

Face mask legality

I am wondering if you have yet realised, like many others of us, that the wearing of face masks in public places is a breach of the Criminal Code amendments passed in 2017 – namely 'Amendment to the Criminal Code Prohibiting the Wearing of Full Face Masks in public 2017.'

With the Victorian government threatening to fine anyone in the Melbourne/Mitchell Shire lockdown area \$200 for not wearing a face mask in public, it can only benefit lawyers who will be confronted with two conflicting laws... with both the wearing of face masks in public and not wearing of face masks in public being a criminal offence!

The both the Federal and State government's failed to address and rectify this legal flaw says just how much they have become removed from reality (or simply how stupid).

I have emailed both Kevin Hogan MP (Federal) and Gladys Berejiklian (State) and it seems both governments are now running around like chooks with their heads cut off wondering how to address this without appearing caught out by a mere nobody!

Yes folks – the king is not wearing clothes!

I attached a photo wearing a face mask and eye protection to avoid catching Covid-19... and neither government wants to say whether or not it is in breach of the Criminal Code.

Azan Mann
Evans Head

Overcrowding

In response to Bernadine Schwartz ('Living in an Overcrowded World' NGT July), I would like to state that overpopulation is not the problem, it's inequality and overconsumption.

And white Australians are the climate and environmental vandals of the planet.

So, what's the solution? We can think local, act local, buy local and use local public transport. Transportation is one of the major climate

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 Nimbin Good Times.

change drivers and our consumerism's the cause of wars.

However, in reality it's a complex situation and there are no simple solutions. All we can do is be the change we want to see.

And remember there's no us and them. We are all in this mess together.

Omega Breakspear
Lismore

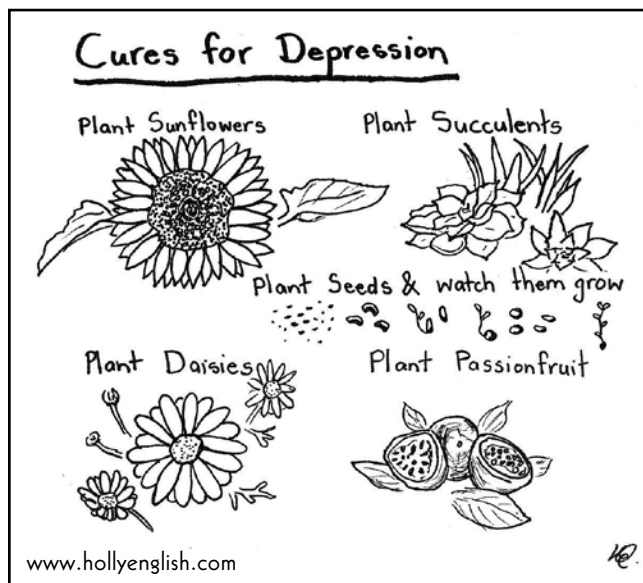
Nuclear weapons

The 16th July, 75 years ago, was the date of the first atomic weapons test code named "Trinity", at Alamogordo, New Mexico, USA (part of the Manhattan Project), which led to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the 6th and 9th August, and over 2000 additional tests worldwide, exposing people and nature to deadly toxic radioactive particles.

Today, there are over 13,890 nuclear weapons worldwide, all far more powerful than the ones used on Japan.

But there is hope, thanks to an Australian initiated campaign ICANW (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons). We now have 40 countries, Botswana being the latest, that have ratified the treaty in the United Nations, with 10 more required to make nuclear weapons, illegal under international law.

Thanks to the dedicated people, who work tirelessly to make this happen, and we can help by making a donation at: www.icanw.org, and encouraging your council to sign up to the ICAN Cities Appeal. There are now 28 Australian



councils signed up, Adelaide being the latest.

So if councils could take some time out from being developers, just like Ballina Council, they could add their support.

There is no future in a world held to ransom by these horrendous weapons of mass destruction.

People should be appalled by the government's announcement to spend \$270 billion on so-called defence.

Love is the answer.

Mick and Deborah Stacey
Ballina

Santos gas project issues

I wish to alert readers to the proposed gas project by Santos at Narrabri.

This is possibly going under the radar during this time of Covid, however it is a vitally important issue in determining Australia's response to climate change, as is protecting the water of the Great Artesian Basin. These are just two of the many important environmental issues at stake.

There are a lot of myths and misinformation being put about. One is that gas is better for greenhouse gases than coal. In fact, it is as bad or worse than coal in this regard.

The fugitive emissions produced if planned gas projects go ahead will make Australia's Paris targets impossible.

Another myth is that more gas will decrease domestic gas prices. Despite a tripling of gas production since 2015, gas prices have not decreased; it is not Santos' intention to decrease prices. Australia is now the biggest gas exporter in the world. This does not help domestic supply.

If you are concerned about this, the last chance to make a submission to the Independent Planning Commission is 10th August. It doesn't take long to do; check out: LocktheGate.org.au We can still make a difference.

Brigid Beckett
Wyrallah

Dunoon dam concerns

I am deeply concerned about Rous County Council's proposed Dunoon dam as part of the Future Water Project 2060.

Given that the proposed site will flood Widgee culturally significant sites and artefacts, including burial grounds, I see no way in which this dam can go ahead. The act of destroying these sites is the continuation of the cultural genocide of the First Peoples of this continent, and to implement the dam Rous County Council is explicitly carrying out this act.

I have also noticed that under the Richmond River Water Sharing Plan, one of the clear objectives is to "Protect, preserve, maintain and enhance the Aboriginal, cultural and heritage values of these water sources". The creation of the dam at Dunoon would directly contradict this objective.

Another cultural impact concern I have is the forced displacement of people from their homes who currently live at the proposed site.

Having assessed the environmental flows impact report, I am concerned with the effects on local ecology and landscape. The anticipated effects in impact Zone 2 are too significant for the land and waterways. The destruction of habitat, eutrophication of the reservoir and expected algal blooms are unacceptable.

Multiple threatened plant species inhabit the dam location including *Tinospora tinoporoides*, *Acalypha* sp. 'Big Scrub', *Corokia whiteana*, *Marsdenia longiloba* and *Desmodium acanthocladum*, which are protected under the EPBC Act (1999).

