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Welcome to the Festival of Over-Policing



Police operation statistics
 Saturday: 413 RBT/RDT tests, 17 positives.
 3 cannabis cautions, 1 possession.
 Sunday: 450 RDT tests, 29 positives.
 1 cannabis caution, 3 possession.
 650 RBT tests, 0 positive.
 Monday: 401 RBT/RDT tests, 16 positives;
 2 mid-range PCA.

by David Shoebridge, Greens MLC

On the weekend I once again joined thousands of activists, reformers and community members in Nimbin for the annual Mardigrass festival. It's Australia's most chilled-out festival with art, comedy, panels, music, a spectacular parade and the world's greatest Kombi Convoy. It's also the annual location for a different festival – that's the annual Northern NSW Festival of Over-Policing, which is paid for by us, and run by and for the NSW police force. The Police's Festival is less chilled-out. It has roadside drug-testing, drug dogs and searches, and its purpose is to intimidate, criminalise and persecute the community of Nimbin. Arriving at Nimbin, visitors saw squads of police on all major entry roads, conducting "random" drug tests on every person driving into town in a ring of overtime paid for by all of us. I was pulled over twice in one day for this pointless exercise, and the police did the

same to hundreds of others including my colleague Cate Faehrmann. At \$25 a pop for each test, plus police hours, plus the five or more police cars and vans at every stop, this is a hugely expensive exercise. At a time when communities are calling out for police resources to be directed to actually investigating cases, responding to domestic violence complaints and other serious matters, this is an offensive misuse of public resources. These tests have nothing to do with road safety. They test for the mere presence of just four illegal drugs and (unlike with alcohol) they are not looking at impairment. People are literally losing their licence because they smoked a joint the night before they got behind the wheel. If the long-standing and evidence-based Roadside Breath Testing program, the one that tests if drivers have prescribed quantities of alcohol in their blood, instead tested to see if a driver had drunk a beer at a barbeque the day before they drove, it would rightly be ridiculed... but that's how the drug testing scheme

works. And because these tests have nothing to do with road safety, they don't test to see if drivers are impaired by prescription drugs like benzodiazepines, which have a well-documented impact on road safety and which are implicated in many fatal crashes. It's because the RDT program is not about road safety that they target Nimbin, the north coast and south west Sydney, and not the northern and eastern suburbs of Sydney. They don't conduct tests in locations identified as high risk for impaired driving, they conduct them where they are politically convenient. They don't even collect data to show if their tests have an impact on road safety. They know such data would not support this extraordinarily invasive program. The peaceful activists at Nimbin are no threat to anyone except to the on-going criminalisation of a plant. How they are treated shows just how the main danger of drugs is not the drugs themselves, but the violent war waged against those who use them by police.

CWA scones and fundraising on the menu at Primex

CWA Far North Coast returns to Primex in 2021 with their famous BBQ, as well as scones, sandwiches, cakes, and all the other delicious goodies you expect from the CWA. Primex, in Casino, runs from 20th to 22nd May, and is one of Australia's largest primary industries expos with more than 25,000 people attending across three days. Primex is also the CWA Far North Coast Group's major fundraiser for their annual Education Grants. All money raised at Primex is used to provide grants to local school children moving from primary to high school, from year 10 into year 11, and from high school into university. These grants are provided to help parents with the added costs of moving between stages of schooling, for




At the stall in 2019, centre: Maggie May (PRIMEX Secretary) and right: Narelle Gotting (FNC Group President)

items like books, shoes, and uniforms. On the menu are our tender steak sandwiches (the best value at Primex), bacon

and egg rolls, and sausage sandwiches. You can also find freshly-made sandwiches with a variety of fillings, homemade cakes and slices,

plus hot and cold drinks, and of course our famous scones with jam and cream. You can also pick up CWA cookbooks and merchandise, jams and preserves, and craft items. The CWA has traditionally provided services to rural women and families at agricultural shows, and we provide a family-friendly place for women to breastfeed, as well as baby change facilities. The CWA Far North Coast Group would like to thank Primex for their ongoing support, without which we could not provide the funding for our education grants. All fundraising activities are volunteer run, which allows us to ensure profits are returned to the community. Drop in to see us in Pavilion 1 at Primex on 20th and 22nd May.



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Banners supporting Assange at the MardiGrass parade

Photo: Garry Mimlich

Rallies call for freedom for Julian Assange

John Shipton (pictured), Julian Assange's father, is undertaking an epic tour down the east coast, beginning in Nimbin at the MardiGrass, then Brisbane, Mullumbimby, Lismore, Byron, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Newcastle, Sydney and Canberra.

