

Tony Parkes reflects on the successes of Big Scrub Landcare

Story and photo by Greg Bork

“It’s magic, nature is magic, look at what it does. This was a degraded paddock! You put a bit of effort into it, and look what it creates. We’re just catalysts, we facilitate but nature does it. It’s very satisfying to walk through here and see this.”

Tony Parkes and friends founded Big Scrub Landcare in 1992, and began trialling different methods of restoring rainforest on his property near Bangalow.

“We have no big remnants nearby so we had to plant it out. This particular site boomed away; in a couple of years we had canopy cover, and then we started having Landcare field days to show people what you could achieve.

“If you give nature a chance, if you get rid of adverse human impacts, weeds, cattle, and just give the rainforest a go... look around now and you can see all sorts of natural regeneration; there are seeds coming in here, this is a very resilient ecosystem.

“When the settlers arrived in the 1880s, the whole of this area was selected in roughly 100-acre blocks. The selectors had to clear all the rainforest, all the scrub as they called it, in order to get freehold title of their land – that was a government requirement. The government didn’t say leave 15% or don’t destroy rainforest along the creeks.

“The net result was 99% of the rainforest was cleared; the creeks were denuded, the Richmond catchment became the most degraded river system in New South Wales over the years,



and this was a tragically fragmented landscape with probably a hundred little patches of remnant vegetation scattered across the 75,000 hectares of the Big Scrub.

“It was the biggest patch of lowland rainforest in the subtropics. There were many smaller patches, but the Big Scrub, as the locals called it at that time, was the largest patch, and it still is the largest aggregation of remnants that we have of lowland subtropical rainforest.”

Tony brings unique skills to his role of not-for-profit fundraising and community engagement, with a former working life in science and business, once running a fertiliser business and later as an investment banker.

“Bush regenerators look after the remnants and restoration plantings; they are the front-line people and they come from a huge range of different backgrounds and from different areas.

“The landholders are the next batch

of our community who care for the rainforest, and they’re usually, but not always, new landholders who have moved into the area because they love its biodiversity and its rich forest ecosystems. Some of the old families have done the same thing; the Johnston family would be the best known.

“Many, many people care for the rainforest. They might have only a suburban plot, but they plant some rainforest trees and shrubs and orchids, so there’s a very wide spectrum of the community who love and care for the rainforest, and they do it in their own individual way.

“It’s all about the environment, but it’s also about practical care; it’s not airy-fairy politics. We almost lost it; we’ve saved what’s left, and we’ve got to provide ongoing care for it. We’ve got to try and expand it, and we’ve got to enhance its capacity to rejuvenate itself in the long run.

“We’ve got to nurture it and care for it; it’s the essence of our community. We the community can lead government, and we can make difference. We can care for this beautiful environment, our rainforest, and we can help sustain it indefinitely into the future.”

Listen to the full 90-minute interview with Tony in the rainforest he planted at: reciprocalrestoration.org where he reflects further on the successes and future direction of Big Scrub Landcare, current advances in restoration techniques, and maintaining energy at the age of 87.

I struggled to keep up with him on our rainforest walk.



Garden Club hits payday



by Kerry Hagan

The Nimbin Garden Club has raised funds for three worthy local causes.

The club has donated another \$500 to the Nimbin Central School breakfast club, \$500 to Barkers Vale Primary to purchase a watering system and good soil, so the kids can begin summer veggie planting, and \$500 for the plantings around the new aged care seating area

Photos show committee member Peter Hagan presenting cheques to Barkers Vale Public School acting principal, Julia Griffin (top) and Nimbin Central School’s principal Cath Marshall.

Thanks to everyone who contributed for our fundraising efforts, which will hopefully result in more gardens for more people to enjoy.

The Nimbin Garden Club meets monthly, weather permitting. See the Garden Notes column on page 27 for details of the next meeting.

Reflections post Extinction Rebellion week of actions

by Benny Zable

The action by Northern Rivers activists with Extinction Rebellion outside the Santos headquarters in Brisbane ended up with a number of arrests on a pedestrian crossing. I was among them, walking out to vacate the pedestrian crossing after supporting a spontaneous roadway display of banners.

This got me thinking about an article that was sent to me through facebook two years ago, ‘The next wave of green extremists’.

Militant environmentalism is coming. And we aren’t ready for it. Written by Jamie Bartlett for the *Foreign Policy* magazine in 2017. The photo displayed is of the Greedozer/Fossil Fools masked character taken at a rally in New York City while protesting President Trump pulling the USA out of the Paris Agreement.

This article is a good one to reflect on, as we are witnessing the reaction by governments to the recent series of XRebellions around the world. See: <https://foreignpolicymag.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/gettyimages-691299260crop.jpg?w=960&h=460&crop=0,0,270,0>

For that reason, XR was created, to remind us of this ticking time bomb and people power; that civil disobedience gets the people in power to take notice; that system collapse, famine and war are imminent if we fail as a species to drastically draw down to reverse the rise of CO₂ in the atmosphere

around the world peacefully. Co-founder of Extinction Rebellion, Roger Hallam warns us in an interview: “Something drastic has to happen.” See: <https://youtu.be/9Hyaxtatda> There are a number of Roger Hallam talks on YouTube worth listening to.

