

Blight of Dobies Bight

by Mandy de Vries

Stewart and Elaine Godwin (pictured) say their experience with coal seam gas mining has made them very angry.

“The drilling is the worst thing, and the generator. The drilling grinds and makes a whooshing noise like a jet coming up the road, it’s steel on rock.

“The noise is an unbearable throbbing. It gets right inside your head, a pressure that feels like it’s a brain tumour and makes your eyes water. It stays inside your head even when you go out for the day to get away from it, and stays there for months.

“Sleep is impossible because they drilled several times for 3-4 weeks at a time, all day and all night, it’s torture.”

This is happening 18kms from Kyogle at Dobies Bight, hidden out of view from the main road, where people can’t see or hear what’s going on.

“One well is 210m from our front door, the second is 1.5km away, and it feels like the drill goes horizontally straight under our feet, the whole house shakes, even the fans.

“It took 30 B-double trucks to gravel the site, as well as all the clanging and banging of pipes. One neighbour tried to build a wall to stop the noise, but of course that didn’t work.

“The gas plumes are as high as the roof of our house and the sky is sometimes red with



the glow. Also it’s a big wind area here and when it comes up we’re very scared that it’s going to get away.

“Metgasco put banks of floodlights on their fence facing our house, they’re on constantly and so bright that you could mow the lawn at night.

“You’re all alone, no one helps you, we tried the government, police, EPA, Metgasco, Thomas George, Council, Barry O’Farrell, but no one listens.

“Peter Henderson from Metgasco has never bothered to come to hear the noise and see what it’s like.

“The people who have wells and dams on their land are benefiting from all this, but there’s nothing for us. People should be sued for damage caused to adjacent properties.

“We moved to the country for the peace and quiet, and now we’ve got nothing, nothing. We’re stuck with this for life, we’ll never be able to sell.



Nimbin Ukulele Protest Singers group is up and running – learning lots of great new anti-CSG songs. Feel free to join in on Wednesday afternoons from 4pm at the Comskool, or near the pizza oven at the Community Centre. You don’t have to have a ukulele, and you can bring your guitar or just your voice, but come along, swell the numbers and learn some songs to share at demos and direct actions.

Anti-CSG – on patrol

A small fleet of marked and unmarked CSG-monitoring vehicles has been launched to help Northern Rivers residents keep a close eye on the activities of companies Metgasco and Arrow.

The patrol vans are equipped with the latest electronic equipment to monitor and record information and to inform the public on the movements of CSG companies.

Daily updates will be made available on Twitter and Facebook to give communities a warning of pending threats in their localities and to give threatened communities the heads-up to mobilise.

Glenugie residents were taken by surprise last week when Metgasco began preparations for a drill site without informing neighbouring landowners.

Work has halted due to a residents’ vigil.

“This is a sneaky industry with no social licence and the community has made it clear the industry is not welcome in the region,” said Phillippe Dupuy of Northern Rivers Community Watch, the group behind the patrol car initiative.

“If Metgasco won’t be honest with landowners then it is up to us to watch them very

closely. These companies also have a poor track record for environmental compliance, so we will be monitoring that aspect as well.”

There are now more than 60 self-declared CSG-free communities across the Northern Rivers and on-going surveys confirm the results of the Lismore poll, showing that over 85% of people oppose the industry.

“We have a legitimate right to monitor and oppose this industry,” Mr Dupuy said.

Daniel-John Peterson, a member of the Community Watch team, said it was unfortunate that the community had to take action, at its own expense, to defend itself.

“The government has clearly failed us, so it falls to us to do the job that the Richmond Valley Council and the State Government are paid to do but disappointingly don’t,” he said.

“We will be on watch 24/7. This will impose on them the transparency they clearly lack.”

Northern Rivers Community Watch has a Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/communityvan Contact Daniel-John Peterson 0431-284-741 or NR Community Watch on 0401-237-903.



Daisy

NIMBIN

GO CRAZY IN DAIZY

Jewellery, incense, stickers, postcards, beanies, hats, sarongs, bedcovers, wallhangings, cushions, thongs, CDs trance & local, slips, beads, sunnies, chimes, etc...

• OPEN FROM NOON DAILY •

60 Cullen Street Nimbin – ph 6689-0146

Metgasco’s Awful General Meeting



by Scott Sledge

Residents of the Northern Rivers went to Sydney for the Metgasco 2012 AGM on 13th November and held banners and large laminated signs supplied by Annie Kia, proclaiming Coal Seam Gas as risky business.

The Sydney media were alerted by Jacinta Green of CSG-free Sydney, and she did an interview on 2GB radio. Demonstrators conservatively dressed as North Sydney business people handed flyers to Metgasco shareholders as they arrived for the meeting. When CEO Peter Henderson arrived, surrounded by a cohort of colleagues, he refused to take the proffered flyer.

During the meeting he derided the significant opposition by local communities as “melons”: green on the outside, red inside. He claimed that downgrading the power plant at Casino from 30mw to 6mw (or even 3mw) would not affect their production licence.

Neither the application to the NSW government nor the conditions imposed for that licence have been made public.

Anti-CSG activists are looking into prospects for mounting a court challenge to their production licence.

If successful this action could be the end for Metgasco. Financially, Metgasco is on the ropes, with losses of \$5 million in the past year and share prices down to around 19c. Shareholders are extremely unhappy with the creation of new shares sold at reduced prices to try to raise capital.

