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Ban coal seam gas operations

by Jeremy Buckingham MLC,
NSW Greens Agriculture Spokesperson

While the Greens welcome the recent Labor announcement that they intend to ban unconventional gas in specific North Coast council areas, it is disappointing that it seems they are making their coal seam gas policy based on cynical electoral politics rather than on basic principles of protecting land, water and communities everywhere in NSW.

I hope this shift in policy is more than a mere electoral ploy, but I question whether Labor can be trusted to actually implement this ban once the election is over.

It was the Labor party that originally unleashed coal seam gas across a third of NSW by issuing 39 exploration licences when they were last in office. It is also alarming that several prominent former Labor ministers have joined the gas industry. Former federal resources minister, Martin Ferguson is now chair of the APPEA, the gas industries peak lobby group, while former climate change minister Greg Combet and trade minister Craig Emerson, are now lobbyists for AGL.

If the Labor Party were serious about preventing the spread of toxic gasfields, then they would proudly endorse the Greens policy of opposition to unconventional gas everywhere and support a rapid transition to clean, renewable energy.

Why should communities in Narrabri, Camden and Gloucester be subject to



Jeremy Buckingham speaking at Bentley

the health, environmental and social impacts of unconventional gas, but the Northern Rivers be protected?

More and more evidence of the dangers of this industry are emerging around the world. A recent report from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection documents a frightening 243 cases of water well contamination due to drilling and fracking for unconventional gas. The reports show multiple instances of water wells contaminated by gas drilling, with chemicals and heavy metals such as chlorides, aluminium, arsenic, barium and strontium at levels which are "dangerous to human health". There are also numerous examples of methane levels in water supplies being so high that the authorities warned

residents that "there is a physical danger of explosion due to the migration of natural gas into water wells or through soils into dwellings".

The Labor party are at least partly acknowledging that coexistence between this toxic industry and agriculture is a high risk strategy but the Nationals are eager to push ahead with it across the state. The Coalition government has introduced policy after policy which favours their big coal and gas mates over regional communities.

The Strategic Regional Land Use Policy has allowed mining on our best agricultural land with the Chinese government's Shenhua Watermark coal mine on the verge of approval in the heart of the Liverpool Plains.

The 'Gateway process' is a hole in the fence rather than a gateway, so mines are progressing despite failing the majority of assessment criteria.

The Aquifer Interference regulation is a toothless policy that acts as a 'guide' to decision makers and is ignored by miners.

Critical Industry Clusters were created to protect centres of agriculture from mining, but the government has ignored rice, citrus, cotton, sugar and dairy farmers who have all indicated they want this limited protection.

The current government and opposition may think they can fool rural and regional people with spin and half-baked policies, but the Greens will continue to hold the Nationals, Liberals and Labor to account because we believe that farms and communities should come before coal and gas.

In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre news

www.nnic.org.au



Sibley Street fundraising

About \$2000 was raised by the Angels and we have just under \$9000 to go (we just paid the annual rates). If you won an Angel but have yet to pay for them, please see Cat at NNIC ASAP, or call us for the bank account details.

Trivia Night: Friday 17th October

The next fundraiser event is the Trivia Night – back by popular demand. The last one was heaps of fun...so book in now at NNIC – you can book a whole table for your team, or just book in yourself. And yes, there will be curry. Phone 6689-1692 for bookings.

Raffle

Look out for the current Sibley Street raffle: 1st Prize = another gorgeous quilt handmade by Noreen McLean, 2nd and 3rd prizes = one year's subscriptions to Renew or Sanctuary magazines.

Nimbin Annual Country Show Best Shop Display

Winner: St Vinnies, Second: Nimbin Optical, Third: The Green Bank. We found it hard to choose between them as they were all wonderful. Thanks to all the shops that participated and helped to make the show another success this year. Fantastic effort to everyone involved in the Show and Sustainability Alley and to everyone who entered their crafts and produce into the pavilion this year which looked amazing and was full of flowers.

Vacation Care (Nimbin Holiday Club)

Thanks a million to Nimbin Community School for letting us use their room now that the Youth Club has closed down.

Fire Appeal and Restore the Heart

Great job by Matt and the crew for

pulling together a fabulous day at Peace Park on Saturday 27th September.

To donate to the Fire Appeal, see our website for the account details

Say Nup to the Cup

For those people concerned about the well-being of racehorses, ALEP (Animal Law and Education Project) is hosting an alternative Cup event at the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre's Training Room, Carrington St Lismore on Tuesday 4th November from 3pm. Prizes for the silliest hat, fun and games, hors d'oeuvres and champagne. Donations to the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses. RSVPs to: nrclc@clc.net.au

Nimbin Women's Dinner Wed 26th November

Contact Teena at NNIC if you can help out with this year's Women's Dinner. All the Dinner details will be in the November edition of NGT.

Sustainable House Day 13th September at Bangalow A+I Hall

Over 1000 people came through to hear the speakers, see the competition entries and visit the Trade Expo. A wildly successful day and a lot of interest in sustainable building. To see the full list of competition entrants, links to their websites and the winners (our very own Guy Stewart took out the People's Choice Award), check out our website: www.sevenonsibley.com

Finalists in the Regional Community Awards

We entered NNIC and Nimbin into the "Super Community – population under 15,000" category and we are one of the three finalists. Cross your fingers and

toes Nimbinites!

Community Drug Action Team

Nimbin CDAT is re-forming and the first meeting will be in the first week of October. Stay tuned for updates.

Annual General Meeting

NNIC AGM will be held on Wednesday 5th November at 5.30pm at NNIC.

Join NNIC

Become a member and help support NNIC and our activities. It is important that we have a strong membership base to reflect and inform our involvement in the community. Your membership means a lot to us. Only \$5.50, renewable in July each year.

Are you struggling with unpaid fines?

You may be eligible to apply for a Work Development Order which enables you to pay your fines down by doing volunteer work at NNIC. Make an appointment with one of our Community Workers to find out if you are eligible.

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC) is a local charity and community organisation run by locals for locals, and is funded by NSW FaCS as a Community Hub. Our main service delivery role is to provide information and referrals to disadvantaged 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 Community Workers for referrals, support and assistance including material aid. If we can't help, we probably know who can.

nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com



by Cr Jenny Dowell

Council meeting

The September meeting marked the halfway mark for this Council term. As is our usual practice, the position of Deputy Mayor was rotated and Cr Isaac Smith was elected to the role. My thanks go to Cr Neil Marks who filled the role so well in the past 12 months.

The meeting was quite mundane with little community interest and only three members of the public in the gallery. It did however involve three confidential matters relating to ratepayer hardship, the sale of a vacant block of land near the airport and the General Manager's annual performance review.

These three items relating to ratepayers, commercial in confidence and personnel matters are the only grounds under which Council debates behind closed doors. Our Council prides itself on open and transparent decision making, so you will find all decisions including those made in closed session, on the website. Everyone is welcome at briefings or meetings held Tuesday evenings at 6pm in Chambers.

