

## Nature vanquished

Imagine a pristine forest with a clear water river. A man and a woman love the quiet and the beauty of nature and so build a house to live there. They clear a small parcel of land.

A family of friends visits them, falls in love with the wonder of nature and such tranquility; deciding to stay, they build a house and cut down trees and settle on another small parcel of land.

Others come and cut down more trees, build more houses and begin to grow food where there used to be a forest. They build a road. They poison the forest creatures which nibble at the strange vegetables they have planted.

Soon there is a small village, later a town, at last a city. The forest has gone, cleared away tree by tree, small parcel by parcel, until all that remains is a tiny parkland, the ghost of what was, and the river has become a conveyer of commerce and the town sewer.

And so it happens to all the forests on the planet and all the rivers, bit by bit, parcel by parcel, nature is vanquished and vanishes. It is nobody's fault.

Michael Brooke  
Kyogle

## Loss of heart

It's plain tragic that the owners of the burnt down Museum site in the middle of Nimbin have lost heart for their fantastic creative bold and imaginative project.

I've known Dr Simon Rose for more than twenty years. He's a dream landlord for the village. He loves Nimbin. For him it's all about building something for our

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

community.

Don't I remember Lismore Council bragging it was a "centre of the arts"? That's a bad joke. Ask the Dusty Attic or Rainbow Cafe about the support, or hindrance, they've got from Council.

There must be staff and maybe councillors who still have the same old fears fermented now into nasty bitterness towards Nimbin dreaming. We've copped it for decades. Us and our stupid ideas like let's look after the planet and be kind to each other. Nutty ideas like organics and wholefood and meditation which are mainstream now. And weed, which we've been saying for decades is our choice of medicine, and been persecuted and ridiculed for.

Lismore Council should be very ashamed of themselves for not fully supporting in every way they could, this development smack in the middle of our village. They've done the opposite. It really is a tragedy. Life is short, art is long, and opportunity fleeting...

Michael Balderstone  
Nimbin

## Drug reform movement

The wake of our drug reform movement has cost our youth I grew up around Nimbin and Lismore, and have now



moved home closer to the region after 10 years away. I am really appreciative of the political passion I absorbed from growing up in this community, and I look up to so many elders in the community for their determined activism on many different issues.

I propose that unless we as a progressive alternative culture also deepen in our ability to be collectively reflective about the impacts of our actions on those around us, we risk going backwards on one front as we progress on another.

The area that specifically comes to mind is around drug laws and community education. I support the legalisation of marijuana and am grateful to all the campaigners who have pushed for it.

It has been frustrating growing up here to see the pro-marijuana culture, its community leaders and advocates not realise or perhaps deny the need to give ample attention to educating young people about the risks of marijuana to young people, and how its impacts are so varied depending on an individual's psychological pre-disposition.

I think most people are aware marijuana is an amazing and powerful medicine, but they also know it can have huge negative impact on cognitive development before cerebral

maturation as well as on people who are genetically sensitive to it.

As young people in our region grow up, they see a culture celebrating marijuana and standing up for the right to use it, but they sadly have missed out on the hard but essential conversations with their parents, family friends and elders that could have informed them that this wonder drug is not good for kids or teenagers.

I have seen so many young people in the area using the drug as a distraction for many years of their lives, and countless kids suffer the health impacts like stunted growth, respiratory problems and mental illness of early-aged marijuana addiction.

My view is that now that medicinal rights are really just a matter of time politically, now is the time to take the responsibility to educate young people about the risks and at what levels and when in your life responsible usage is possible.

We are part of the culture that has led the way to its legalisation, and now we need to take responsibility and educate those most vulnerable to it about its risks.

We need community-led education programs that address this elephant in the room, because there is too much damage already to wait any longer.

Ahri Tallon  
Murwillumbah

## Independent nation

We Australians think we live in an independent nation, but do we?

Our Federal representatives Oath of Office (OoO) states, "I ... do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to serve Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Her heirs and successors according to law."

Two junior members of the Windsor Firm plan an all expenses paid inspection of their rental property to assess the the catastrophic climate fire damage.

With the landlord's approaching visit, the tenants are being vetted so that there will be no embarrassing scenes like those experienced by their local marketing agent.

During the great burning, Paul Parker, the volunteer firefighter who had a go at Scott Morrison for his lack of action during the crisis, has been kicked out of the NSW RFS for expressing his views.

Makes you wonder, whose country is it?

Simon Chance  
Richmond Hill

## Bushfires

Having read Menkit Prince's letter (NGT February), I am even more convinced that there was a heinous and cold blooded agenda behind the recent unprecedented and devastating bushfires!

I live near Glen Innes on a bush property which came very close to being burned if it wasn't for the quick action of neighbours. This whole district was in fire at one stage, with new fires starting every day.

I became suspicious when I noticed two unmarked, green, twin engine planes flying over my house, enroute to a fire in Butterleaf National Park. Within a short time three new fires started miles away from the original one on a day where there was no wind.

My son also witnessed two helicopters flying over his

property and fires started not long after.

The use of incendiary devices during the fires has been witnessed by many people. Most notably, the fire which devastated the Wyaliba community. The Mayor of Glen Innes and others saw the helicopters dropping these devices just before the firestorm ripped through the valley.

The actions of our Prime Minister were incomprehensible during this time. Steadfastly refusing to act when he should have and waiting until it was essentially too late to bring in the Army and help from overseas. Oh! and going to Hawaii on a holiday whilst his country was burning!

So what is the agenda? Well they haven't wasted any time in revealing one of them. Namely the logging of the National Parks. Tony Abbott stated during the 2014 Tasmanian election, that there were too many trees locked up in our National Parks.

I believe that the other agendas are relating to the plan for smart cities and the super fast railway. Moving people out of the bush into the city where they can be controlled and used as a slave force in their mines!