If Metgasco doesn’t start selling gas in the next 12 months it will be in real trouble.

Some investors told NRG they voted against the proposal to give Henderson

nearly a million free shares as “an incentive bonus” because the share price has fallen from more than 50 cents a year ago to less than 20 cents now.

The share price in 2008 was more than \$1.20. The chairman said it wasn’t Henderson’s fault as the NSW Government had held up Metgasco with its CSG moratorium.

The meeting reluctantly agreed to give Henderson another 12 months to get it right. Henderson apparently thinks the intended drilling program will convince the local community (which voted 87% against CSG mining in local government elections) that Metgasco can be trusted and that CSG is “safe.”

Metgasco’s strategy over the next 12 months is to win popular support by convincing people NSW is facing a gas shortage and that CSG is vital to economic survival.

Henderson said he still favoured a pipeline over Lion’s Way, but he admitted that local landholder opposition would cause expensive delays to an attempt to build a gas pipeline over the Border Ranges into Queensland, which would cost at least \$150m.

He suggested that a pipeline to a loading dock offshore from Ballina could be an attractive alternative, and said none of the easements would require payments to landholders from Metgasco.

The protestors told anyone who would listen that Northern Rivers people had a long history of protecting the environment and would fight CSG all the way, making Metgasco a very risky investment.

The mood among investors was sour with many saying they would hold on for a while, hoping for an increase in share value rather than lose so much by selling now.

MT. BURRELL Fruit & Veg

PH. 66 797 287

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 7am - 6pm

- **New Season Mangoes, Peaches, Neclarines, Watermelon**
- **Sweet Pineapples \$2.99 ea**
- **A range of Local Olives / Honey Eggs / Jams, Pickles & Conservees**
- **Dried Fruits / Salad Dressings**
- **& More...Come and say G'day**

THIS BUSINESS IS FOR SALE

ENQUIRIES ..PAUL..

Harcourts

MURWILLUMBAH

Paul Stobbie, formerly of Uki Real Estate is now back in the real estate trade with.. **Harcourts Murwillumbah.** So if you are thinking of selling, need a fresh approach to your current property sale or are looking to buy in our beautiful part of the world... Give me a call!!

SELLING? BUYING? GIVE ME A CALL

Ph.02 6672 7828
M. 0448 191 351
E. paul.stobbie@harcourts.com.au

"I PAINT HOUSES"

RING BEN:
0409 352 102

ABN 59 015 277 505

A surprise speaker was



It was a weekend to be proud and learn about the wonderful bonds of community life. It is a story of transformation from

With low rates maintained by an ethic of volunteering, Billen represents the best of values of a rural community and is a shining example of a low-footprint sustainable lifestyle in a regenerated natural paradise.

Tariffs at Grey Gum Lodge range from \$75 to \$120, and all rooms have ensuite bathrooms, tea/ coffee, fridge and TV. More information can be found at www.greygumlodge.com or you can phone (02) 6689-1713 or 0408-663-475.



or advice that you might have about the experience of building and living in these wonderful houses and

multiple occupancies.
For more information
contact Kezia Geddes on
6622 2209.

[illegible]

They calculated their own eco footprint and then went on to create a vision for a

Key plans of action from the Nimbin youth delegates were the request for the planting of fruit trees at the Nimbin skate park, the provision of filtered drinking water stations in town, the banning of coal seam gas, the end to roadside spraying, and increased renewable energy installation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"We envision a world which is healed through gratitude, sharing, respect, freedom and balance, where all people experience equal rights and there is healthy food, free clean water and renewable energy for all because there is no greed and we take only what we need. We envision a world where all life is respected."



For more information visit:
<http://ozgreen.org>

December 2012 **The Nimbin GoodTimes** Page 3

Cawongla Playhouse goes twilight

by Leanne Logan

There's something fun about being at preschool after hours – it's exciting, it's different, and it's almost dark!

And that makes it a learning experience. And children's learning is what we value at Cawongla Playhouse. So we've chosen a twilight picnic on Thursday 13th December from 6 to 8pm to celebrate the end of this amazingly big year.

We invite all past, present and future families to join us – please bring a picnic, rug, friends and family and a sense of evening adventure.

Over the past 12 months, Cawongla preschool has seen big change. Our much-loved previous director, Sharon Pollard, retired after 30 years at the helm. In that time Sharon saw children come, go and return with their own children – wow! As part of the twilight picnic's events, we will be unveiling a commemorative garden

plaque in Sharon's honour.

We've welcomed our new director Natasha Livock, whose own children attended Cawongla preschool years ago. Natasha decided way back then that if ever Sharon retired, she would like to become director. And she did. Well done Natasha – our little community preschool is all the more special for your presence.

In this last term of 2012, the learning spaces at preschool have changed and grown, just like us. The new sand in our big all-weather sandpit has provided renewed inspiration, with the children working as one big group to recently create the 'Cawongla Sand Dragon'. This extended on Term 2's amazing two-metre long flying water dragon that graces another of our learning spaces.

More of what the children have been busy with this term will feature in a short film to be screened at the twilight picnic. Please come along and enjoy it with us



ButterflyArt: Emogen's exploration of eggs and butterflies led to this beautiful creation

– we'd love to welcome you.

