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presents

NIMBIN ART FAIR 2025

Sat 12th April - Sun 27th April
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NIMBIN SCHOOL OF ARTS

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Gearing up for NAG Art Fair

by Karen Welsh

The new art year is off and running with plans well underway for the 2025 Nimbin Art Fair.

This year the Art Fair opens on Saturday 12th April and runs through to Sunday 27th April. Entry forms are now available at the Gallery desk at 49 Cullen Street, or make a request via facebook or email to: nimbinartistsgallery@gmail.com

(Sadly our website has been hacked, and we are awaiting our new refurbished web presence)

The Margaret McLaren Art Foundation Art Prizes, totalling \$5000, will once again be a feature of this year's Art Fair. There is an Emerging Artist prize of \$2000 cash, and a \$3000 cash prize for the work judged most outstanding.

Entries are open to all artists, with applications closing 17th March.

Every year the standard just seems to get better and better, quite outstanding really for a village of our size.

Local talent is the key as they continue to raise the bar of developing techniques, honing their skills and a unique place in our society.



Overall winner 2024 Naomi Malone Floral Tapestry

The Art Fair is becoming a school-holiday/Easter fixture for the many travellers, tourists and family visitors at this time of year, and allows great exposure of our local artistic talent.

Meanwhile, the Nimbin Artists Gallery continues to be staffed entirely by local volunteers and currently has over 50 local artists on exhibition. Come visit from 10am-ish to 4pm-ish.

Relics V: mapping time and place

Relics V at Blue Knob Solo Space

What seems a very long time ago, Renita Glencross studied textiles at uni and for the past 40 years has travelled far and wide seeking the advice of master weavers and traditional dyers, researching the botany and alchemy for preparing fibres and extracting natural colour to create unique stitched and woven wearable art and ceremonial objects.

Her exploration has taken her on a lifelong learning journey from the southern forests and seas, through the Australian central deserts to the remote top end of the Territory and across Asia into Indonesia, Vietnam, China and Cambodia.

The Relics are a collection of layered mixed media images, ceramic and woven glyphs, sigils, and natural ephemera incorporated in weaving, felting and stitching.

The works build on Renita's previous exhibitions based on journeys made between the desert, the sea and the forest and all the learnings in-between: life and death, transience and impermanence, attachment and letting go.

We were young once...

This exhibition is a journey into the artists' lives and gives us a glimpse into how they came to be artists/artisans.

Many of us came to art practice at different times in our lives. For some it may have been part of our childhood and continued throughout our lives.



'A Chair with No-one There is Like a Book with No Name' by Amanda Doran

For others it may have been something that was dreamt of – an unfulfilled dream or desire that came about later in life.

We asked artists to bring in an image of their 'younger selves' with a few words to go alongside their artworks. You will be surprised and delighted with these 'younger selves' and who they have become as artists/artisans.

The opening event for these exhibitions is on Sunday 9th February at 2.30pm.

Blue Knob Cafe – has a great selection of freshly made gourmet



Ceramics by Bob Ross

toasties, pies, savoury pastries, specials, cakes, coffee and drinks. We look forward to seeing you on the cafe verandah for food, art, and a great view of Blue Knob. See our Facebook page for more info about the café.

Blue Knob Writers Group – meet weekly at Blue Knob Cafe on Sundays. For more info contact Alex 6689-7268 or Helen 0487-385-134.

Blue Knob Vocal & Instrumental Group – Meet on Thursdays from 3.45pm at Blue Knob Hall. Everyone is welcome, just turn up, or for more info call Peter 0458-487-865.

Themed art and craft exhibition in Kyogle



The Roxy Gallery is excited to present the Summerland Giant Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival Art and Craft Exhibition.

Prizes have been awarded in each of the categories of Landscape, Woodwork, and Hard and Soft Craft; with sub-categories for Juniors (5-12 years), Intermediate (12-18) and Seniors (18 years+).

This year's focus is on landscapes showcasing pumpkins or watermelons.

Dave Burgener, Kyogle Council's Arts and Culture Officer said, "The works are colourful and unique. They showcase the skill of creatives living in Kyogle and the Northern Rivers region."

The exhibition is running through to 9th February.



Above: Senior winner Soft Craft by Mario Sanchez
Left: Senior winner Landscape, 'Summer Day' by Dilys Bond



Echoes of the Earth - bringing landscapes alive with sound

Flourish Art in Lismore will present 'Echoes of the Earth', an immersive art exhibition by award-winning Nimbin based artist Marty de Weerd, from Friday 7th to Friday 28th of February.

This unique exhibition invites visitors to experience Australia's diverse landscapes through

both visual art and an evocative soundscape of nature and music.

Marty's artwork captures the beauty and spirit of Australia's environments, from the red deserts of the outback to the lush coastlines.

The exhibition's soundscape, a collaboration with vocalist Ama Joy, enhances the experience

with field recordings and original compositions that bring the landscapes to life.

From the rustling of leaves to the calls of native wildlife, these sounds deepen the connection between the viewer and the land.

