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Council commences Covid-19 relief measures

Lismore City Council will reduce fees and defer the commencement of interest on overdue payments by 60 days as part of a range of measures to help residents and businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Council will also hold a workshop next week on the financial impact of deferring interest charged on overdue rates for a period of up to 15 months.

Council voted unanimously at an extraordinary on 27th March to implement the following measures:

- Extend the commencement of interest accruals on overdue notices by 60 days;
- Halt all legal action on overdue rates except those already before the courts;
- Reduce the minimum per week repayment for overdue rates to \$25.

Council will also reduce the following fees:

- Community facility hire fees – full refunds for cancelled bookings;
- Commercial use of footpaths – no fees for a period of 15 months from 1st April 2020 to 30th June 2021 to allow businesses to re-establish;
- Community group tenancy rentals – fees waived for community groups that rent Council-owned buildings;
- Market fees – no fees from 1st April to 30th September 2020; and
- Building owner fire certificate – no processing fees for one year.

Lismore Mayor Isaac Smith said Council had chosen not to borrow funds at this stage to provide rate relief with Council acknowledging that it is not in a position to increase borrowings.

The Mayor said Council would lobby state and federal governments to provide much-needed funding.

“Council will seek support from the state and federal governments to provide relief to residents and businesses. Council does not have sufficient cash reserves to waive or defer rates and we must continue delivering essential services,” he said.

“Council understands that the current Covid-19 crisis is having devastating impacts on businesses and families, and we have implemented measures to ensure we do not further disadvantage those who are already struggling.

“We are eager to hear the announcements by the Federal Government around further support for businesses including measures to protect commercial tenants.”

LCC service delivery

In line with NSW Government announcements seeking to minimise the risks posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Lismore City Council has made significant changes to its service delivery.

Residents can be assured that the following essential services will continue unaffected:

- water supply;
- sewerage;
- waste collection;
- public safety measures.

Changes to services include:

- The Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre in Wyrallah Road and the Nimbin Waste Transfer Station have now re-opened Mon-Fri, 8am-3pm for residents without kerbside waste collection and business operators, with booking essential prior to entry. Phone 1300-87-83-87 with ID.
- The Revolve Shops are **closed** indefinitely. Members of the public are requested not to bring in goods to the Revolve Shop as there is no storage capability;
- The Goonellabah Sports and Aquatic Centre and the Lismore Memorial Baths are **closed** indefinitely;
- Lismore and Goonellabah libraries are **closed** but the eLibrary is open, providing access to reading materials in downloadable digital formats from the RTRL website: www.rtrl.nsw.gov.au

- or the Richmond Tweed Library app;
- The Lismore Regional Gallery is **closed** indefinitely;
- The Lismore and Nimbin Visitor Information Centres are **closed** indefinitely;
- Lismore City Hall is **closed** indefinitely;
- Council depots, such as at Brunswick Street and Wyrallah Road, are **closed** to public access; and
- The Corporate Centre in Oliver Avenue, Goonellabah, will be **closed** indefinitely. Some Council staff will continue to work from the building and people can continue to phone Council.

Council activities that will continue to operate for the time being are:

- Roadworks, with the works program continuing, subject to resources;
- The Lismore Airport, with a reduced number of flights;
- The Blakebrook Quarry;
- Lismore Cemetery and Crematorium, with some new health protocols in place;
- Internal departments such as finance, planning and development, IT and HR. Members of the public are reminded they can go on-line to pay rates and water bills, order and pay for conveyancing certificates and even pay invoices such as those due for development applications.

People who cannot access on-line services should phone the Contact Centre on 1300-87-83-87.

Council staff are being redeployed where necessary and/or shared across the region. As part of business continuity, many staff have been set up to work from home so that services can continue.

Council is committed to maintaining services wherever possible during this difficult time.

The priority is the health and safety of the Lismore community and Council employees. Council thanks members of the public for their patience and understanding.

Local government elections postponed

The NSW Government has postponed the September local government elections in the face of the Covid-19 crisis.

The decision to postpone the elections was deemed necessary to ensure the health and safety of voters, NSW Electoral Commission staff and election candidates.

It follows Parliament passing amendments to the *Local Government Act* on Tuesday night to provide the Minister with the power to postpone the elections for 12 months with a possible further extension to 31st December 2021 should the need arise.

Current Councillors and the Mayor will continue to hold their civic offices until the rescheduled local government elections are held.