For more information contact Cawongla Playhouse on 6633-7167. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday 9am to 3pm.

Recyclinations

by Gaill Hart,
English/Drama Teacher

Stage 4 Drama students at Nimbin Central School performed their puppet shows to a very receptive audience at the end of

November.

Each student selected a group to co-operate with and completed a series of challenging tasks. The first, of course, revolved around selecting a universal theme which could be



presented on two levels: engage the children as well as communicating ideas to adults.

All students made a puppet, wrote a script and rehearsed. Most students were then able to take the next step and perform for a real audience which was the aim in this case of our show.

We all agreed that the audience responded

delightfully and the feedback provided was positive and helpful. Parents responded with comments like, "I loved the ideas, they were topical and intelligent", "the puppets were funny and the messages were important", "students projected their voice which was a relief" and "well done, it is quite difficult to operate a puppet, read a script and be squashed into a small space!"

What do you see at Nimbin Preschool?

by Kylie Kingston

In its new purpose-built facility, Nimbin Preschool shows how an enlightened educational philosophy can be translated into a productive learning environment.

When you walk around Nimbin Preschool room you will see that our tools and equipment provide multiple pathways for children to express themselves and listen to each other. We think of our main preschool room as a studio. A place to plan, work, investigate, research, discuss, listen and think.

You will see a child painting, some children having a discussion about a topic of interest, a teacher having a meeting with a group of children to revisit and further their investigation and research into a project they have been working on for some months, some children writing and drawing, a child quietly reading a story, a small group of children role-playing with the animal figurines and making patterns with the jewels and rocks.



You will notice the documentation of the pathways, patterns and voices of the children throughout the room, in the children's small journals, the preschool's large journals, the wall panels and the notebooks.

At Nimbin Preschool we spend a lot of time discussing and thinking about the indoor environment and aesthetics, the tools we have available, the items we add every week to challenge and stimulate thinking, even the colours that exist in the space.

When you walk around our preschool yard, you will see our focus on the natural environment. We are busy designing our new outdoor space to



Mahlu and Livio working together

incorporate active and quiet areas. We have worked hard to maintain a space free from large amounts of commercially purchased equipment. We value nurturing the garden and promoting a sustainable self-sufficient lifestyle, and are currently building a chicken house and a new workshop where we can build and construct together and a new cubby.

We highly value listening to each other, and listening to the natural environment.

For enquiries, phone 6689-1203

In your neighbourhood...



Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News
www.nmic.org.au

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre is a local charity and community organisation run by locals for locals.

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre is funded by NSW FaCS as a Community Hub. Our main service delivery role is to provide information and referrals to community members.

For information about all services available in Nimbin, Lismore or the Northern Rivers region drop into NNIC and ask at our front desk or else make an appointment with our CWWs for referrals.

Xmas and New Year Close dates

- NNIC will be closing at 4pm on Friday 21st December (after the Town Hall Community Xmas Lunch) and re-opening on Monday 7th January 2013 at 10am.
- **The Centrelink Agency** will be closed during the week of 24th- 29th December 2012. Centrelink will re-open on Monday 31st December as usual from 10am until 2.30pm weekdays (except public holiday on 1st January).

Annual Town Hall Xmas Lunch

FREE!! for all the family with Santa and traditional Xmas dinner – Friday 21st December in the Town Hall.

A huge day last year...the hall was packed and a great time had by all. You can donate non-perishable food stuffs and toys for our Xmas hampers (given to the needy). Drop them off at NNIC during our opening hours.

SEVEN on Sibley

Donate now! If every person who reads this edition of the *GoodTimes* donates just \$20 during December we will achieve our goal and pay off the loan on 7 Sibley Street, and avoid having to raise extra funds to cover the interest payments. Check out the NEW website: www.sevenonsibley.com

NNIC Post Harvest Food Equipment Library

With mango and banana season coming up and lots of

fruit ripening on the trees, now is the time to think about preserving your excess fruit and veges. You can join our equipment library and get FREE access to the post harvest equipment including dehydrators, Vitamix (seed mill and food processor), and honey harvesting gear.

Contact NNIC to join the library. Membership open to all NNIC members (\$5.50 per year) at the one-off Joining Fee of \$55 (inc GST) and then yearly membership of \$22 (inc GST). The more members we get, the more gear we can add to the library. So join now!

NB. No Food Security meetings until February – date will be advised on our website.

Nimbin Murals Project

NNIC has successfully secured funding from Lismore City Council Heritage grants to complete the mural above the Nimbin News Agency. Time is running out to apply for this funding, so if any other Nimbin businesses wish to undertake restoration of their murals, contact Nat at NNIC for assistance and more info.

Struggling with Grief and Loss?

Come in and see our trained Community Welfare Workers for support and assistance.

Wills and Bequests

Are you updating your Will? NNIC is a gift deductible recipient which means you can make tax deductible donations to NNIC in your Will. Your donations will go towards our activities and services to benefit the Nimbin community.

Join NNIC

Your memberships help support our work in the community. Membership is \$5.50 per year. Membership forms available on our website or at our front desk (posted on request). Support us to support you!

Happy Festive Season

All the staff and volunteers of NNIC wish you all a fabulous and safe festive season and see you in the New Year!

Nimbin Preschool



Enrolments available now.

