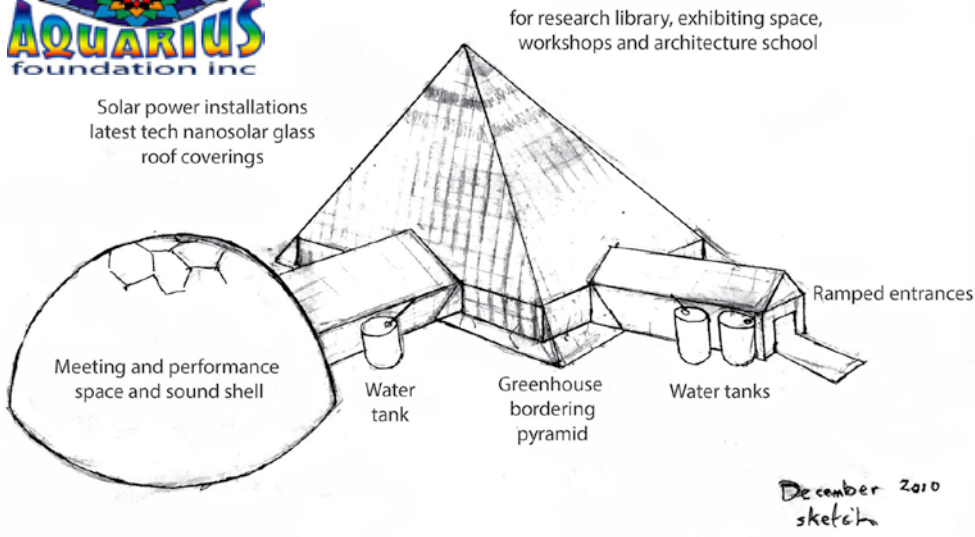


# Bringing it all together: Aquarius 50th anniversary



Solar power installations  
latest tech nanosolar glass  
roof coverings

## Pyramid and Geodome



by Benny Zable,  
president Nimbin  
Aquarius Foundation Inc

A month ago there was a most welcoming discussion held on the verandah of 7 Sibley Street called by James Warren, the artist who created the wonderful weave mural next to the Pot of Gold café, regarding developing a Nimbin Commoniversity. It is an idea whose time has come.

During and since the 1973 Nimbin Aquarius Festival, a wonderful uniquely Nimbin culture has morphed, inspiring many Rainbow dreamers here and abroad.

A growing resource of archives, (my own collection included) has up till now no safe and responsible home to be housed here in Nimbin.

Over the decades since Aquarius, many of these collections have been accumulating dust, mainly in Lismore and Sydney libraries, and in sheds and houses all over the world.

It was a shame in the

wake of Paul Joseph's passing, that much of his digital work and related Nimbin Aquarius archives were stolen. In the Nimbin fire, a lot of historic Aquarius cultural history was destroyed.

The Nimbin Aquarius Foundation over the decades has asked for land to be put aside to build facilities to keep archives to make available for public art creations and scholarly history researchers.

I think it would best be an annex of the Southern Cross University, preferably part of or close to the Nimbin Central School.

I have come to that conclusion because buying land for such a hub has eluded us, as real estate prices keep climbing.

Meetings were held with Robyn Francis regarding the once Aquarius camping site between the Rainbow Power Company and the Djanbung Gardens Permaculture Centre.

Johnny Allan also convened a number of meetings with interested students of Colin James,

the alternative architecture lecturer who first seeded the idea of recycling Nimbin for the Aquarius Festival, to design a space honouring his legacy after he passed away.

Also the Woodstock Museum has worked with us over decades visiting us, filming and photographing and displaying our stories both at Nimbin Aquarius anniversary celebrations and in Woodstock, New York, USA.

Closer to home, so far the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation is marked down for an exhibition at the Lismore Regional Gallery.

All this makes it a great opportunity while some of the older Aquarians are still around, to discuss the housing of our archives, preparing projects and displays towards the 50th anniversary of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival in May 2023.

If any of these ideas interest you, email: [bennyzable@gmail.com](mailto:bennyzable@gmail.com) or drop into the Aquarius office in Nimbin Community Centre.

# Advisory Group outcomes

Nimbin Advisory Group Meeting (NAG) was held on 27th February. The following is what was discussed by NAG members, councillors and Council staff.

## Museum site DA

Great difficulties are being experienced by the developers in conveying their design concept to Lismore City Council (LCC) staff, despite community support. The D.A. is now scheduled for review at the April Council meeting.

There is a sense that LCC staff are micromanaging all elements of the D.A. with an interpretation of heritage compliance which extends far beyond the streetscape. No community consultation has been organised by LCC staff over the past year.

The Rainbow Cafe design has endured similar issues and final consent has been obtained at some cost to the aesthetic and a financial cost, which now leaves Tuntale to consider options other than rebuilding.

Councillors present at the NAG meeting will request to attend a meeting with developers, LCC staff and a Nimbin rep. It is suggested that community members lobby all councillors to resolve the situation.

NAG is in full support of the development and in establishing greater co-operation between LCC, the community and developers regarding all new building in Nimbin. Review of the DCP is overdue, given that its interpretation is causing such difficulty.

## Water security

Although LCC manages Nimbin supply, water extraction sites are governed by Rous County Council. There was community concern about roadworks contractors having free access despite recent Level 3 restrictions on town residents. Cr Darlene Cook will seek alternative future extraction sites. Concerns were generally expressed about the nominal security of Nimbin's supply being over-rated by LCC, given the likelihood of a drier climate and expanding residential developments.

## Seed funding

Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre is managing the funds for fire recovery and Sudipta Dowsett is now employed to take submissions and conduct interviews over the next month, with a focus on improving the community interface with essential services.

## Cecil Street

Community consultation was held, and it's been agreed that pedestrian access will be improved by replacing the culvert, widening the road and extending the footpath on the north side.

