

Harsh judgement

In response to Simon Clough's mean-spirited article in last month's *GoodTimes* (p14), I am disturbed by his criticisms of Bernadine Schwartz's articles.

He admits that she tells it how it is, but then counteracts that by talking about the important changes in the past, as if the falling of the Berlin Wall, or the students' strike in Lismore actually solved anything.

He talks about 'taking the next step' but does not give us a clue as to what that next step might be. Yes, Bentley was a community-confirming success, but it has made no difference to the government's continuing intrusion through granting fracking licenses in the Northern Territory and elsewhere.

We are each entitled to our own opinions, but let's not stand in harsh judgement of each other. How we cope with the present situation in our lives is all down to each individual's choice.

Alex Manzi Fe
Blue Knob

War mongering

Dairy farmers of the Northern Rivers in the 1960's would remember how the British dumped Australian dairy producers in favour of the European Common Marketeers. Australian agriculture suffered.

Free trade is now offered to the British Bastards, and it is all forgotten about of their frenzied greed to join the Europeans and stuff Australia.

Was it not China who came to the rescue of Australian agriculture buying our dairy, wool and wheat in shiploads at a time? Those damned Chinese – how dare they save our bacon!

Oh hang on, were they not our allies in WW2 against the Japanese invaders?

How many none-of-our-business wars has Australia been involved in since Federation? The Boer, WW1, Korea, Vietnam, to name a few. How many external military aggressions has China been involved in? None?

Is it not time to tell the truth about Australia's military incursions into otherwise friendly countries at the bequest of either the BB's or the US Imperialists?

Australia was snotted by the Turks at Gallipoli. Australia was snotted in Korea. Australia was snotted by the Vietnamese. Now Afghanistan has seen a victory over numerous forces including Australia's.

Surely these defeats are enough for Australia to learn the lesson of "make love, not war".

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.

Billions are now being spent on armaments, next to nothing on diplomacy. Is this the way stupid, ignorant Australian governments see the path forward?

Problem is, this time the Chinese are very well educated and equipped, and able to kick butt of BB's, US warmongers, Japanese and the Europeans who bullied, bashed and committed atrocities against them in the past.

Claire De Ellae
Urbenville

DasCapital

Everyone in the Northern Rivers knows that Urbenville is the Capital City of the region. It is surrounded by the suburbs of Woodenbong, Legume and Bonalbo in some of Australia's most spectacular scenery.

Urbenville Primary School has a group of teachers who are compassionate, skilled and dedicated to their students who are performing in the highest expectations of the education system. These teachers give their students respect and the children respect them in return.

The ABC recognised this when they heard about the children of UPS performing at the Urbenville Aged Care Facility and sent their reporters, cameras and crew to make a program of the excellent performances by these young students.

The TV ratings of this ABC program far exceeded *The Voice* so much so that Keith Urban has applied to be a guest singer at their Christmas party. Of course the P&C will have to determine his application for quality and training purposes as he will be amongst some of Australia's best, and they do not just accept anyone.

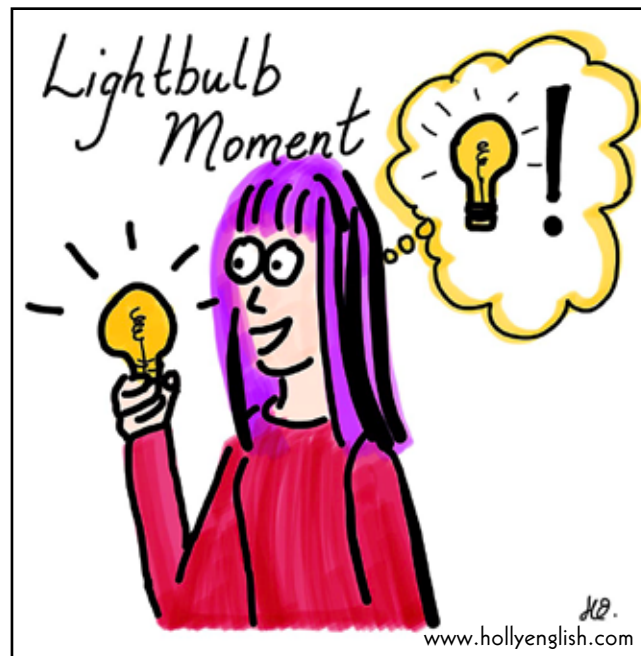
Our local Members of Parliament (Janelle and Barnaby) have been a bit slack with their applications to attend the Christmas party in recognition of this excellence.

Ian May
Urbenville

Leadership

I could not help but notice in the 'Hempire Strikes Back' article (NGT September 21) that the author solves his own puzzle.

In the piece it says, "Which



brings us to politics. In the absence of leadership from our elected leaders..."

Who is electing people who can't lead? The masses: it says "our elected".

Strange, but it seems the perennial problem is people elect other people who can't lead.

Whose fault is that?

Hemp most likely wouldn't have a problem if the masses voted for leaders rather than people who can't.

Look up superforecasters. They are real but I doubt there is one in politics, and that the public does not actively seek them out to place them in positions of leadership.

Just goes to show...

Stephen Jones
Cawongla

Why does our Council ignore climate change?

People are often highly motivated to avoid threats. However, in regards to climate change our local government is not motivated to take strong action.

The current development proposal to allow up to 45 more dwellings within the Nimbin village boundary has a vision of ignoring climate change and its impact upon nature and human habitation.

The question is: why are the people who have put forward the future for Nimbin's development not motivated to see the acceleration of change in our climate locally and overseas?

Year after year it is getting hotter, our rainfall is decreasing, our surface water availability is shrinking, and yet our local government admitted at a zoom meeting to concerned citizens in September, that the designers of development around the village have not considered the impact of climate change in their proposal.

In regards to Nimbin it must be assumed the current LCC is making policy happen in denial of the reality of climate

change. This is clear: in 2020 over 22 extreme weather events occurred, \$120 billion of assets were destroyed, massive hurricanes happening as far north as New York, and uncontrollable wildfires globally. The term drought, meaning eventually dry times will end in some areas, is no longer used, as it has not rained in some areas for 20-plus years.

Current urban expansion in our community will deliver land degradation, loss of biodiversity and longer periods of low water storage. Is it too big an ask to have a council that is hard-wired to deal with climate change with a re-development plan for Lismore?

A gentrified Lismore rebuilt with climate change as a priority would lead to commercial development, more employment, improved economic opportunity, lower crime rates: winners all round.

Mark Pestell
Nimbin

Notices

Annual General Meetings

- The Nimbin Headers Sports Club Annual General Meeting is due to be held on Saturday 16th October, 11am at the club. Restrictions may apply, so check our Facebook page closer to the date for up-to-date information.
- Nimbin Hemp Embassy AGM: 11am on Saturday 20th November in the backyard garden, Nimbin Hemp Embassy, 51 Cullen Street, Nimbin. Nominations for an elected position on the executive committee must be received by the president at least one week before the meeting.
- MardiGrass Organising Body AGM: 12pm on Saturday 20th November in the backyard garden, Nimbin Hemp Embassy, 51 Cullen Street, Nimbin. Nominations for an elected position on the executive committee must be received by the president at least one week before the meeting.
- The 2021 AGM of Nimbin Chamber of Commerce will be held at the Nimbin Bush Theatre on Wednesday 24th November, starting at 6pm. Refreshments will be served. Only financial members may vote.
- Nimbin Health & Welfare Association Inc. AGM: Thursday 25th November from 4pm. Covid restrictions permitting, the AGM will take place in the Birth & Beyond room, otherwise this meeting will be held via Zoom All current and new members welcome. For further info or to RSVP, please contact: nimbinhealthandwelfare@gmail.com or phone 0423-596-368.

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NEXT DEADLINE:
Friday 22nd October

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

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.



RIP Richard Sulkowski

Vale Richard Joseph Sulkowski, born 1946 in Poland, passed away peacefully on 10th September 2021 at his home in Nimbin.

