

Money down the drain

by Robert Green

Nimbin is being railroaded into accepting a massive debt for new water works – something that can and should have been fixed ten years ago.

The New South Wales Government has deemed that all water supplies must be of a potable standard, and apparently Nimbin Water Supply – especially for Gungas Road residents – does not meet this criterion.

Lismore City Council is proposing to spend upward of \$5.5 million dollars on new works to bring Nimbin Water Supply up to standard. But there is a history to this.

In 1998, Lismore Council decided to install a micro-filter, at a cost of \$1.8 million, and set up the Nimbin Water Supply Committee to assess the system and water quality issues (exacerbated since Standard Sawmills were allowed to log the catchment above the weir in 1979).

The committee, finally set up in 2001, comprised three Lismore councillors, senior council engineering staff, members of the Department of Land and Water Conservation, Department of Public Works and Services, and seven Nimbin residents.

The committee was confronted with a number of issues: muddy water in the piping, health concerns about e-coli bacteria, proposals to dredge the weir, subsidised water tanks for rural users, automatic cut-off switches and the option to connect to Lismore's supply from Rocky Creek Dam.

A site visit was arranged to gain a better understanding of the weir, the intake and surrounding catchment. At the inlet, the turbidity created in the weir reservoir could be seen.

The meanderings of a river are determined not only

by geology, but also by the temperature differentials in the water column. The faster, colder water always flows around the outside of a bend, depositing sediment on the inside.

This faster, colder water was being stopped by the weir wall and deflected into the warmer water on the inside of the bend, disturbing the accumulated sediment deposits and creating turbidity – and it was here on the inside of the bend that the spillway and system intake were located.

Water temperatures were recorded at four points across the weir wall. The results were consistent and conclusive; the temperatures on the outside, eastern bank of the bend were always colder, sometimes by as much as 1.5 degrees C.

If this fast, cold water would be allowed to continue uninterrupted over the weir wall, the reservoir would naturally become self-cleaning. This meant positioning the spillway on the opposite side of the creek, quite a modification and quite a challenge for council and the committee.

In October 2001 a submission was accepted by the council and sent to Sydney for consideration, assessment and approval. The council decided to do a trial using sandbags stacked across the wall. This proved of benefit in demonstrating the rationale, but the sandbags soon disintegrated.

When word finally came back from Sydney, they could offer no opinion on the submission, so the council decided to proceed with temporary modification and erected an aluminium fence across the wall with the new spillway on the eastern bank. The benefits became immediately apparent.

With flows uninterrupted the water became so clean the

bottom of the reservoir could be seen for the first time. The intake grate was facing the wrong way, was made of dissimilar metals and was exhibiting a high degree of galvanic action (rust) and was covered with algae and sediment.

It was cleaned for the first time then in 2002, was cleaned again in 2009, but has not been cleaned since, nor has its position been changed.

The other recommendations made by the committee and passed by council resolutions on 14th October 2003 included covering and aerating the Williams Dam.

This was deemed highly necessary in order to protect the water from the direct sun, which was causing thermal inversion in the water-body resulting in massive ribbon weed growth and a decline in water integrity. The council now re-chlorinates the water before pumping to the header tank in High Street.

Thus, the pristine water from the catchment, one of the finest supplies of water in New South Wales, and a supply that has not ceased, even during the last great drought, is rendered almost undrinkable by the time it gets to a tap in town. All because of a fundamental design flaw and simple modifications that Lismore Council engineers now disregard as insignificant, worse, irrelevant.

The work of the Nimbin Water Supply Committee was never considered in this latest debacle of options and pleas to have the work completed before other major works begin have fallen on deaf ears.

This is a massive waste of money that Nimbin and Lismore ratepayers will be paying off for 50 years (council estimates), and it is another example of engineering overkill we have come to expect from Lismore City Council.

The council needs to implement the work stipulated by the previous committee charged with improving the water quality, and passed by council resolutions in 2003, before spending another cent.

C'mon, train...

by Karin Kolbe, president of TOOT

The recently Casino-Murwillumbah transport study fails to meet transport needs now or into the future.

TOOT (Trains On Our Tracks) is calling on the elected members of the government to explain.

Despite promising rail for years, the report shows the NSW government isn't interested in transport. This report is a whitewash. By focusing on heavy rail and ignoring the tourists, the government gets the answer it wants.

The report ignored the 2007 Southern Cross University patronage study which found that 2875 people would use a light rail service every day.

Why is the Lismore-Bangalow road excluded from this study? This major road has clearly been omitted from the study as the answers won't suit the government's purpose.

It has long been argued that a commuter rail would replace the existing unpopular Countrylink

buses, leading to savings – yet this saving is never mentioned.

