

## Cullen Street Blues



by David McMinn

Ever get the idea that Cullen St is becoming too touristy with increasing numbers of people coming to gawk at the old hippies and buy drugs. Are we just becoming a theme park on the tourist route? Alas, this is closer to reality than we like to think and is supported by various anecdotes circulating around the village.

A friend had her family come stay after spending time on the Gold Coast. She asked her young nephew what did he do on his holiday. He responded that he went to Movie World, Sea World and Water World, but he liked Nimbin World the best as "it was so much better."

A German tourist commented to one of the local shopkeepers about the people on Cullen St being paid to look like that as part of the tourist attraction. When told that it was real life, the tourist found it hard to believe responding "No..... really!". Many locals would love to be paid for just being themselves.

All of us have also heard stories about international travellers thinking pot was legal in Nimbin. This is an easy assumption to make given the various venues in the village (Bringabong, Hemp Bar, Hemp Embassy, etc) and the open dealing in the street. Apparently, one Japanese tourist went to the cop shop to complain about a bad drug deal that he scored in Nimbin. Never heard if he was charged or not. How would you explain that situation to a judge?

People complain about tacky Cullen St and talk about it 'being cleaned up'. However, there are other Nimbin people who regard the shabby street scene as a great asset as it keeps out

the conservative middle class trash. It is the only factor slowing the gentrification of our village. People with money and status avoid moving to Nimbin, as they want to live next door to people with money and status. They do not want to live near old hippies, drug dependants, Centrelink recipients and struggling artists. However, those very same 'undesirables' give Nimbin so much of its unique character. Tourists do not come here to gape at yuppies sipping al fresco coffee in Cullen Street.

The Developer's Dream – beautiful one day, a developer's dream the next – so many centres have already experienced this progression. The area becomes 'discovered' and the affluent start buying properties. The price of real estate goes up, the developers move in and the original residents move out as they can no longer afford rising rents and escalating council rates. More money moves into the area and it becomes the C word – conservative – while the sense of community is severely degraded.

Gentrification creates its own issues for many country towns. Maleny had major problems with the building of a Woolworths supermarket – of course Woolworths won. Bangalow, or should I say 'Bangas', is so twee that it is a cliché. Byron Bay is now so hectic and congested that you would not like to live there. Such problems could be Nimbin's future. One of the main reasons why many people live in Nimbin is the creativity and eccentricity of the local community. This could so easily be lost in the gentrification process.

People grumble about the tackiness of Cullen St, but be very thankful, as it so much better than the up-market alternative.

## Kids Fun Day



It was a scorcher, but there was plenty of water and watermelon under the shade tents in Allsopp Park for the Kids Fun Day in January.

Who would have thought so many people would have come out on such a hot day? Thanks to Nimbin Visions Collective and all the helpers, for a wonderful family day.

## Nimbin welcomes new principal

by Bob Dooley

Nimbin Central School has a new Principal, a very engaging woman named Mary-Jane Pell (pictured).

For the past six years Ms Pell has been the teaching principal of Clunes Public School, which she really enjoyed. "I loved having a class – I'm going to miss that," she said.

Ms Pell started teaching as an IM teacher at Liverpool Boys High School, working in several schools in Sydney before making the jump to the North Coast in 2001.

She lives on a 10-acre farm at Rock Valley with her partner, and two much-loved horses that she refers to as "the garden gnomes", and her views on education are down-to-earth.

"My views on education are very much about academic outcomes. I think we have to always come back to the focus that every child has a huge potential to learn, and we have to find a way to tap into it – it's our responsibility – and



that underlies everything I do in the school.

"I'm an avid learner myself," she said, referring to her current studies for a Masters of Pedagogy. "My commitment to learning is just total."

Mary-Jane's car, a pink EK station wagon which her parents bought when she was seven months old, has led to a fair bit of community interaction already. "Wherever I pull up, somebody comes up and starts chatting about the car," she said. "Everyone's been very forthright, very friendly and very warm, so it's been lovely."

## Local wildlife warrior honoured with Australia Day Award

Georgica wildlife carer, Barbara Dobner (pictured) is Lismore City Council's Environmental Citizen for 2009.

Barb was nominated for an Australia Day Award by Friends of the Koala for her work as Care Co-ordinator and Committee office-bearer. Barb is also Macropod Co-ordinator for Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers.

