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'Nimbin dreaming' inspires vision

by Simon Rose

In my mind, Nimbin is a great living example of a positive alternate lifestyle.

Sure it is justly criticised as a seedy dope town, but this has to be seen in context. It is fact that many people smoke dope. It is far better that they buy bush buds sold in Nimbin with a better balance of THC and cannabinoids than what is available in the cities.

But alternative lifestyle is the basis of the Nimbin community. Alternative lifestyle is the glimmer of hope in what seems to me to be a bleak world outlook. The Nimbin community should be justly proud of their energy.

Ageing hippies or whatever they wish to call themselves who arrived in 1973, a wonderful result of the Aquarius festival, are being



Business partners David Piesse and Simon Rose

joined by an influx of young people and families seeking to live healthily, growing vegetables and looking after chickens and not subjugated to persistent threats of terrorism the GFC or whatever else is the current fear mongering of the media.

I bought the Nimbin site because I wish to support Nimbin. Already many people have approached my partner and me with great proposals.

Raw food, juices, herbs and teas, clothing and other local crafts, hemp products and

many other creative ideas that might happen if our plans are approved. The museum site is in the heart of Nimbin, and I hope that the range of enterprises on site reflects the soul of Nimbin.

There will definitely be a large garden area we hope will be a place where people are happy to gather. Tables and benches in the garden, a fire pit, a stage and small secondary space for buskers, a subtle spray of fairy lights at night.

There will be shops and permanent market stalls available for a wide range of rental budgets. The building facing the street will be so Nimbin. I hope the stalls out back will allow us to create individual architectural erections that may become an attraction in itself.

That's why I called this adventure 'Nimbin Dreaming'.

Greens urge building healthier communities

Increasing government investment in preventative health and primary care would keep more people out of hospital and cost less in the long term, according to the Greens.

Greens NSW MP and health spokesperson Dr John Kaye (pictured) joined Greens local candidate for Lismore in the March state election, Adam Guise, outside Lismore Base Hospital to call for more funding for preventative health programs.

"The Greens believe a better quality of life is possible for all residents on the North Coast. Spending on the prevention, management and recovery for patients from a range of diseases and illnesses would keep people healthier and out of hospital. In the long run it is a cost saver. It makes economic sense to help people get well before they need hospital treatment. Currently the health care model focuses on treating the symptoms of disease at the crisis end of the system. The Greens will be taking a range of policies to the election that focus on a more holistic approach to wellbeing, with far greater funding for preventative



programs and rehabilitation," Dr Kaye said.

"Neither the state nor the federal governments are doing enough to promote healthy communities and stop the incidence of in many cases, preventable illnesses like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, hepatitis, HIV, and cancer."

Dr Kaye said NSW had lost \$119 million due to the early axing of a joint state-federal agreement on preventative health while federal cuts would see \$2.2 billion lost to NSW over five years.

"The Greens strongly support spending on public hospitals ... but neglecting preventative health will end up placing unacceptable stress on an already over-stretched system," he said. "Neither the state nor the federal government is doing enough to promote healthy communities."

For instance, reducing children's exposure to junk food advertising is a cheap and effective way to reduce obesity. Healthy school canteen menus should be mandatory in every school.

Mr Guise said it was more tempting for governments to roll out funding to "big ticket" bricks and mortar items such as new hospital wings than investing in long-term solutions to preventative health. He said money could be saved by providing more treatment in community settings instead of relying exclusively on hospitals.

"Community health centres could also play a greater role in health prevention through education and outreach programs, focusing particularly on low-income families," he said. "Prevention is better than cure."

Honourable updates

Rock Valley Hall Inc. has financial assistance under the Lismore Local Heritage Fund Program to refurbish and update the Roll of Honour in the Rock Valley Hall.

A considerable number of names of servicemen from both World Wars have been gathered along with some of their stories.

The original honour board (pictured), inscribed with the names of servicemen who enlisted from the Rock Valley district, in World War One, was placed in the Rock Valley Hall by Horace Knight, in 1919.

In order to create a fitting tribute to service personnel who enlisted from the Rock Valley District, names and stories of men and women from the area who served in all conflicts are being sought.

Anyone who wishes to contribute relevant



information, names, photos or stories of exservice personnel can do so by contacting Betty Olivieri on 6629-3329 or email: bettyo@vnet.com.au

The project is to be completed prior to Anzac Day 2015, so all names and details will need to be made available by the end of February.

Literary ties still growing

by Rob Harle

Our latest publication, a poetry anthology, *Homeward Bound: Poems From Australia & India*, has further strengthened the literary and cultural connections developing between Australia and India.

It is the fourth in a series published with the aim of expanding and exploring the contemporary poetry of these respective countries.

There are sixteen poets, eight from each country. All are widely published and highly regarded poets from diverse backgrounds. There is a poem from both editors, Rob Harle and Jaydeep Sarangi.

The poets featured come from all states of Australia and the Northern Rivers. Local poets are Nathalie Buckland, Bronwyn Owen Allen, Laura Jan Shore). The



Indian poets live in India and also work and live in the UK.