I also cannot bring myself to ignore the fact that arsenic and DDT residues have been identified on the proposed dam site, which would compromise the quality of water and place the health of the community at risk.

I believe there are more efficient and less damaging water security plans that could be implemented in

MP to open on-line shop

Local member of NSW parliament, Janelle Saffin is opening the Nimbin HEMP Embassy's new on-line store: shop.hempembassy.net on Friday 14th August at 11am, at the Embassy. All are welcome to the little event which will be live on-line, and then you can hear Janelle on 102.3FM or live streaming from: nimfm.org when she joins the weekly HEMP Hours program at midday.

Al-Anon family groups

Is your life being affected by somebody else's drinking? Al-Anon Family Groups can help. Meetings held in your district. For more information: www.al-anon.org.au or phone 1300-252-666.

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.

place of the dam, with the \$245M expected to spend on it. Perhaps alternatively, new developments could be supplied with water tanks or we could at least in part, re-use treated water.

If we are serious about planning for a drier climate in the future, eventually we will have to look at implementing this infrastructure, in the long term it is not more efficient to front it now and do the job properly from the beginning?

I will be participating in the active opposition of the construction of this dam, and hope that my voice as a local community member will be heard. Rous County Council are taking feedback submissions on the proposed dam until 12th August, and submissions may be emailed to: council@rous.nsw.gov.au

Léandra Martiniello
Dunoon

See also Jeff Johnson's column, p.10 – Ed.

Brumbies

Regarding Les Rees' article (NGT July, p.23), horses are magnificent animals. That's unarguable. This attractiveness facilitates romanticism and rationalisation of their appropriateness in Australia.

The unavoidable fact is, however, that brumbies have no legitimate place in the natural landscape and should be eradicated just like feral rabbits, cats, dogs and cane toads.

Peter Mudd
East Lismore

Trump's zero-sum game

Game theory crystallises a kernel problem democracies have always had, that establishing and sustaining trust between self-interested parties is nearly impossible: the democracies we have formed are adversarial and that is their weakness; fundamental to them is competition existing in terms of gains and losses between

opposing players.

We have created a form of government that is nominally democratic, that is not egalitarian but is singularly competitive, where deception and treachery are commonplace and are the assumed ways of winning social control and power and wealth.

Trump's America starkly exemplifies this: a nation that cannot modify its impulsive and selfish nature, that does not foster its peoples' long-term interests and welfare, that is combative internally and internationally.

Game theory describes the complex behavioral relationships between organisms as they compete for resources. Interactions range from antagonistic to co-operative, fluctuate between extremes of exploitation and altruism ... this is modern day America. Countries like the U.K. and Australia are trending the same way.

Todd Martens: "Game theory not chaos rules the Trump White House ... it's an endless tunnel that has followers view every living being and pop-culture item as a symbol of potential political opposition."

Trump is playing a zero-sum game and intends he'll be the winner. He intends perverting the next presidential election.

As columnist Umair Haque says: "Trump will probably keep pushing to delay the election ... he'll do everything in his power to corrode, corrupt, and delegitimise it, from shock troops to crying voter fraud to suppressing the vote."

Sooner or later ordinary Americans will discover, to their horror, that what rules them is a fistulous plutarchy – a political system commanded by wealthy people – the only opposition being a rabble of genuine democrats... and the military.

Michael Brooke
Kyogle

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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.

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NGT is published by the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation, 81 Cullen Street, Nimbin.

NEXT DEADLINE:
Wednesday 26th August

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



Chamber Chat

by Diana Roberts, president

Visitor Info Centre closed

Following discussions with Council, it is evident that the community will be going it alone to provide replacement visitor information options. There will be no local government funding – a very poor decision in our opinion from a Council that has economic development as a focus.

To find solutions, the Chamber is going to conduct a survey of local businesses, owners and employees, and the community to see what creative ideas are out there. We will collate your thoughts and organise a meeting or meetings during October with a view to working up supported ideas into concrete outcomes.

So, put your thinking caps on and when a survey comes your way during August, please complete it. This is an opportunity to think creatively and out-of-the-box! To make sure you receive a survey email your interest to: chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au

Roots Festival cancelled

Unfortunately the Nimbin Roots Festival planned for September has been cancelled for this year due to Covid-19, a sensible decision in the circumstances but disappointing nevertheless as this would have been the 5th Roots Festival.

For the past three years the Chamber has sponsored the Roots Festival and this year would have been no exception. Some have asked why we sponsor it when it's a privately managed festival so here's an explanation.

After the first Roots Festival, the feedback the Chamber received from local businesses was very positive. The Festival brought a different demographic to the village – people who'd never been to Nimbin but loved it.

Staying 2-3 days in our village meant people spent money in more than food venues, which delighted many business owners, plus attendees and performers staying in and around the village learnt a little about the things we value. For locals who attended, the music and ambience were really enjoyable. Based on this feedback the Chamber sought to become more engaged with the Festival.

There's a lot involved in organising a Festival. Some of you will remember the early Visions of Nimbin Festivals. The first in 1997 was a very successful event, thanks

to extraordinary community involvement, and we raised over \$30,000 towards acquisition of Nimbin Community Centre.

Subsequent festivals were not as successful and after the third, organisers said "no more". A number of people have tried to get music festivals happening in Nimbin but none have stood the test of time. A festival is a lot of work and needs community support. Hats off to MardiGrass who pull it off every year because of the passion and commitment of many and the organisation of a few.

Nimbin Roots Festival has succeeded so far because of the love of music and performing that motivates Lou Bradley and her family, and a tenacity that is essential if a festival is to succeed. The Chamber sees the Roots Festival as a really positive addition to our cultural calendar and we would encourage you all to get on board next year.

The Community Centre is going to seek funding for an indigenous stage which would be a wonderful addition. It would also be great to put our community on show in other ways and to offer visitors to our village more than a music experience. Think on it. The next Nimbin Roots Festival is scheduled for 10-12th September 2021.

JobKeeper

JobKeeper payments have been crucial for the survival of small businesses, many of which would probably still be closed without it, or employees still stood down. A disturbing and recent Business NSW survey indicated that 40% of businesses have no plan to manage their business when payments stop.

