

Asylum seekers' rights

There is a Bill soon to be presented to the federal parliament which would allow guards in immigration detention centres and alternative places of detention (hotels and the like) to confiscate the mobile phones of detainees.

This would mean cutting them off from their families, friends and legal representatives. It would also prevent exposure of the conditions in these centres.

The move comes after an asylum seeker being held in a Melbourne hotel under guard was able to ask a question on the ABC-TV program Q&A via his mobile phone. He was immediately transferred to a detention centre where he remains.

His question related to refugees being held in hotels with no ability to socially distance or access sufficient hygiene facilities. Some of these people are being confined in rooms for 22 hours a day without access to fresh air or exercise.

To remove their means of communication with the outside world would be cruel in the extreme. Their phones are their lifeline. Without them their mental health would rapidly deteriorate.

This Bill must not be allowed to sneak through under the cover of the Covid-19 crisis.

Bridget Carr
Upper Horseshoe Creek

Concern for public native forests

After enduring the extreme conditions of last summer it seems like an increasingly stupid move by Forestry NSW to continue with plans to log bushfire and drought-decimated Public Native Forests such as Myrtle State Forest south of Casino.

There is overwhelming proof that logging increases bushfire risk.

In addition, and of equal concern, Koala populations in the region have experienced a huge reduction in numbers. Their habitat has been reduced and they face extinction if we do not act now to preserve what habitat remains.



A trip in to Myrtle State Forest will show you a forest that is burnt out, degraded and contains few logs of value. What this forest does contain is valuable and decreasing wildlife habitat for koala, owls and gliders.

It's time that environment Minister Matt Kean and Resources Minister John Barilaro act to place a moratorium on logging in any Public Native Forest that contains remaining koala habitat. Minister Matt Kean has publicly stated that he wants to see "Koalas thrive into the future".

These Ministers need to act now to ensure that koalas are given a fighting chance and our native forests are given a break from logging to recover from the drought and fires of the past year

Johanna Evans
Kyogle

Overpopulation solutions

The ABC-TV program Q&A: *Australia Reimagined* seemed to be going around in circles and coming up with business as usual, which has failed the world.

The biggest problem is overpopulation on the basis of the rights of the child. Men seem to want to keep women as slaves to their every need.

We could garnishee the wages of men to pay equally with their women for bringing up the children they breed, or allow women equal pay for equal work. Ain't gunna happen.

So the simplest solution is to allow abortion rights to women without the guilt

trip of counselling. Also the right to die with dignity – also with no counselling guilt trip.

A. Sutherland
Robina, Qld

Conspiracy rebuff

As usual, I have enjoyed my monthly read of the NGT. Two letters that stood out are those from Hayo van der Woud and Menkit Prince.

Conveniently, Big Pharma gets a run as it often does, whether it's Covid-19 or vaccinations, and of course, 5G gets a run too.

Menkit goes on a rant about tyranny, police states and includes lots of "facts" which are not possible to check for accuracy. My guess is that most of them are not factual at all.

If Menkit really thinks we live in a police state, he could opt to live where the people really do live in fear for their lives and well-being. He might be very happy to return to our great country.

By all means, let us have an investigation into the origins of Covid-19, but until that is completed and we have some clear evidence, let's give the conspiracy theories a rest.

In the meantime, stay safe and well.

David Ashton
Mullumbimby

Tropes

A trope is a figure of speech – it seems to me we humans have become nothing but figures of speech.

Except I am not. I am not a pedestrian, not a consumer, not a voter, I am definitely not a statistic nor an economic asset. I'm nobody's fan, nor am I a listener, and I am not an audience and I'll never be a spectator.

I am alive and doing and living my life, not just watching others live it for me, and I won't allow others to tell me what I am. That actor-idiot-politician-paid commentator on the idiot box does not represent my life and my loves and my dreams.

I am sick to the bones of cultural tropes. One can judge the nature of a culture – political, commercial,

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.

social even spiritual – by the names it calls people. An unemployed person is not a dole bludger. A refugee is not an illegal. A person hurt is not just a 'casualty' – casualty of war, a casualty by accident, a casualty of disease.

A pandemic that has killed tens of thousands of real human people is, according to the newest media and political tropes, most dreadfully a financial catastrophe. The real casualty is the economy. The dollar cost is the real news. It appears financiers are creaming their pants for wanting to get back to 'normal'.

'Normal' is a trope that has countless labels. 'Normal' is boiling the planet alive. 'Normal' is killing us.

I am, I remain, I refuse to be anything but... a human bean.

Michael Brooke
Kyogle

North Lismore plateau

As a Lismore resident and ratepayer, I have always been rather proud of our progressive and proactive Council. In conversations with my relatives in Queensland, I have been happy to speak of the Council's forward thinking – Best Practice Waste Management, solar farm initiatives and general interest in a sustainable environment.

Every week I receive a cute little brochure in the letterbox called *Local Matters*. On the back of this Council communication is a stunning photo of rolling vegetated green hills. I'm sure the inference is that this is the Lismore locality

Notices

Acreage wanted

Couple urgently seeking a small acreage property for a long-term lease in the surrounding areas of the Northern Rivers, about 100km radius from the Tweed and Byron Bay, to be closer to family. We have a menagerie of rescued animals. The ideal property would be at least 10 acres, well fenced with access to permanent water and grazing, shelter for animals and modest housing. If you have or know of a property, call Alicia and Grayden 0401-930-423.

Annual General Meeting

Nimbin Environment Centre Inc AGM, Wednesday 10th June, 6pm at Birth & Beyond (with social distancing), 54 Cullen Street, Nimbin. All welcome. Nominations for executive and committee members will be accepted from the floor. Must be a financial member to vote: \$10/year, \$20 for a family.

Smolder portrait

Does anyone know the whereabouts of the portrait of Nimbin personality Smolder by Rikki Fisher? If so, please contact Peter at Tribal Magic. It was last seen in the Hemp Bar in 2017.

Share accomodation

Clean, peaceful and respectful person wanted to share large 5br house set on acreage at Larnook. Suit couple or single parent. \$150pw. SMS Glen on 0432-534-020.

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.

– beautiful and green. The Council has a vision "Imagine Lismore" which contains inviting descriptions of a well-planned built environment surrounded by a pretty and sustainable green environment.