China now owns a large proportion of Australian assets and will use Australia to feed the out-of-control behemoth that is China today!

Whatever the reasons behind it, one thing is certain. If we as a people don't stand up against this, everything that was good and beautiful about Australia and the way of life we had will be destroyed.

Nora Vandenhoeek  
(Sheridan)  
Glen Innes

## Letter from South Coast fireground

My Dear Family, all,

We have been very aware of your concern and support over the last couple of months. I am deeply grateful.

It is now raining over most of our fire ground; Nowra to Bega and Batemans Bay to Braidwood. Our fire crises are now over.

It has been constantly challenging, often frightening, occasionally truly dangerous, on a background of hard, dirty work.

But, as I reflect on it now, it has also been a life-shaping and opening opportunity to work with so many others, and, along with them, to accept and to give with care and generosity and accept the risks and possible consequences in ways that are less common and less easily revealed in ordinary life.

It hasn't always been

# Notices

## Volunteer Firefighters Thank You Day

Nimbin Bowling Club, Sunday 8th March, 11.30am

## Annual General Meetings

• Cawongla Playhouse AGM Tuesday 31st March, 10am at the preschool. All members are invited to attend. All positions (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) will be open.  
• Tuntabla Preschool AGM Thursday 2nd April, 1.30pm at Tuntabla shop.

## Poetry launch date change

The launch of David Hallatt's new poetry collection Out of the Blue has a changed date. It will be held at the Nimbin Poets at Nimbin Bowling Club on Thursday 2nd April, starting at 7.30pm.

## Cleaner/maintenance person wanted

Cawongla Playhouse is seeking someone to do regular weekly cleaning and lawn mowing, plus occasional maintenance jobs. Cleaning equipment supplied; you provide your own lawn mower. This is an on-going contract one day a week during school terms only, with some additional hours at the start of each term. Start date: 27th April. If interested, please reply to: cawonglaplayhouse.director@gmail.com with your rates and recommendations from previous customers.

## About us

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

Bookkeeper Martha Paitson  
Web [www.nimbingoodtimes.com](http://www.nimbingoodtimes.com)  
And find us on Facebook

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

**NEXT DEADLINE:**  
**Wednesday 25th March**

Email [nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com](mailto:nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com) or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.



by Tara Bayles

John Frederick Bayles, also known to many as Johnny or JB, was a proud Birri-Gubba/Gungalu man and a Dawson River Murri. He was born in Eidsvold, Qld on 6th February, 1957 to Maureen Watson and Harold Bayles.

He is the brother of Tiga (dec), Phillip, Jim, Michael and Robyn. He is the partner of 44 years to Susan, and the father of Shay, Mundayah (dec), Mahlie, Jarrah, Jeddah, Tara and Kirra.

He is the grandfather of Richard, Jacob, Cheyenne, Shareya, Shaye, Mundarra, Mahlu, Rikki-Lee, Malika, Mahlie Jnr, Tjandamurra, Matayah, Ellemarra, Karlos, Nulla, Minjarra and Luka. And he is the great grandfather of Xavier, Marlia, John, Cheyella, Aaliyah, Bapunya, Balam and Anahera-Eliza.

Johnny grew up in Theodore with his parents and four brothers until his parents separated in 1968.

Maureen moved to Brisbane with his four brothers and Johnny decided to stay in Theodore with his dad, because he didn't want his dad to be alone.

Over the years Johnny moved around Qld and helped build some of the bridges that are still in Brisbane today.

Around the age of 15 he

difficult; there have been moments also of humour and fun, at all hours of the day and night, and sometimes in quite dark circumstances. A lot of intense experiences packed into a short time.

There will still be lots to do in the recovery phases but right now, without forgetting those lost lives (we have begun our last two brigade meetings with a minute of silence, a ritual I felt more intensely than ever before), those who lost their homes and livelihoods, we may need to look away from it for a while, to take a break.

So, right now we are playing grandparents at Bundanoon and will head to Wollongong to do the same there. Back to Durras tomorrow night. Home, to full water tanks at last.

Love and care to you all,

Noel and Alison Tait  
Batemans Bay

## Water Meter Users Beware!

If you are using metred water and are billed by the Lismore City Council, you need to regularly check your meter for usage because if you have a leak and lose a large volume of water, you will not be treated leniently and there is no avenue for appeal.

In 2015, while I was working on the Central Coast, neighbours reported a water leak at my property,



Tara gives the eulogy at the Remembrance ceremony with her sister Kirra (observed), flanked by her uncle Michael and brother Mahlie. Photo: Heidi Glover

settled in Brisbane and met Grace Jocko Doyle, and exactly nine months after his 16th birthday, his first child, Shay Doyle was born.

In 1973 Johnny travelled to America on an Indigenous Peoples exchange program, and came back with a love for turquoise. That same year he attended the first Aquarius Festival in Nimbin and fell in love with the place.

Around 1976 Johnny met Sue at Romeo's, a nightclub in Brisbane, where he was working as a security guard and Sue was the bar manager.

In 1979 Sue and Johnny moved to Sydney and in 1981 they had their first child,

Mundayah, followed by Mahlie in 1982 and Jarrah in 1984.

In the 80's Johnny, along with his mother Maureen, brother Tiga and other members of the Bayles/Watson family, were instrumental in helping set up Radio Redfern.

In late 1989 Johnny received a call from Mahmoud saying he was moving out of his house in Nimbin, and within a matter of weeks Johnny and Sue had packed up their house in Sydney and started the journey to Nimbin.

In 1990 they welcomed their fourth child Jeddah, and in 1993 they welcomed twins,

thought he could get the bill reduced. Lies!!!!!! The insurance company ruled that the leak did not damage my property. The bill was the "damage" and they refused to pay out. I asked for a review and changed insurance companies.