Not surprisingly, those industries particularly affected include the arts and recreation, accommodation and food, education and training, transport, postal and construction. It's estimated that 15,000 jobs have been lost in the northern rivers during Covid, mainly in the accommodation, food services and retail areas.

Fortunately, the government has agreed to extend JobKeeper beyond the end of September. The payment rate for eligible employees and sole traders will be reduced to \$1200 per fortnight and, for those who work less than 20 hours a week, further reduced to \$750 per fortnight.

The rules for evidence of a decline in turnover have also changed. Rather than go into detail here I suggest all interested businesses do their own research. Applications for JobKeeper can be made at any time, so it's not too late to look into it.

See: https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/Fact_sheet-JobKeeper_Payment_extension.pdf

Finally, in short:

- Many local businesses have received the NSW government Business COVID recovery grant which is up to \$3000. It's very easy to apply so check whether you meet the eligibility criteria and if so, go for it;
- A big shout-out to Nimbin Emporium for the massive solar installation on their new roof. If you haven't looked up, do – it's impressive;
- Congratulations go to Green Bank owner (and Chamber Executive member) Kylie Cain who was awarded a Summerland Credit Union business grant. Great news and thanks Summerland;
- Council has received an amended development application from the developers of the fire site on the main street. Fingers crossed, this will get over the line and we'll finally see building happening on the site. Thanks go to the fireys who put out the recent shed fire there. Our timber village is so vulnerable to fire;
- Thanks and welcome to all the new businesses who've applied to join the Chamber – you'll be hearing from us shortly. To those who've yet to join go to our website: www.nimbinaustralia.com.au and complete a membership application. It's free and we'd value your support.

Nimbin Community Centre update

by Teresa Biscoe, Co-ordinator

Bottlebrush extension

A veranda extension at the Bottlebrush building that houses the Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Service.

This extension project is the result of grant initiative by the service and is intended, once it is finished, as dedicated space for the Indigenous Elders of our community.

The work has been undertaken by local builders (Jazz Constructions) and we would like to acknowledge and thank the service for the addition to the building and its ongoing service to the community.

Project planning at NCCI

The Community Centre has been working over the last couple of months to review and update our project planning documents to reflect the NCCI Management Guidelines Review made in March this year. This process identifies, sets and consolidates the NCCI plans and actions over the next 3-5 years.

Mitigating climate chaos

Many additional projects identified are primarily focussed on improving centre infrastructure and practice to mitigate the impacts of climate chaos.

This includes: drought proofing gardens by replacing non-native species with native drought resistant species; increasing capture and storage of storm water on site by increasing tanks on site for use in the gardens during water restrictions; where possible insulating and venting roof cavities to manage heat and investigating passive heating and cooling strategies; increasing alternative energy production and investigating and planning for increased demand to the power system on site.

Due to budget constraints most of these projects will need grant funding to achieve as the centre can only contribute some partial funding to match grant contributions. Centre staff and the committee are currently working on a number of grants to achieve this aim.

Grounds improvement

Other projects identified were centred around improving and adding to the grounds infrastructure, security and safety.

These projects include: a through road in the markets area; a drop-off platform for the clients at Nimbin Health and Welfare; developing stair access from the Western carpark behind Birth and Beyond; a native gardens culture walk that showcases the native edible and medicinal species on both our sites with maps and signs identifying species and how they are used; improving disability and community access on site; adding more table seating and shade around the centre grounds; developing the quadrangle in the heart of centre by removing the tar and greening and adding seating, shade and art elements to beautify the space; brightening up the veranda in front of Nim-FM with paint and lighting; extending the rainbow from the rainbow building by running a stripe of rainbow colours across the bottom of the Acacia Building



and across to the Aquarius Foundation in the carpark.

Many of these projects are long-term and will be achieved as grant funding becomes available or in small stages as NCCI can afford. Small projects (under \$2500) may also be achieved via community appeals and donations.

Community engagement

NCCI continues to engage with and recognise its role within the community to support community projects and development both on Centre's grounds and out in the wider community.

Projects identified for support and development

include: the annual Sticks and Stones sculpture installation exhibit held in NCCI grounds; support for local youth engagement projects including offering access to NCCI grounds and casual hire spaces and NCCI youth music project equipment; working with the Nimbin Chamber to

gain funding to extend the Light up Nimbin project and administer mural restoration of our iconic main street; support for the Rainbow Walking Trail; as part of our developing RAP, working with the Aboriginal Culture Centre to facilitate and auspice culture workshops and events including NAIDOC Celebrations; working with the Nimbin Roots Festival organisers and the Aboriginal Cultural Centre to seek funding for a dedicated indigenous stage for the Roots Fest.

Volunteers and ideas

The centre is registered and insured for accepting volunteers. If you would like to contribute to the centre as a volunteer or donate to a special project, please contact us and let us know, on 6689-0000 or: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au



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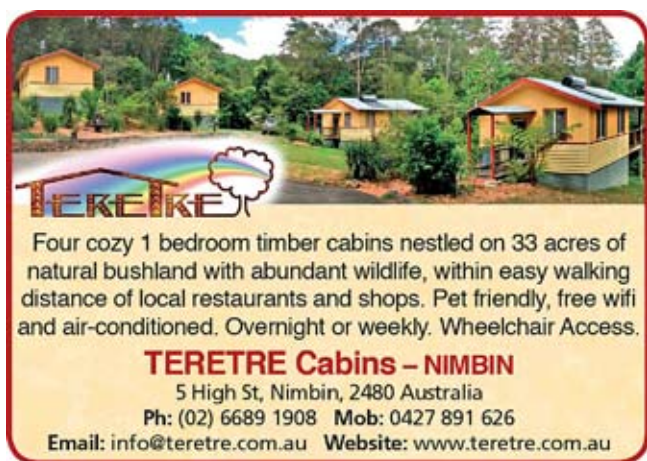


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Lismore Council adopts deficit budget for 2021

Since my last column, the 2020-21 Lismore City Council budget process has concluded, with the exhibited budget adopted.

There were a few minor changes at our extraordinary meeting, with part of NORPA's funding reinstated and some minor changes to fees and charges.