A refuge mid-road will then allow for continuation of the footpath on the south side towards the Showgrounds, as far as funds will allow. Work is expected to begin by the end of March, and residents will be notified beforehand.

## Walking trail

Diana Roberts is discussing with Business NSW regional manager the possibility of funds and support for Stage 2 of the project.

## Fire trail maintenance

RFS funding insufficient. Urgent priority for money from \$1million grant to be used to improve access through Wallace Road and other roads adjacent to Nightcap. Strategies and finance to upgrade fire trails from Tuntale Co-op and Siddha Farm to Wallace Road also needed.

## Dog poo bags

These are now available from Nimbin Environment Centre.

## Nimbin Waste Transfer Station

Not licensed to accept paint, batteries or toxic waste. Council staffer to research licence fee. Budget request needed to become registered as community recycling centre. Discussion re difficulties of waste collection on some roads, suggestion of community collection points.

## School of Arts noticeboard

Not funded for maintenance. Hall Committee to maintain in future.

## Caravan park/pool/playground facilities

Lease has been renewed, issues resolved to lessee's satisfaction, details confidential. Poor state of access road discussed, bitumen a possible solution. The single toilet at the pool is not available during winter and needs repairs also. General agreement that toilet facilities and a seat are needed for users of the playground.

## Special Rate Levy

Unsatisfactory situation where LCC staff have not processed applications, and individuals have had to lend their own money for projects. Agenda item for discussion/approval at Nov, Dec 2019 and Feb 2020 Council meetings deferred without explanation. Council staff member to inform General Manager that this is not acceptable to N.A.G. and that there is a perceived sidelining of Nimbin issues which needs to be addressed at management level.

## Water fountain

Submitted requests for a public filtered water fountain to be included in Council budget.

# Family life on remote Northern Territory communities

I have been fortunate enough to work for a not-for-profit legal provider to indigenous people in remote communities in the NT for the last two years.

Living on community is challenging, but they are also a treasure house of culture and connection to land that goes back centuries. Families, lovers, teachers, police, council employees, white or black, all dwelling in the ochre red and verdant green landscape that is prevalent in the NT. While there is much in common with family life in indigenous communities with 'white' (Balanda or Gubba in Kriol), there are many differences which become apparent after a while.

It took me a while to realise that when someone referred to their mother or grandmother, it wasn't always their biological one. One woman explained carefully, why only three of her five children lived with her.

*"Well, my cousin sister can't have kids so I gave her some. She gets sad a lot so she got my son who makes her laugh. My other sister, doesn't have kids either, she gets sick, and so my girl who likes to care for people is with her."*

Cousin Sister may mean your aunt's daughter, or great aunt's daughter, or someone from your skin group who is a sister. Having your younger sister's child live with you at the age of two to five, and again, when they are near puberty, is very common. Children moving around from community to community to live with different relatives is usual. Territory families, called the Welfare mob, often label this as a "transient" or "unstable" lifestyle and interventions can ensue as a result.

Households in communities are often multi-generational, aunts, uncles, great grandparents and



by Aniko Papp

babies all under one roof. Babies sleep with their mother until they are at least six years old. I was told, "We don't understand you white fellas. You all want to sleep in your own rooms. You leave your babies alone. Don't you love your kids?"

I have been asked why white people don't look after their parents and grandparents but leave them in nursing homes. Children often care for but are also taught by their elders. My office always offers refreshments to our clients as sometimes, they may have not eaten for a while. One elderly woman's five-year old great grandson, very gently, helped her drink her cup of tea and got her to her feet. He played with his blocks while she was with me, and at the end, asked for a glass of water for her.

There is an unsaid side to community life with children. In some communities, I learned, twins were considered bad luck and decades ago, one of a set of twins were often not raised past babyhood. Similarly, babies born to a man and woman who are related even distantly, but not of the right skin group are often called wrong

way babies. Such children are sometimes not cared for properly and occasionally left to be raised by other far more distant relatives.

Families often take turns to feed their own and their relative's children, otherwise known as a big mob of kids. One woman might have food and feed all the children in her kinship group one night, then the kids go to the next house to another relative, the other night. Welfare often refer to this as overcrowding, when the reality is a bunch of boys sharing one room and girls another, sleeping like kittens on the floor or on the beds, giggling and chatting all night.

Family life in remote communities is a rich mixture of love, connection and caring. The harshness of the landscape with its extreme weather and hard land, shading such life with shadows and complexity.



# Do the right thing by the land and by each other

Story and photo by Greg Bork

“There’re so many life-forms and different sounds, different animals, and it’s gentle, not as harsh as out in the sun. I feel relaxed and at home here just to see the crazy shapes of things, like the shapes of roots covered in moss becoming buttresses, or palms pushing through to get some light through the canopy. It’s lush and it’s alive. When I’m feeling triggered, or unhappy, then coming down here I can let go of that and be supported by other things.”

Les Joyce (pictured) restores rainforest on an intentional community near Nimbin. The community matched funds from a Landcare grant 12 years ago to regenerate forest that now protects the community’s water supply, a spring, and prevents further landslips that occurred when the land was originally cleared for dairying.

“Living on an intentional community, we’re faced with questions on a regular basis, from within and without. Other people giving us

information, or expressing their expectations about what we could be doing.

“Our intention is to do the right thing by the land here and each other. That’s the planet, in a way, that’s the local community and the local landscape, so there’s a lot of responsibility. We’re learning and we’re an open community, so when people come maybe they can see what works and what doesn’t work, and spread the word or exchange information.

“This property’s been really damaged. To think of it as healing is a fundamental aspect of caring. In this day and age with the planet pretty hacked up, to see the natural processes restoring land is really encouraging and quite moving for me.

“I guess I’ve got aspirations for healing and becoming more myself or more connected, more related and having a place. I think I’m part of that generation that is wanting to do some restorative work, and this is the part of the world where I live, so this kind of forest would have been here.”