The promised reduction of the bill did not happen, though due to billing changes, the amount was changed to \$9660. Oh, but don't worry, I was told by the LCC, you can pay it off over five years with an interest-free loan. This means \$40 per week for five years.

A builder told me that the amount of water that had supposedly leaked (3040kL) would have sunk my house, but just try to argue this with the LCC. There is no avenue for appealing this type of dispute. The meter was not checked independently.

I have appealed to the Energy Ombudsman (twice), the General Manager of the LCC (the former General Manager— twice), Current Affair, all of the Councillors, the Lord Mayor, the new General Manager of the LCC – Ms Oldham) and our local member, Janelle Saffin for leniency, or assistance.

Janelle Saffin approached the new General Manager on my behalf with a request for a review of the excessive charges. The response from Ms Oldham was that no

Tara and Kirra.

In the late 90's Johnny was invited to take over the Nimbin Aboriginal Broadcasting from Uncle Frank Roberts, and Johnny was still actively running N.A.B. and doing two radio shows a week up until he passed.

Johnny also set up the Nimbin Aboriginal Cultural Centre in the early 2000s.

Johnny was a well-loved and highly respected community member, and was the unofficial caretaker of the streets of Nimbin.

He will be forever loved, missed and remembered by all who knew him.

waiving or review of this bill would occur, and anyway I only had a few more years before I'll have it paid off.

Lord Mayor (Isaac Smith) reminded me of the Hardship Policy when I emailed him, however the Hardship Policy states that you pretty well have to have nothing in the bank and be on welfare to apply it.

A couple of the Councillors bothered to reply, but basically all said it wasn't their area, and couldn't help me. The Councillors managed to misappropriate the expenditure of our rates money, and then voted themselves a pay rise and now they want a rate rise because of their ineptitude while we continue to drive on the pot-holed messes that are called our road network.

Try driving from Alexandra Parade (showgrounds) along Dunoon Road where the developers working on the plateau with trucks have reduced the road surface to swiss cheese.

The LCC continues to squeeze ratepayers for every cent they can get, while a person was on the radio recently in Ballina Shire with a similar water bill to mine – BUT the Ballina Council waived the bill! What!! Ripped-off and furious.

Freya Mosler  
Modanville

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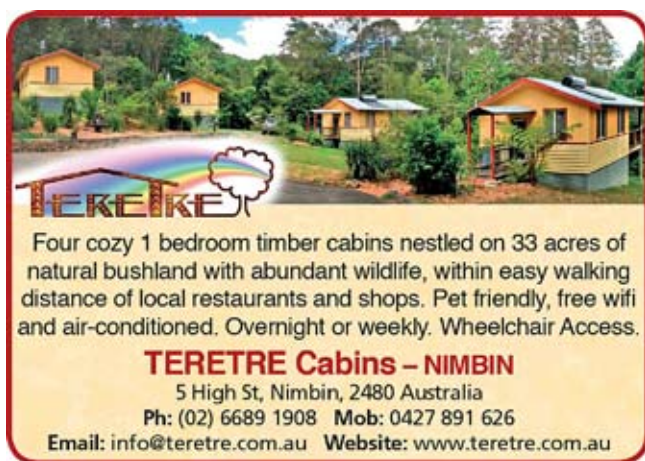
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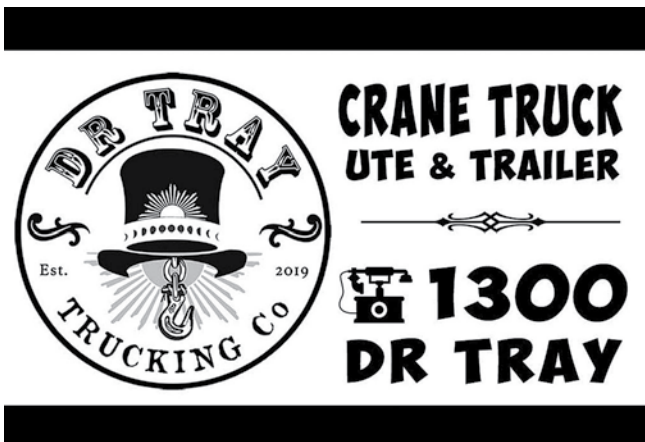




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## Well and truly back into the swing of things

Lismore City Council is well and truly back into the swing of things with our first meeting done for the year. I had a good restful break and I am feeling fairly well prepared for the coming year.

I have spent this first part of the year keeping a very close eye on what is happening with the Nimbin fire sites DA. I know there is significant community unrest about the DA and the developers have made their frustrations clear in previous editions of the *GoodTimes*. It is a challenging situation for everyone involved.

The vision outlined by the developers is very worthy, but unfortunately Council is constrained by the Nimbin Development Control Plan, particularly with regards to heritage considerations.

I have called the DA up to Council for determination assuming we can make it through these final hurdles, and I do hope that a compromise can be found soon that serves everyone involved but that most importantly serves the community of Nimbin.

I am also working to progress our Climate Resilience work, and I am pleased that work is underway to progress disaster planning in Nimbin. As we all know it's not a matter of if a disaster will happen, it's when, and the better prepared individuals, communities, and organisations are, the better we will be able to get through any disruptive events that may happen in the future.

During the recent Community Strategic Plan consultation workshops, climate resilience was a very clear concern for our community and I know that Council has a big role to play in helping us to become more resilient. Like most things at Council, it won't be quick work, it takes time to gather the resources and clearly articulate what the actions will be. My intention is that climate impacts



**Word of the Bird**  
 by Cr Elly Bird

will be considered across all levels of Council activities, and also that Council will work proactively in the disaster preparedness space to support communities to become more resilient. It's a large body of work, and I am looking forward to seeing what we can do together in the next few years.