The opening night on Friday 7th February will provide an

opportunity to meet the artist, hear about his creative process, and enjoy wine and nibbles.

The event is free and open to the public, with Flourish Art being fully wheelchair accessible.

'Echoes of the Earth' will be on display at Flourish Art, 15 Casino Street, South Lismore, with gallery

hours from Wednesday to Friday (10am to 4pm) and Saturday (10am to 2pm).

Whether you are an art lover, nature enthusiast, or curious about the intersection of sound and vision, this exhibition offers a chance to experience Australia's landscapes in a profoundly immersive way.

Contemporary woven and stitched objects

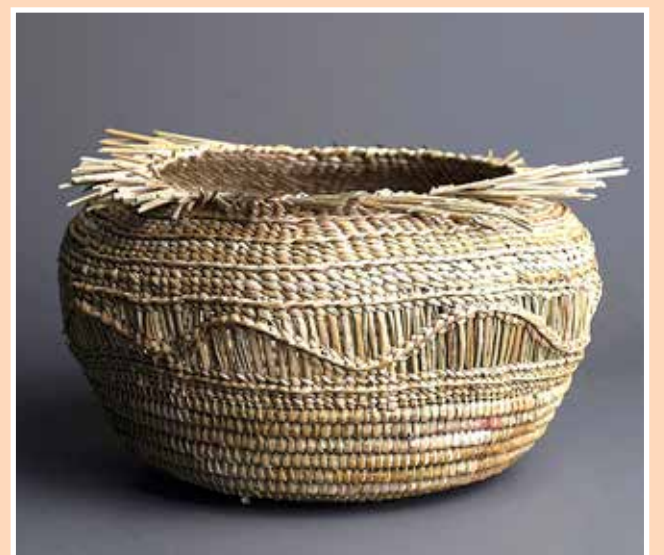
Patterns of Entanglement



'Rainbow of my Heart' by Michelle Campbell, hand-dyed raffia and lomandra, 29 x 32cms



'Woven Child' by Rebecca O'Connell, foraged fibres, 115 cms tall



'Dragon Basket 4' by Vashti Western, dragon tree, piccabeen, red hot poker, 43cm x 24cms



'Dream of Water Reeds' by Martina Driftwood, water reeds, 28cmx15cm

Patterns of Entanglement at Serpentine Gallery invites audiences to explore the intricate world of weaving and stitching. Co-curated by Sue Connor (*playingwithfibre.com*) and Shel Sweeney (Instagram: *aweavinglife*), this collection celebrates the enduring traditions of woven and stitched art forms while showcasing their evolution through contemporary interpretations.

The exhibition features renowned artists including Rebecca O'Connell, Lisa Robinson, Jackie Banks, Vanessa Morris, Vashti Eastern, Martina Driftwood, and Rowena Kempton.

Each artist brings a distinct perspective to the medium, blending traditional techniques with experimental approaches. Their works draw inspiration from diverse cultural heritages, personal narratives, and the natural world.

More than just a display of skill, this exhibition seeks to spark conversations about the relevance of weaving and stitching in today's world.

How do these practices resonate with modern audiences? What can they teach us about sustainability, creativity, and interconnectedness? By posing these questions, the artists aim to redefine weaving not just as a tradition but as an ongoing dialogue.

Sue Connor's contributions to Patterns of Entanglement bring a deeply personal and reflective dimension to the exhibition. Drawing inspiration from the natural environment and the interconnectedness of life, Sue views weaving as both a meditative practice and a means of storytelling. She incorporates fibres gathered from local plants, as well as raffia, which she hand dyes with natural dyes, to create works that honour her connection to the land.

"For me, weaving is about rhythm and reflection," Sue explains, "It's a way to slow down and reconnect with what really matters." Her pieces invite viewers to consider their own ties to nature and tradition, weaving a narrative that is as much about individual experience as it is about collective heritage.

To Shel Sweeney: "This exhibition invites you to consider

the many threads of your own life, your own cultural heritage, your own daily rhythms, and to see the patterns of entanglement of which you are part." These words encourage visitors to reflect on how weaving connects us all, both metaphorically and literally. "It is not just an art but a practice that interlaces history, culture, and identity."


Patterns of Entanglement opens on Friday 14th February, from 5.30pm until 8.30pm, at Serpentine Gallery, 3/104 Conway Street, Lismore.

The artists exhibiting in Patterns of Entanglement are offering a series of workshops, artist talks, and demonstrations. These events allow visitors to engage directly with the artists, learn about their creative processes, and even try their hand at a variety of basketry techniques.

Notably, on Saturday 22nd February, Vanessa Morris and

Martina Driftwood will lead a jewellery-making workshop, where participants can craft their own woven adornments. This session promises to be both educational and inspiring.

For updates on all workshops and events visit us at www.serpentinearts.org or phone 0492-964-819.