Homeward Bound was recently launched at a national conference at Holy Cross College, Trichy in India, to an audience of over 400 literary, academic and educational participants.

The book is beautifully produced by Cyberwit from India and is available direct from their website: www.cyberwit.net for \$15 USD (includes postage) or from Amazon or Flipkart.

Coroner to rule on future of waterhole access

by Bob Dooley

The inquest into the death of 19-year old Louis Vanderstappen at Hanging Rock Falls waterhole, Wadeville on 30th December is expected to resolve liability issues that have dogged the popular tourist attraction for decades.

Police said the man, a filmmaker from the Illawarra region, was using a rope to swing out over the waterhole at about 12.30pm when he hit a rock face and fell into the water. He did not resurface, and despite efforts from friends and bystanders, police, NSW Ambulance paramedics and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter, his body was not found until the next day by police divers.

Hanging Rock Falls, an ancient volcanic blow-hole which rates a glowing mention in the Lonely Planet tourist guides, has been the site of multiple injuries and tragedies.

Long-time local resident, Neil Lord said it had been a popular spot for tourists since the 1940s, when busloads of visitors regularly travelled from Evans Head and Ballina. "The rope has been there for about 40 years and has been removed and replaced several times," he said.

In recent times, a Canadian tourist drowned in 2003 when he became trapped under a submerged ledge and was extracted by rescuers using poles.

On 30th October 2010, 14-year old footballer Mackenzie Chase Mello from Bardon, Queensland, slipped off the sheer cliff face into the water while trying to access the rope swing at the waterhole. His body was found in seven metres of water by police divers.

At the time, the chief pilot of the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Lynton Beggs told *The Northern Star* at least five people had been winched from



Hanging Rock Falls waterhole

Hanging Rock Falls for neck and spinal injuries over the past nine years, and said the service had conducted more rescue operations at the falls than at any other swimming hole in the region.

While trails leading to the popular swimming hole are on Crown Land, it remains unclear just who is responsible for the site.

The land to the north of the swimming hole is a crown reserve and managed by the Wadeville Reserve Trust, but the land to the south is private property, and access to the swimming hole, and the rope swing, is from the southern bank.

Lands department maps show the private property boundary to run along the side of Leicester Creek, but not include the falls.

According to Kevin Cameron, Manager Far North Coast Crown Lands, "The tree with rope swing attached above the waterhole is on freehold land adjacent to the reserve, and is not under the management responsibility of Crown Lands or the Wadeville Reserve Trust."

However, he would not be drawn on where the legal boundary of the crown

land was.

In 2010, Wadeville Reserve Trust treasurer Michael Lambrechtsen said the swimming hole itself remained in a legal 'no-mans land'.

The Trust recently has completed an improved walking trail from Williams Road to the creek, including the creation of wide concrete paths and a wooden boardwalk, with support from volunteers from the Hanging Rock Landcare Group and through provision of State funds.

Mr Cameron wrote in an email to a concerned resident last month, "An immediate priority will be to install additional signage to provide further warnings of the risks associated with use of the reserve."

"Crown Lands is working with the Wadeville Reserve Trust to ensure that the natural values at Hanging Rock Falls can continue to be enjoyed by visitors and local residents alike, while also ensuring that visitors are made fully aware of the hazards on the reserve."

Whether this will be enough to satisfy the coroner that there are no on-going liability issues remains to be seen.

Pool olympics making a splash

by Sue Edmonds

The 4th Nimbin Olympic pool games attracted the largest crowd yet, and the spectators were treated to some record-breaking performances.

Sally set a new benchmark in the longest distance underwater, covering 23 metres with one breath. Louise managed to overhaul Michael in the last lap of the freestyle marathon with a spectacular surge, and she still had enough oomph to come home first in the crocodile-wrangling, which was a very popular event with three heats.

The crocodiles were exhausted after all the thrashing around, and were deflated at the end of the day.

Richard won the new event, four lengths of backstroke. Mike did an excellent job on shark patrol, not one shark was sighted all morning. The Floaters passed the 20-minute mark and were called in with three contestants sharing the glory, Trish,

the reigning world champion lost her title and several contestants bottomed out, so that was the end for them.

Save the Babies went off without a hitch, the Ducks were successfully rounded up and the noodle race was fast and tight.

As usual, the synchronised swimming display was spectacular. Slippery When Wet did a tight performance with poi balls and mock tyres but the new team The Fane Jondas, took out first prize with their wonderful sequence wearing animal skin material and adding a new dimension to this event, two men performed with six women, a big team with a great future.

The pool-side fashion parade was a sight to behold, Michael Hannan walked in the men's prize and Sue Edmonds dazzled the onlookers in her bright shift/moo moo, designed and sewn by Pauline.

\$415 was raised to assist the pool management with amenities, our next project is a clock for the wall up near the shower.



