to the Building and Planning section of our website: [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au)

# New beginnings as a councillor

It's been a busy start since being sworn in as a Lismore City Councillor on October 15. I'm honoured to be part of the council to ensure good governance and sound policy, and I'm ready to tackle the challenges ahead. Getting to know Council from an entirely different perspective; that's for certain.

The first council meeting came with a few surprises, including an amendment to change the start time for meetings to 10 am. While I understand the intention behind this shift, I have concerns about its potential impact on community engagement and participation and councillors who juggle day jobs. To address these concerns, a rescission motion has been lodged, which I support, and will be considered at an extraordinary meeting on October 29. It's my belief that it's crucial that council meeting times remain accessible to everyone.

During the same meeting, several advisory groups including the Nimbin, Aboriginal, Disability Inclusion, and Sister City Advisory Groups were set for a review of their terms of reference, no Councillors were adopted to these groups. I'll be keeping a close eye on these reviews and will update you on any significant changes. Hopefully, the process won't be too drawn out, as expressions of interest for group members are due to open within six months following the election. These groups are such important mechanisms for community consultation and achieving good outcomes.



by Cr Virginia Waters

I'm pleased to have been appointed to the Floodplain Risk Management Committee and as an alternate for Arts Northern Rivers Board. These roles are vital in our region's ongoing efforts for flood preparedness/recovery and cultural development, and I look forward to contributing and supporting these initiatives.

Looking ahead, the Nimbin Place Plan will be discussed at the next councillor briefing on November 5. While these briefings aren't live-streamed, the public can book in to speak. After the briefing, the plan will be up for adoption at the ordinary council meeting on November 12. This is an important step in shaping Nimbin's future, and I encourage anyone with an interest to get involved or share any significant concerns. This document will help inform Council budgets and grant applications for Nimbin into the future.

Outside of council, I've

been out and about in the community. I attended the Nimbin Headers End of Season celebration fundraiser, such a wonderful inclusive and family friendly event. It's great to see the club thriving. I also recently joined the Aquarius Park Landcare Group at the Nimbin Rainbow Walking Track. It's so nurturing to connect with nature and fellow community members and of course many hands make light work. Anyone is welcome to come along it's every third Saturday and starts at 7.30. It's looking great: over 200 trees planted so far and a lot more to go.

I also attended the Nature Conservation Council's picnic at Ngulingah Nursery, Nimbin Rocks. It was a privilege to be in that sacred space, and I brought home some native plants for home regeneration efforts.

Revisiting the Aquarius legacy at a film screening at the Bush Theatre was another highlight and there will be further screenings in November at the Bush Factory, don't miss out!

So, as you can imagine I'm on a big learning curve, but I'm embracing it. You can reach me at: [virginia.waters@lismore.nsw.gov.au](mailto:virginia.waters@lismore.nsw.gov.au) or 02-6622-0164, if you have any Council related concerns let me know.

As I balance council duties with my day job, I'll respond as soon as possible. I'm also planning a morning in Nimbin and Lismore soon for in-person access, details to come in the next edition.

Thank you for your support, I'm excited to represent and work for our community.

# Historic rental reforms

Janelle Saffin MP  
State Member for Lismore

So here we are in November already, and it's that time when the momentum seems to speed up towards the end of the year. It's the season for Year 12 Formals, and I send my very best wishes to all Year 12 students as they complete their schooling and go out into the world.

In Parliament it is also a busy time and I have some news about significant legislation that we passed in the October sittings.

The Minns Labor Government has just passed the most significant rental reforms in over a decade.

This historic legislative package follows our election commitment to improve rental laws, and it strikes the right balance between the interests of owners and renters. More than 2.2 million renters across the state and the large number of local renters will soon enjoy these benefits:

- No grounds evictions will be banned;
- Rent increases will be limited to one per year;
- It will be easier to have pets in rentals;
- Fee-free ways to pay rent;
- A ban on paying for background checks when applying for a property.

Housing is the biggest cost people have and we know how hard it can be for young people and families, for pensioners and people on low incomes facing consecutive rent hikes and unfair evictions. These reforms make the system fairer and more compassionate.



Janelle Saffin celebrating International Day of Rural Women on 15th October with women from the NSW Labor parliamentary team.

## Private Health Insurers must pay

The NSW Parliament Government has passed legislation addressing the refusal of private health insurers to pay their public hospital bills.

Privately insured patients often go to public hospitals and the extra insurance they pay usually covers them for a private room.

But some private health insurers have been paying less than half the daily cost of a bed for a patient in a public hospital.

A number of insurers are doing the right thing, but the big four, BUPA, HCF, Medibank Private, and NIB are among those not paying their bills. The refusal of the biggest private health funds to pay the correct single room rate has been robbing public hospitals of \$140 million a year.

This has been happening since 2019, and in that time the major funds have doubled their profits. In our region it's estimated that private insurers have short-changed the Northern NSW Health District by around \$24.5 million.

## Welcoming essential workers to our region

It is about to get easier for local organisations to attract essential workers, with the introduction of the Welcome Experience to our region.

This program was successfully piloted last year in a handful of regional towns to help essential workers and their families move to regional NSW.

The program helped hundreds of essential workers make the move to the regions, including 346 health workers, 110 educators and 42 police.

The program has now been extended to Tweed, Lismore, Ballina, Byron and Richmond Valley, with Regional Development Australia (RDA) Northern Rivers as the host agency.

Host agencies ease the way for essential workers to settle into their new community by helping them with housing and information about local schools and amenities, joining sporting clubs and building social connections and friendships.

This is about helping our region attract and keep the workers who are essential to the services we need.

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Best wishes to all graduating Year 12 students -the future is in your hands and I am confident you will do amazing things.

**GETTING THINGS DONE**

Janelle Saffin MP  
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# Protect the right to protest – by protesting

The peace movement in our region and beyond has a proud history of mobilising people and communities, particularly when the world is most darkened by humanitarian tragedies, caused by war, war crimes and genocide.

It is one of the few moments of light among the actions against the people of Palestine by the Israeli Defence Force, that millions of people around the world have stood and continue to stand in solidarity against war and genocide.

In our home, the Northern Rivers Friends of Palestine have been fierce in their advocacy and activism, with a strong focus on building our community into a more cohesive network for justice.

The movement in Sydney, and the work of the Palestine Action Group, has successfully held peaceful demonstrations for more than 54 weeks in the CBD, repeating the same critical calls for a humanitarian stop in the state violence and preservation of the Palestinian people living in Gaza.

This basic message has been twisted by Labor Premier Chris Minns, and he has



by Sue Higginson,  
NSW Greens MLC

described these peace rallies as divisive and inappropriate.

In recent weeks, Labor Premier Chris Minns, while he was speaking on shock-jock radio 2GB, went as far as suggesting that the organisers of these peace and justice protests should have to pay for the hundreds of heavily armed police officers who just keep showing up to these rallies for peace and justice.

