

# Efforts to protect railway tracks in rail-trail proposal

by Alain Dubois

The Northern Rivers Railway Action Group (NRRAG) attended a meeting with Tweed Mayor, Cr Katie Milne and Ballina MP, Tamara Smith on Friday 21st February to express their concerns about plans for the state government to introduce a change to the legislation that protects the Casino to Murwillumbah railway line.

Rail Trail Project Officer, Iain Lonsdale, and representatives of TOOT and the Northern Rivers Guardians also attended, along with Tom Rainer, a civil engineer from Murwillumbah.

Iain Lonsdale explained to us that Tweed Shire Council staff have focused on a design concept for the Tweed rail-trail that means removing

the railway tracks or covering them over. This will require a change to legislation in order to be legal.

Some time ago Tweed councillors decided to also look at placing the rail-trail off formation, which means next to the tracks, but no funding was allocated to look at this other option. Iain said they thought it might cost more to put it next to the tracks instead of on top of the rail formation and it was a cost issue.

However, both Katie and Tamara believed there were opportunities for more funding to be found if it meant keeping the current protection of the railway line.

Tom Rainer stated that he believed the off-formation option might cost less, especially considering the ballast contamination and the large electricity interconnector that lies



along the track.

Tamara Smith offered to organise a time for Katie Milne and the Tweed general manager to attend a meeting in Sydney with the NSW Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

Scott Sledge, president of the community group Northern Rivers

Guardians, Inc. said he was very happy that Mayor Milne and Tamara Smith were looking for positive solutions.

The meeting reached consensus to retain the option for future use of the rail corridor for public transport by requiring the land to continue under Transport Department control.

"If the tracks are removed it is likely the land will be sold off in sections for commercial development," Sledge said, "and future generations will be denied the chance to have public transport in this area."

"I believe that we should look for the win-win as both rail and cycleways can exist side-by-side, and users can benefit from both," Mr Sledge said.

"We need some forward-thinking leadership from the state and Federal governments to reduce our use of fossil fuels, and light rail is a good option for our future transport needs."

For further information, phone Beth Shelley on 0423-030-346 or Lydia Kindred on 0422-007-724.

## ASTRO FORECASTS by Tina Mews WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HEAVENS?

### Aries

This is a helpful period for envisioning your future steps. Adjustments to plans and projects can be made now and you are supported in moving forward if your goals benefit the whole. Observe your energies during March 19-25; avoid the temptation to take over and run whatever is happening around you.

### Taurus

Spending time with friends (old and new) may lead to fresh insights and initiates a creative burst of energy. Use it for following your goals but also look for new avenues of expression. Do something unusual. Surprise others with a renewed vision for the future that questions set boundaries.

### Gemini

Now is the time for making the necessary changes, especially concerning your career path and life direction. A fresh influx of ideas is happening soon, so be patient and prepare the ground for the sowing of new seeds.

### Cancer

A new beginning is on the horizon especially regarding your life direction and career goals. Use the coming weeks for re-examining your beliefs about the world and for formulating new guidelines. Relationship issues might demand a lot of your time and energy.

### Leo

This is a time of endings and new beginnings. If you find that your workload has grown too overbearing and demanding, find a way to delegate responsibilities. Thus you can create space for yourself and prepare for new impulses that might arrive through enlightening encounters with others.

### Virgo

Relationships with others might now reach a new level of spiritual understanding especially if you can widen your view and move beyond the nitty gritty details. It is a time for fusion, for the big picture and the grand vision. Then you will naturally come back to a suitable step-by-step approach.

### March

Pisces is the last sign of the zodiac. Then, when the Sun enters 0 degree Aries at the equinox on March 20, we start a new 12-month round. Until then, Pisces reminds us to slow down and do less. Mercury is still retrograde in Pisces until March 10, the day of the Full Moon, inviting us to spend more time on reflection and review, connecting with nature, be in the flow and also taking good care of ourselves. After a very difficult and stressful start of the year, we can now take a deep breath and recharge our batteries. Mercury retrograde passages are a great time for addressing unfinished business and clearing and healing themes from the past. The Full Moon falls in Virgo and is opposite a Sun/Neptune conjunction in Pisces adding intensity to our emotions. The task is to balance practical concerns with spiritual ideals, the need to be in control with a willingness to surrender and an overemphasised feeling of duty with empathy. It is a reminder not to take on too much to avoid feelings of overwhelm during this Full Moon period.

Pisces is a dual sign, with one fish swimming down into materialism and the other one up to the spiritual worlds. The shadow side is escapism or feeling victimised and powerless. With the incoming Aquarian age, we are still hearing the echo of polarisation based on old belief systems that belong to the past. The outgoing Piscean epoch divided the world into good and bad, the deserving and the undeserving. The enemy within was projected onto suitable victims, may it be another person, group, country or even our natural environment. The keyword for Aquarian is 'interconnectedness' an innate understanding that people, nature, and objects interact with one another to form a complex whole, the web of life itself, which we are all part of. Everybody's intentions, thoughts and actions do matter!

Saturn, the Lord of Time, will briefly enter Aquarius on March 22 just hours after the equinox but will return to Capricorn on July 1. Saturn will complete its cycle in Capricorn on December 18 and will travel through Aquarius until March 2023. Saturn was last in Aquarius during February 1991 – Jan 1994 correlating with the birth of the World Wide Web as an innovative form of global communication. This is also the time when the USSR dissolved and a new united Europe was formed. Saturn in Aquarius is in a strong

position since it rules this sign together with Uranus. In the airy climate of Aquarius, Saturn works hard at forming a bridge between ideas of the past that have proven their usefulness and the unfolding concepts for the future. The emphasis is on reordering structures and boundaries, making connections, distributing information, and developing innovations to achieve a better future for humankind, which of course also has its shadow expressions. As the co-ruler of Aquarius, Saturn is the "planetary Gatekeeper" and cosmic guide for the new consciousness to manifest. Aquarius seeks equality and fairness, dislikes authority and attempts to give the power back to the people. Hopefully, we see an increase in grassroots movements all over the planet, especially also during 2021, when Jupiter will join Saturn, because Saturn gives substance, structure and form to new concepts and ideas.

Mars, the energy of assertiveness and willpower is in Capricorn until the 31st of the month calling for courage, self-discipline and determination. Mars conjoins with Jupiter and Pluto, also in Capricorn, during March 19 - 25. As a driver of evolutionary forces, Mars/Jupiter/Pluto urges us to act on our grand vision and putting efforts towards constructive goals. In building structures for the future that make sense and are of substance lies the key to empowerment.