The Fane Jondas

Friends of the Pool thank everyone for their support, swimming, cheering, cooking sausages, donating cakes, making coffee, and taking zillions of photos. And especially John who does a fantastic job keeping the pool clean and healthy for us all.

Thanks to the Judges, Sue, Mick and Jane, always a difficult task with such quality to assess and deliver on. And congratulations to Sue Boardman for becoming the champion of walking backwards in rough water.

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Green groups spruik Great Koala National Park vision

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW, North Coast Environment Council and North East Forest Alliance have all welcomed state Labor's promise to create a 315,000-hectare Great Koala National Park on the NSW north coast, and have urged the Coalition to support the proposal.

The Great Koala National Park, which is one of the environment movement's key policy priorities for the 2015 state election, would comprise 315,000 hectares of public land in the Coffs Harbour region and would be created by adding 175,000 hectares of state forest to 140,000 hectares of existing conservation reserves. The park would protect up to 4,550 individuals, about 20 per cent of koalas in the state.

Several recent events have highlighted the threats and demonstrated the need for urgent action:

- The number of koalas on the east coast of Australia plummeted by more than 40 per cent between 1990 and 2010, the equivalent of only three koala generations.
 - In 2012, the Federal Government listed the NSW, Queensland and ACT populations as vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.
 - Surveys conducted by ecologists in 2013 in the massive Pilliga forest in the state's northwest, an area once considered a stronghold for the species, found the population had crashed by 75 per cent in 10 years. That koala population is now considered "highly endangered".
- "This is a strong commitment by a new Labor leader intent on making the environment an election issue this March," said NCC CEO Kate Smolski. "By supporting the NSW environment movement's proposal for a major koala reserve, Luke Foley has shown he is prepared to act boldly to prevent the extinction of this iconic species."

"It is quite clear that if these trends continue and dramatic action is not taken to protect and connect habitat remnants, koalas will become extinct in the wild in NSW, possibly in

our lifetime," Ms Smolski said.

"We must do everything we can to ensure this does not happen. Given the koala's status as a national icon, we hope that all political parties will support the koala national park proposal."

"The poor level of protection of koala habitat on State Forests was a major reason for environmental groups bringing forward the proposal for the Great Koala National Park on the north coast," Susie Russell of the NCEC said, "It's the only way to guarantee that koala habitat is truly protected."

"We call on federal environment minister Greg Hunt to urgently investigate the carbon benefits of protecting the Great Koala National Park and identify what the Federal Government would be prepared to pay to avoid the carbon emissions from continued logging," Ms Russell said.

NEFA spokesperson, Dailan Pugh, said the Forestry Corporation claims that protecting 19% of State Forests for Koalas will remove 40% of resources in north-east NSW is an inflated fabrication.

"Similarly the industry's claims that 3,000 timber industry jobs would be lost is sheer fantasy. There are nowhere near this number of timber industry jobs in the whole of north-east NSW. We need to have a debate based on truths, not lies.

"A 2006 study found that visitors to parks and reserves in this region contribute about \$107 million per year in regional value-added activity, which included \$59 million as household income. Visitor spending represented the equivalent of 1,650 jobs in the region. This is on top of the NPWS expenditure and 265 jobs in park management.

"Koalas already attract tourists to this region. Koala parks, where Koala populations can recover from past logging, will attract more visitors and be a boost to our regional economy," Mr. Pugh said.

Round Three in the battle to save our native forests

by Aidan Ricketts

The North East Forest Alliance (NEFA), remembered for their unswerving campaign over many decades to protect the old growth and high conservation value forests (HCV) of NE NSW, has fired a first shot over the bow of the state government in what is set to become round three of the historic fight to save our public forests from unsustainable logging.

Whilst the Terania and Nightcap campaigns led to the historic protection of rainforests in the region in the 1980's, it was NEFA's campaign in the 1990s and 2000s that led to over a million hectares of old growth and HCV forest being protected from the ravages of an unsustainable timber industry. NEFA's battle to save the old growth involved over a decade of blockades and eight successful court cases, culminated directly in the resignation of then Liberal Premier Nick Greiner over allegations that he had improperly secured the vote of a key independent to pass pro-logging legislation.

Following a full scientific assessment of forest values by the incoming Carr government, a series of reserves was set up to save the last of the best. The political compromise at the time was that logging would continue in other state forests under Regional Forest Agreements that provided government-backed guarantees of timber supply that were knowingly unsustainable. In the

years that have elapsed, we have what remains of the industrial logging sector in NSW hammering our state forests to extract a dwindling resource at ever-increasing cost to our forests, and heavily subsidised by taxpayers to boot. Over the past 12 years taxpayers have forked out over \$12m to logging companies to buy back timber allocations that never existed, and that's in addition to up to \$15m a year in direct subsidies to the Forestry Corporation to cover its losses.

Overcutting and systemic disregard for environmental regulations has prompted NEFA to draw a line in the sand and commence a new campaign for a complete end to native forest logging on public lands by 2018 at the latest. This creates a three-year time frame for industry transition and for what is likely to be a tough campaign against the vested interests.