The significance of Premier Minns taking this position cannot be overstated; he has essentially proposed to limit the right for people to engage in political communication – to those who can afford it – I suspect if he does try this, he would be in breach of the Australian Constitution.

He has gone further than just words too; he has

ordered a review into the use of police resources in relation to protest activities, with a view to new limitations on protest. Please remember friends, all protests are legal.

Some actions that deliberately and peacefully break certain laws are distinct and known as nonviolent civil disobedience – but the weekly gatherings in Sydney, the same ones the premier wants to shut down, are protests.

The premier is undermining democracy, and his Labor colleagues are getting tired of it.

I was so alarmed that I caused the NSW Parliament to debate the matter of police force and protests last week as a matter of public importance. It was an opportunity to reflect on just how fundamental protest is to our society, political systems, and progressive change.

Perhaps unsurprising was the line of Labor backbenchers who took to the floor of the parliament to call out their own government, and to back the right to protest.

One of the great joys of being one of your representatives in the NSW Parliament is when we get to bring the community in here with us. On the same day, the Parliament debated police and protest, over 50 members of the community from more than 10 civil society organisations joined us in the gallery for the debate – and were



part of a phenomenal press conference on the roof of the Parliament!

One thing we can all see is that the Labor Government's continued trend towards harsher penalties for protestors is as relentless as it was under the former Coalition Government, a fact that has not been missed among worker organisations like the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, NSW Teachers Federation and the Maritime Union of Australia – just to name a few.

While the attacks on protest have continued in Sydney and around the country, and communities have rallied in support of Palestine, there has been a dark turn in the approach taken by police in response to people taking action to protect our precious native forests.

Often, the only way to stop logging machinery from tearing into the homes of

greater gliders and koalas is through non-violent direct action, where we put our bodies on the line and break a law in a peaceful way – to prevent a greater harm from being done. It's these actions, and the people like my friend Susie Russell, that are the last line of defence for native forests at risk of logging right now.

Just a few weeks ago, Susie was denied bail by the local police, despite being a peaceful person, well known in the community, and posing no risk of leaving the area. She was kept in police prison, because the police felt empowered to subject her to this harsh and cruel punishment for protecting the forest.

This is just one of the risks we face if we don't resist the push towards authoritarian police states – situations where police punish with impunity are already far too common, and only truly

called out by mass civil movements that take the form of protests.

This November, Rising Tide will be hosting the second people's blockade of the world's largest coal port for 50 hours. Rising Tide, and their multitude of supporters, will take to the Hunter River in Newcastle to take direct action to prevent more Australian coal being exported and burnt which is well you know, cooking the planet. It is a brave and selfless course of action.

But the police are already trying to shut it down. They have issued a summons to the organisers and are seeking an injunction from the Supreme Court that will prohibit an otherwise legal gathering, calling for climate action, from going ahead.

This is bad, and it's being driven by the police state and helped along by Labor Premier Minns. If the coal-loving Nationals and Liberals had their way, they would have made it clear that they would be passing new laws to give police powers to prevent protests altogether – a truly terrifying future.

But, what might be even more terrifying, is just how close Labor Premier Chris Minns has taken us to the brink already.

The best way to protect the right to protest is to protest, so I hope I will see you this November at the People's Blockade of the world's largest coal port. See: [www.risingtide.org.au](http://www.risingtide.org.au) for details.

## State of beaches report released



Most of the ocean beaches in Byron Shire and Ballina Shire have been given excellent grades in this year's State of the Beaches report.

Water quality assessment indicated that 100% of monitored ocean beaches in Ballina Shire achieved a good or very good grading. This means the swim sites were suitable for swimming most or almost all the time.

The best rated beaches in the Ballina electorate were Seven Mile Beach, Shelly Beach, and Lighthouse Beach. In Ballina Shire three of the seven estuarine swim spots were classed as good while Shaws Bay North, East and West, and Missingham Beach – received poor grades.

Shaws Bay East was downgraded from good from the previous year. Only one of the four monitored lake/lagoon sites (Lake Ainsworth South) was graded as good in 2023-24, with Lake Ainsworth North, East and West all graded as poor this year.

The North Coast experienced above average rainfall in Spring 2023 due to heavy rainfall in October and November. Rainfall is the major driver of pollution in swim sites, with water quality impacted by stormwater runoff and sewage overflows.

State of the Beaches grades are compiled from water quality samples collected at NSW swim sites monitored under Beachwatch programs.

"It is fantastic to see our ocean beaches receive great results despite the high rainfall we have received," Member for Ballina, Tamara Smith said.

"I will be working with Ballina Shire Council to confirm if the beaches that were rated poorly near the mouth of the Richmond River are due to the overall poor health of the river, or if there are other contributing factors."

"As a major tourist destination for our beautiful beaches it is great news that our ocean beaches are some of the safest in terms of water quality in the State," Ms Smith said.

## Price of beer continues to rise



by Kevin Hogan, MP for Page

Due to constant tax increases, alcohol prices continue to go up. This is having a big impact on our pubs and clubs. As we know, they are important gathering places.

Going to the pub for a meal and a beer can be the only social interactions some people have. Not being able to afford this can affect people's mental health.

The excise on beer increased by 11%

in 2023 alone, meaning 60% of the cost of packaged full-strength beer and 47% of mid-strength beer is now comprised of tax.

Local pubs are currently charging around \$8.60 for a schooner of Tooheys New; if these increases continue, we are on the path to a \$10 schooner.

I encourage the Albanese Labor Government to provide immediate cost-of-living measures for the domestic beer and spirits industry.

### Nimbin Walking Trail

Great to see this project progressing well. The walking track will link Aquarius Park and the soccer fields to Nimbin's iconic town centre. I was excited to obtain \$1.3 million in federal funding for this project.

The project includes concrete pathways, boardwalks and bridges, providing access to natural areas and landscape views, interpretive and wayfinding signage, local artworks, park furniture and native plantings.

The track will be over 1km long and great for locals and tourists.

# Resilience in our Nimbin community

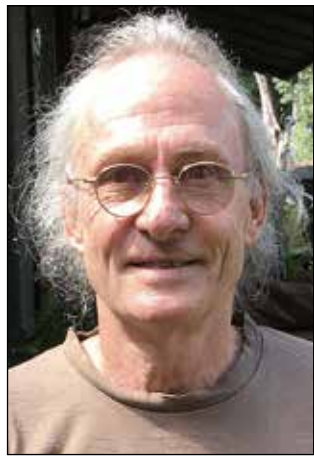
As we progress through 2024, resilience has become a defining value for Nimbin's small businesses.

This concept goes beyond mere survival; it encompasses adaptability, relevance and reimagining how businesses can serve our community.

Local businesses provide more than just goods and services – they contribute employment, stability and essential resources for both residents and visitors.