Richard is survived by his brother Chris, son John, and daughter Melea. We are grateful to the staff at Nimbin

Aged Care and Nimbin Hospital, who were all so kind, patient, and caring to Richard over the years, and for the many kind thoughts and condolences from those who knew him in the community.

Rest in peace, Richard, fly free with love.

Chamber Chat

by Diana Roberts, President

Local Updates

How has the past month been for you? I thought I'd share some feedback from my fellow executive members:

Sammi: As much as the last few months of lockdowns and border closures have been hard on business, and terrible to see many of our much-loved businesses in town closed, I have felt an enormous amount of gratitude to be given the gift of more time with my children, to be considered an essential service, to stay open, to have my wonderful staff be able to work and, most of all, to our beautiful community who have been so supportive through this time. Our businesses really depend on our community buying local; it's what allows us to stay open during this time. So, from all of us at the Apothecary, thank you for all your love and support.

Caroline: has disappeared into the vortex that is her garden

Steph: While I appreciate not everyone has the luxury of a rural life (space to roam), and their previous life has been too busy to explore hobbies, 'forced' time at home has been a blessing. After pruning and weeding the ever-expanding gardens, establishing new ones and clearing HEAPS of lantana for the next wet season tree plantings, finishing dozens of ongoing creative projects and catching up on the Nimbin signage project, I finally had time to embark on the long-held dream of training the goats to harness.

Peter: I've felt like a counsellor for much of the time with lots of time spent supporting and navigating people through applications for the support packages available for local business.

David: gave me something that was much too lengthy to publish here but was definitely food for thought. Kind of David's take on the pandemic, the world and everything.

Biko: pretty much life as usual coordinating the Community Centre.

Kylie: is up to her ears in home renovations. It's freezing in my house, there's a huge hole in an outside wall, a massive pile of rubble in my garden but – we now have lights which we haven't had for years, fans that actually work and are quiet. and screens on the doors. We won't know ourselves this summer.

Myself: I've been working on Chamber initiatives – some of which are outlined below. The Chamber held



a zoom meeting to get an overview of the Nimbin Development Control Plan which goes to Council for adoption in November. Over 37 people attended the meeting or requested audio copies – a great show of interest. Hopefully some of these people, and others, made written submissions to Council.

Website

The Chamber's new website is up and functioning. If you're not on it, it's because you haven't joined. Why join your local Chamber? Go to: www.nimbinaustralia.com.au and discover everything we are doing on behalf of the village we love. Membership would be an indication of your support for our efforts.

In coming weeks we will be doing the photoshoot that has been planned and postponed twice due to Covid and lockdowns. Currently the website has a lot of tourism images but that's about to change and once completed will better reflect the diversity of our business community. On the Chamber's website there is the option of loading visions of Nimbin youtube videos. If you would like to contribute to this page, we would welcome your input. – both professional and amateurish You can use our website to contact us and send your video.

Buy Local

Don't forget that the Chamber is supporting buy local. Please everyone, shop locally when you can. To local businesses – don't forget we have signage and stickers available for your use in support of the buy local campaign.

Visitor Information Centre

The VisitNimbin website is currently changing. Sections of it will be rewritten to better direct it to appeal to the domestic visitor market. The images are going to change for the same reason. The business directory will also change.

If you are a member of the Chamber, you will appear on the website. If you are not a member you need to contact the Chamber to discuss your representation: chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au as current businesses on the visit Nimbin website will disappear from 15th October, if not Chamber members.

Tourism Destination Officer (TDO)

Council has appointed a young, local person to this full-time position which will be based at Nimbin Bush Theatre and work alongside the Visitor Information Centre.

It's an exciting role with lots of potential and we believe the person chosen will do a great job. I'll introduce him and his role to you next month, as he is currently going through appointment formalities.

Visitor Information Centre

This is in the process of being set up at the Nimbin Bush Theatre. Again, this has been slowed down by Covid and lockdowns. There's no need for a visitor information centre when there's no visitors.

The Covid opening up of NSW

As Chamber president, I recently participated in a Northern Rvers zoom meeting with NSW Treasurer Dom Perrottet.

First up, it was heartening to hear the Treasurer acknowledge that the lived Covid experience of this year has been emotionally and financially much harder for most businesses than last year. That's certainly been our experience.

Vaccination requirements

The government is currently developing public health orders for when NSW reaches both 70% and 80% vaccination levels. These orders, which may be legislated, will outline the rights and protections for businesses with regard to Covid requirements.

As I write, there is a lot of lobbying across the political spectrum for regions like ours to be closed to Sydneysiders until we have also reached the 70-80% vaccination target. The government has yet to respond.

The Treasurer was very clear – there will be industry sectors where all staff will be required to be vaccinated. Guidelines will be produced to clarify this. Considerable concern was expressed that this will impact on staffing in businesses already struggling to find employees.

Guidelines need to be provided with some urgency

so employers have clarity. The Treasurer acknowledged that ensuring Covid compliance and policing public health orders is a heavy cost on businesses at a time of loss for most businesses.

Discussions are currently underway regarding policing of public health orders in the interim opening up stages. It is likely the onus will be on the customer to comply and not the business to check and enforce but this is still subject to discussion.

Ongoing Covid funding support

Funding support for business will continue but will be scaled back as areas open up and compliance costs lessen. The Covid-19 business grant will be off the table after 1st October.

Applications for Jobsaver or the micro business grant can be made up until 18th October and back dated to when a decline in business turnover of 30% or more was first experienced.

The future of Jobsaver, shared 50/50 by the Commonwealth and the State, is currently being discussed. NSW is also costing additional support options, such as extending Dine & Discover vouchers. It is likely that during the Covid recovery phase, funding support will become more industry specific, looking at areas such as tourism and accommodation.

Housing crisis

Another issue dear to the heart of many of us is housing affordability. The Treasurer described it as the challenge of our generation, an issue that is keeping young people out of housing and creating a generational divide.

Covid has pushed house prices in regional areas through the roof, rental accommodation has become extremely expensive and employers are having difficulties attracting and keeping staff as a result. Delays in building supplies are compounding the problems.

There is a taskforce looking at the issue and a few suggestions were put forward during my meeting, such as tax incentives for employers who provide employee housing and releasing State-owned land currently locked out of housing.

There is clearly much more required to address the problems than stamp duty reform and tax incentives. NSW is struggling with the challenge, and the Treasurer is open to any ideas people might have on how to address it.

So that's it for this month. Hopefully October will see us all out of lockdown and on the path to a less stressful and more interactive life. Any comments or feedback please email us: chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au

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On the same Page

by Kevin Hogan MP

Funding sustainability hub

Nimbin's Sustainability Hub at 7 Sibley Street needs an added building and composting facilities.

It was great to catch up with Natalie Meyer recently to announce funding for this.

The Hub is a wonderful asset in our community.

I had my second dose of Astra Zeneca

Thank you to everyone who has already been vaccinated, this is our path back to normal life.

Australia's vaccine rollout has ramped up considerably. Close to 25 million doses have been

administered across the country, and the daily rate now exceeds 300,000.

Once we achieve 70%-80% vaccination we will see less transmission of Covid-19 and fewer people with severe illness. This means restrictions and lockdowns should not be required and our lives can get back to normal.

Pfizer supplies are increasing significantly, and more general practices will join the rollout to provide vaccination appointments.

The additional practice names and locations will be confirmed and start to be added to the Vaccine Eligibility Checker.

I recommend everyone monitor the Clinic Finder website as new



clinics and appointments are being added regularly: <https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility>

Community consultation and cultural lip service

The way a Council communicates and consults with its community is in some ways a defining feature and is reflective of the culture within the organisation.

In general, I think Ballina Council does a reasonable job, however every now and then a matter comes up that highlights inadequacies in the process and a feeling that a box-ticking exercise has taken place rather than a genuine attempt to canvas the community's views about a particular project.