Sporting grants

At the meeting, Council voted to provide \$221,400 in grants to 10 organisations for upgrades to sporting or recreational facilities. Among the successful grants was

From the mayor's desk

\$10,000 for further development of the old skate ramp site at Peace Park. This funding will supplement existing money and will allow the site to be restored in line with the concept plans.

Outdoor dining

Also at the meeting, Council approved license agreements for Caper on Cullen and Armonica to lease part of the footpath for outdoor dining. Our climate is conducive to outdoor dining and the new policy with costs based on size makes it affordable and attractive to food outlets.

Nimbin Show

The Nimbin Show must be one of the best around. Where else would show goers see the elements of wicking for soil health close by the best in needlework and whip cracking. The pig poo lotto was a lot of fun with plenty of speculation on which politician would scoop the poo(l) with the most 'deposits'. There were plenty of suggestions to take the concept to the Royal Easter Show, so perhaps we have another Nimbin initiative to take to the world. Congratulations to Phil Williams and his committee for another wonderful show.

Art Show

While I was in Nimbin for the Show, I also visited the Spring Arts Exhibition in the hall. Having seen Autumn and Spring art exhibitions over many years and made several purchases, I enjoy seeing the changes in arts practices in the works of local artists and in seeing

new artists emerging, having moved to the area or taking the brave step of displaying their works for public critique.

Blue Knob Gallery and Café

This month, artists and lovers of our community's creativity will join the committee to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Blue Knob Gallery and Café. Over the past decade this wonderful community hub has blossomed through the efforts of a small but dedicated band of sisters. I often cite Blue Knob as a hall that has re-invented itself to meet the changing needs of its community. Through co-operation, a keen eye for grant opportunities and sheer hard work, the committee has enhanced the facility and made the hall live in a new era while paying homage to its past. Congratulations Heather, Robin, Jeni and Christine.

Fire fundraiser

Just after the deadline for the *GoodTimes*, the community came together in Peace Park for a post-fire fundraiser. Restoring the Heart also gives the community an opportunity to provide emotional support to those affected by the loss of heritage, memories and jobs.

I'm pleased to read that some of the businesses affected by the fire are planning on re-opening or have already done so in other locations. After such a loss, rebuilding does not happen as quickly as some might wish or expect and it is likely that differences in expectation may challenge the community in the months ahead. I encourage everyone to keep the faith that a

'new normal' will evolve in time.

Reform

Local Government in NSW is set for the biggest shake up seen in many decades. The new Minister has released a blueprint for change and has challenged the state's 152 Councils to prove they are Fit for the Future. There have been recommendations for mergers for many Councils, particularly in Sydney, and a new model for the far western areas of the state. Other Councils have been offered financial incentives to amalgamate. The first step is for every Council to submit documentation by June 2015 on yet-to-be provided templates with benchmark measures to demonstrate how each is Fit for the Future.

Here in the Northern Rivers, in addition to the documentation, it is suggested that Kyogle Council should consider merging with either Lismore or Richmond Valley Council. While this concept will naturally be discussed with and by neighbouring Councils, it is very much up to Kyogle Council and its community to determine what is in their best interests. It's a challenging time for local government and strong leadership is required, but I am confident that re-elected Mayor Danielle Mulholland is the right person to lead that discussion.

September 10, 2016

The next Council election is now less than two years away, and while only three women came to my information session at Council



on Wednesday September 10, all three would make excellent Councillors. One was from Nimbin and I encourage her along with others to stand as a candidate to ensure Nimbin has a voice in the next Council. Of course every Councillor represents the breadth of the Council area, not just the constituents who vote for them, but it would be excellent if there was a Councillor who could articulate on the interests of our largest village. Such a perspective would also enhance the broader vision of Lismore to be a sustainable and innovative leader for the region and beyond.

Council questions

If residents have questions and concerns about Council matters, there are many ways to make contact. Phoning 1300-878-387 is the quickest, but there is also Live Chat during office hours on the Council website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au, email: Council@lismore.nsw.gov.au or Facebook and Twitter. You can contact me via Nimbin Hook Ups, my own facebook page, email: Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au or phone 6625-0403.



by Cr Simon Clough,
Lismore City Council

Spring seems almost overwhelming this year. I suspect it's the reasonable quantity of rain we had about a month ago. It has brought a real intensity to this year's spring.

It's great to be almost assaulted with the different scents while on my bike (pushie) and see cattle in lush green paddocks at this time of year which is so often parched and dry.

You may remember last month that I put forward a motion to Lismore Council in support of the Zero Emissions High Speed Rail. That motion was passed by a majority of 6 to 5. Surprisingly many Councillors thought it a great idea, but voted against it.

Simon says...



I recently spent three days in Gloucester talking to people about their proposed blockade of AGL's four wells which are about to be fracked. Gloucester is a jewel of a town of about 2,000 people nested in a beautiful valley about an hour south-west of Taree.

The valley is also a floodplain with the wells in the middle of it. So the impact of any flooding on the wells is not good news for the 75,000 people who depend on the area as a catchment for their water supply. It's also worth noting that the wells are on a proposed open cut coal mine, which will no doubt finish the destructive job of the gas drillers if we let them get away with it!

AGL proudly claims that it has learnt from our Bentley blockade and it is evident that the situation is a lot tougher. There is 24 hour

a day security with white twin cab utes swarming everywhere. There is also video surveillance on all gates and wells. The entry gates are all aligned with the property boundary with no apron that can be used for installations to block the gate.

Last week Groundswell Gloucester successfully got approval from the Shire Council for a primitive camping ground on a property close to the well sites. However a condition of the approval is that the community will have to provide almost \$30,000 in a bond and fees. Freedom of speech and protest doesn't come cheap in Gloucester. For those of you who wish to support the Gloucester campaign you can make a donation at: www.chuffed.org/project/4779/

Another interesting aspect of the Gloucester Shire Council meeting to approve

the camping ground was the fact that it was addressed by the Local Area Commander of the Police (who had twice as much time to speak as "normal" citizens, and then had a "right of reply") and a senior inspector from the Richmond Command (Lismore).

I'm reliably informed that the Senior Inspector from Lismore alleged that at Bentley Camp there was danger created by the fact that "radical" elements were intermingling and influencing the normal citizens who were there to protest in a peaceful exercise of their democratic right. He did not define what he meant by radical and did not explain his connotation of it being connected to criminality.

Next week I'm off to North West NSW to do half a dozen non-violent direct action trainings. It will be great working with the wonderful people of these communities in their opposition to Santos' destruction of the Pilliga and the impacts on their water and livelihoods.

Maybe I will 'radicalise' some 'normal' people!

Enjoy a wonderful spring.

Contact Simon: Mobile 0428-886-217, email: simonclough@internode.on.net

Renewable Energy Target



by Justine Elliot,
federal MP for Richmond

I strongly support the retention of Renewable Energy Target (RET).