There are numerous important functions that healthy forests provide that now far outweigh the value of industrial logging of our native forests. The native forest industrial logging sector these days employs no more than 1600 people state-wide and remains heavily dependent on cash subsidies from us the taxpayers. Thankfully competition from plantation sources domestically and internationally has as much to do with the death throes of the industrial logging sector as does the lack of a sustainable resource.

The role of forests in sequestering and storing

carbon has become far more important and massively more economically valuable, as well as their function in maintaining stable water flows over changing seasons. For our wildlife, every bit of contiguous forest counts, and the survival of just koalas requires the immediate preservation of very large areas of threatened forests between Sydney and the QLD border.

Whilst the state opposition has recently embraced NEFA's call for a Great Koala Park if elected, the chances of an upset win in the coming state election remains uncertain. The record of the current LNP state government is nothing short of appalling, having presided over four years already of non-enforcement of logging regulations, proposals to introduce hunting and even logging into National Parks and most recently the outrageous proposal to commence highly destructive cable logging on extremely steep slopes in a desperate attempt by the industry to grab previously inaccessible timber. Proposals to introduce extreme new extraction technologies such as cable logging are symptomatic of a desperate industry in its dying days, and a government of environmental vandals. The soil erosion alone associated with cable logging would do massive damage to coastal river systems.

Here in the Far North the picture is even more grim with vast tracts of state forest threatened by logging induced dieback. If the logging isn't

enough, once forest areas are disturbed by logging, lantana infestations often follow which encourage colonisation by bellbirds that farm an insect pest (psyllids) that cause the death of the remaining trees over time. Over 100,000 ha is already seriously effected with up to 2 million ha remaining vulnerable. State forests have known this for years but have failed to ever address the causes of dieback.

So the fight is well and truly on again for our native forests and NEFA with its proven track record are letting the state government know that they have three years to recognise the true value of native forests on a planet in crisis. The ALP plans for a koala park are great but will only come to fruition if there's a change of government in March, if not then it is game on for the whole of the next political term.

Our battles over gasfields were very much about our water resources and so is this battle. We all know that forests provide the best form of catchment for creeks and rivers, for our farms and town water supplies so we all depend on them. The fact that we also need forests for carbon storage and that our endangered species hang on a knife edge are all reasons to make a clean break and save our native forests forever.

To find out more, offer your support or follow the action, go to: nefa.org.au or www.facebook.com/NorthEastForestAlliance or contact Susie Russell: susie@brushbox.info

Tweed's koala-gate protests

Tweed shire councillor Barry Longland has been under fire for a controversial motion to push for koala-protection gates at the Blacks Rocks sports field south of Pottsville to be replaced by a grid, which has angered koala campaigners and inspired public protests.

There are widespread concerns that specially designed koala-grids will work to stop the movement of koalas into the adjoining urban landscape, but (depending on their width) may not work to stop access by domestic dogs in that dogs may be able to jump over the grid, and that removal of the gate would leave no restrictions day or night to motor vehicles driving over the grid, putting resident koalas at high risk of vehicle strike and stress from impactive activities.

Cr Longland's successful motion also called for a study to obtain baseline data on koala numbers at Black Rocks and said the gate would not be removed until the koala grid was in place.

At a protest in Uki attended by around 40 people, president of the Northern Rivers Guardians, Scott Sledge told the rally that more than 200 hectares of primary and secondary koala habitat was devastated by the Christmas Day bushfire at Pottsville, and the surviving koalas will most



The protest at Uki

likely take refuge in favourite food trees like swamp mahogany at the Black Rocks sports field site, which was the only part of their habitat not affected by the fire.

Mayor Gary Bagnall said council staff did not support removal of the gates and were not consulted prior to Cr Longland's notice of motion. Cr Bagnall said fire experts had told him the Christmas Day fire near the sports field was deliberately lit.

In October 2014, the NSW Scientific Committee recognised the plight of the Tweed Coast koalas by making a preliminary determination that their threatened status be upgraded to 'endangered'.

Mr Sledge said the removal



Domestic dog crosses a koala grid

of the protection gate would "almost certainly result in the Tweed Coast koala population becoming extinct. This is not a time to reduce protection for the koalas but to improve it."

Cr Bagnall said that he had arranged to meet with the state environment minister

to discuss council's limited ability to protect endangered wildlife populations and that he would also ask whether the Office of Environment and Heritage would be prepared to take koala protection at Black Rocks out of the hands of the Tweed Shire Council.

Passing of local musician and community advocate

Farewell to Garth Kindred
by Lydia Kindred

The loss of Garth, after a long and brave battle with acute myeloid leukaemia, has deeply saddened many people who knew, loved and respected this intelligent, kind hearted and remarkable man who had a great knowledge of history and world politics.

