In search of... liberty, freedom and civil rights

by Aidan Ricketts

V ords like freedom, rights and liberty are values that the vast majority of people aspire to for themselves and for their loved ones. These concepts are widely understood, and as a result vulnerable to being manipulated.

When we hear the word liberty or libertarian, sadly many of us quickly picture gun-toting Rednecks from the US or Australian gun lobby working hard to drum up support for their ‘right’ to bear arms, or bigots in Australia apocalyptically defending their white ‘living space’. This is a temptation to engage in racist and homophobic hate speech. But these very same right wing ‘libertarians’ also support draconian anti-protests laws.

The subject of liberty and rights has become a framing context that is being dominated by the powerful. So let’s break this down a little.

There are several categories of right, let’s call them civil and political liberties, personal freedoms; and entitlement rights.

Civil and political liberties are collective freedoms that are the foundation of a fair and democratic society. These are the kind of things you will find in a document like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These are the real liberties that underpin a fair legal system: due process, freedom from arbitrary detention, and the presumption of innocence to the right to a fair trial and self-representation.

The next important category are personal freedoms, autonomy and self-determination. These include our right to choose who we live with, choose our food, sex, gender, or any other characteristics as we choose. These personal freedoms also include our personal rights to choose our own faith and spirituality. Which is ironic because traditionally it has been religious moral conservatives who have been most oppressive of other people rights to religious autonomy.

The last group of rights are entitlement rights. The right to shoot MY gun, where I want, to drive MY car, where I want, or to do what I want on MY land. Suddenly we see where the so-called libertarians of the right are coming from. In the context of civil and political rights all at, these do not help uphold the institutions of democracy, nor do they support the protection of all people, or protect the rights of people to lifestyle self-determination. They are largely the right wing libertarians who think that property rights enjoyed by the have rights.

Right wing libertarians have a fatal flaw in its logic. It promotes minimum government interference in the power of the powerful, opposes progressive taxation (taxing the rich), and argues for smaller government at every turn. Hang on at every turn! No, there’s one huge gaping exception. Right wing libertarians support the endless expansion of the prison industries.

The massive police, court and prison (and now private prison) system that keeps an unequal property system in place and that rounds up and imprisons the have nots. The USA has the highest prison populations of any regime ever in history, it has severe prohibitions on drug use in most states, and severe laws against the sex industry workers. Yet the gun, junkie and privilege and there’s a huge wealth disparity.

Left wing libertarians on the other hand see the property system as part of the problem and the real emancipation of people to be associated with an effort for economic equality. Civil and political rights enable groups with a grievance to organise, mobilise and advocate for their advancement as Australia’s trade unions and environment groups have been trying to do for many decades. The left of Australian politics (Greens and Labor) have always been more sympathetic to campaigns to decentralise things like diverse sexualities, the sex industry and personal drug use.

Freedom of speech also underpins an open society. Free speech has never been an absolute right however. The right to free speech is most valuable to ensure open discussion and criticism of government and powerful institutions such as corporations.

We should be rightly cautious about any incursions on free speech, but we also understand that there may need to be exceptions. Defamation laws for example are an exception, as are laws against hate speech. Hate speech does not serve the function of speaking truth to power. The laws against hate speech are designed to protect the rights of minorities of live in safety and not be subjected to potential mob violence and discrimination.

The right to refrain to do what you want on your own land places land ownership above collective well-being, ecology and above intergenerational equity. There has never been such an unfettered right. We could learn much from first nations people about our responsibilities to the environment rather than our self-centred entitlements.

So be aware, the so-called libertarians of the right are just protecting vested wealth and privilege at your expense. There is a need to clarify our thinking around these ideas before it is too late and ascertain that collective civil and political rights are the real liberties worth protecting, and that personal rights to self-determination are also important for all people.

With the National Right to Bear Arms in Australia to arrest the steady erosion of our rights and civil liberties, but it needs to protect people and the environment not the entitlement rights of a few gun-toting landowners, or the right of a few racists to engage in public hate speech.