Les collects a pea vine, a weedy relic from



the pasture days that smothers young rainforest trees. “For the last few years now, I’ve been making baskets using that vine. That’s really fun and satisfying, because it’s become a resource and a really valued thing. It’s a lot of work to get rid of it, but it’s necessary work, and there’s an added pay-off now to do something creative with it.

“Most present-day stuff is about short term. Several generations in the future have to be considered with our decisions and with our actions. I’m being rewarded by seeing things grow here, but they’re not going to reach

maturity in my lifetime. “Their impact will be very much expanded in future. Those red cedars will drop seeds in the future, those palm trees will feed birds after I’m dead. The landscape, the forest will keep evolving and changing long after me. The long-term nature of that relationship and that initial and even small input is really important.

“That really amazing activist presence, and that forest activist movement that has been in this area, has been like the midwife for the re-gen movement. Look at what’s here, look at what’s threatened, let’s do something. The conversation has kept going.

“Let’s do something in our own backyard. It seems like it’s too late when the landscape has been ravaged and abused. There’s still hope that a positive change, that thing that was seemingly lost can be nurtured, and re-energised, re-birthed, brought back.”

You can listen to the full 90-minute interview with Les in the rainforest he restores at: [reciprocalrestoration.org](http://reciprocalrestoration.org)

## Life on the edge

My crystal ball has been sending me alarming visions lately. Ignorance would definitely be more blissful!

It isn’t too far flung to link a few basic facts together and come up with impending catastrophe. The Corona virus is almost certainly going to become a global phenomenon (a pandemic) and there isn’t much we can do about it except philosophise and prepare.

Although there is still little known about the origin of the Corona virus, one thing is certain. The virus is zoonotic (comes from animals) and we also know the animals that are bought and sold at the market in Wuhan where the virus originated, are bush food such as pengalin and snake meat.

Wuhan is well known for fast-tracked economic development and massive growth in many sectors. We also know that China’s land dwelling native animals have declined by half since 1970 and the ecological footprint of humans there has more than doubled (WWF, 2015).

An ecosystem stretched to its limits will be unhealthy. It will produce new diseases. It will slowly spiral into collapse. It will try to take us down too!

The same argument can be made for Ebola virus in overpopulated Africa, and even Alyssa virus in our own stressed Flying Fox colonies. Our species is going to have to pay even more dearly for the mistakes we have made.

The recent eco-carnage our forests have faced here means that we are no longer immune to large scale eco-system collapse. Human induced climate change will fast track the stress that our natural world faces and we will be asked to adapt and probably suffer in the process of learning how.

I have always spoken proudly of our little ecology-loving community

### View from the loo

by Stuart McConville

and how we may just be the seed that is needed when it comes to re-planting society in the time of greatest need. It’s time now to nurture that seed, love our country and remember that we are one with the land.

Some tough local decisions need to be made. We will undoubtedly see an explosion in wild dog numbers, now there is nowhere for fire survivors to hide. Nature abhors a vacuum and top level predators are always needed to cull sick and injured animals, move grazing animals along and protect vulnerable plant species from over-grazing.

It is now time to revise some communities’ policies of disallowing dogs so that some of that vacuum can be filled by animals with full bellies.

How will our rainforests respond to the fire? Do we have the time and resources to re-vegetate using traditional approaches or do we need to try something radically different to re-establish canopy and prevent weed intrusion? Sowing readily-available wattle seed from drones might be worth a try in some inaccessible areas.

I have been planting “bullet proof” native species that will grow quickly in all conditions to establish canopy and microclimates, but that are not necessarily endemic. The slower, sensitive rainforest species can come later when the soil is shaded and the protective edges are established.

The important thing is to act! Get out and plant some trees. Kick off a few cows and plant some trees!

Stuart runs Pooh Solutions Compost Toilets and consultancy, 0427-897-496 [www.poohsolutions.com](http://www.poohsolutions.com)

## Powering your business with solar

by D. Gosper  
Rainbow Power Company

Have you thought about upgrading your business to solar? Businesses typically use the majority of their energy during the day – this makes them the perfect candidate for installing solar.

Installing solar on the roof of a business premises makes great sense as the power generated from the sun can be used directly below to meet the business energy requirements. A well-designed commercial solar system may have a return on investment (ROI) of as low as two years.

Businesses purchasing long term assets (that last more than a year) can currently choose to claim depreciation of an amount up to a threshold of \$30,000 all in the one year, giving them an immediate tax incentive to invest in plant and equipment for their business.

Solar systems qualify for this government incentive. This means installing a solar system immediately could reduce your tax bill while providing the ongoing benefit of reducing your future energy bills. Speak to your tax agent to see if you are eligible, but come 30th June the federal government will reduce that threshold to \$1000.

It is a good feeling knowing that your business is running on solar, but for a business the benefits go far beyond that. Productivity has increased as our workers are now in air-conditioned comfort, heating and cooling are major areas of commercial energy consumption and cost. This is now affordable, as the sun is covering some or most of the expense.

Blackouts and power interruptions no longer affect our business. The new Tesla Powerwall2 ensures that our critical power requirements continue to operate with or without the grid.

A 30kW solar system can cost as little as \$20,000 after Government incentives. A system this size will produce on average over 120kWh per day. If all this energy is consumed on-site and we assume the business pays \$0.30 per kWh for electricity, this equates to a saving of approximately \$13,140 per year.

A business like ours, with 35 employees, can see a return on investment in as little as two years, with bills being reduced by an estimated 80%.



### RPC 2020 solar upgrade

Rainbow Power Company has just upgraded its solar system at 1 Alternative Way in Nimbin, from 15kW to over 45 kW to meet our growing energy requirements.

Over the past 30 years we had installed three separate 5kW grid-connected solar power systems and a 28kWh battery backup system.

The three systems comprised of 76 x Kyocera 135 watt panels and 24 x Trina 260w panels connected to three SMA solar inverters: a 5kW Sunny Mini Central, 5kW Sunny Boy and 5kW Sunny Tri-Power. The data was logged by a SMA Webbox and Home Manager.