After receiving a degree in philosophy, Garth moved from Newcastle to the Northern Rivers in the early 80's, beginning the building of his home in 1982 at Rosebank, near the Rainbow Temple, between two lush leafy gullies. With no road access and using only hand tools he designed and built a beautiful wooden house with star shaped timber floors, diamond skylights and windows, in the calm forest setting, amidst towering tallwoods and an ever growing rainforest and fruit orchard that he loved to nurture.

Garth has been a stalwart supporter of the Rosebank community for almost thirty years, being on the committee of both local halls over most of this time. He also established Rosebank Community Inc (RCI) as an umbrella organisation for local groups to support each other and share information and to 'reverse privatise' the *Village Journal* as a community-owned newspaper. Garth co-ordinated Rosebank Landcare and was responsible for establishing the Rosebank Recreation Reserve, registering it as a publicly owned community asset, now transformed from a weedy plot into a pleasant public recreation reserve.



Garth also edited and co-edited with me, *The Village Journal* over a period of 12 years, championing the cause of the environment, interviewing long time locals, and writing many an educational series. 'On Common Ground' eloquently explained the connections we all share in common – from rivers to roads to community halls and much loved local trees. Garth shared environmental information and photos, for local hinterland communities to learn about our natural environment and threats from invasive weeds etc.

Garth created many inspirational and melodious songs throughout his life, writing and playing music since his early teens. While the leukaemia prevented him from completing the recording of his album, local musicians have agreed to record his songs so that his music can be shared with the world. He also has a vast storehouse of original songs

and instrumentals that were recorded in times past that may be released in the future. Garth co-organised local music clubs, supporting the local halls, where hundreds of local musos contributed their talents over many years, much to the enjoyment of those attending as the quality of musicianship was excellent.

Garth was much loved by many for his fine sense of humour and intelligent insights, not least by the young people in the teams he mentored over six years as an EnviTE Green Jobs Corps supervisor.

The commemoration for Garth, held recently at Repentance Creek Hall, saw about 300 friends and family celebrate the incredible legacy of this 'giant' of the local community.

Garth recently spearheaded the campaign to Save Our Rails from demolition by the rail trail lobby. His deep seated belief in the need for rail and public transport led him to write many articles and letters which have, through his insightful writing, helped bring about a resurgence of enthusiasm and belief in the importance of public transport in our region.

He will be sorely missed by all who knew him, and his inspiration will live on in the hearts and minds of those whom he touched, with his beautiful visionary and warm practical nature. His was a great life, cut short, a warrior for peace and integrity – he was prepared to stand up for what he believed in, doing the hard yards in order to change things for the better, with his great love of humanity and for Mother Earth.

We salute you, dear Garth – Kindred by name and kindred by nature.

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Letters

Gas plan not a plan

The NSW Government is spending thousands upon thousands (perhaps now edging closer to millions) of tax-payer dollars in advertisements to try to sell their so-called 'NSW Gas Plan' to the residents of the Northern Rivers. This is an obvious attempt to shore up votes for the coming State election in those seats in the Northern Rivers Region where local National Party candidates are most likely to suffer voter backlash from the many disillusioned members of the community. It is not a genuine attempt to inform, educate and consult with the community.

Many citizens would like the right of reply to these advertisements but we do not have the vast amount of dollars required to buy the necessary newspaper space and radio time to counteract the misleading statements made via this patronising propaganda.

The main avenue for us, the voters, to have our say regarding our concerns, is by writing letters to the editors of our local newspapers. We are grateful for this opportunity, however, there is limited space in the newspapers to publish our letters - certainly not a full page plus one bonus advertorial half-page!

So it is totally unjust and inappropriate that Kylie Hargreaves, deputy secretary, Resources and Energy, NSW Trade and Investment, should write a 457-word letter (19/1) to Grafton's Daily Examiner to refute the written opinion of a member of the public (15/1). The Government is already bombarding us with advertisements - we open a newspaper or other local publication, we turn on the radio or, worst of all, in the privacy of our own home we log into our Facebook page to connect to our friends, and up pops a NSW Government Gas Plan advert! Please, Ms Hargreaves, leave us at least one forum where we can have our say without interference from the Government!

And while I have this much-appreciated opportunity to express my opinion - may I point out that the 'NSW Gas Plan' is not about "Keeping our water pure", "Securing farming generations." It is all about ensuring that the gas industry proceeds throughout NSW!

Rosemary Joseph Bentley

Elephant in room

The 'elephant in the room' is a metaphoric saying denoting something that is palpable, yet unnoticed. It refers to an obvious truth or reality that is so large it often goes unseen -

until someone points it out.

Western culture has a number of elephants standing in its room, one of which is a cultural arrogance towards other cultures.

This arrogance stems from a long history of conquest and colonisation. Since the time of Cortez and the first trading caravels, white Europeans have claimed other parts of the world and exploited them for all the cheap labour and cheap resources they're worth.

This process has changed over the years, and nowadays is more commonly seen in the form of puppet governments and corporate licenses. The West has learned you don't have to actually occupy a country to have control over their affairs!