In recent months, Nimbin's vibrant spirit has been on full display. Major community events like the Spring Arts Festival, the Poetry World Cup, the Nimbin A&I Show, and the Sonic Bloom Dance Party have brought people together, showcasing our unique culture.

The recent Roots Festival,



## Chamber Chat

by David Hyett, president

which highlighted some of Australia's finest musical talents, drew festival-goers from across the country and featured beloved artists like Reg Mombassa, Ross Wilson, Hamish Stuart and the Pierce



Brothers.

These gatherings bolster our local economy and reinforce the creative and inclusive identity that makes Nimbin such a special place.

Looking ahead, the Chamber is excited to support the development and empowerment of local women entrepreneurs through initiatives like the upcoming Nimbin Women in Business session, 'Workshopping Your Business Ideas with Collective Intelligence' on 14th November, 5 to 7pm at Nimbin Youth Centre, bookings: [nimbinaustralia.com](http://nimbinaustralia.com) Limited to 12 participants,

it offers women in business a unique opportunity to harness the power of group dynamics to address specific challenges, situations, or questions.

Whether attendees bring their issues for discussion or wish to explore the practice of Collective Intelligence, they'll gain valuable insights and experience in collaborative problem-solving. This session is open to every woman in business within Nimbin and the surrounding areas, reinforcing the Chamber's commitment to fostering growth and innovation in our local economy.

The Nimbin Bush Theatre is excited to present two additional screenings of the *Aquarius* documentary at 2pm on 17th and 24th November.

Directed by Wendy Champagne and produced by Sam Griffin, the film

chronicles events from the 1973 Aquarius Festival to the present day, capturing the spirit and evolution of the Nimbin community.

The first screening in Nimbin played to a packed house, delighting audiences with archival footage many long-term residents had yet to see after its successful debut at the Byron Bay Film Festival.

Each screening will be followed by a Q&A session, providing a unique and engaging experience for our community and visitors. Bookings at: [nimbinbushtheatre.com](http://nimbinbushtheatre.com)

Additionally, the Chamber will sponsor a Public Speaking Workshop in February 2025, facilitated by Tony Kirton and Aline Binetruy, designed to help local business owners and residents build confidence in sharing their stories and ideas.

## Annual General Meeting

Mark your calendars for the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce AGM on 19th November at 5.30pm – a fantastic opportunity to connect with fellow business owners, share insights, and catch up with the vibrant business community.

Business owners are encouraged to make time for regular reflection and financial analysis, though finding time for these can be challenging amid daily operations. Assessing sustainability and identifying new market opportunities, both locally and beyond, is essential for growth.

Resilience remains one of Nimbin's greatest strengths. By continuously adapting, supporting one another, and embracing new possibilities, we ensure that Nimbin doesn't just endure – it grows stronger.

## What's happening at Flourish Sanctuary?

by Jagad Samuel

At Flourish Sanctuary, a vibrant line-up of events, gatherings, and community offerings is unfolding this season, and we're grateful to those who are helping keep the space in such wonderful shape.

A heartfelt thanks goes out to the SheMatrix team for their tremendous effort during our recent working bee. This dedicated group (pictured) brought an abundance of positive energy and hard work to make the sanctuary look immaculate.

We are thrilled to host SheMatrix's upcoming Grail Retreat, where their participants will undoubtedly enjoy the beautifully prepared surroundings.

November is an especially exciting month at Flourish Sanctuary, with weekly meditations, sound healing sessions, and community Satsangs, all designed to deepen spiritual practices, connect with others, and foster a sense of peace. Here's what's on the schedule:

### Monday Meditations with Jagad and Charlie

Kick off your week with a mindful Monday meditation session hosted by Jagad and Charlie. From 10.45am until noon, participants are invited to gather in a serene setting to centre their minds and hearts.

This is a wonderful opportunity for people of all experience levels to practice guided meditation, delve into self-reflection, and connect with like-minded individuals.

Whether you're new to meditation or a seasoned practitioner, these sessions provide an excellent opportunity to relax and rejuvenate at the start of the week.

### Thursday Sound Healing with Michael Deanshaw

Sound healing has an incredible ability to transform and soothe, and this November, Michael Deanshaw is bringing his powerful sound healing sessions to Flourish every Thursday from 9.30 to 10.30am.

Michael's approach incorporates a range of instruments, including crystal bowls and gentle percussion, that resonate deeply and align with the body's natural frequencies.

Sound healing has been shown to reduce stress, improve focus, and bring a



sense of balance, and Michael's sessions are no exception. All are welcome to join and experience the power of sound in a relaxed, nurturing environment.

### Sunday Satsangs with Jagad

We're also excited to invite you to two Satsangs this month, each a chance to engage in meaningful dialogue and spiritual teachings.

The first Satsang will be held on Sunday 9th November, at the home of Swami Parambodhi in Mullumbimby, followed by a second gathering on Sunday 16th November at Flourish Sanctuary.

These gatherings allow participants to explore a range of topics in spiritual practice, ask questions, and reflect on teachings in a warm, open setting. Satsangs are a wonderful way to meet others who share an interest in spiritual inquiry, and Jagad is honoured to facilitate these gatherings.

### Upcoming events for your calendar

Flourish Sanctuary is also preparing to host two major events that we're thrilled to share with the community.

### Spirit of Water Gathering – Saturday 7th December

Water has long been revered as a source of life, healing, and transformation. We invite you to a unique gathering focused on connecting with the Spirit of Water through meditation, sound healing, and ceremonial practices.

Participants will have the chance to

cleanse emotional blockages, activate intuition, and rejuvenate their spirits as we honour and connect with this essential element.

The Spirit of Water gathering will provide a beautiful experience of connection and renewal, bringing together community members who feel drawn to this ceremonial exploration.

### World Peace Festival – Tuesday 31st December to Sunday 5th January

Ring in the New Year with a transformative experience at the World Peace Festival, held at Flourish Sanctuary. This festival promises five days of music, workshops, and activities, all designed to foster harmony and peace.

In collaboration with local and international artists, healers, and facilitators, the festival will offer a unique line-up of events, all free from drugs and alcohol, to create a safe and inclusive environment.

The heart of the festival lies in its commitment to unity making it a perfect way to start the new year with purpose and community.

As we approach the end of the year, we are filled with gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead. Whether you're attending a Monday meditation, joining us for sound healing, or celebrating at the World Peace Festival, we welcome you with open arms.

Together, let's make these gatherings moments of beauty, growth, and shared joy. For more details, visit: [www.FlourishSanctuary.com.au](http://www.FlourishSanctuary.com.au)



## Mt Nardi walk

Learn about the rainforest and how to identify different trees with a guided walk through sub-tropical and warm temperate rainforest.

This walk is led by Peter Poropat, bush regenerator and author of *Barks and Trunks – Rainforest Trees of Eastern Australia – Vol 1 and 2*.