A recent example of how Ballina Council, in my opinion, has got it wrong, was at the Council's September meeting.

Councillors were asked to determine a design/concept option for the 'Pat Morton Precinct', which is the Lennox headland reserve. The report to Council examined four different concept designs and the responses/points raised from a public consultation process.

Firstly, the submissions were not included as part of the attachments to the agenda. Instead, Council staff provided responses to 'submission summaries'. This in itself was unusual, as the submissions are usually provided.

The proposed new concrete cycleway/shared path would go on the grassy area in front of the carpark where people currently sit, walk and generally enjoy the magnificent views and natural feeling of the lookout.

In my opinion, turning this area into a formal concrete cycleway will greatly change the look and feel of the area. It's also a piecemeal approach to a well-loved, iconic location that didn't even have the support from the flawed consultation process.

Since the meeting I've been contacted by a member of the National Surfing Reserve Committee (which Lennox Headland is a part of) who has informed me that their committee wrote a submission against what the Council resolved and that they had consulted their members.

This important submission was not only ignored, but was treated

as one submission despite it being from the members of a key stakeholder group. As a Councillor, I definitely want to be informed when an important stakeholder group makes a submission.

Lennox Lookout is the major natural feature of Lennox, along with Lake Ainsworth. I would prefer to see a

masterplan for the lookout reserve that incorporates a local Indigenous name and cultural stories that reflects the proud Indigenous history of the Lennox area.

Pat Morton (current name) grew up in Lismore before moving to Sydney's North Shore and later became a Liberal Party MP. He wasn't even from Lennox. I think it's time to acknowledge the proud Indigenous cultural history of our area and create an amazing place up there.

Back in January, I proposed that Council liaise with local Indigenous elders with a view to re-naming prominent local landmarks in the Ballina Shire, with specific mention to the Lennox Headland (Pat Morton Lookout).

When I asked Council staff at the meeting whether local Indigenous cultural representatives had been consulted with regards to the re-naming of the headland or the proposed concrete pathway, the answer was "I don't know", which is code for NO.

I'm gob-smacked with the lack of community consultation with both our Indigenous elders and the wider community for such an important landmark for Lennox.

One of the submissions made the comment that "more references should be given to the Aboriginal heritage of the area". The Council staff response was "This is outside the scope of the document". I find this appalling, given that Council has already resolved to consult with local Indigenous elders with regards to this area.

I plan on moving a rescission motion to broaden the scope of this project to include greater community involvement and a more holistic approach to the reserve before any changes are implemented.



by Cr Jeff Johnson,
Ballina Council

Opening region up safely

by Janelle Saffin MP
Member for Lismore

Last month, I joined forces with four other NSW MPs representing the Northern Rivers to ask the NSW Government to protect our region from a predicted big influx of Sydneysiders when the State capital reaches the Government's 70% double vaccination target before we can.

In an unprecedented move, The Nationals' Chris Gulaptis (Clarence), Geoff Provest (Tweed) and Ben Franklin MLC, together with myself and 'The Greens' Tamara Smith (Ballina) wrote to Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Deputy Premier John Barilaro, seeking a period of grace.

We asked them to adjust public health orders to prevent us being swamped by visitors, by restricting non-essential travel to the North Coast until we can get our local double vax rates to the same 70% safety target.

It should be remembered that regional and rural New South Wales supported Sydney during its darkest hours this winter when the Government redirected some of our vaccine supply to HSC students.

I was part of a similar cross-party collaboration which secured a border zone between Northern New South Wales and South East Queensland, tested recently by some positive Covid-19 cases leaking into our region from

Sydney and the ACT, and resultant snap lockdowns in Lismore (now lifted), Byron and Tweed LGAs (still in place at time of writing).

I also wrote to the Deputy Premier, who is Minister for Regional NSW, requesting a roadmap for opening up from Covid-19 restrictions that is more particularised to the circumstances and challenges being faced by local communities in regional areas.

We need to know that opening up will not mean open slather, putting the village of Nimbin and surrounding areas at any undue risk or disadvantage.

We need the NSW Government to be more transparent about how many residents of Greater Sydney are being issued with permits to travel to the North Coast, whether they are fully vaccinated and why they are coming.

How many others might be slipping through the net, exposing the regions to Covid outbreaks and clusters?

Mr Barilaro did arrange a hook-up with regional MPs, and I now believe he and other senior ministers are starting to listen to our concerns, which are shared by locally-based medical professionals and the broader community.

I pledged to work with the NSW Government to keep our communities safe and healthy, and for government support measures to reach struggling local businesses and individuals.

WestConnex sell-off

Many locals were astounded by Premier Berejiklian's announcement last month of a new \$5 billion WestInvest Fund for Western Sydney, funded by the Government's sale of its residual 49% stake in WestConnex for \$11.1 billion.

Where is the regional and rural share in this privatisation deal?

I have consistently raised the underspend of the NSW Government's Restart NSW Fund in areas where it was meant to go – regional and rural New South Wales – and an Auditor-General's report backs this.

I have also asked Mr Barilaro to use his influence to direct the other half of this WestConnex 'windfall' to where a third of the State's population live.

My November column will look at the issue of domestic cats and native wildlife.

Pictured is Chester the sleepy cat, who belongs to Janelle's senior electorate officer, Ronny Susanto.





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THE GREENS





Citizenship ceremony

One of the great things about being mayor is conferring citizenship on new Australians.

This time, 30 people from 18 different countries were very happy to pledge loyalty, even after the stern message to defend democracy from the Minister of Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant services and Multicultural affairs.

The ceremony itself is formal but fun: we sing the national anthem and tell stories about what the mayor is wearing. The chains of office have the names of all the Lismore mayors since the 1880's and the green robes are covered in embroidered flowers and ribbons representing the rivers of the region.

The vestments are as colourful as the flag of Lismore, gifted from the Scottish island of the same name which means 'great garden'. Such an appropriate description for this country we live in, with fertile farms, rare rainforests and so much food the Widiabul Wiabal people hosted huge ceremonies here for thousands of years.

Part of acknowledging country and paying respect



by Cr Vanessa Ekins,
Mayor, Lismore City Council

to elders past, present and future, is listening to the stories of place.

One story is about how our rivers and hills were formed from the struggle between the rainbow serpent and the goanna. The goanna had a rest at a place in Lismore known as Sleeping Lizard Hill (North Lismore plateau) and then chased the rainbow serpent out to sea at Evans Head.

The Goanna Headland is so named because the goanna is guarding Bundjalung country against the return of the rainbow serpent.

Talking about moving

through country, we all wish Sydney visitors would stay home instead of spreading Covid into our community.

The State government seems overly keen to open up the State when it has an average 70% of people fully vaccinated. This is a real problem when regional NSW has only 40% of people fully vaccinated due to lack of access to vaccines.

We understood when the premier stripped 40,000 vaccines from the regions for Sydney high school students, but we expect to be supported now.

The ABC just reported that in August, 57,000 people were given travel permits to look at real estate in regional NSW. This is the same exemption used by the Sydneysider who plunged us into a five-week lockdown. Real estate speculation or a jaunt in the country is not an appropriate excuse for travel in these times.

Finding a new home for your family and becoming part of our community is a genuine reason for taking a long journey.

Contact Vanessa on 0417-245-502 or email: vanessa.ekins@lismore.nsw.gov.au

Excited to be out of lockdown



by Cr Darlene Cook,
Lismore City Council

This month we were all so excited to get out of lockdown after many weeks of stay-at-home restrictions, only to go back into lockdown five days later.

Fortunately, the second lockdown was only for six days, but it makes us only too aware how vulnerable we are to impacts caused by travellers or people who just won't do the right thing.

I am very proud of our communities who have turned out to be tested, and to be vaccinated. I am a supporter of vaccination, having lived with a brother and mother who were badly affected by the polio epidemic of 1954; I am very grateful that the polio vaccine was around by the time I went to school.