A school teacher by profession, Barb has a particular interest in educating people about the region's koalas and particularly their health status. As well as writing articles in Treetops, Friends of the Koala's quarterly newsletter, she is a regular contributor to JAG (Jiggi And Georgica). Barb also makes presentations to schools and community



groups and is a Friends of the Koala media spokesperson. She is administrator of the group's website.

Barb has been a voluntary wildlife rehabilitator for 18 years. She teaches Computer Studies at Goolmangar and Jiggi Public Schools.



"I intend inviting parents in to talk to me, so I can have a conversation, and get to know people. There's a number of things I'd like to know, too, I want to identify how community, staff and students perceive three things: what we're doing really well; what we could be doing a whole lot better; and what we're not doing that we could be.

"By doing that information gathering, I think I'll get a very good picture of where everyone wants to go."

Ms Pell takes the helm of a school which received cuts to its staffing and resources last year by being taken

off the Priority Schools First Program, and being reclassified as a smaller school. Currently it's enrolments K-12 is under 130. "We'd need 150 to get back our entitlements. It's certainly do-able," she said.

"The most critical thing that I can see is getting the numbers back up to where we can sustain the subjects, sustain the quality peer groups for the kids, and keep the staff numbers up, so we can keep offering quality programs. I hope that by the end of Semester 1, I'll have a really good plan in place.

"At the moment, I'm watching and learning."



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# Contentious Kyogle rally seeks environmental advice

Repco Rally Australia proposes to hold Round 10 of the 2009 FIA World Rally Championship on September 3-6 in the Kyogle and Tweed shires, bringing international media attention to the Northern Rivers, but the proposal has met with some resistance from local groups.

The Nimbin Environment Centre reports that the Repco Rally has arranged meetings with the NSW state government and the Kyogle and Tweed shires, without public consultation, to hold a part of the world rally through our region.

Kyogle Council general manager Arthur Piggott, was quoted by the *Northern Star* as saying, "We (the Council) are very enthusiastic about the (rally) proposal", but is now reported in the same paper to be stressing that the event is not a done deal yet.

"Council hasn't actually approved the rally going ahead," Piggott said.

The *Northern Star* reported that the previous council had given "in-principle" support and that the new council would have to endorse that view at a meeting later this month.

"Rally organisers would then have to submit development applications to Tweed and Kyogle Councils by February or March," the report said. Now this event is on the official WRC calendar for September.

The WRC/ARC have held a public meeting and intend to have another. At this time the Rally has no approval and there is no development plan. It is amazing to note that there is promotion of the event and yet the appropriate Council has no information, has not given any approvals or passed any development applications.

Organisers of Repco Rally Australia are seeking nominations for people to join two volunteer bodies, which will help develop and implement environmental policy when the event comes to Northern New South Wales in September.

An Environmental Advisory



Committee will comprise a small number of qualified individuals, including a Tweed Shire or Kyogle Shire resident, to advise the Repco Rally Australia Board on environmental policy.

An Environmental Monitoring Group, reporting to the Environmental Advisory Committee, "will ensure environmental policies are implemented and monitor environmental issues during the event."

Rally organisers are requesting "qualified individuals" to nominate for their environmental advisory committee by 7th February, by contacting event headquarters in Murwillumbah on phone (02) 6676-7028 or email [gary.upsen@rallyaustralia.com.au](mailto:gary.upsen@rallyaustralia.com.au).

The Chairman of the Repco Rally Australia organising committee, Garry Connelly, said the event took its environmental responsibilities most seriously and recently had commissioned an independent expert to complete an environmental assessment.

"Minimising the impact on the environment is of utmost importance to our event, hence the appointment of an independent consultant to undertake an environmental assessment, together with

the establishment of this Committee and Group," he said.

The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS) has a Rally Environment Statement that addresses:

- accepting environmental responsibility for actions;
- strengthening relationships with the community;
- considering the effect on the environment;
- zero net harm to the environment;
- ensuring energy use and waste generation are minimized; and
- being creative in finding new ways to improve their environmental performance.

Rally Australia claim they will adhere to these principles.