The postponement of the elections will not change the future schedule of council elections, and the subsequent elections will still proceed in September 2024.

NSW Parliament has also enacted

legislation to allow councils to hold meetings and briefings electronically instead of physically.

Virtual meetings will be held for the next six months with an extension to 12 months if necessary.

Council will provide further information once revised meeting procedures have been developed and technology tested for these interim virtual meetings. All Council meetings will continue to be live-streamed on Lismore City Council's website at: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au

Meanwhile, Council's public safety and compliance staff will continue to support local business owners on how to comply with the new Covid-19 restrictions announced by the Prime Minister.

It is critical that businesses adapt their operations under the new restrictions to comply with social distancing and public health standards.

Any businesses that are unsure of

how to operate takeaway and delivery services in light of the new restrictions can phone Council for assistance on 1300 87 83 87.

The NSW Government has launched a 24-hour hotline for workers and businesses to access a range of advice and support on non health-related Covid-19 enquiries. Phone Service NSW on 13-77-88.

Covid-19 information and updates

Council has launched a Covid-19 information page with the latest information and advice about changes to Council facilities and services.

The page contains important links to useful websites and fact sheets on assistance for residents and businesses.

Residents can ask staff questions online via the Q&A function, view ongoing news updates and join the community forum to share stories and experiences. To view the page, visit: yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au

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CWA lockdown

by Linnet Pike,
President CWA Nimbin

In a "normal" world, CWA Nimbin Branch would have been celebrating our first anniversary this month. Possibly with a High Tea or something suitably celebratory!

Just over a year ago we re-opened the Branch and have had an exciting tumultuous and successful year. CWA Nimbin Branch had originally been established in 1928 and after many years of dynamic activity and being a focus of community life, had finally wound up in 1992.

We had small, humble, local goals for our first year, but ended up running a huge project when the fire season last year put many of us locals at risk. We started a project to Feed our Firefighters which then expanded to feeding many of the local Defenders. This action brought our Branch together in solidarity and grew the Branch in a spectacular fashion. Hard times can bring unexpected good.

In amongst providing up to 200 lunches a day during the Feed the Fires period, we were able to complete our humble projects by the end of last year. After a small break over the holiday season, we were looking forward to a full year of projects in 2020, and a deeper engagement with both the

community and other grass roots organisations.

We started strongly this year, renting a space for our Branch to have as a heartland in the centre of the village. The new CWA Nimbin Branch Room is in an ideal position for us, within the Community Centre, next to the Fire Station and the Cultural Centre, and opposite 7 Sibley Street. Our wonderful girl gang has scrubbed, cleaned and painted, and the room looks beautiful, just needing furniture and us in there to start running our many planned projects and pop-up events.

When Nimbin Central School was based at the Community Centre site, our room was the old Industrial Arts building. It is a beautiful space with solid exposed trusses, allowing a sense of airy openness and elegant strength. None of us can wait to get our show on the road, small gardens growing and a nurturing creative space happening.

And then the world changes.

For 98 years, CWA has been an organisation of Australian women working together for the benefit of country people, often at the forefront of ideas and practices. This time is no different, we need to take the lead and act in the best interests of the community.

Much as we would love to continue working on our room, which we have



Trizzy Howes and Kitty van Vuuren working on the paint job

done in accordance with best practices of social distancing, hand washing and spraying down of surfaces, we cannot take the risk of continuing. Nor can we take the risk of engaging with the broader community in any way.

We recognise that if everyone in the community stays at home, and only the most essential of work takes place, there is a chance that transmission of the virus can be slowed down.

So, we reluctantly close our freshly-painted door for the foreseeable future.

We will assess our decision on a monthly basis, and spend the time planning for when life can resume, planting seeds for our gardens and harvesting our own Autumn gardens.

We hope all our followers, friends and members stay safe, stay home and stay hopeful. By doing so, we look forward to seeing you on the other side, whatever that looks like.

With love and health to you all.

There's one virus we *can* cure, and it's easy

by Digby Hildreth

Rosebank woman Mary Smith (not her real name) is relishing the renewed energy and mental clarity she possesses following successful treatment for hepatitis C in 2018.

Mary, in her mid-50s, had lived with the disease for more than 30 years, and thought it was only growing older that was making her feel "ridiculously tired all the time" and suffering a range of "niggly" minor illnesses.

She picked up the virus as "a young and impressionable 18-year-old", using hard drugs and sharing needles.