If you're unhappy about the government walking away from its promises, contact your elected representative:

Don Page 6686-7522,
ballina@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Thomas George 6621-3624,
lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Geoff Provest (07) 5523-4816,
tweed@parliament.nsw.gov.au

A postcard (below) distributed in the March 2007 election shows the T-shirt message: "The Nationals. Yes you can have your trains back". Standing on Murwillumbah station are (from left) Don Page, Thomas George, Steve Cansdell, Andrew Stoner, Geoff Provest and Jenny Gardiner.

It's now 2013 – and we're still waiting....



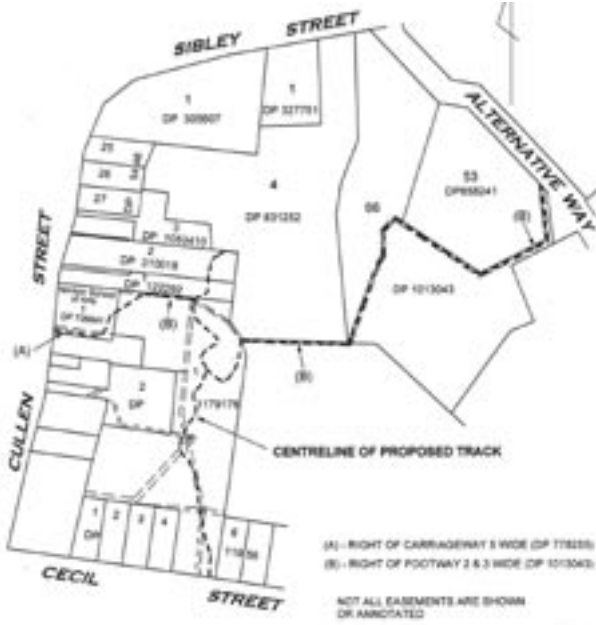
Walking the walk – without funds

by Lois Kelly

Regional Development funding for the Rainbow Road walking track has been denied, but planning and costing continues and a range of commercial opportunities that could help fund the project are being explored.

This work won't be wasted – when funding comes, the project will be ready.

The Nimbin Headers soccer club is supportive of Rainbow Road passing along the side of its grounds. Organisers are currently working with club members to ensure that plans not only provide a fantastic walk, but also add value to the soccer club grounds.



There is an existing right of way which is on land owned by the Headers – between the grounds and the Caravan Park. This established passage continues through the back way to the Rainbow Power Company.

A right of way (ROW) is a right of passage over land that becomes part of the title of the land, protecting the walk for the community. A solicitor has prepared a draft Deed of Agreement that has been sent to relevant landowners for their comment.

It is vital to the longevity

of the project that rights of way are established before the walk is built. "Gentlemen's agreements" have failed in the past.

Nick, a landscape architect, has prepared options for the Headers. Original concepts have been changed to ensure that the wishes of the Headers are honoured and that there is plenty of space for young players to kick balls around, as well as space for spectators.

There are plans for signage and an installation in this area – which could be a sports-themed sculpture or a special shelter..

Organisers have been using

the NSW Police's *Safer by Design* manual to ensure community safety; many thanks to Constable Ryan for taking time to walk the route and give feedback – and strong support – for Rainbow Road.

Feedback is awaited from this year's MardiGrass event as to how the area behind Cullen Street has worked for this special festival. This area will be a well-used community area and a major focus of Rainbow Road.

Feedback from a recent tourist survey has been extremely positive. Work will continue to achieve this facility for Nimbin.

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Cullen Street gets a brush up



by Peter Wise

Local and visiting artists have completed a major repaint of the murals central to Nimbin's distinctive image and strong community identity, in time for this month's Aquarius Festival celebrations.

Benny Zable has recreated his famous Over The Rainbow mural above the Rainbow Café, assisted by a team of volunteers and with the support of the Tuntabla Falls community.

Vernon Treweeke, who conceived and painted Nimbin's murals before and during the 1973 festival has created a new work, Checkmate, which is now installed above the Nimbin Pizza and Trattoria.

Amanda Williamson's work, Endangered Species, now graces the Nimbin Newsagency while Elspeth Jones is working on a new mural that will be displayed at the Community Centre.

These, together with Jimmy Willing's works unveiled on the Nimbin Hotel in 2012, have really smartened up the village.

The Nimbin Murals Restoration Project is a community initiative, in partnership with the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation, Nimbin Chamber of Commerce, Rainbow Power



Co, Nimbin businesses and the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre assisted with heritage grant funding from Lismore City Council.

Our thanks to all the people who made this project possible; the artists, Lismore Mayor Jenny Dowell, Lismore City Council, businesses and donations from the community.

Thanks also to murals committee members: Benny Zable, Kathy Stavrou, Alfredo Bonanno, Eugenie Stephans and Peter Hughes. A special thanks to Natalie Meyer and Therese Biscoe for project

Muralists Vernon Treweeke and Benny Zable, with Peter Wise and Woodstock Museum's Nathan Koenig

assistance, Diana Roberts for providing art studio space, Charlie Cohen for murals installation and Williams Hardware for the specialised materials and paint.

Happy 40th Aquarius celebrations, Nimbin!