These are Extinction Rebellion’s 10 values and ethics:

1. We have a shared vision of change: creating a world that is fit for generations to come.
2. We set our mission on what is necessary: mobilising 3.5% of the population to achieve system change, using ideas such as “Momentum-driven organising” to achieve this.
3. We need a regenerative culture: Creating a culture which is healthy, resilient and adaptable.
4. We openly challenge ourselves and this toxic system: leaving our comfort zones to take action for change.
5. We value reflecting and learning: Following a cycle of action, reflection, learning from other movements and contexts as well as our own experiences.
6. We welcome everyone and every part of everyone: working actively to create safer and more accessible spaces.
7. We actively mitigate for power: breaking down hierarchies of power for more equitable participation.
8. We avoid blaming and shaming: we live in a toxic system but no individual is to blame.



Benny at the Brisbane Extinction Rebellion action

9. We are a non-violent network: using non-violent strategy and tactics as the most effective way to bring about change.

10. We are based on autonomy and decentralisation: we collectively create the structures we need to challenge power.

On 2nd September, I was privy to get a seat on the Mystery Dingo Environment Tours troop-carrier to participate in a series of actions to stop the Adani Carmichael Coal mine.

It took a few days to make it to Birri country to the growing Bindee action camp property just out of Bowen, North Queensland.

We heard the news that Adrian

Burraguba and the Wangan and Jagalingou family council pulled out of their camp following their native title being extinguished by the Queensland Government. After a number of meetings back at the camp at Binbee, the campaign moved to exposing contractors helping to build the Adani mine infrastructure.

We packed up and headed for Mackay, and on 9th September we blockaded a not-publicly-announced-tender polyethylene pipe contractor, AC Whalan around 6.30am. One locked on, while 30 of us picketed, demanding the company withdraws its tender from the Adani project.

Spokesperson Donna Smit said, “People within the industry have leaked the companies competing for Adani’s piping contract. AC Whalan have not publicly declared their interest, understandably, because the majority of Australians do not want this climate-destroying mine as many thousands have already shown they will publicly oppose those involved in it.”

In the last fortnight, five people had been arrested in two separate actions stopping work at the Townsville office of another piping company Iplex. More than 50 companies have publicly distanced themselves from working with Adani in response to public pressure.

On 12th September, we staged a tug-of-war street theatre action outside MP George Christiansen’s office in Mackay, supporting a couple of Frontline activists locking on to a coal loading conveyor belt at Abbot Point.

On the the way back to Northern NSW, we were driving through smoked-filled skies, reminding us that climate change is the burning issue. If you would like to support me, please email for the download of the Greedozer/Fossil Fools mask through: www.bennyzable.com

PS. The Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc. will be holding its annual AGM on Friday 22nd November at 4.30pm for a 5pm start. We need fresh energy from Nimbin as we build momentum towards the 50th anniversary.

Where is everybody?

The Sculptor (NGC253) Photo: Shirley Kaiser

by Alan Roberts

With Fossil Fuel plutocrats pushing their products ever more forcefully and deviously on our dying planet, I wonder whether this is what happened on all the other expected, yet now silent, extrasolar civilisations.

Were they seduced, like us, by the luxuries that fossil fuels gave them to the extent that they justified ignoring the disaster crescendoing around them? Were they greenwashed to gullibility? Was procrastination more powerful than fear? These are insights that it would be helpful to know but will we ever find out?

Since 1950, when Enrico Fermi asked, "Where is everybody?" at a scientific meeting, we have been searching for radio signals from any technologically advanced civilisation on the tens of billions of possible life sustaining planets in our Milky Way and have come up with not a peep. At first the searches were spasmodic, until in 1984 astronomers Carl Sagan and Francis Drake founded a continuous Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI).

It was Drake, who in a belated preparation for a meeting in 1960 on the likelihood of other civilisations wrote a list of things they needed to know as agenda items then realised that if they could evaluate the probability of each item they would then have a probability of there being extraterrestrial technologically advanced civilisations which became the 'Drake Equation'.

The Drake equation's last factor –

the length of time that a civilisation is transmitting signals and then stops for some reason – is the most salient for us. Because the possible life-sustaining planets are in the outer third of the Milky Way (clear of its more dense centre where Super Nova are still sterilising any life-forming molecules), it could take as much as 100,000 years for a signal to reach Earth ie the width of the Milky Way in light years.

Hence if a civilisation transmits signals for 100,000 years, their signals will fill the Milky Way. If less than that, then both the wavefront and its end will expand out through the Milky Way and then is lost from us into the rest of the Universe. It is estimated that new intelligent civilisations will arise at the average rate of 1 every 1000 years, so apart from the signals from dead civilisations we've missed because they passed while we weren't looking, there's likely to be a whole new crop on their way that we'll miss too if we snuff ourselves out before the signals reach us.

Recent past Ice Ages were 100,000 years apart, homo sapiens evolved 200,000 years ago, so life spans these time scales with ease, but technologically intelligent life, because it must use its fossil carbon initially to develop technology then switch off fossil carbon before it cooks everything, may be a rare thing.

We are now seeing with alarming clarity all the forces within civilisations that can end life. The silence from the rest of the Milky Way is itself a message that we've reached the make-or-break point.

Formic acid fermentation

by Thom Culpeper

Ensilation of vegetable matter makes more stable and nutritious kimchi/kraut/vegetable ferments.

