

NGT finalist in print media awards

The May edition of the *Nimbin GoodTimes* has made the finals of the prestigious Newspaper of the Year awards, in the Technical Excellence category for newspapers up to 25,000 circulation.

The edition was entered into the awards by printer Barry Dukes of APN Ballina, who also entered an edition of *The Weekend Star*, which is also a finalist.

Barry said, "Although the category is for print quality, it's important to have quality artwork and photo densities to begin with, to show what we can do."

Only two of the seven mastheads printed by APN Ballina were entered into the Newspaper of the Year Awards.

The awards are conducted by the industry body Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers' Association, whose CEO Mark Hollands said, "The awards are a chance for the newspaper industry across the Pacific region to celebrate their great work in the face of adversity, given the difficult economic climate and period of transition they currently operate in."

Sadly, by the time the winner is announced, at an awards dinner in Sydney on 29th August, the press and its 30 associated workers will have ceased working at the plant.



APN's purpose-built Ballina printery, barely five years old, produced its last newspaper, the *Coffs Coast Advocate*, on Friday 2nd August, ending a 137-year history of newspaper production in the Northern Rivers.

All APN newspapers, and also the *GoodTimes*, will now be printed in Yandina in Queensland and trucked hundreds of kilometres south.

Rubella outbreak re-kindles spiky issue

Free vaccinations are being offered by Nimbin Hospital after four people from the Nimbin district were diagnosed with the rubella infection, also known as German measles.

The illness was found in people aged between 16 and 29 years, and the spacing between them suggests that there may have been other infectious cases in the local area that have not been diagnosed or reported.

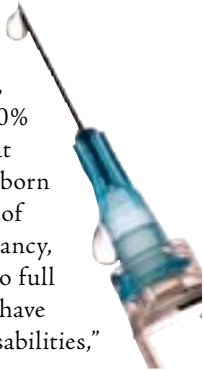
Public Health Assistant Director of the North Coast Public Health Unit, Greg Bell, said that if a woman is pregnant and gets the viral infection, it can cause the baby to develop disabilities.

"If a female is pregnant and contracts the disease during the first trimester or the

first 10 weeks of pregnancy, there's a 90% chance that the infant born as a result of that pregnancy, if it does go full term, will have various disabilities," he said.

Birth defects include deafness, blindness and a range of intellectual disabilities. The air-borne virus causes a mild illness in most people, and presents symptoms slowly, so that infected people who don't feel particularly unwell can still be highly contagious.

Rubella is generally very uncommon in Australia due to high vaccination rates.



Lismore Mayor Jenny Dowell said the low levels of immunisation on the North Coast make the outbreak particularly worrying.

"Having worked with deaf and blind children throughout my career, I know the devastation that Rubella in the first trimester can cause, if the baby survives.

"I just hope that this is nipped in the bud, and people who have the opportunity for free vaccinations take it up," said Cr Dowell.

Greg Bell said, "Anyone who is in the age group born during or after 1966 who aren't sure if they've had their two Measle-Mumps-Rubella shots should actually go and get those shots because it's very important, and they're free."

MMR vaccinations are available at Nimbin hospital, and the free vaccine is stocked by GPs. People with concerns about vaccination are advised by the NCPHU to discuss it with their doctor.

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ABC airs from Nimbin during campaign



Nimbin will host the national current affairs radio programme AM during the federal election campaign.

The AM production unit plans to broadcast from a different town around Australia each day in the three weeks before polling day, and has chosen Nimbin as their second location in a total of fifteen around the country.

Program presenter Tony Eastley said, "Our purpose for broadcasting out of Nimbin is to look at the various environmental policies that are on offer by the parties and to look at the sea change and green changes occurring in Australia as people choose to leave the cities."

The AM program can be heard Monday to Saturday at 8am on ABC local radio, or 7.10am on Radio National, and will be broadcasting from Nimbin on Tuesday 20th August from the veranda of the Nimbin Hotel.

The last time Nimbin featured on the ABC was in an episode of Joe Hildebrand's *Shitsville Express*, which set out to trivialise environmental concerns about CSG mining with absurd proposals for a Nimbin nuclear power station and a personal methane collecting bag.

Hildebrand's antics were widely condemned, both on-air and after the screenings, as was his apparent support for CSG, demonstrated by him swimming in and drinking methane-bubbling water in the Condamine River.

His response, on ABC local afternoon radio, was to say, "I thought hippies could take a joke."

Tony Eastley was quick to distance himself from the show, which is made by a private production company.

"I can assure you AM, which has been on air for 40 years, is a different beast altogether," he said.

Herb shop shuns banned synthetics

by Angel

Happy High Herbs would like to distance itself from media reports that suggest it has been involved with the sale of "bath salts" and "synthetic LSD".