If you have an opinion about dozens of fast cars racing around Williams Road and other parts of this region using racing fuel, endangering the wildlife and inconveniencing locals and tourists, then you can express it at the Repco Rally public information meeting on Saturday, 7th February at Kyogle Memorial Hall at 4pm.

For more information go to the website <http://rallyaustralia.com> or call Kyogle Council on (02) 6632-1611



## Kombi Club invades Nimbin

Did anyone wonder why there was such a large number of Kombis seen in and around Nimbin over the January Australia Day long weekend?

This was due to the 'invasion' of 30 plus Kombi Club Kombis who converged at a local member's property for another camping weekend. Members came from far and wide with representation from Western Australia and Victoria amongst the 70 campers.

Planned activities for the weekend included a tour of the Nimbin Candle Factory, a fact finding mission in



Nimbin Village followed by a cruise through the beautiful hills to the Channon Pub (pictured, top) for lunch returning via Koonorigan.

Try as it may the extremely

bad weather conditions could not dampen the spirits of anyone in attendance.

They will all be back in May for the Kombi Konvoy that preceeds Nimbin's Mardigrass.

## Vale Aunty Maureen Watson

9/11/1931 – 4/1/2009

Aunty Maureen Watson was a storyteller, poet, singer, actor and political activist, who was highly regarded for her stories which told of Aboriginal culture and experiences within urban Australia.

Born in Rockhampton in 1931, Aunty Maureen was a proud Birri Gubba and Kungalu woman who left school at the age of 13 and at 21 married Harold Bayles to have five sons. She later returned to her education, eventually moving to Brisbane in 1970 to begin an arts degree at the University of Queensland in 1970.

In 1981 she moved to Sydney, where she set up the Aboriginal People's Gallery in Redfern and was a driving force behind the development of Indigenous broadcasting in Sydney community radio. Aunty Maureen was at the forefront of the Aboriginal protests against the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982, and was arrested three times while participating in demonstrations. Her first collection of



Photo: Penny Tweedie

"We want to make the world a better place, that's the bottom line I guess, we want to make the world a better place, for my children, for his children, her children, your children, we want to make the world a better place." Aunty Maureen Watson, Brisbane, 5 February 1998

stories and poems, 'Black Reflections', was published in 1982 and she subsequently produced six more poetry anthologies, one children's book and one picture book. She performed in many plays and films including Fringe

Dwellers and in 1986 Jack Davis' play, The Honey Spot, in its tour of Victoria and New South Wales.

Her gift for storytelling helped her to travel widely across Australia, New Zealand and Europe to give presentations. Over a number of years she worked with Sisters Inside, a support group for women in prison.

In 1996 Aunty Maureen was awarded the Australia Council Red Ochre award for her outstanding national and international contribution towards recognition of Aboriginal arts, and was the first winner of the United Nations Association Global Leadership Prize for her outstanding work towards

achieving cross-cultural understanding and harmony. Aunty Maureen continued to work as an active leader and highly respected elder in Brisbane for the next ten years or so before suffering a stroke and spending her remaining days on Stradbroke Island, close to some of her 24 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren. She will be greatly missed.

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**First Day of Big School**

Back to school can be a testing time for anybody, but perhaps none more so than those littlies starting Kindergarten. It can certainly be a steep learning curve, meeting strange new people, like teachers, bus drivers, other kids, and fitting in with strange new routines, like little lunch. But no problem for champion Nimbin twins Luka and Khatia (*above*), who were beaming when their dad Stan picked them up from the bus stop. They gave school a unanimous thumbs up.

## Learning opens doors

For Term 1, the Open Learning Centre presents a huge programme to celebrate the commencement of its sixth year.

Lynne Bagoien has added Yoga Therapy, which can be followed by Shiatsu. Daniel Koestler's class in Chi Gong was very popular last year, along with Christine Strelan's Creative Writing, Andre Marcot's Conversational French and Carole Barrett's Art of Drawing.

Basketry with Moksha will be held at the Bush Theatre, Stained Glass with Michael Murphy will be held in his Cullen Street workshop, and



A project of  
Nimbin Community  
School Co-op.

Woodcarving with Hamish in the Community Centre grounds is a new class that is also bound to be popular.

The eight week Term starts Wednesday 11th February, and runs to 1st April. Look for the old-gold leaflet in your letterbox, or phone 6689-1477 for more information.

