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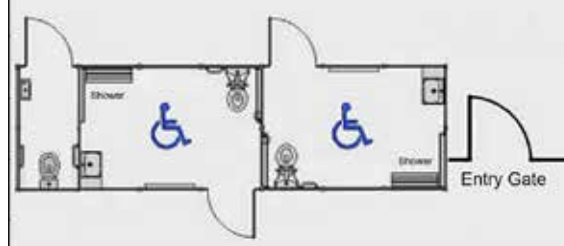
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Work can now officially be deemed to have started on the Nimbin pool toilet block.

Janelle Saffin marked the start of works with the mayor, Steve Krieg and Sue Edmonds from Friends of Nimbin Pool, which had long been lobbying for modern amenities to be provided.

State government funding of \$400,00 was locked in last July, followed by due process.

The purpose-built steel building will serve both the pool and the adjoining Peace Park, as the plan below indicates.



Turning the first sod

Pool now open seven days. Photo and plan courtesy Lismore City Council.

TRIBAL MAGIC

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Watch for this young busker

by Linda Bee

Mark and Senia, from The Heart Connexion music shop on Nimbin's main street, along with others inspired by musician Don Johnson's call-out, helped a young busker take his talents to the next level.

Don, a musician himself since the age of 10, saw great potential in Zeb (also 10) and wanted to encourage him in his musical journey.

Even before receiving any guidance, Zeb was showing remarkable dedication, busking 3-4 days a week for an average of 3-4 hours each day. He generously shared his earnings with his sisters while keeping a bit of pocket money for himself.

Perfecting his skills became something Zeb shared with the town, earning admiration from the locals.

While Zeb busked, it was



Mark, Zeb and Don

evident that his little purple, well-loved acoustic had seen better days. Don thought to himself, "This kid is ready for the next level."

Don showed Zeb a few chords, tuned up his guitar to bring out its best sound, and was impressed by the boy's eagerness to learn.

Inspired by Zeb's enthusiasm, Don approached Mark at the music shop with an idea: if Don could gather a collection to purchase

an electric guitar for Zeb, would Mark meet him half way in matching the value?

Mark, already a Zeb fan, answered with a resounding yes! He assembled a package: a mid-range Northstar Stratocaster electric guitar, a 5W battery-operated amp, a lead, a stand, a case, and a tuner.

Zeb couldn't believe it. He received his new guitar with pure astonishment and disbelief – the kind of

reaction that warms the soul and reminds us of heartfelt joy.

Before long, he was out busking with it, until he broke a string. But that was covered too. The guys had paid for two sets of strings as a reserve "...and the next step," said Don, "is teaching him how to fix a broken string".

Mark had plenty to say about Zeb: "He's a quiet, humble young guy, but fearless with his 'just-do-it' mindset. He's got a great strum, a strong sense of rhythm, and is already developing his own style and sound. There's real talent there!"

So, next time you're in Nimbin, if you're lucky enough to witness a little part of Zeb's childhood journey, take a moment to ask yourself: why wouldn't I support a kid with a smile for everyone and a sound that comes from the heart connexion?

Keep on rockin', Zeb!

Zac Mac steps up for titles

by Marc Le Bars

Local Nimbin man, Zac McDonald is set to participate in the Australian title coming up on 21st-22nd February in Warnambool, Victoria, at Premier Speedway where he hopes to stamp his name in the books, and stand on the top step as the Australian Champion.

Zac has been working extremely hard at getting the car up to speed to be able to compete with the nation's best.

Zac says, "This 2024/2025 season we have been a little off the pace compared to the 2023/2024 season, but the last three races we have got on the podium, so I know I'm on the right path and got some secrets up my sleeve still yet.

"So I just gotta keep pushing and working hard and I know with a little luck and grit, I hope to bring the Australian Championship winning trophy to Nimbin."

Prior to the Australian Titles, Zac will be heading to Toowoomba for the Queensland title on 8th February, where he will be testing a few new things on his car.

And all going well, the weekend after



Photo: Shane Wright

he will head to Sydney's International Speedway before heading south to the Australian Titles, being contested over three nights.

Zac's V8 Dirt Modified is a Bicknell Chassis on DIG Shocks powered by a CT525 6.2 litre engine running on methanol fuel pushing around 580hp.

His trademark fluoro green livery stands out rocking the number 51, which is a special number to him because his birthday is the 5th of the 1st, and his Father (Johnny Mac) is a 1951 model.

I asked Zac what his head space was, coming into three big races, his response

was: "To not suck" as he laughed.

"Oh, definitely always thinking, calculating funds to make sure I'll have enough for race tyres, methanol, pit passes, equipment etc, etc; losing sleep over car setups and trying combinations of spring/shocks, trying to stay fit physically and mentally," he said.

Zac and his team have a busy month of February ahead of them, so let's help our local man and support him and his endeavours to do Nimbin proud.

Everything helps, so contact him at: zacmac51@hotmail.com and see the great opportunities he has to offer you in return.

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Squatters transform Buyback housing to 'public' housing

by Andrew George

Three years after the catastrophic 2022 floods and the NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) are finally getting into the swing of their Resilient Homes Program (RHP).

No flood-impacted people had any say in designing or consenting to the RHP, in blatant disregard of the federal government's own 'best practice' in disaster recovery community engagement principles.

I mean we all want to have a say in decisions that impact our life? Turns out our governments are too afraid or incompetent to even ask us. No surprises there really.