In search of... liberty, freedom and civil rights

by Bernadine Schwartz

2018 is the fourth consecutive year that Australia has continued to break records for bumper rainfall and again we are watching climatic conditions deteriorate here and in countless parts of the world. Nearly all of Europe has been rained on by an extremely hot and wet July, investing an unprecedented bushfires and record flooding, while we in Australia experience the effects of the worst drought in recorded history.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology’s predictions for future rain are not encouraging and they have forecast below average rainfall for the three months leading up to March 2018. Droughts, floods and bushfires have always been a part of Australia’s make up but these major events used to occur every 50 to 100 years and according to the Bureau of Meteorology we are now seeing them every 5 to 10 years and they are intensifying.

No one is realistic enough to survive and regenerate after a natural disaster but when they happen more frequently the environment isn’t given sufficient time to recover and this poses a huge threat to our wildlife, the environment and ourselves.

When Hurricane Harvey hit Texas last year it destroyed an unbelievable 31 trillion gallons of water and according to NASA, it actually caused the crest beneath Texas to warp and sink by 117mm, as it washed over the area as well as Hurricane Katrina a decade earlier. An additional 300,000 cubic metres of flood water has flooded to the Brushy Bayou, a tributary of the Houston Ship Channel. The flooding has killed and injured people, destroyed property and infrastructure and cost billions in property damage.

Water scarcity is becoming a widespread problem on our planet and is occurring in locations that have historically always had an abundant water supply. We in Australia consume more water than any other nation even though we live on the driest continent in the world. A study was done by international water experts, Hoekstra & Chapagain revealing that Australians use 170 litres per person per day, which is the second highest in the world after Canada with 279 litres and the US with 217 litres.

The use of those who have our own water supply are far more careful but for others tap in a limitless supply of water. Our planet has had the same amount of water for two billion years, of course, it’s not running out and the water we pollute is simply lost forever.

I remember a time when a barbecue was always a big deal but now that has been transformed into a backyard fire and I suppose we need our barbecues to cook our meat the way we consume. We are currently third on the global list of meat consumers behind US and Kuwait, and even though we are eating 111.5 kgs of meat per year, the resources that are being sacrificed to keep our cattle alive during this drought is insane and simply unacceptable.

We need to be aware of changes the LNP government has just made to our laws. We have halved our share of marina parks at a time when history shows these truly need protection. One of Australia’s oldest marine sanctuaries, Lord Howe Island is on the list, as well as the Coral Sea which is the cradle for the Great Barrier Reef and the only location left where giants of the oceans still thrive.

There was a time when huge homes, dishwashers and a double garage were a part of the American dream. We have emulated the American lifestyle to such a degree, that we now build the biggest houses in the world. Since the 1950s our houses have more than doubled in size from 100sq to 240sq and some of those homes are only occupied by a couple or a small family while homelessness grows to epidemic proportions.

The average Australian household also has access to 6.4 screens and all with Internet connections and home entertainment systems. Australians are responsible for disposing of approximately $8 billion worth of edible food every year and if you include food being thrown out from supermarkets and restaurants the total is $20 billion, according to the federal government.

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Fantasies Erotique cabaret 2018 is coming up on Saturday 21st September at the Nimbin Town Hall for another night brimming with elevating performing arts.

This show’s production is somewhat grand – the lighting and vision mixing with live camera feeds, done by Tone Wonderland from Crystal Grid, is an exhibition in itself.

Producers Jaz and Judy Who have created the show which is a collaboration of creativity, sensuality and rawness, and the overall outcome is to expand the audience’s imagination.

Raw Designs fashion and costumes are the foundations of the cabaret, where all the imagination begins.

This year the acts will be among some of the favourites. A mixture of local and national performers will deliver a raw, delicate, erotic and bold show.

“It’s about giving the audience a sense of being right on the edge of laughter, sensuality and enthusiasm. We want the viewers to go home and feel open minded,” said Jaz Who.

This original Erotique cabaret, which has been running for six years now, has always been restrained, keeping it right on the edge but no further. It grows every year.