Her choice of what Hepatitis NSW chief executive Steven Drew calls an "adventurous and varied" lifestyle exposed her to the blood-borne viral infection, as it has done for tens of thousands of other Australians seeking new experiences in their youth.

About 90% of those with the disease caught it through intravenous drug use.

Many of them – an estimated 3000 to 4000 in the Northern Rivers alone – are

still living with the disease, which can lie hidden for decades, a "silent" presence in the liver.

Left untreated however, it can cause extreme fatigue, muscle and abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhoea, a rash and itching.

If left to progress, it can lead to diseases such as cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Now national and state hepatitis organisations and the Northern NSW Local Health District are reaching out to those people through an advertising campaign titled Test Cure Live, and urging them to consult their GP and receive treatment.

Since a range of anti-viral drugs became available in 2016, such treatment is highly effective – successful in 95% of cases – and simple.

More than 70,000 Australians have been cured of the virus in the past four years, several thousand of them in Northern NSW.

"The new range of drugs, taken orally, can be prescribed by any general practitioner, and cure is usually achieved within 8 or 12 weeks," says

Steven Drew.

"Many lives have been saved and improved, to the greater benefit of the community. It's a revolutionary opportunity."

If you think you may have ever been exposed to hepatitis C, the only way of finding out is by having a blood test, which Mary asked her doctor for two years ago.

She had originally been diagnosed with hepatitis C in the mid-90s. However, because her "viral load" wasn't too high, she declined the treatment that was available then – a gruelling six-month course of pills and weekly injections of the drug Interferon.

But when offered the new antivirals, which are available to everyone over 18 with a Medicare card through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, she jumped at the chance.

Three months after finishing the three-month program, she was cured and her liver functioning was within the normal range. Her life has been transformed by the treatment.

"If you think there is

any chance you may have contracted hepatitis C, even if it was decades ago, through needles, a blood transfusion or tattoos, I would urge you to ask your GP for a blood test to find out," says Krista Zohrab of the Lismore Liver Clinic.

"There is no reason to live with hepatitis C. Treatment is cheap, with few or no side-effects, and 95% successful."

If you are not comfortable talking to your GP, Krista suggests you call Lismore Liver Clinic on 6620-7539. "We can help organise testing and treatment anywhere on the Northern Rivers."

"While hepatitis C initially has almost no symptoms, if left untreated it can ultimately result in significant liver disease," Steven says.

"I encourage anyone who hasn't yet sought out this medication to explore their treatment options."

"For people over 55, having come this far, why would you not want to keep going and have an even more enjoyable life?"

For more information about hepatitis C and its treatment, visit: <http://testcurelive.com.au>



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Wilcannia bridge on



Whistleblower
Rob McBride

Blockade for the Barka



A state of fear, Wilcannia, March 2020
Photos: Geoff Reid



Rob McBride
addresses protesters

by Geoff Reid

On Black Friday morning, 13th March, the Barrier Highway bridge into Wilcannia, far western NSW, was centre of residents' determination to end to what they believe is political collusion in the theft of Australia's most precious resource: water.

Well over a hundred people participated, blockading the highway, stopping all traffic, showcasing through action that whether as Wilcannia grass-roots or big-city Extinction Rebellion, state and nation function only with goodwill of citizens. People of First Nations, station owners, townsfolk, and 'tradies' were involved in the highway bridge blockade, acting on their belief, encouraging all Australians to take a stand protecting our nation's water.

The Black Friday timing coincided, auspiciously, with the first water flow following years of unparalleled drought, made all the more harsh as greed bled fragile inland watercourses bone-dry, killing an estimated 100 million fish through NSW.

The headwaters of Australia's longest river run inland from the Blue Mountains, Tamworth, and Toowoomba, and down from out around Charleville. Its dozen-plus tributaries unite to meander, shallow and slender, across thousands of kilometres of dry western floodplains down to a once-snow-plumped Murray and out to the Great Australian Bight.

Despite respecting Traditional Owners, politically expedient explorer Charles Sturt 'christened' it "Darling", after his Governor, but to the 'people of the river', the Barkindji from around Wilcannia, it has been "Barka", the 'river', from time immemorial. Life derives from the river. It supports fish and fowl, its floodplains succour yabby, yam, quandong, kangaroo, and the myriad other essentials of Barkindji survival. At least, it did pre-cotton.