He is speaking about Julian's plight and reconnecting with his supporters before he embarks on an even more epic journey to the UK and the US where he will plead with President Joe Biden to ease Julian's decade-long suffering and drop the charges and free Julian.

Describing the past decade of his son's persecution, John Shipton said, "Julian is now 10 years in arbitrary detention: Wandsworth prison, ten day's solitary confinement; Norwich, 18 months' house arrest; Ecuador's London embassy, 7½ years; and now, Belmarsh maximum-security prison, two years in a cell 23 hours per day."

John Shipton addressed an International Press Freedom Day rally in Brisbane's West End on 3rd May. He affirmed, "We join with all other Australians, along with the people of Europe, the Middle East, South America, UK and USA, in declaring, iron-hard, that this, the extradition of Julian Assange, a slow grinding murder before our eyes, shall not pass, will never pass."

Greens Deputy Leader Larissa Waters could not attend, but sent this statement:

"On World Press Freedom Day, the Morrison government must finally intervene and provide an Australian citizen and publisher safe passage home, with assurances that he can live and work here freely. "It's time for Scott Morrison to fight for an Australian citizen whose journalistic work exposing war crimes has subjected him to an extraordinary campaign of persecution from the United



States.

"The decision by the Trump administration to charge Julian Assange was because he was a whistleblower, because he published evidence of war crimes, crimes which the US Defence force had covered up. Yet our Australian Government has abandoned him.

"Australia's meek pandering to the Pentagon on the rights of one of our citizens reflects very poorly on our sovereignty and diplomatic independence. "The charges the US has laid are anathema to a free press and free society and

Australia should give Assange safe passage home and rule out extraditing him to become a political prisoner.

"I call on the Prime Minister to pick up the phone to speak directly to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to release Julian from Belmarsh, and to US President Biden and his new Attorney General to drop the appeal against Julian, after the UK court rejected the extradition bid on the grounds of Julian's health.

"The Greens are proud to have nominated Julian and Wikileaks for this year's Nobel Peace Prize. He should be being treated as a whistleblowing hero, not a criminal. The Greens and all of you stand with Julian, to challenge the notion that crimes can be covered up, and truth-tellers prosecuted and persecuted, in the name of secrecy and national security. "Julian has suffered enough – the Australian Government must intervene and bring him home."

Covid-19 vaccines community consultation underway

People across the North Coast region are being asked to participate in an online community consultation that allows them to share their thoughts on the Covid-19 vaccines.

Healthy North Coast, that delivers the North Coast PHN program, has partnered with 89 Degrees East to develop a short survey, which coincides with the continued rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination program in the region.

Participants can also register to nominate a registered local community group, sports club or not-for-profit to receive a \$2,000 prize.

"We want to support our communities to have access to the best available advice and guidance about Covid-19

vaccines," Healthy North Coast CEO Julie Sturgess said.

"This consultation is an important step in ensuring everyone living in Northern NSW and on the Mid North Coast can share their thoughts and help us understand local needs.

"Healthy North Coast is continuing to support our communities and health professionals across our region to stay Covid-safe. Access to the right information is crucial."

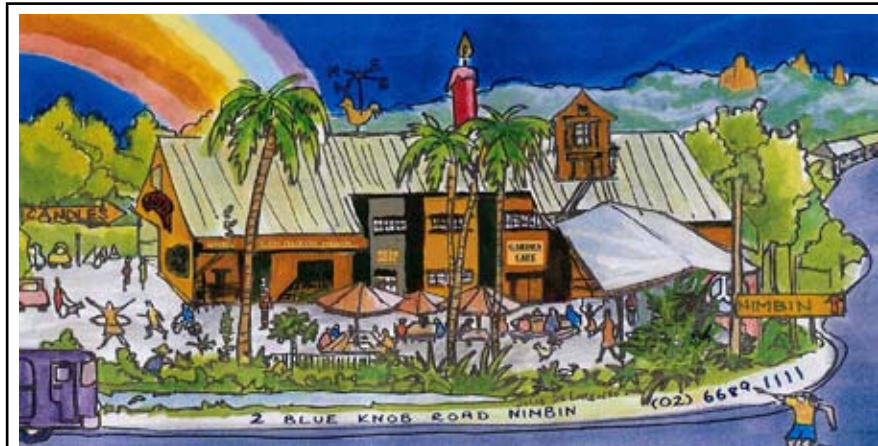
The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete, and all answers are anonymous. It is open until Friday, 14th May.