Unfortunately, in the last few years, developers seem to have got the ear of Council. Developments, on hold for years – with good reason – have now got the go-ahead big time. My understanding was that the 'Imagine Lismore' decision was to ban development on the ridges. This decision has clearly been thrown out. There are several ridges around Lismore ready and waiting.

Lismore's population has been decreasing for a number of years. "In December 2019 the Department Planning, Industry & Environment (DPIE) released population projections that revise its 2016 projections down. Council acknowledges the lower projections but is continuing to plan for higher growth." (2020 *Draft Lismore Strategic Planning Statement*)

The household average is now 1 – 2 persons. The demand at the moment is not for McMansions on large rural blocks with great views, but for centralised affordable housing. In McLeans Ridges, "Large lot residential" style blocks on the ridges have no town sewerage and sub-standard road design. Pushing development further and further out of the CBD has its downside.

My biggest concern is the current and proposed

development on the North Lismore Plateau. This part of the Lismore precinct is pretty special. You can view the south end of the Plateau from many places around the city. It is vegetated in the southern end and contains endangered plants and animals. The Aboriginal heritage is spectacular in its extent and meaning to our original people. The Winton Group and Lismore Council are throwing millions of dollars at this one, in spite of community objections.

My understanding is that the Council has now, more than ever, little money to spare. Why are they backing this inappropriate trashing of heritage with their own funds? I have been told that the planned development on the Plateau is the biggest project ever proposed on the North Coast.

Surely this is not the time to be ruining what we have left of our green hills. On the current trajectory, Lismore is set to become a look alike to any other town, with Sydney-style suburbia along our ridges, dominating the landscape.

It would be a lovely surprise if our governing bodies learnt to say "No" to development money. I would very much like to be able to boast about my Council again to the Queensland relatives.

After reading this letter, I hope Lismore residents take a moment to please "Have Your Say" on the Lismore Council website.

Dot Moller
Lismore

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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.

Bookkeeper Martha Paitson
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And find us on Facebook

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NEXT DEADLINE:
Wednesday 24th June

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

Igor was born to Alexis and Valentina (nee Kinkman) von Sabler, at Shrem, in occupied Poland. Alexis had to leave Russia as he was an officer in the White Army of the Czar. Valentina was Estonian and they were both qualified at law.

The family had to flee from Poland ahead of the Russian advance and were fortunate to catch the last train leaving. This, according to his surviving older sister Xsenia, was attributed to the very young (and very sick) Igor and a compassionate, wounded officer who had room in his compartment. This train took the family to Dresden prior to the bombing.

Igor and his family survived both the bombing of Dresden and interrogations by the Gestapo. They were then interned in a displaced person's camp, 12km from Munich, and with 6,000 others. Fortunately, they were surrounded by forest and the children could escape through the fence and explore.

Igor survived whooping cough, rheumatic fever, and a type of tuberculosis that required him to be hospitalised for three months as he was malnourished and had developed anaemia. His family called him their "little Gandhi". He was a survivor.

His parents separated and his mother remarried. They



applied for, or were offered, the opportunity to start a new life in Australia in the 1950's and lived in Mt Gambier in SA. Igor quickly assimilated and completed his education there. By this time, he was already fluent in the classic form of German and Russian (spoken at home) and had also mastered English, (but spoke fluent Aussie!).

He first married at 21. When this didn't work out, he took to travelling and spent time in the Gold Coast and New Zealand before setting off for Germany. He lived and worked in Munich where he married again, to Nadia. His third wife was Ursula, known to many in the district as Ushi.

His many jobs included various management positions in retail and of the bar and dining room at some top hotels. This included the Hilton in Munich where his name, charm and good looks landed him the position of Maitre-de. He then worked at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich and remained there for ten years.

He and Ushi then migrated back to Australia after the birth of their daughter, Ija

(Violet). They travelled by road from Adelaide across to Cooktown for a while before relocating to the Tunttable Falls Community. They both resided, in separate abodes, at Melapeekie.

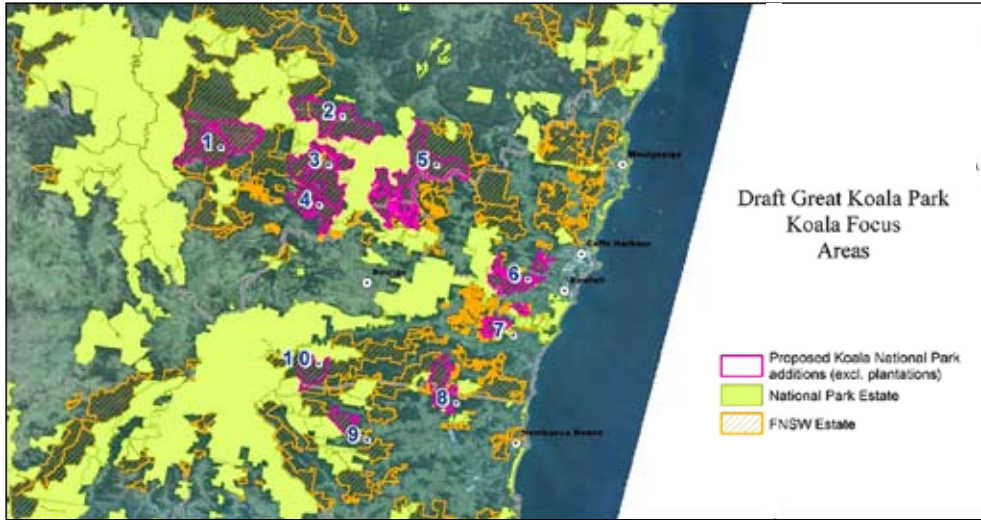
In 1991 Igor and I were introduced, over a cuppa at the Rainbow Cafe, by a mutual friend, Maya. We fell in love and remained in love for close to 30 years. Like most relationships it had its challenges, but we remained friends, lovers and soul mates.

Igor was the primary carer for his daughter after the death of Ushi some years ago. He also supported and assisted some elders within the community: Lily, who spoke Russian and Anton who spoke only Polish. He visited Lily regularly when she was admitted to Carroona nursing home until her death.

Igor lost his treasured little home in the fire event that swept through the region last year. It was a devastating loss for him. He was in the process of improving conditions at Violet's house to be more habitable and homely when he was suddenly struck down with a heart attack after feeling ill for a few days.