That is assuming I am re-elected in September! It is an election year with NSW Council elections happening on 12th September. I have really enjoyed being on Council and representing the community, and I hope to be able to do so again for the next term. It is not always an easy task, and there are high expectations placed on those of us in elected roles. At times it has been difficult to effectively address the many and varied issues that the community brings to our attention, particularly during this last term.

It is well known that it has been a challenging term for us, with the floods in 2017; our financial sustainability issues; the subsequent organisational transformation plan that is underway; and the Special Rate Variation. I know that many people in the community are frustrated and I absolutely understand

why. The challenges we are facing are not easy to deal with, and it isn't possible to keep everyone happy as we work to try and address them. But I am determined to make this Council financially sustainable so that we can effectively do the important work of serving our community across the many service areas we deliver.

One of the frustrations that does get shared with me is that Councillors aren't available to the community, and given the challenges we have been dealing with, that is probably a fair comment.

There have been times over the last year in particular that we have had a greatly increased workload in order to be able to bring the attention required to the problems we have been facing, and personally I struggle sometimes to keep up with the email traffic and I definitely can't keep up with the commentary on social media, let alone the abuse and negativity, but that is another conversation.

I see the role of Councillor as being one of working in partnership with the community but in order for that to happen effectively, some responsibility falls to the community to work with us. I highly recommend picking up the phone or sending an email if you have an issue, rather than trying to get action on social media.

And, if you send an email and don't get a response, send another one or make a follow-up phone call. We are here to work with you, but it's a huge job for those of us who like to engage fully and I am not always going to be able to be immediately responsive.

So, with 2020 well underway, let's work together to continue to build a community we love, and that we are proud of.

*I can be contacted on 0418-639-927 or email: [elly.bird@lismore.nsw.gov.au](mailto:elly.bird@lismore.nsw.gov.au)*

## The creeks are running again

Just as we were saying how happy we were that the rains had finally arrived, the skies broke open and deluged us! I've had 600mm so far for February, my tanks and dams are overflowing and the creeks are running again.

Getting deafened by the frogs and overwhelmed by the grass and weeds shooting up as I watch them! The wallabies are coming back through my place and koalas are coming to snack on the new leaf growth on the tallowwood trees. Even the birds are chirpier and singing more, it seems.

As a result of these rains the water restrictions for the whole LGA have been lifted. Council is well aware of the impact that water carriers and road crews' access to the Nimbin water supply had on the dwindling supply in the creek and dam.

Council is already looking at other locations that carriers and road construction could use in times of short supply in the future to safeguard the water supply for domestic use in the village.

During February, Council held a series of forums on the Community Strategic Plan and future land use priorities. I was unable to attend the Nimbin one, but I gather it was well attended and many ideas forthcoming on the future for the village. I did attend The Channon forum, which was also well attended and many contributions and ideas came out of that – some prioritising the local village but many noting projects that could benefit the entire LGA.

### Events

The 17th Annual Women's Dinner and Comedy Gala will be held at Nimbin



by Cr Darlene Cook

Town Hall on 5th March at 6.30pm for dinner and the show starts at 8pm. Tickets at NNIC or at the door.

In Lismore there will be an IWD lunch at the Fountain Room, Lismore City Hall on Friday 6th March at noon, and a Women's Festival on the 6th - 8th. Check out all the events on either: [www.facebook.com/lismorewomensfestival](http://www.facebook.com/lismorewomensfestival) or: [www.lismorewomensfestival.org](http://www.lismorewomensfestival.org)

Eat the Street returns to Lismore for the day on 14th March with dozens of food stalls, crafts and exhibitions. Sampler plates are \$5 and \$10. Is this something to consider doing as a festival in Nimbin sometime?

The Cancer fundraiser – Relay for Life is back again for another year – this time on the 28th – 29th March at Southern Cross Uni. As a cancer survivor myself, I encourage everyone to consider donating to such a worthy cause, or come along and walk or run, or just come for the day and be entertained.

### Council matters

Consideration of the DA for the re-development of the old Museum site at 60-62 Cullen St was deferred from the February meeting at the developer's request. I understand that it will come to the April meeting, perhaps with some changes to the proposal.

The extent of the proposal, the negotiations over a parking agreement, and other conditions will be considered by Councillors. If you are interested in this issue, please come along on Tuesday, 14th April at 6pm and either register to speak about the proposal, or to observe.

The upcoming March meeting on Tuesday 10th March will include planning proposals to rezone some lands at Chilcott's Grass; reclassification and rezoning some Council-owned lands; land acquisitions for Tucki open space; the Richmond River Governance and Funding project; streamlining the release of SBRL funds for the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce – deferred from last month; and nominations for our Aboriginal Advisory Group.

As some of you may be aware, conversations have started about the Council elections in September this year. Vanessa Ekins contributed a great article to NGT last month about becoming a Councillor.

I encourage you all to consider either nominating for a ticket to run for election, or getting involved at community events and candidate forums in the next months to ensure that Nimbin does get its voice heard at the decision-making forums in town.

*I can be contacted on 0427-895-316 or email: [Darlene.cook@lismore.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Darlene.cook@lismore.nsw.gov.au)*



# School bus run a win for Nimbin Central students, families

by Janelle Saffin,  
Member for Lismore

I'd like to report on a great community win for the Nimbin Central School community, which already is benefitting students education-wise, and reducing inconvenience for many families in the Billen Cliffs/Cawongla areas.

A big thank you has to go to parent Anastasia Guise, who raised this legacy issue with me, one which had been kicking around for several years and which on the surface appeared hard to resolve.

I also take this opportunity to thank Quinn's Bus Services proprietors Cathy and Michael Quinn, Nimbin Central School principal Catherine Marshall and Transport for NSW for working collaboratively with me to achieve this school bus run win.