The RET was an important part of the former Labor Government's policy approach to clean energy. Under Labor, the number of Australian households with solar power increased from 7,400 to over 1.1 million. Jobs in the renewable energy sector tripled to almost 30,000, providing a significant economic boost.

In contrast the Liberal National Government are climate sceptics and they don't believe in renewable energy. The vandalism that has been done to the renewable energy industry in Australia by Tony Abbott's government is disgraceful.

Tony Abbott and the Liberal National Party are putting in jeopardy thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of investment. They are nothing more than a pack of climate sceptics, vandalising the renewable energy industry.

Recently the report by Tony Abbott's Government's hand-picked Renewable Energy Target Review Panel was released. The review paves the way for Tony Abbott's Liberal National Government to break another promise, this time on his commitment to renewable energy.

The recommendations of the Review Panel will decimate the renewable energy sector and the associated jobs and investments.

This is a political document, not an independent review. The climate change denialism, endemic in the Liberal National Coalition, is written throughout this document.

This is a report written by climate change deniers, for climate change deniers, and it shows.

If Tony Abbott's Liberal National Government implements these retrograde recommendations, he will be breaking another promise and killing off billions of dollars in investment in Australia.

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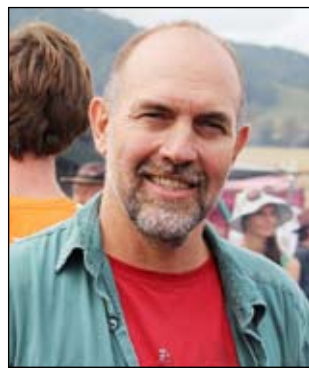
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A gas-free region, it's our right and our duty

The Northern Rivers remains to this day a Gasfield-Free region only because against all odds, our community has kept it that way. The state government and industry had very different plans for us, and if they had their way, gasfields would have been well underway by 2014. We have powerfully resisted that agenda. But there remains much to be done yet.

Our victory at Bentley has been a beacon of hope for communities across Australia and around the world. It is the story of a united region that would not accept being bullied by the industry and by government. But it is also the story of a community that had the courage and vision to set its own agenda and its own direction rather than have these dictated by government. Our campaign for a Gasfield Free Northern Rivers is a positive vision for our future and even though it was at first ridiculed by government and industry it has acquired a life of its own and is now attracting significant political interest. It is a realistic campaign aim and we are edging ever closer to achieving it.

We don't want to keep on fighting defensive battles against invasive drilling like we have so heroically at Glenugie, Doubtful Creek and Bentley. From here on we need to refocus our collective power and passion and push for a lasting region wide solution to secure



by Aidan Ricketts

our collective vision of a permanently Gasfield Free Northern Rivers.

The government has only temporarily suspended the drilling at Bentley and they have merely put a freeze on licence renewals until after the state election, but this falls far short of what the region deserves and demands and would give us no protection in the next term of government. Make no mistake if we return the same government with their same old gas industry apologist policies, then we should expect the assault of the gas industry to be renewed in 2015 for another four years.

There is no doubt the government understands the power of our region once mobilised, but they are also hoping we won't mobilise properly prior to the election. So let's make sure we do. What do we need to be doing now, leading into the election and after the election?

The most important focus for the coming month should

be upon building support for the Gasfield Free Rally and march in Lismore on November 1st to cancel the gas licences and formally declare our entire region Gasfield Free. There is more info elsewhere in this edition of NGT about how you can get involved in the Rally, so make sure you do. Declaring the region Gasfield Free is something we can do as a community, after all it's us who keep it that way. Cancelling the licences is something we need to demand the government and politicians to do, so let's look at that.

We are making progress with our call for cancellation... Just recently we had the state opposition leader John Robertson declaring that an incoming Labor government would declare our region a Gasfield Free zone. The big problem there is that the government may not change this election, due to issues beyond our region. To really secure our vision we need both major parties forced into a position where they need to support licence cancellations. The Liberals and Nationals are currently offering little more than delay tactics to postpone the issue to after the election. For this reason we need to continue to push the current government to at least match Labor's policy and support cancellation of all exploration licences and if they won't we need to mobilise a campaign

to unseat the sitting members.

Both of the major parties have botched track records when it comes to gas and mining, so it's worth remembering that we do have other choices. The Greens have been the most consistent and reliable party to oppose the gas invasion, and on the poll numbers they stand as much chance as Labor to grab some of the Northern Rivers seats from the Nats.

It won't be easy though. The state electoral system gives sitting members (the Nats) an advantage unless voters ensure that they number every square. Any in-fighting between Greens and Labor voters or any messy electoral battles with any progressive independents would be likely to give a victory by default to the sitting Nats. The simple message for the election should be "For a Gasfield Free Northern Rivers... Number every square and put the Nationals last". That is unless the government does a 180 degree turn around and gets behind our vision of Gasfield Free Northern Rivers before then.

The election may disappoint, so stay tuned and whatever the outcome be ready to stand united with your community into the future. As we have discovered it's not all about politicians and government, the community itself is powerful.

See you all at the rally in November, let's do this.

Labor commits to a CSG-free Northern Rivers



"Today I am announcing that a NSW Labor Government will declare the Northern Rivers CSG free," Leader of the Opposition, John Robertson said at Riverside Park on 30th September.

Under the policy, Labor's Plan for a CSG Free Northern Rivers, Labor will not allow new CSG exploration licenses, will refuse to grant CSG extraction licenses, reject renewals of existing licenses and refuse any applications to expand existing operations in the Northern Rivers.

The ban would encompass the local government areas of Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Kyogle Shire, Lismore City, Tweed Shire and Richmond Valley, and formalises the decision of the NSW Labor Conference in July to ban

CSG and unconventional gas in the Northern Rivers region.

John Robertson was joined at Riverside Park in Lismore – the site of the original 8000 strong community protest against CSG – by Shadow Planning & Environment Minister Luke Foley, Shadow North Coast Minister Walt Secord and Labor Candidates Paul Spooner (Ballina), Isaac Smith (Lismore) and Ron Goodman (Tweed) to announce the policy.

"The Northern Rivers is a unique region that is underpinned by its reputation as a pristine environment – Labor will not allow any activities to be undertaken that may threaten that reputation and the industries and jobs it supports," said Mr Robertson.



Volunteering at CEC

by Su Couper

Casino Environment Centre has become a well-known entity in Casino township since our opening a year and a half ago.

It's so lovely to see familiar faces every week coming in to buy our wonderful stock and organic produce, and most importantly, stay for a chat and a valuable exchange of local and regional information.

As a volunteer, I very much enjoy my days at CEC – always stimulating conversation and rarely a dull moment. But you know, we can always do with more support from our locals....

As a fundraiser for CEC, the volunteers have set up an Op Shop in-store, and this has proven to be a valuable income supplement. We have customers now coming in every week asking if new stock has arrived, so due to its increasing popularity we are urgently in need of good quality second-hand clothing donations.

