

NGT welcomes letters and other contributions received by email or post prior to deadline. Letters longer than 300 words may be edited for length, and articles for accuracy. Please include your full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not necessarily those of NGT.

Changing the narrative

I would like to offer my thanks to those who see behind the curtain of ignorance.

Thank you for thinking critically about the incredible volume of (mis-) information that we are bombarded with; thank you for digging deeper and shining another light on the issues of our time such as the climate crisis and its components like deforestation, the bushfires, water management, political inaction and mismanagement; our socio-economic problems; the loss of biodiversity; Covid-19; and a failing democratic system with its power imbalances.

Your voices are vital to open our eyes and to enable informed action to work on solutions. Thank you and please keep up the good work.

However, I would like to offer a solution that addresses the above problems differently; a solution that sounds simple but might prove harder than we imagine as we are stuck in a system that perpetuates fear and anxiety, which numbs us and contributes to inaction.

This fear and anxiety stem from a central narrative that concentrates on everything that is wrong with this world: it's bad news or no news at all. The solution I offer is to change that narrative and concentrate on the good stuff. I mean not only the news, I mean the power of our imagination, our collective force to change our outlook, an outlook that empowers and gives us hope.

Enough of the doom and gloom! We only end up with our heads in the sand. The positive outlook allows us to hold our heads high and see the solutions that are often right in front of us. I say, in the spirit of this newspaper: "We need to focus on the good times!"

It is an appeal to our artists: writers, musicians, painters, actors, and poets to imagine utopia, to imagine a future of peace, abundance and equality. We are creating reality through our stories. Let us hear the ones with happy endings more often.

It is an appeal to our educators (that is everybody by the way) to concentrate



on solutions rather than problems. It is an appeal to the media, to shift to the good news (eg: "The World Health Organisation says the majority of those who become infected generally experience mild symptoms and recover in two weeks").

It is an appeal to all of us to use our collective energy to bring about positive change, which makes us look forward to the future.

Tobias Gebhardt
Nimbin

Agendas behind Covid

For decades, activists have tried to explain that the interests of very big business and banks and the 1% elites are not those of the people or the land. Their interests are unsustainable and cause inequality and ecocide. Most people hoped their puppet governments would shield them. Hidden behind busyness and mobile phones.

Now we have a Covid "pandemic" propaganda which is a case of killing the dog to get rid of the fleas. The dog is our economy, our vibrant small business community, our relationships. The flea is a flu-like illness, which targets the old and the already sick, like the young soccer coach who was later shown to have had leukaemia.

It is likely we will all get this very contagious illness, which most of the time is mild. Most of the cases are not tested or even recognised, so we cannot say what percentage will get significantly ill. Japan is not in lock-down and is coping with their unwell.

Surely the answer to a nasty flu is to isolate and support vulnerable people, not crash society. The interests of the young, children without school friends, the parents, the valiant small business-people and the workers are being sacrificed to protect the hospital system and the

vulnerable. People will get depressed.

Large rural camps with good diet, Vitamin C, exercise and emotional support could segregate and then improve the immunity of the likely serious cases. Field hospitals could be set up, which have been shown to be very good at treating infection. Aerosolised interferon and intravenous Vitamin C will help.

Meanwhile the financial markets are crashing and big banks being bailed out. Is the virus drama a cover for this? Since 27th September, the financial markets have been sliding down and banks not lending to one another as the derivative trade wobbles again, like 2008. Trillions of dollars have been given to big banks in the USA.

This time the fallout will be much worse, but it will be blamed on the virus. Small business is being gutted. Will we just end up with a handful of mega corporations like Amazon, now selling food in USA? Will we all be forced to be vaccinated? What civil liberties will be permanently lost: protests, internet, cash transactions?

Time instead for a universal basic income, regenerative agriculture, revitalised communities and part-time jobs for all repairing our environment and climate. Isolation and fear will not create a better world. Let us use this enforced quiet time to consider solutions for our planet's and our personal health.

Our house is on fire; it's time for co-operation and a localised economy.

Dr Liz Elliott
Billinudgel

Corona and capitalism

The year of the Corona crisis is headed for an even bigger one in capitalism. The good side is that it needs more recognition that the system is broken before positive change

can be catalysed.

Capitalism is merely the latest in a long line of 'isms', eg socialism, communism, that have always failed in practice. Conceptualise the world as having always been ruled by GovCorp, where Government has paid lip-service to the latest 'ism' in a murky meld with Corp, representing wealth and power.

Capitalism in its extreme USA version has been cloaked in a 'religious' fervour by adopting the libertarian writings of Ayn Rand et al, as its scriptures. At last a spiritual aura could be painted around patriarchy, power and money, the three in one.

Capitalism's market 'wisdom' and its inherent instability, is utterly failing that country's Corona crisis. The artificial intelligence of a corporation knows only how to benefit itself.

Further, the sacred commandment 'let the market freely rip' does not stack up in practice. The market between corporations has no resemblance whatsoever to your local farmers market.

Country-sized corporations inhabit different markets, where governments, parties and individuals are weapons in the struggle for survival against other corporations. When giants or their industries are defeated, thousands lose jobs, a frequent event.

It's no free market, when corporations milk taxpayers for subsidies in uneven fights against opponents.

Capitalism as we know it has come to the end of the road. It's time to take the capital out of capitalism.

It is financial capital, interest, money printing and inflation that inevitably create rich and poor. The final exponential spurt left 50% of global assets with 20 individuals, and ran interest rates out of room to move to avoid collapse.

Notices

Birth

Jacob Jack Chapman, born Tuesday 24th March. First child for Sam and Bridget Chapman. First grandchild for Peter Chapman (Grafton) and Annie Heitmann of Nimbin. Blessed.