Happy High Herbs in Nimbin has never sold either of these products, nor any of the 19 synthetic cannabis products recently banned under Fair Trading laws in NSW.

In the interest of personal freedom, and due to customer demand, the shop has offered a small range of legal synthetic substances for sale as legal alternatives to cannabis.

Any products that are not 100% natural are tested for suitable strength and mild effect, and are sold responsibly with a strict duty of care



towards customers.

The shop has a voluntary policy of not selling any of these products online, where it would be impossible to assess the customer's age, sensitivity, and physical/mental health.

Whilst Happy High Herbs does stock a small range of synthetic highs, these products are not promoted, either by individual shopkeepers or as a team. The company's role is to promote a healthy lifestyle, cleansing, strengthening, healing and

a deeper connection with plants, plant medicines and the Earth.

The goal is also to educate people about current trends in the law that govern access to, and use of, these gifts given to us by our sacred mother earth.

The company seeks to give something back for the support it receives from the community. Ten percent of the company's turnover is set aside for community projects and good causes.

Since 2007, Happy High Herbs has been a major sponsor of the Mardi Grass parade. This year the first prize was donated towards Tony Bower's legal fees, in support of a fellow herbal activist.

The Nimbin team is always keen to answer any questions so drop in for a cup of damiana tea and a chat about natural remedies, updates on drug law reform and all things herbal or otherwise.



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Grand NAIDOC celebrations



NAIDOC day was a fabulous celebration, with glorious weather and high spirits as people relaxed with some great entertainment in Allsopp Park.

The day started with a welcome to country by Aunty Dorrie, followed by a cultural performance by Steve Didge and Minnie.

Gail, from the soup kitchen, along with her volunteers, provided food and refreshments throughout the day. Joseph made sure there was a steady supply of hot drinks available at the Elders Tent.

There was plenty of good music from local talent Black Boi, *Monkey & the Fish* and an impromptu set by *Gooramen*.

Tim Tonks contributed to the magical vibe by providing sound for all entertainment, including the short-but-sweet fashion parade featuring local label Wild Honey.

The golden moment of the day was seeing all the Aunties get up and boogie in the afternoon sun, with plenty of clapping and cheering in the background.

Many thanks to all the staff and volunteers at Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services



who worked tirelessly to organize NAIDOC day.

Thanks also to all the local mob, including Gilbert Laurie, who took time to MC the event, and other community members, including Linda Phillips and Belinda Heron for the tasty kangaroo dishes and damper.

Thank you to all Nimbin community members who supported the event through volunteering and coming along.

The Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre also contributed time, energy and funding on the day, as did the Commonwealth HACC program and the HACC ATSI Access Service whose funding made the event possible.

Freedom Flotilla in Nimbin



by Omega Breakspear

Uncle Kevin Buzzacott, from Arabunna Nation and the Freedom Flotilla, participated with the local Elders in a sacred fire and water ceremony at Nimbin Rocks on Sunday 28th July. Local Bundjalung performers treated the visitors to some stunning traditional dancing before a fire was lit and the ashes scattered together with sacred ashes from Aboriginal Sovereign Embassies from around Australia.



Top: Uncle Kevin Buzzacott, Bundjalung members and local Nimbin crew. Above: Greens candidates Desley Banks and Cate Faehrmann with Amos Rumbiac, Cecil Roberts and Uncle Kevin.

"I was inspired by the Bundjalung dance about hitting the water to send a wave that sends a message to the dolphins to bring in the fish. With this journey we need to hit the water hard to send our message to the world," said Ronny Kareni, who is a West Papua independence advocate and flotilla spokesperson.

The event was part of the Freedom Flotilla to West Papua, an epic 5,000 km journey from Lake Eyre in South Australia to West Papua. The Flotilla aims to draw international attention to the plight of West Papuans who have suffered from 47 years of Indonesian colonialism and resource plundering from multinational mining corporations. Amnesty International says at least 100,000 innocent people have been killed by the Indonesian military in West Papua.

Aboriginal and West Papuan peoples.

Earlier in the day at the Nimbin Markets, West Papuans Amos Wainggai and Ronny Kareni had performed on the Markets stage, which included singing 'The Mystery of Life', the last song written by Arnold Ap, killed in 1984 by the Indonesian special forces. Well-known hip-hop artist and activist Izzy Brown, a flotilla crew member, followed them on stage with an inspiring speech and rap song.

"It's really exciting that you are part of this journey," Izzy explained to the crowd, "as we really need the world to be watching as we cross over into West Papuan waters. We've already been refused visas by Indonesia and our sailing permits have been taken away so we are traveling on Aboriginal passports and West Papuan

visas and we are going to question their jurisdiction. Already there's been big solidarity demonstrations inside West Papua in support of the Freedom Flotilla and the people there are preparing their welcome ceremonies for us."