Preschool: Nimbin A&I Showgrounds, Cecil St.
Phone/Fax: (02) 6689 1203
Email: nimbinpreschool@bigpond.com

Nimbin's Funeral Services

Locally owned and Family operated
Servicing all of Nimbin & surrounding Areas
Specialising in Traditional, Eco/Green and Indigenous Funeral ceremonies

0457-157-899
nimbinfuneralservices@hotmail.com
All Enquiries are Welcomed
Please phone Lisa Liversage
your local Funeral Director

Mini Excavator & Tipper Hire

• Bobcat • 3.8T Excavator •
• 300mm - 400mm Auger •
• Tipper Hire 5T •

Laurie Turner
0427 891 708

Share the party

The Nimbin Child Care Centre and Family Centre, located in the grounds of the Community Centre complex in Cullen Street, are getting together to celebrate the end of the year 2012.

Gail, together with Christina, Maree, Lisa and Luh, have put their heads together to organise a fun-filled Friday in December with lots of activities for the littlies like face painting, balloon modelling, piñatas,



bubble and water play and craft and play dough making.

Join them on the 14th December between 10 and 11.30 am and bring a plate of healthy finger food to share.

If you're thinking of

enrolling your child at the Nimbin Child Care Centre for next year, this celebration is a great way to get to know the centre, staff and families.

For enquiries, please phone 6689-0142.

Roa-Dart hits the road again

by Maree Conroy

It all started when we needed a stop sign painted at an intersection on the Tuntable Falls Preschool bike track. I asked Nerelle, a clever parent with the skills, to organise this for us.

Nerelle thought to ask Roa-Dart – the man who paints our local potholes – to be part of the project. We were excited to have him at our preschool, as he has become a local legend.

The children are aware of his much-appreciated art work on our roads. We decided that whilst he was here doing the stop sign, we would make the most of his artistic skill and add a bit more colour to our bike track. Roa-Dart was very happy to oblige.

We consulted with our children for their ideas for a painting on the bike track, and the day before Roa-Dart came, we asked the children to draw their ideas onto the

bike track itself with chalk.

What we ended up with was lots of beautiful pictures of rainbows and Elke drew a 'rainbow flower'.

The big day arrived and Roa-Dart turned up with all his gear, saying, "It's a chance for me to release my inner child out to play," and then with a big grin he added, "Thousands of people avoid my art every day!"

He painted our stop sign and traced over Elke's drawing of the rainbow flower, using the same colours.

We ended up getting a painting of a platypus and a goanna too. The children, who watched from a safe distance because of the paint fumes, loved the results.

This project was a great opportunity for the children to connect with such an interesting member of our community, Roa-Dart.

Cash donations that contribute to buying paint for his work are accepted at



NRMA, All Tribes and the Visitor Information Centre in Nimbin, and at Gibbos in Lismore.

Tuntable Falls Preschool is taking enrolments for 2013. It opens three days a week during school terms (Tues, Wed, Thurs) and has playgroup on Tues (10am-noon). Preschoolers can access the school bus service from Nimbin Central.

Have a safe and happy holiday, and see you all next year.

LISMORE CITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Public notices, updates and information for the Nimbin Community

Happy festive season Nimbin village!

Lismore City Council would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone in Nimbin village and surrounds a happy, peaceful festive season and new year. Council appreciates the passion, creativity and input shown by the people of Nimbin, one of Australia's most unique little towns and one we're very proud is part of our Local Government Area.

Your comments and feedback on any Council issues that affect your life and wellbeing are always welcomed here at Council. May all residents have a lovely holiday season and may the village of Nimbin and its surrounds continue to prosper, grow and flourish in 2013.

Nimbin Water Supply

A report on options for the upgrade of the Nimbin Water Supply is scheduled to go before Lismore City Council on Tuesday, 11 December. Feedback received from residents during community consultation will be presented to Councillors as part of the report.

Council would like to thank all Nimbin residents who participated or provided feedback during the community consultation process. The meeting begins at 6pm and members of the public are welcome.

Upcoming Nimbin road works

Road works on Nimbin Road adjacent to High Street (beginning near the 50 speed sign as you enter the village) are likely to commence in February next year. This will include a 400m road reconstruction and widening with an upgrade of the existing drainage structure.

There will be traffic control in place and short time delays coming in and out of the village. Work is expected to take eight weeks, weather permitting. This project is jointly funded by the Regional Road Repair Program and Lismore City Council.

Expressions of Interest for Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy

Lismore City Council is about to commence the development of a Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy (Draft BMS). Council wants to involve the community in the development of the Draft BMS from the inception of the project.

To this end, a Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) will be established with membership from a diverse range of industry and community interest groups. Members of the Stakeholder Reference Group will provide knowledge, information and help shape the Draft BMS.

Expressions of Interest are currently being sought from individuals as well as special interest groups. Preference will be given to those applicants who are members of and endorsed by a recognised industry or community interest group operating within the Lismore Local Government Area.

Expressions of Interest are due by 4.00pm on Friday, 25 January 2013. Copies of the Stakeholder Reference Group Charter, Procedures and Expression of Interest form are available on Council's website in the 'Have Your Say' section. Should you wish to submit an Expression of Interest, please address your submission to the General Manager, Lismore City Council, PO Box 23A, Lismore, NSW 2480. Late submissions will not be accepted.

