

Street lights

First there was one. When a street light appeared along Gungas Road outside the new subdivision, I was a little surprised.

Around 4kms outside the village, it seemed an anomaly, almost an abomination. Oh well. Perhaps it will attract cane toads, enabling them to be caught easily. However it appears the one was only the beginning and there are to be many more!

Are street lights appropriate in a rural area? The planned street lighting on the new subdivision will unnecessarily light up this 18-hectare site creating a level of light pollution unacceptable to current and future residents, as well as neighbours. We can only guess what the possums, bats, owls, gliders, moths and other nightlife will think of it.

This subdivision is described as a large-lot residential development in a rural environment (R5). Included in the objectives of this style of development is "To provide rural residential development of a quality and scale that is compatible with the character of the rural area." (2017 Statement of Environmental Effects prepared for 198 Gungas Road).

Street lights are incompatible with the character of rural areas. Rural areas are supposed to be dark so you can see the stars at night. There are no street lights in Tulsi Lane or Basil Road, previous subdivisions of cattle paddocks on Gungas Road, so they are not needed at 198.

Another objective of this development is described as: "To provide residential housing in a rural setting while preserving, and minimising impacts on, environmentally sensitive locations and scenic quality."

The removal of a large stretch of creek bank vegetation to run powerlines across to the subdivision is not very sensitive to the environment. Was this described in the DA?

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

Platypus have been seen in the creek in the vicinity of this clearing. Sudden removal of the shade could have a damaging effect on them.

The impact of residential development is far-reaching.
Gungas Road resident
(Name and address supplied)

Farewell Faye

Faye Scherf was Nimbin's 'Light on the Hill'. A Christian warrior queen and true Christian, always fighting for social justice. Many things in Nimbin that we take for granted would not be here now but for Faye's efforts.

A wonderful neighbour and friend, always with a twinkle in her eye. Our dearest Faye our love goes with you.

Len and Kay Martin
Nimbin

Lockdown

Here we go into the unknown, again. I am enjoying isolation, I always do.

I keep to myself so much that my silky terrier Steve is beginning to wonder what I am rattling on about, outside the usual "Walk", "Dinner" and "Get here, you billy suggest."

I am not talking to myself, I keep telling myself. I have been reading, listening to Radio National, watching movies borrowed from the mobile library, planting more garden beds in my two-acre slice of paradise... I know what I am doing during lockdown.

There are so many unknowns in the future, mid-Covid, that it is



impossible to know all the variants.

If you listen to the psychobabblers, it's all caused by the G5 network, Bill Gates, one international conspiracy or another, and the new bogie-man on the scene: Fake news, and the ridiculous notion of 'alternative facts', which is having a field day.

The latest, of course, is that Covid is not a 'thing'. There is a lot of this around.

A Dutch friend of mine who lives in Bali with his wife and two young children writes that "it is a newspaper thing only. It is not a thing. We are not protecting ourselves." I wished him luck.

We are supposed to be lovers of 'the fair go'. This is bullshit. We are a nation of bickering whingers, envious and angry about 'stuff' we feel we have no control over.

We are still looking for a national identity, and this time we think we have found it by changing one word in the National anthem.

Maxx Maxted
Nimbin

Juxtaposition

I was struck by the amazing differences in the stories by Auralia Rose and Dr McCardell (NGT January 21).

Auralia seems to have an incredible imagination and what's more, clearly believes in her abilities to go back centuries and recreate past traumas.

Dr McCardell on the other hand, clearly has a professional and scientific approach to her topics.

Such an interesting juxtaposition of views and thoughts.

David Ashton
Byron Bay

Universal basic income

Lots to think about in Aidan Rickett's article, '2020 rear vision and the challenging road ahead' (NGT Jan 2021). It was good to see someone thinking about the positives that emerged from the year of Covid.

The massive spending

unleashed to prop up the economy just shows that governments *can* print money when they want to, and surprise, surprise, it's good for us.

The \$5 billion spent on extra JobSeeker payments made life a whole lot easier for those who try to survive on Newstart's \$280 per week. JobKeeper is costing even more (\$86 billion) and gives a temporary sense of security and confidence for those whose jobs disappeared under Covid.

Last year's economic stimuli provided an unplanned trial of Universal Basic Income, so I'm hoping that there is now lots more statistical evidence to prove UBI is feasible, worldwide and in Australia.

UBI can't be that unrealistic now we're well into the 21st century.

The signal that our Government has learnt something from JobKeeper and JobSeeker will be an increase in the shameful Newstart payment. They will be howled down if that doesn't happen.

Aidan Ricketts mentioned the stark hollowness of neo-liberal policies revealed for all to see with the failures of privatised healthcare, in particular aged care.

The consequences of having poorly trained, low-paid care workers who have to juggle two or three jobs to survive were evident in pandemic statistics all over the world.

We are all more vigilant about the risks of devaluing social support systems that took decades to fight for, implement and maintain. They are our public goods and not economic gambling chips.

Cecily McGee
Mullumbimby

Neo-corporatism not just problem for the US

Violence in America's violent society was predicted.

I often refer to John Ralston Saul (*The Unconscious Civilization*) who in his 1995 Massey Lecture predicted the USA's 'Great Leap Backward' – a society

Vale the 'Crofton Road Walker'

Regular drivers along Crofton Road from 2015 to 2017 may remember seeing a solitary walker taking his morning constitutional.

New to the village, he became a familiar sight, and many waved in greeting to him.

This man, Michael Sidney Walkerden, "Mick", died unexpectedly of a heart

attack on 30th November 2020, aged 55.

Mick came to Nimbin six years ago, as he battled the onset of a form of early dementia, after a career of many years as a senior traffic controller in Sydney.

Assisted by carers from Byron Respite, Kyogle Care Connections and lastly with support from NDIS and Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Service, he was able to live at home.

The consideration shown to Mick by the Nimbin community, on the street and in cafes, was a source of strength to him, and much appreciated by his family and those who cared for him.

Thanks Nimbin.