“We put on this show every year for the community, because they have so much fun. Ticket buyers come from all over the place, Byron, Gold Coast and even Sydney,”

The event will be catered by the Radical Fairies, which is a show in itself.

Tickets are $85 VIP for a front row seat, or $45 for general admission. (This price is the show only.)

Tickets are available online at: eventbrite.com.au or in Nimbin at Perceptio Books, or in Lismore at Music Bizarre (4BF).

This is a licensed event. Doors open at 6pm for food and seating, and the show starts at 8pm.

What is the price of Internet fame?

Winner of the 2016 Matilda for Best Independent Production, Viral is a story about Art and Zane, two boys who seek to attain internet fame in order to become more popular at school and to make some money.

It examines the role of social media and technology and how it impacts the way we record, communicate and think about events of racism, abuse and violence in our community.

It investigates the line between disassociation and raises awareness about such events.

Inspired by true events, Viral uses physical theatre, multiple role-sharing, verbatim political theatre, AV and an evocative musical score to create a visceral and dynamic theatrical experience.

“Viral was inspired by a number of true events and broader societal changes facing all of us. The show explores desensitisation, responsibility and the role of social media in our modern world,” said directors and performers Hayden Jones and Sam Foster.

“During the development of Viral, we engaged with various demographics and cultural groups on the Gold Coast, to hear a diverse cross-section of perspectives concerning the themes and issues in the play. This process, along with our own research, raised many interesting ethical and moral questions about the role of technology, the internet and the media.”

“We wanted to create a show that raised these themes and issues in an interesting and thought provoking way by combining episodic action that is held together by a strong narrative.”

Viral is an example of Shock Therapy Production’s signature style of doing as much as possible with as little as possible.

Viral will be performed on Wednesday 12th September at 7:30pm at Lismore City Hall. Recommended for ages 13+. The NORPA bar and dinner will open from 6pm. Tickets are $25-$36 through:

www.norpa.org.au or phone 1300-066-722.

The Nimbin GoodTimes
www.nimbingoodtimes.com
Battle of the Bands the finals
Saturday 22nd September, entry free.
The Finals are here for the Battle of the Bands – Passport to Airlie.

The winner of this final will play 3-4 gigs at the Airlie Beach Festival of Music in November, be paid $1000, and receive VIP accommodation and access. This is a great prize for musicians, and leads to great networks and potential gigs down the track.

From 7pm on Saturday 22nd September, these will be five bands in the Nimbin Bush Theatre auditorium with free entry. Playing will be local soul songstress Sarah Stando, three-piece indie rockers Mecha Mecha, folk-roots band Monkey and the Fish and the incandescent talent of singer-songwriter Josh Lovegrove, plus the winners of the semi finals, who are TBA at time of press.

The judges between them have a wealth of musical experience, and are: Chana Waters (Tweed Creative Studios), Tim Tonkin, (Multi-award winning composer, producer, songwriter, videographer), Mel J Will (founder of Nimbin Music FB, critic and photographer), and local musician Reilly FitzAllen, (founder of the Northern Rivers Massive).

This is great way to see and support our local musicians, so come on down and cheer them on!

Artwomb
Saturday 29th September, 12.30pm Entry by donation.

Artwomb is back at the Nimbin Bush Theatre, after having already held three well-received workshops so far this year.

These meetings are collaborations across all art mediums available to all artists. The idea is folk coming together to create art within a mutually supportive and inspiring art tribe!

It’s a fabulous experience for performers, artists and punters. Everyone is welcome. The Cafe will be open.

The best of Hip Hop
Saturday 6th October, 7pm $5 entry. All ages.

Hip Hop at the Bush, hosted by MJ Main, is coming to the Nimbin Bush Theatre.

MJ Main started Rapping at 14 years old and has never slowed down. He has created a thriving hip hop community around his shows that bring together a range of performers of the Hip Hop/RnB and Rap genres.

Text Nine, Krizz Kaliko, Obie Trice, Swiftly Mcvay, Stevie Stone, Fortay at Large and many more.

This event will be a spectacular showcase of big names and newbie MCs who come together for the love of Hip Hop, Rap and wicked beats.