He was loved by many and will be missed by more. He loved and enjoyed life, remained inquisitive and adventurous, never lost his love for languages and never let age limit him. He was a romantic, an optimist and an honourable gentleman.

Vale Igor and thanks for the memories.



DPIE support for Great Koala National Park welcomed

The North East Forest Alliance has welcomed the Department of Planning Industry and Environment's (DPIE) identification of 55,000 hectares of State Forests for addition to existing National Parks as the Great Koala National Park, as a step in the right direction. The area includes land between Dorrigo Plateau and Coffs Harbour.

"It is refreshing that expert advice and Koala records have been applied to identify priority areas for protection", NEFA spokesperson Dailan Pugh said.

"Last time in 2018 when the NSW Government proposed 24,000 hectares as Koala Reserves, as a pillar of its Koala Strategy, they allowed the Forestry Corporation to select areas with no timber value and no Koalas.

"While this time they have again attempted to limit timber impacts, they have at least applied the science and included 30% of the State Forests within these three populations



identified as having high Koala values. There is still a long way to go, but it is a meaningful start.

"The real test is whether the Environment Minister Matt Kean can now deliver on DPIE's advice and overcome the undoubted opposition of the timber industry to any protection of

public forests. This is a litmus test for the Berejiklian Government. We do hope the State government will adopt this."

"While there is no doubt that the Great Koala National Park encompasses the most significant Koala habitat in NSW, it is important to recognise that it only encompasses parts of three of the 29 Areas of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS) identified in north-east NSW. There is much more to be done.

"Next Minister Kean needs to direct DPIE to undertake an assessment of the Banyabba Koala ARKS before the Forestry Corporation trashes more burnt Koala habitat", Mr. Pugh said.



Chamber Chat

by Diana Roberts, president

As Covid-19 restrictions begin to be wound back, the Chamber is very focussed on how we can support our local businesses to recommence or continue operations in a new environment.

It is really important for all businesses to stay informed of developments, although I'm sure many of you are experiencing information overload, including webinar and newsletter fatigue, while struggling to keep afloat.

Fortunately, some businesses have thrived during the recent lockdown, but many haven't and it's those businesses the Chamber seeks to support. As government funded programs such as JobKeeper and JobSeeker are wound back and financial one-off packages end, many businesses might find it hard to retain their staff.

We have been heartened to hear that in recent weeks, day trippers from outside the area are visiting Nimbin. So many of our main street businesses rely on the income this brings in. However, with visitors comes an increased risk of exposure to Covid-19.

A useful site to become familiar with is: safeworkaustralia.gov.au This site has comprehensive information and advice on how to minimise the risk of exposure to Covid-19 in your workplace, including a range of resources and safe work principles.

We are aware that there are local businesses who have developed a digital presence. That's great news. To those with a digital presence already, it has possibly never been more important to ensure it's up to date and looking its best. It's also really important to keep communicating with clients and suppliers.

As I said last month, Nimbin businesses need those who live locally to shop locally as much as possible. It's essential that local businesses let the community know what's on offer. There have been some excellent and useful postings on Nimbin Hook Ups informing those who use Facebook of the activities and opening hours of local businesses. There is a Nimbin Hook Ups – Trades and Services site which contains a lot of information about local businesses.

If you're not into Facebook but need a service, tradesperson or specific item, perhaps get a Facebook user to search for you. Lismore Council recently sent the Chamber a link to a buy local site: www.buylocalvictorharbour.com.au and are canvassing our interest in developing a similar Lismore/Nimbin site.

Each business listing could include business opening hours, operational information (takeaway, dine in, delivery etc.) and any special deals on

offer. Council would then promote the site.

There is no doubt many things the Chamber can do to support local business recovery. We are thinking of holding a general meeting via Zoom for all those interested so we can get your ideas and feedback.

The Chamber has a small but reasonably healthy bank account, thanks to the Special Business Rate Levy collected from Cullen Street business property owners, and we would like to put this to good use. We are currently funding the restoration of the mural above the School of Arts and would like to see other murals and signage around the village restored to their artistic glory. If you're a signwriter or mural artist, contact us.

We are also keen to continue the Light Up Nimbin project from the Apothecary to the car park entrance and are exploring grant opportunities to support this. This does not seem to be the time for the Chamber to be sitting on funds that could be used to revitalise our main street.

By the way, those businesses who employ people on a casual basis – make sure you're familiar with the implications of the recent Federal Court decision regarding casuals and permanent part-time.

The Chamber has made a number of submissions to Council lately. We are keen to see Stage 2 of the Rainbow Road walking trail back on Council's agenda. Stage 1 has been put on hold for now due to difficulties with property owners. Stage 2 is more straightforward in that it follows the creek line from

Rainbow Power Company through Aquarius Village, the housing development on Alternative Way.

The Aquarius Village development includes landscaping plans for a walk commissioned by Permaculture Designer Robyn Francis in 2006, and surveying and flood studies have been carried out. The site enjoys good solar access, views of surrounding landforms and has close proximity to the village and to the walk attractions. Importantly, the owner of the development has indicated his willingness to support Stage 2.

The gully is currently being rehabilitated, and when the subdivision is complete the land will be given to Council. The Chamber would like to see plans drawn up and costed for construction of the walkway through this area to ensure rehabilitation plantings are aligned with a walking path so we can start to look for construction grants.

We need Council on board for this to occur and currently the walking trail has dropped off their radar – even as an unfunded project for future consideration. We recently walked the area with Cr Elly Bird and are hopeful she will advocate for the project within Council.

The Chamber is also keen for the Nimbin Development Control Plan to be reviewed and has been asking for this for many years. It was listed as an action for the coming financial year but has been deferred for future consideration. Council is in a dire financial position and any project not deemed essential has been cut from their budget. This is one of them.