The survey can be found at: <https://covid19vaccinesurvey.questionpro.com/>

"We are excited to support registered local community groups, sports clubs and not-for-profits by making them eligible for the prize attached to the survey," Ms Sturgess said.

To register, participants can complete the survey and then answer a simple question in 25 words or less: What are you most looking forward to when the world gets back to closer to normal? People also have the option of uploading a one-minute video to answer the question.

In the meantime, people seeking more information about Covid-19 vaccines should speak to their GP or call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800-020-080.



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'Trains are going to be part of the future'

by Beth Shelley

A crowd of about 240 people attended a meeting at the Regent Cinema in Murwillumbah in April to hear speakers discuss concerns that the railway line through Tweed Shire will be pulled up for a bike path if council plans go ahead.

Murwillumbah locals are calling for the bike path to be put next to the tracks and to save the railway for future light rail services around the Northern Rivers.

The people of Murwillumbah have not been consulted on whether they want to keep the Casino to Murwillumbah railway line for the future. The Government's own website states that the NSW Government will undertake an independently facilitated community consultation session for each proposed rail trail, but this didn't happen.

Tom Rayner, a civil engineer from Murwillumbah, stated that a 2017 Council meeting noted that there hadn't been any Shire-wide consultation and therefore the condition "to demonstrate categorical community support" had not been met. Staff were meant to bring back "a further report to determine an appropriate consultation strategy" but this never happened.

Tweed Shire Mayor, Chris Cherry, said she had asked the tendering companies to look at the option of putting the bike path off-formation, meaning beside the tracks. Councillors voted in 2018 for both on and off the rail formation to be considered by



Mandy Nolan, Greens candidate for Richmond, who spoke at the meeting in Murwillumbah. Photo: Marie Cameron

tenderers, but TSC staff have ignored this decision and spent no time or money on any kind of outline for the off-formation option.

It's very clear from the tendering documents developed by staff, that the off-formation option was not mentioned at all. Tom Rayner says that if tendering companies are given no guidelines for looking at this option, they have no reason to believe it's wanted by their client (Council).

Marie Luxford from the Murwillumbah rail group presented a petition to Chris Cherry that was signed by nearly 900 people in only three and a half weeks, and also said that she had been surveying local businesses and 99.9% said they wanted

the train back.

Nola Firth, the Greens Council candidate replacing Katie Milne, read out a letter from Katie. It said that if the tenders come back with only an on-formation option, the community needed to express their views to the councillors as there had been no community consultation, "which is a glaring failure of the process".

In a film of an interview with Simon Richardson, Byron Shire Mayor, he stated that having both rail and trail was the most financially viable option because "a rail trail on its own doesn't generate any revenue" and "is a financial drain on whoever is managing the corridor".

"A (rail) shuttle service can provide that economic stimulus to help fund the bike path and do so much more as well." The Byron Rail Report shows the viability and the community need to have rail services.

Lydia Kindred from the Northern Rivers Rail Company said that the new company would be working towards fundraising for rail projects along the line.

Mandy Nolan said it all when she said, "Trains are going to be part of the future and we don't want to be part of a community that's not on that train. We don't want to miss out because we were the idiots that ripped our tracks up."

The Murwillumbah Rail Group are planning to hold a rally at the next Council meeting on 20th May. Please come along and speak out for your community.

The human face of refugees

Lismore Politics in the Pub is resuming its popular evenings of topical discussion, beginning 13th May with artist, documentary filmmaker, and human rights advocate Angus McDonald as guest speaker.

His 13-minute documentary *Manus*, created from footage secretly filmed within the detention centre on Manus Island, will also be screened on the night.

McDonald's intention with all of his work is to



Angus McDonald with Behrouz Boochani

"contribute towards the public rediscovering their compassion and changing our collective approach towards

how we deal with those fleeing war and persecution."

Angus McDonald is an artist of national and international renown, and the winner of numerous awards, for both paintings and films. His artistic skill and his passion for social justice converged last year in his compelling portrait of Behrouz Boochani, a Kurdish refugee imprisoned for six years on Manus Island, which won the People's Choice Award in the 2020 Archibald Prize.

In addition he serves as an ambassador for Human Rights Watch Australia & Asia, and World Vision's Kids Off Nauru campaign.

Lismore Politics in the Pub – Thursday 13th May, 7-9pm, Rous Hotel Lismore, meals available from 6pm. Donation of \$10 suggested (concession available), but due to Covid regulations, bookings are essential.