Along with our economic and military domination however, has come a cultural attitude that views other people as somehow less worthy, less important. Initially, this view centred on skin colour and our (perceived) technical superiority, but these days it often manifests as indifference.

Our media convulses over the recent shootings in Paris, yet largely ignores drone attacks in locations around the globe. Attacks that often miss their intended target, killing innocent men, women and children!

A recent report by the human rights group Reprieve says these killings are fuelling extreme groups and violent reprisals.

So the elephant in the room with terrorism appears to be our own terror. When we kill it's for justifiable reasons, to defend the weak, to defend freedom. But when others kill it's an act of unspeakable horror.

Perhaps the big picture we're not seeing is that murder begets murder and it's all equally bad news regardless!

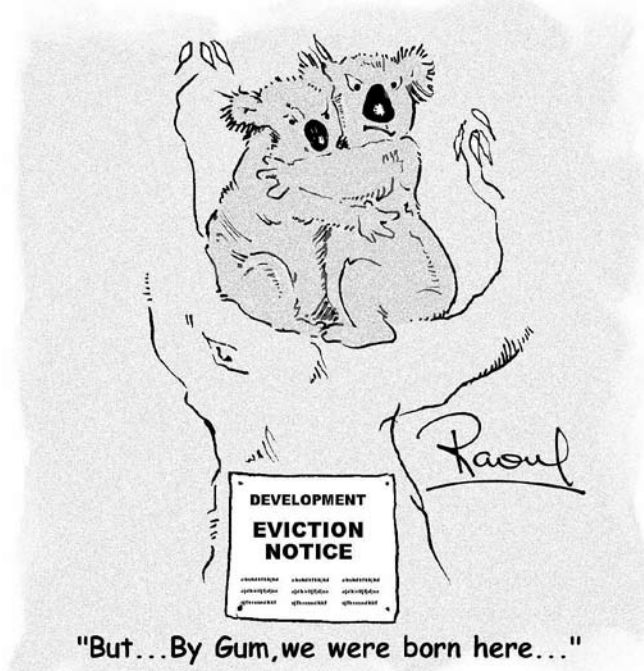
RJ Poole
Lismore

'Chaos' label unfair

I write to you in response to your article 'Chamber in Chaos' (NGT Jan 15), where you recap on recent activities by the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce. Your perspective paints the Chamber in a bad light, and I think you have done this hard-working local organisation a disservice.

Firstly, you correctly mentioned the first AGM as being declared invalid. This course of action was due to many irregularities on the night. The president later sought legal advice and correctly declared the meeting invalid.

At the second, adjourned AGM, there were two contentious issues, the first being with non-



member attendees who believed they had a right of immediate membership status, and immediate voting rights. On this point, the president adopted a most conciliatory position by allowing for a break in the AGM proceedings to formally approve outstanding memberships.

The second issue being that those same people further believed the ballot process, for which I chaired, was not conducted correctly. The ballot was conducted and declared entirely in line with the long-standing Nimbin Chamber constitution and the Incorporated Associations Act. Furthermore, the validity of the ballot process was confirmed during the meeting by a well-respected lawyer member of the Chamber. Claims to the contrary are well off the mark.

The Nimbin Chamber of Commerce is a hard working volunteer business-based organisation. Their immediate work during and following the Nimbin fire resulted in partnering with the Lismore City Council to implement and fund a "Recovery/Tourism" marketing campaign to benefit the Nimbin business community. They should be heartily commended for all their efforts, and there is still much more to be done on this front.

Additionally, a few months ago the *Byron Echo* asked me to comment on a union-proposed WA gas reservation policy, which basically would guarantee locals would receive a guaranteed lower price for the gas than the commercial price.

I responded to this basically saying artificial pricing rarely works. Essentially the story was well reported, however they put a headline over the story that the 'NSWBC supports CSG'. In the final paragraph I said the NSWBC would support CSG, "...if it was safe to do so

and there was no harm to the environment."

The story can be accessed at: www.echo.net.au/downloads/byron-echo/volume-29/byronecho2922.pdf

I have been pulled up several times by people who well recall the headline but not the story.

John Murray
Regional Manager
Northern Rivers
NSW Business Chamber

Sweet reason

Just a short note to thank and congratulate Alan Roberts for his clear-headed, calm and non-hysterical information generally, and especially for his letter in NGT January 2015.

Reading this was like the relief a southerly change brings on a hot and humid Nimbin summer's day. Yes absolutely Alan, "people have a responsibility to verify information that they promulgate."

Don't take Alan's word for all this, or mine for that matter, go buy yourself an EMF meter (\$50 - \$100) and measure everything you irrationally think is emitting killer waves. You'll be pleasantly surprised.

Then please supply factual links to the unbiased, double-blind trials which show how bad all the EMF monsters are that haunt you. If you cannot supply these, then perhaps better not promulgate (or publish) any more harmful nonsense.

Rob Harle
Nimbin

EMR 'harmless'?