Another popular seller is our range of second-hand books, so any donations of these will also be gratefully accepted.



Open Learning opportunities

Term four begins on 15th October, with enrolments on Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th, 10am to 3pm at the Community School room in the Community Centre.

Courses on offer this term are: exploring art, creative writing, personal bookkeeping, Spanish, German, Tai Chi and ukulele. For enquiries, phone 6689-1477.



Kyogle Council notebook

by Cr Danielle Mulholland, Mayor of Kyogle

Thank you to everyone for your support for me continuing in the role of mayor. I look forward to the next 12 months, working with new deputy mayor Cr John Burley.

I come to my second term as mayor with some new ideas and perspectives for Council and the LGA, so working closely with the focus groups and other Councillors, I'll be forming these into some action plans for consideration shortly.

Ideas brewing at the moment involve ways to more aggressively market our LGA and promote its many benefits and attractions.

I'm also going to be exploring ways to reach out to schools to help form closer bonds with local government and engaging young people in the business of government.

There are opportunities for events like the Billycart Bonanza and the Fresh Ideas for Farming Productivity seminar and I think the time is right to explore these possibilities and what they can mean for the economic growth and vitality of our LGA.

Our LGA is a wonderful place to live and work and I'm sure if everyone knew about it, we'd be swamped with offers.

Exciting things are happening, so stay tuned and join in.

The first combined meeting of focus group members was held on 28th August, and each group is now working out the most convenient time for members to meet.

These groups will have an

important role in helping Council to steer the future direction of our local government area (LGA). The groups will be dynamic and members will undoubtedly come and go, so if you're interested in being part of them, why not let us know?

And importantly, they won't all be held in Kyogle if travel is a problem for you.

You can join in various ways and I'm sure we can work out any problems so at least in the first instance, put your hand up to indicate interest and we'll work out the details of how you can be involved later.

The next mayoral Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 12th November at Bonalbo, so if you have issues you like us to know about, or if you'd just like to come along and say hello, I'd be very pleased to see you there.

All I ask is that you ring and book a time with Ms Janelle McLennan at Council on 6632-0214, so that you won't be kept waiting. If you can also advise her of your issue and contact details (i.e. phone numbers, email, etc.) this will help me to make some background enquiries so that any information you receive is correct and up to date.

I've tried to spread the mayoral meetings across the LGA as widely as possible, but if you feel your area has missed out and you'd like one out your way, please let me know. I really would like to get to as many of you as possible, so if you'd like to see us out your way, please let me know.

Kyogle Council: 6632-0214
Danielle.Mulholland@kyogle.nsw.gov.au

NY turns up the heat on climate change

Benny Zable
in New York City

The who's who in the environmental movement had come out to show their colours in the streets of New York, as world leaders gathered at the United Nations for Climate discussions.

A whole three-storey high building was donated for artful preparations, both for the march and the Flood Wall Street action the next day. The most spectacular banners and artworks came out of this the May Day community art space. A mural also was painted outside to mark this most historic moment.

I helped a teacher and students with designing, painting and stencilling a banner which we trucked in the week leading up to the People's Climate March around the city. On the Saturday before, I led a workshop stencilling Hazmat suits and on the Sunday decorated for the Nuclear Free, Carbon Free contingent in the People's Climate March.

New York City was abuzz with actions. The mainstream media was talking



it up, the advertising on the trains urged everyone to come to the party. The key slogan was "To change everything, it takes everyone." The Mayor and New York City councillors marched, with a pledge to divest from fossil fuels and replace the city infrastructure with appropriate green development.

D-day on Sunday, I started at dawn and began decorating for the www.vigil4peaceandecology. Then out to the corner of 73rd and Central Park West attending the Nuclear Free, Carbon Free Future rally, which was facing the back of the Dakota Hotel. We were held up for three hours before the march moved on for us.

The march was the largest for Climate change and the longest as we kept walking for hours from Central Park, through Times Square and out to 11th avenue. A festival was winding down at the end of the rally when I eventually got to the end. A sacred space was created where people wrote their thoughts on ribbons and hung on the tree installations. I did not get back home 'til sunset.

The next day, Monday 22nd September, I rode out on the subway to Battery Park, the rallying gathering place for the Flood Wall Street action. I walked out from the subway to my delight with 350 Bill McKibbin and Lian from Greenpeace Australia. There

were many old activist friends from Occupy Wall Street there. Mike Roselle, one of Greenpeace USA Earth First, Rainforest Action Center founders was there.

I donned my Fossil Fools outfit and began performing with the Clearwater Choir. The mainstream media were out in force again to cover this most lively action. With these large 40-metre banners and Carbon bubbles, a sea of humanity overwhelmed the police and swept up Broadway, surrounded and sat down around the large iconic brass Bull, a block from Wall Street.

We occupied this space all day before it was decided to attempt to hit Wall Street. That is when the police moved in to arrest people. I just managed to escape.

As a follow-up to the People's Climate March and Flood Wall Street, I attended a Josh Fox theatre production (http://solutions-grassroots.nationbuilder.com/the_tour). John Fenton told his story. There were quite a few Australian activists in the audience including Dayne Pratsky who is in the process of making a film, *The Frackman*.

Local health worker

by Noelle Lynden-Way, Community Rep, BUNK

This month I met a person whose job has quite an impact in our community – Darryl Hickling, Aboriginal Chronic Care Worker (ACCW) for Kyogle, Nimbin and Urbenville.

Darryl (pictured) was born in Lismore and is a descendant of the Widjabul Tribe of the Bundjalung Nation. He is employed as an ACCW for the three MPS sites – Kyogle, Nimbin and Urbenville – and he attends a clinic at Mulli Settlement near Woodenbong. He works four days a week in this job, and on Fridays he is relieving the Aboriginal Liaison Officer at Lismore Base Hospital.

Darryl was reared by Lyle Roberts in Lismore. After school, with little employment in the area, he moved to Sydney to work for ten years. He returned to Lismore to look after his mother and met Raylene, his wife of 35 years. Darryl has five children and now four grandchildren. He and Raylene recently moved to a newly built home in Goonellabah.

Darryl has a wealth of experience in the health industry. He started at St. Vincent's Hospital as a cleaner and then a maintenance/courier driver. He spent 25 years in this job and then moved over to Lismore Base Hospital where he worked as a wardsman, operating theatre assistant

and patient transport.

He then took a case management job with Richmond Community Options based in Lismore in the Community Health building, working mainly in disabled and complex care. This led to the ACCW position at Kyogle Community Health and servicing Nimbin and Urbenville MPS as well.

Darryl has come across some of his relatives out in the Urbenville/Woodenbong area because his dad, Frank Hickling was from Tabulum and Baryulgil.