Ensilation is a method of preserving food in an acidic environment, whereby lactic acid produced by lactic acid bacteria stabilise biological material as a stable palatable product, free of an unwanted microbial and taste contaminating form.

The purpose of this controlled fermentation is to allow low-Ph lactic acid to act on plant cells in a relative oxygen-free environment to break down lignums and to

inhibit the development of unpalatable and undesirable contaminants and tastes eg, butyric acid and associated by-products, allowing competent and beneficial digestion.

Salt and NaCl brines are the regular methods of fermentation. Depending on ambient temperature and available cooling resource this process can go awry.

Enter now stage left, ants and their family of 'bite-bastards' (wasps and bees, the Formicoidea) and their common toxin, formic acid, a very stingy compound that most of us in the north know more than enough about. The ants being of the group Formicidae, they being the 'Jumping' and 'Green ants' of the north and the 'Bull-ants' of the south.

Ensilation (silage), that stuff now commonly seen as coloured wrapped bales on most dairy farms, is a fermented pasture product. Fermented vegetables? The same purpose and outcome. Food value-increased food.

Other high protein material, fish, cheese and wine and grogs are also common ferments. Many kimchis in the East combine marine matter and mixed plant material in their cultural ferments, and have done so for a millennia.

All of these processes evolved to overcome inconsistencies of food resources.

Other than the people of the near Arctic amid the permafrost, all other cultures developed many forms of food preservation. Temperate zone peoples have been long active and inventive in this technology.

From Ag-fodder to human veg preservation? Why ant-toxin? Why formic acid?

Salt at 3% is generally good enough to achieve safely-preserved ferments for the short term, without pasteurisation. The Koreans manage to husband their kimchis for years. This outcome being in the main dependent on temperature and inundation and oxygen-free.

0.45% to 1% of 88-90% formic acid lowers



the fermentation rate and allows more complex proteins, oils, carbohydrates, starches and various sugars to survive the process. It also encourages more 'crunch' in the ferment.

Pickle fermenters achieve the 'snap' in dill-pickle with lime, after acid pickle and before final pasteurisation and vinegar storage.

The salt regime is enhanced initially at wilt stage with the formic acid.

Formic acid is a material of world importance in many processes. This stuff is used by the tonnes to treat silk, clean beehives of infection (Verona), tanning and dressing of leather (30% of world supply). Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of this stuff is produced worldwide, annually.

Seeking some supplies will educate the general fermenter on matters of the nature of bloody-minded, food input rip-offs.

Formic acid is inexpensive, if you resource the material in China, India and so forth. Not in the West though, and not from the Yankee sharpies stooging around the clean-food racket, hell-bent on well-practised retail banditry.

Formic acid from Alibaba (China) is available for from US\$500 to US\$900 a tonne. Current US prices on Ebay, Amazon and some Oz health (?) sites: Formic acid (88% generally): AU\$50.00 and AU\$48.18 for 30mls. Thirty miserable mls. Nearly a hundred bucks for a dessertspoonful! So shop around.

Need a 'Fermipot' (pictured) that works, at affordable prices? Contact: FermiPots@greenmail.net and Mardi will give you the drum. Buy local, survive local.

thewholeearthveg@garden.com



View from the loo

by Stuart McConville

My magpies are chortling their morning rituals while I spy out over the dryness from my perched throne.

The pair have their territory firmly staked out with my place right in the middle. It must be Maggie high status to have "a feeder" like me that they own.

I do feel sorry for them at the moment as it's a very rare insect or worm that braves the harsh surface. Climate change reality is upon us, and I am thinking of going to ground myself. Perhaps I can

Light those farts...

sequester the carbon in my body by living underground...

Actually I have been sequestering my own carbon for years. In fact, anyone who owns a composting toilet is doing just that. The concept that, as individuals, we are taking responsibility for our own by-products by composting them, is not only sustainable in the short term, but combats climate change in the long term. In fact we are making a contribution to reducing climate change every time we poo.

People who have a septic system, on the other hand, are actively contributing to climate change. Septic tanks break down our carbon by-products anaerobically and produce methane, a potent climate change gas.

If you're going to produce methane, you'd be much better off producing bio-gas. If you've ever lit a fart, you'll know how flammable methane is. Millions of people in China and India use bio gas every day to generate heat

and light.

Biogas for cooking is produced using a reactor vessel into which go the by-products of the whole family *plus* a dozen or so pigs, chooks, goats etc. There are now some small commercially available reactors that can operate very efficiently. The slurry breaks down anaerobically and produces methane.

The bio-gas produced is often quite dirty, containing significant proportions of sulphur dioxide. This is highly corrosive, so the system needs to be entirely plastic or masonry. One way to remove the SO₂ is to bubble the gas up through a scrubber, such as Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH).

This will remove some of the impurities, and result in a cooking gas that won't stink the house out if you leave the tap on.

While travelling in Vietnam, I saw quite a few bio-digesters. One I remember well used a large clear plastic sausage bag

about three metres long to store the bio-gas in. It was tied off to pressurise it with bits of what might have been pig's intestine. It was suspended directly above a row of gas cookers in the kitchen, a brave place to put it in the event of a kitchen fire.