As a health conscious, thinking non-scientist, I am offended by the opinions pushed as 'science' by Alan Roberts of Bentley in recent editions of the NGT. He arrogantly states that "the proposed (sic) phone tower near the Nimbin preschool is harmless for reasons of physics and biology I've previously enunciated".

He criticises Dr Jacqueline

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

Boustany's letter for "appealing to emotion" (NGT Dec 2014), yet does exactly the same thing, dismissing a highly respected scientific body (the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)) and other scientists' findings as incorrect and 'against the laws of nature', authoritatively pronouncing the phone towers and phones as 'harmless'. He goes further by ridiculing any opposing opinion or scientific findings as 'EMR misinformation'.

On 21st May 2011, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a committee of 27 scientists from 14 different countries working on behalf of the World Health Organisation (WHO), concluded that exposure to cell phone radiation is a "possible carcinogen" and classified it into the same category as the pesticide DDT, lead, petroleum engine exhaust, burning coal and dry cleaning chemicals, just to name a few. Professor Dariusz Leszczynski, of the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority in Finland, explained why this should be considered big news:

"... for the first time a very prominent evaluation report states it so openly and clearly: RF-EMF is possibly carcinogenic to humans. One has to remember that IARC monographs are considered as 'gold standard' in evaluation of carcinogenicity of physical and chemical agents. If IARC says it so clearly, then there must be sufficient scientific reason for it, or IARC would not put its reputation behind such claim."

Mr Roberts, what authority have you and what exactly are your qualifications? One may

be excused for thinking you're pushing another agenda, such as the Coalitions' substandard NBN internet plan.

The fact is there is scientific evidence, research, and published papers showing that EMR is harmful to humans and other living things. For a large number of people living in this area (and elsewhere), there is enough evidence that they do not wish to be exposed at close range to EMR. It is one of the reasons that many people, like myself, have chosen to move away from urban areas with lots of EMR and live in the country.

Just because it is not scientifically proven in an absolute sense, doesn't mean we shouldn't be cautious in the application and location of such technology. It took many decades of science to prove conclusively that smoking cigarettes causes cancer and other diseases, yet many saw the writing on the wall and knew it was bad long before we had the 'scientific proof'.

After all, if we are truly being scientific, we should apply the 'precautionary principle' and not allow mobile/wireless internet towers to be built close to people's homes. There is no scientific certainty that they are safe, as Alan so boldly (and foolishly) claims, and certainly a lot more study and evidence is required. Perhaps Alan could volunteer for a long-term study and relocate to live under one such tower? In his own words, "People have a responsibility to verify information that they promulgate".

Michael Frey
Nimbin

Rails not trails

As a representative of a group that aims to challenge the dominance of the two "major" parties, Cr Simon Clough's cave-in to the spin from the Nationals on their broken rail promises is disappointing (NGT Jan 15, p. 9). The community and Our Sustainable Future supporters would expect Simon to counter the poor excuses trotted out by Don Page and others.

Fact: regular light rail shuttles would service

eight of the ten largest population centres in the Northern Rivers – Lismore, Murwillumbah, Casino, Kyogle, Grafton, Ocean Shores, Mullumbimby and Byron Bay. Of the remaining two, Tweed Heads will have a rail link in the next few years as Queensland completes its southern rail line to the border. To deny benefits to the entire region because Ballina is not currently connected to rail is ludicrous.

TOOT have proposed a dual use for many years, making use of the land alongside the rail line as occurs in many parts of the world. To opt for a single-use bike path at a cost of \$75 million plus is an incredibly wasteful use of public funds, especially as this would be sufficient to get trains on our tracks instead of ripping them up.

The pitiful "we can't beat the big parties" attitude taken by Councils in the region could come back to bite big time, as it is Councils who will be forced to take on the under-funded cost and maintenance of a bike track.

Rail trails – that is, a cycle track without any rails – are best suited to rural areas where industry and population are declining. However, the Northern Rivers sits within the second busiest transport corridor in the country with a growing economy and population. The Casino to Murwillumbah line connects all major north-south and east-west transport routes in the region.

It has cost the Queensland taxpayer billions of dollars to reinstate its Southern rail line to ensure that the road network between Brisbane and Tweed Heads does not come to a complete standstill. Let's not allow the major parties to make the same mistake in our name. Stand up for our rail.

Cr Basil Cameron
Goonengerry

Laying it on the line

Elizabeth Farrelly (SMH 29/1/15) in her article 'Road to ruin paved with more roads' stated that for the State Liberal government "there appears to be a deep emotional resistance to public transport and a deep love of dirty, noisy, mechanical road culture."

Personally I think it's a deep love of money donated by dirty, noisy, mechanical road companies. Oil companies, trucking companies, tyre and road construction companies all donate to the Liberal party. Elizabeth Farrelly states that the West Connex road project will cost \$12 billion and "a mere \$5 billion, Eco-Transit Sydney says, would

buy us a world-class public transport system."

The Liberal/National party promised for years they would reinstate the Casino to Murwillumbah railway service and extend it to Queensland once they got into government. Barry O'Farrell set up Infrastructure NSW where from June 2011 until July 2013. Nick Greiner was the Chairman.