The walk will be held on Saturday 9th November at 10am, duration 3-4 hours. Meet at the Mt Nardi carpark, cost \$20.

For bookings at information, please call Peter on 0434-606-357.

## Count yourself lucky



by Doug Pinch

Carelessly, I recently broke an arm and a leg and have been interned in Nimbin Multi-Purpose Centre (hospital) for the last few weeks, with more weeks to come.

The care has been tremendous and we are fortunate to have such a facility in Nimbin.

An observation: if you visit our Emergency Department

and are sitting and waiting, and waiting for some attention, consider how lucky you are to be triaged at 3.

If you want immediate attention, get triaged at 1 or 2. This entails coming in a different door, the ambulance door on a stretcher with probably some body bits on the stretcher next to you.

So aren't you fortunate being triaged at 3? Just sayin'.

# Destroying native forests has serious consequences

by Scott Sledge, president

## Picnic for Nature

On 20th October, Widgabal-Waibal elder, Phil Roberts graciously welcomed community to a picnic on tribal land near Nimbin Rocks. Their enterprises include a native plants nursery, which Gordon opened for the public that day.

Weather was perfect. We set up a gazebo for musical entertainment organised by Peter Walker, who welcomed singers and musicians to join in. Lisa set up a free chai stall. Recently elected to represent Nimbin on Lismore Council, Virginia Waters gave a short speech.

The event was in collaboration with Nature Conservation Council of NSW to encourage people to appreciate nature. This was the third year and seems likely to continue as an annual event.

## Independent Forestry Panel

We have a chance for NSW to join Victoria and WA, which have now banned logging public forests.

The NSW government recently called for public submissions (now closed), so I wrote on behalf of the Nimbin Environment Centre and the Northern Rivers Guardians as I am president of both organisations.

We asked the panel to focus on the future.

The State Parliament recently debated this issue following a motion to cease logging public



native forests. I was disappointed to hear representatives from most political parties saying inaccurate things about the benefits of logging, so very like the propaganda spread by spokespersons for the Forest Products Association.

We have witnessed a marked decline in forest health in areas subjected to logging, with fewer native animals and poorer vigour of the regrowth, which mostly consists of invasive weeds.

The prospects for better environmental outcomes under current practices, is not credible. The timber industry fails in its attempts at replanting, if indeed there is any effort to regrow native forests at all.

Mostly 'harvested' areas look devastated after logging and any native trees that emerge are often surrounded by lantana and sometimes smothered by vines such as cat's claw.

To assert that restricting the violence against nature will cause Australia to import timber from other countries "which don't have our strict environmental standards" is ridiculous. Firstly the 'standards' are routinely violated by the loggers, and if they are caught breaking the agreed-upon rules, any fines imposed are paid by the public purse, hence

it is not useful to ask one agency of government to supervise another agency.

Secondly, most of the timber currently used in construction comes from the straight trunks of selected species that are plantation grown. The branches, saplings, and hollow-bearing old trees, which are the natural habitat of our wildlife, are reduced to woodchips. Only about 8% can be converted to timber.

Australia has an unenviable record of native species decline and tops the charts for extinctions. We have a history of exploiting nature from a colonial past, which pre-supposes that anything that does not belong to someone is free for the taking, and that allows destruction of habitats without proper regard for consequences.

We need to move on from destructive greed and shape a truly sustainable future. Modern Australians have some commitment to providing a livable environment for future generations, even as we witness the disastrous effects of global climate change.

We can pivot towards stewardship of public lands and encourage plantation forests for timber needs. There will be more jobs and better work for those communities living near native forests to nurture rather



NEC members singing 'Imagine' at the Picnic for Nature at Nimbin Rocks  
Photo: Claire L'Arrivee

than destroy our natural heritage. We will also have better air and water quality as we all help to save our planet.

## Giant devils fig (GDF)

I have noticed a proliferation of invasive weeds in our region of which the GDF (*Solanum chrysotrichum*) is the most scary. The thorns are noxious, and the plant seeds from flowers that appear in its first year of spectacular growth.

Dense groves of GDF can appear just about anywhere and quickly. Slashing only spreads the weed as it also grows from vegetative matter and even puts down new roots if pulled out and left in contact with the ground.

Everyone who is responsible for

land needs to learn how to control this pest and lobby all Councils to look towards eradication. Rous County Council has information about this and other weeds around the far north coast: <https://rous.nsw.gov.au>

## Local elections

We can celebrate the recent council elections in the Northern Rivers. Tweed, Byron, and Lismore Shires have all elected a number of new councillors who look to be dedicated representatives who will bring supportive energy to those who were re-elected to their positions.

Kyogle has many new faces who have environmental credentials – congrats!

# Polluted now, once pristine

by Kyogle Environment Group

In March 2024, Dr Matt Landos, director of Future Fisheries Veterinary Service and Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Queensland, delivered a sobering analysis of the Richmond River's decline.

Once a pristine ecosystem, the river has become a polluted system teetering on the brink of collapse due to the cumulative impacts of agriculture, urbanisation, and the persistent failure to implement water quality solutions.

When Europeans colonised the region in 1839, the Richmond River catchment was blanketed by approximately 750 square kilometres of the Big Scrub, a vast lowland rainforest. Today, less than one per cent of that rainforest remains.

The rapid destruction of native vegetation through logging, land clearing, and agricultural expansion removed vital riparian buffers – natural barriers that

once stabilised riverbanks and filtered sediments. Without these protective buffers, erosion accelerated, and sediment, along with pollutants, began to clog the river's arteries.

The exploitation of the river's resources, largely unregulated, set the stage for environmental collapse. Within 25 years of European colonisation, oyster beds were decimated and by the late 1860s, most native oysters had vanished.

Wetlands, once acting as sponges, were drained and dredged, reducing the river's ability to retain floodwaters. Floodwaters that once took 100 days to recede now drain in under a week, creating oxygen-starved waters that cause mass fish kills.

Dams, weirs and bores have disrupted the natural flow of water, concentrating pollutants and depriving wetlands of essential water supplies, and wastewater treatment plants, though compliant with Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)

standards, do not monitor emerging pollutants such as pesticides, pharmaceuticals, microplastics, and industrial chemicals.

With no regulatory mandate to manage these substances, they accumulate unchecked.

The upper reaches of the Richmond River once supported abundant populations of fish, including the now-endangered Eastern Freshwater Cod and the Freshwater Eel-Tailed Catfish, which has all but disappeared. Species like the Purple-Spotted Gudgeon (found in Fawcett's Creek) and the Pygmy Perch, once widespread, now survive only in fragmented populations.

Yet, as Landos points out, "There is no lack of knowledge of what needs to be done to improve water quality. Only a lack of implementation."

For more than 30 years, the degraded state of the Richmond River has been widely recognised. At least 26 government and research reports have documented its poor condition and proposed



actionable solutions.