For more information, or to book your place for this event, email: lismore@politicsinthepub.net

Kyogle Writers Festival discusses cruelty and humanity

Human rights activist Professor Stuart Rees (pictured) is kicking off the Kyogle Writers Festival when he will be in conversation with Richard Hil at 9.30am on Saturday 15th May.

Cruelty or Humanity: Challenges, Opportunities and Responsibilities is Stuart's latest book, and the focus of his conversation with Richard.

Stuart's early career was as a social worker and human rights advocate in London courts. He has worked in Canada, the United States and Sri Lanka and gained his PhD from the University of Aberdeen.

For over 20 years, Stuart was Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Sydney. He was the co-founder of that university's Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, and the founding director of the Sydney Peace Foundation, which awards Australia's only international prize for peace.

Stuart has a particular passion in seeking justice for Indigenous peoples, for asylum seekers and for all Palestinians. In 2005 he was awarded the Order of Australia 'for service to

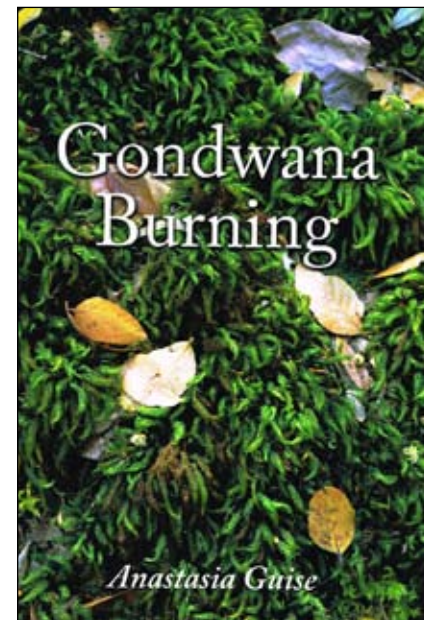


international relations' and in 2018 the Jerusalem (Al Quds) Peace Prize.

Apart from all that, Stuart is an avid sailor and an accomplished poet.

Local author and ecophile Anastasia Guise will also be presenting her latest collection of environmental writing *Gondwana Burning* at the Kyogle Writers Festival.

A Front Up session at 12.30pm on Saturday at the Uniting Church Fellowship Centre invites participants to join the conversation on storytelling, science and advocacy, one year on from the devastating ecological losses of the Black Summer bushfires.



Anastasia Guise will also be presenting her book *Gondwana Burning* at a book launch session at 2.15pm on Saturday at the Sugarbowl Cafe.

Full program details are available at: www.kyoglewritersfestival.com

Brainstorming the Aquarius 50th anniversary



by Benny Zable, president

The Nimbin Aquarius Festival 50th anniversary will take place between 12th and 23rd May 2023.

On Friday 16th April, the first public meeting was held at the Comskool room in the Nimbin Community Centre.

During the meeting we introduced ourselves and shared envisioning ideas and objectives towards the 50th. Here are some suggestions that were written up on paper sheets:

The 50th to be seen as honest and ethical, sending a message on values; alternative communities, activism, art, health, farming, markets.

That Nimbin's achievements over 50 years be celebrated throughout the year.

The Rainbow Cafe to be rebuilt by the 50th (a central community site). A number of sites for camping were suggested.

An opportunity for alternative fossil-free vehicles

to bus people in and out on rotation from out of Nimbin parking sites.

Fundraising events towards the lead-up to the 50th anniversary were discussed.

That the management committee agree upon a structure and appoint a 12-month position for a co-ordination position (grant). Position to be advertised with position description from committee and community. Create an equal opportunity job-shared position.

It was suggested that regular monthly meetings take place over the next two years. It was agreed by most that the next meeting take place on Monday 17th May at the Comskool room from 4.30-6pm.

All people attending are welcome to be members of the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc. (NAFI). Annual membership is \$5.

We are a registered charitable organisation and welcome donations. All are welcome to the meetings.

Peace observance

On ANZAC day for the first time, people gathered around the IMAGINE circle following both the morning

and midday services.

We discussed and shared intergenerational trauma and its links to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

By understanding and knowing that we are not alone, makes it possible to heal and redefine ourselves, towards reclaiming our lives.

We repeated the Declaration of Interdependence together after the sharing:

"We the people of planet Earth,

In recognition of the interconnectedness of all life

And the importance of the balance of nature,

Hereby acknowledge our interdependence

And affirm our dedication To life-serving environmental stewardship,

The fulfilment of universal human needs worldwide,

Economic and social well-being,

And a culture of peace and non-violence,

To ensure a sustainable and harmonious world;

For present and future generations."