But even though we have had good numbers of people getting their jabs, our first and second vaccinations levels are still at a much lower percentage of population than Sydney. For that reason, all five state politicians representing the North Coast have appealed to the premier to restrict travel by Sydney people to our area until every community reaches the 70 or 80% targets.

I know there are many who feel that their rights have been impinged by the stay-at-home restrictions and the requirement to wear a mask and sign in to businesses; however, we are doing it in order to keep the rest of the



Team Darlene on the campaign trail at Nimbin Markets (l-r) Kevin Bell, Darlene Cook, Jasmine Knight-Smith and Joy Knight-Smith.

community safe. If a little inconvenience to me can save my community from further lockdowns, that is what I am prepared to do.

Now that we are free to go out shopping again, I urge everyone to support your local businesses which have been so adversely affected by the closures and have not been supported financially by the government this year. I hope if we support our local shops and businesses, we can help get them back on their feet.

For those of us who do celebrate Christmas, (even though it seems so far away at the moment), can I suggest we get gift vouchers from our local shops as presents for our family and friends?

As this term of council comes to an end, councillors are continuing to deal with the usual range of business reports and development applications. We go into caretaker mode in November where, while we can deal with everyday matters, we cannot make any major policy, planning or purchasing decisions.

The community forum to discuss the recent changes to the Nimbin Development Control Plan was held via Zoom. It was well attended, and many people asked questions about the recommended changes to the plan. Council staff were

available to answer questions and four Councillors were present to hear from the community.

The Nimbin Pool needs volunteers to help oversee the Covid-safe operation during summer. Council has put aside funds for an employee to co-ordinate the opening hours, but we need volunteers to put their hands up, receive the necessary Covid-safe training and to commit to putting in some hours each week. Please contact the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre if you can help.

As you are aware, the Council elections have been set for 4th December. Providing NSW has reached the vaccination targets the government sets for lifting restrictions, then the election should go ahead with a combination of postal voting and voting on-line as well as in person.

I have been endorsed as the Labor candidate for mayor. I am very pleased that three members of my team live locally, in Dorrroughby, Repentance Creek and Boorie Creek, and together we will ensure that our local villages and communities have a voice that will be heard on council.

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



Word of the Bird

by Cr Elly Bird

The most pressing thing on my mind at the moment is our regional vaccination rate and the government's roadmap to reopening which will see restrictions on regional travel lifted when the whole state reaches 80% double vaccination.

I'm really pleased to see that there has just been a shift from allowing travel at 70% due to the strong, bipartisan, unified call from all of our regional MPs to hold off

Strategic approach to recovery from Covid needed

on lifting those travel restrictions until the Northern Rivers has also reached a safe level of vaccination, and I wholeheartedly agree with and support that call.

It's still a worrying situation for us in the regions, a rough calculation based on the current rate of vaccination shows that when NSW is 80% fully vaccinated statewide the Lismore LGA will be somewhere around 60% double vaccinated. It's just impossible for us to catch up in the limited time remaining and it is unacceptable to risk our community well-being, and to risk overwhelming our regional health systems, especially when vaccination supply has been so compromised.

People who have been wanting to be vaccinated have had to wait for weeks to get an appointment. Even now with increasing supply people are still having trouble getting appointments. We need time to

catch up.

The other difficult situation before us is that at 70% statewide fully vaccinated people will have greater access to places like gyms, and pubs and restaurants, but that access will not be available for people who are unvaccinated or who have only had one dose. For us that will be around half our population.

Restrictions will lift for everyone on 1st December when the state average is predicted to be approaching 90%. So we are heading into a messy and confusing six weeks when half of us can do things and half of us can't.

And, with the lifting of restrictions, people with Covid will bring it here and spread it through our community, meaning we may still have to manage reactive lockdowns and it might put people we know and love in hospital.

We know that as vaccination rates increase that it is the unvaccinated

who are being hospitalised. Various media are calling it 'the pandemic of the unvaccinated' and the very, very last thing I want to see in our community is for people who want to be protected to end up in hospital because they weren't able to get vaccinated in time.

We need tourism to return, we need our economy to get moving again and we need to be able to get across the border into South East Queensland. Border access is critical for businesses, and to be able to visit family and friends in Queensland. This won't be feasible if we are still having to negotiate reactive lockdowns because of our lower vaccination rate.

Lastly, from a Council perspective and with the election on the horizon, it is critical that we understand and respond to the wide ranging impacts of this pandemic on our community. Covid is shaping our future and we need to

be responsive and strategic in our approach to recovery.

In the short term we need to support our businesses and our economic recovery; we need to carefully consider how to manage the rapidly escalating housing market and the flow on effect that is having in our community; and as an organisation we need to carefully manage the record levels of economic stimulus spending in infrastructure.

Council has been on a challenging journey over the last four years, but in spite of that we have effectively faced most of the challenges that have come our way, in the coming term we need to shift our approach to one of strategic consolidation and planning rather than one of reactive response.

As a community we need to work together to face our challenges and to prepare ourselves for a future that is increasingly uncertain.

Appropriate zoning needed for high conservation value land

by Melissa Hallett

Kyogle council's attempt to rezone the entire Kyogle region under a "single land use zone" RU1 – primary production does not only refer to existing agricultural land in Kyogle. as Mayor Mulholland stated in her September article in the September issue of NGT (p10).

This type of land zoning has been proposed for almost the entire region of Kyogle outside of the town, and this type of zoning represents even more access for the expansion of deforestation, increased animal body farming and removal of wildlife habitats.

Dailan Pugh, president of NEFA has said, "It is not a matter of maintaining the status quo of decades of failure to identify and protect areas of outstanding conservation value in accordance with the 1979 EPA Act, 1995 SEPP 44 or the 2010 statutory Border Ranges Rainforest Biodiversity Management Plan, but rather it is time that Kyogle Council took its environmental responsibilities seriously and appropriately zoned its high conservation value vegetation and wetlands to limit incompatible uses. It is not good enough to say that they haven't done it in the past, so they won't do it in the future."

"The 2013 Northern Councils EZone Review Interim Report identified that, unlike Ballina, Byron and Tweed, Kyogle's proposed zoning was not based on

'an environmental study based on robust data sources and analysis'. So here we are eight years later and Kyogle has made no attempt to lift its game," he said.

I ask again, what exactly was the excuse of Kyogle council for not having achieved these objectives? The mayor's article simply exposes her willful blindness to the true integrity of the these Bundjalung Githabul lands within the region of the World Heritage Parks.

The matter of mapping our region's wildlife corridors and landscapes should be considered a great privilege, it is a great honor to protect and respect our region's local biodiversity within this region. It is not "too much paperwork" and it is certainly not good enough to just hand over this very serious matter of local responsibility for the protection of our region's wildlife to the State planning minister, then playing nonsense such as "this is the best we can do".

This is a Climate Change emergency – the UN has issued a Red Alert and our region's wildlife need proper protections. This is not the time for business as usual, we need protective measures in place now; we need to map our region's wildlife corridors to formally recognise them in order to easily identify these areas in times of crisis.

These areas need to be equally protected, as well as our region's infrastructure, in times of fire, drought and flood. It is no longer



acceptable that both wildlife and domestic animals are just left to perish in fires or drought. Mapping the true integrity of our landscapes is the most important reason for a LEP (local environment plan), and wider community inclusion is paramount to getting this right and contrary to the mayor's statements in her article, this council has not done this.

At the 9th August Kyogle council meeting, manager Kennett and Mayor Mulholland chose 'not to make any mention' of the more than 90 submissions sent to the council manager from our region's residents/ratepayers during July 2021 opposing these changes to our LEP, prior to taking a vote at this meeting.