Thirteen key recommendations have emerged, seven of which target improvements in the upper reaches of the river, including areas within the Kyogle Local Government Area (LGA).

Kyogle Council acknowledges the importance of the Richmond River in its Local Strategic Planning Statement, which identifies as a planning priority to "protect and enhance the health of the Richmond and Clarence catchments."

The rationale for this priority notes that the catchment is in poor to average health and stresses the need for strategies to improve water quality and restore ecosystem health.

Restoring the Richmond



Intact riparian zone at Horseshoe Creek

River requires a coordinated effort across governments, industries, and communities.

Solutions include replanting riverbanks with native vegetation to reduce sediment and stabilise banks, expanding regulations to monitor new pollutants such as microplastics and pharmaceuticals, reducing chemical run-off and promoting regenerative agriculture, reconnecting floodplains to the river system to slow drainage and prevent fish kills and reassessing dam and groundwater use to maintain natural river flows.

The opportunity to save

the Richmond River is still within reach, but it requires immediate and decisive action.

The solutions have already been identified – what's missing is the political will and community pressure to implement them. Community engagement and local advocacy are essential to create meaningful change.

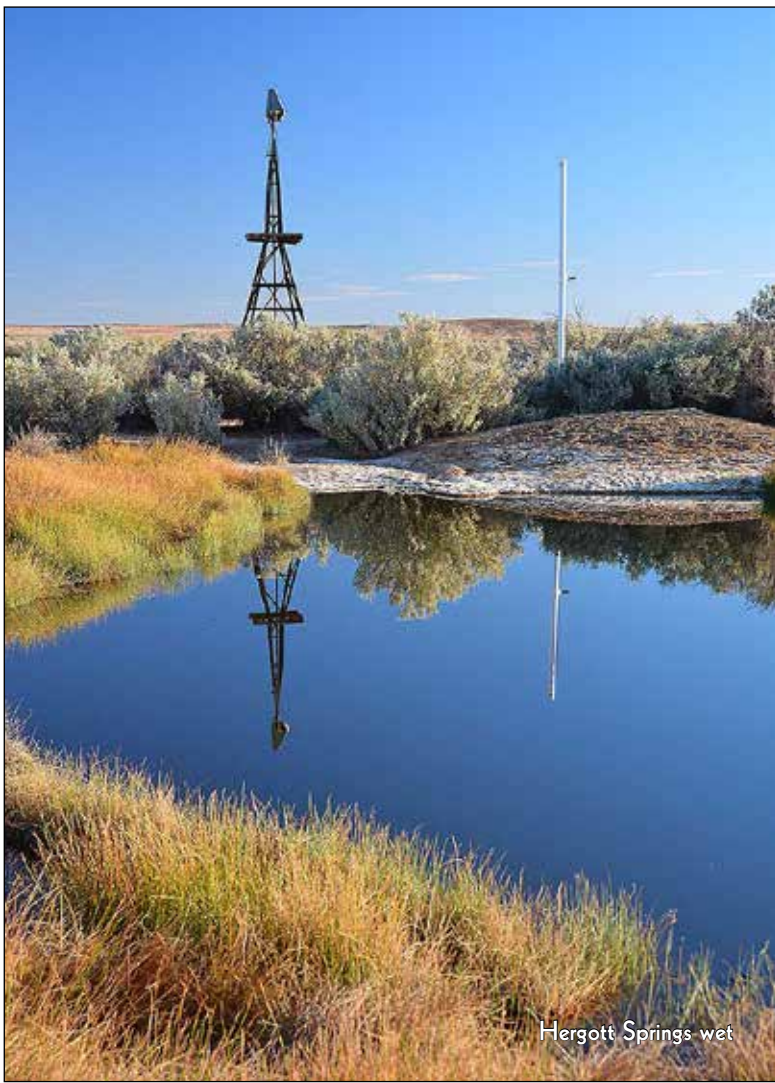
The Kyogle Environment Group (KEG) wants to hear from residents of the Kyogle LGA. To share your thoughts or get involved, contact us at: [secretarykeg@gmail.com](mailto:secretarykeg@gmail.com)

Together, we can work toward restoring the Richmond River to its former glory.



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Hergott Springs wet



Hergott Springs dry

by Annie McGovern

**W**e've lost the Southern Cross. Can't find it in the night sky, in amongst the myriad of stars, lost sight of our reference point.

We have been to Alberrie Creek; have been with the young crew there... they have a rhythm, the flow of linking and support continues... they are in the living present, the art of survival and living in the wild and woolies.

The early summer heat is challenging, learning to live in the vortex of the winds and how to plan and move with that.

There is some residual water lying in the channels, and reportedly Lake Torrens has rare and precious water lying in the shallows, the remnants of a good rain just after we left the area in early July. The few springs visited this time remain in steady decline.

Interestingly, two springs at the edge of this same area looked vibrant with good flow and a small pool holding water at the base of the mound. This is the complexity and the challenge of understanding the shifting nature of water flows, changes underground, pressure sources and how these are altered through excessive extraction.

There will be action on the springs. It is getting closer to where, with an agreement with other groups, it can be said that extraction from Borefield A must

cease. There is a plan to articulate that formally.

(News has just come through that BHP have committed to cessation of extraction from Borefield A by end of financial year 2030. This news is certainly positive, but further deliberation is required in terms of the timeline.)

The winds have been persistent as we travel further north into the face of a wild westerly. We subsequently learn from two different grapevines that good rain was had in Marree the day we left and that both Broken Hill and Roxby Downs had been shut down for two days by the west wind.

This is where we find, when the clouds clear and the dust settles, Scorpio taking a great dive into the western horizon and on first sight about to engulf Venus sitting just below this awesome constellation. But of course it doesn't and Venus continues to meander with and through the descending stars over following nights.

But in the face of this truly brilliant display, the Southern Cross is nowhere to be seen. Over nights of watching and pondering and realising the limitations of our own knowledge and experience (and with no-one to ask or the ability to 'google it') feeling a little bit lost and wondering can we just not see it, what are we missing here?

A lot of introspection, a lot of listening to the wind. Where do we go when our usual points of

reference are missing? However, like Venus we are not engulfed and go meandering into the body of the awesomeness to find out what it's all about and to work with what we have before us. We need a geiger counter that can differentiate background levels of radiation. Data, details, analysis and accountability.

The Roxby Downs Indenture Ratification Act 1982 was amended in 2011 to include amongst other changes, the facilitation of a desalination plant in the Spencer Gulf. This project was subsequently rejected due to Environmental concerns for the Spencer Gulf.

The mine is running out of water supply from the Great Artesian Basin and again they are going to the Spencer Gulf, this time with the commitment and support, including financial, of both the State and Commonwealth Governments, despite the fact that no EIS has yet been presented.

(This venture is what BHP is banking on and potentially what is enabling them to announce the Borefield A closure in 2030.)