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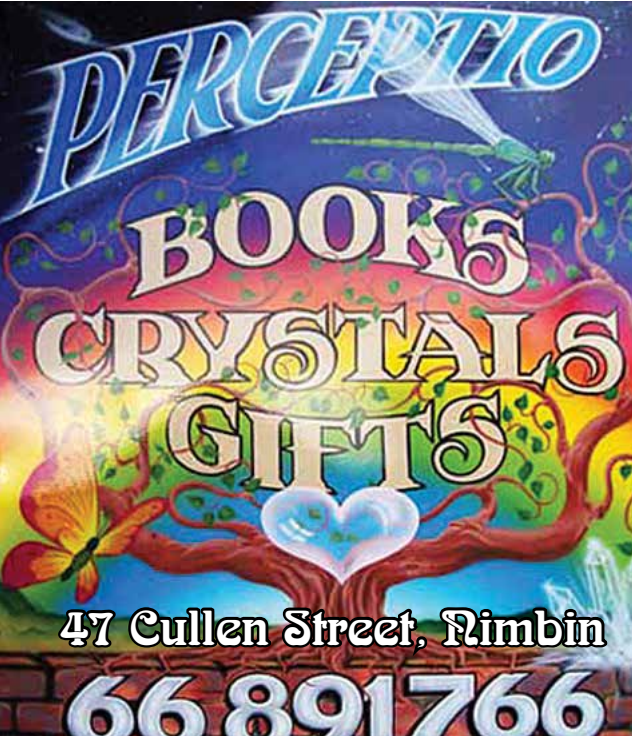
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Creaky voice

by Scott O'Keeffe

In the Northern Rivers, rain means frogs, and we have a lot of them in the district.

One frog has a creaky voice variously described as maniacal, scary or irritating. It's certainly prominent. If you live near water, you've probably heard it.

Peron's tree frog (PTF) is a member of the genus *Litoria*, aka Australian tree frogs. It's a diverse group of more than one hundred species, with new species still being found.

The familiar, very large green tree frog belong to this genus, but the PTF is much smaller, usually about 5cm long.

Litoria frogs are found in most landscapes, from desert to rainforest, in Australia, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Many species are tree-

dwellers, but others live on or near the ground. Some, including our subject, *Litoria peroni*, move between both worlds.

In Australia, PTFs are found from dry inland areas to the coast in NSW, ACT, Victoria, Southeast SA and the southern half of Queensland. They inhabit woodlands, forests, shrublands and agriculture areas that have abundant water with fringing trees and shrubs.

PTFs are mainly active at night. During the day they rest in dense shrubs, under or around rocks, and in tree hollows.

They forage at night, partly on the ground, but they also move up into shrubs and trees. I often see them climbing the sides of buildings.

These frogs have the remarkable ability to rapidly



This Peron's tree frog changes colour every evening before it ventures out.
Photo: teejaybee

change their skin colour. This transformation occurs early in the evening before they venture out to feed.

During the day their skins are mostly pale grey or green. In the evening their skins become reddish-brown. Many individuals have prominent emerald green flecks through their skins. Their thighs are yellow-orange, or red, with black mottling. Males have yellow throats. This is a very attractive animal!

The males can be heard "singing" in spring and

summer near standing water. If they're around, you'll hear them.

PTFs lay their eggs underwater, attaching them to aquatic plants or submerged twigs. Eggs are laid singly or in small clusters. These hatch into golden tadpoles that mature and become small frogs after four months.

I can't understand why these attractive singing frogs get bad reviews. I relish drifting off to sleep to the sound of their charming creaky voices.

El Salvador. Americana Highway revisited.

by Warwick Fry

Back in El Salvador in a different groove: tracks are worn but it's the same machine, the same hardware.

The Policia Hacienda are now called the Policia Civil, but the headquarters are still just down the road; their vehicles still cruise by. Calle Concepcion, where I hung out in the eighties, is now semi-industrial, but the budget hotels survive, just a little noisier.

The taxi-driver of 15 years ago comes into the courtyard whistling at 8am. "Esta el Kanguru?" (Is the Kangaroo here?). He always got me to my appointments on time during the guerilla offensive of 1989.

Today it was through the hora pico, afternoon peak hour traffic (when a five-minute trip takes half an hour), to a cita in a Mister Donut in the Metrocentro Mall with Pedro Cabezas.

Pedro apologises for being late (we were too) because he had been on the road to Cabanas, the province where local communities are resisting the pressure of international mining companies to exploit and ruin the water table of El Salvador's river system.

Half way through our conversation over coffee, Pedro gets a phone call. He nods to me, "They are repealing the mining ban in the Legislative Assembly tonight when everyone is away over the Xmas break." He shrugged, "We were expecting this... but they certainly picked the time to do it."

Eight years ago, ADES (of which Pedro is an official) succeeded in convincing the FMLN government of the day, led by President Sanchez Ceren, to legislate a blanket ban on mining in El Salvador with international support. It established an international legal precedent.

Australian companies played a role in this by utilising 'shell' companies. Prior to this, international corporations could sue governments under international law if they shut down or imposed restrictions on unethical mining activity. Lawfare crippling democratic legislation.