They chose instead to only represent the 11 or so other outdated

submissions presented back in 2016 and again in 2018 who lobbied for these changes, which then resulted in these councilors voting unanimously on the removal of the "deferred matters" – the E Zones environmental protection zones – in favor for this flimsy so-called 'Biodiversity Plan' and handing these issues back to the planning minister, creating a 'spot check' ad hoc approach to the environment when approving planning and development within this world heritage region.

Still no Koala core habitat protections implemented after nine years, and still no proper mapping of our region's endangered species habitats or the wildlife corridors that also exist on private lands.

The mayor boasts that there has been extensive community

consultation, yet council management have an on-going record of 'no reply' to residents' letters that they are not interested in, for some years now, especially on matters of concern for our region's wildlife and residents' health and wellbeing.

Mayor Mulholland and manager Kennett's idea of "community consultation and inclusion" has been shown by not assisting residents asking for the number of those recent 90 or more submissions that had opposed these changes for our LEP for the public record, given they were not mentioned at the August council meeting.

They are now refusing constituents access to this information, even after a request was made under the Freedom of information /GIPA Act, unless the applicants come up with well over \$1600 for the council's time to prepare that information. This is what the Mayor refers to as "community engagement and transparency". This is nothing more than disrespectful behaviour towards residents.

Assistance is being sought from the IPC on the matter of council's exorbitant fees for this public request. "Nothing to see here?" I think there is much more to see here.

I encourage Mayor Mulholland and all councilors to act urgently do the right thing by this region. Please address and implement a Koala protection action plan immediately, so as to avoid any further harm to our region's endangered species.

Words matter

The 12-year-old girl was prostituting herself for alcohol, was the allegation that I had to deal with in the Children's Court.

Another statement, the 14-year-old child in care, had a baby who is in care, to her 20-year-old boyfriend.

I articulated my concerns to the court, to child safety, to my colleagues. Where is the investigation as to which men are lining up to ply a child with booze for a blow job? Where is the prosecution of the 20-year-old man who picked up the child in his car from school to have sex with her?

It went nowhere. No police investigation into these paedophiles. No concern as to who here is truly the victim and who is the perpetrator. Why?

Young girls dancing, and the video has gone viral, as does the condemnation. How dare these girls shake their arses like this? Tut, tut.

The girls are blasted for their scanty attire and gyrating. These

girls are sluts. Provocative. Instead, why don't I read a headline that states: adult men wank off and salivate over girls who could easily be their daughters.

These same men don't see these young girls as children, but as sexual objects. The girls? They are just dancing.

A group of 16-year-old boys are charged with a 'gang bang' of a 13-year-old. The focus was on how the boys will suffer from having a conviction against them. The narrative went that she was drunk with them in a park late at night and it was a bit of horseplay that might have gone too far.

When she gave evidence, with her previously long hair hacked off, her arms bearing wounds of self-harm, I heard, what was she doing out that late? She's only complaining as her friends called her a slut.

Instead, why don't I hear... six boys don't bother asking a child if she was okay. Why don't I read... six boys line up to rape a girl who cannot consent.

A woman and her young children



by Aniko Papp

are living in their car. She cannot feed her children properly and they miss school. This woman is called a bad mother, she is homeless and neglecting her children. Child welfare remove her children.

Instead, why is this not the report? Mother cannot find safe affordable housing for herself and her children. Mother unable to feed her children properly due to living on welfare payments which don't even cover her rent, so her kids get taken and put in the care of strangers instead.

Woman walks in the park and gets raped. The media discusses the length of her skirt and was her top

see-through. It was after midnight so what was she doing out? She was alone, so perhaps she was soliciting? Her past love life is picked over. Her mental state, after all she had depression, is forensically examined. Why doesn't the headline read "Woman takes a short-cut home from work and a man rapes her"?

For years, the husband monitors her phone, her messages, her emails, her friends. The husband is worried she is having an affair and convinced she is screwing around. In a jealous rage, he is provoked into stabbing her 29 times and beating her to death with piece of concrete.

He says that he had to defend himself as she had a knife in her hand. Instead, why don't the headlines state, "Woman is terrified of being beaten as her husband accuses her of being unfaithful, so she picks up a knife to fend him off, but he murders her in a frenzy of hate anyway"?

The headline reads "20-year-old man from one of the most expensive private schools in the country, on the cusp of his career, assaults a woman in the face and stomps on her phone". According to the judge, the man was possibly provoked by a

woman's attire, which is one reason for no criminal conviction being recorded against him. Why doesn't the headline state: "Man gets off scot-free for king-hitting a passer-by in the face as he walks past her and destroys her property"?

How do you define these scenarios that take place every hour of every day, of every week, of every year? One's perception of who is the victim and who is the perpetrator can be manipulated so easily by words.

Victims are made out to be the guilty party. She caused him to lose control, she asked for it. Perpetrators are rendered innocent. He was worried she was having an affair, she led him on, his life will be ruined.

The passive voice is the weapon of misogyny. She was sexually assaulted, not, he raped her. She was killed, not, man murders woman. She let things get out of hand, rather than, he didn't care if she consented and didn't ask.

It matters how such scenes are reported. It matters how you use words. Language matters. These headlines matter. Words matter. Speak up.

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Fran Hart joins Team Swivel on Byron council ticket

Political candidate Fran Hart is a small business owner and active community member.

Running a successful manufacturing business that supplies a national market has required Fran to refine her skills in communication, adaptability and problem solving. Pretty handy skills for a newly announced candidate for the Mark Swivel Team in the Byron Shire Council elections.

The ability to collaborate and be outcomes-focused is just what local government needs.

But that's only one of Fran's abilities. Her professional training is in community development, and helping people with needs link up with relevant resources. That's been a lifelong focus.

She's lived in Byron Shire for 15 years, and 11 of them in her much-loved village of Federal.

Together with her husband and their three children, Fran left Sydney to find a community where her values were shared, and her focus on community was celebrated. Federal ticked all the boxes.

"I knew Byron as my brother had moved here, and I loved the place and the sense of shared ideals and an engaged community. It immediately felt like home. The focus on people, on the environment and on giving back, making a contribution, really resonated."

One of the ways Fran put that idea into action was to co-found Federal Loves Refugees, which campaigns to raise awareness and provide support for refugee advocacy and services. The chance to "think globally and act locally" made sense to her. The capacity to bring people together to help others is a powerful force for change.



Fran Hart (left) joins Mark Swivel (right) and his team standing for election to Byron Shire Council.

"It sends such an important message that collectively we can take on big, difficult problems and make a difference to how people understand issues. It's a lesson about practical compassion, about showing our kids that acting to help others is really important."

Fran's decision to join the Mark Swivel Team stems directly from her desire to benefit her community. In fact, it's a practical opportunity to use her professional experience and understanding in a direct and local way. She trained in community development, specifically helping vulnerable people access resources and opportunities. She knows how people can get left behind if they're not listened to, included and respected.

"Part of my working life has been as a case manager for people dealing with disability and ageing. For example, I've worked with people dealing with early onset dementia, where the challenges of daily life are accentuated. I understand how critically

important it is to enable people to live their best lives, to be properly supported and cared for. To be included.

"That's how we grow as a community, and I think Council can play a bigger role, can make a difference, in building those connections between needs and outcomes."

Too many people, she argues, have been disenfranchised by the current political debate. Ordinary people who don't fit the "propertied and privileged" version of Byron Shire.

Fran is currently on the receiving end of this herself, as her and her partner find their business's tenancy becoming untenable in Byron Industrial Estate.

"We've been priced out of the market, our rent has just increased more than 30%, we are only able to sign a short term lease and the building is on the market for an exorbitant price, it's a really difficult way to try and run a business, we're searching for somewhere

local to move our business but there is a real shortage."

Fran argues the current Council hasn't done enough to develop innovation and creativity in how we deal with problems like this and others such as homelessness, the impact of short term accommodation practices and tourism management.

"There is such a need for people to re-engage with what Council does, and how it can become a force for connecting people, encouraging collaboration and community decision making.