We have now been 'in range' and yes have 'googled it'. It seems that the Southern Cross goes so low to the horizon at this time of year and at this latitude that it is not able to be seen. The pointers (not actually part of the constellation) are highly visible but the Southern Cross unseen.

While 'in range' we have also learned that the Liberal nuclear platform is growing, as is their perceived position in the polls. WA people are worried, as are people here in SA. There is a political voice

becoming stronger to take nuclear power out of the equation. There is also a determination by 'Voldemort' to promote and install nuclear energy production in Australia.

Reportedly there has been another uranium exploration approval given for a site in Morgan SA.

On the face of it, 'exploration' might seem innocent enough, but reality has shown that sites are heavily impacted even at this stage with quite extensive infrastructure set-up and works being done to prove the viability of the project. All this is progressed with virtually no public consultation or EIS process having been carried out.

Uranium mining is a big deal project with massive impost on the community and the environment. Governments appear to have lost sight of the hidden hazards. You can't feel it, you can't see it, you can't smell it or taste it. As one young person of the Lake Eyre district has recently said, "People are dying here."

Production of the raw materials for nuclear power requires massive amounts of electricity, water, investment by the public to support the corporation, and produces vast amounts of toxic, radioactive waste with potentially far-reaching

health consequences amongst our populations that no-one is monitoring or tracking in any way.

The extraction of Great Artesian Basin water by the Roxby Downs uranium mine, through its processing produces 200 million tonnes of radioactive waste per year.

This is not the stuff we regularly hear about needing disposal in radioactive waste dumps (that is another story). This is the contents of 5 x 100-hectare tailings ponds that lie in a semi-slurried state and which leach back into sub-surface structures beneath the ponds, including back into the water table.

The EPA have confirmed many years ago that the leakage of the tailings ponds was a reality but was not concerned as the gradient was towards the mine site and would be mixing with already contaminated water, which would suggest a state of an ever-increasingly high concentration of radioactive and toxic substances infiltrating the underground waters of the Arcoona quartzite aquifer.

A bit all over the place, but there is progress. As we sleep under the beautiful brilliance of Taurus in ascension with Jupiter close by, we strive to understand the depth of our current position and where clarity lies with peace in the world.

### Caldera Environment Centre

The Caldera Environment Centre's stall will be at the monthly Makers and Finders market at Knox Park, Murwillumbah on Saturday 23rd November.

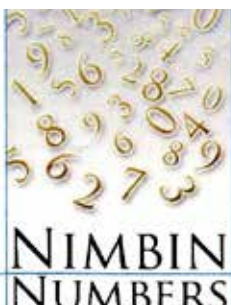
They stock a range of environmental books, including childrens' books, as well as ethically produced products.

Check out their website: [calderenvironmentcentre.org](http://calderenvironmentcentre.org) and Facebook page for information on their activities and events.

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# Do I have dementia?

by Chris Leyton, University Centre for Rural Health

Lisa, who is 70, has gradually noticed a decline in her day-to-day memory.

She used to be quite good at remembering people's names and recollecting details of conversations and events. However, she now struggles to remember the names of friends and sometimes stumbles over words to the point of embarrassment.

Despite this, she continues to go out for a coffee with friends and enjoys activities such as gardening, playing bridge, and reading.

Concerned about the possibility of dementia, she visited her local GP. After conducting several cognitive function exams, the GP decided to take a watch-and-wait approach, assuring her that such decline is common for her age.

Over the following year, Lisa's daughter became increasingly involved in her mother's care, as Lisa started displaying marked memory loss, anxiety and difficulty managing self-care. Eventually, her GP diagnosed her with dementia and Lisa would require constant supervision.

This hypothetical case portrays a common experience for many senior Australians who notice a decline in cognitive abilities, such as remembering, communicating, or making decisions. This often raises concerns about the prospect of living with dementia.

Dementia is an umbrella term that comprises multiple diseases, the most common being Alzheimer's disease. These diseases cause gradual and progressive brain damage, leading to relentless cognitive and functional decline.

As most other bodily



functions and organs remain largely intact, dementia is a protracted disease that gradually steals part of our memories, language, personality and emotions.

This decline causes significant distress and imposes a financial burden on family members and carers.

In recent decades, advances in medicine have substantially improved our health standards and boosted longevity. Since age is the main factor associated with dementia, projections suggest that the number of Australians living with dementia will double in the upcoming 30 years, rising from 421,000 to 812,500 ([www.dementia.org.au](http://www.dementia.org.au)).

Evidence suggests, however, that overall wellness can protect against or at least delay the onset of cognitive deterioration in nearly half of dementia cases.

A recent report by The Lancet Commission revealed that the risk of developing dementia could be reduced by factors such as quality education, higher occupational attainment, better social engagement and remaining cognitively active by learning new skills.

Healthy lifestyles, such as keeping physically active, quitting smoking, reducing alcohol intake and lessening exposure to air pollution were also highlighted by the Commission.

Additionally, managing medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol was also relevant for reducing the risk. The Commission identified other modifiable risk factors for dementia, including obesity, depression and traumatic brain injuries.

It is never too late to make a positive change and adopt healthy habits or routines that keep your mind and body active and fit, even if you are already experiencing some cognitive decline.

Although dementia is a leading cause of death and disease burden in Australia, diagnosis is often delayed, particularly in rural areas. In Lisa's case, she could have largely benefited from an early diagnosis and access to information about the disease. Early diagnosis would have enabled her to make lifestyle changes and implement interventions that might have helped her remain functional for longer.

Despite the diagnostic and therapeutic challenges, research offers hope to people living with dementia. It also allows us to explore how dementia disrupts our social interactions and fragments our sense of self and identity.

A better understanding of these processes will help develop better solutions to mitigate the impact of dementia on the ageing population.

# Who exactly are the CWA?

by Sage Bryant, Nimbin CWA publicity officer

The Country Women's Association of NSW was formed in 1922. It is the largest women's organisation in Australia and aims to improve conditions for country women and children.

We reach that aim in various ways including lobbying for change, helping the local community, creating a network of support and meeting together in towns and cities.

Members meet to connect with others in their local area, fundraise and help set policies, which are lobbied for at a state level. Members also enjoy cooking, handicraft, art and creative writing as well as teaching skills to others.

The CWA Nimbin Branch was first formed in 1928 and then, after a nearly 30-year hiatus, re-formed again in 2019.

Since that inaugural renewal meeting, many local women have joined and have volunteered their time and skills serving our unique community that we are all so passionate about. We honour those brave women that re-established this much-needed local support network.

Not long after the reforming of the Branch in 2019, our community experienced the worst fire season in many years, followed by the horrific floods of 2022.

During these harrowing



times CWA Nimbin organised and catered meals for firefighters, rescue teams, and affected community members. We also provided support with a ready shoulder to lean on and a listening ear.

This year we completed the upgrade of our kitchen space to a full commercial kitchen, which ensures we are prepared for any future community emergency needs.