Before we went through the budget process I came out to Nimbin and spent a couple of hours walking the Rainbow Trail with Diana Roberts to get a full understanding of the issues and the possibilities for the project.

During the budget process, I advocated to reinstate the project, with a particular focus on stage two in our operational plan.

I also advocated for inclusion of the project in our recently adopted sport and recreation plan.

Councillors supported me in this, so the project has been reinstated thanks to



Word of the Bird
by Cr Elly Bird

community members who have been working hard to see this happen.

Unfortunately due to Council's financial constraints this project, like many others, is unfunded at this stage and any progress will be wholly dependent on grant funding.

The adopted budget has a cash deficit \$458,000. More hard decisions will need to be made soon to try and find more savings to reduce it.

We are in a very difficult situation with increasing costs, challenging businesses that we are working hard to turn around, increasing cost shifting from the state government and no real increase in federal assistance grants for many years.

Other features of the budget include: \$7.85m of roads maintenance to help clear the significant backlog in roadworks; investment of \$4.2m in improvements to the Lismore Regional Airport through a Federal Government grant; investment of \$4.7m in upgrades to Oakes Oval and Crozier Field through State and Federal Government funding; investment of \$1.5m in CBD revitalisation through State Government funding; investment of \$2.3m in Nimbin and Lismore Showgrounds through the Federal Government; Council is retaining funding to its two signature events the Lismore Lantern Parade

and Eat the Street; Council will close the Brewster Street Drop-off Centre due to safety concerns and work to find a new location.

We have had to make very significant cuts across tourism and events and to the art gallery.

We have been holding off cuts to these activities for a number of years but after progressively cutting budgets every year with no new revenue, and with the added impact of Covid-19 to local government, we have had to make these very difficult decisions.

The impacts of this pandemic are wide-ranging and significant, and we have a challenging time ahead of us at all levels of our society, so I hope that you are practising and focussing on building your personal resilience and taking good care of yourself and your loved ones.

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

Close the water loop before building new dams

by Cr Jeff Johnson

During the last week of July, I attended a briefing on Rous Water's 'Future Water Project 2060', which is currently on public exhibition.

I was under the false impression that the long talked-about Dunoon Dam project had been ruled out. The environmental impact, the destruction of sacred Aboriginal sites and the massive construction and ongoing costs associated with it haven't changed.

We were told at the briefing that building the dam was now "Rous' preferred way to secure our long term water security".

At the briefing it was revealed that the total cost of the Dunoon Dam over an expected "80-year life span" would be over \$650 million in today's dollars. If it was ever to be built, the cost is likely to blow out considerably.

Also the cost of maintenance and management etc over that time would also increase. All water users in the region would have to pay for it through increased rates and water usage charges.

How can we have this conversation when we only have half the information? The NSW Government is also currently undertaking a review of the future water needs of our region including agriculture.

The Rous Water study only looks at urban water usage and supply. Surely, we need to at least wait to see what the NSW Government's review comes up with before being asked to determine a long term strategy with massive cost and sustainability implications?

Currently, the public is being asked to choose either Option A or B (the Dunoon Dam or a massive increase in groundwater usage).

What if there are options C, D or E, or a combination between them that haven't been given proper consideration? I feel that the two options provided are not the only solutions, and it could be argued that neither option stacks up.

We are fortunate in the Northern Rivers, given our high rainfall. How are other areas going to secure their "long-



Artists impression courtesy Rous Water

term water needs" when they receive far less rainfall than our region? I think we need to look for a more sustainable and creative way to secure our long-term water needs.

For a start, all major new subdivisions in the Ballina Shire have a recycled water pipe built into the infrastructure for toilets, laundry and garden usage.

This greatly reduces the demand for 'new water' to be supplied. Surely programs like this can be extended or retrofitted to areas of high water usage?

If we could get closer to closing the loop, then a new water source wouldn't be needed. The concept of building a massive new dam just to flush the water down the toilet and into the creeks, rivers and ultimately the ocean doesn't seem right to me.

It's time we looked at closing the loop with our water, rather than just building larger dams or unsustainably tapping into the aquifers for a single use water management strategy.

Submissions officially close on the 12th August. The link to the Rous Water website is: www.rous.nsw.gov.au There is an on-line form you can fill out.

Alternatively you can send a

submission to: council@rous.nsw.gov.au

This is an important decision and one that shouldn't be rushed.

Grants available to community groups

Applications for the Northern Rivers Community Foundation (NRCF) Recovery and Resilience Grants Program can now be submitted.

Not-for-profit community groups across the Northern Rivers, impacted by a recent disaster, such as a flood, bushfire, or Covid-19 can now apply for grants from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Funded through the NRCF Resilience and Regeneration Fund, this grants program is focused on helping community groups respond directly to community need arising from current and future crises.

The Application Form and Guidelines can be downloaded from this website at: nrcf.org.au/grants/recovery-resilience-grants-program

Applications close at midnight on Monday 17th August.

Regional Jobs Plan needed to combat record losses

by Janelle Saffin,
Member for Lismore

Now is the right time for the NSW Berejiklian-Barilaro Government to work with the community to develop a Regional Jobs Plan, to combat record job losses.

It is estimated that 15,471 jobs had vanished from the Northern Rivers regional economy between February and May this year, with accommodation and food services hardest hit (3567 jobs lost).

No sector of the economy had been spared, with retail trade close behind hospitality (3281 jobs lost), and health care/social assistance (1893 jobs) and education/training (1418 jobs) badly affected.

These sobering figures are found in Australian company Remplan's report to Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers (RDA-NR). Added to this scenario are the Census figures in the lead-up to the 2019 election that showed 17,000 jobs had gone across the regions, while Sydney had a growth of over 300,000 jobs. We can project that the Northern Tablelands will have suffered such job losses.

A Regional Jobs Plan could include a 'locals first' policy for all State Government-funded programs. If all levels of

government put locals first it would really support our local tradies and local suppliers.