We have a chance to really improve on the current Council, to bring people into much bigger discussions about how Council works, what it can do, what happens with our money and how we relate to other tiers of government. I'd like to be part of a campaign that helps provide education and understanding about the role of local government."

Fran also knows intimately the social and sporting side of community life. She's a stalwart of Eureka Football Club – as a player, a coach and a committee member. She can even put up the net. Coaching her daughters' teams, and playing in her own, has simply reinforced so many elements of community life she loves. Working together, benefitting from the diversity of skills people bring, achieving good outcomes.

"Basically, I'm someone who relishes the chance to pitch in and work with others to get done what needs to be done. That's how I'm approaching being a Councillor, hopefully, that I can be part of a creative, innovative team working collaboratively for the community's benefit. It's so necessary and so possible," she said.

Animal Justice candidate profile

by Anika Mannan

Greg Keightley (pictured) remembers the first animal he ever rescued. "It was an old lady brushtail possum whose tree had been cut down. She was very sick, newly homeless and covered in sores, living at the bottom of someone's old backyard incinerator in Glenbrook."

Born and raised in Penrith, Greg is a wildlife carer and Animal Justice Party federal candidate who has been living in the Blue Mountains for almost 40 years. He became a wildlife rescuer in 2000. "At that time a great flurry of development had begun as the Sydney basin opened up, and I saw a great need for people to rescue the animals who fell foul of development."

Greg has rescued all kinds of wildlife including snakes, lizards, turtles, frogs, possums, kangaroos, wallabies and many species of birds. "I have a great passion for magpies, they do it pretty tough. I've raised as many as 30 orphaned magpies in one season."

Recognising the particular plight of kangaroos and wallabies from habitat loss, Greg joined forces with international filmmakers to found the global advocacy NGO, 'Kangaroos Alive'.

But wildlife carers aren't able to take big steps forward for animals at a systemic level. "We can't continue to put band-aids on weeping sores, you've got to get to the



problem. That's why I joined the Animal Justice Party (AJP). I saw the people in AJP NSW working hard and tirelessly for animals."

Greg is the Animal Justice Party's federal candidate for the seat of Macquarie, covering the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury region. With two MPs in NSW State Parliament already, "We're a party that can have an influence on decisions of government," Greg said.

Here's a quick list of wins from the two AJP MPs in NSW Parliament, Emma Hurst and Mark Pearson:

- Ended the use of dolphins (and all cetaceans!) in entertainment in NSW;
- Mandatory lifetime animal bans for abusers;
- Animals recognised as victims of domestic violence and added onto ADVOs;
- Eight-fold increases in penalties for animal abuse;
- \$500,000 to upgrade

- refuges to house animals fleeing violence;
- Amendment passed to stop strata by-laws banning animals;
- Interim animal bans while abusers are still in court;
- Recommendation for transFARMation in Dairy Inquiry report;
- \$33,000 raised for animal sanctuaries during the bushfires;
- Parliamentary Inquiries into: battery hens, animals in circuses and dolphinariums, kangaroos, koalas, and animal cruelty laws;
- Agreement from the Government to reform legislation to stop animal abusers working with children.

We're making a huge impact. Every new member gives our MPs greater political power as they fight for animals and nature in Parliament.

nsw.animaljusticeparty.org



POSITION VACANT School Business Administrator

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education is seeking an enthusiastic School Business Administrator (SBA) to work part-time, 3 days a week.

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Rainbow Ridge is a small but growing school with around 100 students and a staff of around 30 (full-time, part-time and specialist teachers, administration and maintenance staff). We are located 10 km north of Nimbin, surrounded by extensive gardens and bushland. The local environment is a mixture of villages, small farms, alternative communities, and national parks – all in a beautiful subtropical setting. Our school currently includes classes from Kindergarten to Class 8. The children experience learning in a highly creative and nurturing environment with a strong commitment to maintaining the heart of Steiner Education. Good relationships between our teachers, students and parents foster the life-long love of learning we wish for our children.

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- Oversee the School's administration, maintenance, finance, property and IT programs and systems
- Recruitment, training and management of the administration and maintenance teams
- Oversee HR and payroll processes
- Manage Work, Health and Safety;
- Manage WorkCover and insurance claims, including acting as the school's Return to Work coordinator
- Review, update and implement strategic, master and business plans
- Manage parent invoices and payments;
- Manage the school's debt collection processes
- Financial planning, budgeting and reporting;
- Marketing and promotion of the school;
- Oversee capital projects, asset replacement and maintenance

Please send us your expression of interest in this position by addressing the following criteria:

- Administrative and/or management qualifications
- Experience in school administration and financial management
- Demonstrated commitment to professional and ethical practices in education administration
- Good understanding of Steiner Education
- Good organisational skills with ability to complete tasks and meet deadlines
- Ability to work in a team, to lead and to delegate tasks
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Be able to work with energy and enthusiasm with respect for adults and children
- Demonstrated experience with office management programs and technology
- Knowledge of independent school governance

Please contact us to indicate your interest or for a copy of the SBA job description at: admin@rainbowridge.nsw.edu.au Applicants will be reviewed as received.

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education 279 Lillian Rock Road, Lillian Rock NSW 2480

Can we flatten the energy curve?

by Simon Thomas

Cash was tight when I moved to my first bush property. We saved our pennies and built a cosy shack, but running water was a luxury beyond our means.

The idyllic waterholes of Eden Creek lay nearby, so we hauled it two buckets at a time; around ten minutes work to gain 20 litres.

Eventually, we manifested a 4,500 litre tank and borrowed a fire-fighter pump. With an investment in a roll of poly-pipe, we were ready for an exciting upgrade! I took one litre of petrol down to the pump, fuelled it up and pulled the chord, rushing back to the tank as the old beast roared into action. Within minutes, the tank was overflowing.

To my surprise, pumping 4,500 litres of water had used less than a cup of fuel, costing 30 cents and saving me 225 trips to the creek.

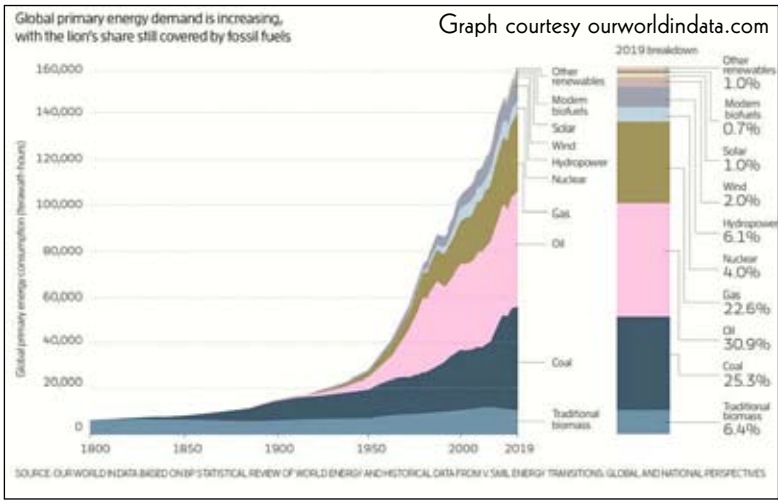
This demonstrates the power of fossil fuels. According to

mathematicians, the energy contained a single barrel of oil is equivalent to a human working eight hours per day for 11 years.

This energetic wealth, accrued over millions of years, ignited the population bomb. The transition of human society from hunter-gatherer to agrarian systems swelled our numbers from 50 million to 600 million over the space of 5,000 years. However, in the 200 years since industrialisation, we have mushroomed to eight billion and counting.

Meanwhile, energy use per capita has skyrocketed. We are hooked on the quick fix of easy energy for nearly every action we complete – from our mass-produced food to the cotton of our sheets.

In agrarian societies, every calorie burned working on the land returns ten calories in produce. However, by the time food reaches your refrigerator in 2021, it has taken 10 calories of energy to deliver every



one calorie that you eat.