I have always thought the best way to retrofit for the sustainable re-use of cities sewage would be to construct giant biogas-producing terminals along the sewer where energy is most needed by industry. Growing up in Melbourne we used to say, "Flush twice because it's a long way to Werribee" (where the whole of Melbourne's sewage gets treated).

Some of the industry to the west of Melbourne, on the way to Werribee, could benefit from biogas production.

Stuart McConville runs Pooh Solutions, compost toilets and wastewater consultants: 0427-897-496, web: www.poohsolutions.com





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DOLPHIN AWARD WINNERS

by Pampussycat Bourne

The stars were out at the Ballina RSL Club for the annual North Coast Entertainment Industry Awards (NCEIA) Dolphin Music Awards in October.

The Awards returned after a year's break, with over 400 entries, the highest number of entries ever, in the 23 categories.

Organiser Mariska Pinkerton explained about the year's break, "Our website went down, and we found we were unable to resuscitate it. As a not-for-profit organisation, we found that we had a budget of next-to-nothing. Then a miracle came our way, and sublime Shelly Brown came to our rescue and volunteered to build us a new website."

The Dolphins were beamed to the world via a live feed, and streamed live via River-FM. 63 judges had made the decisions for the night. Candle-lit tables, champagne corks popping, all ears waited for MCs Maxim Pike and Suzanna Freymark to announce the winners for the categories.

Music For Children: The Moonshiners – 'The Pirate Song'. **Instrumental:** The Bunya Brothers – 'I Wish You Peace'. **Soul/Gospel:** Shelly Brown – 'Burnin' For A Long Time'. **Urban/Hip Hop/ Funk/ R&B:** The Ninth Chapter – 'Smoke Stack'. **Heavy & Hard:** Ritchie Jameson – 'Universe Recycle Theory'. **Protest and/or Environmental:** Greg Shubert – 'Love Now' (featuring Simone Smith). **Jazz:** Denson Baartz Quartet – 'Dark Sky'. **Blues:** The Ninth Chapter – 'What's Going To Happen Next?'. **Electronic:** Petersea – 'Opening The Light'. **Folk:** Luke Bennett – 'Trust'. **Youth:** Hunnybee – 'Meant To Be'. **Music Video:** Moreton – 'Circles'.



Alternative/Indie: Sideshow – 'Fragments'. **Adult Contemporary:** The Loveys – 'Dinner For One'. **Rock:** Beast Machine – 'Time Slowed Down'. **Pop:** The Rochelle Lees Band – 'Warning Signs'. **Country:** Maria Stratton – 'Cotton'. **Production:** Brendan Stanborough – 'Do Whatever Makes You Happy'. **Songwriter of The Year:** Josh Lee Hamilton – 'With The Wind'. **Male Vocal:** Luke Ferguson – 'Do Whatever Makes You Happy'. **Female Vocal:** Shelly Brown – 'Tendrils Of Love'. **Song of The Year:** Moreton – 'See Yourself' (featuring James Vincent McMorro). **Album of The Year:** The Fortunate Souls – 'A Better Place'.

With such talent on the North Coast, do yourself a favour and check out some live music.

Mish Songsmith nominated

The North Coast Entertainment Industry Awards (NCEIA) Dolphin Music Awards has over the years become really popular, with so many talented artists, many of them so young, from all over Northern NSW, entering.

This year, the competition was fierce and the stakes high, yet our local songstress Mish Songsmith was a finalist in the prestigious 'Female Vocalist of the Year' category.

As dozens of her friends on facebook commented: "Well deserved" and "...so you should be recognised!"

Even though she didn't win the award, she was in the top three of over 30 singers who entered, and Mish has been feeling chuffed and honoured ever since, to be up there beside well-established, soulful Aretha-like singers of the region. Good on you Mish!

Mish is a climate passionate and earth loving singer/songwriter, who will be playing her heart-connected, spiritual and relevant music for the current times in a non-stop play-list of gigs this month.

You can witness her



powerful, emotional and passionate vocals for yourself, almost every weekend in November:

- Friday 1st: Nimbin Bowling Club, 6.30-9pm. Mish plays solo at the Bowlo every month.
- Sunday 3rd: Sphinx Rock Café, 12-3pm. Popular live music venue that's great for a Sunday drive along the picturesque tourist road, just 15mins from Nimbin towards Uki.
- Sunday 10th: The Channon Market Buskers Stage, 10am-2pm. Playing as a duo with local talented musician Jewel Musica, alternating between piano, vocals and uke.
- Friday 15th: Marty's at



Caba, 6.30-9.30pm. Mish's new regular gig playing solo at this popular beachside live music venue on the beautiful Tweed Coast.

• Saturday 30th: The Channon Tavern 5-9pm. Mish and Jewel will be leading a sing-along for the beginning of the Festive Season. Always packed out with locals and families, with a visit from Santa on The Channon Fire Truck around 6.30pm. The kids love it! Come for a sing. You can also check out Mish's music and news at: www.mishsongsmith.com or say hi, connect with and follow her musical stories on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/mish.songsmithmusic

Hannan's third piano concert

Michael Hannan will be staging the third of his 2019 solo piano concerts on Sunday 10th November at 2pm in the Nimbin School of Arts Hall.

This time he will be joined by his long-time music collaborator, Fred Cole. All the works in this concert will have an improvised element.