Last August, I wrote to NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, Paul Toole MP, on behalf of Anastasia and a group of families who live at Billen Cliffs, Larnook, who were concerned about the then school bus timetable.

My letter read: "Recently, high school students in Larnook were rezoned to attend the Nimbin Central School. Unfortunately,

the current bus service does not accommodate this alteration and causes students to miss critical times from classes."

I asked Minister Toole to consider the parents' concerns:

1. On school days, using the existing service, at least a dozen secondary school students, were missing a significant part of class time;
  2. The students were arriving at school at 9.10am, missing approximately 15 minutes of class time;
  3. In the afternoon, they had to leave at 2.40pm, missing around 35 minutes of class time;
  4. In total, these students were losing more than six days per term or 25 days per year.
- "The inability of these students to arrive and leave the school at the correct time represents a huge loss of classroom time and learning opportunities."

Anastasia confirmed that she wrote twice to Transport for NSW and the NSW Minister for Transport and Roads, Andrew Constance, six months prior to contacting me.

"I was told that they could not resolve the issue. But I didn't take no for an answer," Anastasia said.

"Instead, I surveyed local parents,



Parent Anastasia Guise, Lismore MP Janelle Saffin and Nimbin Central principal Catherine Marshall met at the school last year to discuss the issue.

spoke with the school and bus company, before approaching Janelle's office. It was great to see Janelle and her staff immediately allied to the cause."

My office contacted Cathy Quinn, who offered to explore any option to find the most appropriate solution to the matter, including applying for an additional bus service or an alteration to the current timetable, to Transport for NSW.

I thank Cathy and Michael for

their professional approach and care for students.

"When it comes to transport for people in the rural and regional area, we both know that there are limited options available for them. For some parents, they are unable to drive their children to school for various reasons, including work," my letter to Minister Toole read.

"We know how important education is for our children. These high school students are unfairly

disadvantaged, and we must do what we can to solve this issue...

"I know that you would agree with me that a timetable matter cannot deprive these students from their education."

Leading up to the 2020 academic year, Transport for NSW was responsive, and granted approval to Quinn's Bus Services for an additional bus service.

Quinn's Bus Service is using a spare (Category 3) larger bus to provide the new school bus service until the company takes delivery of a new Category 3 bus later this year.

This new replacement bus should service the Nimbin district for many years to come.

Principal Catherine Marshall recently thanked Anastasia, myself and Cathy for "hard work and tenacity" which led to the new service, which means students will not miss classes in the morning or afternoon, and will have a positive impact on their learning.

"We greatly appreciate their recognition of the importance of attendance on learning outcomes and their commitment to providing the best opportunities to all our students," Cath wrote.

"Thank you from the entire Nimbin Central School community."

## On the same PAGE



by Kevin Hogan, Member for Page

I am very humbled to have been promoted to Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister.

My first priority will always be, as the Member for Page. Without the support of our community, I would not have the opportunity to serve and represent us.

I am grateful to have been given this new role. The Ministry covers the areas of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development.

Australians suffering from lung cancer have new treatment options, with new and extended PBS listings.

Imfinzi® (durvalumab) is being listed for the first time for the treatment of non-small cell lung cancer for patients who have not progressed after chemoradiation.

Tecentriq® (atezolizumab) listing is being extended to be used in combination with a platinum-based chemotherapy and etoposide for the treatment of small cell lung cancer.

Trelegy® Ellipta® (fluticasone furoate with umeclidinium and vilanterol) is being extended for the treatment of COPD, to broaden subsidised access to this medicine on the PBS.

Disaster assistance has been made available to help people and businesses heavily impacted by recent storms and flooding.

Assistance is being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

If you are uninsured and have low income, for information on personal hardship and distress assistance, please contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800-678-593 or visit: [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au)



The rally for climate action on 22nd February outside Kevin Hogan's Lismore office heard speeches, poems and songs by young people. Photo: Chibo Mertineit

## PROPOSAL TO INSTALL OPTUS EQUIPMENT ON AN EXISTING MOBILE BASE STATION 2 FALLS ROAD, NIMBIN

OPTUS

### PROPOSAL

Optus are proposing to install a mobile phone base station at 2 Falls Road, Nimbin. The purpose for the mobile base station is to provide the surrounding area with greatly improved mobile network coverage.

The proposed facility consists of the installation of the following on the existing 30-metre Telstra pole:

- Three (3) panel antennas at a height of 23 metres.
- Nine (9) radio remote units and 6 combiners next to the antennas.
- One (1) 600mm-diameter parabolic dish at a height of 18 metres.
- One (1) equipment cabinet in an adjoining compound at ground level.
- Cabling and ancillary equipment.

### COMPLIANCE

Optus regards the proposed installation as a Low-impact Facility under the Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2018 based on the description provided.

Optus has prepared a compliance report that predicts the maximum levels of electromagnetic emissions (EME) from the proposed installation.

### HAVE YOUR SAY

Further information including drawings and an EME Report can be found at: [www.rfnsa.com.au/2480034](http://www.rfnsa.com.au/2480034). Further information can also be provided via phone by contacting Elliot Nelson on 0433 347 309.

We invite you to provide feedback about the proposal. Further information and/or comments should be directed to:

Elliot Nelson – Catalyst ONE  
Address: 22 Brennan Way, Belmont WA 6104  
Email: [consultation@catalystone.com.au](mailto:consultation@catalystone.com.au)

By: 20 March 2020



# The uncomfortable truth about filicide

by Jasmin Newman

While the horrific end of the Clarke family shocked the nation, a deeper look into filicide should be part of the conversation moving forward.