One outcome of the RHP has been the buying back of houses deemed to be in the 'red zone' of highest risk in the floodplains of the Northern Rivers. The swampy floodplain, in the case of Gundurimba/Lismore, which should never have been drained and permanently settled if cedar-cutting settlers had respected the Wiabul people of the Widjabul country who warned them of that risk!

Hundreds of homes have now been bought back. Some owners took the offers early, because they reasoned that would be their only chance of moving out of the flood zone, or they waited in the hope they might be able to secure the promised cheaper Resilient Lands and thus relocate their homes. More and more chose, or were forced by circumstances to leave their homes behind. Now, in some streets, the only regular sign of life are the lawn-mowing contractors – disasters bring money to some, usually the owners of the contracting firms, not the workers.

The streets of Lismore and other towns across the NR are now full of buyback houses, hundreds of them empty and boarded. New ecological niches emerge in any major disturbance.

In this case, the niche is buyback properties, many renovated and lived-in post-floods and prior to buyback. You'd be hard pressed to find someone without a home not keen to shelter in many of these houses. In the midst of a housing crisis do people really expect these liveable houses to remain empty?

Pine Street in North Lismore has become a niche of human adaptation in our climate and bureaucracy deranged world. Seven of eight of the houses at the cul-de-sac end of Pine Street are buybacks. They are now full of human habitants. Every bedroom, as well as many vans that line the street serves as safe shelter for people living in a unique community.

Is the floodplain unsuitable for permanent habitation? Probably not in the way that modern consumerist society defines that. Perhaps boarding up liveable homes amidst a housing crisis is a solution that only an out of touch bureaucracy could come up with?

The Pine Street communal squat experiment has been going for over seven months, facing down a handful of eviction threats by mobilising the community to stand peacefully in support at various crunch-times. The slogan 'occupation til relocation' has been at the heart of this stand.

After all, these are big scrub timber homes that must not be demolished but protected until safely relocated, as the RA itself proclaims is its intention.

In July Lismore police superintendent met with squatters, community



Photos: Chibo Mertineit



supporters and RA execs to come to an understanding of occupation. At this stage, a discretionary and proportional approach was taken.

Now the occupants of Pine Street have been given one week's notice to vacate by Tuesday 28th January. The RA is citing the need to have the houses available for the Expression of Interest (EOI) process (in which private bids can be made on buyback houses to relocate them from the floodplain).

The EOI trial process is currently well underway and adding nine new houses at this stage would confuse the process. The claim that these houses are needed immediately is therefore false. There is no evidence yet that the trial will successfully see buyback homes removed from the floodplain, with preference given to flood impacted residents and zero chance that the timeline for eventual removal will be short of many, many months.

Therefore, the move by the RA to once again try and evict Pine Street Squatters, can be seen as both a cynical move to appease potential Labor voters in the face of a federal election (with Nationals MP Kevin Hogan calling for their eviction), and a cover for the RA's own failure to make any material progress on turning buyback houses into social housing.

In December last year Reclaim our Recovery met with the RA and asked again about the forty houses not in the 'red-zone' that RA had earlier in the year told us were suitable for social housing. They said they were working with Homes NSW to make this a reality. In the words of the RA, "there's a

shortlist of 15. We are waiting for a legal agreement. It's pretty close".

Four months later and there is no news – we have come to understand that 'soon' and 'pretty close' means a very different thing to the RA.

No surprises that the public are taking things into their own hands, moving in and taking up 'public housing'.

What is truly disturbing is how far Australian society is from demanding secure housing for all and making that demand a reality through multi-pronged and creative re-organising, based in a culture of solidarity. The system rewards investors, and thus there are people with multiple properties, renting them out at exorbitant rents or leaving them empty to bank them and make capital gains.

We all know someone who is facing rent increases or struggling to find somewhere to live. To accept this reality, in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, is to act in class treachery or ignorance. By propping up the elitist system of commodification of basic needs, we support the ceaseless neoliberal capitalist project of destabilisation, disconnection and thus exploitation of ourselves, the masses.

What is called for is solidarity and resistance. Stand up with the people of Pine Street facing eviction and all squatters, support tenancy unions with your membership and your wallet, build alternative housing solutions, take action, and always think of those less well off.

More comment on pages 9 and 26.

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T-shirts protest removal of protest signs



The screenprinted T-shirts read: "87% voted no to toxic gasfield. Everyone benefitted."
Photo: Gwilym Summers

by Gwilym Summers

These anti-CSG tee-shirts (pictured) are a celebration of all the work done by protectors; the huge amount of hours by huge numbers of people who stopped toxic pollution of air, water and land in this area.

If we had not stopped the gas here, we would be living in a poisonous environment. Would you rather be living in a gasfield?

I still don't understand why our Council wants to not recognise the work of the community and leave the signs. Ten years from now I would say that there will be celebrations for what we did as a community. Huge thanks to

everyone who stood up and said "No".

I personally went to the Southeast Queensland gasfields in 2012 on a Bridging the Divide tour, where I spoke to 12 farmers who were at a loss about what was taking over their environment. We had meetings with a hydrologist.

There are two important peer-reviewed science reports on Coal Seam Gas. One is called 'Fugitive Emissions from Coal Seam Gas', which is about methane leakage, a far more damaging greenhouse gas than car emissions etc.

This study found that results showed a widespread enrichment of both CH₄ (up to 6.89 ppm) and CO₂ (up to 541 ppm) within the production gas field, compared to outside. See: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11270-014-2216-2>

[springer.com/article/10.1007/s11270-014-2216-2](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11270-014-2216-2)

The second is a health study by Dr GERALYN McCARRON entitled 'Air Pollution and Human Health Hazards: a compilation of air toxins acknowledged by the gas industry in Queensland's Darling Downs'.