The pièce de resistance of the program will be James Penberthy's flamboyant and somewhat irreverent musical diptych: *Hymn for the Death of Jesus/Devils in the Cathedral*, a work for piano four hands, written for Michael and Fred in 1987.

It was featured in concerts they gave in Melba Hall, University of Melbourne (1987), at the Newcastle Bicentennial Festival in the concert hall of the Newcastle Conservatorium and at the inaugural Blue Mountains Festival.

Some readers might remember, James Penberthy (1917-1999) was the foundation Dean of Arts at the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education in Lismore.

James' work on the Nimbin program includes visual and verbal prompts to improvise as well as conventionally notated elements. For example, the pianists are instructed, at one point, to "climb up the wall of the cathedral then onto the ceiling and (then) play vicious little caperings of devils".



The other works on the program will be compositions written by either Michael or Fred. Like the Penberthy work, these works involve structures in which the pianist(s) can improvise in a free way.

Also in November there will be a Michael Hannan Retrospective Exhibition held in the foyer of the Southern Cross University Library in Lismore.

In 1986, Michael was appointed as Senior Lecturer and Head of Music at Lismore's Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education (NRCAE), a predecessor institution of Southern Cross University. His brief was to develop a degree in contemporary popular music, which was to be the first of its kind in Australia.

The retrospective exhibition covers a number of themes of Michael creative and academic work since 1967.

These include: his research on the music of Peter Sculthorpe and his subsequent creative collaborations with Sculthorpe; his work as a composer of concert music focusing on piano works that are based on transcriptions of Australian birdsong; his work as an improvising musician including "comprovisation", a creative practice combining improvisation and composition; his composition of the score for NORPA's production of *The Flood* (2004); his film music and sound research; and his "visual scores" and related visual art works.

The exhibition runs from 4th to 29th November. There will be an opening in the Manning Clark Room (which is off the foyer space of the library) on 6th November at noon. All are welcome to attend the opening.

As part of the exhibition program, Michael and Fred will perform a free concert of his and other piano works in the University's Studio 129 (D Block), on 14th November, 12-1pm.

The program for this event will be different from that of the Nimbin School of Arts concert, except that they will give another performance of the James Penberthy piece.



It's been five years since musical maestro, Pietro Fine founded Northern Rivers' community ensemble, Orkeztar Lizmore (pictured), a mixed abilities ensemble that plays tunes from around the world (including Australia).

Since then, this growing band of 20-plus members has been going from strength to strength, including playing at the HonkOz and Illawarra Folk Festivals.

You can always expect a smorgasbord of music from 'Ork Liz' (as they are affectionately known) – anything from Klezmer to Rock, Jazzed-up-Folk, Middle-Eastern, African-inspired music – and expressions of truth, hope, fear, critique, protest, or love through instrumentals and songs.

Some tunes are timeless, while others may be contemporary originals, with much joy taken in improvising and extemporising within them.

Last performing in Nimbin in 2014, the Ork will do their multi-cultural thing there again in November, this time in tandem with local lovers of Americana folk, Black Train.

Fronted by "the Reverend" Kim McLean,

Black Train play ol' timey hillbilly and early Gospel style tunes with a beautiful combo of banjo, mandolin, guitar, harmonica, fiddle, cello, double bass and of course, vocal harmonies.

Black Train are teaming up with Ork Liz for the Ork's annual concert in this year, the 70th anniversary of folk hero Pete Seeger's iconic protest song, 'If I Had a Hammer'. Both bands embrace, as did Seeger, the power of song by the people and for the people.

They will combine to present a finale that includes a new up-tempo version of the Hammer song, re-written by Pietro Fine to voice our concerns about climate change inaction.

The Power of Folk concerts, with Orkeztar Lizmore and Black Train will be performing at Nimbin School of Arts on Sunday 24th November, 2pm and also at Lismore City Bowling Club on Friday 29th November, 7.30pm with yummy drinks and snacks for sale.

Keep an eye out around town for posters advertising the gig or check out social media or the Ork's new website for up-to-date details: www.orkliz.org

Sharing the wisdom on medical cannabis

by Michael Balderstone

The HEMP Embassy hosted another excellent Medican Workshop last weekend at Nimbin's unique Bush Theatre beside Mulgum Creek.

It was a terrific mix of visitors, from as far away as Perth, average age maybe 60.

Dr Deb Waldron introduced the full house to the plant she finds so useful in healing for so many different ailments. Dr Pot himself, Andrew Katelaris, spoke next and it was rich pickings for all who were there, and entertaining. His breadth of experience with both hemp and cannabis is unsurpassed, and there was no end to questions. Fortunately we had two days, and the speakers were available for one-on-one conversations when they weren't on stage.

After the break with Radic Al doing extraction demos, Dr John Teh from PlantMed spoke about his clinic in Brisbane which is expanding quickly. In fact, Medical Cannabis Clinics are popping up like mushrooms across Australia now. There are 77 approved cannabis medicines which can be prescribed by the clinics which you then have to collect from a chemist. Sometimes that can mean



up to a month waiting for your medicine to arrive, and it costs considerably more than the black market price. However it is legal, and we heard stories from people being prescribed buds for around \$15 a gram; indoor clinically-grown buds from Canada which come in a childproof container.

There was a lot of discussion around drug testing drivers for THC and hence the popularity of Cannabidiol, CBD, for many. Even so, there were some very positive healing results coming from the whole plant extractions with minimal THC.