Court victory for CSG protesters

by Dominic Feain, courtesy Echonetdaily

Coal seam gas (CSG) activists (*some pictured*) celebrated outside Grafton Local Court as charges against three protesters arrested during the Glenugie CSG blockade in January were thrown out of court.

Ingo Medek of Blue Knob, Ian Gaillard of Keerong and Benny Zable of Nimbin were acquitted of all charges, casting serious doubt on the viability of similar charges pending against another 15 protestors.

They were all arrested on 7th January as about 40 police, including members of the Tactical Response Group, broke the 50-day blockade to a Metgasco CSG site at Glenugie, south of Grafton, allowing a drilling rig and other equipment access.

Magistrate David Heilpern first found Mr Medek not guilty of hindering police, as police admitted they did not properly identify themselves or give adequate warning prior to the arrest. He also found Mr Medek not guilty of obstructing a driver, as there were no trucks in sight at the time of arrest.

He then dismissed the charges against Mr Gaillard and Mr Zable for the same reasons.

Speaking as the regional co-ordinator of Lock the Gate Northern Rivers, Mr Gaillard said the decision validated complaints by protesters at the blockade who described police action as excessive.

"The riot squad from Sydney were totally heavy handed," Mr Gaillard said. "It was very traumatic for many, especially elderly people who were pushed around, dumped on the ground and rough-handed by police."

"It was totally inappropriate the way police were used that day. It showed people that you can't always trust your government and your



police force to do the right thing," he said. Defence solicitor Steve Bolt said, "Speaking as a lawyer, I hope the riot squad gets the message that there are some rules they have to follow."

"Beyond that, politicians need to understand that if they use the riot squad to move people along in a protest situation, that's not the end of the story; if the end result is cases getting thrown out of court," he said.

The question remains as to who ordered the riot squad from Sydney to come up to help a mining company proceed against the wishes of a whole community.

• More on CSG, Page 11
• More on dodgy police procedures, Page 18

May is Aquarius month

To celebrate the 40-year anniversary of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival this month, a very full calendar of events has been organised.

Exhibitions

Lismore Regional Gallery will be showing its exhibition of the history of owner-built houses all month.

An 18-panel display from the Aquarian Archive, *Nimbinovations* will be on show at SCU Library from 13th to 20th May, and then move to the windows of Nimbin's shops for the rest of the month.

The photo-documentary *Aquarius – Living the Dream* will be displayed at the Bush Theatre on 19th May, and then move to Nimbin's Presbyterian church until 26th May.

Film

The *Woodstock Downunder* documentary, a work-in-progress in six parts, will be presented by the filmmakers,

Nathan Koenig and Shelli Lipton at the Bush Theatre on Tuesdays and Fridays through the month.

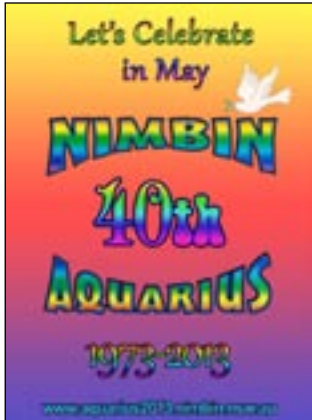
It will also be screened as part of the *Aquarius in Lovemore* events at the Star Court Theatre, Lismore from 9th to 12th May.

Conference

Southern Cross Uni will host *Aquarius and Beyond* at Nimbin Town Hall over two days, 23rd and 24th May.

Festivities

The Nimbin Aquarius Foundation is hosting the main event, a weekend for festival activities including a *Circus Arts and Craft Fair* in the Community Centre grounds on 18th May, with



a Folk Concert that night in the Town Hall, followed on the 19th by *Imagine*, an Aquarian Arts Happening at the Bush Theatre.

The Aquarius Masquerade Ball will be held on 25th May.

Check the calendar on Page 12, or find it online at: www.aquarius2013.nimbin.nsw.au and share the experience.

Buy local!

Nimbin Farmers Market started 1st May, with local growers and producers – including several from the Blue Knob Farmers Market – bringing their goods to town.

The Nimbin Farmers Market is held every Wednesday in the parking area between the Green Bank and the Nimbin Post Office.

The market runs from 3pm to 6pm, rain or shine. Look for loads of locally produced goods, including honey, sauerkraut, tofu, cheese, pesto, sourdough bread, veggies and sprouts.

Any stall inquiries please contact Jason on 6689-1512.



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Bring the farm inside

Four bales of straw is all we needed to transform half of our preschooler room into an 'inside farm'. The children sit on the straw for story time or to drive a tractor; they build houses for the animals with the blocks and tools; we

learn about machinery that is needed on a farm, and what safety issues come with living on a property (dam, animals, fences...).

We had a very tame chicken and a rabbit here. They stayed all day in our farm corner and the children fed, cleaned and played with them. We can see how our children connect to their surroundings and how valuable their learning through pretend play is.