The current Australian government should take a strong interest in this. We are still seeing the obscenity of the ALP's 1989 'Timor Gap Treaty' that led to the invasion of East Timor by the Indonesian

government of the day; as well as the deaths of five Australian ABC journalists who in 1975 reported the 'deniable' invasion based on the interests of oil companies.

Current El Salvador President Bukele trumpeted his intention to overturn the mining ban with the arrest two years ago of anti-mining activists 'The Santa Marta Five' on trumped-up charges. The Santa Marta Five were key activists in resisting the incursions of the mining interests. They won the ban by convincing the government (and the Catholic Church whose Archbishop was a graduate in chemical engineering) that cyanide in the water table of water-scarce El Salvador was not a good idea.

Last October, Bukele (the self-declared 'coolest dictator') sacked the judge who dismissed the fake charges against the Santa Marta Five, and appointed a new judge who is now appealing the dismissal of the charges. They go up for a retrial in February this year. At the same time Bukele assigned 2000 military and police to impose a cordon around the province of Cabanas.

Pedro agreed with me that the anti-mining movement in El Salvador could be a flash point in El Salvadoran history. Their anti-miner movement was also an historic precedent in international law (an Australian company was involved). It meant that a nation-state could now be protected against 'lawfare' from multinational corporations if attempts were made to regulate their activities.

Bukele, as a political agent of multinational corporate capitalism, is seeking to overturn that precedent. Something similar happened in Australia when QC Bernard Collaery was persecuted for exposing the legal shenanigans the Australian government pursued in the obscene 'Timor Gap Treaty' preventing the Timorese claims against Woodside from appearing in the World Court.

With 2% of the nation's resident population locked up in one of the world's largest prisons, the locals in El Salvador keep their heads down. Grassroots organisations are organising, but cautiously. People are losing their homes, their 'little patch' of land, to bank loans and money lenders, with

the breadwinners of the family in gaol, unable to pay off loans and mortgages.

The only growth industry that I could see were the superhighways to potential tourist resorts. The other source of employment is the police and military, which the IMF and World Bank seem to be strangely willing to support, rather than the social programs of health and education that El Salvador desperately needs. It is the re-militarisation of the country.

It was reminiscent of the El Salvador of the 1980s that I knew well too. Micro-businesses are a monument to the industrious Salvadorans who emerge at 4-5am to get to work. They exist in daily confrontation to their daily living conditions, living their lives beyond the super-malls, the Metrocentros that take up acres of city blocks for upper middle-class shoppers - the 'aspirational' class.

Bukele's concept of 'progress' is Asian-financed superhighways under construction to tourist developments, while the pot-holes in the back streets of the capital San Salvador get deeper, the ramshackle dwellings and shopfronts close and crumble, and garbage collection in the back streets are evident in their neglect.

The capital has definitely declined from its already decaying condition from when I knew it in the 1980s, and now lacks the street stalls that gave it so much character, bulldozed out of existence by the Bukele government. The micro-businesses are being systematically eliminated to provide cheap labour to the factories of international corporations: the Neo-liberal business model.

Why should we be afraid?

The return of a corrupt government in El Salvador together with a corrupt and politicised judiciary is an echo of what is happening in Australia today.

The persecution of QC Collaery over the resistance to the mining interests in the Timor Gap, the anti-democratic corporate influence on governance, and the politicisation of the legal system, which is supposed to be a corrective to political abuse, augers ill for the future.

The only corrective is the people, who survive; those who are willing to stand up for what is clearly and evidently right, in the face of everything thrown at them.

World Peace Festival wash-up

by Jagad Samuel

The 4th Annual World Peace Festival at Flourish Sanctuary ran from 31st December to 4th January, and was a resounding success, bringing together people from all corners of Australia and beyond.

Over the course of the festival, there was just shy of 500 people in attendance.

The collective effort of facilitators, performers, and volunteers created a seamless and enriching experience for everyone.

The festival brought an increase in economic activity to local shops, services and tourism operators as attendees immersed themselves in fun-filled activities and experiences that celebrated harmony, community and global peace.

The festival was a drug and alcohol-free celebration that the entire Rainbow Region can be proud of.

Program highlights

The festival kicked off with an inspiring opening ceremony, held in the Compassion Temple, which invited participants to ground themselves and connect with the festival's vision of global peace.

This was followed by a variety of workshops, performances and ceremonies that captured the hearts of all who attended.

The line-up of musicians included world class spiritual performers such as Afro

Moses and Shivam Rath, as well as more local performers including Kathryn Riding, Gia Tree, Sophia Fletcher, Shunya and many more.

Ice baths, river dips and the swimming pool complemented saunas and a fire circle. The Dance Mandala and Dance of Universal Peace offered a joyful and inclusive space for movement and celebration.

Weedy Gardener allowed us to screen his film, and local artist Marty de Weerd supported the creation of a joint work of art.

Drumming circles, improv sessions, sound journeys, kirtan, singing and voice workshops all brought soulful melodies and vibrations that uplifted spirits.

Yoga, meditation, breathworks and sound healing sessions provided grounding and mindfulness.