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# Preschool gets a summertime spruce-up

So Nimbin is a village full of talented people, hey? Well, Nimbin Preschool would love to see some of those talents shared with the children of this community. We are calling for volunteers with skills such as playing music, weaving, spinning, carpentry, gardening, story telling and so on. Volunteers will need to complete Prohibited Employment forms before they can spend time with the children. We are open Tuesday to Friday from 9-3 in term time, and would welcome volunteers any of those days. We all know it takes a village to raise a child. Please ring the Preschool on 6689-1203 and talk to one of the directors.

## Playgroup on hold

Last term we held a successful playgroup for younger children and their parent(s) on Mondays. We have had to close on Mondays in 2009 to remain viable with our limited funding. So playgroup is cancelled for Term 1.

## Any room at the Inn?

We are full on Tuesday and Wednesday but still have vacancies Thursday and Friday. Drop into the preschool or ring for an enrolment pack.

## New sandpit

Local tradesman Seb Sledge rebuilt the sandpit over the holidays and did a fantastic job! We now have a 5-star



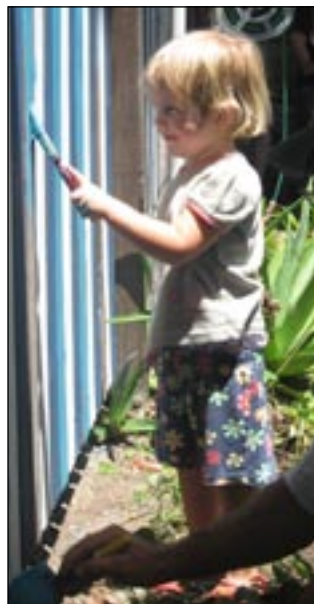
sandpit facility.

## So is it built yet?

No, the new building has not been built (hark the sound of gnashing teeth from frustrated staff and parents...). We are still waiting for DA approval from Lismore City Council. Hopefully 2009 will be the year we get a new preschool to go with our new sandpit.

## Why preschool?

Much research has shown that children who attend preschool have better social and educational outcomes at school. At Nimbin Preschool we take early childhood education seriously. We make children's learning visible and valued by documenting their experiences at our centre in individual portfolios, containing samples of children's work, photos, stories and comments. Their strengths, interests and



Helpers of all ages attended the working bee in January.

emerging skills are evident in these books. These portfolios are available for parents to peruse and are taken home at years' end to enjoy and remember the year by.

A learning diary, documenting the group's experiences each week, is also be available for parents to view.

Thanks to all the parents, friends and staff for the wonderful working bee on

Saturday. The preschool was painted and cleaned, trees pruned, gardens weeded, chairs and lockers scrubbed, new sand delivered, grass mowed and the place made ready to welcome the class of 2009.

## Help for parents of adolescents: Free parenting skills course

Community Connections of Lismore is running a seven-session evening workshop for fathers, mothers or carers of adolescents. It will cover such topics as Reducing Conflict, Practical Parenting Skills, Understanding Teenage Behaviour and Appropriate Boundary Setting. The course is run in an informal and friendly atmosphere.

The workshops are free! It begins on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February at 6pm. To register and book your place call Darmin at Community Connections 6622-3143. Bookings are essential.

## Community Forum on sustainable technologies

As of 20th January, around 65 per cent of the NNIC Solar Packaging Scheme household rebates have been approved and of those, 50 per cent of the installations have been completed with all reports so far being that all customers are very happy.

The installations of the systems for the Neighbourhood Centre and the School of Arts have also been completed. So what's next?

The whole community is warmly invited to attend a weekend Community Forum on Saturday and Sunday, February 14 and 15, at the Nimbin Town Hall to get info and tips on renewable and sustainable technologies, as well as to workshop priorities and strategies for building a



sustainable Nimbin into the future. This is a free event.

Happy householders who have been a part of the NNIC Solar Packaging Scheme are invited to attend for a photo opportunity at around 11am on the Saturday. We are looking to take a group photo of as many of the happy scheme participants as possible.

## The program

The official launch and celebration of the NNIC Solar Packaging Scheme will be held on Saturday, February 14, from 10am. There will be the latest info on solar technologies and rebate opportunities provided by Rainbow Power Co, a *Living with solar* workshop by Karlin Bracegirdle, a presentation by Robyn Francis: *Strategies for Sustainable*

*Communities from around the world: What is Working?*, and a community workshop – *Sustainability Priorities for Nimbin* – also led by Robyn Francis.

On Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> from 10am the community workshops continue with *Strategies to progress the Sustainability Priorities for Nimbin* – led by Nat Meyer (NNIC) and Len Martin (School of Arts), various workshops, promotion of local initiatives and displays, and the plenary: *Where to From here?*

There will be local munchies and drinks available for purchase from the Town Hall kitchen.

Please come along to participate in this important community planning event.

If you are interested in convening a workshop or putting up a display of your activities etc, please contact Nat Meyer on [nimbinnic@yahoo.com.au](mailto:nimbinnic@yahoo.com.au) asap.

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# Nine months of art and food

by Heather Kimber

As a ceramic artist, I have had a passion and desire to combine art and food for a long time, so when the opportunity came up to take on the cafe at Blue Knob Hall gallery, it was a dream come true!

Although I haven't had any formal catering experience, I've been involved on the periphery of the hospitality industry for around 18 years, and I've always enjoyed creative cooking. However, I have to say that it has been a steep learning curve since May 2008, when I started!

At Blue Knob Hall Cafe, I've kept the weekly lunch menu to a few simple, but tasty dishes with a selection of cakes and puddings, some of which I bake, but also I source local popular sweets, such as the baked lime cheesecake and sticky date pudding.

The main courses include vegetable dahl with chapatis – a recipe passed on to me by a friend who worked and cooked for an Ashram in India, and I must say this has become a popular dish.

Also available is Greek Spinach pie with salads, Blue Knob Platter with home-made hummus, salads and flatbread, and home-made soups with warm cheese scone. Prices are reasonable with nothing over \$10.



The feedback I'm getting is that people enjoy the food, the verandah setting, our lovely Gallery, the beautiful views of Lillian Rock and Blue Knob Mountain and the peacefulness of the place.

I really enjoy working at Blue Knob Hall Gallery and the Cafe and I feel blessed to have such a beautiful environment to work in.

The people are fantastic, the Gallery is beautiful and I hope I am able to make a lovely experience for anyone who comes to the Gallery and stays for a coffee or lunch.

This year I am offering pre-booked dinners (with food based on a country of choice) any night of the week for a minimum of 10 people for \$25 per person. So if you have any special requests for lunches or occasions, please contact me at the Gallery on



6689-7449 and I'd love to talk about it.

We also have our monthly Artists and Friends lunch on the last Thursday of each month for \$15 per person for mains and dessert. – always a fun afternoon.

So if you'd like to combine a Gallery visit with a devonshire tea or just like to go somewhere different for a tea or coffee – Blue Knob Hall Gallery and Cafe is worth a visit – 7km north of Nimbin.

# Skate Park update

by Duncan Wilson

With the New Year it seems that we have a fresh charge on the skatepark. Hopefully the current approach will see the completion and opening of the park achieved.

There is a strong core of workers at the working bees in the park each Saturday, with Bill McHenry emerging as a major player in that role, sourcing materials at a price that suits our current budget and supplying infrastructure such as scaffolding.

Steel supports have gone up for the sound wall on the Northeastern corner facing Sibley Street and the crew are working to get the subvoids of the ramps sealed. If built to the recommendations outlined in our last sound report, this could achieve over a 29 decibel reduction in sound levels. We are hoping that this will make a huge difference in the way nearby residents are affected.

Last Friday saw the appearance of several staff members from Lismore council at the skatepark, including Brent McAlister (Executive Director of Governance and Development), Matt Kelly (Environmental Health Manager) and Nimbin's own Lizette Twisleton. Lizette played a big part in the early development of Nimbin skatepark, and has recently become LCC's Youth Development Officer.

It appears that the new Council is very interested in achieving an outcome for the skatepark and is ready to engage with community



**Temptation.** A Cornish backpacker on the ramp (above); Cedric shows some bike moves (below); Ezra (bottom left).



members in finding a technical solution to achieving sound compliance for the park.

It may well be that full enclosure of the subvoids will achieve this, however, it is more than likely that some kind of extending sound walls will need to be added, which would require a DA amendment.