The New Moon of the month eventuates on March 24 in Aries and calls for a new beginning. New Moons are optimal times to set new intentions. They mark the ending and beginning of a monthly cycle. It synchronises with Saturn's entry into Aquarius and as such it supports the start of new projects that are innovative and community orientated. The New Moon is conjunct Chiron and Lilith indicating that a new approach is needed for dealing with anger, aggression and violence. The way we do relationships, personally and within our culture, is in the spotlight reminding us that entrenched structures based on patriarchal entitlement have no place in a progressive society.

*Navigation by the Stars: Your Year Ahead: Plans, Directions, Concerns for 2020.*

*Next Astro-afternoon: "Saturn in Aquarius", Thursday March 12th from 2.30pm – 5pm; Lillifield Community Centre*

*Next 1 day Workshops: Australian Bush Flower Essences Course', Two Saturdays, March 14th and 28th, 10am – 4pm, at the Lillifield Community Centre, For all bookings and info, contact 0457-903-957 or email: star-loom@hotmail.com*

### Libra

Work and health issues are at the centre of your attention at the moment. What has gone out of balance needs re-balancing to facilitate the next step on your journey of personal evolution. Make sure that you have enough space and time for the unfolding of your creative impulse.

### Scorpio

This is a great time for feeling inspired and opening your innovative channel. Try to use your creativity for something special, a new artwork, playing music, dancing, singing or writing a brilliant poem. You can encourage others with your deep insights and profound research.

### Sagittarius

Early memories and beliefs inherited from your family are now under the scrutiny of your conscious mind. Whatever has served its purpose can be left behind to make space for the new energy. Create a working bridge between ideas of the past that have proven their usefulness and newly unfolding concepts for the future.

### Capricorn

Mars is in your sun sign until March 31. This is an important period of extra energy at your disposal. Great successes, or conversely, extreme downfalls are both possible. Remember that "bigger is not necessarily better" and use your energy for causes that further the whole.

### Aquarius

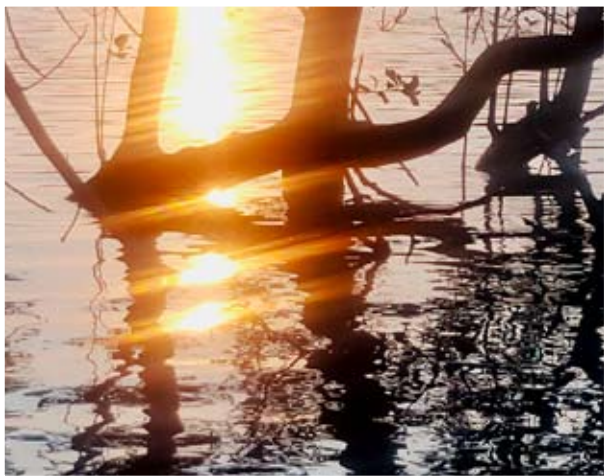
Soon you will experience a spiritual rebirth. Get ready by creating extra time and space for moving within. Listen to your inner voice and carefully examine the aspects of your soul that want to be given expression. There are parts of you that have been waiting in the background for many years.

### Pisces

At the moment, you might be quite aware of a lack of boundaries between yourself and others adding vagueness to your self-expression. Clarify your needs and wants and work on your self-image. It is vital to value yourself; this will attract the support that you need for accomplishing your goals.



Sexuality and healing



by Marilyn Devlin

What a year it's been and we're only a tiny way through. Jeez, it's been full-on since the last quarter of 2019... and it continues.

For me it's been tough, this opening of 2020. Almost from the first day... onwards they marched. Challenge after challenge. I was feeling pretty good about myself at first... handling them like a pro. Ahhh... "all my growth" I thought.

Then the proverbial straw. One tiny bit more and down it all comes. There have been a few meltdowns along the way. Stretched to the very edge. It's disappointing when you've felt so strong and 'transformed'.

It's uncomfortable, and certainly not something you seek. But I believe nothing happens by chance. Maybe it was my Father's favourite mantra he so loved to share. "There's no such thing as chance"... "No such thing as an accident."

Dad was a natural philosopher... yeah some of it's rubbed off. Another of his favourites was "There's no such thing as a coincidence."

He was a man who never came completely into his own. He had a brilliant mind... a highly original and creative intelligence. But he stuck to the safe and seemingly secure path. He never discovered the peak of his genius.

Yeah... it was tough times. Not long out of the depression, recently back from fighting in WW2. PTSD wasn't known back then... still fights for recognition. There's not a great deal of trauma awareness that I come across. Even in the medical field.

As I've shared before... I discovered a bit about trauma these last two years. Tantric Coaching took me deep into myself. Finding things I never knew were there. I had no desire to adopt the 'trauma' label (not a fan of labels)... but there it was, and wishing it away was not going to make it disappear. It was not just a state of mind. It was lodged deep down inside my body.

I've walked this path. It's not just theory for me. I've gone to those horrid, scary places. The horrible dread that floods your bloodstream... that you just can't seem to shed.

The fear that never leaves. The hyper-alertness... jumping at the slightest unexpected sound. The overwhelm... ohhh the overwhelm. I know it well.

The feeling weird and different, separate... alone in a sea of faces. Of bolstering your shield... how clever you are to have created such a brilliant alter-ego. So clever you've fooled yourself.

The gnawing isolation... separation from yourself. The role you've played so long... so well... at some point will come tumbling down.

I believe Love is the core of everything. An energy field of 'Love'. That the primordial creative power itself is Love. And everything comes from it. Our body has a naturally inbuilt focus on wellness. Totality is a natural desire. Everything is created to thrive. To flower... to love, to care. We see it all around us in nature. It's the same inside us.

Even the disruptions... all part of the ongoing desire to be one again. To move forward... to create, to evolve. To be a part of the whole.

When these 'tough' times appear they're not random. They're all part of the cyclic evolution. The only control we have... is how we respond. And that is an ongoing learning.

There are hidden stores of Power and Agency built into our body. Some of these have been on lock-down for a very long time (especially in the feminine). There are regions in our body teeming with nerve supply.... inexhaustible possibility. There are untapped sources of vital energy we carry within us all the time.