– Bill Hunter

only superficially based on democracy, conformist and corporative.

"A society in which legitimacy lies with specialist or interest groups and decisions are made through constant negotiation between these groups." You should read Philippe Schmitter's paper 'Still the Century of Corporatism'.

In a nutshell, the problem is not Trump, it is a sickness bedevilling all democracies; it is neo-corporatism.

People find themselves living in a society with mere pretensions to democracy.

They live in a system in which they exist primarily as a 'function', not as a citizen, not as an individual. This is why 75 million Americans voted Trump.

This is what is happening to Australians. There will inevitably be a rebellion, as Chris Hedges observes, when people feel betrayed and abandoned by their leaders.

Michael Brooke
Kyogle

Farewell Spock

Many of you will have known my beloved black dog Spock, aka Spotty Ji, aka Bilbo...

On Thursday 21st January he left his body. We had been together for 16 years – my longest live-in relationship! I knew he had come to the end of his life on Earth when he became unable to walk.

I must give thanks to the Murwillumbah vet and nurse who came out to our home for their gentle, sensitive, and respectful help during those last moments.

Thank you, wonderful dog, for all the priceless time we spent together.

With love,

Alex Manzi Fe
Blue Knob

Notices**Room to let**

Vacancy available in large four-bedroom home in bushland setting, just a 12-minute walk to Nimbin Post Office. A third interesting and happy person is wanted, so there will be a spare room. Huge veranda and large garden area, some of it planted. Our possible house-mate would be working, studying or involved in community activities. A non-tobacco smoker is preferred. Very reasonable rent. Email your interest to: dougpinch@gmail.com and tell us about yourself.

Annual General Meeting

Tuntabla Falls Community School AGM will be held Monday 29th March, 2.30pm at the TFC school.

Bowlo Open Mic

Nimbin Bowling Club's popular Open Mic series is starting up again this month, with a few changes. It's shifting to Thursday nights from 6.30pm, starting 18th February and continuing fortnightly. Covid restrictions will apply. Book for dinner on 6689-1473.

About us

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Distribution Peter, Coralie, Daniel, Sue, Bob, Rob and Lisa, Dominique, Aengus, Rosie, Trevor and Chibo

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
And find us on Facebook

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

NEXT DEADLINE:
Wednesday 24th February

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

Rest in peace Faye Scherf

Over the Christmas break we received news that on 9th January beloved community member and long-time volunteer Faye Scherf passed away, aged 92.

The Community Centre would like to acknowledge the incredible contribution Faye Scherf made to NCCI over many years. She was a founding member of the Nimbin Community Development Association, the organisation formed to raise money to acquire the community centre sites, subsequently re-named NCCI.

Faye made a tireless contribution to our extensive fundraising efforts over those two years and beyond. She was a regular visitor to the Centre and continued her involvement in many organisations until her death. She was a country woman and a committed Christian who truly lived her faith in her volunteering,



Diana Roberts speaking at Faye's memorial gathering



offering kindness, compassion and understanding to all members of our diverse community.

She helped to found the Nimbin Soup Kitchen in the 1990s to ensure that the homeless and vulnerable in our community were cared for. She supported

Drug Law Reform and participated in the

MardiGrass Drug Law Reform marches because her experience in Nimbin led her to believe that addicts were victims in need of care and support and that criminalisation harmed rather than helped these people.

Fay supported and contributed to most of our village community organisations at one time or another. Her perfect scones, cakes, damper and other baked goodies graced many a fundraising table and community event. She was loved and respected by the whole community and will be sorely missed.

– Teresa Biscoe

Review of 2020 and projects for 2021

by Teresa Biscoe, co-ordinator, Nimbin Community Centre

Review of 2020

As we move into 2021, we are reviewing the projects and activities at the Centre last year. Due to the disruptions created by the pandemic, some Community Centre improvement plans were significantly delayed.

However, in spite of a constantly changing landscape, closures and rental income lost due to the pandemic, we still managed a number of community projects and made a number of grant applications to stage an event, upgrade and improve Community Centre infrastructure and contribute to community development. Last year we:

- Successfully lobbied the Traffic Advisory Committee to change the parking zones around the disabled access ramp in front of the Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Centre (Rainbow Building) to facilitate the drop off and collection of clients to this important service. This will be implemented this year.
- Applied for and received NAIDOC funding and worked with the community and the Wai:bal Cultural Centre to stage a Covid safe NAIDOC celebration on 13th November. Many thanks to all the community organisations who contributed goods and funds for the event.
- Applied for and received funds to replace the Quadrangle water tank and install another tank behind the Neighbourhood Centre to improve water storage and use on the site. The tanks will be installed early this year.
- Applied for funds to upgrade the footpath that runs the length of the market site and replace the old sections of the covered walkway. Unfortunately, these applications were not successful, so we will continue to look for funding this year to complete the projects.
- Supported and advocated for the Bushfire Infrastructure Grant application for the Nimbin Rainbow Road Walking Trail project being auspiced by the Lismore City Council.

- Worked with the community to purchase the 11a Alternative Way property in December to ensure the Nimbin Rainbow Road Walking Trail project was able to go ahead when grant funds are available.
- Installed a new community sign in front of the Cullen Street carpark painted by local mural artists Elspeth Jones and Julie De Lorenzo.
- Replaced approximately 45 metres of covered walkway.

Projects for 2021

This year we intend to continue to improve Community Centre sites through volunteer workdays, seek funds for identified community projects and to develop others to a "shovel ready" stage so funding can be sought.

- Community Projects requiring volunteer energy include:
- Maintaining and improving community centre garden beds and grounds.
 - Maintaining and planning the development on the newly acquired 11a Alternative Way to include the Rainbow Trail and Native Wildlife and Vegetation reserves.
 - Increasing native butterfly habitat and native vegetation on centre grounds and verges.
 - Painting a rainbow across the front of Acacia House, the admin building at 81 Cullen Street. Last year we received \$600 in donations for paint and we will organise some work days as soon as we have purchased the paint.
 - Setting up and running the Sticks and Stones Sculpture Exhibit in the Centre Grounds in spring.