Wanted to rent

Writer needs quiet rural cabin or small house with fireplace and garden for 3 to 6 months. Will pay 3 months in advance. Please call 0467-848-819.

Apology

NGT has been informed that in last month's edition, we unknowingly included an image of a convicted child sex offender. We sincerely apologise to the victim and her family for any distress caused by our publication of the photo.

Thanks

Thanks to all our contributors, advertisers, production staff and delivery people for helping get this edition out. We hope we can continue to publish in the coming months.

Free notices

Keep it short, under 50 words, and to the point, and if your notice is non-commercial and of interest to our readers, get it to us by deadline, and we'll run it for you for free.

There is a great opportunity here to alleviate the immediate fallout of both Covid-19 and the bushfire disasters, plus a terminal capitalism's refurbishment.

The system is so complex and so broken, solutions cannot be imposed from above. Government has neither the will nor understanding to help all who need cash now.

The time is ripe for an immediate unconditional, liveable, social wage, to prevent system collapse. That puts the boot on the other foot. Only each individual knows what they need to survive.

Cash is turned over rapidly, much of it returns to the coffers immediately as tax, we have liquidity, and the economy is working the way it must in the short term.

To avoid political conflict and delay, and demonstrate its viability in this crisis, it may need to involve philanthropists of vision talking directly to government. Tasmania would be ideal, since it is isolated, enabling direct comparison with mainland states. \$1000 fortnightly for each adult resident is in order.

Put Australia on the map for early resolution of the economic fallout around Covid-19, and as a way shower for transforming capitalism as we know it.

Just trust in the good side of human nature. In the absence of survival fears, the disadvantaged and self-medicating will initiate their own path to participation in society. And many who don't need the cash will donate it where they see need. Many will feel worthy for the first time ever!

Results elsewhere suggest that in 12 months, Tasmania will be streets ahead in economics, reduced pressure on services, social cohesion and happiness.

Hayo van der Woude
Mullumbimby

Anti-viral strategy

My virus defence invention is proof we loo-paper lovers are not loopy.

I simply wear my corona design hat, decorated with loo paper, for one hour daily: usually out of sight early mornings, to avoid embarrassment.

No sign of a virus!
(Name and address supplied)

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And find us on Facebook

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NEXT DEADLINE:
Wednesday 29th April

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

The Nimbin GoodTimes acknowledges the Bundjalung people, the traditional owners of the land and waters on which we work and live, and pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.

Nimbin Covid-19 community information

Self-isolation

You MUST self-isolate at home for 14 days if:

- You have cold or flu symptoms; or
- You have returned from overseas in the last 14 days; or
- You have been in contact with someone who has the virus; or
- You are otherwise instructed or recommended to by Health personnel.

It is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that you self-isolate if you are aged 70 years or over – for your own protection.

Call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800-020-080 with questions regarding prevention and the spread of Covid-19.

Testing

At the present time testing for the virus is only available to people who have been in contact with someone who is known to be infected.

Healthdirect help

If you think you may require testing, or to speak to a registered nurse who can provide advice when you're not sure what to do — whether you should see a local GP, manage the condition at home, go to an emergency department, or call an ambulance, call healthdirect helpline on 1800-022-222 available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Social distancing and hygiene

It is essential that everyone co-operates and maintains a distance of at least 1.5metres from each other and washes hands frequently and properly, sneeze and cough into your elbow and generally avoid close contact with people other than immediate household members as much as possible.

Shopping for necessities and carrying out other necessary activities can be maintained as long as safe social distancing is respected at all times. You should avoid non-essential activities which involve being out and about in the community as much as you can.

Support for small business

For the latest info on support packages for small businesses impacted by Covid-19, including wage subsidies, tax relief etc. and how to apply for this support, see: www.business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business/what-support-is-available-to-your-business

Details of the Australian government's stimulus package for small businesses is available at: <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/businesses>

For Jobkeeper payments information for employers, see: https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Fact_sheet_Info_for_Employers_0.pdf

Income support

For people whose employment has been impacted by Covid-19 if you are not already a Centrelink customer and need income support because of Covid-19, you may be

eligible for income support.

The usual waiting periods have been waived for such people, who will also likely be exempt from mutual obligation requirements. For info see: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/affected-coronavirus-covid-19/people-who-dont-get-payment-from-us-coronavirus-covid-19

If you need assistance navigating the process, come into the Services Australia/ Centrelink Agency at Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre at 71 Cullen Street 10am-2.30pm weekdays. As we all know, the MyGov system and also the helplines are overloaded and we anticipate delays and issues may continue but we will do what we can to help.

Waste, garbage and recycling

The Nimbin and Lismore Waste Transfer Stations are now re-opened Mon-Fri, 8am-3pm for business operators and residents without kerbside collection.

Prior bookings must be made, on 1300-87-83-87, with a vehicle registration number and home address.

Lismore recycling depots are closed.

Local services and support

Nimbin Medical Centre (GP Clinic) is operating Mon-Friday 9am-5pm with strict hygiene and social distancing measures in place.

Telephone consultations are available to high risk patients (children aged under 1 year and people aged over 70 years) Call 6689-1410 for an appointment. Please call ahead if you need to see a doctor, rather than just dropping in.

Nimbin Hospital is also operating as usual however if you have cold or flu symptoms or are concerned you may have Covid-19 please call the national helpline on 1800-022-222 for advice.

For all other patients seeking assistance with general health issues, please call the hospital on 6689-1400 before presenting, if possible.

Please also call before planning a visit to the aged care residents.

Nimbin Pharmacy continues to operate. Please respect hygiene measures in place. If you are self-isolated and need medicine, and keep scripts on file at the Nimbin Pharmacy, you can email to: nimbinpharmacy@live.com.au and the pharmacy will message you when they are ready for you. If you do not have scripts on file or require a new script contact the GP clinic for advice as to obtaining one and call NNIC on 6689-1692 for assistance regarding pick up and delivery if you have no one who can help you with this.