We have now upgraded the system with an additional 96 x REC twin peak 325w panels connected to a 25kW Sunny Tri-Power Solar Inverter. In addition to this, we updated our existing inverters to the latest models from Fronius and SMA to modernise our showroom and aid with staff training and customer visibility.

To help offset our night-time energy usage we have also installed a Tesla Powerwall2 AC battery. This acts as a back-up in grid outages, but also provides battery power for self-consumption running our business each night. It also minimises imported power from the grid on cloudy days if our solar generation is momentarily less than our usage.

Our new solar system is slightly oversized for our requirements, but is designed to incorporate the introduction of an Electric Vehicle to our fleet and start to provide for our transport needs.

The extra power generated is fed back into the grid at up to 5kw per phase (15kw total), which helps repay our ROI via the feed-in tariff.

Feel free to come down to our

showroom and take a look, or you can view our system data here: <http://bit.ly/RPCSolar>

### Commercial solar with RPC

RPC has installed many solar systems for our commercial customers, including:

- Lismore’s Richmond Hotel installed a 23.6kW grid-feed system (118 x Trina 200w panels);
- The Roundabout Inn (Grafton) have recently installed a 38.8kW grid-feed solar system;
- Local potter Avital Sheffer recently installed a 21.12kW Grid Connect Solar System through RPC to help run the electric kiln;
- Nightcap Ridge Eco Retreat recently installed a 6kW off-grid power system to power its wedding event centre and guest houses;
- Nimbin Headers soccer fields 10kW solar system and Tesla Powerwall 2 installation; and
- In May 2017, the Goonellabah Sports and Aquatic Centre (GSAC) (pictured) in Lismore was fitted with 360 solar panels, with a 93.6 kW capacity – a massive array by any standards. Rainbow Power has previously installed grid-connect systems on other Council buildings, including Oakes oval, Goonellabah Community Centre, Lismore library and the Wyrallah Road Council facility.

This latest installation is expected to have paid for itself in five to seven years, and put Lismore City Council well on the way to meeting their admirable target for renewables.

Rainbow Power Company have assisted countless NFP and NGO organisations to switch to solar. Go solar today with the renewable energy experts. Call RPC on (02) 6689-1430 or visit: [rpc.com.au](http://rpc.com.au)



# People’s Climate Assembly demands urgent action

by Carol Perry

I took the train and the bus to Canberra for the People’s Climate Assembly (PCA), a peaceful gathering on the lawns of Parliament House, for the opening of Parliament on 4th February and five days of events including the three sitting days of both houses.

### What is the People’s Climate Assembly (PCA)?

The PCA is a coalition of activists groups including Extinction Rebellion, School Strike for Climate, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, Stop Adani and many others, as well as supporters and concerned citizens who are demanding that the government take action on the climate emergency.

I was excited by this pivotal moment of collective action. Not just one organisation, but groups with the same goal were working together, an idea that has been floated for decades, and now it is happening.

### From reform to rebellion

Another aspect of my momentum was making the shift in my mind from a “reform” model of activism to a “rebellion” model. The Eight Stages of a Social Movement strategy developed by Bill Moyer has informed social movements for decades and there are a lot of parallels with the rebellion model.

When majority public opinion is achieved through actions and campaigns, then the focus is on promoting a paradigm shift, not just reforms.

### No time left for reforms

After reading the founder of Extinction Rebellion, Roger Hallam’s book, *Common Sense for*

*the 21st Century: Only Nonviolent Rebellion Can Now Stop Climate Breakdown and Social Collapse*, I am convinced that the civil resistance model he proposes is the most effective strategy.

We no longer have time for reforms. It took 17 years for Lismore City Council to enact a koala protection policy. That is a reform. Why did this reform take so long? It was seen as a threat to development and growth. This is where a paradigm shift has to take place.

Change of this magnitude will not come from the power-holders, that is why rebellion at this time makes sense. Environmental integrity and climate change issues are the same issue.

### Steps towards collaboration and coalitions

The civil resistance model of Extinction Rebellion (XR) aims not for reforms but regime change. Mass action is built on creating alliances between networks and this was the achievement of the PCA in Canberra. It was not a rebellion but a major step in bringing diverse groups together to create a presence at the opening of Parliament House.

There were enough people to surround the building holding hands, estimated at around 3000, while the Ngunawal people held a smoking ceremony at the entrance.

Features of the event were lots of fun, creative placards, great music, inspiring “cut to the chase” speeches on a range of relevant topics, exciting input from first nations people and many workshops including training in a discussion process for People’s Assemblies using relevant issues as practice.

The time for clinging to a particular political action rooted



Photo: Chibi Mertineit

“Because it is the people who ultimately hold the power, they will either preserve the status quo or create change.” – Bill Moyer, *Doing Democracy*

in organisational identity is outmoded. This is especially relevant to professional oppositions organisations. Given the diversity of action styles and approaches, a coalition of mass action must be committed to open dialogue and flexible boundaries, non-violence, active respect towards the public and opposition regardless of their responses. XR supports these principles.

The commitment to non-violent action in the Gasfield-Free Northern Rivers campaign was both empowering and morale boosting. Farmers whose livelihood would be threatened by the pollution of air, soil and water, caused by the unconventional gas extraction process of fracking, joined that campaign. Most had never before identified as activist. The campaign succeeded, extraction licences (PELs) were cancelled. This was a reform.

### Incapable of governing effectively

Many of these activists are now involved with Extinction Rebellion,

which aims for a paradigm shift from parliamentary “non-democracy” to Citizen’s Assemblies. It is evident that parliamentary institutions are irretrievably corrupted by the vested interests of extractive industries, intrinsically amoral and incapable of navigating complex contemporary issues.

XR is not alone in believing that conventional politics is incapable of responding wisely and justly to the complexity of climate change and social justice. Carne Ross, a British diplomat for 15 years, and author of *The Leaderless Revolution*, says: “This new world requires a new politics.”