This study found that hospital admissions for circulatory and respiratory conditions, controlled for population, increased significantly from 2007 to 2014 (p < 0.001). Acute circulatory admissions increased 133% (2198-5141) and acute respiratory admissions increased 142% (1257-3051).

See: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00207233.2017.1413221

Men's Shed sets sights to support Nimbin men

by Phil Bromley (Brommers)

Research shows that men are generally more socially isolated than women, more estranged from their local communities, and as a result, more lonely.

This is due to a combination of the social roles that men typically occupy in society and being generally less affiliative than women. There are very real health consequences to social isolation and loneliness: men have shorter life-spans than women, and experience more chronic illnesses such as cancers and heart disease.

Statistical analysis can control for the contributions of life-style factors such as smoking, drinking, exercise levels and diet, and still find that men are generally worse off than women on a range of health outcomes.

The conclusion is that social isolation



is a major contributing factor to poor physical and mental health outcomes for men.

Men's Sheds are a community based, grass roots strategy to overcome this social isolation. It is an attempt to replicate what many women tend to do quite naturally, that is, get together and talk.

As men tend to prefer their social chatting to occur in a context of activities, Men's Sheds usually focus on doing things together and allowing the chat to happen naturally as a consequence.

There is no 'anti-woman' focus of this social movement, just a recognition that many men need an overt focus of activity, at a particular place and time in order to come together.

As women enjoy organisations such as the Country Women's Association, with a recognition of women's needs

to get together for female specific purposes without it being viewed as 'anti-men', Men's Sheds seek to carve out a space specifically for men's needs and purposes.

Socially integrated, well-supported and healthier men are more likely to be better contributors to their families, friends and local communities in a range of ways. Everyone benefits from men who feel better supported and integrated in their local community.

There will be an initial meeting on Tuesday 25th February, at 6pm in the Casuarina Building (next to the public toilets), the first room on the top floor. Looking forward to meeting all interested parties on the night.

Please email homebrewradio@gmail.com with any questions. An agenda will be released on the Nimbin Men's Shed Facebook group prior to the meeting: <https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1BE3EA2UVu>

The Aether Agency takes on 'Visit Nimbin' promotions

Founders of The Aether Agency, Rain and Wick (pictured) have been enlisted by Lismore City Council's Destination and Economy Team to assist with content management and information for the "Visit Nimbin" promotions.

As passionate advocates for the Nimbin community, Rain and Wick are excited to help showcase the vibrant culture, events and unique charm of the village to visitors.

"While it might take us another 20 years to be considered true locals," they



joked, "we're incredibly proud to be representing Nimbin and sharing everything it has to offer with the world."

The duo is eager to connect

with local businesses, community groups and event organisers to highlight the many facets of Nimbin life, from shop promotions and

sports events to festivals and happenings around town.

Rain and Wick encourage anyone with a story, event, or initiative to reach out to them directly at: nimbin@theaether.agency

"We're so grateful to represent this beautiful community and are committed to showcasing all that makes Nimbin special," they said.

Keep an eye out for more updates as Rain and Wick dive into this exciting initiative, putting Nimbin on the map as a must-visit destination!

IWD Festival kicks off in Nimbin & Kyogle

Not-for-profit Creative Communities Connect Inc (CCC), is launching the Northern Rivers' own International Women's Week Festival from Sunday 2nd to Saturday 8th March 2025, to celebrate and empower women in our local community.

The festival kicks off with three events in Kyogle and Nimbin, in collaboration with regional community organisations, businesses, speakers and creators.

On Sunday 2nd March, in Kyogle, CCC presents Women Rising, a one-day women's business event aimed at building new skills to unleash their business potential.

Speakers include three-times Australian Marketing Institute national award-winner, Amanda Blennerhassett with Triumph of the Underdog, a once in a lifetime 'David and Goliath' project for a Byron Bay pet business that ultimately won Australia's top marketing award ahead of finalists like IBM and Coca Cola.

Also on the program is local Wirangu woman, Daina Walker, founder of Diversified Business Skills and not-for-profit, First



Nations Women in Tourism.

Daina will share her story from small town country girl to global highflyer in the travel industry before settling in the Northern Rivers to raise her family and creating her business 'You LOVE By Design'.

The event will take place at the Kyogle Golf Club and includes lunch and refreshments.

On Wednesday 5th March, at Nimbin's Church of Aquarius, CCC presents 'Blossoming Throughout The Seasons', a one-day cultural workshop of connection, sharing and laughter that will celebrate women and girls of all ages and stages.

This intimate event will explore our intergenerational growth as women from maiden to mother to crone, and includes creative activities and local speakers at each stage of life, each of whom have chosen authenticity over convention to find her own truth and step into her destiny.

Maiden, Eleanor Hearn, completed TAFE qualification and travelled before becoming a devoted nanny and crystal sound healing practitioner.

Mother, Tereza Andjelic was born into a strict ethnic family in Sydney, married young and became a single mother of three. Balancing jobs and raising her kids alone, she

found healing through holistic counselling, inspiring her to pursue a successful career in the field.

Crone, Rose Cubis was raised on a farm in the 1950s, defied expectations to become a nun or wife, and trained as a nurse instead.

Her career took her across Australia and the world before settling in northern NSW to raise her family.

She later managed aged social groups, creating events and jobs for Indigenous workers.