We love to have picnics outside at this time of year, and we listen to the birds above our yard. Some are big and black and some are cheeky, rainbow colours and they "rain" on us, which means lots of good luck for us!

The Nimbin Early Learning Centre is open every day from 8am to 5pm and this is a great place for your little one to learn through play at a very affordable \$15 per day. Please phone us on 6689-0142 for more information.

Tony's musical gift

by Kylie Kingston

Recognising that dance and movement are powerful vehicles for children's expression of self, Nimbin pianist Tony Gibson has generously donated his precious piano to the Nimbin Community Preschool.

Teacher Diane Wilder has a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education, specialising in children's dance. The skill she brings to the preschool in regards to movement, along with educators Barbara Mills, Gordon Ellard and Amala

Boumansis, is seen daily.

We have recently restructured our teachers' roles and I now also fill a position of close support to the dedicated parent committee.

I can also announce that we have received a grant from the NSW Government's Community Building Partnerships to install eight solar panels on our roof.

This is the beginning of the creation of our sustainable preschool program, and we are happy to be able to support our local Rainbow Power Company to install these.



Tony Gibson and an excited Kylie levelling the new piano

Additional Government funding has meant we can offer four- and five-year-olds a lower fee rate; this makes the preschool more accessible for everyone.

We are excited about the potential for our preschool for 2013. Positions are filling fast, so please phone us on 6689-1203 to arrange a visit to enrol your child.

Playhouse highlights sustainability

by Cawongla Playhouse educators

Sustainability is a focus at Cawongla Playhouse this year – and we're looking at it both practically and creatively. All the usual good things – veggie garden, compost, worm farm, recycled craft materials and encouraging packaging-free lunchboxes – are in place. To this we've added a few left-of-centre concepts – like a giant recycled spider's web and bang-groovy musical instruments.

Our 2mx2m spider web appeared at preschool one day – woven with recycled yarn and much good intent – much like a real spider's web. A cardboard spider soon took up residence – as did treasures found in our autumn playground. The whole thing has been captured on time-lapse film, to share with our families.

Another exciting addition to our preschool life is the 'recycajon' (re-cy-ca-hon), our very own, homemade drums. The 'recy' part of the name refers to the recycled materials used to create them – paint buckets, spoons, old turntable rubber mats and a few screws and bolts. The 'cajon' bit is inspired by the South American/Spanish instrument, the cajon (Spanish for 'carton'). It originated in Peru via African slaves who made these drums from old packing crates.

The recycajon is played by striking its various parts with drumsticks. It possesses the three main sounds of a traditional rock/jazz drum kit – kick drum ("boom"), snare ("crack") and hi hat ("tss, tss"). Children love it as it involves striking things with a stick! This movement element is what children



Harlow, Georgia and Elijah find the beat on recycajon drums.

first associate with music participation. It also leads us to explore what else we can make, re-use and recycle into musical instruments, so growing our preschool sound garden and the children's learning. How exciting!

If you'd like to join us, Cawongla Playhouse (ph 6633-7167) is open Mon-Thurs 9am-3pm. Playgroupers welcome.

In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

www.nnic.org.au

Complementary Health Practitioners' Register

To get onto the register, you need to download the application form from the website, and email or bring it back to us once it is completed, or else grab a hard copy one at NNIC, the Apothecary, Herbal Highs or the Green Bank and drop it back to us. www.nnic.org.au

NNIC website – 'Wot's On' Events Calendar

The idea is to get as many local events on there as possible, so the whole community can use the Events Calendar on our website to avoid clashes when planning your own events, and so we can all look up every local event all in one place. So if you have an upcoming local event or know of one that is not on our calendar already, email it to us at: admin@nnic.org.au

7 Sibley St Updates

Funds are still trickling in and we need to work harder to catch up with the Lismore Regional Gallery, which so far has raised over \$123,000 for the quadrangle. If Lismore can do it, so can we. Did you pledge funds last year but never managed to get them to us? Did you maybe consider a weekly or monthly direct debit from your account? If so... NOW is the time to ACT on those promises. And to spread the word far and wide and try and get your friends and rellos to chuck in some if they can. Every little bit helps. C'mon Nimbin.... WE CAN DO THIS!! See www.seveonsibley.com for updates.

May Events

• Aquarius 40th Anniversary Folk Concert

18th May at the Town Hall – all proceeds to 7 Sibley Street. Over 20 great acts, including Andrea Soler and James Ross, Diana Anaid, Christine Strelan and heaps more. With MCs David Hallett and S Sorrenson. An event not to be missed. Doors open at 7pm. Dinner available. Show starts 7.45pm. Many thanks to David and the School of Arts for organising this event.

• Aquarius and Beyond

Two days of info and

discussions on the Aquarius vision then and now and into the future. Hosted by Southern Cross Uni. At the Nimbin Town Hall all day on 23rd and 24th May.