Dr Reuben Walker is available for telephone consults only. Call 6689-0081 to make an appointment or email: DrReuben@protonmail.com with any inquiries or concerns.

Nimbin Optical is OPEN Monday and Thursday 10am-4pm with after-hours appointments available by request. Call 6689-0081 or 0403-263-692. Email:



nimbinoptom@gmail.com

Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Service (NACRS) provides weekly home support for eligible people 65+ (50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) and is undertaking regular telephone welfare checks of all clients. NACRS is liaising with the Emporium to arrange grocery shopping and deliveries to isolated older people.

NACRS can do telephone assessments and intake for those older community members who are not already on the existing client list. Capacity is limited but they will do what they can to help. Phone 6689-1709.

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre is continuing to operate. New operating hours: 10am to 3pm weekdays.

Due to social distancing protocols the number of people inside the building at any one time is limited, and some services and activities e.g. Weekly Soup Kitchen and food parcels and Vacation Care, have been temporarily suspended.

Telephone appointments are preferred to face-to-face where possible. To make an appointment or for general inquiries, help, support with anything at all call 6689-1692.

• **Mental Health/AOD clinical support and counselling** (Genevieve) – Monday-Wednesdays. Phone 6689-1497 for appointments.

• **Community worker** (Peter) – general support, information and referrals, material aid, electricity and telephone vouchers for eligible clients, advocacy and liaison with e.g. external service providers Wednesday-Fridays. Phone 6689 1692 for appointments.

• Information and referrals and material aid ph 6689-1692.

• Time-limited PC and copier access (max 15 minutes).

• **Food relief** – some food and meals available for people in high need (see Page 6 for how to make donations to Food Bank).

• **Services Australia (Centrelink)** Agency weekdays 10am-2.30pm – info and assistance, access to telephones and MyGov and supporting technologies. Demand is high, so plan for a short waiting time.

7 Sibley Street – Steph is working hard to develop some on-line resources and workshops she can deliver via ZOOM.

Keep watch on our 7 Sibley Street facebook page for updates. Unfortunately the Sibley Street

website is down at the moment and we are working to restore it.

Nimbin Vacation Care the next round of school holiday program has been suspended. Kylie our VC Co-ordinator is preparing some school holiday activity kits for families with limited resources. If Kylie has not been in contact with you and you would like an activity kit, contact us at: admin@nnic.org.au

Local cafes and take-aways

Most cafes are now closed, but some are still doing phone orders and take-aways.

Home deliveries

Deliveries of groceries and other essential items can be made to self-isolated community members.

On-line orders and home deliveries are currently available from: The Emporium, Pharmacy, Apothecary, Happy Highs Herb Shop, Nimbin Building Materials and Rainbow Power Company.

Emporium deliveries are happening Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Groceries can be ordered and paid for on-line and Duuvy Jester is doing home deliveries to residents living within 15kms of Nimbin. Delivery charge is \$11 inc GST. To place your Emporium order contact: info@nimbin-emporium.com.au

You will also be able to order directly from the Pharmacy: nimbinpharmacy@live.com.au or call 6689-1448, and Apothecary www.nimbinapothecary.com.au 6689-1529 by calling/emailing them and paying for your goods over the phone or on-line.

Those goods can be included in Emporium deliveries, so you should place all your orders on the same day and at least three business days prior to delivery date.

You can also order from **Rainbow Power Co** on-line: www.rpc.com.au to be included in the delivery services.

For all deliveries other than via the Emporium, please email Duuvy at: drtraytrucking@gmail.com Deliveries from these businesses will be an additional \$5.50 inc GST on top of any Emporium deliveries, or \$11 inc GST if you do not have an existing Emporium order.

Note that additional delivery costs may be negotiated for large, heavy or bulky items from e.g. Rainbow Power Co or Nimbin Building Materials.

For deliveries of essential items to a distance greater than 15kms away, email Duuvy with your request to see if he can accommodate you.

You will need your debit/credit card and telephone contact details when you place your orders. You will also need to provide phone numbers, your address and any specifics about where to find you, or mud maps.

When your goods are delivered, Duuvy will call out to check you are okay and will be required to wait until he sees you collecting your goods for safety and security reasons. For this reason when you place your order, please also include phone number/s for your

next of kin or person to contact if you do not respond when Duuvy calls out – if you do not respond and he has no number to call and check on you he will call 000.

The capacity of this service will be limited, so please use it wisely and reserve it for those who really need it most. The community home delivery service is a moving feast as the logistics are ironed out along the way. For the latest updates see Duuvy's facebook page: www.facebook.com/drtraytrucking

Nimbin Newsagency is doing free deliveries within the village only. To place orders phone 6689-1372 or email: nimbinnewsagency@gmail.com

Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Service is managing groceries and deliveries to vulnerable older people who are their clients.

Other vulnerable people in need NACRS and NNIC are both continuing to support homeless people.

Local service providers and community members are developing plans to support high needs self-isolated people, in particular families suffering high financial stress, with grocery deliveries. If you have a current valid Police check, a comprehensively insured vehicle and would be willing to assist with home deliveries to people in need who are not able to access Duuvy's home delivery service, please email us at: admin@nnic.org.au AND caw@nnic.org.au

Local communications

This community information sheet will be regularly updated as things change and will be circulated via:

- Nimbin Hook Ups facebook page;
- Nimbin CSI facebook page;
- NNIC facebook page;
- NNIC website: www.nnic.org.au
- NCCI website: www.nimbincommunity.org.au

It will also be posted around the village.

Tune into **Nim-FM** on 102.3FM for more regular local info.