Nowadays, over Queensland's border above Lightning Ridge, two of its tributaries with a Sydney Harbour's worth of water vanish into towering earthen enclosures, 'ring-tanks', bulldozed up on this Hemisphere's largest irrigated farm, Cubby Station. That is just where the water theft begins.

Annually, northern cotton growers rob the Barka of an estimated 2,000 billion litres, 'gifting' the equivalent of 1/200th to trickle, in good years, to Wilcannia (SMH 15-3-19). Yet, by the industry's own reckoning, cotton earns a mere \$2 billion, less than a thousandth

of our national GDP, but to the broad semi-desert zones its importance is massively negative. Only on the driest habitable continent, Australia, is cotton routinely flood-irrigated.

Around Narrabri and back-o-Bourke, water runs uphill and rivers flow backward, such are the capacities of pumps on their banks. Levees also funnel to their maws any floodwater from millions of hectares of floodplains. Nor are just the above-ground public water assets plundered: massive pumps lift straight from aquifers into ring-tanks kilometres in diameter.

While such artesian heists are perpetrated against Future's children, theft of river and surface flows causes immediate obvious damage to the environment, to other western NSW agriculture, and heralds slow death for the Barkindji's 'mother', and culture. Any 'Land Rights' granted were minus water rights, or a voice in the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. Genocide continues.

Our elected representatives must declare company shareholdings, but water-licence holdings are exempt. Since Howard's Government privatised water ownership in 2007, politicians of both persuasions have been shamelessly 'wetting their beaks' at that trough. From 2012, when Katrina Hodgkinson enabled extraction of NSW water entitlements three years in advance, a litany of Nationals have jealously monopolised State and Federal water ministries, including Kevin Humphries, Niall Blair, David Littleproud and Keith Pitt.

Last year's early water minister, Barnaby Joyce, awarded \$78.9 million – effectively a 'public-purse' Lotto payout – to buy hypothetical floodplain flows back from a Cayman Island company. It was, of course, mere co-incidence Liberal colleague Angus Taylor helped create that company (SMH 21-4-19).

True to the preponderance of voters at National Party conferences who earn salaries in water guzzling industries, including Big-Cotton, CSG and Coal, Minister Melinda Pavey recently awarded her own broad public-asset prizes, scurrilously waiving NSW pumping embargoes the moment a few raindrops dotted the dust of drought. That first modest rain, and a fortuitous later torrent from St George were consequently stolen by Big-Cotton.

What would have been a drought-breaking flood rejuvenating a thousand kilometre length of floodplain was bled until, it slid, silently, two metres deep down the slender Barka's bed.

Wilcannia received it just in time to reinforce the resolve of Black Friday water protectors. Rubbing salt into a drying nation's wounds, profits from the largest flood-irrigated cotton holdings go offshore, as do those from much of the water trading.

Speakers addressing the highway blockade included notable Indigenous locals, female and male, young and old, telling of cultural pride, but also of spiritual anguish and decay of hope. Rob McBride of Tolarno Station spoke of six years fighting political corruption, water theft, and conspiracy to destroy the Barka and the 30 million-year old Menindee lakes.

He related that a video of him in summer 2019, lifting rotting century-old Murray Cod from the Barka went viral, and earned him death threats from water thieves. Paddle-steamer 'Tolarno' serviced through to Bourke, when Wilcannia was Australia's third biggest trading port earlier in the 169 years the McBrides have lived on the Barka; the family, he says, never before witnessed a million dead fish.

Mid-morning, the pop-up riot squad materialised, reminiscent of intimidation attempts during anti-CSG actions in Northern Rivers. Police assurances of allowing an all-day blockade were countermanded. As a duty of observance following the recent suicide of a local girl, half a dozen Barkindji women continued their blockade, railing against genocide by denial of water rights.

Official warnings defied, they were escorted or carried from the bridge, each between two riot troopers. So too were local Indigenous protection leader, Barry Stone, and Barka advocate, Ian Sutton, both of whom had remained in support of the women. All were freed under threat of jail for recidivism.

Bolstered by collective success, spirits soared that evening, and the following morning the earnest local police Inspector marched at the head of a community column celebrating and restating demands highlighted by the previous day's blockade.

On the bridges of the Northern Rivers, and across Australia, a double-handful of simultaneous actions supported the 'people of the river' in their defence of the Barka, and of our water. For water thieves: beware Black Fridays.

Podcasts of speakers are available on-line through *Environmental As Anything*, on River-FM 92.9 (streaming Saturdays, 2-5pm).