The sooner someone comes up with an impairment test for drivers the better, but

meanwhile it was unanimously agreed there is no need for Aussie cops to be so ruthless. We are testing drivers like no other country, which has just created more disrespect and multiple ways to mask your cannabis use. Which is hardly the way to go about road safety, is it?

Lawyer Sally Macpherson spoke about her visit to Canberra with Lucy Haslam and how the one politician to follow up with her and maintain interest has been Pauline Hanson! Medicine maker Malcolm Lee told us wonderful stories including how to feminise seeds.

These pioneering Medican gatherings get better and better

as the collective knowledge grows and the mixing of the different factions, sharing their expertise generously, is Nimbin at its best.

Typical of that was CBD Luke who came for Saturday evening to show us the brand new movie Green Light, made about himself and his mate Nick who are healing people with their cannabis extract medicines. Luke answered questions following the movie, and it was hard not to be inspired by their passion and dedication.

No doubt we are in the midst of a dramatic and fast change to the way society sees cannabis use. In the next year, much will change. Legal pot must come down in price and Aussie grown mediweed will come on tap very soon hopefully, helping that to happen. And maybe, just maybe, we'll be allowed to grow our own soon, like they can in Canberra next year.

Disco Sista managed the sound and screen as usual and you won't feel the great atmosphere, but the talks will be up on youtube in a week or so... just type in Nimbin Medican.

The next Medican weekend is planned for January 18/19 next year, so mark it on your calendar.

Finally, the gold standard for pot

by Michael Balderstone

Ideally, as each new American State creates a model for legalising cannabis, they learn from those behind them and the models get better and better.

After all, this is new terrain and coming out of nearly a century of prohibition, it's tricky to get it right.

Pennsylvania is the latest cab off the rank, and weed enthusiasts are saying their new bill could be the gold standard legalisation bill for the free world. Just what we here in Oz, 20-plus years behind, have been waiting for!

What I love most about it is that anybody over 21 can get involved, not only as a grower but also as a seller, keeping the big corporations from dominating the market.

Here's the highlights of the bill, with thanks to the Philadelphia Enquirer:

Homegrown: Individuals would be allowed to cultivate 10 plants. That's more than any other legal state. Homegrowers keep it for personal use or give it away but would be prohibited from selling it. Annual permit: \$50.

Microgrowers: Small businesses would be allowed to grow up to 150 cannabis plants to sell to processors and dispensaries. Microgrowers wouldn't be able to use the product themselves or sell directly to consumers. Permit: \$250.

Dispensaries: Current

medical marijuana dispensaries would be able to sell recreational weed as long as they kept their inventory and supply chains separate. There would be no cap on the number of potential retailers but ownership would be limited to three storefronts. Dispensaries would be allowed to hold permits to deliver cannabis and open a lounge where people could consume marijuana. To ensure safety of the products, dispensaries would be held liable "for civil treble damages" for harm caused by inaccurate labelling of sold cannabis. Permit: \$5,000.

Bigger growers: So-called Big Marijuana would be kept in check. Permits would allow for no more than 150,000 square feet of outdoor weed farming or 60,000 square feet under indoor lights. There would be no limit on total number of growers, but each grower would be limited to an ownership stake in only one grow facility. Application would cost \$100,000, annual renewal would cost \$10,000.

Processors: Could purchase weed from big growers and microgrowers to make pills, tinctures, vape cartridges, and concentrates. Permit: \$1,000.

Delivery service: To get cannabis from dispensaries to consumers, individuals would be able to deliver by foot, unicycle, bike, car, bus, train, or armored car. Dispensary employees or independent contractors could serve as

deliverers. Permits: \$50.

BYOW lounges: Much like a bar is for alcohol, a public lounge would serve cannabis users and could be owned or attached to dispensaries. Lounge owners could sell admission but not sell product within the lounge premises. Customers required to bring (their) own weed. Most legal states do not offer lounges. Permit: \$1,000.

Taxes: Set at 17.5%

Research: Colleges and universities could grow and process cannabis in conjunction with any classes they offer related to the weed industry. All product, however, must be destroyed and not used by any individual. Though the offer is attractive, most schools would be unlikely to participate for fear of being stripped of federal grants.

Social justice, expungement: All criminal convictions for cannabis-related offences would be removed from a

person's record. Anyone incarcerated on a marijuana-related crime would receive a commutation. Pending criminal charges for cannabis would be dismissed.

Social justice, education: Creation of a network of schools to offer classes for prospective cannabis entrepreneurs.

Social justice, grant program and loans: Up to \$2 million would be available as interest-free loans for low-income people who want to participate in the recreational marijuana industry who have prior cannabis-related criminal convictions.



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Mullum Fest Magic



Quivers: Holly, Bella, Mike & Sam
Photo: Jade Elford



Alana Wilkinson



by Mel Williamson

The musical delight that is Mullum Music Festival is nearly here (14th – 17th November). Over 200 performances across the multiple (and varied) venues will bring you many shades of musical genres from the international, national, and local smorgasboard of acts.

Just a few of the acts to catch include Nano Stern, Z-Star Trinity, Sibusile Xaba, Dereb the Ambassador, Emma Donovan & the Putbacks, Steve Gunn, Husky, Will and the People, Harry James Angus, Wagons, Mojo Juju, Joe Pug...