Sexuality is our base energy source. It's a misunderstood word... coloured by patriarchy and religion. But discovering what it really is, what it really does... is enlightening, expansive, and freeing. And HEALING. And it feels good. Sometimes we forget... we're created to FEEL GOOD.

More on sexuality next month.

Nimbin Trivia Time

by Eclectus

- 1. What's this blue thing (pictured)?
- 2. On 9th February this year, satellite imagery revealed a disturbing development on the West Antarctic ice shelf in an area of the Antarctic Peninsula where temperatures have risen 3°C in the last 50 years, when an enormous 300 square kilometre iceberg separated from the Pine Island Glacier. It is not, however, the largest iceberg recorded. Can you say how big the largest was?
- 3. In 1973 a particularly theatrical rock artist released their seventh (and final) studio album which came in a brown cardboard box with pink block lettering "ATTENTION: / THIS CARTON CONTAINS ONE (1) / [XXXXX] / MUSCLE OF LOVE / FRAGILE" The artist said of the album "It's not complicated in any sense and there's not a lot of theatricality on it. It's very basic rock and roll throughout." And "I really wanted this one to have more guts to it. More balls." Who is XXXXX?
- 4. The world currently faces the serious threat of a global COVID-19 virus pandemic which has preliminary mortality rates of 5.8% in Wuhan and 3.8% in the whole of China and, perhaps 3% globally. What were the mortality rates of the Black Plague in the 14th century, the Spanish Flu in 1918-20, and the annual seasonal influenza outbreaks?
- 5. What 1981 song by The Reels, now regarded as a classic, was covered by Kate Cebrano and Jimmy Little, among others?
- 6. Who are Pistol and Boo and who cares?
- 7. Who said "Why was I not made of stone, like thee?" (There is a clue somewhere above).
- 8. Are Yellowhorn, Bachelor's Button, Golden Trumpet, Candytuft and Johnny Jump Up desserts, flowers, lesser known Impressionist works, short films from the 2020 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, or vintage steam locomotives?
- 9. Who won the 2019 Polocrosse World Cup held in Warwick in 2019?
- 10. Are cabernet franc grapes a red or white?

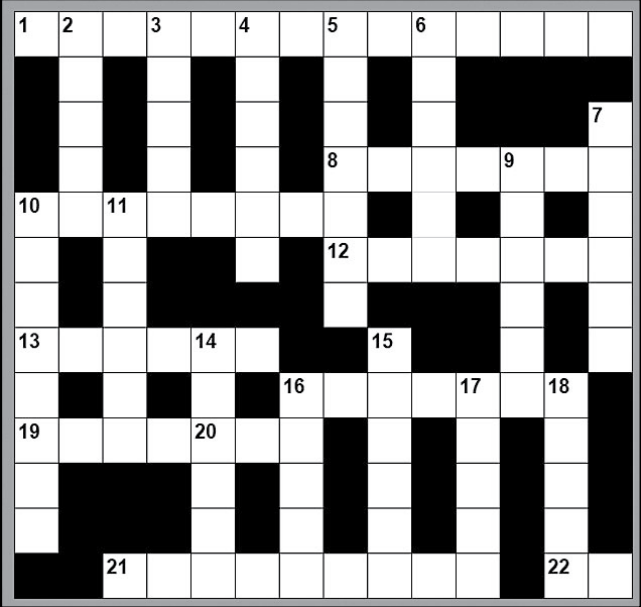


Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons

- Answers
- 1. Glaucus atlantica, also known as a blue dragon, blue angel or blue ocean slug, is a free-floating, 3cm long shell-less mollusc that eats bluebotles, recycling their stingling cells for its own protection.
  - 2. The largest recorded iceberg, at 11,000 square kilometres, calved from the Ross Ice shelf in 2000.
  - 3. Alice Cooper.
  - 4. The effects of the Black Plague were geographically mixed but many urban locations in Europe saw mortality rates of 50 to 60% killing between 75 and 200 million. The Spanish Flu had a death rate of 2-3% killing 20 to 50 million. The seasonal flu each year has a mortality rate of less than 0.1%, killing up to 640,000 each year.
  - 5. Quasimodo's Dream.
  - 6. In 2015 Johnny Depp and wife Amber Heard arrived in Australia by private jet with family dogs Pistol and Boo. The tiny Yorkshire terriers were not declared to Customs and, when discovered at the couple's Gold Coast mansion, were given 72 hours to leave the country under pain of death.
  - 7. The inimitable Charles Laughton, as Quasimodo, delivers this forlorn closing line to a garçoyte after the gypsy beauty Esmerelda (Maureen O'Hara), the only person who has ever been kind to him, leaves the cathedral with her true love in the 1939 movie The Hunchback of Notre Dame, based on Victor Hugo's 1831 novel of the same name.
  - 8. Flowers.
  - 9. Australia (34) defeated South Africa (21).
  - 10. It's a red grape used in the wines of Bordeaux and Loire.

Nimbin Crossword

2020-3  
by 5ync



- Across
- 1. Deep fried sweet treat from the chip shop (9,5)
  - 8. Nonsense
  - 10. Dark future? Bad place
  - 12. Teases?
  - 13. Mad
  - 16. Heading off with spouse-to-be
  - 19. Catches fire
  - 21. Film processing studios
  - 22. Extended Player (init.)
- Down
- 2. The white keys?
  - 3. Hero of Bricksburg
  - 4. Fleshy growth? Immature
  - 5. Highly invasive flowering shrub
  - 6. Damage (extensively)
  - 7. \_\_\_\_\_ Söze – metafictional crime lord
  - 9. Standing stone
  - 10. Scan or record to a database
  - 11. Add spices
  - 14. One who's 12 across
  - 15. Abstract colour-lines artist
  - 16. Chemical compound – basis of plastic, DNA, oils and fats
  - 17. Religious images
  - 18. Lamp spirit?

Solution: Page 36

**Has Your Hot Water System Been Checked Lately?**

*Ever Heard Of A Sacrificial Anode?*

A sacrificial anode is a vital part of your water system, and having it inspected can be the difference between an efficiently working system and a costly replacement.

Manufacturers recommend that you maintain the anode in your system in order to prevent damage from rust + corrosion. After its 5th birthday – warranty expires.

**THE ANODE IN YOUR SYSTEM SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO CORRODE AWAY, WHATEVER TYPE OR BRAND OF SYSTEM YOU HAVE – Solar, Electric, Gas or Heat Pumps.**

FOR A LIMITED TIME we will check your anode in your area free of charge.