After recognising the lack of options for local second-hand clothing, this year we also opened the Op Shop space in our rooms, ensuring everyone in community can access affordable clothing, bedding and household goods.

Our ongoing mission is to serve our local community. We work hand in hand with other local support agencies to provide material aid to those in need, and all the monies raised from our fundraising efforts go back into the Nimbin community wherever it is most needed.

If you would like to be a

part of our supportive group, pop along to one of our open days and have a chat with our members. We'd love to meet you!

## Dates to remember

- **Open Days:** 10am-3pm, 2nd and 3rd Wednesday of the month, pop in for lunch and a chat.
- **Op Shop Days:** 10am-3pm, 1st and 4th Wednesdays of the month.
- **Community Market Days:** 9.30am-3pm, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month.
- **Street Stall:** 10am-12noon, most Saturdays outside the newsagents.
- **Branch meetings:** 5pm, second Monday of the month, new members always welcome! Location: Figtree House, 81 Cullen St, Nimbin (next to the firehouse via Sibley Street).

For all general enquires, please phone: 0461-412-831 or email: [secretary.cwa.nimbin@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.cwa.nimbin@gmail.com)



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## Nimbin Community Care Team

### Gathering

Saturday 9th November

10am-1pm

At Nimbin Showgrounds

Your Questions Answered!

Re-connect with the project and each other

### Featuring

**Group Conversation:** building relationships in our neighbourhoods, and possible support roles, in between disasters.

**Paul Dodd** on how to respond and support someone in a trauma state and how to manage a personal experience of trauma.

Refreshments provided





Rehearsing a scene from Antoinette's play *The Taming of Hamlet*.

## Short play competition

by Antoinette Ensbej

Rehearsals are in full swing for this year's Short Play Festival at Mullumbimby's Drill Hall Theatre in November.

The festival features a Shakespearean cocktail of ten short-listed plays written by local playwrights. The popular festival now runs for over 20 years.

Artistic director and the engine behind some of the hottest theatrical plays is Mike Russo.

Inspired by Shakespeare, the plays are a contemporary take on the old master of love, life and loss.

I was one of the lucky candidates whose play was

selected for performance at the festival.

As a fresh playwright and new at this game, it was a steep learning curve and rehearsals can be summed up as: "This same progeny of evils comes from our debate, from our dissension," to quote Titania of *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. O brave new world!

Come and see the Hot Shorts at this year's biennial short play competition and be part of the People's Choice Award when the audience votes for the hottest of the Hot Shorts 2024.

Performances run from 14th to 24th November. For more information and tickets, go to: [drillhalltheatre.org.au/hot-shorts](http://drillhalltheatre.org.au/hot-shorts)

# Weaving and mending

by Raine West

This year marks the 20-year anniversary of the Nimbin Weave and Mend Gathering.

It will be held at the Nimbin Showgrounds over the weekend between 30th November, opening at 9am, until 1st December, with a closing at 6pm.

The gathering is a free event where we can come together, to practise, share, and learn new techniques, discover local fibres, along with how to sustainably collect and dye them. The weekend is a fantastic opportunity to catch up with some old friends, as well as a great time to make new ones.

Everyone is welcome, whether you're a novice, skilled or just genuinely interested in weaving. Camping with amenities is available for \$25 a night at the Nimbin Showgrounds.

There will be a chai tent, music, and Alfred's Coffee Cart on site. You are welcome to bring food, fibres and knowledge to share. "A birds eye view."

It's wonderful to see the new weavers carrying on the tradition of women coming together to weave, make, share, and mend. I see many groups of women's weaving circles out there now and I know the effect of that, so we can expect to see a rise in contented women.

Of course, we all know it's not just weaving (or knitting or sewing or...).



there's a whole lot of other things going on.

The CWA are experts at this, and it's worthwhile looking up some of the changes they have made to society. They aren't just a bunch of grey-haired ladies making scones and knitting, they DO stuff.

It's natural when women come together, to create a comfortable space and simpler ways of doing things. To help energy flow, to keep the children safe and happy, and to learn from and teach and assist each other. That is not so easy in these times.

In weaving, there are many parts to

a basket and they all depend on each other, although they are different, they make a complete, useful thing. Looking back on the many Weave and Mend we've had, I see what is possible.

Women in groups weaving different styles with different materials, fibres soaking in large containers of water which is irresistible to small children, who paddle and emerge covered in fibres.

Smoke from a fire, food being prepared, music floating. Older women respected, children shared.

I dream of this being normal. So come along and share the possibility.

**THE NIMBIN BUSH THEATRE**

**Events Programme**

**Aquarius Movie Film Screening**  
2PM Sun Nov 17th and 24th

**SONIC BLOOM VOL V Dance Party**  
6PM Sat Nov 23rd

**AFROBEATZ NIGHT HAPPY AFRICA BAND**  
6:30PM Sat Nov 30th  
with drumming and dance workshops sunday from 9:30am

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING**  
Cacao Ceremony  
10AM Sat Nov 10th  
Nourishing Yin Yoga and Sound Healing  
9:30AM Sat Nov 30th

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[nimbinbushtheatre.com](http://nimbinbushtheatre.com)

## AN EVENING OF TRIVIAL FUN

Calling all trivia enthusiasts and supporters of early childhood education.

Challenge your mind. You're invited to our Nimbin Pre-school trivia night fundraiser. Gather your friends, family, or co-workers and form a team to compete for fantastic prizes and, most importantly, bragging rights as trivia champions.

Get ready to put your knowledge to the test while making a difference to the lives of our little learners.

Every dollar raised will go towards enhancing Nimbin Preschool's educational resources. In addition to the exhilarating trivia showdown, we'll have exciting raffle prizes, and plenty of opportunities to connect with fellow supporters of early childhood education.

Reserve your table now and mark the night of 16th November on your calendar.

**Trivia Night**  
Nimbin Bowling Club  
Welcomes you to a Night of Trivia  
in support of the Nimbin Community.

WHEN: Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2024 (usually 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat of the month).

WHERE: Sibley's Bistro, Nimbin Bowling Club. Lots of fun for all.

FUNDRAISING for the Nimbin Pre-school

Great prizes to be won on the night as well as a raffle and auction.

BOOKINGS are Encouraged. Priority Given for Meals in Bistro.

Nimbin Bowling Club 02 6689 1250 Sibley's Bistro 02 6689 1473

THEME: Best dressed prize!  
Come as your Favourite nursery rhyme Character

TIME: 6:00 pm For 7:00 pm Start. ENTRY: \$3 gold coins

## Richmond Greens launch The Hot Seat

The Hot Seat is no boring political launch. It's a gathering of comedians, artists, musicians, producers, activists and MPs for a campaign premiere and a live chat show.