Attendees also had the chance to engage in enlightening trauma release, heart-centred circles and non-violent communications workshops, fostering deeper connections and understanding and so much more.

Gratitude and reflection

Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers, who came from as far afield as Japan and India and within Australia from Adelaide and Newcastle.

Special thanks to Marty, our dynamic MC, and Bodhi, whose unwavering support was instrumental in the festival's success.

A huge thanks also extends to Michael, Lucia, Lea, Greg, David, Satya, Pritam, Roscoe, Ian and Tom, whose contributions were vital to the event's success.

Thanks to Paramabodhi, who created a short film which beautifully captured the essence of the event.

Thanks also for Channel 9's News program for somehow hearing about the festival and then coming out to let people know about the festival.

The 4th Annual World Peace Festival has left an indelible mark on all who attended. A big thank you to everyone who participated. Together, we created something truly special.

Plans are already underway for the 5th Annual World Peace Festival, which will take place from Wednesday 31st December, 2025 to Sunday 4th January, 2026.

The festival will again offer a diverse program of workshops, performances and ceremonies that inspire peace and connection.

We are now seeking performers and facilitators to join us for the 2025 festival.

If you are passionate about sharing your gifts in the areas of music, movement, mindfulness, or any practice that fosters peace and community, we would love to hear from you.

For updates and opportunities to get involved, visit our website at: www.worldpeacefestival.com.au



Cauliflower Highway

Tree Kangaroo Photo: Photoma

by Scott O'Keeffe

Somewhere tonight, tree kangaroos and possums are moving along a cauliflower corridor.

Cauliflory is a strange physical characteristic of a large number of tree species that produce flowers and fruit on their trunks and large branches, which are often large and colourful. On some species it appears as if the trees have sprouted heads of cauliflower on their trunks and branches. The displays are always striking and often very decorative.

Trees from many plant families, often not closely related, display cauliflory, a characteristic that seems to have risen independently in different locations over millennia. There is no agreed explanation for why cauliflory should exist, but then again, it's not something that has been intensively studied.

As an ecologist I'm most curious about its role in ecosystems, and assume it has important functions in all the ecosystems where it occurs.

Cauliflory is found on all continents, but is most common in tropical climates, and in particular plant families including figs (*Moraceae*), custard apples (*Annonaceae*), some familiar tree crops such as cacao (*Theobroma cacao*) and durian (*Durio zibenthinus*). Locally, you can see papaya (*Carica papaya*) growing in backyards and orchards.

So how does this characteristic fit into ecosystems? To understand cauliflory in ecosystems, one might first ask how it benefits the plants in which it occurs.

One theory holds that presenting fruits and flowers on the trunks and branches of trees increases the effectiveness of pollination and seed dispersal by animals that move up and down the tree trunks and branches, constantly brushing up against the exposed flowers.

Arboreal mammals, for example, constantly move up and down the trunks of cauliflorous trees, providing a role in pollination, as well as seed dispersal.

In our part of the world, several sorts of animals that use this vertical corridor of tree trunks are likely to benefit from this convenient



This local native tree, the Ooray or Davidson's Plum, is cauliflorous, producing flowers and fruit on its trunk.

banquet. Possums and tree kangaroos for example, and some climbing reptiles also eat fruit, suggesting they are effective seed dispersers. In this arrangement both the tree and the disperser will benefit.

With cauliflory, it's common to have dense, closely spaced clusters of flowers and fruit. Obvious displays will be more likely to attract flying pollinators whereas less conspicuous displays might produce mostly random encounters.

Flying insect pollinators of all sorts are attracted to the prominent floral displays on tree trunks and branches. Fruit bats, especially, are often closely associated with cauliflorous trees, and they are undoubtedly very effective in dispersing seeds.

Another theory suggests that cauliflory evolved to allow the development of very large fruits that require the mechanical support that a slender twig cannot provide. A local example of this is the black bean tree (*Castanospermum australe*). Its flowers spring from their trunks and large branches.

While the flowers themselves are light, the mature golf ball-sized seeds in their woody pods might need the support of a woody branch or trunk to develop fully. The black bean is a common local tree found on the banks of watercourses.

Jackfruits (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) are another example that is sometimes grown locally. The fruits on this fig relative can weigh as much as 50kg, so it makes sense to speculate that a tree trunk or stout branch would be needed to support such large fruits to full maturity.

Yet another theory holds that cauliflory is the result of competition between rapidly growing foliage and flowers for minerals and nutrients.

My investigation suggests these theories are competing. Given that this feature arose in very different plant families widely separated in space and time, I have to ask why would we assume there's a single cause or function for this fascinating characteristic? The purpose or function of cauliflory could depend upon where and when the characteristic evolved.

In some cases, cauliflory might have several functions and benefits. For species where there seems to be no explanation for the development or benefit from a feature such as cauliflory, there are two possibilities: First, we might not have looked carefully enough to understand its function. Second, it's possible that the characteristic in that particular species is the result of an entirely benign mutation.