For speaker profiles, more information and to book tickets for both these and other events visit: www.creativecommunitiesconnect.org

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Annual V-Day flashmob returns to Main Beach, Byron

Into its 14th year, the annual V-Day flashmob returns to Main Beach, on Friday 14th February from 6.30am.

This popular event draws attention to the continuing levels of domestic violence within our community.

This year we will also have a powerful Bolero presentation, as well as the traditional Break the Chain dance.

Women, men, non-binary and children are all welcome to come and gather in solidarity with others around the world to protest with dance in defiance.

One Billion Rising is the biggest mass action to end violence in human history.

Wear red. Dance in defiance. Rebel. Be loud. All welcome.



The Vagina Conversations

After nine years of sell-out performances, this diverse collective of Byron Shire's powerful, creative women and people with vaginas, present personal, professional or political stories to inform, educate, entertain and support. The MC is Zenith Virago.

The Vagina Conversations are on at

the Brunswick Picture House from Thursday 13th March to Sunday 16th March. The show is suitable for 14+.

Doors open at 6.30pm, the show starts at 7pm, tickets cost \$45/\$35, available from the venue. Matinee Sunday show.

All proceeds go to the Women's Resource Service, Byron Escape Fund and the Tweed DVIRC Impact Fund.

Next market
9th February
9am - 3pm
**Coronation Park,
The Channon**
Enquiries 6688-6433

Discover the power of movement and connection

by Michelle Webber

Over the past year, the Mindful Movement program has grown into a thriving and supportive community.

Mindful Movement sessions are held on Mondays between 9.30-10.30am, \$10 per session, at the Uniting Church Fellowship Hall, 14 Bloore Street, Kyogle.

Open to all ages and abilities, ensuring everyone can experience the transformational power of movement and connection.

These weekly sessions are designed to combine free-form expressive dance with mindfulness techniques.

The program focuses on releasing stagnant energy, reducing stress, and fostering emotional well-being, all within a safe and nurturing environment.

I am a qualified Dancing Freedom facilitator with over five years of experience in conscious dance facilitation. Thanks to generous funding



from Kyogle Council, we can cover hall hire and keep costs accessible, making it easier for pensioners and low-income earners to join.

Women's Freedom Dance

In addition to the on-going Mindful Movement program, we're excited to announce the launch of our Women's Freedom Dance evening classes in Lismore and Kyogle.

Weekly classes will be alternating between Lismore and Kyogle, starting on Monday 5th February. They will be held at Fellowship Hall in Kyogle, and the Flow Collective, 1/72 Conway Street, Lismore.

These sessions are designed to create safe, nurturing spaces where women can connect deeply with themselves and each other through expressive movement.

Whether you're seeking to unwind, reignite your passion, or simply enjoy an evening of soulful dance, these classes offer a unique opportunity to embrace freedom and self-expression.

The bonds formed in these classes are a testament to the strength and wisdom that emerge when like-minded women come together.

Join us as we continue to explore the transformational power of dance and connection. Classes are open to all levels of experience - no prior dance background is necessary.

For more information or to book your spot, please contact Michelle Webber on 0416-226-144.

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In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

Nimbin Women's Dinner Thursday 6th March

Celebrating International Women's Day – the theme this year is 'Accelerate Action'.

Tix now available via Humantix or NNIC. See poster on opposite page, or our website for more details.

NEW! SMART Recovery group starting up

SMART stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training. This is more than an acronym: it is a transformative method of moving from addictive substances and negative behaviors to a life of positive self-regard and willingness to change.

SMART recovery groups are an alternative to AA or NA groups, and have a more flexible approach. If you want to address your drug or alcohol issues in a supportive and non-judgmental environment then this is the group for you!

For more info, contact Nicole at our front desk on (02) 6689-1692 or: ccm@nnic.org.au or else call (02) 6687-1111 or email: intake@buttery.org.au

Nimbin Recovery Support Service

The Nimbin RSS has now wound up. If you still need assistance with flood recovery issues, make an appointment with our Community Worker at NNIC.

Many thanks to the NNIC RSS staff team over the past two and a half years, and to the NSW Reconstruction Authority for funding the Nimbin RSS since September 2022.

Even though the RSS will be gone, NNIC is still here and always will be, to provide ongoing support as much as we can. We are well aware that recovery is on-going for our community.

We are pleased to announce that Alison from the RSS is joining our team

of community workers at NNIC.

Nimbin Community Disaster Plan

If you haven't checked it out before, or not for a while, be sure to do so as it contains a lot of info about what to expect and what to do at the local level if disaster strikes.

You can view or download it on our website – see the link under the Disasters tab.

Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan (SNCP)

The new edition of the SNCP is available to view or download it on-line at: www.nmic.org.au or hard copies are available for viewing at NNIC.

We are now moving on to implementing the strategies under the SNCP.

You can get involved in the Food Security activities – join the Nimbin Food Security Facebook page to find out more; or the Nimbin Arts Collective – again, join the Facebook group for more info.

Passionate about water? The Water Collective group has also commenced – for more info contact: sibley@nnic.org.au

Not on Facebook? Contact the above email address to get onto our SNCP email list for updates.

Many thanks to the Northern Rivers Community Foundation for the funding support.

Green flags workshop

A four-hour workshop will be held in Nimbin on Thursday 20th February provided by NORWACS that empowers women to identify healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics.

Participants will learn to set and communicate boundaries effectively through interactive discussions, practical strategies, and real-life examples.

By the end of the workshop, attendees will be equipped with the tools to protect their well-being and foster respectful, supportive interactions.