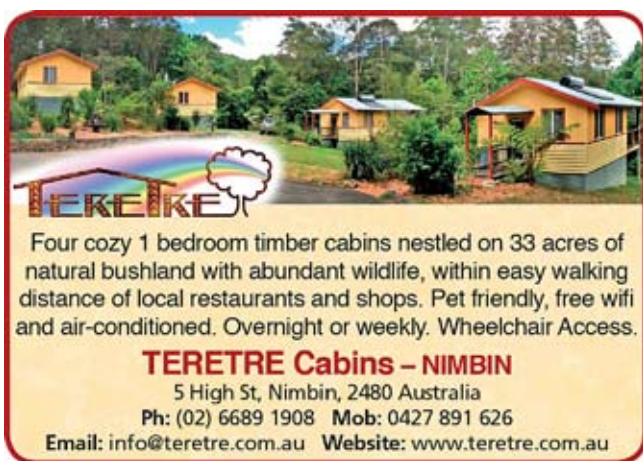
Another area that may see

significant funding cuts is the tourism area. It looks like Visitor Information Centres (VICs) will be closed and there is no provision at this stage for a replacement option. The Nimbin VIC costs Council around \$155,000 annually. Much of this would be staffing costs. The Chamber is keen to see continuation of some kind of visitor information service in Nimbin, perhaps placed in an existing local business or community entity, and we will be strongly advocating for this with Council.

Your Chamber committee is a group of volunteers who are only as good as the input we receive from you – our community. The current committee consists of myself, David Spain (Nimbin Law), Teresa Biscoe (Co-ordination Co-op), Sammi Allen (Nimbin Apothecary), Kylie Cain (The Green Bank), Steph Seckold (7 Sibley Street), Peter Hughes (Nimbin Tax & Accounting) and Caroline Todd (Nimbin Hemp Embassy).

We meet on the first Monday of every month (currently via Zoom) and we need you to give us your ideas. To encourage this, we are waiving membership fees for next year so every local business, sole trader, footpath trader and ABN holder will be able to join the Chamber without cost.

While your committee can follow up ideas we need you as our brains trust if we want a thriving local economy. So, take time out to think strategically and share your ideas with someone on the committee or email us: chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au



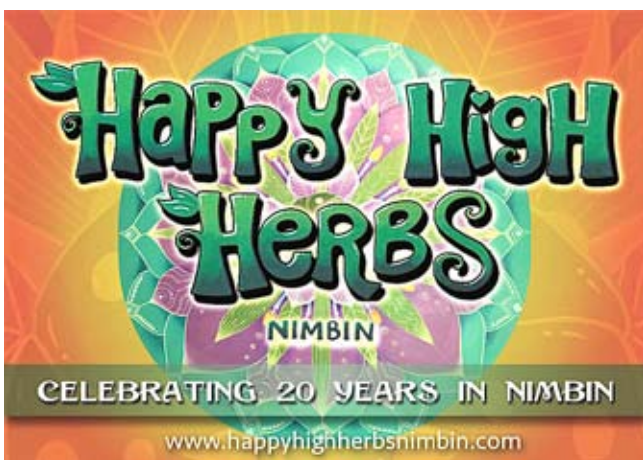
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Lantern parade reimagined

I hope that you are all doing OK as 2020 continues to unfold, taking care of yourselves and of each other.

We are very lucky to be living here in the Northern Rivers with abundant fresh air, sunshine and good produce, and while it is very difficult in so many ways, I am thankful for the protective factors that we have.

With the news last month that the *Northern Star* and the *Lismore Echo* will both cease hard copy production, I am writing this full of gratitude for the *Nimbin GoodTimes*. Local sources of news and information are so important, and as we all know the online versions of NewsCorp articles are not accessible for many in our community.

So, let's make sure we support the *GoodTimes* so that we can maintain a trusted, local newspaper. If you need to promote your business please advertise and help protect our well-loved, and very important community paper.

This month I would usually be talking to you about the Lismore Lantern Parade, and the importance of gathering together as a community.

As with many other events it has been postponed, and currently it is planned for 14th November.

The Lantern Parade has been reimagined as a virtual parade on its usual weekend, with a window display in businesses in Lismore and a whole lot of mini family events in your own home.

Anyone at all can join the virtual parade on 20th June by purchasing a lantern to make and decorate at home, and sending in your lantern photos to be collated. All the details are on their website: lismorelanternparade.com. Please share far and wide.

As we head into June and restrictions on businesses are lifting, it is more important than ever to support local businesses, please buy what you need locally as much as you possibly can. We need to come together as a community once again to support each other over the coming months, and our



Word of the Bird
 by Cr Elly Bird

businesses need us to commit to them. Many people are receiving stimulus money from the government, so please consider sharing some of that money with our business community.

There are a range of funding opportunities coming through as state and federal governments respond to Covid-19 impacts, so if you are a business owner or if you are involved in a community group, keep an eye out for any opportunities to apply for funds to deliver projects.

Council has a very handy grant portal where you can sign up for alerts about

grants that might suit your organisation. Go to: <https://lismore.grantguru.com.au> and you can set filters to receive email alerts about grants as they are released.

I wrote last month about the financial situation at Council, and this month will see the adoption of the 2020/21 budget. Submissions are due on 10th June, and the budget meeting to adopt the final budget is on 16th June. The meetings are live-streamed on youtube and on facebook if you would like to watch the meeting.

The only way changes can be made to the draft budget is as a result of community submissions, so if there is a change that is important to you, please make a submission. If you are reading this and you haven't done so already, you will need to act fast. Submissions don't need to be detailed.

You can find the documents and submission details at: yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au

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

Finally a skatepark for Wollongbar



It was great to see a project that I've been supporting for years finally get approved at Ballina Council's May meeting: Wollongbar Skatepark (District Park).

The proposal for a skatepark for Wollongbar must have come before the Council on at least 10 occasions over the last eight years. There was extensive consultation and numerous possible locations considered, then more consultation, designs, etc, etc.

It's been quite a torturous journey for those involved. It's unfortunate that it became a bit of a political football, with an organised and very vocal opposition group who had the support of the local residents' association, which largely consisted of the same people.

It's a shame that skateparks can elicit such fear within



by Cr Jeff Johnson,
 Ballina Council

some local residents, even though the facilities in both Ballina and Lennox are very popular and don't have any problems or complaints.

With Wollongbar, we heard fears about increased crime, anti-social behaviour, reduction in property values, noise, etc. I'm not aware of any statistics that back up these claims, but they

continue to be repeated.

Those opposing claimed to actually support a skatepark but only if it was located on the edge of town well away from homes.