This, strangely enough, brings up crime prevention concerns... Senior Constable Michael Hogan (Lismore crime prevention officer) will hopefully be attending the next meeting at the park so that we can work out where the wall can go and still

comply with crime prevention strategies.

Unfortunately, while this is the approach that we have been in desperate need of, it does not give us instant gratification – the park remains closed. Complaints are still being made regularly to Council about the park use, NCCI is under continued pressure to put the bars back on, and we still have a fence which is costing us money that should be being spent on finishing the park.

Saturday mornings, at the park, We have materials, and still need motivated bodies to do the work. If you want to skate, be there.



## School of Arts solar system ready to go

The Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre's solar system is already contributing electricity to the grid without adding to our planet's carbon dioxide load.

The Nimbin School of Arts solar system has been installed, and is simply waiting for Country Energy to connect us so that we can follow suit.

The panels are beautifully orientated on the north face of the School of Arts roof, but are not visible from the main street. However there is a good view from the back verandah of the Nimbin Pub, as seen in the picture.

The electricity from the panels comes into the system as low voltage direct (DC) current. This is converted into high voltage alternating (AC) current for feed



into the grid by a large inverter (inset), which has been placed on the wall of the back deck of the School of Arts (indicated by >>>> in picture) where it will be highly visible to all those patrons relaxing on the deck during Blue Moon Cabarets, fashion shows, art extravaganzas and so forth.

The inverter has a small meter registering the cumulative kilowatt hours produced, so we will be able to keep Nimbin Community informed of just how many tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions we have saved.

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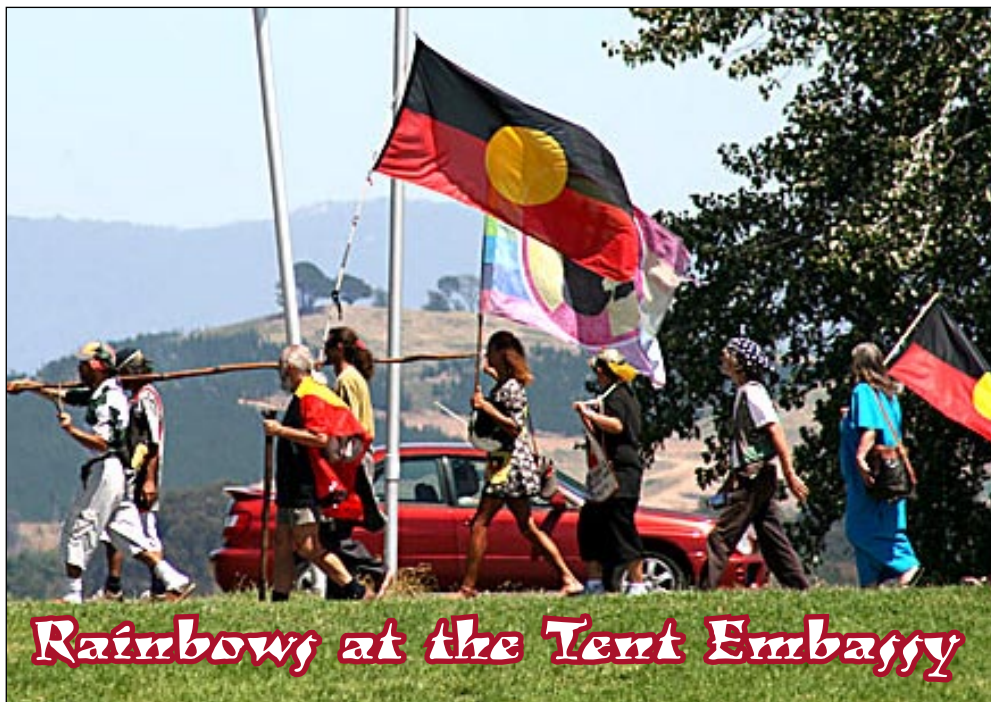
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## Rainbows at the Tent Embassy

by Graeme Dunstan -  
peacebus.com

28<sup>th</sup> January, 2009

It's a 40 degree day, the Canberra sun beats down on the Rainbow Chai tents and Benny's brilliant flag array flutters listlessly. In the Chai Tent shade are empty chairs and bare carpets; what Tent Embassy crew that there are in camp are stretched out in the shade of trees like kangaroos at midday.