Look out for promos on Hook Ups and other socials, or contact Nicole at our front desk for more info or help to register.

Heatwaves

Hot weather can affect everyone, but older people, babies and young children, pregnant women, people with existing medical conditions, outdoor workers, socially isolated people and people who are homeless are at greater risk.

Climate change is resulting in more hot days and more intense heatwaves.

Now more than ever, it is important to know the risks of heat, who is at risk, how to prepare, and how to protect ourselves and others.

Check out the *NSW Beat the Heat* website for more

information.

The heat can also impact our local wildlife. You can help by providing water for them in clean dishes, making sure you also place sticks etc so that critters can get out again.

Critters may also be attracted to swimming pools in hot weather. To ensure they don't get stuck and drown in your pool, provide 'ladders' of some kind at either end of the pool, using moored timber or rope so that critters can climb out safely. Check the filter box every day for frogs and lizards.

For more tips, see: <https://wildlife.org.au/tips-to-make-pools-fences-roadsides-more-fauna-friendly/>

Did you know?

NNIC is a registered DGR charity, which means that donations to our charitable activities, or bequests in your will, are tax deductible.

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or visit NACRS at Bottlebrush Studio, rainbow building at Nimbin Community Centre, 81 Cullen St
www.nacrs.com.au

Nimbin Hospital information



Child immunisation

By appointment, please phone 6630-0400.

Early childhood nurse

Every Tuesday. Baby checks, weighs, post-natal support. For appointments, phone 6630-0400.

Women's health nurse services

Third Thursday of the month, next is 20th February. Phone 6688-1400 for an appointment.

Wound clinic

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8am. For self-referral, phone 6688-1433. Referrals also from Nimbin Hospital and GP clinic.

Drug and alcohol counselling services available

For an appointment, please contact 6620-7600. A trained professional will ask you a few confidential questions and will provide you with an appointment time.

Nurse practitioner clinic

Diabetes clinics: Third Thursday of the month, next is 20th February.

Community Registered Nurse

Monday to Friday, 8am-4.30pm. Assessments, wound care, referrals, advocacy, provision of palliative care in the home, medication support. Phone 6688-1433 – leave a message, will return call swiftly.

Nimbin NSP

Needle and syringe program open Monday to Thursday. Arrangements can be made to see a community Registered Nurse.

Health advice line

Phone 1800-022-222 if you have a health issue. 24-hour, seven days a week, free service. A Registered Nurse will assess whether you need to go to an Emergency Department.

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month, 9.30am in the conference room of the Nimbin MPS. New members always welcome.



Nimbin CWA branch doings

by Sage Bryant, publicity officer

IWD gathering

Nimbin CWA's Women's Day Gathering will be held on Saturday 8th March from 3pm at the CWA Rooms and Community Centre. You are invited to join us for an afternoon of celebration.

Please bring along food to share and some purple, white and green flowers for our Women's Peace Mandala.

Spring raffle

We are very excited to announce our International Women's Day raffle to be drawn on IWD, Saturday 8th March.

We have fabulous prizes donated by very generous locals.

First prize is a luxury retreat at Alam Kesehatan Wellness Retreat; including one night's accommodation for two, hot and cold therapies, and massage.

Second prize is a beautiful Sophie Amelia print.

Tickets will be available at our room on Wednesdays, at our Saturday Street stall and the Nimbin monthly market.

Donations required

Nimbin CWA Op Shop has reopened for the year, and we are once again taking donations of clean quality clothing and household bric-



a-brac.

Please drop donations off at the rooms during our open hours on Wednesdays.

Dates to remember

- Open days: 10am-3pm, 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays 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-12pm, most Saturdays outside the newsagent; and
- Branch meetings: 5pm, 2nd Monday of the month, new members always welcome.

The CWA room is located in Figtree House, 81 Cullen Street, Nimbin (next to the RFS fire shed via Sibley Street).

For all general enquiries please phone: 0461-412-831 or email: secretary.cwa.nimbin@gmail.com



Open Learning classes start

Nimbin Open Learning Centre is again running eight-week courses on an interesting range of subjects.

Term one commences Tuesday 11th February, with enrolments open Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th February, 10am-3pm, at the Community Centre.

On offer are courses in Gelli Plate Printing and Dry Point Tetrapak Printing, both non-toxic lithographic hand printing techniques.

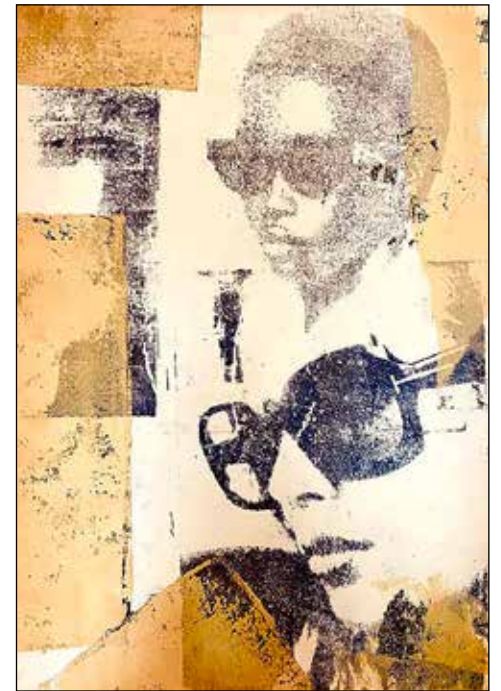
These courses will be conducted by Nuro Oliver and Crystie Saulwick of Yellow Door Print.