After an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander patient with a chronic disease in their lungs, heart, kidneys or diabetes, is discharged from one of the three hospitals, Darryl does a 48-hour follow-up. He hears how the person is coping and finds out if their doctor has set up a plan. He visits people in their homes and touches base with them. It is up to the client to agree to a visit from him, and he is out in the field on a regular basis.

He is qualified to test a client's sugar levels and blood, and if there is concern about these levels, he will get a second opinion and confer with nurses and/or the doctor associated with the client.

Darryl often arranges for another visit one or two weeks later. He can link people up to other services, doctor's appointments, medical scripts and Webster Packs.



With his many years of experience in hospital care and professional training, we are very fortunate to have Darryl here.

Carer Consultant Program

Here is a chance for the general public in our community to have a say on things to do with our hospitals and health services. You can help improve the experience of patients and carers by becoming a volunteer for the Carer Consultant Program.

If you provide care to a family member or friend who has been a patient in our hospitals, then you will have information that can help. As a "consultant" with this program, you will be invited to provide feedback on a variety of things that aim to improve services. The co-ordinator of the program will correspond with you via email (and phone if needed) a couple of times a month.

The co-ordinator will forward "consultancy requests". These are requests

for feedback on various things such as a new hospital pamphlet, a new hospital policy or a proposed change to the way that services will be provided. There is usually a two-week timeframe for people to provide their feedback and providing feedback is optional.

Best of all, you can do this from your own home and in your own time. All you need is email.

For further information contact Kenneth Lee, Co-ordinator Strategic Programs, Disability and Carers Planning and Performance, PO Box 498 Lismore 2480, phone 02 6639-8276 or 0400-882-837, email: Ken.Lee@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au

Health Advice Phone Line:
1800-022-222

Free 24-hour 7-days advice from a Registered Nurse, who will assess whether you need to go to an Emergency Department or not. Look them up on: www.healthdirect.org.au

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Catch a career at the Youth Training Station

The Mullum Music Festival has deepened its commitment to local youth with the announcement of a newly formed not-for-profit organisation called The Youth Training Station, offering career advice and lifestyle information to teens in the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

Festival Director, Glenn Wright said, "It's a bold project that aims to positively affect and support good social outcomes for the community's youth. Teenagers will hear inspiring talks by successful and motivated professionals – from people who are passionate about their careers and lives."

Building on the strengths and success of the festival's long running Youth

Mentorship Program that supports up-and-coming local musicians, The Youth Training Station covers a range of industries from filmmaking to midwifery.

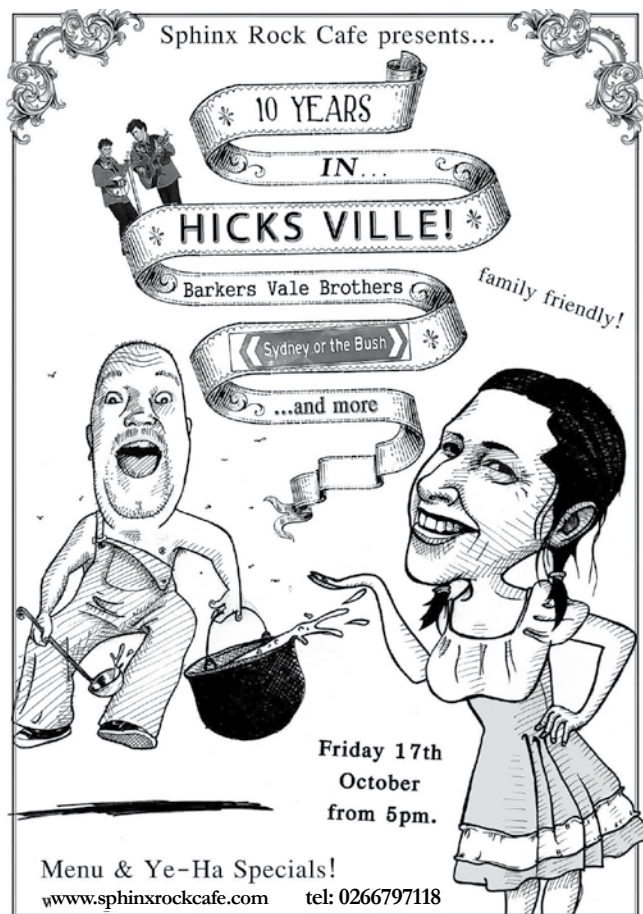
"The North Coast is blessed with an abundance of arts and music events and the aim of the Youth Training Station is to shine a light on other potential career paths," said Glenn Wright.

Two afternoons a week, 4-6pm throughout October and November in the lead-up to the festival, industry leaders will present a series of free, inspiring TED-style talks at the iQ Platform, a pop-up creative community space provided by iQ Inc at

Mullumbimby Railway Station.

Entry is free, but spaces are limited so registration is essential. For details of the program and registration, go to: www.mullummusicfestival.com

The Youth Training Station launch event will be held 4pm Sunday, 5th October at the Courthouse Hotel, Mullumbimby (Family friendly – all ages event). Cost: \$10 donation on the door (free for children under 10 years), featuring Ash Bell and Matt Bone (Starboard Cannons), Danni Carr (Mr Cassidy), Warren Earl, Rebecca Ireland, Joel Salom, Merryn Boller (Potato Potato), Mali Biggin, Cai Leplaw, and MC: Byron Shire Mayor Simon Richardson.



RV Hall centenary

Rock Valley Hall is turning 100 and everyone is invited to celebrate with a whole day and evening program on Saturday 4th October.

Entry is free from 10am for memorabilia displays, vintage car and machinery exhibition and much more. There will also be children's activities and face painting.

The Rock Valley Hall was officially opened, on land donated by Mr M. Gay, on Wednesday 30th September 1914, with a picnic and dancing into the early hours. The hall has hosted many events since that time, including church services, kitchen teas, meetings, dances, balls and more.

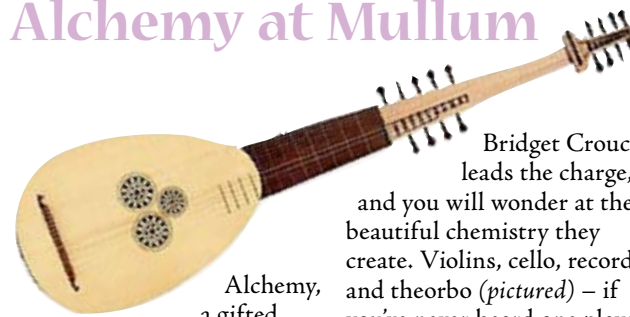
The official centenary commemoration and cutting of the cake will be at 2pm, followed by the performance of a new theatrical work about the history of Rock Valley. A fully licensed dinner-dance, featuring old time dancing, will start at 6pm (Bookings essential).

There will be country-style refreshments available all day and plenty of seats and shade to enjoy the celebrations and the beautiful view. A BBQ lunch, including vegetarian food, commences at noon.