Make sure you keep an eye for updates and keep people you know who may not be on line or have access to regular info, informed as much as possible.

If you have updates, corrections or additions to this info sheet please send them to both admin@nnic.org.au AND caw@nnic.org.au

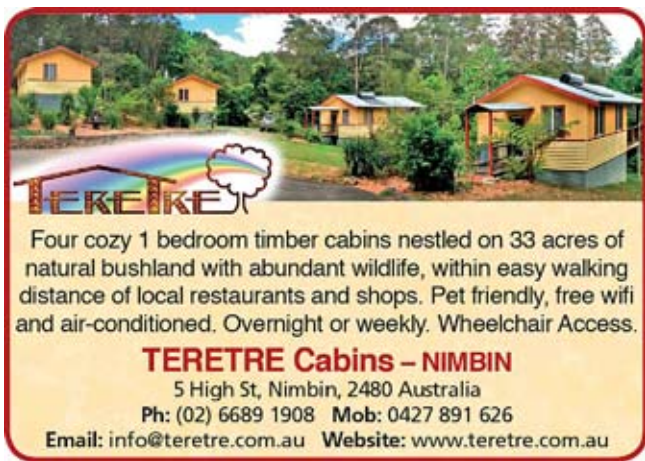
We all need to work together and support one another as much as possible. Please keep an eye on people you know who may be especially vulnerable and call NNIC on 6689-1692, 10am-4pm weekdays with any concerns.

For emergencies requiring ambulance, police or fire response, call 000.

Domestic violence, child safety

Please keep your eyes and ears alert everyone around you. Now is the time to make sure everyone is safe, including women and children from abuse and violence.


Never have the risks been higher to victims of abuse and violence trapped behind closed doors. If you have any concerns or worries for yourself or anyone else, call us on 6689-1692 for support and guidance.



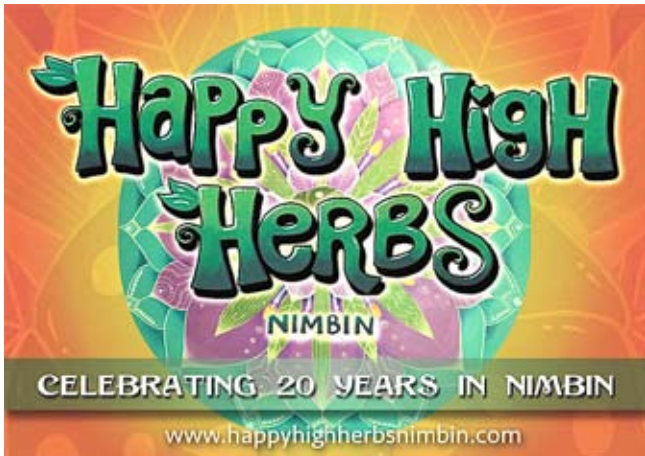
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How we might be able to work together

Of course, this column is about Covid-19, or Coronavirus. But, I don't want to talk about health warnings, washing your hands or social distancing, hopefully by now you are well informed and being vigilant. What I do want to talk to you about is how we might be able to work together to support each other over the coming months. Life is becoming increasingly complex and difficult and our adaptability and community resilience skills are really being tested. Over the last two weeks I've been thinking deeply about the concept of mutual aid. If you have been following community responses to Covid-19 you might be familiar with the term. Mutual Aid is exactly what it sounds like, communities helping each other. There are a lot of Covid-19 Mutual Aid groups springing up all around the world as communities grapple with our rapidly changing society.

It is a natural human response to want to help each other, and to help elderly and vulnerable people who may not have networks of their own. After the floods in Lismore we got organised and went out door-knocking, and then we organised volunteers to help people who needed it. But this is a completely different situation. It isn't safe to mobilise a bunch of people to walk around in groups, and it isn't safe to coordinate distribution of goods from a central location. The virus spreads too easily and we actually need to be extremely careful to limit the contact that vulnerable people need to have with everyone else.

We need to think differently about how we might get organised to respond to this particular threat and I think the answer lies in forming groups to develop and strengthen supportive relationships and mutual aid. Many communities are organising their street, their neighbourhood or their village. One way to do this is for someone to put a note in their neighbour's letterboxes with their



Word of the Bird
by Cr Elly Bird

contact details on it inviting them to group up. Then, if people are interested, the group chooses a way to connect everyone up so they can talk to each other. There are a whole lot of different ways to do this but the most important thing is that everyone can communicate with each other - you don't want to rely on one person organising everyone else because you might run into trouble if that person can't be the organiser any more.

The easiest way to set up communication is using some sort of group messaging system - Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp are probably the most common but there are others like Telegram or an on-line platform called: nextdoor.com Others won't have smart phones or internet and will need to be connected by landline or by talking to their neighbour, but if most people in the group are connected to each other then that person can still be connected to the whole group through one or two people who communicate with them in whatever way works.

Now of course some people won't want to join a neighbourhood group. Not everyone wants to be connected to their neighbours, sometimes you want to maintain your privacy which is absolutely valid. If that sounds like you, then your group could be a bunch of friends, it could be the members

of your sports team or it could be a network of family and friends. As long as we are connected, and in groups with other people who we can easily communicate with, we will be in a much more resilient position.

The social distancing measures we are observing now are likely to go on for quite a while. This is not going to be over quickly. So, the more networked you are the better. If you get sick you will need someone to bring you supplies, and if your neighbour or your friend gets sick you will be able to do the same for them, and if you both get sick then your other group members will be able to help.

You can also work together as a group to limit the number of trips to the shops you need to do, think about coordinating outings and pooling resources. And of course if you can get things delivered in a bulk order instead of going out to get them that's even better.