A Regional Jobs Plan could identify where to grow job opportunities in our regions, where general and youth unemployment levels are at record highs. Our plan could be informed by the Climate Council's Clean Jobs Plan, which shows how 12 policy opportunities can put 76,000 Australians to work, reboot the economy, and tackle long-term challenges, including climate change. Go to: www.climatecouncil.org.au

A Regional Jobs Plan could help protect existing local jobs and help local small business and entrepreneurs create new local jobs over the next few critical years as regional economies recover from the impacts of the initial Covid-19 lockdown from March to May this year.

The newly-created NSW Department of Regional Development could co-ordinate the development of a plan. The Department could marshal all local resources and talent including Business NSW regional managers Jane Laverty (Northern Rivers) and Joe Townsend (New England North West), local Chambers of Commerce and industry representatives, union leaders, TAFE, local councils and some



Janelle Saffin last year thanked Tuntabla Falls resident Kael Veenstra-Young for her work as one of the key co-ordinators at the bushfire evacuation centre in Nimbin Showgrounds.

standout successful business operators. Local MPs at all levels would need to be involved.

For starters, there is some \$1.7 billion of unspent Restart NSW funds that are legislatively earmarked for regional NSW. I have raised this in the NSW Parliament and I note that Business NSW includes it in its NSW Budget Priorities March 2020 submission.

The designation of a Special

Activation Precinct in the Lismore Electorate would also be timely.

The Regional Jobs Plan could involve taking on resourced apprentices and interns, as it is predicted that they will be out of work for a lengthy time due to Covid disruption. The Productivity Commission's latest research showed the Coronavirus recession could prove even worse for young people and their chances of securing a well-paying job, even a

job at all, over the next decade. There is a now an embrace to shift from an over-reliance on cheaper off-shore manufacturing of products back towards encouraging a reboot of Australian manufacturing, including in regional and rural areas. The manufacture of sanitiser and personal protection equipment (PPE) has led the way.

We could create and fast-track housing development, of which we have a dire shortage.

TAFE would be a big player in this as well, and it needs to be our primary provider of vocational education and training.

The Federal Government's JobKeeper and JobSeeker programs, together with State Government support grants, have kept many eligible small businesses afloat, but as Centrelink payments are wound back from October, other practical support must be provided in a more structured way. Some of the State money remains unspent and it can be repurposed for a Regional Jobs Plan.

Lismore is known as a university city, but Southern Cross University is fighting to survive following the loss of overseas students, among other things, and our vibrant arts industry has been decimated. Both of these sectors need more targeted support.

Maintain good hygiene and social distancing

Our local communities continue to adhere to the government's requests to limit our social engagement and to maintain good hygiene and social distancing. As a consequence this area, the NSW North Coast, has seen very little incidence of Covid-19.

We have been very fortunate, I think, to have been partially protected by QLD closing their border with NSW and restricting travel within that state. This move has had a flow-on benefit for all of us. We now wait to see if the influx of visitors from Victoria during the school holidays will impact our community and local health services.

I had to travel recently for two family funerals, and the variations between different country towns in their awareness of Covid-19 and hygiene rules were very disturbing. Some places complied with the requirement to obtain the contact details of people in cafes and provide hand sanitiser and to properly clean tables and chairs between customers, and some had no restrictions at all.

Because the message is just not getting through to some people, we are now seeing Victoria and western Sydney experiencing severe outbreaks of community transmissions.

I think tighter restrictions may have to be reintroduced. The issue right now is not the popularity of a government, it is the health and safety of our community and the support for all affected persons to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table.

That has to be the highest priority for governments – the security of our people is more important than winning the next election or the state of government finances.



by Cr Darlene Cook

Council News

While we have all been meeting via Zoom, rather than in person, Council has tried to maximise the engagement with our community. Council has ensured that access was available via Zoom at briefings for those who chose to register; and the monthly meetings were live-streamed on both the Council website and Council Facebook pages.

During the July Council meeting, a motion was passed that Council formulate a Covid-19 Return Safety plan as soon as practicable in preparation for the return of Councillors, staff and the public to the Council Chambers for meetings and briefings. Unfortunately the influx of visitors from Victoria during their school holidays has made the timing of this return to normal uncertain.

As part of our updated Sport and Recreation Plan to 2024 we included references to working with the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre as owners of 7 Sibley Street, and with the Nimbin Advisory Group, to create a master plan for the area vacated by the old skatepark.

As well, we added that we wanted work done on the planning and design for the Nimbin Rainbow Road Walking Trail Stage 2. Expediting this walking trail has

been requested many times by the Nimbin community, and it is great to see that it will progress in the next few years.

There was also an application to modify the development consent of the village subdivision on Alternative Way. There were a number of modifications requested, but the one that drew 10 submissions objecting to the application was the request to remove a Sydney Blue Gum on Lot 48 and the subdivision of lot 48 into 2 lots.

After some debate including questions about the Arborist reports, Council voted 9:1 to refuse that modification (Cr Bennett was on leave). It is probable that the internal road may have to be moved slightly to avoid further damage to that tree and the tree preservation zone.

On public exhibition for input from the community are the changes to our Development Control Plan which includes a new Chapter 14 Vegetation Protection.

The revised chapter is to respond to the recent legislative changes by establishing the appropriate approval pathway for any vegetation removal and covers all the LGA. The list of what is exempt from requiring an approval is more detailed, and the issues for consideration by assessors in rural and high biodiversity value areas is more significant.

Submissions are open until 26th August. You can get access at: <https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/on-public-exhibition-changes-to-dcps>

As the Mayor, Isaac Smith is on leave, I will be acting as Mayor during August. I can be contacted by phone on 0427-895-316 or email: darlene.cook@lismore.nsw.gov.au

On the same Page

by Kevin Hogan,
Member for Page

Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre grant

I secured a grant recently to assist the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre in purchasing new furniture. Great to catch up with Kath and the team recently.

The Neighbourhood Centre provides a wide range of important services. This includes a soup kitchen, vacation care and qualified community welfare workers.

Thank you for what you do for our community.



JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments extended

This continued support for people who are without work, and for businesses and their workers will help our community get through this crisis, and recover on the other side.

The JobKeeper Payment will continue at its current level until 27th September, it will then be extended for a further six months to 28th March 2021. A two-tiered payment will be introduced to better reflect the pre-Covid-19 income of payment recipients.