If you require more detailed information feel free to contact Mr Nick Stephens or Dr Damian Licari on telephone: 1300 87 83 87. Council is committed to making the best decisions for Lismore based on good information and community input. Your contribution will help set the direction for the management of biodiversity within the Lismore region into the future.

Nominate now for 2013 Australia Day Awards

Lismore City Council knows there are many unsung heroes in our community – people who work day in and day out making our beautiful corner of the world a better place to live. Sometimes it's nice for good folk to be recognised with a little pomp and ceremony. To see them stand up in front of the whole community and formally be given a well-earned and very public pat on the back.

The opportunity to give them that recognition is simple – you just have to nominate them before 20 December for a 2013 Australia Day Award. Now is the time to put forward the name of an individual, organisation, club or team who you believe deserves recognition for their time, skills and energy.

In honour of the late Darcy Goodwin, who fed the needy in Lismore and Nimbin for many years, the Australia Day Community Services Award will be named after him in 2013.

Nominations are open in the following categories: Citizen of the Year, Aboriginal Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year, Art/Cultural, Sustainable Environment, Services in Community (individual and group), Sportsperson (junior and senior) and Sports (team/group/organisation).

Nominations are due by 20 December and an application form can be downloaded from the website in the 'Council News' section.

MyRoadInfo – road advice all in one place

Whether it's information about road closures, road works, accidents or flash floods, you can find all the road information you need at MyRoadInfo. This online road info hub lets you know what's happening on local roads right around the region so you can travel safely and avoid delays and dangers.

The MyRoadInfo website provides an easy, one-stop-shop motorists can access from their computer, phone or tablet. To check it out, visit www.myroadinfo.com.au.

Corporate Centre 43 Oliver Avenue, GOONELLABAH 2480
CBD City Office 55 Magellan Street, LISMORE 2480
Phone 1300 87 83 87
Fax (02) 6625 0400
Website www.lismore.nsw.gov.au
Email council@lismore.nsw.gov.au



Lismore – a great place to live and work

solar solutions

for all your power options

save up to \$60,000 on solar

Renewable gift ideas
From lighting kits, usb chargers & solar cookers to complete solar installs, you can find unusual gifts online or in-store

12V and 24V lighting
Australia's BEST range of extra low voltage lighting. Available in-store and online

mini power systems
compact solar power systems, portable or installed, for lighting, laptop, mobile, mp3, small fridge

solar pumping systems
deliver water for stock or domestic use, from bores, wells, dams or rivers

35% off
cook up a solar feast with the Tuls solar box-oven + 4 stainless steel pots, oven mitt & recipe book; reduced to a sizzling **\$190**

buy online or call to discuss
02 6689 1430
sales@rpc.com.au
1 Alternative Way, Nimbin, NSW

The solar subsidy is still available for grid and off-grid solar installations. Save \$600 per 1kW on solar systems smaller than 100kW. Talk to the experts at Rainbow Power Company about your energy requirements.

LIC.198555C

www.rpc.com.au

Act locally

Nimbin was reborn in 1973, in the spirit of self-reliance. Gentle folks came with a vision for themselves and their children. A future built around respect for the Earth and each other and a strong, peaceful and inclusive community.

Successive waves of people coming to share the dream unfortunately included many who came seeking power, prestige or profit. Over the years, many of those who shared the vision splendid retreated under the barrage of ego-driven assaults and our fragile, embryonic society began to crumble.

We used to say "Think globally, act locally" as we dreamed of the global village of the future. Unfortunately, our dream is now a nightmare of corporate Americlone pop culture in which you can choose from 50 kinds of junk food but only two political leaders, and the only thing that's sacred is war.

There is no need to think globally these days, because everybody knows. Now is the time to act locally as never before.

Harry Neville
Nimbin

It's about education

I write with grave concerns regarding the future of community-based preschools in NSW, like Nimbin Preschool. Since 1989, community preschools have either been in a funding freeze or a state of sporadic and unreliable funding where services and families have no surety of future funds or how they will be allocated.

In 2013 fees at NSW community based preschools will be the highest they have ever been – up to \$55 a day in some parts of the

state. The most vulnerable children in our communities are missing out and this is creating an even bigger gap in the educational outcomes for children. Participation rates are falling across the state and we know from research that the 0-5 years are the most important time for a child's learning and development, and that children have better outcomes if they receive an early childhood education.

This week sees the start of a concerted campaign by preschool teachers to increase funding, reduce fees and make preschool education accessible, affordable and equitable for all children across NSW. We aim to make the NSW Government responsible for preschool education – this is the case in every other state in Australia where preschool fees are very low or non-existent.

We have asked the Premier Mr Barry O'Farrell, the Minister for Education and Communities Mr Adrian Piccoli and our local member Mr Thomas George to explain why NSW has reached this crisis point and how they aim to address the situation.

NSW is in a shameful situation compared to the rest of Australia, who seem to value the youngest members of their society more than the government of NSW does.

Kylie Kingston
Nimbin

Family court farce

Like so many others, I applaud the announcement of a Royal Commission into child abuse. We have all heard horrific stories and know people who have suffered sexual abuse at the hands of religious organisations and state institutions. Sadly, children

can also suffer abuse at the hands of their own parents.