If you like the idea of Mutual Aid and you are interested in setting up a group, Lismore Helping Hands have put together a whole bunch of resources and templates to help you get organised. You can find them if you join our Facebook group 'Lismore Helping Hands: Covid-19 Community Information, Resilience and Recovery' and we can also offer you support with learning how to use different apps and platforms to communicate. You can also email us at: lismorehelpinghands@gmail.com

Covid-19 will test us, our lives aren't the same as they were and we need to do things differently for some time yet. This is an incredibly difficult world we find ourselves in, but we can become an even more resilient community if we focus on strengthening our networks. Let's build viral kindness, because we will be stronger if we are together, even though we are physically apart.

Take care (and wash your hands!)

I can be contacted on 0418-639-927 or email: elly.bird@lismore.nsw.gov.au

Our world will be tested to the core

Firstly, my heart goes out to everyone who has lost their job or business over the last couple of weeks due to the growing impact that the coronavirus (Covid-19) is having on our community. The health impacts and economic fallout will only increase in the coming weeks/months as the Government moves closer to lockdown in a desperate attempt to 'flatten the curve' of this global pandemic.

If a vaccine or effective treatment is still 6-12 months away, then our society and interconnected world will be tested to the core.

There is no doubt that further 'stimulus' measures will be announced as the number of business closures and job losses continues to rise. It does seem like an over-reaction however to lock down the whole country when it's likely that there are many areas in Australia that are currently Covid-19 free.

This is the ideal time to take advantage of the often long distances between towns. I agree that cities and

urban areas like ours need to be locked down for a period as our urban sprawl and interconnectedness make it impossible for anything else at this stage of the pandemic.

In trying to be positive - why can't the government start to identify Covid-19 free areas and allow these 'zones/regions' to remain open for business. The pubs, cafes, parks, sporting comps, etc don't need to close if there is no risk of infection.

Why not start with 'remote' regional centres and if necessary test everyone in the town/region. If there are any Covid-19 cases identified, then isolate and treat those people. Don't allow anyone into these areas unless they are certified free range organic. You could then test the neighbouring towns, etc and before long you could have large areas of Australia that can be open for business (and pleasure) with zero risk.

With over \$119 billion in 'stimulus' already announced and more likely to follow, why can't we spend a few billion fast tracking and



by Cr Jeff Johnson,
Ballina Council

administering millions of tests so that the whole country doesn't have to go into lockdown? The only way to have areas return to a semblance of normality is for testing on a grand scale to take place. Even if it cost billions of dollars it would be a fraction of the cost that hundreds of thousands of businesses going to the wall and millions of jobs disappearing will have.

It's certainly an unprecedented event in the modern global age. Despite all this, as always, I feel so blessed to be living on an island in the Pacific Ocean

and better still, in the totally awesome Northern Rivers.

Imagine facing this crisis in America where everyone has a semi-automatic military style weapon in their downstairs closet? I'd much rather a few toilet rolls be stashed here and there to provide comfort in an otherwise distressing time.

Be safe everyone and use this time wisely, enjoy the gift of time that our rushed lives often don't allow, say hi to your neighbours (from the prescribed legal distance), get the vegie gardens cranking and share produce around your street and social networks. Let this be a time of love and community building. Let our resilience and the great Aussie Spirit shine through.

Let us pass this incredible test one day at a time. Let's be kind and loving to our partners and patient with our kids who will no doubt test us relentlessly. And let's all be thankful, whatever our situation, that we are fortunate to live in one of the best places in the world.

Stay home unless you are frontline worker

I want to express my deepest gratitude, thanks and commendation on behalf of our community to all our frontline services for being there in our time of greatest need.

Nurses, midwives, doctors, allied health staff, cleaners, farmers, supermarket and grocery store workers, security, police, ambos, SES, teachers, child care, aged care and disability care workers, school staff, students, freight and logistics, Service NSW staff, media and more.

If I have not mentioned you, please forgive me and please contact me, as you too deserve public recognition.

The 25th January seems a long time back from when we had the first case of Covid-19, then called Coronavirus.

As I write, many Australians returning home from overseas are to be quarantined at the port of entry in a hotel or other accommodation for 14 days. That is critical, as many cases of Covid-19, our leaders tell us, have been acquired overseas. Tens of thousands have already been through our ports of entry without quarantine.

We need governments to tell us what to do, be consistent, be clear and know that it is in our best public health interest.



by Janelle Saffin,
Member for Lismore

However, we as individuals, families and communities must take responsibility to do our bit; to stay at home unless absolutely essential, and not to forget to keep socially distant from others if we must leave our homes.

We know that for the vulnerable amongst us, it is more challenging,

Many people are contacting me raising concerns and considerations for government and I have included some examples as the list is long.

- Schools, TAFE campuses, child care centres and beaches to close;
- A lockdown in New South Wales. We have people pouring over our borders when theirs are closed;
- Personal and commercial renters and landlords/ladies: No evictions, support for small business



- landlords/ladies and banks to give a waiver of some payments/fees;
- Small businesses and employees to be better supported;
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) by way of an order, from health authorities to supermarkets and food services, e.g. clear signage on hygiene and social distancing, security to assist, concierge/s at the entrance to state the conditions of entry, social distancing at checkout queue, sanitizer at entry and exit, scoops or something for handling fruit and veg, help yourself to nuts etc. closed;
- Public Health units to be

- more visible and active in our communities;
- Upscaled resources for the homeless and rough sleepers;
- Adequate medical equipment and supplies for hospitals, doctor surgeries, chemists, dentists;
- Vets to remain as essential services;
- Wildlife carers to be essential services;
- Hairdressers want clarity as they cannot social distance;
- The border areas to be given special consideration, especially the Tweed/Gold Coast border area;
- Co-parents who are frontline health workers who need to take on changed responsibilities, not

- to suffer financial penalties;
 - Frontline health workers who need to take leave to care for children but cannot get paid leave while schools are classified as open;
 - Frontline health workers to access the 20-day special leave provision if they contract Covid-19; and
 - A call from frontline health workers for visitors to be limited in hospitals, due to increased usage of personal protection equipment (PPE) and lack of social distancing.
- The key issues are lives and livelihoods. Protect lives now, provide support through the government for economic survival and protect our economic architecture as best

we can for recovery.