– Inspired by the Earth Charter: <https://earthcharter.org>

Composed by Rick Ulfik, founder of We the World.



<https://we.we.net/declaration>

We closed the circle by repeating three times the World Peace Prayer Society universal message to the world: "May Peace Prevail On Earth".

Chai tent

On Sunday 9th May, Mother's Day, the Rainbow Chai Tent turns 40, and depending on the weather, will be setting up at the Channon market on the oval.

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Next Market
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The Chai Tent is back, celebrating 40 years!
Drumming Circle
The market will operate under Covid-Safe restrictions.
Enquiries: 6688-6433

Dunoon koalas genetically important

by Nan Nicholson

The Dunoon Dam koalas are even more important than first thought. They can help other koala populations to recover robust genetics.

New information has been revealed about the local population of koalas which would be impacted by the proposed 50 GL dam at Dunoon.

The Dunoon Dam was taken off the table by Rous County Council in December 2021. The councillors who voted down the dam proposal cited the loss of important ecological systems and fauna habitat, as well as the valuable cultural heritage sites of the Widjabul Wia-bal people.

A new Future Water Plan, without the Dunoon Dam, has been prepared by Rous County Council and released for public comment. Submissions close on 28th May.



Koalas face many threats, including cars and dogs and disease, but the worst is habitat loss.

Dr Steve Phillips of Biolink Ecological Consultants says:

"The Dunoon koala population has different genetic origins, and is more robust and outbred, than other koala populations to the south and east, which are, in contrast, immunologically compromised and demonstrably inbred.

The Dunoon koalas thus have lots to offer these other koalas which suffer from high disease levels and associated mortalities, as well as the manifestation of physical traits of inbreeding such as smaller average body sizes and microcephaly.

As far as we can tell, the genetic affinity / origins of the population imply a link to hinterland koala populations of SE Queensland (loosely referred to as the SEQ genome).

We have known about the presence of this special koala population for some time (since at least mid-1990s) but do not yet know such critical things as population size and the full extent of

the population's distribution in the Dunoon area.

Why is the population so special? Because it carries genetic information known to be missing from the coastal populations of Byron, Ballina, and the Richmond River floodplain around Lismore.

The progressive or assisted incorporation of genes from the Dunoon koalas into these other populations will increase their overall genetic and immunological fitness and so increase their capacity to resist change."

The Dunoon Dam would destroy 23 ha of koala habitat, according to the Terrestrial Ecology Impact Assessment prepared for Rous County Council in 2013.

This does not include forest damaged or fragmented by construction works, or peripheral impacts on koalas living around the edges of the impact zone. The forest consists of key koala feed

tree species such as tallowwood, linked by rainforest and regrowth.

In addition to habitat loss, koala corridors linking this population to others would also be negatively impacted.

Mitigation is not an option because koalas need these trees now and cannot wait for a regrown forest. Northern NSW koalas could be extinct in less than 30 years if nothing is done to halt on-going habitat loss.

Water Northern Rivers Alliance represents local groups promoting diverse water options and opposing the Dunoon Dam. See: [https:// waternorthernrivers.org](https://waternorthernrivers.org)

They urge people who care about koalas to put in a submission supporting Rous' new Future Water 2060 plan. The new plan has taken the Dunoon Dam off the table. See: <https://rous.nsw.gov.au/future-water-for-our-region>

See also story page 15 ⇨



Market Talk
5th June:
Beekeeping for Beginners, with James



Nimbin Farmer's Market
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Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

NDIS and mental health

Living with long term mental health issues and wondering if the NDIS is right for you?

Make an appointment with our Community Worker to find out more. 6689-1692. Note: this project will end on 30th June – so this is your last chance to book an appointment and get to the bottom of your NDIS queries.

Nimbin Disaster Plan

The plan was officially launched at the Nimbin Town Hall at 10am on Saturday 24th April.

The launch included a sobering but very useful overview from Robert Kooyman, well-known local botanist and ecologist, of the values of the World Heritage Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, and an update on the forests and rainforests of the Nightcap and Border Ranges region.

He also updated us on the continuing post-fire research and discussed the implications of those findings for the future of the local forests, local landholders and residents.

You can view or download the slides from Rob's talk from the NEW Disaster section of the NNIC website dedicated to the community disaster plan and related information.