Hallam’s call to bring down the government might sound ridiculous but “rebellion is about giving people permission to say what they really think. It creates the connective tissue for solidarity that many don’t realise exists.”

If you aim to bring down a system, then there must be a plan for what will replace it. XR’s plan is for a national Citizens Assembly to take over the sovereign role from a corrupted parliamentary system.”

(R. Hallam, *Common Sense for the 21st Century*, p.9)

The Citizens Assembly model is effective and proven, with a clearly defined process. It was a Citizens Assembly that advised the government of Northern Ireland to end the criminalisation of abortion. A Citizens Assembly is currently advising the French government following the protests of the Yellow Vests (sadly, a violent campaign involving loss of life) on issues related to climate change.

If we want to make changes to our political culture it is going to take the action of everyone, not just the children. Daniel Berrigan, anti-war activist and writer reminds us, “The difference between doing something and doing nothing is everything.”

“Australian democracy is at risk. If we want to save it, we must all play a part.” (*The Guardian* 8.2.2020)

But it’s not the only element that’s needed. Two other things are required. Political reporters, like me, need to communicate the seriousness of the times to readers and viewers, and keep showing up to work, pulling on the threads, and then putting the facts back together, no matter how difficult it feels to counter obfuscation, stonewalling and hostility.

And voters have to value their democracy enough to remain engaged, and keep speaking up when they see signs that the system that doesn’t work for them.

People have to be vigilant too. “She’ll be right mate” isn’t an antidote. Demanding good governance is the most powerful act of resistance there is.

Roger Hallam’s book, *Common Sense for the 21st Century* is available for free download.

# Summer of fires, winter of revenge

by Alan Roberts

Such was the fierce determination of the fires that having exhausted above-ground carbon stores, they then voraciously chased the carbon of tree roots underground, leaving only vacuous tunnels.

No less fierce is capitalism’s craving for fossil carbon as they appropriate it from the people, enriching themselves quickly before the resulting heating planet strands “their” asset.

Capitalism’s waste CO<sub>2</sub> has loaded the atmosphere enough now (417ppm CO<sub>2</sub>) to stall the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) on the African side for longer, causing prolonged drought and corresponding intense fires in Australia.

The fires, by transferring carbon from forest to atmosphere, increase the stalling of the IOD thus increasing fires, or at least locking in that tipping point.

To save bequeathing a world of uncontrollable fire to our children, we have to stop burning fossil carbon, stop logging native forests and grow more forests faster than they burn.

So here’s some coming

actions you can take to help keep fossil carbon underground and forests growing.

The first one is Divestment Day coming up on Friday 20th March. All the banks, despite claiming to comply with the Paris agreement, are still lending your money to fossil carbon burners. This is a chance for those people who still have accounts with the big four banks to transfer their money to somewhere safer.

You can sign up for this and to send the banks a message, by going to: [www.marketforces.org.au/get-involved/divestment-day-2020](http://www.marketforces.org.au/get-involved/divestment-day-2020) and selecting the Lismore option (or somewhere else if it’s listed). You will then be kept updated.

Westpac is a particular target, because they are due to update their climate policy and they have recently lent a fortune to Woodside’s Pluto LNG project off Karratha in WA (totally disrespectful of Aboriginal heritage on the Burrup Peninsula).

Secondly, here’s your chance to again close the world’s biggest coal port with the people’s canoe blockade on Sunday 19th April. There is no better fun to be had while



Adani’s box-cutting machine assembled on mine site

hastening the demise of coal mining. Check with Nimbin Environment Centre for more details as the date approaches.

Thirdly, on Friday 15th May is the School Strike for Climate, where everyone is invited to join in. Our children have the strongest moral argument in their fight for a livable planet. For information, and to register go to: [www.schoolstrike4climate.com/may15](http://www.schoolstrike4climate.com/may15)

Fourthly, Adani is going ahead with serious coal mining preparations in the Carmichael basin. Workers have assembled a monstrous 600-tonne Liebherr 996 excavator (pictured) on the Carmichael mine site while others are assembling compatible dump trucks in Mackay to be transported to the site.

A railway workers’ pad that

was bare when I was last there is now populated with dongas. This pad has a bund wall to keep the flooding Belyando River out, and had Coates Hire pumps to pump its stormwater out over the bund.

Despite Adani’s moves, he has major obstacles yet to overcome. He has no bank loans and is using family finance, which is limited. He has no rail line or operator – there are only two options, Pacific National and Aurizon. Adani has no insurance which he needs before digging a hole.

Marsh, an insurance broker for local councils, is Adani’s insurer. Marsh has been working on the project for a year, but no contracts yet. Also, a private company sensitive about its image, BMD, has a contract to build Adani’s rail line. BMD also does local council work.

Adani also does not have any resolution with the Traditional Owners – the Wangan and Jagalingu with whom we are in solidarity.

Nimbin Environment Centre will organise information meetings to prepare for a future event, but keep your mid-year calendar clear to mobilise north. To be ready, you can register with Galilee Rising at: [www.galileerising.com](http://www.galileerising.com) where you can take the pledge for the FLAC camp in readiness. It has info on the FLAC camp with travel options etc.

### Keeping forests from being logged

Our significant Gondwana forests in the Kalang headwaters, south of Bellingen, are most immediately under threat from logging by Boral for poles. The previous protest camp was ordered out with threats of fines by Forests NSW because of a perceived fire risk.

Then the whole forest was closed by a Section 44 and a helicopter pad was put in where the camp once stood. Bits of the original camp were smashed up and pushed over the edge of the helicopter pad.

Though the fire was ferocious and ridge hopping along, it luckily stopped three km before reaching the magical area that is the camp site.

Really the whole Kalang headwaters forest is a magical repository of the most biodiverse sample of ancient Forests of Gondwana. Magical because in the course of its journey through “deep time” it has been in the right place at the right time to be rescued from a number of near extinction events, and though other places have a few relics from Gondwana, Kalang has by far the most.