Skateparks are in most towns these days, and have proven to be very popular. Kids as young as three to four years of age are on them with their scooters, parents are generally standing around providing encouragement or even dusting off their old boards and having a crack themselves.

I must admit that I'm in that category now, as my six-year old and lots of his friends are all into skateboarding and scooter-riding. My ankles don't seem to have the same level of flexibility that they used to and my sense of balance seems to have left me. The concrete is still as hard as

it ever was.

What's great is that these days all the kids have helmets and other PPE which was never around when I was growing up.

Wollongbar is a fast-growing area with lots of young families moving to the area. The new facilities (including the skatepark) will certainly enhance the area, and being surrounded by homes, it will be very accessible.

I'm sure once it's up and running it will prove a huge success and an asset to the community. The other facilities include half-court basketball area, picnic tables, BBQ, parking, walking track, shade trees and a large open space area.

Hopefully by this time next year it will finally become a reality.

Cleaning up our act: it's time to rid ourselves of plastic

by Janelle Saffin,
Member for Lismore

The NSW Government released a discussion paper in March this year about whether New South Wales should rid itself of plastic, and it may have slipped under the radar somewhat due to us all dealing with Covid-19. Nonetheless, I hope local residents made submissions before the 9th May deadline, and I have told advisers to NSW Minister for Energy and Environment Matt Keen that I will be watching for genuine progress in this policy area.

The discussion paper set out four outcomes and directions: 1. Phase out single-use plastics; 2. Triple recycling; 3. Reduce plastic litter by 25% by 2025; and 4. New South Wales to escalate its research.

My position, and that of the NSW Labor Opposition through NSW Shadow Environment Minister Kate Washington is clear; we took a deplasticise policy to the 2019 election and have advocated getting rid of single-use plastics at a minimum since.

We all know plastic is handy, but lesser known is how harmful it is... to our water and all who live in and by it, our land and our oceans. We as a community can do this if the Government leads and supports.

I remember when we changed

our community behavior towards litter, wearing hats, smoking and many more public health matters. We have great local community champions, and I shall be part of that group to rid us of plastics.

Did you know that in NSW we:
• generate 800,000 tonnes each year yet only recycle 10 per cent
• consume 1.1 million tonnes mainly in packaging and household items
• 99% are made from fossil fuels.
Did you know that plastic can cause harm at every stage of its manufacture and use?
• Extraction and transportation
• Refining and production
• Consumer products and packaging
• Plastic waste management
• Cascading exposure as plastic degrades
• Ongoing environmental exposure.

I admire local champions like 'our own wonderful' Australia Seabird Rescue, originally established by the late Lance Ferris, who have asked, requested and pleaded with us to get rid of balloons at least.

I listened, and as much as kids loved balloons (adults too), they are a no-go for me.

The Country Women's Association of NSW posted this matter on their Facebook page as well, so clearly view it as important.

We are so fortunate to also have local Boomerang Bags groups in Lismore, Kyogle and Tenterfield,



Janelle Saffin joined Aunty Gwen Hickling, Aunty Jacqui Williams, Aunty Dorrie Gordon and Aunty Charlotte Williams for a 2020 Reconciliation Week event at North Lismore's Serpentine Gallery hosted by the Ngalingah Minjung Dubais (Our Happy Women) group and supported by the YWCA. Our Happy Women use art, storytelling and cultural knowledge to build leaderships skills and to foster intergenerational collaboration.

who make cloth bags through voluntary labour and recycled material, and provide them to local feature businesses, charities and community groups.

Recognising our valuable volunteers

Nominations are open for the 2020 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards, giving the community an opportunity to nominate selfless locals who have stood tall during drought, bushfires and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The past year has been

very challenging for our local communities and there is no better time to recognise the many local heroes who have gone above and beyond to help others.

I have witnessed the valuable work of volunteers and thanked them personally, and I encourage everyone to nominate someone they know so that we can give thanks publicly and make this year's awards the biggest yet.

The awards, run by the Centre for Volunteering, are in their 14th year and have grown to become one of the largest celebrations of volunteering in Australia.

You can nominate someone for one of the following seven categories:

- Adult Volunteer of the Year;
- Young Volunteer of the Year;
- Senior Volunteer of the Year;
- Volunteer Team of the Year;
- Corporate Volunteer of the Year (Individual);
- Corporate Volunteer of the Year (Team); and
- Excellence in Volunteer Management.

Nominations close on Friday 3rd July. For more information or to nominate a volunteer, visit: www.volunteering.com.au/awards

Looking after our vulnerable people

I am so very proud of our local communities for taking on board the government's requests to limit our social engagement, to maintain good hygiene and social distancing, and to explore ways to work from home and to home school our children.

We have seen so many people going out of their way to ensure that vulnerable people in our community – the elderly or unwell, those with small children or no transport – have been looked after.

There are amazing volunteers shopping and delivering groceries and supplies to assist their friends and neighbours.

For many it has been a time of building on the sense of community connection and drawing closer to their community, their village, or their neighbourhood.

As a result of the community's acceptance of these restrictions and staying at home as much as possible, we here on the North Coast have been very lucky in not having any major health crisis or cases of Covid-19 requiring confinement in intensive care units.

I am concerned that governments are now under serious economic pressure to relax the restrictions too early. All the medical evidence from previous pandemics suggests that a second wave of cases is yet to emerge. Undoing all the good effort that has been made in recent months would be tragic.

Many of us are very wary about going out into shops and restaurants while new cases of contracted virus are being reported on a daily basis.

Whatever decisions the government makes, I believe it is up to the individual to determine the best course for themselves and the safety of their families in the next weeks and months.

Our world and the society we live in has changed so much recently. We are not going to go back to 2019 behaviours overnight as many of us take this



by Cr Darlene Cook

opportunity to explore new ways of having a better work / life balance.

I read that the community of Cabbage Tree Island has very unreliable internet coverage so most people don't own computers or laptops. As a consequence, their children were unable to access the on-line learning offered by the schools during this shut-down period. Their school principal has had to photocopy and post schoolwork out to each student.

This cannot be an isolated case where the technology so many of us take for granted has completely bypassed some communities which have been left behind in this new world. I know mobile phone and internet coverage in the Nimbin valleys is a bit haphazard and I would appreciate anyone who has been unable to access on-line schooling or work to email me and let me know.