To join the Nimbin Disaster Group and support the implementation of the Disaster plan, email: DisasterResilience@nimbincommunity.org

Take home Naloxone

Naloxone is a life-saving drug which temporarily reverses the effects of an opiate overdose.

It is now available for free at the Neighbourhood Centre to people who are at risk of an opioid overdose or adverse reaction, their carers, friends and family members and any other people who may become first responders. (Also available at the NSP and the Pharmacy, by appointment.)

Anyone using opiates, whether by prescription or otherwise, is at risk of accidental overdose. Naloxone buys valuable time for an ambulance to arrive. It can be administered by injection or delivered through a nasal spray.

To get some for your first aid kit, make an appointment with our Community Worker on 6689-1692.



Nat and Gin accept plants from Lismore Mayor Vanessa Ekins, at the launch of the Nimbin Disaster Plan

7 Sibley Street happenings

See this edition of the NGT (or the www.7sibley.org website) for the May workshop program.

During May we will be focusing on affordable housing, including how to construct a stud wall frame, safe tools use, weed block building and yurt construction.

You may have noticed a yurt is being temporarily constructed at 7 Sibley St for the purposes of these workshops. On Tuesday 25th May, there will be a talking circle to explore viable options to address the current local housing crisis.

Tools and Equipment Library

Tools and equipment are available for borrowing to members. All memberships are due for renewal on 1st July each year. Anyone joining between now and 1st July 2021 will be rolled into the 2021-2022 year at no extra cost.

Full year's membership is \$22 plus NNIC membership. Non-members need to join NNIC first (\$5.50 a year). There is a great range of equipment for loan. You can check it out on our Sibley Street website: www.7sibley.org

Are you handy with tools care? We are looking for a volunteer to drop by 7 Sibley Street on a regular basis (e.g. once a fortnight) to service any tools/equipment that needs maintenance etc., and keep an eye on consumables.

If this sounds like you, contact Steph at: sibley@nnic.org.au

Struggling to make ends meet?

Has your income suddenly reduced due to the end of Job Keeper and Job Seeker supplements? Or are you just struggling with the rising costs of living in general?

We may be able to help with household expenses including electricity bill relief, vouchers for food and other items, Telstra vouchers, food or other material aid. We may also be able to assist with negotiating unpaid fines and debts.

We make no judgements and all services are confidential. We can also provide mental health support and referrals.

Call us on 6689-1692 to make an appointment with our community worker (available Wed-Fri) at NNIC.

Reinvigorating Nimbin Death and Beyond group

The first meeting will be held at NNIC on Thursday 27th May at 1pm.

The main aims of the group will be to finalise the purchasing of a cold bed for community use, to raise the remaining funds needed to purchase the cold bed, and to hold the Day of the Dead event in November 2021.

If you are interested, contact us at: admin@nnic.org.au

Community Drug Action Team

We are a community-based action group aiming to minimise the harms associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs. We do lots of fun and creative stuff and the project has a strong youth focus.

We need more members to help us do all the fun projects we have planned for the coming year.

We will be looking to build upon the success of our 2020 Regional Youth Art competition and expand it to include multi-media workshops leading up to another big regional art competition.

You can check out some of the stuff we have been getting up to, including the short films we have made on our website in the CDAT section: [www.nnic.org.au/Our Services/CDAT](http://www.nnic.org.au/Our%20Services/CDAT)

To join us, simply contact Nat at: admin@nnic.org.au

www.facebook.com/pages/Nimbin-Neighbourhood-and-Information-Centre

Nimbin Hospital information

Child immunisation clinic

For 0-5 year olds, held on second Tuesday of the month. Next clinic: 11th May. Phone 6620-7687 (Lismore Community Health Centre)

Early childhood nurse

Every Tuesday. Baby checks, weighs, post-natal support. For appointments phone 6620-7687.

Women's health nurse services

Third Thursday of the month, next is 20th May. Confidential service, checks, advice, general health information. Phone 6689-1400 for appointment.

Wound clinic

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8am. For self-referral, phone 6689-1288. Referrals also from Nimbin Hospital and GP clinic.

Drug and alcohol counselling services available

For an appointment, please contact 6620-7600. A trained professional will ask you a few confidential questions and will provide you with an appointment time.

Nurse practitioner clinics

- Respiratory clinic: second Tuesday of the month, next will be on 11th May. Phone 6630-0488 for appointments.
- Diabetes clinics: third Thursday of the month, next is 20th May.