You don't have to look far to see examples of cauliflory in our native plants. They're a feature in local rainforests. You won't need to go hunting around in the woods to see them, as they are widespread in cultivation and currently fruiting along their trunks.

The ooray, aka Davidson's plum (*Davidsonia jerseyanum*) is grown throughout the region in small orchards and gardens. The coolamon (*Syzygium moorei*), although endangered in the wild, is also widely planted locally, and is used as a street tree in Lismore.

There are several large trees on roundabouts and road verges near Bunnings. The large clusters of pink flowers can be seen from November to March and the white golf ball-sized fruits ripen in late April.

So, forget eggs at Easter and go for cauliflower.

Hit or miss medicine

by Michael Brooke

A tourist in Australia was hit by a car. He woke up in hospital with an Aussie doctor standing over him. He asked the doctor, "Did I come here to die?" The doctor replied, "Nah, mate, you came here yesterday."

Any old doctor, any odd patient: there is an abundance of jokes about the relationship between the two. Some few are funny.

Talking to a friend who suffers with a bunch of old age ailments, she said, "I go to the doctors and there's six of them work there and I don't know which one I'll see."

It's a busy small town practice; patients are in and out like Flynn. "I get the bum's rush," she said. "They gets rid of me quick."

She's a phlegmatic old thing. Sadly she observed, "I suppose a queue of silly old buggers like me is a bit of a yawn."

She speaks to the part of us which is looking for a rescuer, a treatment, a drug that will cure whatever illness we have. She knows in her old bones, of course she knows, ultimately there is no saviour.

The poet David Whyte points out that healing happens in the great fairy stories. There's always a moment when the child who has been abandoned on the road, or who is lost in a forest, finally gives up. In their grief they fall against something – a tree, or a stone, or they think it's a tree but it's actually a wizardly brown bear.

And they lean against it and they sob, and all their grief comes out, and in that moment of actually leaning against the world, of allowing the world to support them, it's then the tree or the wizardly bear or the stone speaks back and it says, "What's the matter? And what do you need?" Which are two of our life's most important questions.

The great teaching in these fairy stories and mythologies is that you must have a kind of faith in the world. The world (our life) is as the poet Yeats said, "...a source of revelation, not a problem to be solved." In the depths of our mind we know what we need from the world.

Western medicine primarily relies on advanced technology, drugs and surgery. It's a system which gives us a sterile list of options – few choices. Personally, I'm wrapped in the alternative the poet Mary Oliver offers: "...and there is a new voice which you slowly recognise as your own, that kept you company as you strove deeper and deeper into the world, determined to do the only thing you could do – determined to save the only life you could save."

"Yes, doctor, I've taken all the tabloids you sent, and now I want a new persecution." Going to my doc feels a bit like that. I've tried talking to him as a person, yes even as a friend, but to no avail. He insists on being a technologist. It's not a good relationship. It feels like business.

So I take personal responsibility for accepting any treatment that he offers. I am wary, determined to save the only life I can save. By experience, I have found some doctors are not holistic in their knowledge or methods – some are essentially people in business.

By holistic I mean 'the psychological and organic relationship between the parts of and the whole of the person'. Treatment that is not holistic may be limited in its effectiveness.

My favourite Leunig cartoon depicts a man who has grown a rhino horn where his nose used to be. The doctor prescribes camomile tea for a few weeks to see what happens.

It's like hit or miss medicine these days: "Try this pill and if it doesn't work, well..." and he shrugs, "we'll try another to see what happens."



by Suzy Maloney

Many people are in love with horses, me included. We also love what horses can do for us.

If we're honest with ourselves, most of us will experience a bit of both. The problems start when the love of what horses do for us outweighs our innate love of horses.

For a number of us, horse riding and competitive equestrianism are a part of how we interact with horses. To do these we must understand our horse's temperament, strengths,

and even fears.

This level of understanding fosters a sense of emotional connection and affection for our horses. Plus, we need to feed and care for our horses, all the time deepening our relationship with them.

However, the competitive nature of modern equestrianism cannot be ignored. There are cases where horses are treated more like commodities than companions, especially in professional racing or high-level competitive events.

Horses that no longer perform well may be sold, traded, neglected,

I can't imagine anyone putting a bit in their dogs' mouth to take them for a walk, they wouldn't want to, plus the public outcry would be huge, yet it's socially accepted with horses.

People watch horses being whipped at the racetrack and spurred in competitions and don't even think about it, it's been normalised.

While the use of pain to train or control other animals no doubt occurs, it is not socially acceptable as it is with horses. What this

For the love of horses

or sent to the knacker. The financial stakes involved in modern competitions mean that for some, a horse's value may be tied more to their winning potential than to any inherent worth.

The pressure on people to succeed can also result in people doing things to horses they would never do to their other animals, such as their cats and dogs. The use of pain-based control methods such as bits, whips and spurs are a good example.

means is that many people are coming mostly from the "What can horses do for me?" perspective.

For me, the way to avoid this trap is to ask a simple question. When I am about to do something, I ask myself, "How is this going to be for the horse?"