The Freedom Flotilla is a political and spiritual journey of raising awareness, bringing together musicians, artists and activists.

"On behalf of the West Papua Freedom Flotilla we would like to thank the Nimbin community for their warm welcome, especially Bundjalung Elder Uncle Cecil Roberts, Nimbin Environment Centre, Grannys Farm, Nim-FM radio and Solidarity Sound Systems," said Izzy Brown.

From Nimbin, the convoy headed off to Cairns via Brisbane, then onto a flotilla of boats to West Papua.

Unions back hunting program

The NSW Government announced in July that a trial of the Supplementary Pest Control Program would start in 12 national parks.

After this trial, a report would be delivered to Cabinet, and further national parks on the original list of 75 may be considered for the program.

Unions of National Parks and Wildlife Service report that the safety concerns they raised during the inception of the program have been adequately addressed, and the campaign to stop amateur recreational hunting in national parks "has been won".

The trial program is a professional hunting program and will be run entirely by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) staff. The program is back in the hands

of the professionals who have always managed pest animals in NSW.

NPWS staff may bring in volunteers to help execute its professionally planned and managed programs, and such volunteers will have to go through the same training as NPWS staff, including navigation training, species identification, and demonstration of competency.

Any pest eradication programs involving volunteers for will have one of two zones within it. There were previously three, and the third, now omitted, was the "scary zone" that permitted amateurs to carry out unsupervised hunting.

The two zones that remain are Zone A and Zone B. In Zone A, volunteers will be part of the NPWS team and working shoulder-to-shoulder

with experienced NPWS staff.

In Zone B, experienced and trained volunteers are supervised by NPWS staff. This will include induction and daily safety briefings. Detailed reporting, data collection and debriefing requirements will also apply.

Site-specific shooting plans with detailed maps will direct operations, approved by NPWS regional managers consistent with regional pest strategies.

National Park will be closed to the public when pest eradication programs are taking place.

There will be no shooting activity in any national park during school holidays. No minors will be allowed to hunt in any national parks despite lobbying from the Shooters and Fishers Party.

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Tara: 'It's worse than you thought'

by Chantico

After attending the successful Doubtful Creek blockade, it became obvious that all roads lead to Tara, so off I went with other Northern Rivers protectors to see the Queensland gasfields for myself.

I have spent days trying to put into words what I witnessed. To feel and see

an ecosystem under stress and dying is indescribable. Everything has been affected by this parasitic industry.

The Great Artesian Basin is being drained, with waste from huge toxic holding ponds being sprayed on the roads, the Condamine River bubbling with gases.

The roads billow with dust from constant traffic as 27,000 workers (many

of them from overseas) commute, with roadworks and road kill everywhere. The state forests are being obliterated. Yes, it's as bad as you've seen – and worse.

The community is fading as the industry takes over what was once a quiet country area.

Sadness and grief is everywhere, and fear of speaking out. One guy said

g'day as he came out of work at the gasplant. "If I didn't have a mortgage I'd stand with you," he said.

Childhood illnesses, abandoned houses and the obvious gap between the haves and the have-nots.

The people that live there and have been fighting this industry on their doorstep are exhausted. Respite is what they need.

I will continue to fight after witnessing what they plan for this area. We are the protectors.

On 13th July there was an amazing concert, which gave



the protectors some much needed R and R. We danced, celebrated life and healed.

To all of those artists, and all involved, thanks from all of us.

Fighting for the forest

by Bee Gonos

This article is the result of an interview with Murray Drechsler to celebrate the first anniversary, on 5th August, of the Protest camp in The Leard State Forest, Boggabri, NSW.

Murray worked for 10 years in the Rural Fire Service in Main Arm, Mullumbimby, and spent his last year in the service as Senior Deputy Captain before travelling hours south to battle the coal industry in the Leard State Forest.

He was running tours out of the Pilliga, looking at CSG mines, when he met Carmel Flint, a NSW activist who locked on to a dozer in the Leard State Forest coal mine.

"This is a State forest, which is owned by the people, which is put aside for nature reserves timber reserves. It should be managed accordingly, not just raped and destroyed," he said.

Murray's campaign began by raising awareness, letting people know about the forest and there is a coal mine that threatens 395 species of flora and fauna.

His biggest ally in the fight was a man named Cliff Wallace. He is a local farmer whose land is 25km from the Leard State forest.

He supplied local knowledge, local community engagement, as well as water, food, ice and wood for the protestors' camp.



"We are up against three coal mines," Murray said. "One is Boggabri Coal which is owned by Japanese owned company – Idemitsu. They have shares and interest in gas, petrol, oil and nuclear power stations.

"The other is Whitehaven, which runs Tarrawonga and is about to start the third coal mine, Maules Creek. They are Australian-run, with shares from companies and people abroad."