National Broadband Network

Community info/consultation at the Town Hall on 29th May 5pm-8pm. Come along to find out more about the NBN rollout to Nimbin.

June Events

16th June 11am – 7 Sibley Street Super Sunday Social Spectacular (get it?...7 S's!!) – a fun day for all the family with meat and vego BBQs, lots of fun games, activities and prizes. Get this date into your diaries. All proceeds to 7 Sibley Street.

Poor Izzi

Our NNIC cat had an accident of some kind and seriously injured her tail. As a result she had to have surgery to remove most of her tail and she is now well on the way to recovery, although with a much shorter tail of course. Thanks heaps to everyone who chipped in towards her vet bills. The bill was \$370 and we got about \$200 in donations, so that helped Nat a lot (Nat paid the bill). If anyone happens to know how she got the injury, please contact us (so we can make sure it does not happen again!).



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

It 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.

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Nimbin remembers the fallen

by Paul LeBars

This year's ANZAC Day parade and commemoration ceremony in Nimbin was a well-attended, reflective and respectful event.

It was good to see some new veterans and families joining in the march.

Thanks to Nimbin Central and Coffee Camp schools for their participation in the march, to the Nimbin RFS flag bearers, Pastor Jim Gallagher for his ongoing support for our commemorations, and all those who assisted.

This year we raised just over \$600 (about double the usual) selling the ANZAC badges. Thanks to Sally, Wayne, the Nimbin Hotel and the Nimbin Bowling Club bar staff.

I am putting the idea



out for a Dawn Service for next year and would like your feedback by email to: paullebars@gmail.com or on Nimbin Hook-Ups.

Thanks everyone for your

Paul LeBars leads the minute's silence at the war memorial

support and let's make next year's Anzac Day a big one. "Lest We Forget"

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LISMORE CITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Public notices, updates and information for the Nimbin community

Nimbin Physical Activity Centre tender process

Tenders for the management of the Nimbin Physical Activity Centre will open on Monday, May 13. For information packages phone Community Services Coordinator Annie McWilliam on 1300 87 83 87 or email Annie.McWilliam@lismore.nsw.gov.au.

Think outside the square – pledge to Lismore Quadrangle

The launch of *Not Quite Square: The story of Northern Rivers Architecture* at the Lismore Regional Gallery in late April was a huge success, with a full house to celebrate the owner/builder culture that emerged in the region after the 1973 Aquarius Festival in Nimbin.

The day also included the launch of a major six-week community campaign called Pledge Now for Lismore Quadrangle that could finally give Lismore a gallery it can be proud of. The concept is to attract government funding to relocate the gallery to the 'Lismore Quadrangle' (the old Lismore High School site) where it would find a natural home alongside the Conservatorium and Lismore Library. The proposal also includes the development of a 'town square' with grassed areas in the centre of the city.

In order to make a strong application for funding, Lismore City Council needs to show there is community support for the concept. In the first four days, the Pledge Now for Lismore Quadrangle campaign raised more than \$63,000 and Council would love to see that number grow. People can give as much or as little as they like – the idea is to show that this is something the region supports.

Council is looking to apply for around \$4 million from Regional Development Australia with Council's contribution largely in-kind, providing the land and C Block at the old Lismore High School site for refurbishment.

The Northern Rivers' peak arts organisation, Arts Northern Rivers, is also exploring the idea of relocating to Lismore and becoming part of this exciting venture. It is estimated a new gallery could bring an extra 40,000 visitors to Lismore each year and that would have flow-on effects for the whole region.

Any pledges made through the Pledge Now for Lismore Quadrangle campaign will only be called upon if Council is successful in gaining external funding. All donations are tax deductible. To add your voice to the groundswell of support, visit www.lismoregallery.org.

Nimbin roadworks scheduled for May

The reconstruction of Nimbin Road is scheduled to commence in late May. The works adjacent to High Street (beginning near the 50 speed sign as you enter the village) have been delayed due to an unusually high works schedule caused by floods and unrelenting wet weather. Council apologises for this delay.

Works will include the reconstruction of the road pavement and the inclusion of a dedicated footpath which will extend the existing footpath to High Street.

Additionally, the formalisation of the bus pick up/drop off area adjacent to High Street has also been included within the scope of works. These works are expected to take six to eight weeks to complete, weather permitting.

Mobile Library Thursday visits

The Mobile Library visits Nimbin each Thursday, offering a complete library service including talking books, DVDs, CD, access to PCs with internet and printing facilities, online catalogue and an out of hours drop off chute.

The Mobile Library has been servicing Nimbin weekly for over 30 years. It is open outside the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre each Thursday from 10.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm.



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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.

Praise for court

Congratulations to the Land and Environment Court (SMH 16/4/13), which pursued justice in the case of Bulga NSW (pop. 300). This was in regard to an open-cut coal mine that the State Government had endorsed to allow this mine next to the town, even though this land was an offset trade off (a barrier between the township and the mines) a decade ago.