Greens candidate, Mandy Nolan (pictured) has invited fellow activists and rabble rousers for a night of conversations and cabaret to dig deep, ask the hard questions, and celebrate the diversity, adversity and sometimes downright perversity of the federal seat of Richmond.

- It's a festival of changemakers, with:
- Paul McDermott – Australian comedy legend and television host;
  - Wendy Harmer – broadcaster, author, columnist and comedy icon;
  - Rhoda Roberts AO – actor, writer and artistic director;
  - Angus McDonald – award-winning artist, filmmaker, writer;
  - Spencer Hitchen – environmental youth activist;



- Alexandra Hudson – comedian and disability advocate; and
- Mehreen Faruqi – deputy leader of the Australian Greens and Senator for NSW.

These pioneers will take to The Hot Seat to talk about First Nations justice and how we decolonise, how we address biodiversity, climate collapse, gender politics, disability advocacy and the NDIS, why we are failing the world's refugees and how we solve the housing crisis.

Forget Q&A – the Hot Seat is where it's at!

The Federal seat of Richmond is a hot seat in itself. Mandy got close in 2022, and at next year's federal election she needs just a 1.8% swing to win the seat she's lived in for over 30 years.

Mandy is joined by her sizzling house band Katrina and the Greenies, with dance moves by choreographer Philip Channells.

The Hot Seat will be on at Lennox Head Cultural Centre on Saturday, 16th November from 7pm. Tickets are \$40 and available on-line at: [www.mandy4richmond.com/events/hotseat](http://www.mandy4richmond.com/events/hotseat)



After their monumental nine-month USA tour, Northern River's own 'epic folk' band The Heart Collectors return to the region to share a homecoming garden concert at the beautiful Garden of Light in Tyalgum, on Saturday, 16th November.

The band will share stories and songs from their road trip: nearly a year of continuous performing across the United States.

"It's been an incredible journey. We've had the opportunity to share our music with so many people in the US, sharing our positive music and inspiring so many folks around the country," the band's cellist, Mo Barnaby said.

The band's tour spanned 40,000km, with over 100 performances across 25 states and sold-out shows. They wowed audiences with their unique four-part harmony driven, 60s and 70s Americana-inspired folk, with a Celtic lilt.

The Heart Collectors homecoming concert is a celebration of their incredible journey, offering an intimate, immersive experience of uplifting music all amongst the beautiful spring bloom at the Garden Of Light and catered by Flutterbies Cottage Café.

For tickets see: [theheartcollectors.com](http://theheartcollectors.com)



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## LET'S DANCE TECHNO: SONIC BLOOM VOL. 5

Endancement Productions are super excited to announce the fifth instalment of our spectacular dance music event Sonic Bloom.

On Saturday 23rd November, Sonic Bloom Vol.5 will be held, once again, at the iconic Nimbin Bush Theatre from 5pm till midnight.

Sonic Bloom is a dance music orientated party hosting five top notch local and interstate DJ's on stage with headliners La Fray (Nimbin/USA) and Kozi (Gold Coast/Japan/Brazil) supplying groovy House and Techno vibes to our notoriously funky dance floor.

Glockn'Speel will open this delicious musical journey at 5pm in the grounds of the Nimbin Bush Theatre with our premium Danley Sound Labs



sound system supplied by Sound is Everything – one of the clearest and crispest sound systems in the Northern Rivers, accompanied by stunning

visual projections from local wizard VJ Rubin, and all of this topped off by the spectacular decor arrangements curated by local artistes Jingles and La Fae.

We are also thrilled to welcome the return of Audiotronix (Sonic Bloom 4) and Bobby K (Sonic Bloom 3) collaborating together in a B2B two-hour set!

The Sonic Bloom Dance Music journey has been gathering momentum in 2024 and this latest instalment promises to be an all-encompassing dance party extravaganza.

Tickets are available from the Nimbin Bush Theatre website: [sites.google.com/nimbinbushtheatre.com/nimbinbushtheatre](https://sites.google.com/nimbinbushtheatre.com/nimbinbushtheatre)

See you on the dance floor!

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## The Politics of Life comes to M-Arts

by Richard Hil

The first in a series of public talks called This Stuff Matters – Politics of Life takes place at the M-Arts Centre, Murwillumbah on Thursday 21st November.

The main event is 'Phew or spew?' What the US election means for you, me and everything on the planet. Our conversationalists are Julianne Schultz (*The Idea of Australia, A Search for the Soul of a Nation*) and Judith White (*Culture Heist: Art vs Money*). The event commences at 7pm. And the bar opens at 5.30pm with food available.

Our conversationalists will discuss the US election. Let's face it, the choice before the American people on 5th November isn't great. And the prospect of a Trump presidency is sending shivers down the global spine. You know the reasons why. Julianne and Judith will reflect on what the US election result means in terms of US democracy, global geopolitics, as well as its implications for Australia. How should Australia respond to a Trump or Harris presidency? What should Australia and Australians do if Trump is elected?

The Politics of Life is concerned with how and what we think, what worries us, and how we are in the world. You don't have to be a Plato or Aristotle to wonder what's life's all about. We think



about the meaning of life all the time. How can I be happy, content? Why am I so sad? What does love mean? Why do I feel so lonely? Why do I seek meaning and purpose? Why do I keep asking so many questions?!

Life's a journey all right. It's complex. It can be brutish and short, but it can also be wonderfully joyous. Our lives, of course, are shaped by historical, social, economic, cultural and material circumstances. How we think of and experience life depends on where, when and with whom we find ourselves.

Life as we know it, is changing, and fast. Our worlds are becoming more polarized, troubled and uncertain. The very technologies that promised so much connection seem to be driving us apart. Despite their relative wealth and privilege, western societies exhibit many signs of social fragmentation and human misery. We're among the loneliest generations to have lived.

Which is not great news given that the climate predicament and ecological destruction are going to have massive

implications for how and where we live.

To face up to what's unfolding, we'll need to rebuild civic life and create more resilient communities. We'll need to relearn how to connect with each other in ways that make us feel supported and part of something bigger than ourselves. This all runs counter to what our society has become. Growing economic inequality and distrust of politicians and democratic institutions will make these tasks more difficult. We can worry about all this on our own. We can lose hope and sink into despair.

But there is another way, and it's through reconnecting with others, sharing our thoughts and feelings, building new solidarities and finding solutions to our collective problems. We might not be able to prevent the worst, but we can face things knowing that someone has our back and we have theirs.

The Politics of Life is focused on what love, compassion, connection, attachment, respect, trust, sense of place and so forth mean in a rapidly changing world. The series will encourage us to think afresh about what life means in a transformed environment and what we can do to make life feel more connected and joyous.

In the meantime, you can book your ticket for the first event here: [thisstuffmatters.my.canva.site](https://thisstuffmatters.my.canva.site)

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- Open Mic, Wednesday 13th November, 6pm
- Trivia night, Saturday 16th November, 6pm
- Social Bowls, Sundays 10am, all welcome

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