Murray says the ex-Deputy Premier of NSW, Mark Vaile, is the president of Whitehaven.

The Leard State Forest is 5,500 hectares, with 395 species of flora and fauna, 34 threatened species and several endangered ecological communities, including sugar gliders, bats, snakes, lizards, koalas and trees up to 400 years old.

The forest is surrounded by farmland, an island of refuge for wildlife.

The three mines will run the length of the forest, clearing an estimated 3500 hectares of the Leard State Forest and 5,500 hectares of native vegetation.

"We have been very productive in getting the word out. We have also given the locals hope, that a fight can be taken up with the mining companies."

Murray says there is a good chance of victory, based on the economic situations, the price of coal, people's growing awareness of the health and environment impacts of mining, and knowledge about alternatives to coal.

"We all need to stand up for our rights to clean air clean water and good food.

Our basic needs of living are being threatened. Its a bit like paying rent for living on this earth. Doubtful Creek, Glenugie, Folton Cove, Kimberley and other protests gave me strength, to see others were fighting elsewhere with the same intensity and passion."

For more information on what's happening or tours at the Leard State Forest go to: www.facebook.com/Mystery.Dingo.

Tours or: www.facebook.com/FrontLineActionOnCoal or contact Murray on 0418-754-869.

Traveller's snapshot of Gladstone

by Daniel-John Peterson

I can't remember having been to Gladstone but I must have passed by this way with my parents on our family vacation from Doubtful Creek, NSW, to Cape Tribulation, in Far North Queensland, in the late 1980s.

On this occasion, I approached the southern outskirts of Gladstone as a lone traveller, curious about how Gladstone fits into the bigger picture of Australia's CSG industry.

The encroaching suburban streets compelled me to slow down and begin something of an intuitive search for the right person to show me around, or at least tell me where the Gladstone Harbour was.

A sign reading "Community Centre" captured my attention, and there I found fellow anti-CSG campaigner Sheree Dearden. She told me: "I feel like I'm the only one in Gladstone speaking out against CSG."

Like so many of Australia's ports, Gladstone has a legacy of exporting the most expedient product of the time. Initially trees, then beef, alumina for making aluminium, and coal by the train load.

Today's Gladstone is utterly intoxicated by Australia's economically fashionable CSG export industry.

On my way back down the

main street I made a point of visiting the Infomation Centres offered by the multi-billion dollar corporations which are feverishly constructing processing plants intended for converting CSG into LNG (liquefied natural gas) for exportation.

The atmosphere was surreal. The lies were so crisp and poised, as if some grand elaborate formula for human deception had been researched and developed at great expense, printed on laser cut display boards in assertive colours and lighting.

On my way out, I boldly handed a Community Blockades pamphlet to the receptive receptionists.

Sheree works in the human services and artistic sectors of Gladstone's community, and has done so for 10 years. She explained how the influx of construction workers has forced Gladstone's rents to double within the last two years.

As a result, Sheree and others like her are being forced to leave Gladstone in search of a more affordable life. Sheree says she also sees the effects of this in homelessness rates.

"It is difficult to survive here if you don't earn the big mining dollars," she said.

These are not the 'internally displaced persons' of war-torn regions, but they are refugees, who the CSG industry and mining sector generally would

rather not talk about.

In Gladstone's paper it was closer to an entire page worth of adverts promoting various forms of prostitution. I was told: "Don't have sex while you're in Gladstone, 'cause chances are you'll get AIDS."

Apart from the health impacts of unprotected sex, there is the associated violence and abuse that's attributable to congregations of independent labouring men.

Sheree described the drunken men in downtown Gladstone as "a mess" where it was no longer possible for her to walk. "Saturday nights are the worst."

As I drove out of Gladstone I passed a huge "Welcome to Gladstone" sign with the motto: "The Region of Choice". Unfortunately for those living in Gladstone, nothing seems further from the truth.

Gladstone is a prime example of the 'choices' facing other Australian towns right now.

The stories of Gladstone's mining related issues of social dysfunction could be told endlessly, because the issues themselves are interrelated.

Opportunities sometimes come in strange packages, but I am compelled to believe in the ability of people to see the interrelated opportunities, where others see only profit.

May Gladstone's fortunes remind us of the things that make us all so fortunate.

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Horse neglect acquittal

Six animal cruelty charges relating to a horse found in poor condition on a Nimbin property that had to be euthanased last October were dismissed in Lismore Local Court after the prosecution could not prove who owned the animal.

Nimbin Rox YHA owner Liam Brehme faced charges including committing an act of aggravated cruelty and failing to provide sufficient food and water to Amber, a horse on his property.

The prosecution case relied on evidence by an agronomist that the horse was found in a paddock where the grass was lacking in nutritional input and the presence of crofton weed. The veterinary report as to horses condition indicated extremely poor body index score, emaciation, dehydration (suggesting that the horse had no access to water) and appalling skin condition.