If the answer is not interesting, fun, easy to understand, etc I stop and consider other options.

If the answer to this question is along the lines of "It may hurt" or "They're not going to like this", I need to take another track.

I am not talking about where medical assistance is being provided or other such situations. I'm talking about everyday life with horses.

For example, I am riding and want my horse to go faster, and they don't want to. Some may start riding with a crop, just holding it.

If I asked my question "How is it for the horse?" I may realise the horse goes forward from a whip being held because they're afraid of being hit.

This happens if they've been whipped in the past, so the horse is feeling threatened by the rider. I

don't want this type of relationship with my horse, so I would look for other options.

Checking the horse has no physical pain, doing groundwork to help them free up, and most importantly, rewarding every single effort the horse puts into moving forward are good places to start.

If I ask, "How is this for the horse?" with these types of options, I am happy with the answer.

Most of us have a mix of both perspectives, we love what horses do for us, physically and emotionally, that's why we choose to have them in our lives.

If we're aware of this, we can always try and tip the love of horses to the forefront in our decision-making.

This will result in healthier and happier horses, which in turn enriches our own lives. For the love of horses, this one simple question can make all the difference.

Phone Happy Horses Bitless on 0401-249-263 or visit

www.happyhorsesbitless.com

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Don't ask, just do!



View from the loo
by Stuart McConville

If they don't like it, they'll tell you! This short statement epitomises the principle many people are now embracing when it comes to navigating bureaucratic planning law overreach.

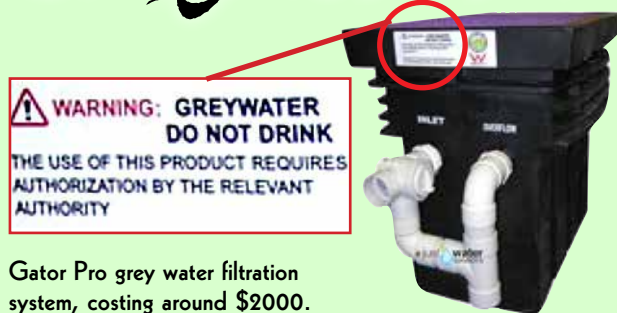
In other words, it is better to beg forgiveness than ask for permission.

Reactive planning decisions and legal/risk management complexity in general have led to all levels of government inventing a multitude of red and green tape that is no longer serving the community that it was designed to serve.

At face value, most of the planning regulations have at least some practical merit. It is often the case though, that regulatory frameworks are developed with no recourse to people having any common sense at all.

Unfortunately, this "lowest common denominator" approach results in overbearing and expensive restrictions that effectively place many people on lower incomes out of the game when it comes to pioneering a block of land or even just fixing up an old home.

This inequity is a major



Gator Pro grey water filtration system, costing around \$2000.

contributing factor to the current housing crisis.

In my industry, an environmental health disaster and consequent class action triggered the reviews which led to better wastewater treatment.

Wallis Lake oysters were contaminated with Hepatitis A via failed septic systems, and many people who ate them got sick. This cost the NSW taxpayer \$7.5m in damages.

Septic systems are now very well regulated and there is little chance of a repeat of this type of disaster.

However, grey water was not clearly distinguished from septic water (ie toilet flush water) and as a consequence, grey water must meet similar environmental requirements.

Grey water is not as high risk for human pathogen contamination and should not be treated as such.

At the moment, if you have a composting toilet, your grey water still needs to be treated to a very high level before being applied to soil below 300mm below ground, as per septic water.

So the cost of installing the system is only slightly less than a septic. In terms of actual cost, this could be

as much as \$20k for a new build.

Applying high risk treatment and land application to grey water is costing the build at least \$10k more than if the lower risk were managed differently.

Cheaper ways would include grease traps, smaller retention tanks, bark or textile filters, under mulch irrigation systems or banana circle sillage pits.

A review of the current Lismore Onsite Sewage Management Strategy will take place this year.

I would encourage everyone that has need (or has paid too much for) a grey water system to speak up to your local councillors to change the local regulations.

More broadly, Southern Cross Uni is holding a conference on Friday 28th February posing the question: "Is it better to ask for forgiveness than permission?" with respect to innovatively solving the housing crisis.

Attend, it's free and will have some great speakers.

Stuart McConville runs Pooh Solutions Compost Toilet and Waste Water Services
Phone 0427-897-496
<https://poohsolutions.com>

Bushwalkers return to Evans Head



by Peter Moyle, Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

After our break over Xmas, we start again for another year. The only walk we do every year and our first as well is along the coast at Evans Head, not a long walk but great scenery and varied terrain, with a refreshing swim at the end.

This is always popular, and a coffee afterwards tops it off.

Already we have good numbers rejoining for the year, and a mix of day walks as well as weekends away are planned. The weekends away have day walks in conjunction so non-campers can still be involved.

We have two activities a month and we try for variety in coastal, rainforest, and scenic days.

Walks Programme

Sunday 9th February Goanna Headland at Evans Head

Leader: Ron Smith 0497-792-789, please ring to register your interest.