Projects we are seeking funding for include:

- Implementing Stage 2 of the 'Light up Nimbin' under-awning and mural lighting project to extend lighting design from the Nimbin Apothecary at 54 Cullen Street to the entrance of the Western carpark.
- Replace another 30m of covered walkway at the 81 Cullen Street site.
- Improve pedestrian accessibility by upgrading uneven or broken footpaths on site.

- Improve and increase community centre signage around the site to facilitate access and navigation around the site.
 - The purchase and installation of artworks on the outside of NCC buildings from the artists in residence at the Wai:bal Cultural Centre as part of our acknowledgment of First Nations People cultural contribution.
 - Nimbin NAIDOC 2021 celebrations with the Wai:bal Cultural Centre.
- Projects we are completing the planning details for so they can be funded and implemented in the future include:
- Develop and cost the Quadrangle Area Project to include shade, gardens, green space and art to encourage community use of Centre gardens and space, mitigate heat by creating a cooling microclimate.
 - Improve disability access to the Wai:bal Cultural Centre
 - Increase seating and shade around the Rainbow Seating in front of the Aged Care Service.

New office hours

Due to income constraints, the Committee decided last year to cut co-ordinator hours in the office to save money. The savings will be put towards a grant development fund. Our new office hours are: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 8.30am-4pm.

Participation

The Nimbin Community Centre relies on the support of the community to manage, maintain and improve our grounds and facilities. We welcome your input to our Centre either as a tenant, member of NCC, volunteer or sponsor.

If you wish to donate for a specific project, we will put those funds to good use on the selected project. We are registered with Centrelink and accept volunteers for grounds, maintenance and office support.

If you wish to know more about contributing in any way to the Community Centre, please contact our office on 6689-0000 or email: nnci@nimbincommunity.org.au

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Country Labor for country communities



Word of the Bird

by Cr Elly Bird

Lismore Council starts up again this month with a number of items coming to our 9th February meeting.

We will be considering the adoption of our Climate Resilience Policy, a DA for a new brewery in South Lismore, and a couple of items to do with changing planning and zoning conditions.

It's fairly standard business of Council, but this month we will also be electing a new mayor to serve until September when the next Council elections will be held. Cr Isaac Smith resigned at the end of 2020, so it is up to the remaining councillors to elect a new mayor to replace him.

I have no crystal ball so I can't say what the outcome of that vote will be, and as you are reading this you probably have a better idea than I do. I

Council meets again this month

will be nominating for the role, and it is also my intention to run for mayor in the elections in September, but I know that a number of other councillors will be nominating as well, and as such I really cannot predict who will end up in the seat.

That said, I can be sure that whoever it is will work hard with the best intentions of our community at heart. Anyone who steps forward to serve as a councillor does it with that intention, and I know that we are all on the same page when it comes to our dedication to our community. We may not consider issues in the same way, or make the same decisions about how things should be done, but we do all have your best interests at heart.

While we are talking about elections, it is looking like we will have a federal election towards the end of the year as well, so brace yourselves for a year of political action, campaigns and competing rhetoric about what matters.

My foundational position is that we need to be factoring in climate resilience to all our decisions and actions at all levels of government and that we urgently need to focus on

social justice and equity. We have escalating crises in our environment and in our society that urgently need attention.

Frustratingly, at the council level it is difficult to take action on issues like housing affordability and access, family and domestic violence, and meaningful action on climate, but there are still things we can do and I will continue to find ways to advocate and take action where we can.

Fundamentally, we have a responsibility to you to manage and maintain our assets, to support and enable economic development, to manage appropriate development, and to ensure the financial sustainability of our organisation in order to provide core services. It is a challenging task and I know I don't need to tell readers that we are not keeping up with our asset maintenance as well as we need to be.

There are many reasons why this is the case, but essentially it comes down to not having enough money to pay for what needs to be done. I've spoken at length about this in previous issues, and I'm sure I will come back to it through the

year. Local government is at the mercy of state and federal funding decisions and a simple solution would be for the federal government to allocate more funds to councils to manage our asset maintenance. Unfortunately that's not really a vote winning campaign though so I'm not holding my breath.

Before I wrap up I want to acknowledge that we have just had our annual Survival Day, Invasion Day, Australia Day events and I want to pay my deepest respect to our Wadjabul: Wai'ibal custodians for their leadership at rallies and events that I was able to attend.

I recognise the effort it takes to continue to show up, to continue to educate our community, to continue to tell your stories and I acknowledge the oppression and trauma that colonisation has had and continues to have for our First Nations People.

I am in awe of your strength, your endurance, your vulnerability and your necessary resilience.

As always I can be contacted for community or Council matters at: elly.bird@lismore.nsw.gov.au or on 0418-639-927.

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Aboriginal culture to be recognised

by Cr Jeff Johnson,
Ballina Council

I'm proud to announce that at the Ballina Council January meeting, my proposal to formally start a process to rename local sites that have Aboriginal cultural significance was unanimously supported by Ballina Shire Councillors.

The motion itself was that:

1. Ballina Council acknowledge the long and enduring association the Bundjalung Nation and Aboriginal people have with the land within the Ballina Shire and beyond.

2. Ballina Council liaise with JALI Local Aboriginal Land Council and local Aboriginal cultural representatives to design a process for Aboriginal place-naming, including naming



of local sites with Aboriginal cultural significance.

This is a major step forward which should see landmarks such as headlands (including the Lennox Headland which is known as Pat Morton Lookout) renamed to reflect their Aboriginal cultural significance.

This is more than just renaming prominent sites. It's about increasing the wider communities' knowledge and awareness of the long and enduring Aboriginal cultural connection to our region and

promote reconciliation and understanding.

The Ballina Shire is becoming increasingly multi-cultural with the recent citizenship ceremonies revealing new arrivals coming from 37 different countries. That would have been unheard of even 10-20 years ago.