So Boral can make their poles from steel, concrete or whatever else they like, but not from our Kalang forest. The trees might be big enough for poles, but not tall enough to allow koalas to get above the cooked zone of a crown fire. To provide this natural koala escape route, the trees have another century of carbon storing to go, by which time capitalism will have consumed itself.

To get past the Boral bottleneck threat, the Kalang headwaters forest needs people to help to re-establish the camp and to maintain a continuous vigil.



# MardiGrass 2020 Hemposium plans

from Miss Guidance

As usual, MardiGrass offers full-tilt ideas and education all weekend at the 2020 Hemposium, where we pull back the curtain to reveal creative and abundant places around the globe basking in the post-prohibition green glow.

As Australia is just waking up to the benefits of medical cannabis, the MardiGrass Hemposium aims to inspire, as we learn and share knowledge about our favourite plant ally and healing herb.

There is an impressive line-up of speakers who will share their cannabis expertise and experiences, and reveal the gains made in both Australia, and throughout other cannabis-loving communities around the planet.

In 2020 we are excited to host **Dr Jeffrey Hergenrath**, a general practitioner from California specialising in cannabis medicine since 1999. Dr. Hergenrath's practice, research, and teaching focus on the medicinal uses of Cannabis through a wide range of conditions and age groups – from infants to elder care.

He is a founding member and current president of the Society of Cannabis Clinicians, a non-profit corporation dedicated to quality patient care, educational programs, and clinical studies. Additionally, Dr. Hergenrath works as an expert witness and consultant to local

governments in industry in creating safe access to Cannabis medicines.

Returning international speakers in 2020 include **David Nickles**, an underground ethnobotanical researcher and glassblower based out of North Carolina, and **Sita von Windheim**, Canadian cannabis rights activist. Both speakers are interested in how the use of plants can transform our world.

From around Australia, we welcome experts and passionate educators for medical cannabis and drug law reform. **Prof Kylie O'Brien**, CEO Global Health Initiative Australia, will discuss the findings from her recent book, *Medicinal Cannabis and Mental Health*, as well as lead a panel discussion on the spiritual dimensions of cannabis use, and delve into cannabis as a plant teacher.

Regular speakers at the Embassy's popular Medicin Workshops will also speak at MardiGrass in 2020.

**Dr John Teh**, from PlantMed Medicinal Cannabis, has been working within the medicinal cannabis industry since the legalisation of cannabis for medicinal use in Australia in February 2016. Treatment with natural whole plant products in conjunction with conventional medical treatment has always been his top personal priority.

**Carol Ireland** is the CEO of Epilepsy Action Australia, and she will share the creation of a dedicated medical cannabis education portal for both patients and practitioners.

In 2020 MardiGrass is excited to welcome 2018 Churchill Fellow, Tom Forrest, who will discuss cannabis agronomy in Australia and worldwide alongside a screening of his fellowship film showing inside cannabis cultivation facilities, broad-acre cannabis farms and research centres worldwide.

Politicians joining us include **David Shoebridge Greens MLC NSW**, and **Fiona Patten Reason MLC Victoria**. Fiona will discuss how cannabis law reform has reached a tipping point in Australia and will detail her plans for legalisation in Victoria. David will educate us about our rights with police.

MardiGrass's usual experts return in 2020 including **Steve Bolt**, **'Dr Pot' Andrew Katelaris**, **Dr Deb Waldron**, **Nick Wallis** (Australian Psychedelic Society), and **Martin Williams** (Psychedelic Research in Science & Medicine), as well as healers, advocates and families from the medical cannabis community.

This year's MardiGrass HEMP Expo will promote global and local hemp solutions for medicine, food and industry featuring: **Martin Ernegg** (Hemp Fibre Fusion), **Andrew Kavasilas** (HEMP Party), **Dolph Cook** (Australian Cannabis University), and **The Hemp Club**. On Sunday, **Kog** and will share the truth about cultivating cannabis at his annual Grower's Circle, and we've heard rumours that the legendary **Tony Bower** of Mullaways will be back at MardiGrass this year.

The Hemp Embassy's Medical Cannabis workshops held in Nimbin over the last four years have attracted large numbers of the newly emerging and increasingly visible Australian cannabis demographic – families with extremely ill children, and people dealing with chronic pain and often terminal illness.

The Hemposium will include real world stories from the Australian medical cannabis community, including families whose lives have changed dramatically for the better thanks to medical cannabis.

It's time this magnificent herb

was welcomed into mainstream Australian life, and the persecution and prejudice to stop. Medical cannabis has been a growing international phenomenon over the last few decades, and Australia is only now starting to catch on and catch up.

The Hemposium aims to expand the mind as much as that special weed herself, and is a space to inform, learn, agitate, inspire and connect in this massively important green revolution. Join the Green Vest Movement and help us overgrow the government!

## Get involved in MardiGrass planning

When the going gets tough, the tough get going, or something like that someone said, but it comes to mind thinking about MardiGrass 2020.

The politicians are smugly saying they've legalised cannabis and they have, if you buy it through their dealers at exorbitant prices who deliver it to you at the chemist. All up it costs at least twice the black market price and often way more, and it's only for certain health conditions.

So they haven't really legalised it at all. It's just a slap in the face to us who have been saying it's our medicine of choice for decades now. So never has the MardiGrass protest weekend made more sense.

Meetings are now an event at the

end of the working week, every Friday from 4.20 in the HEMP Bar.

We we'd love to see you or hear from you if you want to be a piece in the annual jigsaw puzzle protest on the first weekend in May. Either performing on stage or dragging wheelie bins of rubbish around, all offerings are most welcome.

We plan on having an awesome, informative and fun weekend. The war on drugs and weed in particular, is just way past its use-by date. Come help us help them to realise it!

Email: [head@hempembassy.net](mailto:head@hempembassy.net) with offerings, or phone 6689-1842, or come to a meeting. Or just start planning to come for the weekend, you know, safe driver, plan B, stuff like that.