Grade: 2 – 3. Some rocks to walk and track can be slippery, care needed at drop-offs.
Meet: 9.30am at Chinaman's Beach car park. Two beautiful coastal walks: each year we come here, and we never tire of this wonderful spot and a nice coffee after. A walk to Goanna Headland followed – after lunch at the beach – by a walk through Dirrawong Reserve. Each walk about 1.5 hours.

Bring: water, lunch, and a hat. Good sturdy footwear needed. A swim after is always refreshing.

Sunday 23rd February Clarrie Hall Dam via Uki, paddle and walk

Leader: Alison Blatcher 0434-982-922, please ring to register your interest

Grade: 4 due to the slippery rocks. An easy paddle from the dam wall of about 3 km, before a shortish walk up a beautiful creek to some lovely waterfalls. A lovely swimming hole under the waterfall is a popular option. Some rocks to walk on in the creek and they are slippery when wet, so I recommend a pair of shoes to get wet then you just walk in the shallow creek, less slippery.

Meet: 8.30am at the carpark at the end of the road into the dam.

Bring: water, lunch, and a hat. Good sturdy footwear needed. We may have some extra paddle craft, ask Alison.

Friday 7th March to Monday 10th March Forest Tops in the Border Ranges National Park, via Kyogle

Leader: Mark Osberg 0408-113-125

Grade: 3 – 4. There are lots of great walks and all re-opened, as are the roads in from Kyogle or Murwillumbah.
Meet: at the campground, contact Mark to register your interest. You can come for a day walk or you can camp for a night or two or three. In-car camping and tent spots available to share. We have all three sites booked for the three days. NSW Parks vehicle daily access fee applies, or yearly is better value.
Walks: Saturday and Sunday from 9am.

Camping: Mark and Michelle will be staying all three nights. For sharing, \$15 per person per night; ring to reserve your stay.



Tall trees in town

Nothing to fear...



Our tree



by Graeme Gibson and Meg Bishop

When we were looking to buy a house in Kyogle township, about nine years ago, one of the great attractions of one property we were interested in, was the large hoop pine in the backyard.

Venerable, it's been described as about 30 metres in height and pre-dating the establishment of the town.

Our neighbours had another hoop pine of similar size in their backyard. So it was a little disconcerting to get a text message from the neighbour while we were away a few weeks back, saying their tree had come down in a storm the previous night. Half of it was now in our backyard.

On return, neighbours and others wondered when we were getting ours cut down. "It's a very big tree," they'd say. "What if it falls?"

"What if it doesn't," we'd say. *Araucaria cunninghamii* can live up to 400 years and grow much taller than ours.

Many people have a fear of large trees, particularly in urban areas. But while trees do sometimes fall, the fear is often irrational, out of proportion to the risk.

A recent report from the United States says people are around 10 times more likely to die from falling out of bed, than from a falling tree.

Trees are an essential part of what makes an area liveable. They reinforce a sense of place and offer a connection to the natural world.

Our magpies are endlessly entertaining and accept us as part of their world. And trees are increasingly important for the cooling effect they provide.

We decided to have our tree properly assessed by a qualified arborist with a Level 5 qualification in the Australian Qualifications Framework. We wanted someone who doesn't rely on their chainsaw for a living.

At this level, arborists consider three things about a tree and its situation: the likelihood of failure; the likelihood of hitting a target, such as a house; the consequence of failure.

The arborist came to assess our tree, along with the neighbour's fallen tree for clues it might offer.

The fallen tree had a number of identifiable risk factors. First, visible bracket or shelf fungus on the lower trunk which causes decay of the heartwood and weakening of the tree. There is no treatment for this.

Rot was visible in about 60% of the neighbour's tree at the base. Also resin or gum was evident on the outer bark. This is the tree's natural defence mechanism and is a visible sign of trouble within.

The base of the tree had a build-up of vegetation and leaf litter around it and the ground was quite damp. It's possible a nearby driveway had diverted water run off to the base of the tree.

An area below the tree had been terraced and it seems likely this caused some damage to the tree's roots.

Our tree had none of these risk factors. Its surface roots were checked and all found to be live tissue with no damage. There was no visible sign of decay or damage to the trunk.

The fallen tree, on its way down, knocked several branches off our tree, leaving rough short stumps, which are prone to fungal or insect damage, so having these trimmed was recommended.

Later, when the tree climber was doing this, a number of magpies swirled around in curiosity, or perhaps as a warning.

The assessment cost several hundred dollars. But the cost of having the tree removed would be far, far greater than this. So if in doubt, or if in fear of a tall tree, have an inspection done.

Be certain the assessor is properly qualified for the job. You get peace of mind and, perhaps the opportunity to preserve a piece of nature's grandeur.

Finally, a fun fact about the fine print of an insurance policy. If a fallen tree does not cause property damage, the insurance does not cover clean-up.

Given we had a quote for \$8,000 we were pleased the tree had wiped out part of the fence. Pleased also that it missed the house.



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