But Michael Jack and his 78 year old mother Liffy are working away keeping the kitchen clean and ready to serve. Benny Zable is painting a new set of toxic waste barrels nearby, Robert "Spooki" Corowa is at the Chai Tent PA making droll comment and announcing himself as "Aboriginal Tent Embassy Radio Live!" in a voice as sweet to the ear as honey. And this old wordsmith is tapping out this story in his van.

It's quiet, not only because of the heat but also because it is a rest time between

two events: two days after Sovereignty Day and 4 days before the actions of 3rd February, the first sitting day of the federal Parliament for 2009, when a convergence of convergences will take place.

One will be an End the Northern Territory Intervention rally which will bring many elders and community leaders from NT and elsewhere together; the other a Climate Action Summit being organised by a coalition of climate change activists from Malbourn, Sydney and Newcastle, bringing activists together from all over the country – they aim to circle the Parliament holding hands.

The Tent Embassy will in effect be hosting both these events – its sacred fire providing spiritual focus, and the Chai Tent providing the catering and artful ambience. Those koori green flags with the Nimbin Rocks profile are much appreciated here and on 3rd Feb their koori-green alliance symbolism will have perfect fit.

Those flags, Benny's and others, looked great as the

Sovereignty Day walkers crossed Commonwealth Bridge on 26th January. Some 80 walkers had gathered at Garema Place Civic to meet the eight walkers led by Darren Bloomfield and Winiata who over 17 days had walked to Canberra from Botany Bay.

At the Tent Embassy they were welcomed and smoked by Auntie Isabelle Coe, who was proud to proclaim that the Tent Embassy was in its 37th year, the longest continuing protest in Australia. Other elders present and engaged were Neville "Chappie" Williams, Ellie Gilbert, and Ron Gardiner.

But for all the flagged and lanterned glory and kind catering, the celebrations of Sovereignty Day and Sovereignty Day eve at the Tent Embassy did not pull big crowds; no more than a hundred at any time, kooris and whites. This crowd compares with at least 10,000 and maybe as many as 35,000 who gathered nearby for the free Australia Day concert outside the new



Michael and Liffy



Benny Zable

Parliament House on the evening of 25th January.

The Tent Embassy may not be making much impact, at this time, offering an alternative to the red, white and blue brigades of 26th Jan, but what a cultural asset it is none-the-less: a humble camp, an enduring resistance and a refuge.

Also in residence are about 30 young people, in town for activist training workshops organised by the Australian Student Activist Network at the ANU. Last evening, after a hot dry day, the rose garden sprinklers came on and a bunch of young women let out a whoop and ran from the Chai Tent into the spray.

A joy in itself just to sit about listening to stories from the extraordinary people who are drawn here, but add water nymphs dancing - what more can an old man want?

## Aussie Battlers



**Hip-Hop performers** (above, left to right): Karinya Oldfield, Lluella Thenet, Ashanti Thenet, Simone Thenet and Nikita Rogers with Hip-Hop star Swoop. Below: Winners with their T-shirts.

by Lynne Oldfield

Survival Day saw the now traditional Aussie Battlers Hip-Hop Dance Competition, Freestyle Battles and Open Mike take place once again at the PCYC in Lismore.

Organised by Nadine and Zara from Community Connections, Aussie Battlers proved to be an absolute hit this year. Luckily many young people from the Nimbin Hip-Hop community managed to get there as they were really in for a treat.

Swoop, a hip hop dance choreographer from the USA, who has choreographed music videos for many artists including MC Hammers, Aaliyah "try again", Chris Brown "Forever", Will Smith "Wild Wild West", Busta Rhymes "Fire it up", Dr Dre "Been there done that", Mario Winans, Mya, P. Diddy,



Snoop Dogg and for several motion pictures, arrived with Travers Ross (who runs the Intensive dance festival in Coffs).

Swoop arrived with Travers Ross and soon got the crowd going as they did their dance showcase, which was very exciting to watch. The judges also jumped in and did their bit of dance as well.

Another exciting part of Aussie Battlers was the young break dancers that came from Coffs Harbour and Grafton.

And to cap it off, some of our young Nimbin dancers, Lluella, Ashanti and Simone, took out the first prize in the Junior Section.

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