Community Registered Nurses

Monday to Friday, 8am-4.30pm. Assessments, wound care, referrals, advocacy, provision of palliative care in the home, medication support. Phone 6689-1288 – leave a message, will return call swiftly.

Nimbin NSP

Needle and Syringe Program open Monday to Thursday. Arrangements can be made to see a Community Registered Nurse.

Health advice line

Phone 1800-022-222 if you have a health issue. 24-hour, seven days a week free service. A Registered Nurse will assess whether you need to go to an Emergency Department.

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

Monthly meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month, 9.30am in the CWA room. New members are most welcome. Fund-raising is now underway again.





NIMBIN

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

CENTRE



Benny Zable (left) and Sledge modelling NEC logo on T-shirts available in the shop. Benny has done a DIY colour-in that personalises his version. Original artwork by local artist Snow in 1997.

Photo: Tori Bail

by Scott Sledge, president

The power of co-operation

An important change is coming through. The so-called Economic Rationalism of the 1980s, touted as the spoils of the Cold War when western capitalism could run rampant over any serious opposition, now seems a shabby and shallow materialism, short on redeeming humanitarian ideals.

The idea that marketplace competition was the ultimate good culminated in the greed-is-good mantra but led to serious problems providing health, shelter, and sustenance for all. Many people today look back to the Whitlam era as a time of social good, balanced with economic opportunity.

Perhaps we will begin to value co-operation as the ultimate good, as we did more often in those days. After all, that's how historically we have come to triumph over adversity.

We humans have devised fantastic technology, but it is mostly used to amuse rather than to sustain. The accumulation of wealth has become a world-wide phenomenon for elites with the rest of us expected to be content with the scraps that fall from their tables and mind-numbing electronic games.

Is this perhaps part of the reason why humanity is devastated by catastrophic events and stymied by the Covid pandemic that makes a mockery of our omniscience? Do we have the ability to put aside the fascination we have with stuff and focus instead on helping one another, the strong and the weak, the small and the large?

Yes, of course, but we must make good choices, in our lives and in our politics.

Nimbin Business Plan workshop

Lismore Council Mayor Vanessa Ekins led a Council team to workshop ideas recently. While the event was ostensibly about increasing business, several community reps at the Nimbin gathering took to the streets (figuratively).

We told the Council folks that completing the Alternative Way junction with Cecil Street should be a priority, not shelved until the developers feel like it.

A second road through our village would have myriad benefits, especially reducing heavy truck traffic on our lively main shopping street, which also serves as a social space. Where will future parking be located? What about the water and sewage for all the planned and prospective housing and other building needs? Nimbin is at its limit for essential services already.

You can find a snapshot of initial feedback

insights, along with opportunities to share your ideas online, here on Your Say Lismore. LCC encourages feedback and ideas, so please invite others to engage with this process.

Let's not leave it to others to decide our future. Contact Kathryn Gray, CBD Activation Officer, Economic Development, Lismore City Council (02) 6625-0457 or 0437-246-216.

MardiGrass

Nimbin Enviro Centre usually joins in the annual drug law reform parade on the first weekend in May, and we did again this year. Why? Because along with the many other positives associated with hemp, many forest products can be made using hemp/cannabis, and that could help to save our threatened forests and associated wildlife.

Michael Balderstone has been leading the charge in Nimbin for hemp legalisation for at least 29 years with our support and encouragement. He says, "Hemp is one of the most useful plants on earth."

The world is in danger of climate change due to overuse of fossil fuels and lack of care for biota. Some world leaders recognise this and are moving on to more sustainable practices. We live in hope.

New in the shop

Local author Anastasia Guise has published a delightful set of essays on subjects dear to the hearts of most Nimbin-area residents.

Entitled *Gondwana Burning*, the book begins with characteristic sharp phrasing: "I built a small sustainable house, off-grid, and planted a rainforest with my babies strapped to my back. I quit flying. I mended things, grew things, pickled things and bottled things."

Also new in the shop are 'Koalas Need Trees' shirts from Nature Conservation Council (NCC) and tickets in the annual raffle to support the work of Northern Rivers Guardians, Inc (NRG). Great prizes include a gift pack from NEC and prizes offered by 'Fashionating' and 'Perceptio', plus businesses in Uki and Murwillumbah.

The raffle drawing will be held at the World Environment Day in Murwillumbah on 6th June. Tickets can be purchased at the NEC shop until then.

World Environment Day 2021 will launch the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. This can take many forms: growing trees, greening cities, rewilding gardens, changing diets or cleaning up rivers and coasts.