NIMBIN

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

CENTRE



by Scott Sledge, president

About 25 people met on Friday 13th March at Lismore near the Ballina Road bridge. More than half were Knitting Nannas who organised the solidarity protest to raise awareness for the blocking of the Wilcannia bridge, 1100km west of here, to protest against the mismanagement of water in Australia.

Extinction Rebellion (XR) Lismore supported the protest and the demands of the Wilcannia bridge blockaders which were: 1) water trading to be ended in Australia, because water is not a commodity; and 2) an immediate embargo on river diversion, floodplain harvesting, and the pumping of rivers by irrigators upstream. (Story opposite.)

The Lismore protest lasted nearly an hour, and even a police car tooted in support, which gave us hope for the future. (Thanks Chibo for this report.)

This month, many critical environmental activities are being postponed or cancelled. Information/film nights, protest demonstrations, a NEFA forest forum at Whiporie (south of Casino) and even the weed identification workshop NEC planned for Gungas Road are all postponed. The School Strike for Climate (SS4C) is cancelled and the Stop Adani protest in the Galilee Basin in May/June could be postponed. The NEC



Lismore protest on the Wilson River Bridge on Bruxner Highway in solidarity with the Wilcannia action against water mining on the Barrier Highway bridge. Photos: Chibo Mertineit



shop on Cullen Street will remain closed to the public until further notice. What does that mean?

We are trying to reduce the speed of spread of Covid-19, a highly contagious disease which is mild for most people but can cause serious illness in others.

Much of the world is enforcing "self-isolation" and "social distancing" in an attempt to limit the contagion, which has been called an "unprecedented" pandemic... although this seems an exaggeration when we remember all the other diseases in human history. The strategy to deal with this involves allowing only "essential" services and businesses to operate.

The restrictions imposed/recommended in response to Covid-19 have already caused a substantial and detrimental impact on

small businesses, families, and countless industries that cannot function well with people working from home. This is putting a financial and emotional strain on many people.

The NEC shop probably doesn't qualify as "essential," but protecting the environment surely does! If the industries and activities which plunder and pollute our planet continue or get worse, we would be foolish to ignore that. If we want to support the orthodoxy that we need social isolation to be safe, we must at least keep pressure on decision-makers via emails, phone calls, and letters.

While we are contending with the disruptions, the Kalang headwaters camp near Bellingen needs volunteers to prevent the destruction of important habitat through logging.

Alan Roberts described the Kalang area as "a magical repository of the most biodiverse sample of ancient Forests of Gondwana." Could this be a good place to hide out from the Coronavirus and save the environment at the same time? Contact the Bellingen Enviro Centre for details or Anastasia 0413-907-014. Maybe take time to dig weeds and plant some food at/near home. Can we make a better *new normal*?

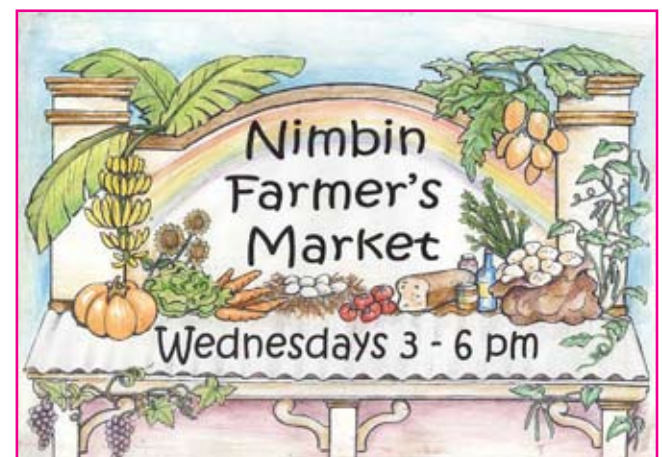
NEC will not have its usual monthly meeting during April, but we intend to have a meeting in May. So stay safe, eat well, drink warm fluids, get plenty of rest and moderate exercise. If you feel a sore throat coming on, gargle with vinegar or lemon juice in warm water. I hope to see you on the other side of this shut-down.