A percentage of wages like in the United Kingdom and Norway, and a basic wage would work best. This crisis is not one in need of stimulus but economic continuity.

We can recover and will, and we should now have Recovery Commissions at federal and state levels working on this.

It is important that we in the country are not forgotten in this.

We need to understand what is being done to cushion our economy and hibernate our businesses, mindful that we want to come through this with capacity to rebuild and recover our community.

I know there is fear and pain and I feel for all of us. The kindness I have seen though is so lovely and I know it will continue. Where we can, "bear one another's burdens".

My office is operating as a virtual office, but with one of us there at a time. My office phone 02 6621-3624 is diverted to my mobile and is on 24/7.

As you can imagine, I have taken lots of calls and my wonderful staff are ringing all community members aged over 70, and local organisations and businesses, to check in on them and to offer support.



by Kevin Hogan, Member for Page

As a community, now is the time we come together. Let's all do the right thing. Washing our hands and following strict social distancing will slow the spread and get us through this.

Here is some important information regarding the Coronavirus (Covid-19) and support that is available for individuals, households and businesses:

- www.australia.gov.au is a link to a central source for key updates on the Government's response across all areas of Covid-19.
 - A 24/7 National Coronavirus Health Information Line is available on 1800-020-080. The phone line provides health and situation information on the outbreak.
 - The Federal Government has announced significant support for individuals and households, for more information please visit: www.treasury.gov.au
 - We have also announced important support for businesses, to see what is available for you, please visit: www.business.gov.au or call the Business Support Hotline on 13 28 46.
 - To find out more about Covid-19 symptoms, what to do if you're feeling unwell, and how to best protect yourself, please visit: www.health.gov.au
- Please stay safe: this will pass, but it is important that we all do what we can to try and limit its impact.

Resilience proven by surviving crises

The world just keeps throwing crisis after crisis at us – in the past four years we've had floods, drought and fires; and just when we thought 2020 would bring us some recovery time – we now have Covid-19.

The impact of this virus on the entire world was under estimated for weeks and as a consequence we are now paying the price with heavy restrictions on our movements, our ability to work and operate businesses; to socialise or to travel. But we are a very resilient people – the past few years have taught us that – and if we work together, take precautions and obey the health advice, we will survive this pandemic.

What we all can do to stop the spread of the virus is to practice good hygiene, self-isolation, and social distancing. Stay at home, only travel elsewhere for essential reasons or for work.

Many village groups are establishing phone trees to ensure that our elderly or frail neighbours, our friends with small children and those with disabilities or health concerns, are not forgotten and overlooked. If just a few people from a community have the ability to shop for their neighbours, then the numbers of people coming into possible contact with the virus is much reduced.

For people who are self-isolated and do not want to come into the village, the Nimbin Neighbourhood Information Centre advises that the following measures are in place to support those people:

Emporium groceries can be ordered and paid for on line and Duuvy Jester is doing home deliveries to residents living within 15 kms of Nimbin. To place your Emporium order contact: info@nimbin-emporium.com.au



by Cr Darlene Cook

When your goods are delivered Duuvy will call out to check you are okay and will wait until he sees you collecting your goods for safety and security reasons.

Information websites

- The Australian Government Department of Health website: <https://www.health.gov.au/.../coronavirus-covid-19-current-si...>
 - The National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080
 - Northern NSW Local Health District webpage: <https://nnswhd.health.nsw.gov.au/>
 - For more information about the impact of Covid-19 on the services provided by Lismore City Council: <https://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au>
- As a result of the virus, Lismore Council has closed its gyms and pools and sports grounds, caravan parks and camping grounds (except to permanent residents and people with no other home to go to). It has also closed all of its other public facilities, including its Corporate Centre (see story Page 2 for full list), but Council assistance from administrative staff, including development assessors, is available via

telephone and online.

Essential services – water, sewerage and waste collections – continue as usual, subject to the health of our staff.

The waste facilities at both Lismore and Nimbin are now re-opened as essential services, but bookings are essential on 1300-87-83-87. (See full details, Page 9.)

Financial assistance

Council met on Friday 27th March to decide what financial assistance we can give to ratepayers during this crisis.

We decided, as an initial step, to amend our Hardship Policy to increase the interest free days on overdue rates and not to commence any new legal actions if people apply for assistance under the Hardship Policy if they have lost their jobs or had to close their business.

We will temporarily waive fees on community facility hires, commercial use of footpaths for dining, community groups' tenancy rents, and market fees for 15-18 months. (More details Page 2.)

We agreed not to borrow money to provide rate relief at this stage, acknowledging that we are not in a sound enough financial position to reduce rates and charges across the board.

The measures listed above could cost nearly a million dollars and represent a significant cash shortfall, which we do not have the capacity to manage beyond the short term.

We will continue to lobby both NSW and federal governments to assist us, similarly to the financial assistance they have given to other business sectors.

I can be contacted on 0427-895-316 or email: Darlene.cook@lismore.nsw.gov.au

No valour in war crimes

by Graham Dunstan
Peacebus.com

The more evidence received by the Brereton Inquiry into Australian special forces operations in Afghanistan, the more grim and shameful the story of Australia's longest war appears.

At the time when these war crimes were taking place, the conduct of the war had been hidden from the people of Australia and their Parliament. Everything about the SAS and its operations was top secret. We were told that was what the US-led global 'War on Terror' demanded.