The Term one program also includes the perennial favourites, Creative Writing, Art and Italian for Beginners. All the eight-week courses are \$60.

There will also be a one-day Gelli Plate workshop on 1st March, \$50.

If you are interested in joining a class, phone 6689-1477, drop by during enrolments, or contact us on facebook at Nimbin Open Learning.

Nimbin Open Learning Centre is a project of the Nimbin Community School Inc.



Gelli plate production (top) and print

Hospital volunteering

Northern NSW Local Health District is encouraging the local community to kick off 2025 by becoming a healthcare helper volunteer.

Applications are now open for volunteer roles supporting patients, visitors and healthcare staff in facilities at Lismore, Nimbin, Bonalbo, Urbenville and Kyogle.

Lismore Base Hospital general manager Ian Hatton said the hospital was seeking more volunteers to take on vital roles that comfort and support patients.

"Volunteering is fantastic because it helps others while enhancing your own wellbeing by helping you connect with people," Mr Hatton said.

"As a greet and guide healthcare helper, you'll welcome visitors and help them find their way around the hospital.

"As a patient companion helper, you'll help make our patients' stays in hospital more comfortable."

Launched in late 2023, the healthcare



helpers program has quickly become a valued service at Lismore Base Hospital.

"We're eager to welcome more people from diverse backgrounds so our volunteer team reflects the broader community, helping patients feel even more at ease," Mr Hatton said.

Volunteers are especially needed in the hospital's acute stroke and dementia unit, and surgical wards.

Northern NSW Local Health District can be contacted at: nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre proudly presents...

The 19th Annual Nimbin Women's Dinner

Thursday 6th March 2025 Nimbin Town Hall

Celebrating International Women's Day

"Accelerate Action"

Featuring:

Dinner: Little Kitchen
Banners: Pauline Ahern

Circu-licious
Haylz Carter
Sue & her Uke
The Violettas
Nanna
The Ganja Faeries
Zoe Xanadu
Groovin Granny Maz
Fisted Sisters
Áine Tyrell

Tix \$35
including Dinner

Available from Humantix, NNIC or on the Door (unless sold out)

Sound by: Chatterbox
Lights: Rachele

Doors Open for Dinner: 6.30pm
Show Starts: 7.30pm
Bar Provided NO BYO
Vegan and GF dinner avail.

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7 Sibley Street

February What's On!

For bookings, email: sibley@nnic.org.au

\$20 unless otherwise noted

Workshops: Gold coin donation

- **Tues 4th, 10.30am: nimBIN CHICKENS** – sorting and shredding at 7 Sibley Street, 11.30 re-making at Nimbin Showground.
- **Wed 12th, 10.30am: Spinners and weavers**
- **Sat 15th, 10.30am: Emergency lighting** – How to make oil lamps from your kitchen and traditional clay lamps.
- **Tues 18th, 10.30am: Knitting and crochet**

- **Wed 19th, 2pm: Nimbin Water Collective**
- **Wed 26th: 10.30am Crafters** – beginners sewing: making flour bags
- **Community Tools Library:** Every Wed and Sat for home repairs, garden tools, food and craft equipment. Join at NNIC Mon-Fri.
- **Tools Repair and Sharpening service:** Rusty, blunt, broken handle? We'll bring your old tools back to life.
- **Basketballs & pump available:** \$5 deposit.

Welcome to Country use-by date

There has been quite some controversy in mainstream media recently surrounding the 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies that have been held around Australia for the last half century.

The ceremony has been reputed to have started in 1973, when it was claimed that the first of these welcoming ceremonies were held at the Aquarius Festival in Nimbin.

First and foremost, it needs to be pointed out that the ceremony was offered for the first time, only after the organisers of the Aquarius Festival went out of their way as part of preparing for the festival, to contact the local custodians and to actually ask them for their permission to put on the event on the local tribes' traditional country around the town of Nimbin.

This impressed the custodians enough for them to see the good intention in the hippies to do the right thing. That good intention was something that the Original people of what is now called 'Australia' had not experienced much at all for the more than two hundred years since the foreign invasion of their lands.

So they gave the Aquarius organisers the ceremony that the tribes gave to other friendly tribes when they collectively stepped onto other mobs' countries.

After the Aquarius event, it was gradually adopted by groups, communities and governments all over the countryside.

Now, it has apparently come to the time that Welcome to Country has reached its use-by date. The truth is, why 'welcome' invaders with bad intention onto the country to actually trash and destroy the land?

After 50 years of actual abuse of this so-called 'ceremony', is it possible to re-brand the event and to show actual sincerity about an attempt at reconciliation? An event that, we must be reminded of, was originally instigated by the victims!

In a discussion a number of years ago about this issue, it

NGT welcomes letters and other contributions received by email or post prior to deadline. Letters longer than 300 words may be edited for length, and articles for accuracy. Please include your full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not necessarily those of Nimbin GoodTimes.

was suggested by local Elder, Auntie Lizbeth Johnson, that rather than using the term 'welcome', which could never really fit, it would be more realistic to name it an 'Acknowledgment and Acceptance' ceremony.

Finally, it is suggested that there is one big hurdle to proper healing for the future for this great continent.

Without a more truthful 'coming clean' about Australia's past history, and after what turns out to be a messy (welcome to country) attempt at reconciliation, everything that follows may continue to have a hollow and disingenuous ring about it.

That is a continuing concern and is something that particularly the majority of racists in our society cannot and will not accept. Though for the whole of Australia's future benefit and to clear our continuing bad karma, accept they must.