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Original Anode

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"Feeling safe was imperative for me. Marilyn creates and holds a very safe space to feel, explore and integrate feelings and emotions. Her intuitive sense of what I need allows me to merge with challenging emotions in a gentle, integrative way."

Jane Halliday – Feel the Difference

Marilyn Devlin... Transformational Coaching  
manymagickmoments@gmail.com



# Re-wilding at Tuntable Preschool

by Hannah Pearl

The Tuntable Preschool was started the week I was born, in July 1979. Many of my most treasured memories happened there, as a preschooler, as a teacher in my early twenties, and now as a parent.

The natural setting provides opportunities for “re-wilding” and connecting with the native animals and the environment, with frequent excursions to the creek and around the community.

These experiences help kids to grow their confidence, resilience and empathy and allows them to expand beyond their own limits, becoming the eco warriors of tomorrow!

Even more importantly, the well-established community within and around the school creates a unique environment which nurtures relationships from the very beginning. So many of my friends from my preschool days are still precious friends as an adult.

Sometimes I feel that we are all threads in the huge tapestry that is our community, a cloth that holds us and supports us all together. I’m so grateful to be able to gift this valuable life experience to my children!



# Vacancies at Nimbin Preschool

Is your child aged 2½ to school-age, and you’re looking for somewhere to send them? If so, Nimbin Preschool has vacancies!

Nimbin Preschool is an inclusive early childhood education facility. The preschool staff are patient, caring and diploma qualified.

The Director, Katie, is an experienced teacher and oversees a democratic, child-focused program where children’s ideas and inquiry are central.

Nimbin Preschool is rated as “Exceeding” the national quality standards by the Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

The preschool has a community garden, chooks, guinea pigs, an educational support dog, an enormous outdoor shaded play area, and a lovely, air-conditioned indoor area with library.

The preschool is open



Monday to Friday 8.30am-4pm and is taking enrolments now.

Please feel free to call 6689-1203, email: [nimbinpreschool.director@gmail.com](mailto:nimbinpreschool.director@gmail.com) or drop in at the Nimbin Showgrounds

in Cecil Street for more information.

Or come to our Playgroup one Monday from 10-12pm and have a look and a play. Find us on Facebook: [Nimbin Preschool](#).

# Preschoolers on the map

by Carina, Annalyce and May

February was another busy month for the Nimbin Early Learning Centre.

We have been interested in the area in which we live. We made a map of the Nimbin community and showed where we live on that map. We then made our own maps showing the paths we take to school.

This created a conversation on how we all get to school, and who takes the longest and shortest times.

This month we are going to be maintaining the garden around our playground, which is located in the Community Centre. This will be our space to take care of and maintain.

Some of our pre-schoolers have been interested in using the hammers, and after so much interest in painting with coloured ice, we decided to freeze ice with pretend bugs hidden inside for the children to help free using a screwdriver and hammer.

Please feel free to call the Centre on (02) 6689-0142. We are open Monday to Friday 8.30am-5pm.



# The school day at Rainbow Ridge

by Mark Piper

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education has several new staff members this year, among them a new Class One teacher and a new gardener, and is also delighted to welcome several new families to the school.

As a school supporting and working with families from local towns and communities, it is great that our enrolment is again over 100 children.

Although it has been rather a soggy start to the year for us all, including a day’s closure due to the inclemency, this has not dampened the spirits or enthusiasm of the children (or the staff for that matter).

The children are just starting their second Main Lesson cycle, covering topics as diverse as Business Mathematics, the Fall of Rome, Ancient India and Persia, The Local Surrounds and Letters of the Alphabet.

Outside of the Main Lesson, the day is taken up with Maths, English, Woodwork, Handcraft, Library, Music theory and ensemble, Gardening, Bother Gymnastics and Art.

Every morning, the class teacher meets each of their students with a handshake, a “good morning” and a smile. This not only allows a check on the physical wellness of each child in the care of the teacher, but also allows each



of the individual children to be met, to be seen by the teacher, even if for a small moment in time.

That moment gives the young person the sense of their own belonging and confirms their existence as part of the group, and as someone who is important and valued by the teacher.

After meeting the children, Morning Circle is a time of rhythm and group collegiality: clapping or stamping rhythms, reciting songs or verses, movement as either a game or specific exercises such as balance, ball or beanbag work. Starting the day being seen and participating as part of a group develops and strengthens an individual’s identity within a social context.

For the first day of the year, the new Class One students met their class Six or Seven

buddies, and spent the morning finding out about each other and played a game hunting treasure.

For the Middle School students, a verse is recited that was originally written by Dr Steiner, and is spoken by Steiner/Waldorf students all around the world at the beginning of the day.

It is encouraging to think that though time and distance separate these young people, there is a ripple of the spoken word that resounds and traverses the entire planet, starting in New Zealand and ends in Alaska. There is actually only two hours, between 9am Alaska time and 7am (the next day) New Zealand time where this verse is not being spoken!

If you would like to know more about Rainbow Ridge School, or Steiner Education in general, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

# Northern Rivers schools are first in Australia to embrace hemp uniforms

In mid-2019 Madeleine Smith, a local business owner and mother, attended a Dunoon P&C meeting with the idea of a change to the school’s uniform colours.

As part of this process she was given the job of sourcing a more sustainable fabric for the school’s polo shirts.

By chance Madeleine had been researching the benefits of hemp products for another project, and after searching for a potential supplier, randomly contacted Chris Martin, founder of Hemp Clothing Australia – a company which makes all of its product line from hemp.

She enquired about the possibility of making hemp polo tops for Dunoon with the school’s logo applied. As it turned out Chris’ company had already been working on a hemp uniform range, and it was almost ready for the market.

Both keen to make a difference in this space, Madeleine and Chris’s team at Hemp Clothing Australia understood that if they could move quickly it would be possible to deliver the first hemp uniforms in time for the January intake of the 2020 school year. To be able to do this they needed help from other schools.

With Dunoon Public School being a smaller school, it made sense to Chris and Madeleine to invite other schools in the region to join forces, which would help keep production costs down.

While Chris continued to work on the manufacturing side of his hemp product, Madeleine quickly got to work contacting friends and P&C presidents and Principals from Byron Bay to Blakebrook.

In September, Chris and his partner Justine visited many schools in the region and a



multiple schools meeting at Dunoon Public School facilitated by their amazing Principal, Genevieve Slocombe.