As a consequence, the SAS operated in Afghanistan under the command of US Special Operations Command without any accountability to the taxpayers who were providing money, or the families who were providing the meat.

Now we learn that there are helmet camera recordings of the Australian special forces. The public accountability, so long denied, came to light on screens all across the nation.

We are now witnessing the story of Australia's longest war as revelation. Futility, failure, cynicism, callousness, murder, lies and cover-ups. The operational life of an SAS trooper.

This is how the story will



'The Third of May 1808' by Francisco Goya

now be told and how the histories will be written. The witness testimony of the Brereton inquiry is already an archival treasure trove.

The story of the Afghan and Iraq wars was to be the centrepiece of Brendan Nelson's \$500 million renovation of the Australian War Memorial. Alas, no valour in war crimes.

The terrible truth of Australia's invasion of Afghanistan is that our elite soldiers, the best of the best, did their best and their worst in Afghanistan and failed. They left the people there worse off than they found them, and they returned broken.

Broken both in terms of the PTSD and the suicides among veterans, and also broken as a regiment. Now corrupted by cover-ups, wounded by shame,

toxic with denial, riven by rumour and fighting among themselves, whistleblowers versus deniers, it's a toxic culture, not the high morale fighting force it once was.

May the full release of the Brereton report bring a big re-think of the LibLab defence policy of doing whatever it takes to be an obliging vassal of Uncle Sam. If the imperial master wants Australian special forces for another killing field, well that's what a vassal must do. End of story.

But it is not the end of the story. Inevitably the war comes home as PTSD, domestic violence, suicide and killer cops.

These secret wars turn good men bad and break regiments. Leaders are revealed as liars. Governor Generals are revealed as war criminals.

Chamber Chat

by Diana Roberts,
president

This is an extraordinarily challenging

time for all those running a local business. Impacted by the fires at the end of 2019, followed by reduced tourism numbers over the holiday period, then a flood, Nimbin based businesses are now confronting the overwhelming impact of Covid-19.

The Chamber recently completed analysis of the survey we undertook to assess the impact of the fires on local business. While 81% of businesses that completed the survey reported the fire had a negative impact, most businesses felt they had recovered well after the fire.

Recovery from the impacts of Covid-19 will be much harder as many businesses face forced closures for extended periods, valued staff have been laid off and outgoing financial costs will continue to accumulate.

The Chamber sees its role as providing, to the best of our ability, up-to-date information specifically relevant to local businesses. A range of supports have been put in place by both the Federal and State governments for small/medium businesses, including sole traders and not-for-profit community organisations, and while they are a moving feast of information, we will endeavour to keep you informed. (See Page 9.)

If you are a local business operator or a community organisation that has not been receiving updates from us but would like to, please send your email address to: chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au

Lismore Council is currently doing what it can to support local businesses while



struggling to deal with the organisational impact of Covid-19. Council has set up a Covid-19 information page located on their Your Say Lismore page. If you would like to receive live updates you can subscribe: yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au

The page contains links to useful websites and fact sheets on assistance for businesses and residents. There is also the capacity to ask staff questions via the Q&A function.

Any business that is unsure how to operate takeaway and delivery services can phone Council for assistance on 1300-878-387.

A number of local businesses have organised a shop by phone or email to arrange delivery service. Details can be found on Nimbin CSI and Nimbin Hook Ups facebook pages. If you are not a social media user or can't find the detail ring NNIC on 02 6689-1692 to become connected.

Nimbin's Disaster Recovery Committee also met recently to turn its attention from fire recovery to Covid-19 management. An information sheet has been compiled and distributed through social media and email networks. If you would like to receive this and get regular updates, please contact NNIC on the number above.

Finally, please shop locally when you can, now and into the future. Most businesses are currently facing significant strain and stress and for some this will be devastating. Many of our businesses and community organisations will need to "hibernate" (ScoMo's words, not ours) and we can only hope that those forced to close will emerge the other side.

Our thoughts go to all those businesses and we will endeavour to provide any support that we can.

Another invasion? This time Covid-19



by Aniko Papp

I approach a client in a remote indigenous Northern Territory township, red dust swirling around my boots.

My indigenous co-worker lets me go ahead, as she has been bitten by a yellow dog before so she's wary. I usually wear jeans despite the heat, in case one of these mongrels grabs at my calf.

Like so many homes I have visited, there are at least ten people crowded into a three-bedroom house. The open small verandas are littered with bedding and mattresses. The house is constructed from concrete besser blocks on bare cement floors, with only a few windows letting in fresh air and light. Water gushes into the house, from the dirt road outside during the wet season. The cheapest plastic fittings fit out the interior, which are lucky to have a washing machine, let alone air conditioning.

Houses for nurses and police, just a street away, are large, bright and airy. They are built from aluminium and wood, and elevated off the ground, bearing wide covered verandas complete with shiny BBQs, air conditioning and solar-panelled hot water. Palaces compared to the square squat homes of the indigenous folk they have been sent to service.

Crowded and strong smelling with so many people in one small area. Water sourced from bores often saline and hard, staining all surfaces. Hot clean water is sometimes difficult to access. Electricity provided by diesel generators is pricey and prone to cut out. These homes are already hotbeds of infections, with rheumatic heart disease just one infection common to communities.

I go to the local clinic, which unlike many, is open every weekday. Some clinics are open for a few hours once a fortnight only. I am told of broken machines and lack of medical equipment and this isn't now, this is months ago.

I chat to one of my clients bearing a large lump in her arm, bulging and painful. She's a mother of two young children waiting for a kidney transplant. The stent in her arm is for her dialysis. Two machines run constantly to

cater for their patients here.