What I find particularly appalling is the prevalence of false child abuse allegations being raised simply to gain advantage in Family Court proceedings. It is an absolute insult to anybody who has suffered real abuse, yet such deliberate perjury goes unpunished. In family law circles, such allegations are commonly referred to as the 'magic bullet' for resolving custody battles over children. Whoever makes an abuse allegation against the other parent first, typically wins custody of the children.

The courts operate focussing on the 'best interests of the child', so where there may be any kind of threat, then there is a presumption of guilt against the accused parent, and they are withdrawn from having contact with their own children. This of course gives full care of the child to the parent telling the lies and rewards them for doing so. For the alienated parent, the allegation may as well be a conviction.

This year, our parliament passed a bill which removed all penalties for making false allegations in the Family Court. It also broadened the definition of 'domestic violence' to be so vague that almost anything can now fit the criteria of 'domestic violence'. Be careful not to so much as raise your voice at your partner!

For those alienated parents who don't just give up or take their own life in despair, it can then take up to two years just to have the matter heard by the court, before they even have a chance to defend the allegation. Two years of separation from your children, just like that. The

child loses a loving parent, just like that. This is called parental alienation, and it is in itself a form of child abuse, but one that is not recognised by the courts.

Family Court outcomes need to be included in the terms of reference of this Royal Commission into child abuse, because the court itself has no records of, or interest in, the outcomes of decisions it makes in secret, often handing care of vulnerable children into the hands of the alienators and abusers. Hardly in the 'best interests of the child'. Devastated and dispossessed parents fall by the wayside as faceless, nameless victims of the secret Family Court process, many becoming homeless and destitute as part of associated property settlements and child support claims.

What is urgently needed is dramatic reform in family law, a whole new approach. After all, courts are for criminals, not families.

Andy Gough
Billen Cliffs

Parasite industry

Webster's Dictionary definition of a parasite is: 'An organism which lives in or on another organism and derives substance from it without rendering service in return.'

We in the Northern Rivers (and other areas of NSW) are being invaded by a parasite industry. This industry comes uninvited onto our properties and into our communities.

This Industry can clear our land without restriction, use our water without restriction, pollute the air with poisonous gases and uncontrolled long term industrial noise.

This industry is exempt from the land water and air acts that govern the rest of the community. It turns our rural and natural landscapes into industrial landscapes. It disposes of its polluted wastewater into our rivers, and there is lots of it.

This industry owns little and uses much. It does not own land or buildings, so it pays no rates. It is a very heavy user of public roads, and does much damage to small rural roads that were never designed to carry such quantities of heavy traffic. It leaves the community to bear the cost of repair.

The Inland Petroleum

(Onshore) Act is the work of the Nick Greiner government. It is this act that allows the parasite to take over our properties and damage the aquifers and Land. The exploration licences were issued by previous Labor administrations whose ministers for Mining and Energy, Eddie Obied and Ian MacDonald are presently under investigation for corruption.

No Scientific Baseline Studies on the effects this Industry has on underground water, air, human and animal and plant health have been carried out. "Trust us", this Industry says. When Scientific data is produced that contradicts this Industry's claims that it is "Clean and Green" it shrieks that the Science is inappropriate, but it does not produce Scientific evidence to support its claim.

A parasite can eventually suck all the nourishment from its host whereupon the host dies. The name of this invading parasitical Industry is The Coal Seam Gas Mining Industry and it needs to be removed from the host now, before it sucks the life from it.

Simon Chance
Richmond Hill

History repeats?

Chris Hartcher's paranoia about so-called leftish agendas reminds me of the old Queensland days when Premier Joh used to murmur darkly about "those

communists down south". It makes me wonder if at some time in the future we may have our own version of the Fitzgerald Enquiry.

There are many others like Paul and Carol Worsnop (NGT Letters, Nov 12) who have experienced the living hell of residing near a neighbour's CSG mine. But hard-hearted politicians turn a deaf ear to the cries for help. Why? Well, if I were a mining company executive, I would be very careful not to annoy MPs in this way, and would make certain I myself didn't live near one of my mines.

The "happy" graziers who welcome CSG mining on their properties probably don't even live on the place, and don't give a damn about the neighbours. To my knowledge, none of the Qld victims suffering ill-health, through pollution, sleep deprivation and noise, have been compensated. Is this another James Hardy denial?

I was extremely disappointed to read that the NSW govt Standing Committee No. 5 didn't mention a review of this ridiculous 200-metre buffer zone rule. Who was the birdbrain who decreed that all noise, floodlights, vibration and air pollution could be effectively contained within a radius of 200 metres? I also objected to its recommendation to try fracking to see if it damages the aquifer. Too late then.

It is alarming that the EDO may close in the new year.

Elizabeth Lorna Laurie

Born 2/6/1959 and died suddenly in Nimbin 19/11/2012

Lorna was the second daughter for Vivienne Laurie and Herbie King (dec).

The family moved to Old Camp, and then Pippi Beach Yamba. She attended school in Yamba with her Laurie family then finished her schooling in Lismore. She was nicknamed 'Happy Robinson' as she always lived life to the fullest, and would greet her family with laughter and open arms.

Lorna was a deadly cook, and her crocheted beanies and bands are to be found all about the place. Most Nimbin folk said they loved her dancing; and often have a story about dancing with Lorna. She was often seen in the park, teaching tourists crocheting or sharing cultural stories.