Catch local rappers and influencers from the Brisbane scene in a celebration of Hip Hop that is open to all ages.

Get on down to the Mighty Bush and be a part of it!
Mullum music fest approaches

Diversity, community, equality. That’s the vibe that underpins Mullum Music Fest, to be held November 15-18, the popular small town festival that’s on every music lover’s bucket list.

With headline acts like Nigerian Bombino, Gneuina’s Mad Professor, Jaba from Jamaica, and Osaka Monaurail from Japan bringing the music of the globe to the stage, the festival also brings local music to the globe with its third announcement celebrating the immense talent of the region.

Festival Director Glenn Wright is committed to continuing this festival’s exciting trajectory with a line up that is all about inclusivity.

“I think when we say diversity and equality, it is of nations, gender and music styles. There is also a common thread of good quality music, and we are very aware of the local arts scene, our community, and try to include as many of these artists each year,” Glenn said.

There’s one sure way of telling Mullum Music Festival is about diversity and that’s by having a look at the audiences.

There are children, older people, teenagers, mothers, fathers, young adults, babies – all dancing, listening, walking the streets and generally vibing along at the shows. Inclusivity was the festival vision 11 years ago, as it continues to be the shows. Inclusivity was the festival vision 11 years ago, as it continues to be the shows.

“Jeff is such an extraordinary singer-songwriter and a seminal figure in the world of roots and blues music, we are thrilled to have him on board,” Festival Director Lou Bradley said.

“Jeff Lang to light up Nimbin

Roots music legend Jeff Lang will set the Australian counter culture capital alight when this year’s Nimbin Roots Festival bursts into life on 14-16th September.

The annual celebration of peace, love and roots music is delighted to welcome Lang onto the stage for the first time, along with dozens of other incredible musicians from across the country.

“Jeff brings the raw power of his music and voice to the stage, and his voice is truly ‘for the people and by the people’.

Making use of Nimbin’s beautiful halls and outdoor stages, it welcomes musicians from all corners and gives them all equal billing.

A colourful array of talent will join Jeff Lang to the line-up, including explosive Northern Rivers quartet Wild Marmalade, award-winning country/roots artist Paul Greene, consummate songstress Husay Hicks, and American banjo virtuoso Cameron DeWhirt.

The Festival will incorporate solar powered stages and stages this year, and for the first time bus services running to and from Lismore, Byron Bay and Mullumbimby.

There will also be a colourful array of stalls and great camping options for those keen to have the full “Nimbin experience”.

For ticket info, head to: www.nimbingoodtimes.com

Jeff Lang to light up Nimbin

Mullum music fest approaches

BOWLO
25 Sibley Street Nimbin. Phone 6689-1250

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT THIS MONTH

NIMBIN ROOTS FESTIVAL – FRI-SUN, 14-15-16th

• Open Mix Nights – Weds 12th & 26th, 7-7pm
• Friday Tag – 6pm Kitty Cervins
• Friday Tag – 8pm Eddy Wills
• Friday Tag – 10pm Asia Fenton & the Mountains
• Friday Tag – 10pm Tony and the Horns
• Friday Tag – 10pm Octopus

Saturday Night Live – 11pm-1am

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Sunday Night Live – 11pm-1am

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BISTRO AND LOUNGE
25 Sibley Street Nimbin. Phone 6689-1473

NOTA BOWLO
25 Sibley Street Nimbin. Phone 6689-1250

What’s On in September?

• Saturday 8th – Old Jayco Owners Club visit
• SunGAYz – Sunday 23rd, 1-7pm
• Jazz Club – Saturday 29th, 6-9pm
• Sunday 30th – Crafton Travellers
• Social Bowls – Sundays 9am
• Courtesy Bus – Enquire at Bar

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COMING UP!