The sentiment needs to be genuine for a ceremony such as this to have its effect and to do the healing it has the potential to do daily when uttered.

The words must have a particular and specific meaning first.

Binnah Pownall
Nimbin Rocks

Welcome to the USA

I am visiting from the USA and am US-born. My dad lives in Urbenville and is Australian, as is his friend Delma from Casino.

We were all sitting on a bench at Wilmington RR Station in Delaware USA when three men were walking toward us up the platform. Two had dark glasses and the one walking



www.hollyenglish.com

between them was carrying a briefcase.

When the middle man drew level with us he said, "Good morning". My Dad replied in his best Australian, "Good day mate, how are you going?" The man greeting us spun around pointing at us and said, "Australians" to which Ian replied, "Yeah you got that right."

The gent then said, "Welcome to the USA." So, we were welcomed to the USA by President Biden who occasionally used public transport (Amtrak)

to go from his home in Wilmington to Washington DC. The moral of the story: If it's good enough for the President of the United States to use public transport then when will you see some of your Australian politicians do the same?

Delma also met Michelle Obama in Hawaii at a coffee shop when one of Michelle's daughters was not feeling well... Not a bad record for a Casino woman to have been welcomed to the United States by its president and met a first lady.

Claire De Ellae
Galesburg IL, USA

US - signs of decline

To visualise the trajectory of US decline, pull up a graph of the growth in US debt, then invert it. The slope is precipitous.

Over the last four years, the United States has suffered a humiliating rout from Afghanistan at the hands of the Taliban, and demonstrably failed to weaken Russia in Ukraine, despite more than three years of escalating military assistance to the Zelensky regime.

The US faced an inglorious defeat in its attempt to extradite Julian Assange and was unable to block ICC arrest warrants for its allies

in Israel. It failed to broker normalisation between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and was unable to prevent the Chinese brokered rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

It couldn't protect Israel from Iranian missiles, it can't secure marine traffic in the Red Sea or halt the blockade of Israeli shipping by Yemen's Ansarallah, and after more than a year of its genocidal siege and bombardment of Gaza, the US empire has proved incapable of defeating the defenceless Palestinians, who continue to resist their oppressors with remarkable resilience, despite terrible losses.

For all its power and glory, the United States is increasingly constrained in its ability to shape events around the world, a trend it is unlikely to accept gracefully.

John Scrivener
Main Arm

Stop the Gaza horror

Michelle Ruby's 'Gaza grief' letter (NGT November '24), is full of historical nonsense, racist talking points, and that atrocity story about rape that has been debunked many times now, on Mondoweiss as well as the Grayzone (Max Blumenthal), and belatedly, the *New York Post*.

Can we stop the invented atrocity stories that were

Remembering Simone

by Chibo Mertineit



A few months ago, Jeremy Buckingham, member of the Legalise Cannabis Party, gave a 15-minute passionate speech in the NSW parliament to raise the issue that between 1977 and 2009, 67 women went missing and/or were murdered. That is more than two women a year! What a shocking statistic.

One of them was Simone Strobel, a German preschool teacher travelling with her boyfriend. She was last seen on 11th February 2005, having drinks at the Gollan Hotel, staying in a Lismore caravan park. Her boyfriend reported her missing to the police the next morning.

It took the Lismore police five days to get a sniffer dog here, which found her body very quickly under some palm fronds on an old bocce court, 90 metres away from their campsite.

I met 25-year old Simone in Nimbin one afternoon, and she told me how much she loved this area and the people here.

So, Jenny Dowell, former mayor of Lismore, is organising with friends a gathering on Tuesday 11th February at 6pm at the Quad, between the gallery and the library.

There will a banner made with a heart and wings by a friend, sunflowers, her favourite flower and a hedgehog, the name of her preschool group in Germany.

Jenny told me that she was at that time on Council and helped with a fundraiser to get her body back to Germany. "Lismore was shocked and we felt in some way as a community, responsible."

"We will have a minute of silence to remember all the women who went missing, like Lois Roberts in 1998 and Lucy McDonald in 2002, two indigenous women."

Everyone is welcome from 6pm to 7pm.

and are used to fuel the mass slaughter, genocide, of Palestinians? I would just refer people, and Michelle Ruby, to reputable sources such as the above.

We have to stop Australia's part in this horror. Why is Australia still exporting weapons to the apartheid, racist, settler-colonial, expansionist, genocidal state of Israel? How about sanctions?

And before I get called names, I will say my father was a Jewish refugee from Austria. He was never a Zionist... I will not use a capital 'z' for this discredited, racist ideology.

I have worked in Israel. It must turn into a different kind of state, as South Africa did.

It is easy to despair, but I do not. I work with others for Australia to stop being on the wrong US-Israel side, and be (as now wretched Anthony Albanese once was) on the side of justice, and Palestine.

Stephen Langford
Katoomba

Thank you NGT

After having played in/with The Hoochers late last year at the Nimbin Bowlo, I was expecting to see a few pics on a FB page or two, but to no avail.

However, one appeared along with a nice little blurb in last month's NGT (you guys have spies everywhere). It's nice to be appreciated and recognised.

Where I live I'm now seen as that weird guy who no longer plays country music with the locals. Thankfully, with the band I am privileged to be able to play with some of the area's finest musicians (I'm looking at you, Tim Tonkin).

So, as a member of The Hoochers, I appreciate all and sundry for supporting live music: Nimbin Bowlo/ Bob Dooley and the gang for monthly open mics; the Nimbin MardiGrass crew; and of course the NGT for publicising the arts in all its forms

Tony Baron
Kyogle

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NEXT DEADLINE:
Friday 21st February

Email nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

The Nimbin GoodTimes acknowledges the Bundjalung people, the traditional owners of the land and waters on which we work and live, and pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.