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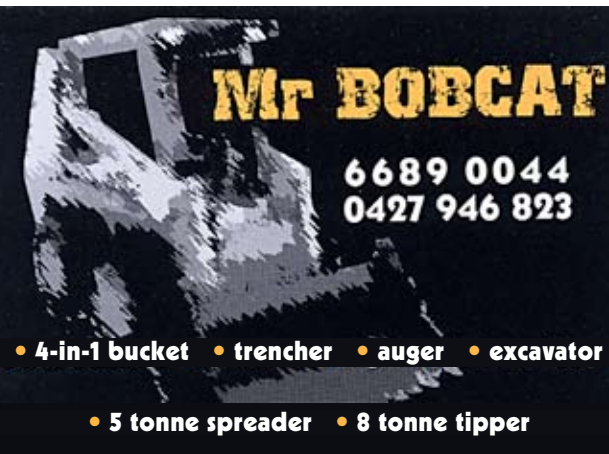
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52 Cullen Street

- Nimbin's own Aquarius Loaf baked fresh daily
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In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

Covid-19 – NNIC operations

We are working to maintain our levels of service and ensure the health and well-being of our staff and volunteers.

We have implemented policies and procedures including cleaning of equipment, enhanced sanitisation efforts, activating work-from-home policies where necessary, and rescheduling non-essential travel and events.

We have instructed team members who are not feeling well to stay home. Strict social distancing measures are being enforced.

If you need NNIC services and support, but you are either: in compulsory self-isolation, or feeling unwell – especially if you have a temperature above 37.50, or feeling nervous and wanting to maintain social isolation:

Then you can call us on 6689-1692 and we can try and arrange a telephone appointment with our community workers for you, so you do not have to come in here.

Please be patient, as we are anticipating the increasingly heavy usage of our phone lines over the coming days/weeks.

If you need help with Centrelink stuff, here are the numbers to call: Newstart 132-850; DSP 132-717; Aged pension 132-300; Families 136-150; Youth Allowance 132-490.

Covid-19 community response

The community has swung into gear and numerous initiatives have been put in place to e.g. manage grocery home deliveries for self-isolated or quarantined people.

A full list of local services available, useful information and local responses has been published and will be regularly updated as things change or new info comes to hand.

See our website for the latest version, or contact us for an email copy. Email: admin@nnic.org.au or caw@nnic.org.au to send us any updates, additions, corrections or amendments to the Community Info Sheet.

Nimbin Food Bank

We are re-stocking our food bank in anticipation of increasing demand. We are gratefully accepting donations of



Hilarity at the candle-lit Women's Dinner
Photo: Heidi Glover

in-date non-perishable food items... drop them to us at NNIC.

We are also gratefully accepting cash donations – deposit to our account as follows: Summerland Credit Union BSB: 728728, account name Nimbin Neighbourhood and Info Centre – Gift Fund, A/C no: 22205341.

Please cite your last name (unless you prefer anonymity) plus use the letters 'COV' in any references so donations made for this purpose can easily be identified.

Donations will be used to support Covid-19 community responses including purchasing food and other essential items for people in need, covering volunteer fuel costs, volunteer screening checks and other related costs.

Casual relief bookkeeper – required immediately

Bookkeeper required to provide relief for an extended leave period. Expected duration is between 3-6 months. 6 hours per week, Level 4 SCHADS. Must be experienced with Reckon accounts, STP, payroll and BAS.

Applicants must address the selection criteria available from NNIC via: admin@nnic.org.au

Struggling with household bills?

We may be able to assist with electricity and telephone bills. Phone us on 6689-1692 to make an appointment with our community worker.

Nimbin Women's Dinner

Many thanks to everyone who came along and especially to all the volunteers who made the 2020 Nimbin Women's Dinner happen... another great night of hilarity and delicious food.

Thanks to Kath, Heidi, Gail, Margi, Mandi, Doug, Ron and Ryder, Lynda and Helga for helping with all the organising and set up, tix sales, the door, the bar, the floor, the coffee and cakes and the raffle.

Karen Youl for all the dishwashing... what a mammoth effort by Karen! Pauline for the banners and Jane for the table decorations. Head chef Betty plus Ron, Kath and Al for the food. Cake makers Bev, Judy, Heidi, Chris, Ashoka and Yolande. Town Hall crew for general help with stuff plus the loan of the Blue Moon Cabaret tablecloths and candle-holders.

Plus Disco Sista for the sound and lights and all the great performers who entertained us: Triny Roe, Odette Nettleton, Lisa Sharpe, Ting Lim and Ellen Briggs.

Also team leader Nat, who had to do a fair amount of time filling to allow for a no-show by the SuperHero and for one act getting stuck in traffic.