World Environment Day is celebrated in most places, including Lismore and Kyogle, on Saturday, 5th June.

Nimbin School of Arts – President's report

by David Hallett

The past year has been both unique and challenging in the 116-year history of the School of Arts.

The Covid-19 pandemic lockdown struck in the same week as last year's Annual General Meeting; all events and classes were cancelled, the Nimbin Artists Gallery and Perceptio Bookshop were both closed, and all activity in the hall was stopped for several months.

It is fortunate that major projects that had been planned for some years were actually completed in 2019, and that the Nimbin Fashion Show in early March 2020 was successfully staged prior to the lockdown.

The loss of income from events such as Blue Moon Cabarets, Autumn Arts Fair, MardiGrass, Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup and Nimbin Roots Festival was most significant for the School of Arts. Rents were waived, then halved

for some months, however the NSA had to maintain insurance payments, rates, electricity, phone and fire safety expenses throughout the lockdown. All major building projects were shelved, and maintenance was kept to a minimum.

While all performance events were cancelled, it is particularly pleasing that the visual arts became the highlight of the year. The 2020 Spring Arts Exhibition was the most successful art show that the NSA has ever managed, with more than double the sales of any exhibition in the past 30 years. The show was such a success that the School of Arts held a first-time Summer Art Exhibition, which opened on New Year's Day 2021. This also proved to be a worthwhile event with hundreds of visitors and considerable sales.

The mainstreet central mural facade of the hall was repainted in 2020 by Bundjalung artists Oral

Roberts, Gilbert Laurie and Greg O'Brien. This project was funded in part by a donation from Nimbin Chamber of Commerce.

The School of Arts longtime tenants Perceptio Bookshop and the Nimbin Artists Gallery reopened in the latter months of 2020, together with a new tenancy The Hemp Couturier in Studio 1, while hall hire also resumed for music tuition, exercise and karate classes, as well as for various community and local council meetings.

Some major events are scheduled to go ahead in the months ahead, but Covid-19 attendance restrictions continue to affect plans for other performance programmes, including Blue Moon Cabarets, which remain on hold at present.

Nimbin School of Arts continues to be well cared for by its crew: Tony Gibson, Kylie Kingston, Carole Barrett, Sue Edmonds, Peter Brooker, Tim Tonkin, Samara Burcher and Donovan Lynch.

Free plant identification workshop

The Nimbin Environment Centre is presenting another weed identification workshop on Saturday 22nd May, 8am – 12 midday.

Led by local bush regenerator, Tristan Mules, this is an opportunity to learn to recognise a variety of local weeds and native vegetation.

The basis of bush regeneration is plant ID, knowing what to keep and what to get rid of. Held on Mulgum Creek, this is experiential learning in the field.

Funding from Australian Government's Communities Environment Program made this event

possible.

Numbers are limited so please book in with Nimbin Environment Centre, email: nimbinenvironmentcentre@gmail.com or phone 6689-1441 during opening hours 11am – 4pm, or leave your contact details in the shop at 54 Cullen Street.



NIMBIN'S SUSTAINABLE LIVING HUB



7 Sibley Street

May
What's On!

\$10 unless otherwise noted
Bookings: text 0475-135-764
or email: sibley@nnic.org.au

Workshops (start 10.30am)

- **Tues 11th: Paper making** – Learn how to process natural fibres.
- **Wed 12th: Furniture revival** – Chalk paint techniques & sanding, using tools library.
- **Sat 15th: Stud frame construction** – Build a wall frame for your yurt, with electric tools.
- **Tues 18th: Knitting and crochet** with Sue
- **Wed 19th: Spinning and textile weaving** – Wheels, looms and materials available.
- **Tues 25th: Talking Circle** – Co-operative and affordable housing.
- **Sat 22nd: Weed block making.** Turn lantana and woody weeds into buildings, \$25 bookings essential.

Farm tours (Bookings essential)

Carpool leaving 7 Sibley Street at 10am.

- **Sat 8th: Brad's Organic Gardens**
- **Sat 29th: Steph's** – Reading the landscape and successional planting

Regular events

- **Community tools library:** Wed and Sat 10.30am-2pm
- **Plant nursery:** Seedlings, cuttings, fruit and regen trees for your sustainable gardens.
- **Reference library:** Relax and enjoy books on traditional skills, gardening and sustainable living.
- **10 minute workshops:** Try your hand at hemp string making, stick spinning or cob building!



Shop 1, 66 Cullen Street
BRAIN TREE CLOTHING NOW IN STORE