The Land and Environment Court ruled to overturn Government's approval for the project much to the relief of most of the residents. This was achieved by Bulga Progress Association with help from The Environmental Defenders Office of NSW (is this one of the reasons why funding for the EDO was cut?).

There was much rhetoric in the Coal & Allied (a subsidiary of Rio Tinto) claim that the communities were significantly obstructing investment and job creation in NSW. Furthermore they inferred the security of 1300 jobs at the existing mine and 150 jobs at the proposed new mine would now be at risk (is this a threat?).

This mine was open cut, not CSG, and was approved in February last year by the NSW Planning Commission, and the NSW Environmental Protection Authority. Is now the time for the communities of NSW to make frontal opposition to the Government, to cut expenditure with Coal and CSG for the benefit of other renewable energy resources.

Was this mine extension another result of politicians who dumped their electorates for the Mining Industry and took with them associated public servants (as referred to by Alan Jones) for the benefit of the Mining Industry?

Alex Dugul,
Bungawalbyn

Doubtful Creek solidarity

We are residents of Ettrick, living approximately five kilometres from the CSG test drilling site at Doubtful Creek. We would like to commend the people who participated in the blockade at Doubtful creek, firstly on the clean and tidy manner in which they left the entrance to the Eden Creek Forest.

Now that the threat of this dangerous industry has passed for the time being, we would like to thank the following people. The Githabul people, folks who came from town and other districts and states, even those who are at present suffering from CSG mining in Sth Qld. They were supported by local families, farmers, retirees, etc who ensured they had fresh water, garbage disposal, and clean facilities.

Support was also forthcoming from professional legal and medical people and many of those who could not attend,

by lobbying governments on our behalf, sending letters and emails, voicing our concerns.

Then there were those who set up and ran the kitchen, supported at times by local restaurants that sent out food. In addition, many shopkeepers displayed posters to raise awareness of our fears.

All who attended adhered to the rules of Peaceful Direct Action, and when emotions were high, people supported each other. All up, a sterling effort by all. We are indeed proud of the solidarity shown by this growing movement and know that this spirit of co-operation will stand us in good stead for whatever challenges we are presented with in the future.

Elspeth Lake, Carol Fickling, Robyn Healey, Wayne and Ruth Dixon, Ettrick

Gullible marries Greedy

The self-appointed, wise King of mythical 'Richland Valley' has just conducted a survey of his minions to estimate attendance at the public wedding of his daughter to the very promising manager of Pig Aviation Unlimited, who has been courting her for 10 years.

The carefully-worded survey question was: "Would you attend the wedding of Princess Gullible to Sir Greedy if you knew you would receive a diamond from Sir Greedy's treasure trove and a gold wishing-urn, complete with genie and a flying pig, from the King's stables?"

The King and Sir Greedy were delighted with the result that 70% of residents said 'yes'. That would mean 25,000 guests.

The King has now requested Sir Greedy deliver the required number of diamonds and has directed his top officials to source the wishing urns. A massive breeding program is planned for the Royal Stables and the King has promised a treasure chest of jewels to the first local farmer to supply a flying pig from which to breed sufficient airborne grunterns.

A leak from the King's court indicates that the wedding has already secretly taken place behind the heavy

doors of the Royal Cathedral and that Greedy now claims he can't find his family jewels. Minions are being asked to display restraint and patience as the public ceremony may take some time to prepare. A tentative date has been set for the first Sunday of Never.

The Court Jester,
Eric van Beurden,
Tatham

History repeats

At the present time in Australia, we are seeing history repeat itself. There is another invasion of this land, this time by miners who tell us it is for our own good as they rape and pillage our land.

In 1788 white civilisation came, and the destruction of a society began. Then, the invaders carried guns and diseases and poisons. Now the invaders are backed by police with guns, tasers, and capicum sprays while they, the miners, spread poisons to our water, soil, and air, just as the early settlers poisoned waterholes and flour.

The noxious by-products of mining give us sickness, and diseases, that can kill us. Remember asbestos? Now we are facing Antimony, Lead, Mercury, Cyanide, and a host of other deadly agents.

In 1788 no heed was given to the welfare of the indigenous population, and none is given to us now. We are being driven from our farms at an ever-increasing rate, and the beauty of our landscapes is being destroyed and reduced to wasteland.

In 1788 the destruction of the food supply of indigenous people began. Their land was taken from them by force. The same is happening now. We are being forced from our farms. We are given promises by politicians and miners that will not and cannot be kept, just as then.

Now, as then, the Government is bringing this to our backyards with the help of an ill informed, uneducated people with the ostrich syndrome, intellectual pygmies.

At least all Original Australians tried to withstand the invasion. We stand by as our beautiful soil and water is being turned to a poisonous moonscape.

Where is our food going to come from?

In Memory of Michael Vaughan

Michael passed away on 3rd April 2013 after a long battle with cancer.