Mr Brehme engaged a barrister, Peter O'Connor, who argued his client gave Amber to Alan Davey in July 2012 after a trail-riding business the pair established folded. Mr Davey denied owning the horse. Magistrate David Heilpern likened the arguments to a group of school children playing pass-the-parcel.

Mr Heilpern eventually dismissed the charges against Mr Brehme after it could not be proven that he owned Amber.

Cherie Shepherd of East Coast Horse Rescue said she was disgusted that no-one would be held responsible for



Amber's neglect and suffering even though she was seen by all three members of the Rox hostel every day. "It's a pity that the magistrate could not factor in a 'duty of care' conviction to all three persons. The bottom line is that the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* needs reform urgently," she said.

Angela Pollard from Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre also said that changes to animal cruelty laws are needed. She says that trying to change these laws is "like walking through jelly backwards," and that the NSW government is at present trying to reduce animal cruelty laws, not increase them or make them tougher.

Amber's previous owner, Liliias Cotterell, said in a statement to NGT, "Horses

are beautiful intelligent creatures who can't cry out for help. How do we stop this kind of neglect happening if we cannot convict the perpetrators?"

"Cases have to be investigated by police or by RSPCA or some other similar groups, and brought to court. Mr Brehme was put to great expense to defend himself. Perhaps that is some form of deterrent to negligent owners," she said.

"If you have a horse in your paddock, don't just assume they are OK. If you go away have someone check up on them. They require expensive maintenance. If you sell a horse, like I did with Amber, follow up that they are being cared for and not abused or neglected," Ms Cotterell said.

Will Abbott log national parks?

The North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) is calling on Tony Abbott to clearly state whether the Coalition would open up National Parks for logging if elected.

Statements by Barnaby Joyce, the Nationals' candidate for New England, and Kevin Hogan, the Nationals' candidate for Page, indicate support for such logging.

NEFA spokesperson Dailan Pugh said the National Party seems intent on giving in to the loggers' demands. "The question is now whether the Liberal Party and Tony Abbott will agree to this."

Mr Pugh said electors had a right to know. "The problem is that the loggers have been intentionally over-logging State Forests for the past 15 years and now that they are running out of sawlogs they want to do over our national parks."

"In their evidence to the Public Land Use Inquiry, the NSW Forest Products Association stated they want over a million hectares of north-east NSW's National Parks, Nature Reserves and State Conservation Areas for logging."

"This amounts to half the national park estate in north-east NSW."

Loggers have so far singled out 43 national parks and other conservation reserves in north-east NSW for



Looking from the Border Ranges across to Mount Warning. The Forest Products Association have singled out the western part of Wollumbin National Park (background) and Mebbin National Park (foreground) for logging.

revocation, stating that they also want whatever other reserves are necessary to maintain current yields.

Mr Pugh says those areas include forests identified as qualifying for World Heritage Listing, areas of core koala habitat, and irreplaceable stands of old-growth forest, including those at Chaelundi, described by Justice Stein as "a veritable forest dependent zoo, probably unparalleled in south-eastern Australia".

Reserves specifically identified by the Forest Products Association for revocation within north-east NSW's federal electorates include:

- RICHMOND: Wollumbin, Mebbin and Goonengerry

National Parks, along with Wollumbin and Whian Whian State Conservation Areas and part of Nightcap National Park;

- PAGE: Bungawalbin and Chaelundi State Conservation Areas, along with parts of Guy Fawkes River, Chaelundi and Nymboi-Binderay National Parks;

- NEW ENGLAND: Nowendoc National Park, Tuggolo Creek Nature Reserve and Butterleaf State Conservation Area;

- COWPER: Cascade and Bongil Bongil National Parks, part of Sherwood Nature Reserve, and Gumbaynggir, Cascade and Nymboi-Binderay State Conservation Areas.

LISMORE CITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Public notices, updates and information for the Nimbin community

Applications open for Heritage Assistance Fund

Council, in conjunction with the NSW Heritage Office, is offering grants to carry out conservation works on listed heritage items or items within conservation areas listed in the Lismore Local Environmental Plan.

The grants are to assist owners in the repair and conservation of their properties and are limited to a maximum of \$2000 per application and must be matched dollar for dollar with the applicant's own finances. Projects previously funded included reinstatement of decorative architectural features and repainting, and window, fence and verandah repairs.

The closing date for applications is Friday, 30 August. Successful applicants will be announced in September.

Application forms and brochures on the scheme are available on Council's website and can be obtained from Council's Corporate Centre, Oliver Avenue, Goonellabah, on 1300 87 83 87, between the hours of 8.30am and 10am, Monday to Friday.