Every form of energy that we use has an environmental imprint, be it the energy that it takes to create the device, the mining and production of materials, pollution caused by manufacture, or other impacts such as the damming of rivers and the leakage of heat from all our gadgets.

In fact, if we continue to grow

the world economy at 2.3% as the balmy economists insist is necessary, heat leakage alone will raise the temperature of the atmosphere to 100 degrees within 430 years. That's without even taking the greenhouse effect into account! Remember, 2.3% growth means doubling the economy every 26 years, ie exponential growth.

The only solution to this self-destructive addiction is a radical winding back of our energy usage. However, our entire infrastructure – the buildings, roads, dams, factories etc have been created with an enormous amount of energy, back in the days when oil bubbled out of the ground with very little input.

Today, when the extraction methods include fracking and tar sands, it can take a barrel of oil to produce just three. Still, we have enslaved ourselves to an endless treadmill of energy usage simply to keep our lifestyle on track.

Of course, all this is the natural result of judging our progress by GDP rather than any true measures of planetary and human wellbeing.

A new paradigm is needed. We have to lose faith in the myth that progress can be measured by numbers on a page and that the belief in eternal growth on a finite planet is somehow sane.

There's a lot to be said for staying cool

by Bernadine Schwartz

Whenever we're confronted with an emergency, there's a lot to be said for staying cool, calm and collected, but that alone can't get you through a crisis. In this country though, in typical Aussie fashion, we casually make light of a problem, no matter how big or small.

This is the country whose PM thought "she'll be right", and then flew across to the other side of the world for a family vacation, while the whole world watched on in horror as the nation burned.

Miraculously the rain came just in the nick of time and we've been extremely fortunate. But what happens when Lady Luck doesn't come to our rescue? Take a long hard look at America, the most powerful empire on the planet, being brought to its knees and not a single weapon used, just the untested forces of nature.

For most Australians, the carnage they see on their little TV screens is nothing more than images of faraway places. No worries, not happening in my backyard. Well something's not right in my backyard and I have a bloody big one.

How many weeks of no rain? Those telltale cracks are appearing and I've got hungry, thirsty wallabies, again. Currawongs and king parrots scavenging for nectar in the grevilleas and the bandicoots are back to turning my precious pot

plants upside down and excavating the bigger ones. Others might think "she'll be right, no worries" but not me.

This lacksadaisical attitude is entrenched in the Australian psyche and is why we have a government that is lagging way behind the rest of the world on climate action. A report in August from the Australian Institute highlighted Australia was well behind developed nations for renewable energy and has one of the highest transport and energy emissions in the world, despite an update in green power and clean energy projects. We also have one of the lowest non-fossil fuel electricity generations, even though we rank second globally for rooftop solar power.

Other countries look on with envy at this sunburnt country, where there are miles and miles of wide open spaces for wind farms and massive solar installations, while we chose to waste decades of free wind and sunshine, and it's a sin!

Our god-fearing PM claims Australia is transitioning away from fossil fuels to clean energy sources and we're one of the world's leaders, when in truth we ranked third-last out of 23 countries.

The nation is right on target he says, and fulfilling its obligation to the Paris Accord, but according to the Office of the Chief Economist, there are 116 fossil fuel projects proposed. They include new operations and the expansion of

existing ones, which means new coal mines and ports, gas fields, gas pipelines, LNG terminals and oil fields.

Data compiled by the Australian Energy Market Operator revealed that as of July 2021, at least 115 MW of upgraded or proposed coal-fired power was on the horizon, along with 3.4 GW of gas fired generation across 23 projects, bringing the total number of projects to 139.

The greenhouse gas footprint from these filthy operations can only be described as an act of genocide. Just four of those listed by the Office of the Chief Economist will potentially release another 9.8 billion tonnes of CO₂, cancelling out any gains made under Australia's emissions target 109 times over, from now to 2030. 109 times over!

The International Energy Agency has summarised what needs to be done in just a few short words: "For Australia to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, they need to rapidly transition away from fossil fuels. There is no room for new or expanded coal, oil and gas projects."

Scientists had anticipated that the global pandemic would slow down emissions, what with planes grounded, empty factories and a dramatic reduction in road traffic, but according to scientists who study the atmosphere, it was all but undetectable.

Our federal government has a history of disregarding the IPCC's

recommendations, but I've yet to see a backlash from Australian voters or a public outcry. And when I say outcry, I mean thousands, not a handful of people with their backs up against the wall, like the eight students and a nun, who had a short-lived victory in the Federal court. The court's ruling was intended to protect our children's future and their rights as a citizen. Instead it was brushed aside by our federal Minister for the environment, Susan Ley, who holds what I believe is the most important portfolio a minister could have.

Yet she willingly accepted advice given by the Federal Environment Department assuring her it was unlikely Whitehaven Coal Ltd would contribute to rising global temperatures and the proposed mine would not be harmful to humans. And if it wasn't approved, it was likely a comparable amount of coal would still be consumed in its place!

What I found just as disturbing was during the assessment process, 62% of the public's submissions were in favour of the mining operation. When the future of our children is overridden by money, that's when you know we've reached the end of the line as a species. Not only is the planet reaching a tipping point but humanity too.

While other nations are divesting from fossil fuels, we're busy tripping over ourselves breaking all the rules. Put simply, we're the rogue nation of the world.



A flyer for Climate Action by four children from Bridgeman Downs Brisbane

We're all in this together, but you wouldn't think so, and the longer we keep delaying, the more out of reach salvaging something for our children becomes. These are the sentiments of an endless list of environmental and scientific organisations, including the IPCC.

I'll never understand a world that believes it's acceptable to put a timeframe on saving a planet because it suits them best. What I do understand is that Australians need to wake up and now.

They should be worried out of their minds and pulling their hair out. Because it's not all good, she won't be bloody right and we most definitely should be stressing out.

But WTF would I know. I'm stranded in the backwaters of the world, in the land of football, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars. And mediocrity.

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Energy-efficient refrigeration

by Diana Gosper, Rainbow Power Co.

Off-grid dwellers (and energy-conscious griddies) have been waiting for decades for an affordable, efficient, modern fridge, with easy access, excellent thermal design, a proper sized freezer, good warranties and one that is available in a size that suits a normal household.



Finally we have one that is easy to source locally and is affordable for the general person not just for the Chris Hemsworths of the world (good on you though Chris).

Because gas is expensive and non-renewable, and modern fridges are becoming way more efficient (as are solar panels/batteries) we tend to recommend electric fridges these days. I know, what a change!

This is the fridge we have found to be very low power consumption (if you get it from Jodie in Lismore let her know Nat from RPC sent you for the best price she can do: www.retravision.com.au/lg-332l-top-mount-fridge-gt332sdc), this particular fridge consumes approx 800 watt hours per day, can be run from a minimum 400 watt inverter (with minimal start-up surge), a minimum of 2 x 370 watt panels and at a minimum a 100 watt lithium battery or 500 amp hour lead battery bank.

We can also recommend the Samsung SR471LSTC (471lt) and the Hisence HR6BF157B (157lt bar fridge). These are reasonably priced, and the power consumption is competitively low.

You can still get chest freezer style fridges which are efficient, and you might find some models of the Evakool and Arcticold fridges that work for your purposes, especially the chest style ones (which you can turn off at night and they still keep the food cold), but for a typical household fridge, so far, the aforementioned are the best we have found.

We believe three-way fridges are a thing of the past, as are 'gas only' fridges – clearly we believe all appliances possible should be running from the power of the sun. Unlike gas fridges, the new model electric ones do not lose efficiency as the weather gets hotter and unlike three-way fridges they don't use exorbitant amounts of energy to power up and remain operating. The chance of a fire breaking out, or exhaust poisoning is also greatly reduced.

Remember to keep your fridge and freezer full, even bottles of water to fill up the empty space, and it will run more efficiently, but do make sure there is airflow around items. Also don't position your fridge in the full or afternoon sun.