In 2012 the O'Farrell Government funded a study by the 'ARUP group' which declared that reinstatement of the railway service would cost over \$900 million for 130 kms or approx. \$6.5 million p/km. Recently a private railway contractor quoted \$300,000 p/km for repair to a section of line in Byron.

The Liberal government said the railway service was unaffordable. According to Wikipedia, Nick Greiner is the chairman of Lend Lease Infrastructure, which is doing the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale upgrade to the Pacific Highway, (\$862 million for 17km). This works out to \$50 million p/km. I think this is an ICAC matter.

Beth Shelley
Booerie Creek

Enrol to vote

On 28th March, the people of NSW will be utilising our democratic right and going to the polls to choose who represents us in state politics.

I've been looking at the history of the Lismore electorate, and since 1927 we've had, for the vast majority of the time, National Party MPs. Historically I can understand this, being largely farming country, but can we really afford to keep the Nationals in power?

The Nationals claim to be the voice of regional NSW, yet we have repeatedly been ignored when calling for the Northern Rivers to be gasfield-free and they are in league with the Liberal Party whose policies actively create greater disparity between the rich and poor. This is not the kind of world I want my children to inherit.

So how is it that we can live in the Rainbow Region, a place where people gravitate to live an alternative lifestyle, and yet we have dinosaur politicians still in power?

I can only assume it's because people are not utilising their right to be counted.

If we don't consider what policies and practices the various parties adhere to, if we don't enrol to vote, or don't number every box clearly according to our preferences, then we only

Notices

Free firewood

Storm damage Blue Gum, you cut you haul, phone 0448-334-327.

Dance Studio for Hire

Are you thinking of running a class or workshop? Do you need a meeting space? The Nimbin Community Centre Dance Studio is available for hire at \$11 per hour or \$33 per day, with a \$20 key deposit. The Studio has fantastic natural light, a mirror wall, chairs and tables, and music player. Contact the Coordinator on 6689-0000 or email: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au for more details.

Belly dancing for fun and fitness

Biskit's Belly Dance class begins another term every Friday between 4 and 5pm at the Nimbin Community Centre Dance Studio. New students welcome.

Self-esteem workshop

A three-session workshop, 'Building healthy self-esteem in children' is being presented by Family Support Network Inc. for parents/carers of children of all ages. They will be held on Thursdays 12th, 19th and 26th February from 10am to 12.30pm at 143 Laurel Avenue, Lismore (car park in Shepherd Lane). The workshop is free, and morning tea will be provided. To book a place, please phone 6621-2489.

Songwriting classes and art/craft therapy

Are you looking for some new creative friendships in 2015? Georgina Pollard is running a series of five classes as an experiment and a way of sharing her skills and knowledge with her local community. The classes will run at 34 Clarice Street, East Lismore from 5.30pm to 7pm on five Thursdays: 5th and 19th February, 5th & 19th March and 2nd April. The cost is \$100 for the five classes, or \$25 casual visit. For bookings please email: SingwithGeorgina@gmail.com or phone 0417-640-369.

Wildlife Carers courses

WIRES gives basic training courses three times during the year. The next course will be 21-22 February. Anyone interested may call the 24-hour hotline on 6628-1898 or go to: <http://wiresnr.org/Helping.html>

Al-Anon

Al-Anon Family Groups meet in Lismore at 6.30pm on Tuesdays, at the Quakers Hut, Cnr Wyrallah Road and Dibbs Street and in Ballina at 6pm at West End Lions Club Hall, river end of Brunswick Street. If you are concerned about somebody else's drinking, Al-Anon can help. Go to: www.al-anon.alateen.org/australia or phone 1300-252-666.

Embroiderers' group

Meetings are 9.30am-2.30pm every 1st and 3rd Wednesday and every 3rd Saturday of each month in the function room at the rear of the Red Dove Centre, Keen Street, Lismore. Contact 0423-337-872.

Special General Meeting

Nimbin Organic Food Co-op Special general meeting (for expansion of committee) to be held Monday 9th March, 6pm at Birth & Beyond. Further details in shop or on website: <http://nimbinfoodcoop.org>

Free listings

Keep it brief and to the point and if we think it's of interest to our readers, we'll run your community notice for free. Email us by deadline (see box on opposite page).

really have ourselves to blame when politicians get into power who don't truly represent the interests of the people.

The easiest way to enrol to vote is online via the AEC website: www.aec.gov.au/enrol/ but you can even turn up to a polling booth on Election Day and ensure that your voice in wanting true representation in politics is

counted.

It really is up to each of us to help create governance that will ensure a sustainable future for us all.

Ivy Young
The Channon

Letters also received from:
Beverley Crossley, Geoff Morley, David Norris, Alan Roberts, Scott Sledge, Wayne Somerville and Tony Thompson.

Letters to the editor

NGT welcomes letters by email or post by deadline. 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.