Michael moved to Blue Knob six years ago and quickly involved himself in the local community. He was associated with Blue Star Community, Blue Knob Gallery, Blue Knob Rural Fire Service, Hetty's Choir, barman at Nimbin Bowling Club, Nimbin Garden Club, Landcare and bush regeneration projects, Jungle Patrol and Polite.

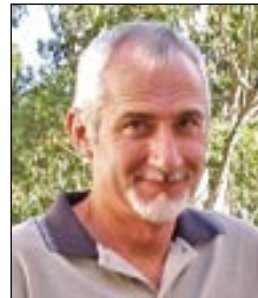
Michael's professional life was mainly nursing elderly and disabled people, theatre nurse and six years with Royal Australian Air Force.

Michael was a very creative, caring, compassionate and generous man who was loved by most who met him.

om mani padme hum

Michael was the lotus bud that emerged from the muddy water to blossom into the glorious white flower.

Now at Rest



In Memoriam

Dennis John Whittaker (Smokin' Den), sadly left us on 2nd May 2010.

*A beautiful memory, dearer than gold,
Of a father whose worth can never be told,
There's a place in my heart no one can fill,
I miss you, Dad, and always will.*

We miss you big fella, fly high!

Love from his children Selena, Karl, Brad, family and friends.



We have an ever-increasing population. Are we to be herded onto missions and fed by government handouts?

Wake up Australians. It is almost too late.

Don Durrant
Afterlee

Siam Reap response

Since writing about my sojourn in Cambodia (Postcards from Cambodia, NGT April 13) I have been taken to task, both in your letters page and on the streets of our fair village, regarding my perceptions of Siam Reap. Let me say to anybody who felt that I was denigrating the place they love... sorry, sorry, sorry.

However, in explanation, I must point out that I was only in Siam Reap for a grand total of 36 hours, 15 of which were spent either sleeping or exploring the Wats. This basically left a couple of afternoons to explore the town.

My accommodation, booked for me by a pushy tuk-tuk driver in Phnom Penh ("I have a brother in Siam Reap... I fix"), was a

dark and mouldy room with the window opening into the establishment's laundry.

My afternoons were spent hunting down some decent local cuisine (second rate compared to Phnom Penh street food – the pork dumpling didn't melt in my mouth and the Amok tasted like it came from a can); and my evenings spent in an Aussie rooftop bar smoking weed and watching the pimps. Obviously, a very narrow perception of the town.

So once again, my heartfelt apologies to all who felt miffed.

Bob Tissott
Nimbin

Mackay murder case

By some freaky coincidence the email on the piece in the Griffith Area News, written by journalist John Higgins on the Mackay case, arrived while I was about halfway through Dr John Jiggins' book *The killer cop and the murder of Donald Mackay*, an un-put-downable read!

Dr Jiggins' book presents a very convincing argument

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for a re-opening of the Donald Mackay murder case. And now he's found a new witness. "My new witness is scared of the police and scared for his life if he goes public," he's quoted as saying in the *Area News*, 8th April. And so he should be!

What assurances can the government give a person in such a situation? It's clear that there's been a conspiracy to prevent the truth of this case being known, a conspiracy that does not stop at murder, involving people at the highest levels.

The so-called 'war on drugs' is also a part of this conspiracy. Who benefits from this war? Only the dirty, as Dr Jiggins shows. Plus, by linking bent cops and criminal drug cartels with shady spy organisations like the CIA and their ties with political parties in Australia, Dr Jiggins demonstrates that there are aspects of this story suggesting a perversion of the democratic process, leading to the overthrow of the popularly elected Whitlam government.

The Mackay family, the people of Griffith and, indeed, the people of Australia have a right to know the truth about this case. It's not just about 'the Calabrian Mafia and its influence in Griffith, as journalist John Higgins suggests. It's both a despicable murder that requires that justice be done; and a tale about crims who compromised the sovereignty of Australia.

Harsha Prabhu
 Byron Bay

Federal elections loom

Opinion polls consistently show that at the next Federal election, most Australians do not want a Labor government with Gillard as PM; nor do we want a Liberal/National

government with Abbott as PM. This is hardly surprising when we remember that Ms. Gillard portrayed herself as a prime minister who is by turns "real" or "fake" and opposition leader Mr. Abbott told us that we cannot believe anything he says unless it is "in writing and signed by his own hand"! When democratic leaders are self-described liars why would we vote for them or the parties they lead and thus encourage and reward their treachery?

Here in Richmond, voters can show that we will no longer accept the old parties' ongoing betrayal of us, the nation and all that we value. Labor's Justine Elliot has done very little while in government; a vote for her is a vote for a real or fake PM and therefore a real or fake party. If elected, the National's young Matthew Fraser will be nothing more than another backbench yes-man to a duplicitous PM and his party of dog-eat-dog economic rationalists.