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Community Sustainability Survey

Coming to a place near you in the next month. This will be the third such survey of Nimbinites since 2009. These surveys have been providing us with valuable community level data, which has helped us attract funds and support for our community projects and the Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan.

There will be some new questions this time, in addition to those we have already been tracking through the last two surveys. The more Nimbinites (30km radius around Nimbin) who complete the surveys, the more valuable the data is. We will send the surveys out via mail, plus we will have them at various community events and of course at NNIC. If you only do one survey all year, do this one!

7 Sibley Street update

The 7 Sibley Street project Design Team is pleased to announce that we will be launching the Master Concept Plan at 11am at the Big Auction event at the Nimbin Town Hall on 24th August.

The Plan is not the final plan, but rather a visual representation of the possible use of the site. The Plan will be used to generate further community discussion about the development of the site with a view to arriving at the final plan down the track.

In the meantime, over \$108,000 has been raised to date. Way to Go Nimbin! We are now well on track to reach our goal of paying off the loan completely by the end of the year.

Thanks so much to everyone who has donated and contributed to date. A full list of the cash donors can be found on the project website: www.SevenOnSibley.com If your name is not there and it should be, let us know at NNIC. The list is updated on a monthly basis.

You can help bring this baby home!

August Events for your diaries

- **Monday 12th August** – 12pm at Birth and Beyond – Wallers Bus Company community consultation re Wallers Bus services to Nimbin. Wallers needs your input as to the viability of bus services between Lismore and Nimbin.
- **Saturday 24th August** – Big Book Sale and Auction for 7 Sibley Street at Nimbin Town Hall, featuring presentation of the Master Concept Plan for 7 Sibley Street at 11am. The 2012 Auction was heaps of fun, so make sure you come along.
- **Saturday 24th August** – “Spring Eve” at the Nimbin Town Hall. Come out and celebrate the end of Winter. All funds raised to 7 Sibley Street.

Nimbin Women's Dinner Committee

Women who are interested in helping to organise this year's dinner, please contact Teena at NNIC. We will be back in the Town Hall this year and the date is 27th November.

NBN Nimbin rollout update

See ad p.14. Check our website for latest updates: www.nnic.org.au

Nimbin Show:

21st and 22nd September

- **Most Sustainable In Show** – entries close 30th August – see our website or drop in/email us for entry form and more info. Trophy and cred for the winner!
- **Local Film Bytes** – short local film comp. Can be anything to do with local food production. Entries close 30 August – entry forms avail at NNIC or on our website. Drop your entries into NNIC.
- **Cullen Street Shop Display competition** – in the week before the show. Trophy for the best show-related display.
- **Sustainability Alley** – contact us if you would like a stall in Sustainability Alley or would like to do a presentation or working demonstration.



Koala at Henson Road, Nimbin

Nimbin Koalas

Increasing reports of koalas being spotted around the Nimbin valley in locations where they have not seen before, got folks talking about the local koala tree planting efforts in past years, which have clearly started to have an effect. This has inspired a new local koala tree planting effort. If you want koala feed trees to plant on your property or you would be willing to help with some planting please email us at NNIC: admin@nnic.org.au

NNIC website – Lots of stuff

The website aims to serve the community. You can find local transport timetables, latest news, community events, directory of local health practitioners, stuff for young people including updates on happenings at the Sk8 park and heaps more. The site is updated on a weekly basis and is always worth a visit. If you think something should be on there but is not, or for any other feedback, email us at NNIC: admin@nnic.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.

High hopes for Rainbow Walk

The Rainbow Road Walk is a 3km walk around the village of Nimbin which will link existing authentic experiences with education and new technology.

It aims to provide a link for locals and visitors between Nimbin's attractions, shops and displays and fixtures such as Rainbow Power Company and Djanbung Gardens International Permaculture Hamlet.

The track will be built to Australian Walking Track Standards, and feature working examples of sustainability and alternative life to promote and extend the values of Aquarius.

It will also create employment and training opportunities.

The executive summary shows that Rainbow Road is feasible:

- It is different and authentic – providing what target markets are seeking;
- It builds on and links with existing attractions;
- The village of Nimbin averages 400 visitors per day and more than 60% of



Concept plan by Alderson & Assoc.

those surveyed would take the walk and extend their length of stay;

- It will add value to tourism experiences in the Northern Rivers Region;
- It has full community support and provides community amenity and facilities;
- It has landowner support;
- It will create employment and attract investment;
- It will capitalise on the NBN and emerging e-growth industries;
- There is early developer and business interest and curiosity;
- It links with the zeitgeist

of the times – global social and environmental consciousness.

Rainbow Road is a truly innovative experience based on strong natural, cultural and heritage values.

Coupled with a vibrant “e-delivery” platform, this project has the capacity to meet the needs of the Nimbin community as well as the expectations of Nimbin's current and future visitors, both actual and virtual.