## Pot sparks your imagination and opens windows

I've spent a lot of time around the Designated Smoking Area (DSA), deep inside Parliament House, but now I spend a lot of time inside it. It used to be the tobacco smoke was choking, but that all changed at the end of last month.

Nearly all the minions working in the Big House live in Canberra a lot of the time, of course. And if they didn't have at least an address where they sleep over, they have one now. Because that means you can carry fifty grams of skunk with you at all times.

There's a whole new aroma in the corridors, and some MP's offices literally smell like the local dealer's lounge. The DSA is way down deep in the bowels of the House with massive exhaust fans sucking the air out and depositing it God knows where, but far away enough for school kids to be able to gather undetected I believe.

The DSA used to be likened to a leper colony, such was the pressure to give up the fags, but that's all changed. Now it's a gathering place for the "vegan cool people", as Somo calls them. It's also called the ideas room: how quickly did that happen?

You don't even need to light up, someone will be doing that and one of the engineering staff has sorted the exhaust fan so it can be regulated from inside with a switch. You can even turn it off. No-one leaves the room unstoned! Every rock is turned over. Some deny it, but the laughter and often giggling as people head back up the stairs to the real world says it all.

And the ideas. Even the staunchest old rusted-on Nats still hooked on the fags who'd never touch a joint have

noticed when they return to the office they regularly get a new idea. Some big problems have been solved, and some new legislation is on offer already as a result of time spent in the DSA. Hard to believe but guaranteed true, and it's the hottest gossip topic in the House by a mile.

It's completely changed how Bethany feels about visiting Canberra, I can tell you. Pipe's camp is not very well set up for endless rain and the caves are not very deep, so I was on the plane with my special pass in no time. And a new dress, which I knew would win Somo's eye. He's so easy!

He raised the subject first chance we were alone. "Everyone's talking about the DSA Beth." (That's the new dress, got him all friendly straight away.)

"People are going there to get ideas and sort problems. Some of the Greens crew are almost living there. They would if they had mobile reception down there, and I hear they're getting that organised."

There was genuine confusion in his voice and I couldn't not smile. "I've been telling you for months now pot has answers that could save you, haven't I? And not just CBD."

He sat down then and I heard myself land about ten goals in a row.

"Pot sparks your imagination and opens windows you didn't even know were there, Sir. Sometimes it's confusing, there's too many ideas. It can replace cotton, it can stop wood chipping, it's a super food, and the medicine, the holy grail, this can save your health department billions."

I couldn't stop myself. "The pharmaceutical industry is milking the old people of their hard-earned savings in aged



## STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

care homes like they're a dairy herd. Pot is perfect for the old and dying and they can even grow it themselves, or they're kids can for them. This is God's gift for the people, Sir."

Clearly I'd gone too far. Carried away on the wings of weed I call it. I had him with milking the old people as he'd just watched his father join Jesus. I shouldn't have mentioned God; it was a step too far.

He waved me out of the office as he shrank into his chair wishing the world would swallow him.

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## The 25th Hemp Olympix



is happening on the 2nd and 3rd of May at the Mardigrass in Nimbin!

# NIMBIN BOWLO

25 Sibley Street Nimbin. Phone 6689-1250

## What's On in March?

- **Sunday 6th** – Fire Fighters Thankyou Day, 11.30am
- **Sunday 15th** – Visiting Club: McLean Cane Cutters
- **Sunday 22nd** – Ganja Faeries Fundraiser
- **Open Mic Night** – Wed 18th, 1st
- **Social Bowls** – Sundays, 9am
- **Courtesy Bus** – Enquire at bar

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# BISTRO LOUNGE

– AND –

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## LIVE ENTERTAINMENT THIS MONTH

- **Friday 6th, 6pm** Mish Songsmith
- **Friday 13th, 6pm** Josh Jaws
- **Friday 20th, 6pm** Sarah Stando
- **Friday 27th, 6pm** Nina Lotus

**Lunch & Dinner Wed – Sat**  
**Sunday lunch specials**

**Catering for functions of all budgets and tastes**



## She-Rated Cabaret #2

In 2012, Imogen Kelly (pictured, right) was crowned Miss World Burlesque, and has been perfecting her craft ever since.

This is a unique opportunity to study with her, then come to the second She-Rated Cabaret, produced and MC'd by three well-known local performers: Claudie Frock, Simone O'Brien, and Gabrielle Griffin. Imogen is the cabaret headliner.

You will also be able to see female-led creativity and diversity in the areas of circus, music with Jex Lopez, award-winning poetry from Rebecca Rushbrook, dance by The Flash Collective, puppetry, mime, and plenty more, all with sexy heart.

Both events are wheelchair-accessible, and the Cabaret will have AUSLAN

interpreters available.

Bookings for both are essential, and links can be found on the She-Rated Cabaret Facebook page.

Tickets for the workshop are \$30 with more info on the booking page, and the Cabaret with over 10 local acts, is only \$25/\$20.

Don't miss out, last year's Cabaret was a raucous sell-out, with the never-to-be-forgotten Naughty Brides on stage... who knows what will happen this year.

Proudly produced with the support of the Lismore Women's Festival and the YWCA, also supported by NORPA.

Get yourself off the couch: dress to impress.

There will also be food and a bar



Photos: Greg Bork

available for purchases, with DJ Deb from Music Bizarre spinning rare funk grooves and lounge for dancing and flirting after the show.

## Local director celebrates the tough stuff

There is a great saying that goes: 'There are three things a person can never take their eyes from: fire burning, water moving and another person using their hands well.'

"I think that says it all," said Darcy Grant (pictured), the director of *Backbone*, a circus coming to NORPA, Friday and Saturday, 27th and 28th March.

"Circus is an aspirational form and people can always relate to how others use their body," Darcy said.

In less than a decade, Australian acrobatic sensation Gravity and Other Myths (GOM) have rocketed to international acclaim. They are bringing their biggest and most spectacular work, *Backbone*, to the Northern Rivers.