There will also be markets, art, comedy, dance acts, circus, and the fabulous Orleans-style street parade to feast on.

As well, part of the Mullum magic is the vibe that permeates the whole town – stopping to listen to street performers between venues is always a highlight, there really is music everywhere.

The always lovely volunteers and workers, and the relaxed music-loving crowd also deserve high mention.

Mullum Music Festival is my personal Northern NSW festival highlight. Since moving to the region (two years after the first one), I have been to every festival, and every festival has delivered... and then some.

As a bonus, this year's theme is 'Where The Wild Things Are' – how could you not want to be part of that!

For tickets and more info, go to: www.mullummusicfestival.com



At Eternity's Gate

by Teresa Biscoe



Directed by painter-turned-filmmaker Julian Schnabel, *At Eternity's Gate* is a moving addition to his series of films on visionary outsider men: *Basquiat* (1998), *Before Night Falls* (2000) and *The Diving Bell and The Butterfly* (2007).

With a screenplay co-written by veteran Jean-Claude Carrière, who collaborated on some of Luis Bunuel's best known films (including *Belle de Jour* and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*), the script draws freely from Van Gogh's letters, as well as myths and stories about the artist.

during a period of illness are so intimate you almost feel as if you should look away.

And the keen intelligence with which he approaches the film's many scenes of Van Gogh painting give us access to the absorbing process of looking and mark-making.

Dafoe is really painting, and while the results look a bit muddy – in the real paintings Van Gogh's brush strokes and colour separation are clean – he's able to accurately portray the determination required to turn experience into paint.

It focuses on his wildly productive time in Arles, where the prior years of effort and experimentation culminated in several breakthroughs that pushed painting into new territory.

Faithful to the artist's essence, the film is unconstrained by historical approaches to Van Gogh's life, allowing the gaps in his history – such as his assumed, but never proven, suicide – to bloom into fiction.

Willem Dafoe plays the ever-fragile Van Gogh like an exposed nerve, prone to fits of raw, unsteady emotion. He's buoyant when communing with nature and racked with a tomb-like muteness in periods of despair. In Arles, he drinks too much and his violent outbursts put him offside with the town's residents.

This focus on perception and representation allows Schnabel to continue his own experiments with the image. He incorporates Van Gogh's experiments with complementary colour into the film's colour system, and the ever-mobile frame narrows and blurs as Van Gogh's mental health deteriorates and his obsession with finding new ways of seeing intensifies.

The edges of the image fall out of focus, creating a tunnel vision effect as he spends hours tramping through the countryside around Arles, a mundane landscape of ploughed fields and scrubby hills that are transformed into riotous colour and abstract form in Van Gogh's late work.

Like the exhilarated brushstrokes Van Gogh favoured during this period, Schnabel's shots are energetic, free and charged, like blood pumping through the veins.

The main conflict comes from his friendship with Gauguin (a strangely unfamiliar Oscar Isaac), who is paid by Van Gogh's brother Theo (Rupert Friend) to go and keep Van Gogh company. For several intense months, the pair live and work together, painting the same subjects and arguing about their different approaches to painting.

When the friendship unravels, Van Gogh falls into an unshakeable grief.

The special pleasure of Dafoe's performance is his openness to these moments of fragility. His uncontrollable loss when he realises Gauguin is leaving and the trembling vulnerability of his body as he curls up in Theo's arms

Van Gogh's intensely spiritual relationship with nature feels especially resonant when you realise that in the film, Arles is Arles; that the path Dafoe walks is the one Van Gogh walked over a century earlier.

This mystic sense of place culminates in an exquisite moment, shot at dusk as the light turns from yellow to blue, where Dafoe rushes through the fields and collapses into the earth as if folding into it, his body merging with the soil.

A moving and inspirational film about the life of a fascinating and troubled genius.



Above: Nina Lotus. Below: Ren Waterfall.



Nimbin Bowlo Open Mic

Story and photos by Mel Williamson

The Bowlo Open Mic nights (1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month) continue to go from strength to strength at Nimbin's local community club.

There is always a bevy of varied local talent up for their 15 minutes, village visitors from far and wide, plus an increasing number of lovely musos from our neighbouring villages and towns dropping in.

And it's not just musicians – poets and comedians are also more than welcome. Come along early and put your name on the board to get up and share what you love performing for the enjoyment of the always enthusiastic audience.

The club's PA and mics are provided, operated by a rostered volunteer sound engineer, along with a drum kit, bass amp. Bring your own instruments and pedals, but an electric/acoustic guitar is available for those who have just happily stumbled upon an open mic night.

The Bowlo is Nimbin's community

club, and is run and staffed by volunteers (they always welcome more). Become a social member for just \$5 a year.

The open mic crew are also music-loving volunteers who organise the nights and have fundraised for a lot of the PA, stage equipment etc to ensure live music always has a home in Nimbin (so next time the tin goes around please contribute something to help with the on-going costs of maintaining and replacing equipment).

Also keep your eyes open for the (fundraiser) Open Mic calendar that will be out in December featuring some of our favourite acts from over the years.

The fabulous Greenkeepers Bistro is open from 5.30pm for your delicious dinner needs, music etc kicks off around 7pm.

November Open Mic nights will be on Wednesdays 6th and 20th.