Lorna is survived by her partner Noel, and her children Shane, Mareka, Erica and Trish; Auntie Viv and siblings Carmel, David, Monica, Gilbert, Tanya and Jacque; grandchildren, nieces, nephews and large extended Laurie and King families.

Vale Lorna. Fly free with all our love.

– Rose Cubis



whatever
you're looking for

we can help you find it

nimbin
more than you can imagine

nimbin visitor information centre
46 cullen street nimbin nsw 2480
02 6689 1388
nimbin@lismore.nsw.gov.au
visitnimbin.com.au

Letters to the editor

NGT welcomes letters by email or post by deadline, the last Wednesday of the month. Letters longer than 300 words may be cut. Letters already published elsewhere will usually not be considered. Include full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not necessarily those of NGT.



Next Market 9th December

9am – 3pm

Band of the Day:

Broadfoot

Busker: Andy Holme

Charity of the Day:

The Channon Hall & Landcare

Enquiries: 6688-6433

About us

Editor: Bob Dooley
Assistant Editor: Sue Stock
Sub Editors: Hal Williams, Dave Fawcner
Layout: Peter Chaplin
Photographers: Sue Stock, Darmin, Marie Cameron
Distribution: Angus, Peter, Coralie, Daniel, Rob & Lisa, Stuart, Faerie Laura's (Bellingen), Dave (West End), Ken (Mooloolaba).

Bookkeeper: Martha Paitson
Website: (Expressions of interest currently being sought) www.nimbingoodtimes.com

NGT is auspiced by Nimbin Community School Co-op Ltd., 81 Cullen St, Nimbin

Next deadline: Wednesday 26th December

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

There is now a gap between this closure and the opening up of government shop-fronts. But without legislation to deal with "neighbour annoyance" all those "lefties" will be shown the door. Meanwhile, Metgasco is forging ahead with its agenda to reverse its balance sheet.

Jeanette Gow
Casino

My land – whose land?

"I won't be told what I can and can't do on my land" is a disturbing attitude in opposition to the Local Environment Plan. I suggest that our custodianship of the fertile lands, waters and biodiversity of Northern Rivers is a privilege and responsibility that needs to be put into global and historical perspective.

The fact that we humans can rarely see the big picture jeopardises our collective future. Right now, the cumulative impacts of every human activity threaten to tip the balance from functioning ecosystems to drought, flood and famine.

The unexplained scrapping of the E2 and E3 environmental zones by State Minister Hazzard (yes, the same guy who is approving CSG – suspicious?) threatens to open up all areas of native vegetation outside of National Parks and Reserves in the Northern Rivers to many varied forms of intensive agricultural and industrial exploitation. Is this what we want for our region?

Many have worked long and hard to protect what is left and regenerate what was damaged during the slash and burn era of the 1800-1900's. Hence we have at least some quality water flowing from our catchments, some topsoil on our slopes, some acid sulphate soils undisturbed,

some wildlife corridors and some functioning wetlands.

If you're not sure about how these ecosystem services benefit you directly, it's time to do some research! Our region is in a hell of a lot better condition than many other degraded parts of the country, yet all this could come undone if this State decision slips under the carpet. Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore and Kyogle Shires are affected – contact Minister Brad Hazzard: office@hazzard.minister.nsw.gov.au or take action online at www.northcoastnature.org.au

It is apt time to remember this custodianship, for most of us, is not 'OUR' birthright but the birthright of those who are now marginalized and displaced from their traditional lands by our superimposed colonial paradigm and system of land ownership. Respect to the clans of the Bundjalung nation who co-existed with nature and walked lightly upon this land.

Wren McLean
Mullumbimby

Mayor Longland's faux pas

Mayor Barry Longland recently wrote a letter to the editor saying "the developer (of Kings Forest) sought a supplementary report from local ecologist and renowned koala expert, Dr Stephen Phillips... the Koala Plan of Management (KPoM) submitted with the Project Application and supported by the reports of both James Warren and Stephen Phillips did not recommend a ban on dogs in the development... the Stephen Phillips report also raised issues about dog size recommending a 10kg limit on dogs... three respected koala experts have not called for a ban on dogs."

To my knowledge, Steve

Phillips has never written a report that contradicted his publicly stated views about dogs' impact on koalas. I clearly heard him say to the JRPP in May 2011 regarding the Cobaki Lakes development (by the same developer): "There is no such thing as a koala-friendly dog." That includes dogs under 10kg. Therefore why would he support a KPoM that did not have a dog ban in place? He didn't. The developer's ecologist writing the KPoM, Frank Carrick did.

The Mayor should correct his inaccurate statements to the media or lose credibility. His decision to support dogs at Kings Forest comes at a critical time right before Minister Tony Burke is to decide on a controlled action requiring a new KPoM, based on the latest decision by the Minister to declare koalas in NSW threatened and also the council's nomination to the NSW Scientific Committee to declare Tweed Coast koalas endangered. If there is no controlled action, then our coastal koalas will be finished. They desperately need every bit of protection they can get right now.

Since council staff recommends against dogs at Kings Forest, he cannot claim to follow their advice consistently.

The Mayor's only hope for redemption is if there is an urgent rescission motion and he votes against a dog ban. Otherwise he will have driven the last nail into the koalas' coffin and must live with the knowledge for the rest of his life that he was responsible for the localised extinction of one of the gentlest and most beautiful creatures on the planet.