While it's great that Ballina is becoming a cultural melting pot, the most important cultural connection, that of the Aboriginal custodians needs to be recognised and celebrated more than ever.

It was great that a few members of the JALI Local Aboriginal Land Council were at the meeting to hear the debate for themselves. To have a unanimous vote shows a clear willingness to move forward with this initiative given there were no dissenting voices.

It was also an honour to

welcome Wadjabul Wia-bul elders to the Ballina Council meeting. They were present due to a rescission motion being up for debate about the Dunoon Dam.

The rescission was championed by Cr Sharon Cadwallader, who is also the deputy chair of Rous Council, seeking to put the proposed Dunoon Dam back on the agenda. The motion sought to have Ballina Council write a letter to Rous Water requesting that they continue work on the Dunoon Dam.

After a heated debate, it's unfortunate (from my point of view) that the motion was supported 6 votes to 4.

We don't need to desecrate sacred Aboriginal sites and one of the most important rainforest remnants left from the former Big Scrub in order to secure our water supply.

**Working for you
and our region**

TAMARA SMITH MP
MEMBER FOR BALLINA

Please contact me at:
(02) 6686 7522
ballina@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Shop 1, 7 Moon Street, Ballina NSW 2478

THE GREENS

Authorised by Tamara Smith Member for Ballina.
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Janelle stands with the community to stop logging

by Janelle Saffin MP,
Member for Lismore

Recently I accepted a community petition signed by 8892 people, calling for no further logging of Bungabbee State Forest and working towards the long-term goal of the forest being reclassified as a Nature Reserve or Regional Park.

I stand with locals who are fighting to protect this small but important forest, which falls between Bungabbee Nature Reserve and Mucklewee Mountain Nature Reserve, and which is home to a host of threatened and vulnerable native fauna and flora.

They put their grassroots campaign on my radar late last year, and I have made representations on their behalf to NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro and NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean, now working more collaboratively on conservation issues.

In my letter to Mr Barilaro, I also noted that the proposed Northern Rivers Rail Trail will pass within a few kilometres of Bungabbee and



Renata Phelps hands the petition to Lismore MP Janelle Saffin in Bungabbee Forest. With them are Peter Neilsen, Kim Curtis, Louise Somerville and Amanda Pawski

this could provide a potential network of bushwalking and cycling trails, promoting ecotourism.

On behalf of my constituents, I have told both Ministers that I wholeheartedly object to Forestry Corporation's plans to undertake logging in Bungabbee in April this year.

I have asked the Deputy Premier to intervene to protect this important pocket

of wilderness because locals, including farmers in the Bentley area, are dismayed to think that it might be damaged in any way.

I commend the North East Forest Alliance, together with a number of botanists and zoologists, for undertaking a preliminary assessment of Bungabbee State Forest last October which identified 27 threatened species, including koalas, gliders and owls.

The vulnerable Long-nosed Potoroo and Marbled Frogmouth, as well as the critically endangered Native Guava, were also observed. Bungabbee is well worth saving.

US politics

Before the US election, I said that I would breathe a sigh of relief if Joe Biden won. I said he just has to be there. It would end an era of deliberate

division. An era whereby President Donald Trump incited and did not lead. I said leadership matters – tone matters – character matters.

President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have shown all three traits, from their campaign to inauguration, to the first few hours in office; doing the job with dignity. They are the saviours the nation needs. The healers.

I was at the National Democratic Convention in Philadelphia in 2016 and saw the then Vice President Biden speak. I said he should be running for President. He gave the most compelling speech that spoke to, and spoke for, all.

I also said however that Donald Trump had a slogan that would work. Sadly, the way our mainstream media works, slogans take prominence.

President Biden hit the ground running, after laying out his four national priorities in his inauguration speech – the pandemic, the economy, the environment and immigration and race. He signed 17 executive orders, memorandums and

proclamations, to expunge the harmful actions of the former President.

Actions that separated children from parents.

Actions that pitted race against race, religion against religion, political parties against political parties, raised the standing of white supremacy, and that degraded women.

Actions that caused the destruction of the fragile Arctic Circle, causing more pollution that harms our lungs, our air, our water.

President Trump caused the attack on and overrun of Capitol Hill. Even Senator Mitch McConnell, a Republican elder and doyen of the Senate, albeit late, said that these people were led by lies fed to them by President Trump.

US politics does influence us here, in practical ways and cultural ways. Think China and think of the few Federal MPs who are spewing lies and extremism unchecked (I do not mean censored) and 20 Coalition senators who voted for the silly Senate motion, led by a One Nation Senator, to say "It is OK to be white".

This too must stop.



On the same Page

Bill and Nancy Nugent

Great to drop in and see Bill and Nancy Nugent recently. They have a long history with Nimbin and are proud of it. It's their home and they believe the most physically beautiful area in the country.

Bill and Nancy bought the Nimbin Bakery from Basil Hayter in 1974, one year after the Aquarius Festival. Bill baked using a wood-fire oven, which was one of the only bakeries in the state which baked this way, as most had moved on to gas or electric ovens.

by Kevin Hogan MP,
Member for Page

He started selling the Aquarius Loaf, and distributed it from Sydney to Brisbane. He would make over 300 loaves of this a day, and the bus companies would move it around the towns. It is still sold at the bakery today.

The Bakery is still in the family today, with their son-in-law Darren who owns and runs the shop. A wonderful story of two locals who love their home and their community.

Big battery and EV charging station coming

Big battery for McKees Hill

As you may be aware, AGL will be shutting its very old coal fired power station at Liddell in the Hunter Valley in the next few years. They are looking at alternatives to coal to supply our future needs.

Battery, pumped hydro (in Tasmania and the Snowy region), and gas are three commercialised technologies available to provide demand response to enable higher penetration of intermittent renewables into our national network.

One company, Maoneng, is the recipient of a contract with AGL to develop battery sites to assist in the transition.

Maoneng has identified a site adjacent to the Lismore substation at McKees Hill to host Lismore's first utility scale battery storage facility. It will be one of the first sites developed within New South Wales.