Only the Greens' Dawn Walker can fearlessly represent our best interests without having to appease the faceless union bosses of Labor or the ruthless mining and corporate bosses of the Lib-Nats. Remember that only the Greens stood side by side with the people of Richmond to oppose CSG mining from the moment the invasion of our district started. Just as importantly, the Greens' leader Christine Milne possesses more honesty and integrity than Gillard or Abbott could even dream of.

Should we in Richmond choose to elect just another Labor or National politician come September then we will all be losers – as the cliché says, a sure sign of madness is to keep doing the same thing again and again while

expecting a different outcome. There is nothing to lose and at the very least hope for a decent future to gain by sending Dawn Walker to Canberra to represent us.

Or are we actually barking mad after all?

Bruce McQueen,
 Mt. Burrell

Real democracy

There's an old adage that in a democracy you get the political leaders you deserve; if this is so then by recent standards we Australians are a corrupt and dishonest species. However my experience of Australians is that we are, for the most part, decent people. So, I ask myself, is the old adage untrue or is there a different underlying reason for our inept and corrupt political leadership.

The answer turns out to be that the adage still holds true but it's our political system that is at fault; or more to the point, it is not a democratic system at all.

The two party preferred voting system we labour under bears some semblance to democracy but only that; a semblance, we are not truly a democracy.

If I should decide to cast my vote for a minor party or independent representative then my ballot will, by preference, trickle down to one of the two major political enterprises; Liberal or Labor, neither of which I have actually voted for and neither of which are beholden to the people. Let me give you a practical example, Kevin Rudd.

Like him or loathe him the Australian people voted for him to lead our country, and for a while he did. Until he crossed the line. When Rudd proposed a mining tax so the mining concerns would pay a fairer share of our resources back to the people who owned them, that's us, this was all too much and within two weeks Rudd was no more, to be replaced by a compliant leader who would toe the company line and the proposed miner's tax was reduced from 40% to zero.

I would like to dwell on this point for a moment longer as it highlights our plight quite clearly.

In a real democracy, Norway, the government insists that the miners of

their North Sea gas oil fields return 83% of all revenue to the people of Norway. The remaining 17% are the profits of the miners. The Norwegian people are content to have no mining magnates but a fair share of their common wealth distributed amongst them.

As an Australian citizen and landowner, I have no right to the assets beneath my feet; these belong to Gina Reinhart, Twiggy Forrest and Clive Palmer or one of their minions or overseas investors.

Or the gas we suck from our undersea reserves and sell to China at 2 cents a litre; should we decide to keep that gas and run our transport and industry needs with it we would be a nation free from debt and blessed with little pollution. But I digress, it's our voting system from which our problems stem, Reinhart, Palmer and Forrest are merely the festering symptoms.

Our cousins in New Zealand are experimenting with a different system of voting; it's called proportional representation and it means that a political party wields as much power as it receives votes; a little confusing and difficult to manage but democratically fair; it means for better or for worse the political leaders must work for the people who voted them into power. I believe this is called democracy.

In the past I have badgered and encouraged people to vote, as it is our sacred right and the only means of control we have over our country's future but now my mind has changed and I would suggest a different tactic. Now I would suggest that we do not vote.

Under today's status quo your vote, no matter whom it's for, will devolve either to Gillard or Abbot, and unless you are in the top one percent of the economic pile neither will represent you.

So decline to vote. Instead, by your refusal to participate in the corrupt process, demand a referendum to decide on a real democratic process instead of the bastardised excuse for democracy we now live with. If enough of us refuse to participate then the system must change. As it stands we have nothing to lose and a real democracy to gain.

Gerald Taylor
 Larnook

Notices

For Sale

- Metters fuel stove 'Beacon Light', green. Working order. Phone 6684-9147.
- Brass double bed, pink porcelain on black frame, \$150. Phone 6684-9147.

Business For Sale

Nimbin Ice Cream is for sale. Great little business, work from home. Serious enquiries only please. Call for appointment to view: 0448-334-327.

Embroiderers' Guild

Meets 9.30am-2.30pm every 1st and 3rd Wednesday and every 3rd Saturday of each month in the function room at the Red Dove centre, Keen Street, Lismore. Embroiderers of all styles and ability levels are welcome. Phone 6663-5308.

Beginners Tai Chi

Yang style (long form), starting early-mid May at Nimbin community centre. Further details and to register interest, please contact Melissa 0431-958-443.

Open Learning

The Nimbin Open Learning Centre will begin Term 2 on Wednesday 8th May. This term we're offering Carole's Art of Drawing, Cat's Sewing Club, Megan's Ukulele group and Christine's Creative Writing Class. There are two new classes, Mandarin with Xi Xia and Herbs for Health with naturopath Fiona.

Enrolments are from 10am to 3pm on Wednesday 1st May and Thursday 2nd May. If classes are already established, late enrolments are possible, up to the first week. Call 6689-1477 for enquiries or enrolments.

Annual General Meeting

The Nimbin Community School Co-op Ltd will be holding its AGM on Tuesday 21st May at 6pm in the Comskool room at Nimbin Community Centre.

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