Check out photos from each Open Mic on our facebook page: Nimbin Bowlo Open Mic

NIMBIN BOWLO

25 Sibley Street Nimbin. Phone 6689-1250



What's On in November?

- **Blush: Cabaret Bowlesque** – Saturday 9th, 7.30pm \$20
- **Open Mic Nights** – Weds 6th & 20th, 7pm
- **Poetry Gathering** – Thursday 7th, 6pm
- **Social Bowls** – Sundays, 9am
- **Visiting Club** – Sunday 24th
- **Courtesy Bus** – Enquire at Bar



First-timers and novice bowlers welcome

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT THIS MONTH

- **Friday 1st, 6pm** Mish Songsmith
- **Friday 8th, 6pm** Nightcap Jazz
- **Friday 15th, 6pm** Sarah Stando
- **Friday 22nd, 6pm** Brommers
- **Friday 29th, 6pm** Cass Eleven



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Empowering women's narratives

by Jenny Dowell,
LTC publicity officer

Lismore Theatre Company is again staging Eve Ensler's acclaimed *The Vagina Monologues* to round off the 2019 season.

The Vagina Monologues, first performed in 1996, is based on interviews with 200 women.

The play, a series of individual monologues and four group pieces, explores consensual and nonconsensual sexual experiences, body image, genital mutilation, direct and indirect encounters with reproduction, vaginal care, menstrual periods, sex work, and several other topics through the eyes of women with various ages, races, sexualities and other differences.

For this production, Director Sharon Brodie has selected 10 local women to present 12 monologues by characters aged from 16 to 72, and four group pieces.

Sharon Brodie has directed *The Vagina Monologues* twice over the past eight years, each time varying the monologues and the group pieces.

She says, "I love presenting *The Vagina Monologues* to audiences, because it combines my passion for theatre with my commitment to human rights. These stories are educational, empowering and powerful and they can be enjoyed by everyone."

Actors in this production include actors familiar to LTC



The cast with director Sharon Brodie
Photo: Richard Johnson

audiences, Elyse Knowles, Beth Hobbs, Kashmir Miller, Natalie Havilah, Sarah Jane Loxton, Megan Lester, Jenny Dowell and Sivi Tuoro, and newcomers Mechelle Anderson and Ajita Cannings.

Elyse Knowles has participated in *The Vagina Monologues* previously and says, "It is truly an honour to be involved in *The Vagina Monologues* for the third time. The beauty of this show is that it not only deals with the experiences of women in the world but it continues to evolve over time and as each new person brings it to life."

The youngest member of the cast, Kashmir Miller says, "Being a part of *The Vagina Monologues* is an empowering experience

that has made me think about the power of womanhood and sisterhood in new ways. "My piece explores contemporary attitudes towards young women, and it's been a pleasure so far learning with my character how to embrace yourself and become free from other's perceptions." The show is confronting, poignant and funny and while there are references to sex and violence and some coarse language, it is suitable for mature teenagers. *The Vagina Monologues* runs from 29th November until 8th December. Bookings can be made at: www.lismoretheatrecompany.org.au or: <http://bit.ly/VMbookings>

Auditions for Soft Murder
Bette Guy is directing her play *Soft Murder*, at Lismore Theatre Company's Rochdale Theatre in March 2020.

Auditions are to be held on Saturday 23rd November between 10am and 2pm at the Workers Club in Keen Street.

There are several male roles with a variety of ages required. Older men are welcome to audition. There are also two roles for females, between 25 and 40 years.

Bring a one-minute piece to perform, although the audition will consist mostly of improvisations. Please bring a notebook of some kind.

Enquiries: Bette on 6628-2034, 0401-344-827 or email: betimagine@gmail.com

The untold story of the Witches of Oz

Wicked tells the incredible untold story of an unlikely but profound friendship between two young women who first meet as sorcery students at Shiz University: the blonde and very popular Glinda and a misunderstood green girl named Elphaba.

Following an encounter with the Wonderful Wizard of Oz, their friendship reaches a crossroads and their lives take very different paths.

Glinda's unflinching desire for popularity sees her seduced by power, while Elphaba's determination to remain true to herself, and to those around her, will have unexpected and shocking consequences for her future.

Their extraordinary adventures in Oz will ultimately see them fulfil their destinies as Glinda the Good and the Wicked Witch of the West.

As in the movie, the Wizard of Oz is an old carnival huckster who blew into Oz in a hot air balloon and became a false-faced leader. But there's a twist in both Maguire's novel and the musical with regard to the relationship between the Wizard and Elphaba.

The Wizard (pictured) is played by Carl Moore, a keen participant in a variety of shows at Ballina Players over many years, from drama to farce to musicals, from intense seriousness to side-splitting comedy. Always keen to send shivers up the spines of our audiences, Carl aims to explore the variety of motives, moods and morals of the Wizard.

Wicked opens at Ballina Players Theatre, 24 Swift Street Ballina, on



Photo: Lyn Gale

Friday 8th November, and runs until Sunday 1st December. Tickets are \$30/adult, \$22/child (16 and under), and are available at Just Funkin Music shop at 124 River Street Ballina, 6686-2440 (a \$2 booking fee applies), or online at: www.ballinaplayers.com.au (no booking fee). All shows are at 8pm except for Sundays which are at 2pm.

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www.nimbingoodtimes.com

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