Specifically, from 28th September until 3rd January next year, the two payments will be \$1,200 and \$750 per fortnight, with the lower payment for employees who worked less than 20 hours a week in the month of February pre-Covid-19. From 4th January to 28th March next year, the two payments will be \$1,000 and \$650.

The temporary Coronavirus Supplement for those on income support will also be extended until 31st December 2020. The \$550 per fortnight supplement will continue until 24th September. From 25th September until 31st December, the supplement will be \$250 per fortnight, reducing by the same amount as the JobKeeper payment.

Both payments have been extended under the next phase of our support for affected businesses and households.

New medicines listed on the PBS

Australians suffering from lung cancer and Type 2 diabetes have new treatment options, with new and extended PBS listings:

- Ozempic® (semaglutide) is being listed as a new treatment for type 2 diabetes.
- Tecentriq® (atezolizumab) is also being expanded and improved to include a new form and treatment.

Legal anomalies in asylum seeker treatment

by David Heilpern

We have a functioning first-world justice system that we can be proud of. Or do we? Here are three fundamental things that a functioning justice system would never ever do.

Firstly, we do not lock up people who have not committed a crime. As a society we just don't do that unless they are completely mad or refused bail. The second thing we never do is lock people up who have not committed a crime, to try and deter others from doing something that is not a crime. That would be utterly ridiculous.

And thirdly we never lock up children who have not committed a crime, and never ever to deter adults from doing something that is not criminal. That would not just be cruel, but would go against the very basic tenets of our society and protection of children. OK, you with me so far?

But that is exactly what Australia has been doing for the last two decades. Shamefully, we have been locking up people who have not committed a crime. Tens of thousands of them. We have been doing it to deter people from doing something that is not a crime.

And we have even been locking up children who have not committed a crime, in an effort to deter people from doing something that is not illegal. That goes against absolutely everything I believe in and everything the law has stood for in my lifetime at least.

That is what we are doing with asylum seekers. They have not committed a crime, yet we lock them up. We are locking them up for the ridiculous reason that this may deter other people from committing no crime. And we are locking up children in an effort to deter adults overseas from doing something which is not a crime.

As a law student in the 1980s, if someone had said to me that in my lifetime we would lock up innocent children in an effort to deter adults from doing something that is not a crime, I would have laughed in their face.

And I would have instantly committed to fighting any such regime – and I mean really fighting it with direct action and protest and taking to the streets. I come from a holocaust refugee background – we know what happens when people are locked up like that.

And except for asylum-seeking refugees, except for these largely dark people from foreign lands, we would never have a bar of it. In 30 years of law, having traversed every single law and order argument across the bar table and the dinner table, not even the most bloated of rednecks have hinted that we lock up innocent Australian children as a deterrent to innocent adults in another land.

Even rapists and murderers get a trial, get legal representation, get a jury, get to make a bail application, get a sentence with a beginning and an end.

What have we become in our complacency? I despair. What a terrible indictment of a country that 90% of people have voted for parties that support this policy. And we spend billions and billions of dollars doing it.

Here's a suggestion. Last I heard it had cost \$25 million to keep one family on Christmas Island. Let's put the money into domestic violence services. Win, win, win.

A win for refugees, a win for victims of domestic violence, and a win for the want-to-be justice system that no longer is perverted by laws that make a mockery of the word justice.

Until the last chain falls, freedom will make slaves of us all.

The apprehension of violence

Legal writes
by John Adams

Once sat with a friend in a court he'd been summoned to by his ex-wife to renew her 2-yearly Apprehended Violence Order (AVO). He thought I'd enjoy the experience. I did.

The alleged person in need of protection (PINOP) wanted to give evidence. The magistrate, sensitively, stood the matter in the list until everyone else had gone, then allowed her to fully express her feelings.

My friend explained afterwards, "I had a lawyer once. Now I just follow his instructions; accept Order 1ABC without admissions, and have a witness with me if I'm likely to run into her. Saves a fortune."

My new client says, "He's taking out an AVO on me."

In NSW there are two AVOs; ADVO and APVO. D stands for Domestic (generally people who live together), P for Personal (like neighbourhood disputes). Having an AVO against you doesn't go on your criminal record, and Orders 1ABC; not to assault, harass etc, just say you have to treat the PINOP as you would anyone else. After 12 months or two years, it's gone.

She tells me more. We talk about what will happen on the day. "He doesn't have to be there," she says. It's an ADVO, a police application, and he's just a witness.

If we oppose it, and there's sometimes good reason for this, he can have his day in court. As can we. The good reason is that a breach (beyond reasonable doubt) is a criminal offence carrying a maximum sentence of two years.

I tell her of a client whose ex invited him home from the caravan park to have Christmas dinner with his kids. One of the AVO conditions was not to consume alcohol around them. The ex, he told me in the cells, persuaded him to have a beer. One mouthful in, she rang the cops. Got him out of the way for a few months. Then there was the young mother of five who did quite well on the single parent pension. Her nickname was Triple-O.

To grant an AVO the magistrate has to be persuaded (on the balance of probabilities) that the PINOP actually feels fear and that such fear is reasonable. My new client doesn't think he's scared of her. But she's scared of him. Not that he's ever been physically violent. I explain that the Crimes

(Domestic & Personal Violence) Act 2007 ('the Act') doesn't cover fear of someone using the legal system to beat you up. Maybe it should.

We have two options, either accept 1ABC without admissions, and try to reduce it from two years to 12 months, or oppose the AVO altogether.

In one of the new interview rooms at court, we go through the grounds of the application. She suggests the ex hasn't been entirely honest. I am instructed to oppose it.

We're first in. She sits behind me in the otherwise empty court. The court officer gets the magistrate. We all stand up then everyone else sits down. I mention the matter, wait for his Honour to find it, then tell him our decision. He orders six weeks for police statements, then three for our reply. Then we get a hearing date. I hope it's this year.

Drafting cross-examinations is one of my favourite things. We only have to prove that his alleged fear is not real, and/or not reasonable. But if I catch him in one lie, he's made a false statement to the Court to get an AVO, an offence under s49A of the Act. I suspect we'll all look the other way on that one.