They found a willing landowner and have briefed the state planning department, and worked with TransGrid to obtain a preliminary indication of capacity on the network.

Their proposal will be for a 100/200Mwh battery storage facility on 1.2ha approximately.

A community consultation session has been held regarding Maoneng Australia's proposed battery energy storage facility at 1348 Bruxner Highway, McKees Hill.



by Cr Darlene Cook,
Lismore City Council

EV charging station for Lismore

Another renewable energy project will soon commence in Lismore.

Funding has now been received and tenders will soon be let for the design and construction of the Clyde Campbell Solar Carpark and Electric Vehicle Charging Station.

The investigation and design will commence as soon as possible after the contract is awarded with construction anticipated to start around June.

This scheme will provide shaded parking in a portion of the carpark, generate solar energy and provide electric vehicles with a charging facility in Lismore.

This will enable electric cars to come inland away from the highway and be able to explore our villages, knowing the recharge facility is available.

Rous water options

As I noted last month, a rescission motion has been lodged against the decision by Rous councillors to scrap the Dunoon Dam from their Future Water Project and to sell the dam site lands owned by Rous.

The objectors want that land to be retained until after it can be guaranteed that ground water options can ensure the future supply needs.

There are three points to consider here: Firstly retaining the lands allows a future Council to reopen the option to build the dam.

Secondly, the reports provided by Rous already state that groundwater can provide sufficient additional water for about 9-10 years, at which stage additional sources must be found. The groundwater was never expected to be a guarantee of long-term future secure yields.

Thirdly, at least one objector appears to be vehemently opposed to the use of purified treated wastewater for drinking purposes, and hence supports the dam rather than exploring the many alternate sources of supply.

The matter will be debated at the Rous meeting on 17th February, which will again be live-streamed.

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

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The Amazon – massive tipping point looms

by Bernadine Schwartz

There are millions of people on this planet who have been living a simple existence that stretches back well before the rise and fall of all our great empires. Their geographical isolation has been their saving grace, keeping them well hidden for thousands of years, but now their land and resources are becoming scarce. What remains, well the world wants that too, except 80% of this land is in tribal territories and that includes the Amazon, the most environmentally significant region on the planet. In recent years the land grab in the Amazon has reached a frenzy, in a place that was once a tranquil paradise. Today it's become a lawless frontier where gunslingers run rampant, gun in one hand ready to kill and an axe in the other to destroy the forest. The people who live there are being hunted down like wild animals, making them the most threatened on the planet. In Brazil there are 690 separate territories and 98.5% are in the Amazon and together they account for 13% of Brazilian land that's home to 900,000 tribal people, the highest number in the



world, consisting of 305 individual tribes. Their ancestry dates as far back as 11,200 years and many of these tribes have never had any form of contact with the outside world. Meanwhile others are on the frontline, fiercely rejecting any form of contact and resorting to the use of weapons in an act of utter desperation. The Awa are one of the many tribes considered highly endangered, helplessly watching on as illegal loggers continue to steal their forest hunting grounds where they have led a nomadic existence for untold generations, but that was before the arrival of progress. The forest was the only world they had ever known until the day they heard the deafening noise of chainsaws echoing throughout the forest. The volume is growing louder every day as machines tear open the forest, sending shafts of blinding light that penetrate the very floor of the forest, terrifying all that live there. Progress never comes without infrastructure, so now there are railroads that go for miles and miles to accommodate the enormous freight trains carrying iron ore. Bridges that loom high above the forest canopy like

monstrous monuments, and never-ending highways, making access easier for the transportation of soy, beef, rubber and sugar cane. And huge logging trucks, driven by men fully armed, ready to use their guns if need be. The Javari Valley sits on the border of Brazil and Peru where the highest concentration of isolated people in the country live, and the majority have never had contact with the outside world. Intriguing people like the very rarely seen Piripkura people, named after butterflies by neighbouring tribes because of their ability to move through the forest unseen and unheard, and the Korubo who shun any form of contact, even with local tribes and known as the clubmen for their extremely huge clubs used to protect themselves. The Amazon is 55 million years old and covers a massive 5.5 million square kilometres, but every year it's losing an area 115 times the size of Manhattan, and is less than 30 years away from reaching an irreversible tipping point, that will end with the unthinkable. Nearly half of the planet's species of plants, animals and organisms will become extinct, something the world just can't afford when

approximately 50,000 species are lost every year. In the last 50 years, 70% of the planet's wildlife population has disappeared. We will also lose 20% of the planet's freshwater that is stored in the Amazon, creating a ripple effect that will be felt throughout the world. The Amazon isn't just any rainforest, it's Mother Earth's greatest botanical garden where unique medicinal plants are found nowhere else and today 90% of drugs used to treat human diseases are derived from here, ranging from leukaemia to heart disease, with numerous medical possibilities yet to be discovered. The UN are calling this human tragedy in Brazil an act of genocide, but the world has let it go on uninterrupted for decades, and if the world doesn't intervene we will be allowing history to repeat itself. These enigmatic people represent what remains of ancient humanity and if not for Survival International they would have no voice. So if you would like to help these people, please take the time and subscribe to survivalinternational.org and help to make their voice loud enough to be heard. Then maybe the world will listen.