What an embarrassment and shame!

Menkit Prince
Uki

Reflections on addiction

Addiction and its associated behaviours provide contrast within the spectrum of our society. Of course it brings misery to individuals who bear its yoke, not to mention the misery suffered by close friends and family.

It is part of the darker side to the light and pastel shades of life. People live vicariously through learning of others' misfortunes and weaknesses, like the Dionysian moth to

the flame (Dionysus, Greek god of wine, chaos and anything escaping human reason). Addiction and false reason fuel the arts (scripts, poems, songs and novels). Our society will always have its dark underside.

Some seek to help others, whilst others are repelled by the stigma and nature of addiction. Others prefer to live in denial of there being a problem, as it simply looms as all too hard. This may work until the elephant becomes way too big for the room. Dark unknowns, even discovering a disturbing side within ourselves, is confronting.

Behaviour motivated by addictive yearnings comes not from the heart, though these motives do exist and persevere. Acceptance and honesty, not derision and hatred, bring dark into light. The cycle will always be there. Our society is multilayered and multitextured – good, bad, indifferent, those who struggle with addiction are part of our totality, and as such provide part of the glue which holds all together. A positive, pro-active, inclusive community is a powerful force.

Some people resolve their addictions, some simply lose themselves in their escape from socialised personality which may lead them into a world of Dionysian possession. Every life is a different story.

Jane Wales
Lismore

Devolution: The Future

Current city-want preferences of the Macquarie St Mafia over matters of regional imperatives, need to be challenged. Shock-jock voices, bell the demands of the top end of town for the wants of the Wen and it's plebs. This position needs to be challenged politically.

The process of devolution should start now! We have the communication structure, we should use it to manage our own affairs.

The total refusal of the Capital to take heed to the wants of the Northern Rivers on matters of land, environment and the people now leaves us with the only option for a secure economic and political future.

We must grasp the metal,

anvil it and beat it into the shape, we prefer. We must go it alone and secede.

This will be a hard road to tread, just about as hazardous as it is to travel on the existing regional roads left in perilous state by Macquarie Street's financial neglect!

We are strong enough to care. We have our imperatives. Dare we change?

Tom Culpeper
Coraki

European crisis

The European crisis is serving to illustrate the atrocities of capitalism. Compare "successful" Germany to "failed" Greece.

Germany's "success" is attributed to their supremacy in "workplace reform". Casualisation led to de-unionisation, underemployment and job insecurity. That, together with high youth unemployment led to lower wages, deprivation and despair: Economic success to a capitalist.

In Greece, maintaining wage levels meant uncompetitiveness and massive job losses. Capitalists derided the Greek government as "over-indulgent" and the Greek workers as "over-demanding".

They dared to seek to maintain their standard of living.

It gets uglier. To address the unemployment disparity,

the E.U. leaders, capitalists, are continuing with policy (SMH Business Day, Nov 21) "pushing unemployment to such traumatic levels that it breaks labour resistance to pay cuts".

Greece's youth unemployment is already 55%, and wages have fallen 12% in 2010-2012. Not good enough. More torture is required. Never mind that it'll mean less demand as the populace becomes further deprived. An economic death spiral in a furious and vain attempt to retain profits. Absolute madness.

40% of our workforce is casualised, with almost no unionism and high job insecurity. We work about the most unpaid overtime in the world, have a youth unemployment of 25%, and our lowest paid workers have been losing wages in real terms.

But, profits are dwindling. Employers are seeking more "workplace reform" and less company tax.

From what's happening in Europe, our choices are simple. Work hard for a drop in living standards, or, don't work for far worse.

Or, reject capitalism and embrace socialism, and we all share the wealth.

No, forget that, that would require awareness.

Doug Burt
Kyogle

Notices

Combined Church Service

St Marks Anglican Church, Nimbin, will be holding a combined churches' Christmas Carol Service on Sunday 23rd December at 6.30pm (no service at 10am), followed by fellowship, Christmas cake and sweets for the kids. All welcome. For further information, contact Faye Scherf, church warden, on 6689-1440.

In Memoriam

RIP Uschi (Ursula) von Sabler from Tuntable Co-op 11/2/1952 died 9/11/12
 Daughter Violet Ija von Sabler

Greens meeting

Northern Rivers Greens December meeting Monday 10th December, 6pm at the Italo Club, Barrow Lane, Lismore. Interested supporters welcome. Enquiries: 6689-1148.

T-shirts wanted

Donations of used but serviceable T-shirts sought for community project, to be transformed into a re-usable product, not cut up for rags. Please put into donation bag (feed sack) outside the Nimbin Community Centre office.

Seasons Greetings

From the *GoodTimes* team, best wishes for the festive season to all our contributors, advertisers and supporters.

FOR APPOINTMENTS
Tel 6689 1000



THE HEART OF NIMBIN
RAINBOW CAFE
 EST 1973

Great food with lots of choice for everyone, including gluten-free, vegan and carnivores. We do everything the hard way – cut our own potatoes to make chips, blend real local organic fruit to make smoothies and create our own sauces. We have great local coffee with great baristas.

Nimbin Post
 Open 7am - 5pm Monday - Friday
 Full counter postal services

Home of the Next G range of pre-paid phones

Locally owned and operated

New stock now in!

POSTshop