Unda covid influence

After decades working undacuva on the North Coast amongst trippers called druggies, I know only too well the early onset signs of megalomania.

Of course it doesn't help if half the congregation are bowing in hesitant reverence when they see you. When he awkwardly raised the subject with me I thought he was joking, which he does a lot.

"Do you think I'm special Bethany?" He went on like I wasn't listening and he was more talking to himself, even though he was staring straight at me.

But I was listening, and I'd seen it before, around the bonfires at Main Arm full moon parties in particular.

"I mean I know being PM is special and a great honor, but do you think I'm more than that? People at church are treating me strangely lately. Saying things to me."

It's hard acting so many different characters over the

STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

decades and when I'm really stoned, like this day, I can slip into another persona easily.

"Oh Coronaman." It just burst out of me like a song. "You've terrified the people and now you have to save 'em bro. You the Big Daddy for 'em all. They loss chillen an you their Pappy call Jesus, or prime minister, or president, dun really matter. We all looking to you to save us from corona now maaan."

Good communication is all in the delivery they say, and sometimes taking on some crazy character is enough to soften the blow, but he looked quite shocked.

"What are you speaking about Bethany? You on drugs?"

"You know exactly what I am saying sir. Just thought I'd lighten it up a little. You are the leader, their father.

You said lockdown and they say lockdown. But will they again for you sir? They're discovering sunshine fights corona. Doubts are rife out there. You lied to them about cannabis; what else are you lying about?"

"I have to pray now, spend time with my father, if you'd excuse me," he says and heads for the door.

Jesus I think, I've heard that before.

"The hippies say we can all be Jesus sir. They say magic mushrooms can get you there. The clinics in the hospitals up north fill up during mushroom season with people who think they're Jesus. Arguing with each other endlessly about who is the real one, they all have to be sedated."

That stopped him. "My wife often cooks mushrooms, but that has nothing to do with



this. Death in the form of corona is stalking every one of us Bethany, and I am their leader and yes, I do have to save them."

"But what if you can't sir? What about the aged care homes where people are dying without their families? Why don't you take them to hospital? Is their use-by date up?"

He was crushed, and sat down again.

"I believe, like my mother told me, that I was destined for great responsibility, Bethany. This is my fate, it's not easy. And I'm not sure if you realise who I am. Or who I think I am. If I am not 'The One', who else could it

be? Not Donald. The time is clearly upon us."

Took me a long long second to realise he was talking about the Trump, not the duck.

"Do you mean you're the white horseman sir, the first?"

He was stunned. I was so stoned I started dreaming about stunning the prime minister, laughing with myself about what a good story it was but who could I tell? Undacuva world is as lonely as it gets.

"How do you know about that, Bethany?"

"My mother took me to Sunday school and I've been employed by your government for decades to hang out with the tripping hippies, sir."

I nearly said "lord" instead of "sir" and again started laughing with myself. Just talking about tripping starts putting me in that space.

"What do you mean they think they're Jesus, Bethany?" He was listening now.

"Well, not that I would know sir, but it looks like delusional self-importance.

Because you're paranoid, sir."

He stared at me but I imagined I was his mum, tripping away as I was, and I literally felt him soften as he slowly let go. "You can only do your best dear, you can't save the whole world."

I heard the words come out of my own mouth and I swear it sounded so motherly I was melting myself at the same time. We were both insanely lonely in our jobs. It was our common ground, I realised.

He had no idea I was a man, but none of that mattered anyway, for the moment I was his mother.

"Better to just be Scotty, the boy who got lucky in the job, and leave Jesus in church."

He looked up and even smiled that crooked grin as he hoisted his responsibilities back on and got up out of the chair. I gave him a new bottle of CBD pills and laughed to myself: I've saved the nation from a loony like Putin.

It is funny but I can't tell anyone, so I'm writing about it anonymously.

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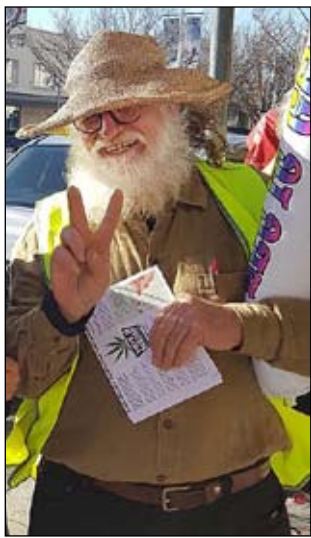
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On the by-election bus

by Michael Balderstone

The Hemp Party was always going to run in a by-election if it happened, and how perfect was Eden-Monaro? The electorate totally surrounds the ACT, where people are allowed to grow two plants. Or four per household, which is not enough really.

Anyway the Canberra laws are the only crack in the wall of Australia's war on weed. Sol Ramana Clarke, who launched his movie *The Hemp Revolution* at the 1995 MardiGrass, was going to be our candidate, but has applied for Canadian citizenship, so he was ruled out of the race. I, however, living at the other end of the state, was totally eligible to run.

So Caroline and I drove down inland, enjoying the wide open spaces and the good season with plenty of grass. We entered the electorate north of Yass and immediately started looking for good spots to nail up the 'Vote 1 HEMP' coreflutes. No wannabe politician's face on these signs, but a beautiful, big, bright green sativa leaf.

We soon notice there's not much election signage around, and at the Yass pre-poll where voting has been underway already for a couple of weeks they tell us there are strict rules and fines for littering the country with electoral signage.

What signs we have seen, mostly Labor or Liberal, are on private houses and fences. Major drama as the Subaru is crammed full of our leaves: 200 printed in Lismore just before we left. It's our only election expenditure and strategy.

How big are the fines? \$200 plus \$220 collection fee. \$420! Is that a good sign or a bad sign? Facebook wouldn't let us advertise, so maybe we can afford a few fines, I reckoned.

On the highway to the capital there is an odd cluster of corflutes on roundabouts where people slow down. Liberal, Labor, Greens, Nats, Democrats, maybe another one or two, hopeful faces neatly nailed to tomato stakes driven in the ground.

The big Sativa leaf propped up with bush branches looks

awesome amongst them and stands out a mile.

The next real stop is Queanbeyan where the two booths are in full swing and we are clearly the late arrivals.