Help prepare for disasters

by the Nimbin Disaster Steering Group

Lismore City Council is undertaking a rural disaster planning project with the Nimbin community. The project aims to build resilience in the community by the establishment of action plans and programs that can be implemented by the community to build resilience and facilitate recovery from natural disasters. The project will result in the preparation of the Nimbin Disaster Plan for the Nimbin Community, building upon work already undertaken by the community following the 2019/2020 bushfires. The plan is a key outcome for the community under the Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan. An information session will be held at Nimbin Town Hall on Tuesday 9th February from 10am to 1pm, to help the community understand and effectively collaborate with emergency services organisations during natural disasters. Register for this free event at: www.eventbrite.com.au/e/understanding-disasters-an-emergency-services-perspective-tickets-137568987545 This will be followed by an afternoon workshop, from 3 to 5pm, repeated from 6 to 8pm, where the community can actively contribute ideas about how to best respond and recover from disasters, and also how to prepare and help reduce the potential for future ones. Register for the afternoon session at: www.eventbrite.com.au/e/nimbin-disaster-plan-community-workshop-tickets-137686091807 Register for the evening session at: www.eventbrite.com.au/e/nimbin-disaster-plan-community-workshop-tickets-137687907237 The event will include afternoon tea and light refreshments. Please arrive at the venue 15 minutes prior to the sessions for Covid compliance. This project is funded by the Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund.

shapeshifting

by Anand Gandharva

Is this Kali Yuga? The storming of The Capitol in Washington DC tells us it may be as significant as The Bastille uprising, usher in the collapse of the US as world power, global capitalism as economic system, and chime in an Asian Age. Australia's multiculturalism may evolve, become a model for a Global Village Race of Tan, with trillions of humans in the stars: the herbivore galactic state. Ditch Machiavelli's 'divide and rule' pyramid path to power and embrace the ball; not sharp elbows to get 'ahead', but a flexible, sustainable, fun, gentle heart and the power of creative, renewable community. We are lucky to live in the Northern Rivers. The planet has precious little wilderness left over. Most folk are packed in cities. One still can catch fish, run down roos, eat dugongs, but that only works if there are a few people to harvest nature. Or we share these wonders. We are billions. It is unfair to ask people to stop making out, just so one can shop, hunt or fish. Besides, loving is

a human urge. The result: more billions, pressure to reduce populations, preferably 'others', land for 'livestock', debeaking chickens, fattening pigs, 'tending goats', boats that transport live animals to gruesome ends, and endless wars for territory or resources. Thus, we are in a seemingly perennial battle between tribes, faiths, classes, species. Unnecessary, fake. It makes no sense to reduce populations in an empty galaxy. We just have to stop behaving like hunters and love the planet. Some of my best friends are omnivores, but one can live a healthy, tasty life as a herbivore. In fact, being an omnivore is taught as part of nurturing, it does not come naturally. The chemicals harm us. Think of a cow's fear and adrenaline when it is at the abattoir. Why eat this? The secret lies in easy economics. We need to survive, but want to do so leaving a better planet. Millennia ago, Aesop spun a yarn about an ant and a grasshopper, right and left wing. The moral screwed up our economic thinking, and helped make the community unforgiving. The grasshopper comes to the



door of the ant in winter to beg for food. It is the same as today's taxation: the disadvantaged one may need a hand-out from the squirrel, who gathers nuts for winter. But untold by Aesop, the ant has a food-sharing system in the nest, a socialist caring. This signifies our tribal past and the problem with 'white privilege'. We only share with family, not with strangers, certainly not with other species (unless you are a lucky pet). The principle at work here is titanically simple: only so many can survive in a lifeboat. The rest must drown, or cannot climb on board to shared safety. The pharaohs and even Julius Caesar kept grain silos for lean times for citizens, but woe if you were a hungry outsider. Sadly, social awareness stretches to those we treasure. Anyone else is considered a 'grasshopper'.

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Actual supply and perceptions of reality

by John Adams

Convicted by a magistrate of supply cannabis, given a suspended sentence, his life savings confiscated as proceeds of crime, my client, understandably, went straight from court to the pub. There he joined a mutual friend who provided my number.

Legal Aid had re-assigned the file to a private firm. A solicitor interviewed him, watched the search video, and took notes. A different one ran the hearing. He'd told them what he told me; he didn't deal; "Why would you? All that stress."

On the dole, he'd saved \$100 a fortnight. I asked him how. "Don't have a car, grow my own vegetables, don't need much. Roadkill's good."

"Small footprint."
"You got it."

On the NEIS scheme, he'd turned a hobby into a computer repair business. Customers came from the valleys around, bringing money, fruit and vegetables. Some also brought medicine for his bad back, which others made into fruit cake and cookies. "I'm a shithouse cook myself."

He packaged it in bags to make it easy for the cooks, roughly 4-gram ones for the cookies, 14-grams for the cakes, 'weighed' them by feel.

He'd wanted to appeal but the police case, the lawyer said, was too strong. My barrister mate refused to run it on-spec, so I filed an all-grounds appeal in the District Court anyway, and got to watch the search video myself.

One fine morning, before the cooks arrived, seven police had appeared at his back door. He'd surrendered all the bags, and the sergeant examined his invoices, receipts and expenditure for the previous six months. His back had been bad. Business was slow. She, on over \$100,000 a year, couldn't believe he could live on his takings.

There lies the problem; the worldview of

the comfortably salaried. He told her he'd been dipping into profits from before, but she refused to look at the journals. Not trusting banks, he kept his life savings behind a pegboard. When, during the search, a constable leaned on it, the bundle of \$50s fell out; eight thousand.

A square of paper in his wallet, his debtor list, also became evidence. The sergeant called it a tick-list. So did the magistrate. My client said, "I lend money to people who need it."

He'd given his last remaining cookie to police when they'd searched his house (corroborating personal use) but it wasn't in evidence before the magistrate. One of the people named on the debtor list was there, but the lawyer hadn't called her.

My book-keeper prepared a full financial statement. In both prior years, he'd made between 20 and 25 thousand, and saved over 10. The DPP solicitor wanted the journals exhibited to our affidavit. The judge agreed and we adjourned.

Back in court he told his story. Cross-examination can be fun when you're telling the truth. He and her Honour shared a topical joke about banks.

Interrupting Ms Crown's submissions, she asked, "I've forgotten, how much cannabis are we talking about?"

"78 grams, your Honour," I assisted.
"Oh," she said, "I was confused, thought it was a deeming case."

Section 29 of the *Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act* 1985 says that if you have more than the 'trafficable quantity', (300 grams) of 'cannabis leaf' (which, weirdly, includes flowers) you're deemed to deal, unless you prove it's 'otherwise than for supply'.