That way Council can compile a register of "black spots" which can be reported to our State and Federal representatives. Then we can lobby for better connectivity to come to our villages and farms outside of the city.

Council News

Council's draft budget and delivery program for next year was brought to the May meeting. As many of you know, Council has been struggling with the consequences of unwise historical financial decisions and lack of

governance and management oversight by previous senior managers, as well as cost shifting of state responsibilities onto local councils. Councillor Elly Bird's article in the May NGT explains the history of these problems very well.

The Covid-19 pandemic has added to Council's financial difficulty with lost revenue from the sale of recycled goods; waiving rent and fees for tenants of Council properties and some commercial fees; the closure of libraries, the City Hall, the pools and gym. We estimate that revenue loss to be \$1 - \$1.5M; this estimate could worsen if the restrictions and closures continue into the latter part of this year.

Council held a guidance and information session prior to the draft budget being brought formally to us. At that session we were told that despite the best efforts of staff implementing zero-based budget techniques, there was still a forecast \$2.8M deficit.

Councillors debated a range of measures which included cutting or reducing services and closing some business units. The actions recommended by Councillors cut \$2.5M from the budget and lowered that deficit down to \$221,000.

Many of those decisions will be very unpopular. They include the possible closure of the Visitor Information Centres in Lismore and Nimbin; no longer issuing tip vouchers; reducing the number of cultural and sporting events supported each year and cancelling many activities at the Quad.

I recommend residents access the draft documents on council's website and have a look at them and how they will affect Nimbin for next year. Submissions are open until 10th June. You can access these at: <https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/budget1>

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

On the same Page



by Kevin Hogan, Member for Page

Nimbin Rocks acknowledged

Nimbin Rocks are a spectacular and physically beautiful landmark in our community. They are extremely significant for our local Bundjalung people and feature in many Aboriginal Dreaming stories.

I spoke about this in Parliament recently. I told the story of the Cleverman, a prominent figure in Aboriginal Dreaming stories.

It is important to acknowledge sacred sites such as this.

Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre grant

National Volunteer Week was held recently. It is an important time to celebrate the contribution of many volunteers across the community.

I used the occasion to announce the latest recipients of Volunteer Grants.

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre received \$1,800 to upgrade and purchase new furniture.

It is a great community organisation that provides an important service. Congratulations to Natalie and the entire team.

Covid-19

This has been a time to come together.

As a Government and as a community, we have handled this well on a health front.

It is important now we open back up, support our businesses, and get our economy moving.

NZ cannabis referendum prospects

by John Jiggins

Imagine a world where all illicit drugs are effectively decriminalised, and where cannabis is legal; where medical cannabis users (along with the rest of the population) can grow their own medicine!

Then look at the policing and surveillance all around you: such a world seems a million miles away.

Yet come September, such a haven of drug sanity may be only a three-hour flight from Coolangatta! In September, a referendum will be held alongside New Zealand's general election for voters to decide whether to legalise cannabis.

In this interview, Chris Fowlie (pictured), of cannabis lobby group NZ NORML, praises New Zealand's approach to cannabis legalisation for providing a model for the rest of the world.

JJ: How did the referendum on legalising cannabis in New Zealand come about?

CF: Well the referendum is an agreement between the Green Party and Labour Party which form part of the governing coalition along with NZ First, and the three of them together have agreed to have the referendum. It's a great opportunity for us to pass this referendum and bring in what we think is one of the best forms of legalisation that has yet been devised.



JJ: What are the current drug laws like?

CF: We have a very strict form of prohibition in NZ at the moment. Up until recently we had the world's highest arrest rate for cannabis and the police really did put a lot of emphasis into it, and that has shifted in recent years.

Last year there was an amendment put into our drug laws which has effectively decriminalised all drugs for small amounts by only letting the police proceed with a prosecution if there is a public health interest that over-rides giving them help and treatment or leaving them alone, so that applies to all drugs and makes health the main approach rather than law enforcement and criminal prosecution. That's been a significant change. It's been little noticed and came in without fanfare and wasn't even controversial. Medical cannabis has also



been legalised. It's similar to the Australian approach, but they have learned a few things from the blockages in Australia and the overly corporate approach. It has only taken effect in the last few weeks. It is still a pharmaceutical approach and most patients are really wanting the referendum to pass because the medical scheme may omit some of the products that might be somewhat more expensive than people might want to pay. The referendum will give them the right to grow their own.

JJ: How many plants will they be allowed to grow?

CF: It will be two plants per person, maximum of four plants per house. You've got to be aged over 20. The plants can't be visible

from public areas, not in your front garden. You will be able to go into a shop and buy seeds and cuttings or live plants and take them home and grow them.

They even put in rules and regulations so if you have to move house you can take your plants with you and they even have rules about the packaging the plants have to be carried in so that when you leave the shop they are not visible to people or if you are walking down the road with the plant in your carry bag. So, they have really put a lot of thought into the regulations.

JJ: How will the regulations work?

CF: The gist is you will be able to grow your own if you are an adult. You will be able to go to a shop

and buy it and those shops will be licensed in a similar way to alcohol-type licensing. The places where you can use it will be controlled in a similar way to tobacco in that you have smoking and non-smoking areas, but the way they are giving out these licences, that's the really interesting bit.

They've made social equity a central part of it and they're dividing up the total market share that's sold in shops on social equity principles and so if you are just in it for the money you are not going to get a licence – you have to partner with community organisations, you have to do good in your community, and then you'll get one.

You need to be the best to win the licence, because it is a quota system so it creates an incentive for everyone to be the best operator, not cause any problems, do all these socially good things, return their profits to the local community, partner with local organisations to create local jobs and that's what is going to get you the licence.

We think they have really done a good job of coming up with a model that people who don't consume cannabis will see the benefit from it.

They're going to see that legalisation is going to help everyone, not just the people who consume cannabis, by spreading the benefits and keeping them in local communities.

Unda Corona

STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

Social Distancing, SD, is endless trouble for me. After spending weeks in Pipe's commune, which could be called Hugsville, it's just too hard to stay so far away from everyone.

Especially if I'm a middle-aged mothering type wearing glasses and frocks, which is what I've established Scomo likes.