Darcy Grant was, until recently, a Nimbin local,

and has a long association with NORPA. He is a NORPA associate artist and performer/deviser for NORPA's site specific work *Dreamland*.

Grant was also movement director for NORPA's Australian gothic juggernaut *Wildskin* (2018).

Last year, NORPA produced and premiered *Fold: A Domestic Circus*, directed by Darcy Grant, and created in collaboration with two of the incredible acrobats from the original creative ensemble of *Backbone*.

Darcy Grant is a classically trained acrobat, award-winning fine-art photographer, physical theatre director and founding member of Circa, revered as one of the world's most adventurous, genre-defying circuses.

He has trained, taught and



toured work on the cutting edge of new circus around the world. Darcy and his family were based in Nimbin for a number of years, before recently moving to Iluka.

*Backbone* is Grant's directorial debut and his first show for GOM. How did this wonderfully successful combination of company and director come about?

"The company was ready to make their next work and we serendipitously crossed paths at the perfect moment," Grant said. "They needed some fresh eyes and I found their company culture magnetic. They are a self-made success: young, raw, unpretentious and hungry to create strong and deliberate meaning in contemporary circus."

A high-octane spree of physical virtuosity featuring ten extraordinary performers and a live band on stage, *Backbone* tests the limits of strength: physical, emotional, individual and collective.

Staged with a deceptively DIY aesthetic and dispensing with trickery and distraction,

this is circus that goes straight for the jugular. *Backbone* is a celebration of human connectedness and the meaning of strength.

"We wanted to express and shape meaning around the concept of 'strength' and the different ways it can be measured or embodied inside an individual or group," Grant said. "This company grinds harder than any I've seen. They go above and beyond for each other and never take the easy route if there's something to learn."

Bringing this show to NORPA is particularly exciting to its director. Well, this is his home community.

"My work is mostly based overseas so being able to show my community what I'm doing with my time is special," Grant said. "I think the Northern Rivers will dig the work."

*Backbone* by Gravity and Other Myths is at NORPA on Friday 27th March and Saturday 28th March, at 7.30pm. Tickets: \$25 – \$49 from: [www.norpa.org.au](http://www.norpa.org.au) or phone 1300-066-772.



# Queerstories

Fast becoming an institution around the country, *Queerstories* has seen more than 200 LGBTQI+ storytellers take to the stage over the past four years.

Writer and producer of *Queerstories* Maeve Marsden will host a local line-up at the Drill Hall Theatre in Mullumbimby, on Saturday 14th March from 7.30 to 9.30pm.

“The premise of *Queerstories* is simple: we invite a range of LGBTQI+ people to share a personal story, but the focus is on the unexpected, on the stories people want to tell, instead of those often expected of queer people.

“I often say, ‘There’s more to being queer than coming out and getting married’, and that’s really true at *Queerstories*, where the stories and narrative styles of the performers are always so diverse.”

The programming focuses on local community creatives and heroes, with special guests including Bundjalung artist Ella Bancroft, shedding creator

Sophie Wilksch, Melody Edwards of Fossil Farms and Mullum Community Gardens, radio presenter Peter Lehner, drag performer Huey Acuna aka Ru Bella, and writer Ash Watson.

Bringing storytellers from all walks of life to the stage, *Queerstories* has proved itself an undeniable success for the past four years with regular sold-out events in capital cities, but touring the event to regional areas can prove a financial and logistical challenge without local partnerships.

The event is presented in partnership with Queer Family, a local community group that aims to reduce social isolation and improve mental health by providing safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ people to connect and build community in the Northern Rivers.

Like *Queerstories*, Queer Family is completely run by local volunteers, so *Queerstories* is only possible thanks to Queer Family receiving a Byron Shire Council grant.



Maeve Marsden will host

“LGBTQIA+ people in rural and regional areas can be quite isolated, and we often miss out on events like these, so it’s really important for our wellbeing and community to be able to come together like this,” Queer Family co-ordinator Aiden Gentle said.

*Queerstories* is Auslan interpreted and wheelchair accessible. Tickets are \$22 concession, \$25 adult and bookings can be made at: [www.eventbrite.com.au/e/queerstories-mullumbimby-tickets-92589729373](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/queerstories-mullumbimby-tickets-92589729373)

There will be a BBQ before the show from 6.30pm to raise funds for future Queer Family events, and for folks to come and socialise.



The 2020 Norco Eat the Street Festival is much more than a celebration of wonderful food, with some great performers entertaining foodies between noon and 9pm.

Once you have tantalised your tastebuds at the 2020 Norco Eat the Street Food Festival, head over to the Southern Cross University entertainment stage and excite your ears with local talent and the Brisbane-based octet Steele Syndicate (pictured).

For those who like an eclectic, genre-bending sound that re-imagines elements of old school funk, reggae, ska and indie rock, Steele Syndicate is the band for you.

“We are excited to provide local performers with the opportunity to perform at Norco Eat the Street.

“With some of Southern Cross

University’s top musicians on show we hope to highlight the abundance of talent we have in the region,” said Virginia Waters, events officer and stage programmer.

“Our line-up of artists will be sure to get everyone up and grooving, adding to a great day of food and entertainment.”

Local performers include SCU student and talented singer and songwriter Joe Conroy, who has just released his debut EP, and Nimbin favourites, Missus Hippy and the Lovehandles.

Eat the Street will come alive on Saturday, 14th March from 12pm to 9pm in the heart of Lismore, Magellan Street CBD.

There will be more than 50 stalls offering tasting plates, plus boutique drinks and beverages, home-grown produce and locally made products



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**WEDNESDAY-** POKER NIGHT FROM 6.30PM  
**THURSDAY-** JOKER POKER & RAFFLES FROM 6.30PM  
**FRIDAY-** RAFFLES & MEMBER DRAW FROM 7PM  
**SATURDAY-** PUNTERS DAY  
**SUNDAY-** POOL COMP FROM 5.30PM



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THURSDAY 26/03 – BROMMERS  
FRIDAY 27/03 – BUD

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