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC) continues to be OPEN unless we let you all know otherwise. At the time of writing our hours are 10am-3pm weekdays, Centrelink 10am-2.30pm weekdays. Keep an eye on our website for updates: www.nnic.org.au

Nimbin Hospital information

Child immunisation clinic

For 0-5 year olds, held on second Tuesday of the month. Next clinic: 14th April. Phone 6620-7687 (Lismore Community Health Centre)

Early childhood nurse

Every Tuesday. Baby checks, weighs, post-natal support. For appointments phone 6620-7687.

Women's health nurse services

Third Thursday of the month, next is 16th April. Confidential service, checks, advice, general health information. Phone 6689-1400 for appointment.

Wound clinic

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8am. For self-referral, phone 6689-1288. Referrals also from Nimbin Hospital and GP clinic.

Drug and alcohol counselling services available

For an appointment, please contact 6620-7600. A trained professional will ask you a few confidential questions and will provide you with an appointment time.

Nurse practitioner clinics

- Diabetes clinics: third Thursday of the month, next is 16th April.
- Respiratory clinic: second Tuesday of the month, next will be on 14th April. Phone 6630-0488 for appointments.

Community Registered Nurses

Monday to Friday, 8am-4.30pm. Assessments, wound care, referrals, advocacy, provision of palliative care in the home, medication support. Phone 6689-1288 – leave a message, will return call swiftly.

Nimbin NSP

Needle and Syringe Program open Monday to Thursday. Arrangements can be made to see a Community Registered Nurse.

Health advice line

Phone 1800-022-222 if you have a health issue. 24-hour, seven days a week free service. A Registered Nurse will assess whether you need to go to an Emergency Department.

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

The Auxiliary is suspending all fundraising activities until further notice. Monthly meetings of the Auxiliary have also been cancelled.



Tiny moments of pleasure can help us through these stressful times

by Desirée Kozlowski

If I told you that last night I built a blanket fort in the living room, crawled inside with my cat, a glass of wine and my just-arrived copy of the *New Yorker*, would you think less of me?

After all, we're in the midst of a global coronavirus pandemic. Borders are closing, people are sick, dying, losing their jobs, and locked in isolation.

And there was I, playing – as though I didn't have a care in the world.

Meanwhile, you might be reading this holed up at home, screaming with fury at those bloody hoarders.

Or perhaps you're on a train, valiantly trying to keep 1.5 metres away from the next person, shrinking back as they cough and splutter.

Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, whatever you think about the pandemic, the economy, or your compatriots, a tiny part of you knows you could do with a bit of pleasure right now.

The effects of sustained stress

When we're first exposed to something stressful, like a deadly new disease, our body reacts with a cascade of small changes such as releasing adrenaline and other chemicals, and activating brain regions related to fear and anger.

In many cases those changes make it more likely we'll meet the challenges we face.

But if the stressful conditions continue, and especially if we feel powerless to fix the situation, the consequences of the stress response increase.

Our risk of chronic diseases increases, immune function can be compromised, and we become more vulnerable to mental health problems.

We can feel depleted, disconnected, anxious and depressed. We can become fixated on negative thoughts and on looking for signs of threat. Sound familiar?

The good news is the effects of stress on the brain are reversible.

Pleasure in times of stress

It may seem too simple to be true but shifting our attention toward the small, everyday pleasures in our lives can offset the consequences of stress or negative events.

US researchers reported last year that experiencing pleasurable emotions, for example having interesting things to do, serves as a buffer between chronic stress and depression. So, among people with sustained, high levels of stress, those who reported more pleasurable moments were likely to experience less severe depressive symptoms.

Pleasurable experiences might even be of most benefit in times of stress.

We experience pleasure in a myriad of ways. Perhaps one of the most potent of pleasures, and one that springs most easily to mind, is a lover's caress. But to maximise the pleasure in every day, we should look more widely, to a multitude of sources.

If we're too busy reading those alarming headlines to notice the beauty of the sun setting outside our window though, it's a missed opportunity for a moment of delight.

When I recently asked people on Twitter to share the things bringing them delight in these challenging times, I received hundreds of replies within a couple of hours.

Each one was a small vignette conveying a personal moment of simple pleasure. Gardens and dogs and children and nature featured strongly, and many people reflected on the added pleasure of recalling such moments.

Indeed, recollection and anticipation – along with relishing pleasure in the moment – are effective ways to maximise the value of



positive experiences or emotions. We call it "savouring".

Luckily, we can get better at savouring with practice. And the more we savour, the less stressed we feel. And that's why I'm here.