We had no-one to hand out our how to vote cards, which were in fact just information on weed. We didn't tell people how to vote, but rather asked them to Vote 1 HEMP as a protest vote followed by the party of their choice. Pot smokers, cannabis users, come from all walks of life.

Of course we were never going to win, and were actually happy about that. It was always going to either Liberal or Labor and the dozen other candidates were never a chance, though everyone carried on like they might win. We wired our Vote 1 HEMP leaves onto prominent spots and it was impossible to miss them.

Graham Dunstan turned up, and we covered the Peacebus in the HEMP leaves and headed down the Kings Highway to Batemans Bay.

We set up on the highway outside Bega with flags, leaves, a picnic table with a cup of tea and a 'Honk for Hemp' sign. Plenty of honking including the local cops (not the highway patrols).

Back in Queanbeyan on Friday afternoon before the election, it's in full swing at the pre-poll booths and I meet most of the other candidates. I spend time with Labor's candidate, who is a friendly young mum who made a name for herself in the fires where she was mayor of Bega.

The Liberal woman didn't really want to talk to me and assured us she had returned our HEMP Party survey, but we never got it.

Fred Nile was there with his very young wife who Fred said wanted to live in Nimbin.

Everywhere we go people are furious about the cannabis saliva test for mere presence having nothing to do with impairment. People want to try the medicine but won't because of this.

Don and Louise turn up for Election Day to hand out how-to-votes at the main polling booth in Monaro Street. There are Electoral Commission officials with endless rules about where you can hand out. People get there

at 3am to get the best spot, like at the Grand Final.

Graham puts me in the Peacebus front seat talking on the microphone attached to Sound Solutions' amazing speaker system on the roof. His colourful black cockatoo flags on tall bamboo poles have been very eye-catching on our highway roadside stops along the way and he insists on tying them up for our drive around Queanbeyan.

We head off slowly. I can't believe how loud and clear the speakers are. They can hear me in the middle of Canberra. They can also hear me when they are standing, pen in hand, marking their voting cards. Louise calls with a message there is a complaint that voters can hear us in the booths as we drive up and down Monaro Street, the main drag.

I don't think Queanbeyan had seen anything quite like it. The Electoral Commissioner drove out from Canberra himself to see what was going on and after a threat of fines that no-one in Nimbin could afford, we settled on a central parking spot and unplugged the speakers, but the job was done.

It was freezing by 5pm with only a trickle of voters left, so we retired early to watch Geelong win in the local pub. Graham however scrutineered the counting at the Monaro booth. He arrived back saying he sat on the heater the whole time and we got 5.8% there.

On the TV we had 3% but as the pre-poll votes came in we slowly fell to 2.3. I still get emails every day saying there is ongoing counting and allocating of preferences!

We headed home the next day, inland again via the wide open spaces of this amazing island we live on.

Many thanks to Sol and Shanti, Shahnaz, Michelle and Steve, Danielle from the Motor Inn in Queanbeyan, our HQ for the election weekend, and the few other Hemp Party members in the electorate, who understandably want to remain anonymous who helped.

And thanks to the 2154 people who voted for us, 2.27%.

Labor's young mum Kristy won by 695 votes.

Snap... crocs!

by Aniko Papp

Crocodiles are a feature of everyday life to indigenous people in remote communities in the Northern Territory. They are a protected species in the NT but also a traditional source of food for certain tribes.

Decades of protection have seen their numbers explode to the point where crocodiles now thrive where they have never been sighted before. I have been told that many waterholes and rivers where the mob used to swim in only a decade or so ago, are now off-limits.

The first lesson taught to me was that freshies (freshwater crocodiles) won't hurt you unless you step on them or taunt them.

With long narrow snouts and smaller bodies, I was assured that freshies won't go for you as humans are far too big to fit into their mouths, unlike their usual prey of small birds, frogs and fish.

One fellow showed me a neat crescent shaped scar on his calf, after he tangled with one in a waterhole near Beswick (Wugulaar): it bled like beejesus, but apparently was but a flesh wound.

The second lesson taught to me, as I wandered in an Arnhem land swamp, was that the awful dead animal stench was probably a saltwater crocodile lurking nearby, so we better walk a bit faster. I was warned never to go to the same spot by a river more than twice and never to wander in their territory at night with a torch as they are attracted to the light.

Crocodiles are often a totem for members of many tribes, especially on the Tiwi Islands. They are revered. In one village near Nhulunbuy which is on the Gove Peninsula, I sat with a young woman on a mat, writing down her story so I could appear in Court for her.

Her little boy wandered by and threw me a ball. Mum was a bit weary, so her son and I played soccer in the yellow sand. At the edge of glorious blue waters that lapped on the Timor Sea, was a large steel cage just along the beach. "It's for the crocodiles," she explained. The startled look on my face must have said it all.

She went on, "It's not for old man crocodile, we leave him alone. It's for the young ones."

I asked, "What do you do when a croc doesn't get into the trap?"

Quite nonchalantly: "Oh we run and close the doors."

I asked, "Why do you live so close to



where the crocs are?"

She looked at me as if I was slow, "So we can get fish and pippies." And we kept writing her story, albeit, with me keeping an eye out for that old man croc.

In another community located at the edge of the Tanami desert, there was a strange creature buried deep in a hole in a virtually dry river bed. There had been no rain in that community for at least eight months.

Yet, after a brave soul attached a camera to the end of a long stick, gingerly poking it into the dark regions, it became clear that this was a huge salty somehow stranded there after the last big rains.

No-one knew quite what to do, as crocodiles had never been found there by anyone, even in the oldest elder's lifetime.

The Rangers were called out in a croc SOS to save people from becoming dinner, even though the massive croc later became bush tucker itself.

One of my Gurindji elders from another community laughed after I showed him the photo of that salty's huge snapping jaws. The elder pointed out that the shredded end of sticks strewn about the hole were no doubt the result of the local kids teasing the crocodile. He warned me never to walk in dry creek beds as crocodiles were known to bury themselves in the drying mud for months at a time, patiently biding their time for their next meal.

"Good to know," I said. "Oh, I don't want to lose my favourite lawyer," said the old man. "Not yet."

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