It has the capacity to deliver on-going long term employment, investment and income streams to ensure sustainability.

Support your hospital Auxiliary



Since 1933 the United Hospital Auxiliaries of New South Wales Inc has been responding to the needs of health facilities and community health facilities throughout the State.

Here in Nimbin, we are fortunate enough to have our own Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary (NHA). The NHA helps raise funds for the purpose of purchasing special pieces of equipment to aid and comfort local patients attending the 24 hour seven days a week Nimbin Hospital (296 patients were seen during the month of May this year), including those living in the Hospital's own aged care residential facility.

With the help of local funding we have to date, been able to purchase items such as a portable oxygen concentrator and bath shower chair (\$5000) a blanket warmer (\$4966) a low bed (\$4175), air mattress (\$3390), centrifuge (\$1975) and equipment for recording patients' temperature and blood pressure (\$3000). These are a few of the many pieces of very necessary equipment that aid diagnostics and assist with patient comfort.

We hold regular fundraisers such as our monthly raffles held on Saturdays of each

month outside the Nimbin Newsagency where vouchers worth \$50 can be won. Basket raffles, kindly donated by Lyn Brennan are also available at the hospital.

We also have a stall at the Annual Nimbin Show where raffle tickets can be purchased plus a selection of plants as well as lots of wonderful homemade cakes and jams. At Christmas the Lismore Lions Club invites Nimbin UHA to be charity of the day at Lismore Square. All funds raised on these days are donated to the Nimbin UHA.

Caring staff at the hospital also hold hospital garage sales and the monies raised are donated to the Auxiliary. There are also two money boxes on the counters of the local pharmacy and the hotel pub for ongoing donations.

Donations are occasionally given directly to the hospital. Should you wish to make a bequest to the hospital we now have explanatory brochures available at the hospital reception. Donations can also be made by direct deposit at the Nimbin Summerland Credit Union.

The Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary invites new members to help with our work. Volunteering can be very satisfying and rewarding, especially within your own community and your support will benefit you, your family, friends, and neighbours.

If you would like to join our happy, informal association, doing a little or a lot, attending meetings or not, or just to be there, please come along to the meetings.

The NHA meetings are held on the second Friday of the month at 10am in the Conference Room at Nimbin Hospital. The AGM is to be held on 16th August. All are welcome.

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Gas strategy a lot of hot air

A new flurry of company propaganda from Metgasco during July has been rejected by community groups in the Northern Rivers.

The attempt by the company to force its corporate, profit-driven agenda on an unwilling community are likely to result in an even stronger level of opposition to the industry across the region, according to CSG-Free Northern Rivers.

“The latest offerings from Metgasco signal that they are continuing with the same failed methods of using spin, deceit and corporate arrogance to try to force their way back into our region,” said Boudicca Cerese, spokesperson for CSG-Free Northern Rivers.

“The company’s claims that it has support from the broader community are based on a clearly biased poll undertaken in the Casino area by Richmond Valley Council.”

In the poll, respondents were asked:

“If the Coal Seam Gas industry in the Richmond Valley resulted in increased employment; economic welfare for the region and was appropriately regulated and proven to be environmentally safe, how supportive would you be of Richmond Valley Council working with CSG stakeholders and regulators to ensure the community benefit from this industry?”

“That is a very big IF,” said Ms. Cerese, “and is basically a blatant example of push-polling, a method where the pollster attempts to influence the outcome by asking leading questions that ‘push’ the respondent towards adopting a particular position.

“More than 20,000 residents in over 112 communities in the Northern Rivers have conducted their own grass-roots democratic process through a community-run survey.

“The average response to the question ‘Do you want your roads/lands Gasfield

Free?’ is 95% YES, with overwhelming majority responses recorded in every local government area, including the Richmond Valley Council area.”

Ms Cerese says claims that Metgasco will return to the region with a focus on conventional gas prospects highlight the company’s reliance on spin and misinformation.

“Numerous earlier Metgasco documents noted that many of the gas bearing sandstone structures in the Northern Rivers region are ‘tight gas reservoirs’ that are likely to need extensive fracking to be commercially viable, yet now, suddenly, they are ‘hopeful’ that these sandstone formations will not require fracking.

“Our community will not be duped by these phoney claims and if Metgasco thinks that their drilling operations will not be opposed because they are now labelling their wells ‘conventional’, then they might be in for a big surprise.”



Michael McNamara speaking at the Glenugie protest

Put your money where your heart is

Research released by Market Forces and the Australia Institute shows almost 25% of Australians would be prepared to switch super funds if their fund continued to invest in coal and CSG.

The findings were welcomed by Michael McNamara of Lock the Tweed.

“The research, conducted earlier this year, shows a consistent trend across all age groups and for both men and women,” Mr McNamara said.