Last week, we witnessed another despicable act of domestic homicide when Rowan Baxter made the unfathomable decision to murder his wife, Hannah Clarke and the couple's three children. And it truly is unfathomable. No rational, thinking person could even imagine doing such a thing, and yet it seems premeditated.

It reminds me of a similar incident in 2019 when Charmaine McLeod drove her four children to their death north of Hervey Bay in Queensland. All four children and their mother died as her car collided head-on with an oncoming truck. A note was found. It had been thrown from the vehicle prior to impact.

For most of us, the idea of a parent who would commit filicide brings deep emotions of sheer disbelief and even rage. No person who could do that should call themselves a parent.

But we've seen this before. One of the most notable and despicable acts of family violence related to court orders occurred when Arthur Freeman brutally murdered his daughter, Darcey, by throwing her off the Westgate Bridge in Melbourne. Four-year-old Darcey was supposed

to be taken to school by her father that morning. Seemingly angry at court orders reducing his time with the child, he made the unfathomable decision to murder her.

Four years prior, Robert Farquarson was driving his children back to their mother after a court-ordered access visit on Father's Day, 2005. Instead of returning them home, Farquarson drove the vehicle at speed into a dam. He got out of the vehicle, leaving the children to drown.

There are obvious similarities in all these cases. A parent has made an otherwise unthinkable decision to murder their children in an act of filicide. And in each of these cases, there were unresolved issues regarding caring for the children after a relationship breakdown.

In the tragic case of the Clarke family, Detective Mark Thompson was asked to stand down due to his comments that a full investigation was required. Anti-domestic violence advocates were outraged that his comments regarding investigations indicated this was somehow Hannah's fault.

We all know this can only be the fault of the person who did it.

Yet when Charmaine McLeod killed her children, those same advocates came quickly to her defence. Some attempted to make claims that she'd been driven to the act through desperation, as Charmaine claimed she was a victim of domestic violence in a Facebook post.

Their father, James McLeod, told the *Courier-Mail* that he separated from his partner in order to protect their children. "I've always known that she would do something like this to the kids. I've let judges know, I've let lawyers know, I've let DOCS know, I've let police know. They've all turned a blind eye. This all could have been prevented if they did something. (I've been telling them) for years," he said.

I sincerely hope there will be an inquest into the deaths of Hannah Clarke and her children. We must examine all aspects of these terrible acts of violence.

While what he said was poorly worded, what I imagine Detective Thompson was trying to say is on the mark. We need to investigate what drives people to make these despicable decisions. Only they, the murderer, are responsible, but until we determine the triggers and what could be done to prevent it, the rate of filicide will continue.

In a comprehensive 12-year study of filicide, the Australian Institute of Criminology revealed that 125 children were murdered by their biological mothers, and 108 by their biological fathers. Stepfathers also contribute to filicide figures, however, a child is statistically safest from filicide in the care of their biological father.

If we were to view filicide as a gendered problem, as we do with domestic violence, we would be looking at this as an issue of female violence. The reality is, in



Floral tributes to the eight children killed by Raina Thaiday in Cairns in 2014. Thaiday was found to be "of unsound mind" and all charges were dropped.

all the cases mentioned here, the difficulty of family separations is present. According to the research, separations were present in 76% of the cases.

I sincerely hope there will be an inquest into the deaths of Hannah Clarke and her children. We must examine all aspects of these terrible acts of violence. Yet this week, the West Australian Coroner made the unfathomable decision to not hold an inquest into the brutal murder of the Cockman children in Margaret River.

All four children, their mother, and the children's grandmother were murdered by their maternal grandfather. The mass murder was the single biggest gun violence since Port Arthur and was influenced by protracted matters in the Western Australian family court.

The sole survivor of the tragedy is their biological father, Aaron, who told *WA Today* that the court process exacerbated the problems

within the family.

"Separating families don't belong in courts; they need help, support and much earlier, health-focused interventions.... where these measures aren't enough, families need affordable access to high-quality conciliation and arbitration, too. It's so much safer than sending vulnerable parents and at-risk kids into the deadly, pressure-cooker environment of the family court," he said.

There has been some well-intentioned commentary regarding early intervention counselling for men experiencing relationship breakdown. Certainly, this would help in some cases. However, given the Australian Institute of Criminology's findings, I propose that this intervention and risk assessment needs to be uniform in nature.

Tragically, and as unthinkable as it is for most of us, parents, both mothers and fathers, kill their children.

## Surveillance cameras in Cullen Street

Life has been busy and varied for the Chamber's Executive, with a number of exciting initiatives in the pipeline, but first let me explain what's happening with the cameras in Cullen Street.

While we love a good conspiracy theory, it's time to dispel a few. The cameras are not new as such. They were originally installed after strong lobbying of Council by the community many years ago, following spates of vandalism in the main street. Council agreed to maintain the cameras provided the Chamber paid for their installation.

Recently Council received a grant to replace the cameras. Contrary to some rumours, the new cameras do not have audio capabilities or facial recognition. However, they are superior to the cameras that were there previously, and will have much better night definition.

Each camera position consists of a fixed camera and a pan/tilt/zoom (PTZ) camera. Under normal operations the cameras will provide views north and south within Cullen and Sibley Streets and the western car park. The PTZ functionality enables an operator (no prizes for guessing who) to adjust the view 360 degrees at any time, while the fixed camera maintains a set view.

There are two new cameras in the system. One is at the exit of the western car park directed towards the Community Centre. This camera has been installed at the request of the Community Centre management. The other camera is located in the western car park.

## Fire site re-development

Where to start? This issue has received extensive media coverage, including an article in last month's *NGT*. Lismore Council can hang their heads in shame as the outcomes to date are disastrous and so disappointing for the community.

I can remember Brent McAlister (Council's Director of Planning) saying to me after the 'charette' he organised to discuss what Council and the developers would like to see on the site: "This is the most important site in the village, Diana, and Council will get it right."