Later, standing to make my final submissions, she stopped me: "I don't think I need to hear from you, Mr Adams. Both convictions are quashed."

She, on her \$350,000, got it. He got his money and good name back. I got paid.

NZ points way ahead for pot

by Michael Balderstone

How come New Zealand police are so different to ours, and has anyone ever compared their results? Seriously.

They don't carry guns for a start, and of their own accord a year or more ago they decided to de-prioritise busting cannabis users and focus on drugs causing trouble in the community. Consequently, arrests for pot halved in the next year.

Now they have blindsided their own police minister and other frontline staff by deciding to drop their annual cannabis eradication operation. Usually they spend \$700,000 each year to fund hundreds of hours with the Defence Force helicopter crews, but this year they said there is a "lack of appetite" from the leaders of the 12 police districts to bust weed crops.

A spokesperson from NZ Police National Headquarters said: "With the increased harm in many communities arising from other drugs, particularly methamphetamine, a one-size-fits-all annual aerial national cannabis eradication operation no longer represents the most appropriate deployment of police resources."

I had to read it twice and then pinch myself.

Meanwhile, on the other end of the planet, in another Commonwealth country called Canada, licensed pot



producers grew a record 220,461 kilos of dry weed last October. We are being left so far behind in the booming rapidly expanding world of legal cannabis.

It seems that the pandemic has driven cannabis use to huge new levels in North America where cannabis use was included in essential services where it was legal. Weed sales increased an extraordinary 67% over the whole country, but of course that's with new states coming on board.

But Oregon for example, with a population of four million people, legalised pot in 2015. Their sales jumped 38% compared to a year earlier and topped a billion dollars for the first time. That's recreational use, or adult use as they call it. Medical use increased by 58% to over \$100 million, still only a tenth of adult use.

Medical sales are not taxed in Oregon, but adults are taxed at 20%, making it a bright spot for the government coffers. Most of it goes towards substance

abuse screening and addiction problems.

In Illinois, the Governor announced the "forgiveness and expungement" of about 500,000 criminal cases. "We will never be able to fully remedy the depth of damage done, but we can govern with the courage to admit the mistakes of our past and the decency to set a better path forward."

Americans spent nearly \$18 billion on legal weed last year. Medical marijuana is legal now in 37 states, while 15 have legalised for adult use. Stuff we can only dream of here, but our day will come, and every new day is a day closer.

MardiGrass is to remind everyone of that, among other things.

Because last year's annual event was cancelled, there is a lot of enthusiasm for May 1 and 2, 2021.

Any performers, artists and volunteers who want to be involved should get in touch via the contact list at: nimbinmardigrass.com or phone the HEMP Embassy on 6689-1842.

January 26

by Aniko Papp

Each year now, more and more indigenous Australians are marking Australia Day with their own events.

These gatherings are called Survival Day, Invasion Day, or a Day of Mourning. Each major city, from Darwin, to Alice Springs, Townsville, Sydney. Perth: these are not happy days. Not celebration days.

So what is Australia Day about? January 26, 1788, is the date when Captain Phillip planted the Union Jack in Sydney Cove, taking Australia for the British Empire. The First Fleet of convicts actually arrived in Botany Bay between the 18th and 20th of January 1788.

Terra Nullius had been proclaimed by then: up to one million indigenous people with a 65,000 plus history of occupying this land, were dismissed as non-existent. What was the wealth of this new colony built on? Land and resources which were just taken. No treaty. No consent.

But 40 years after that day, another 26th January day was in 1824 when the first legal marriage between an Aboriginal

person and a convict took place, as Robert and Maria Lock were married in Paramatta. Maria was a Boonooberongal woman of the Dharug people and the daughter of Yarramundi, the 'Chief of the Richmond Tribes'. Her brother, Colebee, was captured with Bennelong in 1789 and detained in Government House.

Maria was taken from her family and sent to the Parramatta Native Institute, under a forced assimilation order. Maria was "civilised, educated and Christianised" – a precursor to the policies leading to the Stolen Generations. The final irony but not all surprising fact, was that although Maria was granted acres of crown land, which went to her nine surviving children who lived there until 1920, that land was stolen and made into an Aboriginal reserve, controlled and owned by the Government.

Apart from Maria's wedding, 26th January was 'Foundation Day' in the early years of the NSW colony but there was no Australia Day consistently taking place on that day, until it was declared a public holiday by each state and territory in 1994.

Indigenous people have been

marking that day with anger, mourning, sadness and shame for many decades before 1994. The first Day of Mourning was held in Sydney in 1938, the 150th anniversary of the First Fleet landing. Indigenous families marched in silent protest in Sydney. In the re-enactment of the landing, Aboriginal people living in Sydney refused to take part in it, so organisers brought in men from Menindee, and kept them locked up at the Redfern Police Barracks stables until they were forced to play act the invasion of their own country.

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy was established on the 26th January 1972, a sit-in protest. Gary Foley said that our governments have made Indigenous Australians aliens in our own country, so like other aliens, we needed an embassy.

On 26th January 1988, about 40,000 people marched in Sydney, the largest protest since the 1970s anti-Vietnam War demonstrations. Aboriginal protestors and their supporters marched to Sydney Harbour, to protest the 200th anniversary of British occupation and colonisation.

Most non-Maori Kiwis I have encountered seem to celebrate Maori culture as part of their own culture. Perhaps this is because the Māori language is an official language of the country and is taught in schools. Kiwi English



contains many Māori words that are in common use.

6th February in New Zealand marks the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, when the British Crown and about 500 Māori chiefs signed what is often considered to be New Zealand's founding document. Decades later, Māori lobbied for a day of thanksgiving and that 6th February became NZ day which eventually it became a national day.

Waitigi Day is a day of inclusion and nationhood. For example, one Waitangi Day celebrated the Māori-Pākehā partnership of tangata whenua (people of the land) and tangata tiriti (people of the Treaty), which aimed to give non-Māori partners a feeling that they have a right to call New Zealand their tūrangawaewae (a

place to stand). Their home. Given, not stolen.