At these meetings, Chris and Justine provided samples and discussed design and colour options. As a result, local schools jumped at the opportunity to swap their petrochemical polyester shirts for sustainable hemp shirts at no extra cost.

Dunoon Public School didn’t end up changing the colour of their uniform, but they did swap to hemp and have fully embraced the transition. Parents and kids alike are loving the soft fabric and the quality of the hemp product range.

Madeleine says, “It feels so good to be part of the solution heading into the future with a focus more on sustainability and saying no to fossil fuels. It was a lucky, synchronistic phone call to Chris that has now changed the uniform landscape in our beautiful, environmentally conscious region.”

Uptake has been huge, with many of the schools already having to re-order. If your school is keen to hop on board, please contact Chris Martin at Hemp Clothing Australia, phone 0409-939-099, email: [info@hempclothingaustralia.com](mailto:info@hempclothingaustralia.com) Web: [www.hempclothingaustralia.com](http://www.hempclothingaustralia.com)



# Nimbin student leaders inducted

by Cath Marshall, Principal

On Tuesday 18th February, Nimbin Central School held its annual induction ceremony to welcome our new Secondary School Captains, Vice Captains and the 17 SRC students from years 7-11.

We would like to congratulate our 2020 school captains: Kai Prikulis and Mayla Tribolet as well as our Vice Captains: Grace Bellamy and Boah Winston.

Our Primary School Captains were formally acknowledged in their assembly on 21st February.

We congratulate our 2020 school Captains: Mikayla Frey and Zoe Farmer as well as our Primary SRC



representatives: Yuta Penn and Amelie Sledge.  
Thank you to all the parents and carers

who attended our assemblies, and we look forward to seeing the achievements of our new SRC in 2020.

# Rebuilding Bolgaon, Nepal: House 12

by Helen Simpson

In December 2019, Mick Watson, Callum Dougall and myself headed up to Bolgaon with Dn and Roshan from Good Earth Nepal/Global to build Earthbag House 12 for mother of seven, Mangali.

She is still in temporary housing under tin since the 2015 earthquake. The funds were donated by the late Terry Monk from Nimbin.

Time is always the essence when building in Nepal, but particularly this village when every wet season (June til September really by the time the road is repaired) the road is cut off by landslides and mud.

Meaning sand, gravel, pipe, bags, and concrete cannot be transported up the mountain, and jeeps cannot access with volunteers and supplies.

Though we have walked it at times, its gruelling. So it has to be after September, but then the festivals of Dashain and Duvali, important in their Buddhist and Hindu cultural calendar mean not a lot of work is carried out until the end of November.

And we could not really go late into December because of the cold, frost and snow – a mere three-week window of opportunity.

So this trip meant we volunteers not only had concerns about the fires in Australia, we worked really hard clearing the very small steep site and digging the two-foot foundations. Mind you, the glorious mountain scenery was as far removed from the fires as you could get.

Ed Keiffer had to stay home because of fires at Siddha Farm, but came later to a different project. We returned home after the first layer of earthbags over the gravel bags and pipes were laid, and the locals came back on board. A stone plaque in memory of Terry was placed in the rendered front wall.

We stayed in the fifth House we had built in 2017, owned by a man called Lapki. He houses people waiting for their houses to be



rebuilt still. He has added a second story to his earthbag house, lined with ply and tin on the outside. We heard an earthquake, 4.3 on the Richter scale (confirmed) one night, roaring and banging outside and shaking the stairs, but the room we were in on top of the earthbag first floor stayed still. Yay for earthbags.

It was heartening going back in December. Lush vegetable gardens, fruit trees, harvested millet, buffalo, goats, pigs – all breeding quite successfully, house construction, new born babies, marriages, festivals and feasts, nursing clinic, rebuilt school (with increased attendance) and a general feeling of optimism and moving forward.

The men skilled in the earthbag construction techniques are now getting work in other villages, hence some income. Bolgaon had risen.

Unfortunately, the elderly couple Pasang and Tilke passed away last September; Tilke ten days after Pasang. They had only been in their earthbag house nine months. Mick, Dn and I had spent our last day in December 2018 painting bamboo mats for a ceiling, organising doors and windows and making a buffalo dung floor.

They were supposed to wait at least 24 hours after the

last slurry before moving in, but at dusk on that last day the village men carried the paralysed Pasang into the house. A poignant moment.

They had been injured in the earthquake 2015, and we had actually built their house in 2017 but they had very little assistance (as no children), no cash and many of the men had left the village for work, so doors and windows etc didn't get done.

We collected a few stories over the four years of rebuilding, but it wasn't easy. Bolgaon is in the earthquake prone Sindchowpulk region, and the people belong to the Tamang tribe from the Kathmandu valley, an ancient tribe who came over from Tibet. They are Buddhist, their language and culture unique.

Their oral Tibeto-Burman language means only a few women speak regular Nepali and hardly any English at all. (Children are learning Nepali and English, and adult men Nepali because they have been educated longer.) This made it hard for our Nepali translators.

As a result of their success in maintaining this distinct identity and with geographical isolation they are highly marginalised and exploited by the state with extensive poverty and illiteracy faced on a large scale. There is minimal

cash-flow, and they live a subsistence lifestyle. All the families for whom we had built houses had lost loved ones in the earthquake and suffered extreme hardship.

We eagerly hope to return with a literacy program, a need expressed strongly by the women and I would love to build more houses.

Also being considered is instigating earthbag techniques in Australia for people who have lost their houses in fires.

The fires in Australia have meant there will be no active fundraising for Nepal now, but donations are graciously accepted to the Nimbin Nepal Relief Fund a/c: 223050642 at Summerland Credit Union BSB: 728728.

I would like to thank the Nimbin Health and Welfare Association for their support in this project, Good Earth Global and all those who kindly donated, helped and volunteered. It has been a difficult journey but an amazing one.

The village people are very grateful for what we have done and many long-lasting relationships and connections formed. Nimbin support has been awesome.

A full report with stories and lots of pretty piccies will be available from Nimbin Health and Welfare, and myself if requested, phone 6689-1417.

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From Page 33

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# Drubchen – The vast accomplishment

by Simon Thomas

I am sitting on the floor of a tent almost the size of a football field packed with fellow Buddhists from around the world.

Before me, in the centre of this makeshift temple, stands the 'Mandala House', a three-metre tall construction resembling a palanquin which is draped in rich brocade.

From the flanks of the central tower radiate shelves, like a step pyramid, each decorated with colourful symbolic offerings.