The Hall Committee are launching a book outlining the history of the hall, as well as a local recipe book, both of which will be available for sale on the day, alongside centenary souvenirs.

A special bus service is running from Lismore to the Hall during the day. Phone 6629-3328 for information.

Alchemy at Mullum



Alchemy, a gifted quintet of fine musicians, brings a taste of Europe to St Martins church, Mullumbimby on Sunday 12th October at 3pm. Well-known local muso

Bridget Crouch leads the charge, and you will wonder at the beautiful chemistry they create. Violins, cello, recorder and theorbo (pictured) – if you've never heard one played, then come and hear for yourself.

Special music from special people for special people. Tickets at the door. \$25, members \$20, children \$10.



The final concert in the Seniors program for 2014 in heritage-listed Tyalgum Community Hall, will be held on Friday 10th October.

Entertainment will be provided by Tyalgum Public School, the Audrey Spence & Kuwani Barnett duo, and back by popular demand, the Trombone Kellie duo.

These concerts have been very successful in bringing Seniors together, making good use of a beautiful hall, encouraging Youth and Seniors to mix.

Offering good quality entertainment at a reasonable price, the series has helped develop a village profile, supporting small local businesses and creating an entertainment precinct in a rural area.

Bookings are essential for catering purposes. Phone 0418-723-908 or email: infoateventzbiz@gmail.com

"We look forward to sharing the afternoon with Seniors, their supporters and you."



The magical world of Alice comes to the Tweed Valley in October with the staging of the Murwillumbah Theatre Company's new pantomime, *Alice's Adventures*.

Adapted and directed by Bryanne Jardine, this production of Lewis Carroll's famous and wonderfully fantastic books – *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* – maintains the imaginative plot and brilliant use of nonsense in a modern context, as it relates Alice's adventures in a bizarre, topsy-turvy land underground.

There Alice encounters a cast of strange characters and fanciful beasts, including the groovy White Rabbit, March Hare, Mad Hatter, the sleepy Dormouse and grinning Cheshire Cat, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the dreadful Red Queen and a host of other unusual creatures.

Alice's Adventures will be staged at the Murwillumbah Civic Centre on Friday, 17th October and Saturday, 1st November at 7.30pm; Saturdays 18th and 25th October at 5.30pm, and Sundays 19th and 26th October and 2nd November at 2pm.

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$6 for school students, and are available on-line at: www.murwillumbahtheatrecompany.com or from the Murwillumbah Music shop on 6672-5404, or at the door.



Ten years at Sphinx Rock Cafe 'Hicksville' party

Jon, Sharon and the team invite all friends and customers of Sphinx Rock Cafe to celebrate 10 years.

The cafe was opened on a shoestring with two fresh immigrants from the UK...

Jon pointed at the burnt out car outside the cafe and the overgrown gardens, including some human pixies, and turned to his wife Sharon (holding their 1-year old son and heavily pregnant) saying, "this would be a great place".

10 years on and its been an epic journey, quite a lot of laughs, some tears, many beautiful connections... becoming part of a very unique and vibrant community.

So come along to say "yee-ha" to all.

Live music throughout and stories to share, of course the legendary fish burger and more...

Family fun night from 5pm Friday 17th October.



Oktoberfest weekend at Nimbin Hotel – German food and drink
Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th October – wunderbar!



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Being a LOVER not a HATER



Georgina Pollard is playing at Sphinx Rock Cafe on 12th October.

Georgina is also recording a brand new composition with the title of *Lovable* in October at local recording studio, Tone Ranger at Modanville run by Jim and Jules Kelly. The message of this new song feels very apt for current times when there is so much hate being reported in local, national and world media.

Georgina says, "As a 14 year old in my history class at Alstonville High, there was a sticker on the wall which said "Think globally, act locally". I am so very aware and saddened by the horrendous things happening in our world and at times feel extremely helpless and ask myself how on earth can I possibly make a difference? I've realised more and more that the way my life makes a difference is in my own personal sphere of influence. To choose to be a lover not a hater in my own immediate family, within my circle of friends and in my local community. It definitely doesn't come easy and I fall and continue to make mistakes but I choose to get up and start again fresh everyday and choose to act and react out of love and grace instead of from a place of anger, hurt and disappointment."



Maroon Jazz Quartet will play Lismore City Bowling Club on Sunday 26th October, 2pm-5pm, \$15/\$10 Members

Cole Cox Lovejoy is a wonderfully polished ensemble improvising the best piano trio tunes in the jazz repertoire. Fred Cole (piano), Hans Lovejoy (bass & vocals) Ben Cox (drums) are joined on the bandstand by jazz stalwart Royden Ainsworth on alto sax, in what promises to be an afternoon of listening pleasure.

Clever arrangements, tight, gentle rhythms and the odd earthy vocal (dig Hans Lovejoy's rendition of The Strangers' *Golden Brown*) is reason enough

to grab a cool drink, find a comfy seat and enjoy.

Then there's Mr Ainsworth – his thoughtful alto playing will add another dimension, or two. A musician who developed his skills in the dance bands of the 50s and 60s, played 'for a year or three' in the ABC and Channel 9 showbands in Sydney, and has recorded with great jazzmen Don Burrows, John Sangster and Errol Buddle to name a few.

Come to the party folks, it's gonna be special.



Drumming Plus

Australia's world-acclaimed taiko drumming ensemble, TaikoZ will present a new masterwork in Lismore this month. *Crimson Sky*, composed by TaikoZ Artistic Director Ian Cleworth, is based on a haiku by Japanese poet Miura Yuzuru.

The work will feature an instrument rarely heard in Australia – the bass koto, a traditional Japanese 17 string plucked instrument – with legendary bass koto player Satsuki Odamura performing solo segments in the piece.

TaikoZ will be performing two shows only 10th and 11th October, 7.30pm at NORPA at Lismore City Hall. Bookings: 1300-066-772 or go to: www.norpa.org.au



The Channon Open Mic

by Ray Flanagan (Rayzor)

The perfect spring afternoon was served up for the September session of The Channon Open Mic on Sunday 28th September.

Although off to a slow start, as the afternoon wore on the performer and audience numbers swelled.

Local regular guitarist, Glen arrived with yet another of his 'home-made from mostly scrap' instruments – a banjo this time – and managed to coax a fair tune from his latest creation.

New to The Channon Open Mic were Tasmanian duo, Les and Tony, and

young singer/songwriter Connor – all very accomplished musicians.

Les and Tony (pictured) performed a couple of mandolin duets and a couple of guitar duets with some lovely accompanying harmonies, and Connor performed a popular mix of covers and originals.

The next Open Mic will be held on 26th October now with daylight saving starting from 3pm. Lunch is available from The Channon Tavern restaurant from 12 – 2pm and snacks throughout the afternoon and dinner from 6 – 8pm.