Well Brent (who's no longer there), Council



## Chamber Chat

by Diana Roberts, president

couldn't have got it more wrong.

By the time you read this, the developers of the former museum site will have met with Council to try to negotiate some of their concerns. They have already put the land on the market.

Meanwhile it is likely the Co-ordination Co-op will be forced to walk away from the rebuilding of the Rainbow Café and the land will likely be sold with little to show for years of painstaking, expensive planning effort.

I and the Chamber have closely followed progress (or lack thereof) on the development of both these sites. We made submissions, organised community consultations, actively sought feedback, liaised with the developers and much more.

For both sites, the community couldn't have had more sympathetic developers. They were not only interested in a return on investment. They wanted to create something to be proud of, that reflects what Nimbin is about. Not everyone liked every element of their plans, but that's the nature of change, and overwhelmingly feedback was in their favour.

I think I can safely say that Council's bureaucratic, pedantic, unhelpful rigidity and delay have destroyed not only the re-development of the museum site but also reconstruction of the Rainbow Café.

Council has tried to design the buildings and shape the site appearance themselves, and in doing so has completely destroyed the passion and enthusiasm both developers brought to their projects. They have had to design and redesign and now they're designed out.

If Council wanted to micromanage the development of these sites, they should have purchased the land in the beginning. They didn't, and in overseeing its development they

have shut out the community and exhausted the developers. Shame on them.

There is now a danger that some rich commercial developer will buy both sites and build a standard supermarket or bottle shop, ruining the heritage of the entire village and trashing the community. For this, Council's planning staff are to blame.

The Chamber is sickened by the outcome. We are going to discuss these issues and more in greater depth at our next general meeting – see below for details.

## Fire recovery

The Chamber is represented on the Nimbin Disaster Recovery Committee, established in December 2019 to provide a community link between local Council and other agencies in relation to the recovery of the community from the recent bushfire event.

The Committee has identified the need to document the response from the community to the bushfire situation, while it is still fresh in everyone's minds. It was an overwhelmingly fantastic response, but we need to explore what worked well and identify what could have been done better.

A project officer has been employed (funded by the Nimbin Advisory Group) to undertake this work, and their report will inform the development of a Nimbin Community Disaster Plan. This plan will aim to cover a range of emergency situations including floods, severe weather events, such as cyclones, and bushfire.

This initial report may also be submitted to the NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry. Submissions to the Inquiry close on 24th March, and the Committee is keen to make a submission as the relationship between the community response and the organisational response deserves to be highlighted and explored in depth by the inquiry.

The Chamber has sent out a survey to local businesses with a view to obtaining information on business impact and involvement. There are many local businesses (sole traders or small businesses) who are not on our data base. If you would like to complete a survey (it can be done anonymously) please

contact me urgently: [chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au](mailto:chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au)

The Committee is also keen to see the Nimbin area receive its fair share of the fire recovery funds received by Council, and will be lobbying for this to occur.

## Policing in the village

The Chamber is interested in exploring the relations between police and people in Nimbin, and as such is conducting a survey of local main street businesses. The results of the survey will be provided to the office of Janelle Saffin MP.

Janelle is our State local member and she responded to representations from the community concerning policing by organising a meeting for the community with the Regional Commander in January.

That meeting was held during the day, and as very few business owners or employees were present, we felt it important to seek further input. The survey has been hand-delivered, and the results are being collated by someone with experience in surveys and research who is donating her time and expertise.

## The future for our village

Our next general members' meeting is scheduled for Thursday 2nd April, 6pm at Birth & Beyond. While Jane Laverty, the Regional Manager of the NSW Business Chamber, is attending to give advice on a range of issues, it is our intention to have widespread discussion about Lismore Council and village-related planning issues.

Council elections will be held this year, and any would-be Councillor is more than welcome to attend – we have a lot to complain about, but we will also focus on the positive. So, if you're concerned about what is and isn't happening in and around Nimbin, please attend. It's not enough to rant and rave on social media.

If you can't attend, to raise an issue or share your thoughts please email us: [chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au](mailto:chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au)

Chamber Executive meetings are on the first Monday of every month, so if you have an issue please contact us at the email above.



# Logging pushing fire-affected species closer to extinction

The Nature Conservation Council has obtained evidence of logging operations destroying some of the last prime habitat for nationally listed threatened species left after the summer bushfires.

Styx River Forest, midway between Armidale and Nambucca Heads, is ecologically one of the most significant remnants of unburnt forest in the region for spotted-tail quoll, greater gliders, the stuttering frog and Hastings River mouse.

“We have obtained evidence of industrial logging in unburnt forest just weeks after fire ripped through the region, with immensely negative ecological impacts,” Nature Conservation Council Chief Executive Chris Gambian said.

“The fires mean that whatever we thought before about wildlife and species has to be scrapped and reassessed.

“No approvals should be regarded as current until after the full impact of the fires is understood.

“I have written to the Environment

Protection Authority asking it to issue a stop work order while the impacts of the fires and logging are fully investigated.

“We call on the NSW Government to immediately halt logging operations in native forests across the state until a thorough assessment of the ecological impact of the fires is completed and made public.

“Rather than reducing impacts on threatened species, we are aware of at least three logging operations in unburnt forests that will hamper the recovery of threatened wildlife populations, and possibly push more species closer to the brink.

“The government’s own analysis found that at least 32 threatened animal species have lost 30% or more of their habitat due to fires.

“These species are already teetering on the brink so the government should be doing everything in its power to avoid their extinction.”