Beyond the mandala house, leading up the front, a wide walkway is lined with straight-backed Tibetan monks bearing instruments from the ceremonial orchestra.

Furthest away are the long-horns or Tibetan didgeridoos, which blast aura-massaging pulses of bass each time the sacred music reaches a crescendo.

The whining, dissonant tones emanating from the jewel-encrusted oboes remind me of bagpipes, dispelling negative forces with their reedy tangle of sound.

There are conch players, cymbal clashers and big bass drums on sticks which one monk holds up straight while the next in line beats it with a crook-shaped drumstick.

The air is a fog of herbal incense and we are served with blessed food. Sonorous chanting fills the void. Every sense has been awakened to participate in this quest to overcome ego.

Seated on silk upholstered platforms, a group of highly revered teachers and meditation masters preside over this nine-day long ritualised meditation



Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche

retreat known as drubchen, ensuring that the many intricacies of the ceremony are completed properly.

You might think that this scene occurred in Bhutan or Tibet, but no, it was early February in the back-lots of Peats Ridge, north of Sydney. The humungous tent stood in the grounds of Aloke Meditation Centre, and a nearby paddock was lined with hundreds of cars.

No feat of organisation could have prepared us for the first day however, when the tent was crammed with 700 people, it was 41°, and the air conditioner spat the dummy.

Everyone stifled as the managers scrambled to replace the gear, but the monks chanted on regardless. This is not a retreat where you get to do nothing.

On the contrary, drubchen entails an

endless round of prayers, visualisations, meditations and offerings which are repeated three times every day and night. Even between sessions, the continual murmur of the sacred mantra is not allowed to stop from the beginning until the end.

The whole idea of bringing this ceremony to Australia was to break the drought, so it seemed appropriate to be facing the sweltering wrath of our new climate reality.

We were six days into the ceremony when the deluge began. "Warning, east coast low forming!" shouted the meteorologists, "high winds, rough seas, flash flooding expected."

The car park was the first thing to fail. It took tonnes of blue metal just to rescue dozens of stranded vehicles. From then on, we parked along the narrow country track and trudged through increasingly heavy showers each morning.

The tumultuous resolution of the drubchen entails dances, food offering and of course plenty of chanting, hooting and drumming. It happens at daybreak on the final day, so the prayers kick off at 4am.

Driving there at 3am in such tempestuous weather is a feat I wish never to repeat. The dash from the car to the tent, which was shedding like a waterfall, left us soaked to the bone.

The ceremony continued unabated, even in the final stages when the gale shook the tent like a croc with its prey and the power dropped out due to fallen trees.

"Well," said Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, "you've got a lot of rain now, this is what you want."



## The Tirol

by Bob Tissot

Christ, often with flowers or photos of dead people. Now maybe I've been living with the pagans too long, but I'm pretty sure Australia doesn't display as many little Jesus shrines as there seem to be here. Diana finds them grotesque and the thought that a religion would use this as its symbol quite disturbing.

Knowing that we were now in a region considered *über conservative*, we were careful not to appear too strange, which was tricky because the last Tirolean to smile was back in 1743, so we occasionally had to stifle a giggle or two.

The countryside around here is extraordinarily lush horse country with the sweet aroma of pig shit wafting on the breeze because they spray it in liquid form on the fields. Lushness doesn't come free you know. In the village some houses still have the animals living underneath in the winter.

Day two dawned so clear that Diana dragged me out of bed about two hours before sunrise so that I could appreciate how insanely bright the stars can be at this altitude without any of that pesky oxygen to dull their sparkle. It was -4° and anywhere that wasn't under snow was sparkling with frost.

Dawn broke with a cascade of pink and gold, pouring down the slopes; so beautiful it left you breathless, although that might have been attributable to the oxygen thing as well.

After breakfast we headed off to Mittenwald (middle of the forest) to do some serious hiking and found ourselves crunching through the snow up a rather steep mountainside. Made it to the top, crossed a crazily deep gorge on a swaying, see-through bridge with a foaming river roaring below us (a new personal best in bravery for Diana), before descending through a silent pine forest with nothing but the tracks of wild deer in the snow. Absolutely bloody magic!

Last day here and we're checking out Innsbruck when who should come marching around the corner but the Austrian Army... well, at least the brass band part of it. The conductor was a no-neck, bullet-headed sergeant who conducted like he was drilling a marching squad.

We stayed for a couple of pieces and then found, of all things, a Thai restaurant for lunch.

Off to Deutschland tomorrow... we'll see you there.



The joy of music

The world according to  
Magenta Appel-Pye

I went to a jazz concert last night and was transported into another realm. Away from the cares of the world, the audience spent a few hours immersed in harmony, wonder and beauty. Sitting there together, riding the same wavelength of pure pleasure derived through our hearing and also our feeling bodies. Music is a strange phenomenon. It doesn't last, but the feelings it evokes do, often for a lifetime. What is it about instruments being beaten, plucked, struck and blown into that affects us so much? As we know, music is stored at the back of the brain in the long-term memory which is why all those songs we loved in our younger days are remembered, words, pitch, rhythm all there. This is why it is easy to relearn an instrument as an older person that we had learnt when young. It is more like reawakening the neural pathways and remembering how to do it rather than learning afresh. Those music lessons, for those of us lucky enough, are never a waste of money.



Aunty Maj and Uncle Norm

She says

Dear Freda, as you probably know, clitoris is Greek for the word key, indicating that the ancient anatomists considered it the key to female sexual pleasure. The clitoris is a knot of more than 8,000 nerve fibres, twice as many as in the penis, and is the only organ in the body designed purely for pleasure. From an initially undifferentiated phallic outgrowth in the embryo, it develops into either a clitoris or a penis depending on exposure to hormones. Imagine the hullabaloo that would ensue if we couldn't find our man's penis? He would be: "What's the point?" Exactly! Statistics show that gay women orgasm more than hetero women. They obviously know how to find the fun button because they have one themselves. The problem is that from the outside, the clitoris is roughly the size and shape of a pea. The visible button-like portion is near the front junction of the labia minora (inner lips), above the opening of the urethra. Mix up sexual positions and even those men who are actively searching for it get confused. Some tech savvy woman needs to invent a Clit Nav app. It could work well as young men often look at their mobile phones, so I'm told. Program a woman's voice, with a choice of sexy accents. Aussie boys may enjoy an ocker voice: "Onya mate, keep goin' past the map of Tassie, yeah, you're on! No, drongo, you moved! Back up, higher. You're on, you fuckin' beauty." It shouldn't take too long for this brilliant idea to come to fruition. In the meantime, Freda, you'll have to take on this role yourself, but it does make it more like a kindergarten lesson but who knows, maybe you're both into that.