“Investors believe that ethical concerns, not just monetary gain, should be taken into account when investing their hard earned super funds.”

In dollar terms, this means that there is up to \$250 million looking for an ethical investment home.

“This reflects the strong community concerns about the long-term impacts of these industries on the environment, existing industries, our health and our water,” Mr McNamara said.

“Community concerns are being heard by local governments all around the state.”

At its last meeting, the Tweed Shire Council resolved to investigate opportunities for ethical investment of funds under its control.

“For a local council to go down this road sends a strong

message to the banks and other investment bodies that the issue is a serious one,” Mr McNamara said.

“The concern that people hold about where their funds are invested extends to the lending activities of the big banks.”

Billions of dollars have been lent by Westpac, ANZ, NAB and the Commonwealth Bank to companies behind coal and coal seam gas developments.

“This includes \$6.5 billion since 2008 for coal ports along the Queensland coast that will impact on the Great Barrier Reef,” he said.

“This increasing development of coal and CSG facilities along the Queensland coast has put the Great Barrier Reef’s World Heritage listing at risk.

“Losing this listing would have a devastating impact on the Queensland, and Australian, tourism industry.”

Mr McNamara called on local residents to contact their bank and superannuation funds to demand that they stop investing in coal and CSG developments.

“The banks and superannuation funds need to recognise that the world has changed. For an increasing number of people the morals and ethics of the investment is just as important as the financial gain.”

Fracking royalties figures fudged

by Scott Sledge

During the weekend of 13th and 14th July, when musicians and CSG activists gathered to show the world what has happened to a wide area of Queensland, *The Weekend Australian* published a swag of dangerously inaccurate articles.

The paper said Queensland’s 2013 budget papers recorded gas royalties income of \$409m in 2011-12. The real figure is \$53.2 M and that is for all petroleum. Gas must be a mere fraction of that.

The impression that gas royalties contribute a significant amount to Queensland appears in articles entitled “Gas boom has the activists fired up but the state is still negotiating its fair share”, “Loads of cash ‘will win LNG doubters’” and “Big gas fills state coffers”.

Letters were written to *The Australian*, challenging the figures. Reporter Adam Shand defended the Facts about Fracking article and said that it was compiled by a staff writer and that the newspaper seeks to print “the truth”.

If the truth is the first victim of war, then we must be at war.

I emailed a copy of my complaint to the Press Council and received an email from the paper’s editor, Clive Mathieson.

He wrote: “We have run half a dozen stories on CSG in the past week as part of our On the CSG frontline series, which is an effort to explore all sides of this controversial issue.

“Not all stories will please all players the proponents and opponents of CSG

have very different positions but our aim is to present a balanced picture of the issue.”

The following article was written by Adam Guise and me in response to another recent report in the newspaper:

While the coal seam gas industry claims it brings jobs, taxes and increased exports, it does not mention that this growth comes at the expense of other industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, education and tourism.

A 2011 Australia Institute report states that the high level of foreign ownership of the major coal seam gas projects means it is likely most profits will flow offshore.

Coal seam gas projects can crowd-out existing industry and have a negative impact on other land-users, such as farmers and tourism operators.

Coal seam gas mining draws contaminated “produced water” out of the ground that is high in salt and methane, and can contain naturally occurring toxic and radioactive compounds and heavy metals.

While the compound known as BTEX may be banned from fracking fluids it exists naturally in coal seams and still ends up in waste water.

Most of the chemicals used in fracking are highly toxic. The CSIRO has found that coal seam gas is a risk to surface and ground water and will result in aquifer draw-down.

The National Water Commission estimate that the Australian coal seam gas industry will extract around 7,500 gigalitres (GL) of produced water from

ground water systems over the next 25 years, more than 13 times the capacity of Sydney Harbour.

Coal seam gas drilling connects the surface to coal seams beneath, passing through any aquifers present. About 7% of well casings fail and leak within a year of construction, and about 50% fail before being shut down. Plugs of concrete and steel degrade over time.

Research from the US indicates that methane leakage or “fugitive emissions” in the unconventional gas industry will cancel out any greenhouse benefits of gas over coal or other fossil fuels.

Testing by Southern Cross University researchers in the Tara gas field found some greenhouse gas levels over three times higher than nearby districts.

A University of Queensland Global Change Institute study found that gas-fired power generation will not be cheaper than coal and will only result in marginal emission reductions.

It seems likely that gas emissions will only add to carbon pollution as coal mining is also set to expand.

State forests are currently being cleared to allow for wellheads, pipelines, and pumping stations. These total approximately 75,000 hectares lost to forestry and agriculture in Queensland.

The gas compressor stations being built near Gladstone will require much energy to liquefy gas to load onto huge ships which will carry it away to foreign ports through the Great Barrier Reef.

Dredging there has already caused such damage that the World Heritage status of the reef is in danger.

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