He is riding high. Throwing money to the masses and telling them to stay home and not go to work can't help but win the popularity stakes. Even a \$60 billion blunder got little traction against his team.

"Jesus is with me, I can feel it," he confided to me late one night. "He has cleared the way for me. Shone a light through the darkness."

He was staring romantically out his giant Prime Minister's window into the night. Had he been drinking too much? I daren't

say anything of consequence, muttering only that I'd noticed the polls where Albo was fading into oblivion. But as I did, I moved over next to him at the window brushing his sleeve. He leapt back like I was a leper.

"SD Bethany, SD. What are you doing?"

"I'm sorry sir. I've been on the commune and forget..." I couldn't have used a worse word. Maybe Mullumbimby, or Nimbin. I had actually visited both places on the way down to see him, delivering some of the new season's cbd extraction.

"Corona commune, that's where you've been. Stay away from me." He was aghast. Eyes popping. "You've been with the anti-vaxxers, the filth. My God, how did they even let you in here?"

"You organised a gold pass

for me sir, remember?" "Of course, of course. I know, I know. Now you must go. No, wait. The spray." Next thing he was calling his servants who appeared from nowhere with sprays and wipes, and I was quickly hurried out dripping with disinfectant.

The sea parted for me then as I stalked out through the crowd always hanging around outside his office, like dogs outside a Nepali butcher's.

I still had the cbd parcel in my bag so he sent a minder to chase me down. I presume it got delivered, because everyone and everything is monitored down there to the 'nth degree in the Big House.

Everybody is being watched all the time, and just to prove it two burly security boys happened to



Photo courtesy ABC News: Nick Haggarty

materialise alongside me to make sure I just kept walking until I was out the front door.

And that was that. He can get it all in Canberra now of course, and legally, so I didn't expect to hear from him again in a hurry.

When I got back up north, the Boss called me in for a full dressing down and in front of everybody. "Couldn't even manage to SD with the PM. Made us all look stoopid."

Then he sent me to keep count of the Coles delivery trucks while I pretend to be checking speed. Sitting beside the road at all hours. I couldn't make it easier, putting up signs well in advance, the "Your speed will be checked". Still, dozens will get a letter in the mail.

While I was down in Canberra I did hear from the servants that Dutts, as he's known, or potato head, never liked touching people

anyway, and is determined to keep SD as long as possible. Permanent if he can. It's much easier for all the monitoring systems if there's a little space between us all, he says.

Just a side benefit that there can no more big gatherings or protests. Control is the end game of course, "Keeping us Safe" the mantra.

Scomo, on the other hand, is naturally warm and fuzzy, and it took a while to get him to take SD seriously.

The Chief doctor did the trick, telling him his high blood pressure and lack of exercise would likely have him drop off the perch.

It was all Dutts's scare tactics, the servants said, hoping it would upset his performance, even put him into iso, so someone who's immune could take over.

But in fact the opposite happened, and the church man became the model example to everyone about keeping your distance.

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The laughing gas led recovery we don't have to have

by Ken Jones

Laughing gas (nitrous oxide) is a potent greenhouse gas and can be addictive when misused, causing great pain and expense.

In these things it bears much semblance to the unnatural gas sucked from the fractured earth to feed addiction to profit and profligate energy use. But here is a cautionary tale to better illustrate these things.

It seems that the Coalition may have kicked the coal habit.

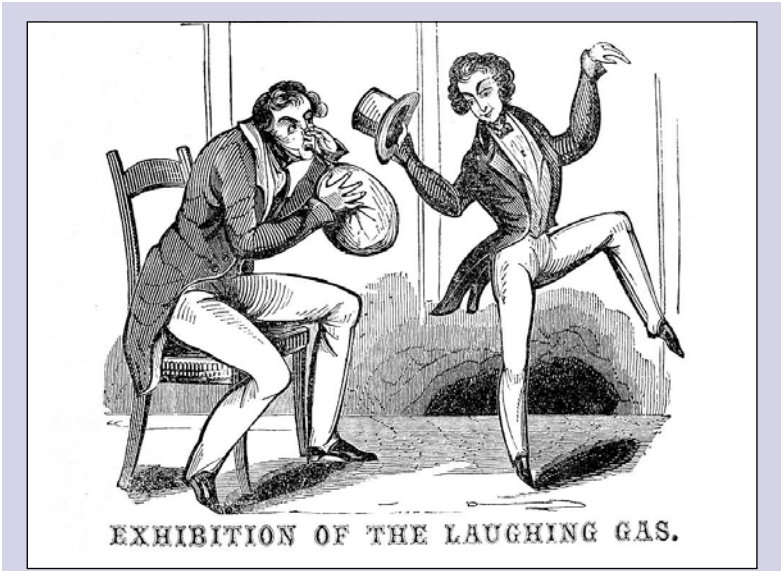
It's not that long ago that they were roaring along on the coal train. Way out of control, giggling like kids while they passed around a huge lump of Bowen Basin Black Rock with the whole world watching.

And the mood swings! One mention of wind or solar and Barnaby's nostrils would flare, his eyes would go wide and, before long, the spittle would start flying. Scotty's lips would purse and the fire and brimstone would rain down. Just like their gurus, the Mad Monk and Hoe Jockey, who went around tilting at windmills looking to pick a fight wherever they could.

That's about the time they got young Angus hooked with their crazy dreams about saving the starving masses in India if only they could get enough coal to them.

Those days are gone. They don't use the c word much any more. Not since they went into rehab back in October 2019.

As is often the way of these things, they have replaced one addiction with another, seemingly less harmful. The Coalition has been supported in this painful transition



"Nitrous Oxide, or Laughing Gas, was discovered by Dr. Priestly, who produced it by abstracting a part of the oxygen from the Nitric Oxide. It is named Laughing Gas on account of the very exhilarating emotions produced in those who respire it for a short time: laughing, dancing, jumping, acting, reciting, and (last but not least) fighting are amongst the prominent effects displayed by persons under its influence." – Wellcome Images

by regular large doses of their new poison of choice, unnatural gas, the occasional shot of carbon capture and storage and the odd hit of micro nuclear, all administered by their carefully chosen rehab org, the enigmatic King Review.

This handpicked who's who of Australian and global fossil fuel and mining barons have apparently pulled off the impossible by ending such a relentless fixation.