Impact of fires on threatened species known to occur in the Styx



Styx River forest

River State Forest:

- The Hastings River Mouse: 61.9% of all modelled habitat and 85.3% of known records of Hasting River mouse has burned, including within Styx River State Forest.
- Spotted-tailed Quoll: 56.4% of

- all modelled habitat and 44.7% of areas with Spotted-tailed Quoll records in north-east NSW burnt.
- Sphagnum frog: 68.3% of modelled habitat and 56% of areas with Sphagnum frog records burnt.

- Stuttering Frog: 59.5% of modelled habitat 54.1% of areas with Stuttering Frog records burnt.
- Powerful Owl: 50.6% of modelled habitat and 52.4% of areas with Powerful Owl records burnt.

## Firewood dramas

Lillian Rock Firewood won’t be offering firewood this season due to problems with council approval of their operation,

They operate from a rural location within the Kyogle Shire, close to the Lismore Council border.

Kyogle council have informed them that even small-scale or part-time firewood producers come under the title of sawmill or log processing works.

This type of rural industry is permitted in the current land zoning but would involve a change of land use and requires a development application to council for consent.

“This is a not a lucrative business with huge profits, but more a lifestyle choice for our family. We are a Mama and Papa operation. This business is only worth it for us as our worksite is close to home and our four children,” owner Sebastien Sledge said.

“After a few hard years, previously splitting by hand, we have established that the Nimbin area has a need for good quality, reliable and ethically sourced firewood.”

Kyogle Council has advertised that they want to encourage new rural enterprises, and there are many other small-scale firewood operators that haven’t yet been council approved.

Council advised that because there are multiple dwellings within 500 metres (as the crow flies), Lillian Rock Firewood were required to pay for a Noise Impact Assessment by an acoustic consultant.

“The permissible limit for us is only five decibels (dB) above our area’s ambient noise level, which is 35dB, totalling less than 40dB...

not much considering a normal conversation is about 60dB, a lawn mower is about 90dB and a loud rock concert is 120dB,” Sebastian said.

“It makes no difference if we work a couple of weeks of the year or full-time every day of the year, we have to comply with these limits.”

The testing was done and the results exceeded the limit by a few dB at only one out of the five neighbouring properties.

The consultant’s only advice was to put the machinery in an acoustically insulated, custom-built shed costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, and there would still be practical operational problems.

Sebastian did some brainstorming and researching and arrived at a more achievable alternative: a site redesign.

“We appreciate that this area is paradise and we don’t want to wreck it for anybody with excessive noise. We have invested in good quality firewood processing equipment powered by efficient engines that are much quieter than chainsaws, and that run for a fraction of the time in comparison.”

The issue has been going on since August 2019, and council has been clear that they don’t yet have consent to operate. At this point of time they are waiting for the noise consultant to respond, retest and supply a report for council. Unfortunately, that’s unlikely to be completed any time soon.

“I’m sure there are many customers who will be affected by our inability to supply firewood this season. We apologise for any inconvenience,” Sebastien said.

## Fermenting the harvest

by James Creagh

Join us on Sunday 29th March for the seventh annual Northern Rivers Fermentation Festival.

It’s the first and only Fermentation Festival in Australia, and this year it will be held at the Lismore Showgrounds.

In past years we have held the event at the Blue Knob Farmers Market, but this year we want to share the event in Lismore, hoping to include more people.

Humans have long enjoyed eating foods we eat as treats, like chocolate, coffee, bread, beer and wine, that have been a part of our everyday modern foods. All these raw ingredients require the process of fermentation to magically transform them into food we love to eat and drink.

But what is new in recent years is the growing resurgence of interest in traditionally fermented foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, olives, milk kefir and kombucha. There is a growing enthusiasm to learn these traditional processes that have been passed on from generation to generation in many cultures but have also been lost in many others.

The introduction of the refrigerator was a new way of storing food, especially store-bought frozen food, and fermentation was seen as a time-consuming activity people could do without in the new busy modern world.

The current fermentation revival grows out of a bigger movement about reclaiming where our food comes from – moving away from the way big business produces food and instead moving towards farmer’s markets, community gardens, growing your own food, seed saving, and locally-focused food security.

Making your own food from scratch as the healthiest way to eat has come full circle. People want to take control of their own health, including eating healthier food.

Sandor Katz, who attended our first festival, writes in his seminal work *The Art of Fermentation* some of the benefits for fermentation include:

- Preserving food: think of how much longer yoghurt or, even better, cheese lasts compared to fresh milk
- Saving fuel: by breaking down some foods that would otherwise require long cooking



### Fermenting workshops in Nimbin

Leading up to the Fermentation Festival, a workshop will be hosted by Louise Plant (pictured) at the Nimbin Hall kitchen on optimum gut health with fermented foods. The workshops, on two Thursdays, 19th and 26th March, 9am to 3pm, will explore the world of digestion and ferments, and the importance of gut health. Cost: \$60. From Japanese pickles to gut-healing rejuvelacs, this course will enlighten you as to the problems we face in the Western world with easy solutions you can make at home. For more information call 6689-1477 or Facebook: Nimbin Open Learning.

- Food safety: acidifying bacteria can make it more difficult for pathogenic organisms to establish themselves
- One of the things we love about fermentation is that anyone can do it. Most fermentation techniques use traditionally simple methods, requiring very little expense or equipment.
- The Northern Rivers Ferment Festival will feature six local speakers and the MC, Deborah Perry sharing their ideas and passion for many different ferments from sourdough bread, miso and koji to ferments that you can make to add beneficial microbes for a healthy soil or for your pets.

There will be time for questions and answers with each talk. The festival is an opportunity to learn traditional skills from local fermenters, and for regular fermenters to share their ferments and ideas. Come along to join us for this free community event. There will be lots of stalls selling locally grown produce including a wide range of fermented products. There will also be some delicious coffee and healthy hot food. For more information, contact James at 0490-504-639 or email: jamescreagh@hotmail.com