Something for us in Australia to consider, that in NZ, their national day doesn't divide its indigenous and non indigenous peoples, but celebrates respect and reconciliation. Words often missing in Australia Day celebrations. 26th January marks the day that our indigenous brothers and sisters had their ancestors massacred, land stolen, and their culture.

Maybe Australia Day should be marked by sorry ceremonies first, if we cannot change the date. Or perhaps we do change the date and find a national day to really acknowledge and recognise our fellow Indigenous Australians, so we can more truly mature and become, as our new anthem says,

Why Rainbow Power Company?



by Diana Gosper

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Our suicidal war against nature

by John Scales Avery

Here are some quotations from a 2nd December, 2020 article by Justin Rowlett entitled 'Humans waging suicidal war on nature – UN chief Antonio Guterres':

"Humanity is waging what he describes as a suicidal war on the natural world. Nature always strikes back, and is doing so with gathering force and fury," he told a BBC special event on the environment.

Mr Guterres wants to put tackling climate change at the heart of the UN's global mission. In a speech entitled 'State of the Planet', he announced that its central objective next year will be to build a global coalition around the need to reduce emissions to net zero.

Net zero refers to cutting greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible and balancing any further releases by removing an equivalent amount from the atmosphere.

Mr Guterres said that every country, city, financial institution and company should adopt plans for a transition to net zero emissions by 2050. In his view, they will also need to take decisive action now to put themselves on the path towards achieving this vision.

"The objective," said the UN secretary general, "will be to cut global emissions by 45% by 2030 compared with 2010 levels."

Here's what Mr Guterres demanded the nations of the world do:

- 1) Put a price on carbon;
- 2) Phase out fossil fuel finance and end fossil fuel subsidies;
- 3) Shift the tax burden from income to carbon, and from tax payers to polluters;
- 4) Integrate the goal of carbon neutrality (a similar concept to net zero) into all economic and fiscal policies and decisions;
- 5) Help those around the world who are already facing the dire impacts of climate change.

It is an ambitious agenda, as Mr Guterres acknowledged, but he said that radical action is needed now.

"The science is clear," Mr Guterres told the BBC, "unless the world cuts fossil fuel production by 6% every year between now and 2030, things will get worse. Much worse."

"Climate policies have yet to rise to the challenge," the UN chief said, adding that "without concerted action, we may be headed for a catastrophic three to five-degree temperature rise this century."

The impact is already being felt around the world. Apocalyptic fires and floods, cyclones and hurricanes are the new normal. Biodiversity is collapsing. Deserts are spreading. Oceans are choking with plastic waste.

Mr Guterres said the nations of the world must bring ambitious commitments to cut emissions to the international climate conferences the UK and Italy are hosting in Glasgow in November next year.

As well as pressing for action on the climate crisis, he urged nations to tackle the extinction crisis that is destroying biodiversity and to step up efforts to reduce pollution. We face, he said, a moment of truth.

But he does discern some glimmers of hope. He acknowledged that the European Union, the US, China, Japan, South Korea and more than 110 other countries have committed to become carbon-neutral by the middle of this century. He said he wants to see this momentum turned into a movement.

Technology will help us to reach these targets, Mr Guterres said he believes. The coal business is going up in smoke because it costs more to run most of today's coal plants than it does to build new renewable plants from scratch, he told the BBC.

"We must forge a safer, more sustainable and equitable path," the UN chief concluded. He said it is time for this war against the planet to end, adding: "We must declare a permanent ceasefire and reconcile with nature."

Danger of catastrophic global famine

As glaciers melt in the Himalayas, depriving India and China of summer water supplies; as sea levels rise, drowning the fertile rice fields of Vietnam and Bangladesh; as drought threatens the productivity of grain-producing regions of North America; and as the end of the fossil fuel era impacts modern high-yield agriculture, there is a threat of wide-spread famine involving billions rather than millions of people.



People threatened with famine will become refugees, desperately seeking entry into countries where food shortages are less acute. Wars, such as those currently waged in the Middle East, will add to the problem.

What can we do to avoid this crisis, or at least to reduce its severity? We must urgently address the problem of climate change; and we must shift money from military expenditure to the support of birth control programs and agricultural research.

We must also replace the institution of war by a system of effective global governance and enforceable international laws.

Optimum population

What is the optimum population of the world? It is certainly not the maximum number that can be squeezed onto the globe by eradicating every species of plant and animal that cannot be eaten. The optimum global population is one that can be supported in comfort, equality and dignity – and with respect for the environment.

In 1848 (when there were just over one billion people in the world), John Stuart Mill described the optimal global population in the following words:

"The density of population necessary to enable mankind to obtain, in the greatest degree, all the advantages of co-operation and social intercourse, has, in the most populous countries, been attained. A population may be too crowded, although all be amply supplied with food and raiment.

"... Nor is there much satisfaction in contemplating the world with nothing left to the spontaneous activity of nature; with

every rood of land brought into cultivation, which is capable of growing food for human beings; every flowery waste or natural pasture plowed up, all quadrupeds or birds which are not domesticated for man's use exterminated as his rivals for food, every hedgerow or superfluous tree rooted out, and scarcely a place left where a wild shrub or flower could grow without being eradicated as a weed in the name of improved agriculture.

"If the earth must lose that great portion of its pleasantness which it owes to things that the unlimited increase of wealth and population would extirpate from it, for the mere purpose of enabling it to support a larger, but not better or happier population, I sincerely hope, for the sake of posterity, that they will be content to be stationary, long before necessity compels them to it."

New downloadable book

I would like to announce the publication of a new book, which discusses the exponentially increasing stress that humans are placing on their natural environment. The book may be downloaded free of charge from the following link:

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Our-Suicidal-War-Against-Nature-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

Other books and articles about global problems are on these links:

<http://eacpe.org/about-john-scales-avery/>
<https://wsimag.com/authors/716-john-scales-avery>
<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2020/11/free-online-books-on-serious-global-problems/>
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