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When government fails, community steps in: this time it's the housing crisis

There are things government can do well, there are things business can do, but for everything else there's community.

Government is at its best when we tax wealth and spend it on equitable programs that benefit the community and protect the least fortunate and the environment. It is at its worst when it is captured by vested commercial interests, and corporate economic theories.

By the end of the 1970s we probably came as close as we have to a reasonable balance between private wealth and provision for the public good, especially in terms of public housing.

Since then, decades of neoliberal economics has shrunken government programs, privatised public functions, and provided tax cuts and rorts for the wealthy, particularly property investors.

The net result has been a dismal tide of declining government services, obscene wealth disparity, and out-of-control homelessness and poverty.

The spiralling cost of homes to buy or rent in Australia is an intergenerational crime, and a ponzi scheme that benefits very few. Homeowners don't really benefit from the high on-paper value of their home, as replacing it will cost just as much, and young people are squeezed out of purchase and rental markets; and the banks' net share of national wealth escalates.

Two things support this ridiculously overpriced property market, one is investor rorts that encourage predatory landlordism, and the other is the complexity of the planning system and the hoops that we have to jump through to build a 'dwelling' to gold plated first-world building standards.

Despite the potentially well-meaning motivations for the endlessly complex building codes that we have, building red tape has become an enforcer of a wealth divide.

There's no point in having an aspiration for a gold-plated planning system and building code when it is being actively undermined by economic policies that push much of



by Aidan Ricketts

the population below the poverty line.

If society genuinely wanted to insist on every building being built to a wedding cake standard, then we would need to back that aspiration with massive investment in public housing, and proper taxation of runaway wealth. If we are not prepared to do that, then our planning system simply becomes the gatekeeper of poverty and exploitation.

When government fails, the community needs to step in. We saw this when the government tried to impose an industrialised fracking industry on the Northern Rivers, and only concerted and united community resistance was able to turn that train wreck around.

We saw it again in spades during the 2022 major flood event when the community stepped in to rescue thousands while the government was overwhelmed by the scale of disaster; and in the recovery where the spirit of communally-driven mutual aid (the Lismore free state) brought us through the most difficult days in living memory.

So too, with the housing crisis. Government and business have both failed spectacularly to provide a solution to homelessness and poverty and so community self-help and mutual aid is again our necessary response.

Fortunately, we have been here before in this region. Starting from the 1970s, throughout the Northern Rivers groups of like-minded people joined together, purchased rural lands and established rural land-share communities.

The result was a grand social experiment that defied the logic of the real estate markets, openly disobeyed

the planning rules of the day but nonetheless successfully delivered a lower cost housing solution to thousands that remains to this day.

It wasn't an easy ride, the laws didn't support the movement, councils complained and threatened demolitions at times, but bit by bit the inevitable logic of 'better to seek forgiveness than to ask permission' prevailed, and government adapted to an empowered community by finding ways to legalise the many beautiful owner-built paradises that popped up and gave the Northern Rivers its unique flavour.

Now in 2025, we find ourselves again faced with a homelessness crisis of immense proportions that will not be solved by going cap-in-hand to government and developers.

The community needs to once again pursue bold self-help solutions. Government of course will have a role to play, but as is often the case in crisis it may be to ultimately recognise and facilitate the innovative solutions that community finds for itself.

Whether this takes the form of more rural land-share communities, more granny flats, more tiny homes on larger blocks, more facilities for van-lifers, or an enthusiastic collective embrace of squatting idle buildings, community-led solutions have become more than urgent.

Already we have a positive and community-oriented squatting movement emerging to caretake and occupy some of the now publicly-owned homes in the Lismore flood plain. While we all want to see buildings eventually moved to higher ground, we also know this will take years, and meanwhile these buildings can play a part in relieving homelessness.

Being a North Lismore resident myself, I am one of the nearest neighbours and have been impressed at how positive, respectful and community-driven the North Lismore squatting project has been.

Where we used to have tents hidden in the landcare area, we have seen a few streets transformed into busy little open communities

housing locals and travellers and providing respite for so many. This group actively liaised with neighbours, with former owners as well as with the Reconstruction Authority and with police.

This is a positive development. In a time of crisis, it is far better to encourage open communicative self-organising communities of this sort than to drive the problem underground with aggressive responses, and for the most part this is what we have seen so far.

Sadly, in the last few weeks there appears to be a very ideologically driven campaign on social media to denigrate the emerging mutual support community in North Lismore, employing all of the usual slurs, negative tropes and false accusations that typify punch-down campaigns of this kind.


Hopefully with wider community support, these attacks will fail and sensible conversations can be had.

Unity and mutual aid are the values that get our region and people through crises. It is a very important time for us as a broader regional community to have a grown-up conversation about homelessness, impoverishment and the very real ways that community can step into the vacuum left by decades of poor policy to provide innovative and humane solutions for those most in need.

To that end, the Law School at Southern Cross University is hosting the 'Land sharing and the law' conference on Friday 28th February, with the explicit aim of facilitating just such an important conversation.

The conference brings together academics, experts, government, and homelessness advocates, to host an open and hopefully productive discussion on how community can step into the breach and address homelessness and how government, council and business may be able to support.

Conference attendance is free, but you should register to ensure your place at: www.scu.edu.au/business-law-and-arts/events/land-sharing-and-the-law



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