But what about their long suffering partner, the Australian people? They've been going to Coal-anon for years. Sneaking a few panels on the roof while the Coalition was out partying with Adani.

Hiding the odd battery in the

garage. Taking the risk of all hell breaking loose just so the kids can have a few electrons to keep warm, have a cooked dinner and enough light to do their homework by. Were they even asked if they thought it was a good idea? Were other, less dangerous alternatives considered?

Rather than fracking all over the countryside, littering the place with shipping containers full of nuclear power plant, spending a fortune chasing the economic mirage of carbon capture and paying billions to big polluters because they pollute, what else might be done?

What about a rich mix of wind farms, solar farms and Distributed Energy Resources (the funky new name for things like rooftop



Hornesdale Power Reserve, South Australia. Photo courtesy Renew Economy

solar and batteries in domestic, commercial and industrial sites)?

Sure it's addictive, but it's a natural high! It doesn't make you sick. It doesn't send you broke. It doesn't set a bad example for the kids. Best of all, it won't destroy the planet!

Renewable energy is already cheaper than coal or gas, let alone nuclear. And, supported by big batteries to provide resilience and manage the grid, it is the way of the future.

Look at South Australia. They will be 100% renewable by 2030. The key is the world's biggest lithium-ion battery installed by Tesla in late 2017. It took 63 days to build at a cost of \$90 million.

The Tesla Big Battery, officially known as the Hornesdale Power Reserve and once described by Scotty as "about as useful as the Big Banana", produced a profit of \$22 million in its first year of operation, saving South Australian taxpayers \$50 million at the same time.

It paid for itself in a little over two years, and is being expanded

by 50% to increase the range of emergency power supply and grid stabilisation services it provides, stabilise the spot price of power and allow South Australia to export renewable energy to the eastern states.

The Liberal State Government thinks that's pretty useful.

The Australian Energy Market Operator, which runs the electricity and gas systems and markets across Australia, expects the market share of gas in South Australia to be just 13% within a few years, and little more than 5% by 2027/28.

Even when you ignore mankind's existential threat in climate change, even when you ignore all the other pollutant threats to health and wellbeing, even when you ignore the destruction of our dwindling natural environment, it makes irrefutable sense to choose renewable sources of energy over fossil fuels or nuclear on purely and simply economic grounds.

It's cheaper and it provides more jobs.

A plan for after the pandemic: social reboot or more of the same?

by Dr Liz Elliott

What will happen after this virus crisis?

Australians can rejoice that our spacious island has avoided a severe first wave, but such a contagious virus will recur until we achieve herd immunity. This is usually quoted as 70% of the population becoming immune.

In Sweden and New York and Germany, immunity rates of up to 30% have already been found in routine maternity screening. Elderly, males and artery-inflamed patients seem likely to be at risk of severe acute respiratory syndromes (SARS-2) and, sadly, many frail people will die. Herd immunity will take at least a year to create.

Poorer, more crowded countries and migrant worker and refugee camps will suffer more.

Australians feel grateful to the government for apparently protecting them. But over the next year, many people will suffer loss of jobs, homes, small businesses and pension plans. Our superannuation is allied to the stock market, which will slide as the shutdown shrinks the economy. Many people are stacking up credit card and business debts; whole nations are going into debt.

Debt, of course, is the banks' major product. Accelerating debt dictates we must spend an ever-

larger proportion of our work and resources, and carbon emissions, repaying the banks for their minor skill of creating credit. Credit is an accounting trick, that is, created out of thin air.

Problems exposed during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis have not been resolved, criminal practices have persisted and destabilising derivatives are trading larger than ever. The Commonwealth Bank, for instance, has 30 times its deposits in risky derivatives.

So becoming deeper in debt seems inevitable. Or is it? Liberating solutions to debt are possible.

To many, the whole virus response seems disproportionate, even a conspiracy. The rich will get richer, the earth will pay.

So, who profits from vaccines and tests? Who benefits from the loss of old people? The loss of small businesses? There are many theories...

Whatever the cause, the likelihood of pandemics is increasing due to travel, habitat destruction, air pollution, climate change and radiation injury. This was known for decades, yet public health has been subject to austerity measures in many countries.

The UK health system was in crisis even before this virus hit, and the US health system is dysfunctional.

Neoliberalism is looking inadequate to many. Forced to



Image courtesy dailykos.com

stay at home, the public have been considering the direction of our societies, and the importance of real wealth, family and friends. It could be time to cease subsidising climate-destructive industries and reboot our industrial and even agricultural practices. (Food industries are responsible for 40-50% of carbon emissions.)

Long-held neoliberal tenets – that there must be a surplus, or at least balanced budgets, that the poor must suffer austerity so we can shovel wealth to the top 1% 'job-creators, that there isn't enough money for environmental issues, that war is affordable but poverty alleviation is not – have been exposed as mere ideology.

Suddenly, governments found massive funds to bail

out corporations and support unemployed people. Overnight, socialism was the correct response.

This is in line with the principles of Modern Monetary Theory which says that a sovereign country can (should) create money to support new population, and infrastructure. As long as the country has spare productive capacity, there will not be inflation. Governments do not need to go to the bond market, nor tax massively, nor go into debt to private banks.

This is the Green New Deal which Bernie Sanders was advocating.

Michael Roddan in *The Australian* (19/3/20) quotes the hyper-capitalist Macquarie Bank as saying we are heading towards a universal basic income instead of piece-meal

welfare, effective nationalisation of capital and deep changes in work practices. This is a chance to reorganise our economy. We might even survive into the next century...

In my book *A New Way Now*, I estimate that 50-70% of our work, resource use and emissions is to pay interest and other wasteful practices. That is, we could work less, waste less and live in comfort with public banking and an end to many corrupt practices which enrich the few, not the many.

World debt is more than three times world production. Professor Michael Hudson, the economic historian, is calling for a debt jubilee (a forgiving of unrepayable debt burden) so societies do not degenerate into a minute elite owning more than the great majority.

It is also essential that nations start to calculate true environmental and social losses involved in production. The net result may be a more decentralised society, with more workplace control, and the environment considered primary.

The Green New Deal and other plans show that a costed, stepwise and practical path to environmental salvation is possible.

Debt does not need to continue to bleed us into stressed and unwell lives. We can emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic with a future.