If we increase the pleasure we experience, it can lift our psychological well-being. In turn, higher well-being is linked to better immune function.

It's about boosting our personal capacity

My message is not to avoid the facts or pretend nothing has changed. It's to intentionally build in moments of reprieve and restoration.

It's to turn your attention to what is still good and rich and fun – to really focus on those things.

This is how we can harness the protective power of small pleasures, for the sake of delight itself and to build grit and resilience.

So, there may never have been a better time to build a blanket fort, or to bring out a game of Twister, or to lie on your back in the garden making fantasy creatures out of passing clouds. Find excuses to giggle.

Making pleasure happen

In difficult, frightening times, no one is immune to worry; it's a natural response.

But what we can do is take steps to protect ourselves, as much as possible, from its physical and psychological ill-effects.

The challenge is to make this happen, to tear yourself away from analysing the Covid-19 curve and intentionally, systematically engineer more small delights into your day.

Do you like the sunshine? Then know when the sun falls on your balcony, in your garden or in the street near your place. Take a cup of tea or coffee with you and soak up the warmth.

Pets? Run, play, be silly with them.

Eating a tomato? Plant the seeds and watch something grow, from nothing, because of you. Sing. Dance. Delight someone with an act of kindness.

Plan your opportunities for pleasure. Put them in your diary. Set your alarm for them. Commit to share them with others.

Photograph them. Post them on social media or share them directly with friends and family. Anticipate them gleefully and reflect on them with delight.

This is our time to be here. Savour.

Dr Desirée Kozlowski is a lecturer in Psychology at Southern Cross University.
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Fire season ends

With the fire permit season officially over, and many people confined to barracks, now is a great time to do some serious cleaning up around the property.

Bill Cox, Senior Deputy Captain at Blue Knob RFS brigade, said that there's a window of opportunity to decrease the flammability of gardens, yards and acreage.

"If we come out of this pandemic by the end of the year, we'll be right in the next fire season, so now's the time to get cracking."

Of particular concern are trees overhanging houses, and overgrown access tracks and driveways.

Bill said, "During the last disastrous fire season, many people learnt a lot about how to protect their properties, and have developed their skills to do it. Now's the time."

Although pile burns and hazard reduction burn-offs will no longer require a permit, it is important to follow RFS procedure.

This involves letting your neighbours know, with 24-hours notice, and informing Fire Coms prior to ignition, stating your address.

This allows for checking of any 000 calls prior to despatch, any can also assist the householder with wind forecasts.

In the Northern Rivers, the Fire Coms phone number is: 6626-6922 during office hours.

NIMBIN BOWLO
25 Sibley Street Nimbin
Phone 6689-1250
ADVICE FOR MEMBERS & GUESTS



Home of the Big Bowler


Nimbin Bowling Club and the Greenskeepers Bistro thank members and the community for your continued support.

We will re-open when permitted.

Until then, we will sell packaged alcohol, cartons and 6-packs only, observing the social distancing protocol.

Hours of operation: 4-6pm, 7 days.

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NIMBIN'S SUSTAINABLE LIVING HUB
7 Sibley Street

April Workshops Program
\$10 unless otherwise noted
Bookings: text 0475-135-764 or email: sibley@nnic.org.au

Mondays (starts 10.30am)

- **6th April:** Make Liposomal Vitamin C for improved absorption, with Diane \$15.*
- **13th April:** Creating the Nimbin Harvest Exchange. Register or bring excess produce to swap/share or sell.
- **20th April:** Weed walk. Learn to identify common edible and medicinal wild plants.*

Tuesdays (starts 10.30am)

- **7th April:** Eco sanitisers with Aromatherapist, Heera Rigney, \$15 materials provided.*
- **14th April:** Vege start-up. Bring seedling pots, make potting mix and plant seeds to take home.*
- **21st & 28th April:** Plant for propagation. Creating an urban oasis, plant useful perennials at 7 Sibley Street.*

Wednesdays

- **Community tools library** 10.30am-2pm.
- **Garden Building** Preparing retainers, digging & planting.*
- **15th April – Intro to bamboo joinery** Market stage project with Jingles.*

Thursdays

- **Garden maintenance** Weeding, feeding and mulching.*

Saturdays

- **Community tools library** 10.30am-2pm.
- **4th April – Nimbin seed exchange** (1st Sat each month) Swap & share saved seeds and cuttings.

* Workshops may be live-streamed # Book to register attendance, max 2 people on site