Send your relationship problems to:  
normanappel@westnet.com.au



I have a joyous time playing at a respite care centre for people with dementia. My 95-year old student and friend, Ray Ellis, and I play our ukuleles and sing the wonderful old-time songs. Amazingly, the audience sing along, remembering all the words. They come alive and feel like their old selves. Many get up and dance. I also tell them one-liner jokes which they enjoy very much. We do our sing-along at the end of the day because that way the people go home happy, even though they can't remember why. It is therefore ego-less entertaining, which is a good feeling.

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything." – Plato

Clit nav

Dear SSHS  
My boyfriend doesn't have a clue how to find my clitoris. Help!  
–Freda.Fricker, The Entrance

HE says

Dear Freda, I tried to look up clit in the dictionary... but I couldn't find it. I've seen a few fadges in my time, mostly on the internet, I admit. I've seen a handful of real ones as well and, I can say quite confidently that I've never actually seen a clitoris. Not knowingly anyway. As a little boy and in my callow adolescence, I yearned to find out what lurks underneath a girl's cottontails. I'd seen a few drawings and diagrams in so-called educational books, but it turns out these illustrations bore little resemblance to the real thing. Much like a pack shot on a frozen meal, and what you actually get when you pull it out of the microwave. It's more like looking at a photo from the Hubble space telescope of an Andromeda millions of light years away. Totally foreign and alien. I do feel compassion for you women folk. Nature has dealt you a bum deal compared to us gents. All your fun bits are hidden away in a secret little vault to the point where even you sisters can't see them without a little help from a hand-held mirror. I'm at a certain age and girth where I'm having the same problem, so I do sympathise. I've always relied on my little cheese and kisses to give me a bit of guidance. She gently guides me to the right spot and I concentrate like hell to make sure I stay there, only to be slapped seconds later because I've lost it, again. Let's face it, there are no discernible landmarks and everything feels the same. Please don't blame us, we try, we really do. If you must blame someone, blame God for designing you that way. Typical male. Maybe before engaging in sexual congress, you could get a bright coloured texta and mark the spot where you want him to go. Draw a little road map with places of interest along the way (blokes are good at reading maps), and you'll be amazed how quickly he will reach his final destination. Happy travels. What do you call a bag full of vaginas? Clitoris allsorts.

Dialogues  
by S Sorrensen

Come on. Join me!  
No. No thanks. I'm good.  
It feels lovely.  
It looks lovely. You're dancing in the rain.  
"I'm singing in the rain, Just singing in the rain..."  
Ha. 'Singin' in the Rain', 1952, with Gene Kelly. You seem too young to know that film.  
"What a glorious feeling, And I'm happy again..."  
Okay, so you do know that film.  
My mother was a dancer and she loved watching that film. Especially that song in the rain. She'd dance along with Gene, umbrella and everything. I'd dance with her. Happy times.  
Well, you look happy now. And wet. Your dress is running...  
What? Can't hear you. The rain is so loud! I'll come closer.  
Don't splash me. I have my phone in my pocket. Wouldn't dream of hurting your phone. Or wetting its carriage system.  
Very funny. Your dress is running. There's dye everywhere. Your knees are blue. Or are you cold?  
No, I'm not cold. I knew the colours would run. It's from India. But it just means it's a different dress after every wash.  
And so are all the other clothes in your wash.  
I don't care. I'm tired of caring. I'm tired of worrying. I'm tired of sadness.  
Me too.  
You know, my friend who lives here in Lismore is freaking out about flooding. Two weeks ago, he was freaking out about drought and fires.  
People worry. Worry is worry. It's the same worry, just keeps



changing its focus. Rising anxiety, that's the real global pandemic.  
Where does it come from, do you reckon, this anxiety we share?  
I think, despite humans' recent disconnect with nature, after 200,000 years of being intimately attuned to the Earth, we can feel it hurting now. Subconsciously. We feel something is wrong. We are still creatures of the planet. We are the planet.  
Yes, I guess.  
You should dance with me.  
No. My phone doesn't like water.  
"I'm laughing at clouds, So dark up above, The sun's in my heart, And I'm ready for love..."  
And I'm shy.  
Who cares what people think? They're hiding under Bunnings umbrellas, worrying about flood and internet connection. It's raining!  
I'm happy to see the rain. My mum is very sick.  
Oh.  
It's not illegal to dance in the rain, you know.  
You sure? The cop hassled Gene Kelly when he was dancing in the rain.  
Oh, it is a bit chilly when you stop...  
You've finished dancing?  
Yes. Got to get to work. You're shivering. Hop out of the rain. Here's my jacket.  
Thanks. The antidote is joy, you know. Celebrate the good bits.  
Like the rain?  
Like the rain.  
Okay.  
I've got to go. I'm walkin' in the rain back to work. Gonna soak it up. Might be the last rain ever.  
You can work with wet clothes and blue knees?  
I have some dry clothes there. Which will cover my blue knees. Don't worry.  
Okay. I'm done with worry. See ya.  
Bye. "Let the stormy clouds chase, Everyone from the place, Come on with the rain, I have a smile on my face. I'll walk down the lane, With a happy refrain, Just singin', singin' in the rain..."  
Wait! My jacket! My phone!

Revenge of the Loon

by Laurence Axtens



One of the most recognised car companies in the world sent me a letter warning me not to drive my car. My now former car was 21 years old. They sent around a truck to pick it up. It had an explosive air bag that had already killed 29 people and injured over 300 – most Japanese vehicles have them installed. You can check to see if your car is lethal by visiting the following site: <https://ismyairbagsafe.com.au> They offered to buy the car for a very paltry fee, or store it until they eventually got a

replacement airbag (for a 21-year old car?). I knocked back the first offer but I need a car. I could have applied for a courtesy car, if I was suffering hardship, and if I really wanted to, and I really wanted them to search for the paperwork and wait for the administration to make an assessment. The final option was I could sign for it and drive it away in full knowledge it could kill me. I'm the loon, I took the final option and drove the car away... giggling psychotically. I did ask them to take out the airbag but they wouldn't. I rang up my mechanic and asked him to take it out – he wouldn't. It's illegal to take it out! Truly, is it legal for me to drive a car with a nail bomb one foot from my stomach, but illegal to remove the nail bomb? The aforementioned company came back to me with a decent offer on the car and I sold it to them – particularly as it was now unregistrable and I couldn't get the airbag out myself. I had planned on driving it for another decade – it only had 170,000 on the clock. The car company videoed the vehicle being crushed – I kid you not – that's what the insurance company required. When you make a good product it lacks the necessary built-in obsolescences I suppose. So it makes sense to install something that makes it obsolete, but lethally obsolete? Built-in lethal obsolescences – a vehicle straight out of the movie Brazil.