She is one of the lucky ones. Her community is big enough for a machine. I recall one client's wife with three young kids, dead from heart disease at 32, already having had a leg amputated from diabetic complications. The closest hospitals are often hundreds of km away.

The local stores ship in produce sometimes from thousands of kilometres away. Unlike mining companies who get diesel and transport subsidies, people here pay top dollar for their transport costs. I wander into the one local store: a punnet of blueberries is \$22; a wilted iceberg lettuce \$10.

A young father buys a small box of groceries: ½kg of meat, powdered milk, cereal, potatoes, various tins and cans for \$100. The lockdowns mean that families will no longer be able to do their big cheaper shops in towns like Darwin or Katherine.

What does this mean for our indigenous families in remote communities? Let's start with sobering facts. The 2009's Swine flu's first victim in Australia was an indigenous woman from a central desert community. The death rate for Swine flu for indigenous folk was six times higher than the rest of Australians. ATSI people comprised 2.5% of the Australian population but accounted for 16% of patients hospitalised.

ATSI people are already three times more likely than non-Indigenous people to be admitted to hospital for influenza and pneumonia, which is the leading cause of respiratory related deaths for ATSI Islander adults and babies under one year of age. The 1919 Spanish flu decimated indigenous communities, with a death rate of up to 50%. For example, 15% of Cherbourg's population died within three weeks, with only 10 people out of a population of 600 not affected by the illness. All of the survivors had lung damage, heart damage or brain damage.

Overcrowded already, how will indigenous people in these remote communities self-isolate? Poor health is already endemic. Like smallpox, the Spanish flu and Swine flu, if Covid-19 gets into these communities, it will devastate them.



Women's Festival thanks

Thank you everyone for coming to the Lismore Women's Festival over the weekend 6-8th March. What a hoot! The program this year was outstanding: how special and talented are the women of Northern NSW? We want to reach out to all event hosts who put in mountains of work and passion; they made us laugh, cry and whoop. The music was amazing. The LCC IWD event, the comedy, the cabaret and the feminist panel were all sell-out events.

We couldn't do this without the wonderful volleys who worked beside us all the way. We had a great time on IWD where so many women shared their talents and gave their all.

Land clearing free-for-all



Eucalyptus plant clearing at Leeville. Photo: Dailan Pugh

There has been a 13-fold increase in land-clearing approvals in NSW since controversial land-clearing law changes were introduced in 2016.

This has been revealed in a Cabinet in Confidence report obtained by Independent NSW MP Justin Field, who has labelled it as evidence of a “catastrophic failure” of land management under the NSW Nationals.

“This report makes clear that the management of natural resources under the NSW Nationals have been a catastrophic failure that has led to seemingly unrestrained land clearing approvals, and an increase in unexplained clearing across the majority of the state,” Mr Field said.

“It is unacceptable and unforgivable that the Government has been sitting on findings for nine months that show their own laws present a ‘state-wide risk to biodiversity’, while land clearing has been allowed to continue at record levels.” Mr Field said.

North Coast organisation the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) is calling for an immediate halt to land-clearing in the light of the Natural Resources Commission’s (NRC’s) damning review.

“The NRC are scathing in their assessment that the Government is only setting aside in protected areas a fraction of the area approved to be cleared, when the Government promised they would protect two-four times more than was cleared,” NEFA spokesperson Dailan Pugh said.

“Last year over half of north-east NSW’s remnant native vegetation was burnt with the likely death of over 350 million native mammals,

birds, lizards and frogs, including thousands of koalas.

“Many species of plants and animals have had their populations decimated and are teetering on the brink of extinction. It is outrageous that the NSW Government is now allowing land clearing and logging to push many populations over the brink.

“Land clearing increases regional temperatures, reduces rainfalls and releases large quantities of carbon into the atmosphere, we cannot afford for it to continue, let alone escalate. We need to be planting more trees to take up carbon, not bulldozing them,” Mr Pugh said.

The NRC’s report found that:

- In 2018/19, over 37,000 hectares were approved to be cleared. This is almost 13 times the annual average rate of approval in the ten years prior to 2016/17 of approximately 2,700 hectares (p.6);
- Land clearing approvals almost doubled between Q4 2018 (25,247 hectares) and Q1 2019 (43,553 hectares), just after the most controversial element of the land clearing reform, the Codes, commenced in March 2018 (p.4);
- There were 7,100 hectares of ‘unexplained’ clearing over six months (August 2017 – January 2018) representing almost 60% of all land clearing. (pp.4,5);
- Nine of 11 regions in NSW are setting aside significantly less than the area approved for clearing (between 6 and 69% of the area approved to be cleared). When the reforms were introduced it was intended that two to four times the area approved for clearing

would be set aside (p.6);

- Nine of 11 regions are considered a “high biodiversity risk” with high rates of clearing being undertaken under provisions to allow for “thinning for pasture expansion”. The report describes clearing under this rule as presenting a “state-wide risk to biodiversity” and that the “policy intent of the reforms is not being achieved” (pp.4,6); and
- The Government has failed to finalise key elements of the 2016 reform including the Native Vegetation Regulatory Map and a coordinated Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting program (p.4).

Justin Field has been pursuing this report through the Parliament since its existence was confirmed in September 2019.

“Our wildlife and the native forests, woodlands and grasslands they rely on have been savaged by the drought and fires and the Government has known its land clearing laws were making that worse,” Mr Field said.

“This sends a terrible message to landholders who are trying to do the right thing, and who understand the value of protecting biodiversity on the land, when they see the Government allow rampant clearing across the state.

“New approvals for land clearing and the ‘pasture expansion thinning’ rules should be paused until the NRC’s recommendations are implemented in full.

“I’m concerned that in the current Covid-19 crisis unacceptable rates of land clearing are going to continue unabated and without enforcement.”