Hope to see you there.

www.nimbingoodtimes.com

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October Gigs

Friday 3rd	7.30pm	Sabotage
Saturday 4th	6pm	Kayza
Sunday 5th	5pm	Lez Karski
Thursday 9th	6.30pm	Toby
Friday 10th	7.30pm	Hot Sex Chocolate
Saturday 11th	6.30pm	Good Corn Liquor
Sunday 12th	5pm	Conner Cleary
Thursday 16th	6.30pm	Gavin Doniger
Friday 17th	7.30pm	Moondog Gypsy Blues
Saturday 18th	6.30pm	Mr Troy
Sunday 19th	5pm	Kim Banffy
Thursday 23rd	6.30pm	8 Ball Aitken
Friday 24th	7.30pm	Jesse Morris Band
Sat 25th Sun 26th		OCKTOBERFEST
Thursday 30th	6.30pm	Bill Jacobi
Friday 31st	7.30pm	Mescalito Blues

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Police have the power to make change happen

by Michael Balderstone

You know the times are changing when the *Northern Star* opinion sticks up for Nimbin against police raids. And after a hundred false starts it really does look like this time medical cannabis will become legal somewhere in Australia soon. Maybe only for terminally ill adults and maybe they will still have to go to the blackmarket to access it, but it's something. A crack in the wall. An admittance deep down but never spoken that the dreaded hippies may have been right all along about this plant, like they were on so many other things.

Ever dreaming hippies like me thought this year that finally the police were starting to leave the weed alone in Nimbin a little. After all we really do most of our own policing. If there is an altercation there's usually no time for the cops to come so of course we have to be the peacemakers. The more we are left alone to do it ourselves, generally the more peaceful the village is. The more police are involved the more paranoia is in the air. With the cops at home everyone relaxes, the scales come out and people get a real deal, rather than a rushed rip off. Just how the undercovers must like it, I now realise.

The more police pressure the more different drugs come into the equation for the many who will use whatever is available to change their headspace. Legal alcohol comes first and easily hidden pills get popped. Or ice. Being outside the law there's no rules or regulations in the illegal market place except those you make your-



self, or the community tries to make. In Nimbin it seems the more it's left alone the more transparent, open and honest it becomes. The more you harass it the more the honest dealers go home and the desperates take over. Of course. Smart policing of the street could corral the dealers almost to where they want them. Instead of hunting them, herd them?

Our Area Commander justified the eighty police used in the Nimbin raids on September 11 as the number the risk assessment recommended. Like the 800 for Bentley? He also said it will make no difference to the dealing and it will be back the same in no time. True. So what did they achieve by sending in undercovers over a six month period? I guess trying to trap sellers multiple times to ensure they go to jail. Which translates as – go to criminal university, get a record for life and find it virtually impossible to get a job.

And the simple fact that the police are buying pot for months on end as the dealers they are trying to trap are selling it endlessly shows just how dangerous they think this prohibited substance is. They weren't at all worried about the weed river flowing freely for months on end



while they filled a couple of buckets from the stream every now and then. No risk assessment on the danger levels from the river? Of course not as they know as well as we do that there is no danger. It's all hogwash. Why weren't they buying ice?

The police never support drug law reform initiatives while they consistently justify their raids with spurious figures and numbers that are mostly more hogwash. It's a lost battle, we all agree. I think they love the power the drug laws give them but the growth of disrespect on both sides is the far-reaching consequence. The dealers and buyers have no respect for the cannabis laws and neither do a lot of police. It's just a game now, and for high stakes. Dealers risk getting caught

and the cops are afraid of losing their job, and maybe their house and family.

Prohibition is continually undermining the peace in our village we work so hard to create. And the local police must feel embarrassed to be separated so sharply from the community by their uniform. The local coppers told me they knew nothing of the raids that had been secretly happening under their noses for months. They are left with an even deeper divide, which will go on for a long time. Generations even when you think about the affect on the young people who are sent to jail. The Police need to reassess their role in the war on drugs and be honest with themselves about whether they are part of the problem, or the solution.



Oasis raid – an eyewitness account

by Francis Blanq (Hook-Ups)

Was having a sarsaparilla at the O today. Nimbin. Maybe I was going to get some weed. Maybe I had even just smoked a joint. All of a sudden a sinkhole opened up and out swarmed about 30 cops.

They pounced on a well known local reggae enthusiast and billboard star for tourism. They dragged him away despite vigorous expressions of alarm and outrage from those present. They were webbed out in the storm trooper gear. More cops than you could poke a stick at.

They held us prisoner for 20 minutes. We could hear the sniffer dogs just over the fence. There were plainclothes dudes too... reggae had nothing on him, but they snaffled him anyway. It suggested the work of undas.

They searched us and let us go with an official sounding get-out-of-town routine. Gail made me laugh, (sort of): "I work across the road. I'm not bloody going anywhere..."

We were searched and told to "Get out of the CBD" by a geezer with a lot of lettuce on his epaulets, who looked very familiar. Richmond AC bigwig these days, but has been haunting the place for years. I got the fook oot o' there.

I heard not a few times, long-term locals say they had rarely seen so many cops in town. There was a forensic van parked prominently. More like a paramilitary occupation than an old-fashioned cop raid.

Really sucked the jam out of my day. Usually we are pre-warned through the lightning grapevine, and this correspondent can only hope that this was the case today. Poor little Nimbin. Really getting a slippering this year. Resist!

Sex Party message of support

The Australian Sex Party has extended its sympathies to the people of Nimbin, "subjected to an inappropriate and disproportionate operation by NSW police."

"Six months of work and 80 police officers for two kilos of cannabis! The War on Drugs is a waste of time and a waste of money. It's a waste of our resources and all for what?" said Fiona Patten, Australian Sex Party President.

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New book sheds light on Mackay murder

The Man Who Knew Too Much, a new book on NSW's most infamous murder, the murder of Donald Mackay, will be launched by Senator Lee Rhiannon at the Waratah Room, NSW Parliament, on 14th October at 6pm.

The assassination, its orchestration, and its execution are the subject of the book by Dr John Jiggins, an occasional *GoodTimes* contributor, who has been researching the murder, interviewing witnesses over many years. He reveals how the murder happened, and in which direction the body disappeared.

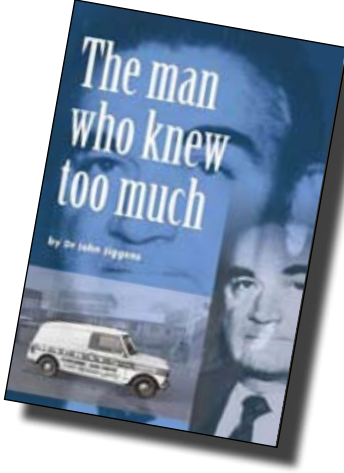
While the versions of the murder presented in re-enactments like *Underbelly 2* are at odds with the evidence of witnesses, his version is based on their evidence.

"Don Mackay was murdered because he knew too much about an international drug smuggling conspiracy that was growing huge quantities of marijuana in Griffith and shipping it to the United States," said Dr Jiggins.