# Buying a tube of burns cream in Kenya



by Rob Fisher

I was suffering with sunburn to my face and head. Since we were living inside the hospital compound, I decided to buy some burns cream from the hospital pharmacy. There were no other customers at the pharmacy and the only worker was dusting the furniture. After a while he stopped dusting and asked what I wanted. No they didn't have anything for sunburn, and went on with his dusting. I then asked, "Do you have any cream for burns?" He replied, "Yes but you need a prescription from the doctor". I walked down the hall to the Doctor's office – again no customers there either. I told the doctor my problem and she said she would check with the pharmacy and left. After a while she returned to tell me they didn't have any sunburn cream. I politely agreed with her and said, "But they do have cream for burns, so perhaps I could use that?" She wasn't sure but said I could try and wrote me a prescription. Off I went to the cashier's office to pay for the burns cream. After studying her price list intently, the cashier informed me she needed to check the price with the pharmacy and off she went. A considerable time elapsed, so I walked out into the corridor to check what was happening. The cashier was in deep conversation with someone, but not the pharmacist. I walked back into the cashier's office and to my amazement the woman behind the desk asked for 250 shillings (\$3.70) for my medicine. How did she know what I wanted? They must use mental telepathy here. I offered her a 500 shilling note to be told she didn't have any change. Off she went with my money looking for change. After quite some time she returned with my 500 shilling note intact, before rifling through her handbag to find 250 shillings change for me. Armed with a receipt and my prescription, I returned to the pharmacy. Before too long I exchanged my receipt for a small tube of burns cream. The whole exercise had taken more than an hour and yes, ordinary burns cream does work for sunburn.

Rob Fisher Rob and Rikki recently returned from Kenya after checking on the progress of projects funded by their charity Kenya Kids International. For more details, check out their website: [www.kenyakidsinternational.org.au](http://www.kenyakidsinternational.org.au)



Nimbin Central School's new Kindergarten children: Lyric Grono, Ella Kirkwood, Willow Harrison, Saphira Avogniko, Vinny Lange, Raphy Gaidier. Louis Pike was absent.



The 2020 Lismore & Villages Relay For Life is on at Southern Cross University, Lismore Campus, on 28 and 29 March. "The Relay For Life is an overnight event that only happens every two years in the Lismore community, and is all about honouring those lost to cancer, supporting those living with cancer and celebrating cancer survivors and their carers," said community relations coordinator Erin Turnbull. "It also raises much-needed funds for world-class cancer research, as well

as funding prevention, information, advocacy and support programs." With over 800 participants expected to attend, the whole community is invited to attend this family-friendly community event with free entertainment including live music, food trucks, jumping castles, face painting, a DJ, light show and more. Cheer on the relay teams while camping under the stars and enjoying the festivities from 3pm, Saturday 28th March, at SCU Oval, Military Road,

East Lismore. "You can come to relay for one hour, or come for the entire night. This is our relay, our way," said chairperson Leanne Thompson. "There will be a range of market stalls and a new health precinct for the local community to access information from local health organisations," she said. To register your team, please contact Erin Turnbull at Cancer Council NSW on 6639-1300 or visit: [www.cancercouncil.org.au/lismorerelay](http://www.cancercouncil.org.au/lismorerelay)

## Bushwalkers delight in Woody Head

by Steve Johnson

Rain was predicted, but there is no way that a few drops from the heavens was going to prevent the Nimbin bushwalkers crew from enjoying the delights that Woody Head and its surrounds has to offer. Saturday was a beautiful but testing walk to Iluka along stunning beaches, then through World Heritage rainforest. This place is a rare gem.

Sunday was paddle day as we kayaked from in town to the beginning of the Esk River. The tide and wind were of great assistance in our endeavours. Sunday afternoon was a ferry ride to beautiful Yamba, and after a brief tour of the surrounds, the crew indulged with the locals in a couple of well-deserved ales and enjoyed one of the best views you will ever see from a very historic hotel.

We are a blessed lot and a great few days was had by all. I don't like to end on a sad note, but an amazing, inspirational and lovely human being was lost to us. Bill West passed away on Sunday 23rd February. He was an absolute gentleman and for me personally, an inspiration, and will be sorely missed. Our walks will never be the same. We love you Bill. Enjoy the next walk.



## Walks programme

Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd March  
Springbrook National Park, Gold Coast

Leader: Sue Macklin 0402-220-973  
Grade: 3-4 Care needed at drop-offs, can be slippery after rain and some rough tracks. Stunning views, clear running streams, spectacular waterfalls, some easy and some more difficult walking tracks, some steep grades, caution needed at lookouts. We will be staying at The Settlement camping area. Camping fees of \$6.55 per person/night. Bookings online: <https://qpws.usedirect.com/qpws> or by phone: 13-74-68. For more info, and if you want to share a site, please phone Sue to confirm your attendance. Bring camping and walking gear, open fires are not allowed. Check out: <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/springbrook/about.html#springbrook>

Sunday 5th April  
Peates Mountain and Rocky Creek,  
Whian Whian State Conservation Area

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498  
Grade: 3-4 Mostly on formed tracks, will be some slippery rocks and tracks particularly after rain. About 4 hours and 9km. We will walk to Peates Mountain on a well-formed forest track before returning via Rocky Creek with its beautiful creekscapes. We will experience the Blackbutt Forest before rainforest and the lovely Rocky Creek. Meet: 9.30am at the Rummery Park Campground. Bring: the usual: hat, drinking water, lunch and good bushwalking boots/shoes. Insect protection recommended.



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Agent of the Year

2020

**Nimbin  
Jacqui Smith**

A big thanks to all my vendors and purchasers for all their loyalty and wonderful reviews. I look forward to another great year ahead. I love Nimbin and I love my job. Totally blessed!  
Jacqui - 0439 15 6666