• Isle of Dogs / Diana Anaid / Tailor Birds
• JahR/ Vanishing Shapes / Dark Comedy
• Medicina / Matilda / Thor Phillips
• Linsey Pollak as Carrotman / Timbuktu
• Mad Professor / Kayo Grande

FIX + INFO
www.nimbinbushtheatre.com
CAFE BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES
(02) 6689 1111

September 2018

Page 17

The Nimbin GoodTimes
Yothu Yindi & the Treaty Project

As seen by Yothu Yindi's success in the 1990s, Indigenous music, song and dance are powerful tools of protest. The current national conversation surrounding Indigenous affairs and recent wave of new generation artists keeping the message and culture alive have made it clear that now is the time for iconic music to renew their involvement in that protest. Yothu Yindi & The Treaty Project inspired by the remix package celebrating the 25th anniversary of Yothu Yindi's Treaty (Filthy Lucre remix). Which resulted in ARIA Hall of Fame inductees Yothu Yindi reuniting with Gavin Campbell of production outfit Filthy Lucre"

**Festival pits art against science**

By Omega Breakspear

"It's all about National Science Week in Lismore, and bringing together the whole community. We are celebrating creativity and our enquiring minds. We're looking to engage people who may not ordinarily engage with science," said Ajita Cannings, the co-ordinator of the Arts vs Science Festival at Lismore's Quad space last month.

Opened by the Nini Nahrí Gali Bundjalung Dancers, I found myself immersed in a day of science, art and music.

I got to see the moonrise at 11am up close, watched the sun with its halo of solar flares, and later gazed at the mystery of Venus, all through the wondrous telescopes of the North Coast Astronomy Club, thanks to their (un) amateur astronomers (pictured).

Then it was off to discover how to identify frogs from their calls and wonder about eating insects. I'll be leaving that culinary experience to the frogs. I preferred the Love Food Hate Wast Coal cooking demos.

The different water quality impacts in our catchment were graphically demonstrated using River Watch's terrafomed realistic model, loosely based on the Richmond and Brunswick Rivers water catchment areas (pictured). These impacts come from agriculture, urban areas and industry.

We were told about simple everyday things we can do to help improve water quality. There was a school in the model, so we saw how litter left in the playground ended up in the river through the effects of wind and rain. Ditto for litter anywhere.

In urban areas, sediment ends up in the river through storm water drains when hosing paths or washing cars. Different farming practices were also demonstrated in terms of sediment control and riparian vegetation. The model starts up at Rocky Creek Dam and, showing all the different catchments, ended up at the ocean.

My next science adventure was in Training the Brain. From playing a giant chess set to draper picture memory games, it seems there are many ways to improve our brains.

I particularly liked the workshop by Nimbin local Michelle Walker titled 'Beyond Words – how pictures make our brains smarter.' She explored how art helps us to communicate. Our brain doesn't take on words easily, it thinks in pictures. Michelle discovered that using drawing to communicate ideas works more effectively than just talking about them. Memory is also aided by having visuals. For more on Michelle's useful techniques you can go to her website: www.curiousmindsco.com.au

Talking of curious, nothing could be more quirky than 'curiouser and curiouser.' Katie Cooper-Wares, who performed strange experiments on unsuspecting visitors. She explained nothing but rather attached cryptic messages to our foreheads written on yellow stickers as she worked laboriously on the crowd. It's almost scientific versus sound was another theme.

In this case sound won outright with the musical entertainment highlights including Love Your Mother. These Northern Rivers Conservatorium students played an impressive set of jazz fusion with considerable talent. Follow these young stars on the rise, I will be. Richmond Tweed Regional Library hosted hands-on science with coding in the computer lab. Interestingly, most of the participants were very young and extremely skilled and fast in this digital domain. I was out of my league.

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THERE’S A NEW STAR IN THE AGENCY

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$\$\$\$ MILLIONS WORTH OF REAL ESTATE FOR THIS REGION

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Tom & Becky Jepgenberg

"I had the difficult task of selling my late brother’s property at Jiggi, complicated by the fact I live in the Blue Mountains. What I was looking for was a painless, hassle-free sale. Klaus from Nimbin Hills Real Estate delivered exactly that plus more. He kept me up to date on everything, managed to get a good price and a fairly quick sale. I would highly recommend Klaus & the team at Nimbin Hills for honest hassle-free & professional service.”

Matt King

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