Jiggins maintains that Mackay had discovered that Frank Nugan, one of the most powerful business men in Australia, was central to this conspiracy, and that Nugan's private investigator, Fred Krahe, uncovered the Mackay threat and dealt with it through a well-orchestrated assassination.

"It was a big, well-organised operation, with multiple assassins," he said.

The version of the murder of Don Mackay shown on the TV show, *Underbelly*, *A tale of two cities*, which



dominated TV ratings in 2009, wrongly portrayed the murder as done for \$10,000 by a lone assassin.

"The purpose of the book is to show that the assassination of Donald Mackay was not a bargain-basement operation. It was big operation by a team of assassins, backed by the deep pockets of the Nugan Hand Bank. It was the best hit Frank Nugan's wealth could buy."

The Man Who Knew Too Much reveals the astonishing depth of knowledge about the Australian drug trade that Don Mackay possessed. It demonstrates that Don Mackay did indeed know too much. If we knew what he did – and we would have, if he made it to Parliament – a group at the very centre of power in Australia would have been threatened.

"The story the Australian public has been fed about a lone assassin and a bargain-basement hit is wrong," Dr Jiggins said.



Alan Jones is in the winner of the Excellent Liaison Medical Marijuana Award of 2014.

His reading of the Prime Minister's Letter a.k.a "Directives from the Leader of

Team Australia" has been quoted by media outlets all over planet earth.

This has provided millions of global Cannabis activists with more ammo to fire at their governments, as well as encouraging all Australian Medical Cannabis patients and activists that their efforts are not wasted, and that they might live to see a change in the Cannabis laws "in their lifetime".

Onya Al.

Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party
www.australianHEMPparty.com

HEMP HEADLINES

Support Tony Bower [GoFundMe]

Tony Bower has helped hundreds and hundreds of people with his cannabinoid tinctures and oils. He has worked tirelessly for others and is currently facing a gaol term for doing so. Please, if you support medicinal cannabis, donate a few bucks for Tony's legal costs, so he can be released and back where he belongs – helping others. Right now, it's our turn to help him.

Public Health Association of Australia supports medical cannabis [phaa.net.au]

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has thrown its support behind the legalisation of medical cannabis, launching its new organisational policy today. "PHAA's new Position Statement on Medicinal Cannabis in Australia recognises the need for a compassionate regime

whereby seriously and terminally ill individuals who have been appropriately authorised may possess and use cannabis without penalty," said Michael Moore, PHAA's Chief Executive Officer.

What's the way forward for Medicinal Cannabis in Australia? [Vice]

Jim Moylan, lawyer and national campaign director of the HEMP party, explains that medicine and policing are state concerns in Australia. So he sees Abbott's statement as directed not towards the public, but towards the Liberal state premiers throughout the country, providing them with a green light in policy making in regards to medicinal cannabis. He said the most favourable proposal was that of Rattenbury in the ACT because it allows for personal cannabis growing licences, which

addresses the issue of supply. Moylan believes that the road to the legalisation of medicinal cannabis in Australia will see the country repeating many mistakes that have already made in similar jurisdictions overseas. "We'll career along an eight year path of legislation and re-legislation, blindly ignoring 25 years of experience throughout America."

Kevin Anderson – the unlikely cannabis crusader [SMH]

The NSW Government's first steps towards decriminalising cannabis for medicinal purposes had their beginnings in The Old Bell Tower cafe in Tamworth in May, when owners Lou and Lucy Haslem invited their local member for a cuppa. Their 23-year-old son, Daniel is dying of cancer and cannabis is the only medication that eases the side effects of his chemotherapy.

STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

Undacuva in Arnhem Land

I guess you want to know if the Boss's wife left or not after the Bin raids. She did, but only for two nights. Stayed at her sisters, then he came home from work and she was back. Dinner in the warming oven as usual but with none of his favorite, the gravy, and he told me with a hurt look they are hardly talking.

But back on the job, beards have saved the day again. In the TPPS, Terrorist Potential Point System, beards get five points. As high as anything and one of the reasons the Bin keeps coming to the top in the terrorist breeding ground searches, like the cream overnight on fresh milk. It does help explain the raids, and the pressure on the Boss.

He sent me to Arnhem Land with the PM for his 'blackfella camp', as it was called by staff, to try and explain why the little village of harmless hippies shouldn't be burnt to the ground.

I can tell you his big ears are true to their kind and when we got time alone in his tent late at night he listened well. The TPPS explained itself. 5 points for each of: a beard, talking aloud about God, being unemployed, having a criminal record, long hair, and men wearing dresses. It means Cullen street has been rating twice as high as the Lakemba Mosque for TAR, the Terror Alert Rating. Even Tony knew something was wrong there.

I was right at home barefoot with the locals up there and Tony was impressed. We talked late into the night after we'd both drunk a couple of hefty mugs of the local Acacia Bark tea. A lot of things became very clear very quickly to Tony. At first he couldn't stop talking about the scrap in the Middle East. He wouldn't hear a word I said on the religious war. "This is it," he said repeatedly. "My mother told me I could be one of the Horsemen if I got in early. The

final battle against evil is on and I aim to be in the frontline." He said it more than once. All proud and innocent, trying to convince himself.

He was always comfortable in the boxing ring, he told me, and when he walks into press conferences he imagines that's where he's headed. "So they know I mean business". Finally it will not look out of place as he announces battle moves to the nation.

Then we talked about the war on drugs. The tea had kicked well in by then and it all fell into place for him as the tent disappeared for me into a psychedelic vortex. Not sure what was happening to Tony but suddenly he was horrified how much of his (he called it his!) massive top end dole cheque went on Adelaide hydro at fifty dollars a gram.

He also realised how stupid it was that the evil enemy Taliban were growing all the opium and hash when we could be ourselves. He realised the vested interests were dug in deep but like a true general he said he'd declare war on them.

Turns out it was his daughters who told him personal use of weed was legal in NSW when he found them with a bong on the back porch one evening. And old choofer

Malcolm Turnbull has been in his big ears also it seems after some prompting from Big Clive.

This is the email we wrote in the tent that night responding to Alan Jones:

"Thanks Alan. Let me look into this. I have no problem with the medical use of cannabis just as I have no problem with the medical use of opiates. I was under the impression that personal use of cannabis was no longer an offence in New South Wales, not that I would ever support the recreational use of these sorts of drugs. If a drug is needed for a valid medicinal purpose, though, and is being administered safely, there should be no question of its legality. And if a drug that's proven to be safe abroad is needed here, it should be available. I agree that the regulation of medicines is a thicket of complexity, bureaucracy and corporate and institutional self-interest. My basic contention is that something that's been found to be safe in a reliable jurisdiction shouldn't need to be tested here again. And clinical trials that have been done elsewhere shouldn't have to be repeated here. I doubt the Haslams need a meeting, they need their problem addressed, so please let me see what's possible. Cheers, Tony"

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