When it comes to off grid systems, a small one is enough to run an efficient fridge (see: www.rpc.com.au/solar-systems/off-grid-solar-power/small.html), so you can always get a system just to run the fridge and have your existing solar setup to power everything else (which is what I currently have going on)... or you can adjust your desired load output/appliances that you want to run every day, and have a look at what is suggested as a system design to run the fridge and everything else as well all on the one system.

It really depends on your budget and rooftop/space available for panels, and on how much power you want to consume (see: www.rpc.com.au/solar-systems/off-grid-solar-power/quick-quote.html?system=51). We are just a phone call away if you want to do a free customised quote over the phone any time. I would say as a rough price (but I am not a designer so don't hold me to it), about \$4000 for a system just for a fridge (a two-panel kit), and \$13-15,000 for a modest household to run everything (except air-con).

It is always adjustable to your budget and needs, for instance I completely got rid of my hair iron and hair dryer when I went off-grid, and there is no way I would own a clothes iron, a bar heater or a toaster, but my 300 watt barmix is a blessing and laptops that take way less power than a PC are a goddess-send, my TV that doesn't take much, and I use rechargeable power tools and the like, all on a pretty modest little system.

RPC have over 33 years' experience and are the local experts on solar power for your home and business. Our products are backed by long warranties and our after-sales care is second to none. Give us a call on 02 6689-1430, email: sales@rpc.com.au or send an enquiry through our website...or pop down and see us at 1 Alternative Way, Nimbin.

Loonacy



Revenge of the Loon
by Laurie Axtens

Each and every conspiracy theory contains a grain of truth which like a pearl is covered in layer after layer of half-truths and is then finished off with the stain of madness and impossibility.

Many just swallow it whole, but the conscientious who are strongly attracted to these grains of truth quite reasonably are fearful of the stain of madness and this keeps them holding on to these grains of truth in quiet places far from the

haranguing crowd.

A crowd which spins in ever-diminishing circles about them in a horrific tumult of advocacy; some selling madness, others selling conformity as the undeniable and absolute truth. Each purporting to be scientific and providing study upon peer-reviewed study proving their case to be correct.

Ah, science is a strange beast that draws its assurances from failed falsifications; it's the art of skepticism and in practice it is far from incorruptible. It's just the best method we've got, but it is only as

good as the people using it.

Meanwhile for the conscientious, their little island of quiet grows ever smaller and I watch as they tire and fill with anxiety.

The fear of death is heavy in each of the whirling camps, and they're desperate for the conscientious to affirm them and their theory. To help them feel safe and right.

All I'm willing to say is that science seems to indicate that complex systems inherently seek balance. Do you think we're living in balance with the natural world?

Mankind has exploded

Shapeshifting

by Anand Gandharva

Can humans surf evolution, change course? Why sail to collective doom?

In ancient Greece of Homer's tales, Odysseus had the ears of all other sailors plugged, while sailing past the Sirens.

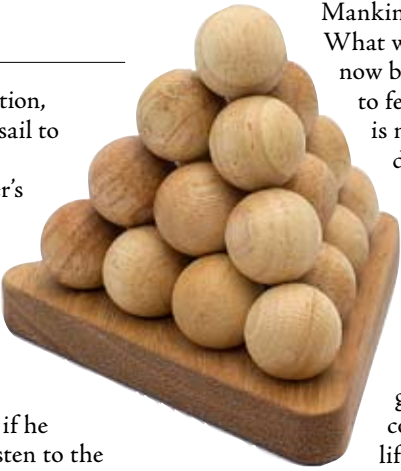
Sneakily, he had himself tied to the mast, and instructed the crew not to loosen the ropes, even if he begged them. So, he could listen to the enticingly destructive Sirens, and not shipwreck on their island.

It's like having your cake, and eating it too!

The lessons for Aquarius? We either become sustainable, or extinct if humanity hangs on to childhood values. Live with nature, or destroy it. Buy smart, or feed soulless industries. Live off the sun, or exploit fossil fuels. Tread lightly, or leave a huge footprint.

But can people have it all? The answer is no, for humanity has to be constrained, like Odysseus. No need for tying people to a mast, dictatorial eugenics, one-child policies. Just curtail old habits.

In the consumer society, that means 'buy sustainably'.



Mankind has exploded. What was millions, is now billions. The way to feed extra people is not to occupy defrosting lands, the solar system and habitable exoplanets, but alter habits so people won't gobble up conscious life or abuse environments.

Nature used to be a danger, now humans are a danger to it.

Mankind has to learn to feed on gardens, orchards, buy tucker made from plant derivatives, live in deserts, on the bottom of oceans, on ice or on mountains. Going from fossil fuels to renewables takes generations and arguments, but voluntary restraint is the future.

NASA asks astronauts to go herbivore on Mars.

It is not DNA (nature) that satisfies taste, but nurture. Taste is not genes, but habit. There are herbivore groups, like Jain, Vedic Hindu, Taoists, vegans, babies on mother's milk.

Food gets broken down into its

components, and plant proteins are... proteins. Plants are easier to break down in digestion, and are healthier!

"Feed the man meat" is brainwash to sustain industries. Elephants are mighty. Gladiators were strong. One doesn't have to take a mammal's life to satisfy hunger.

Animals concentrate sunshine, but its chemicals feed nightmares and fears, like cow dreads in adrenaline at slaughter houses. Only a few predators exist in family groups compared to herbivores. Some 50% of land is used to feed carnivore habits. Cows instead of people.

Even though manufacturing statistics are dreadful, most people are full of goodwill.

Tribal economies, warring each other, gave us the United Nations, but it also caused ecological crises, climate change, pollution, internment camps, caste systems, untimely deaths, population quotas, 'top down' ways of controlling society, etc.

It needs an orchestra to make music of divergent sounds; to hear the combined strength of community, accept common goods like hospitals, water, roads, libraries, teachers. The same goes for food needs.

In the academic world it is 'publish or perish'. On Earth it is 'adapt or perish'.

So far, dinosaurs lived 400 times longer than human civilisations. People can do better than reptiles, can't they?

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Sonnet II

by S Sorrensen

Anger trolls the streets, white, male and mean,
Protest, maybe, but Q's involved too,
The lads scream 'No masks!' and 'No to vaccine!'
Loud and violent, like Americans do.

Meanwhile, in country Aboriginal,
No vaccines, pissed off bro', again betrayed,
The system's still racist, colonial,
See, Wilcannia is black and far away.

Anger spreading globally, a disease
Stalking us like nuclear submarines,
Is Covid the cause? Or lockdown decrees?
Or Earth choking on polyethylene?

Don't know what makes this anger from within,
But I've an answer: Bring back the love-in.

An Honourable Man

A ukulele song in D
Words and music by Sue Edmonds, Sept 2021

I'm an honourable man for all to see
The laws of Australia were entrusted to me
I'm an honourable, honourable man,
An honourable, honourable man.

Nothing to see here, nothing to show
Who's behind the millions, they'll never know.
I'm an honourable, honourable man,
An honourable, honourable man.

I shake my head in disbelief, have a little cry,
They say years back I raped a girl, I strongly deny.
I'm an honourable, honourable man,
An honourable, honourable man.

I'll fight them in the barricades with the long arm of the law,
A blind trust will pay my bills because I am so poor.
I'm an honourable, honourable man,
An honourable, honourable man.

My government relies on me to keep them at the helm
I am the crucial number so we're free from greenie hell.
I'm an honourable, honourable man,
An honourable, honourable man.

My dad

by Jazmin Theodore

In 1932, during the Great Depression, my father was only 16 and he took off with a swag searching for work all throughout NSW, as far as Victoria and up into Queensland, but mainly NSW. As a child and a teenager he told me all his stories.

There were always hobos camped together, and at the side of the hobos' camp was the metho drinkers camp. The hobos didn't want the metho drinkers in their camp because they'd be drinking metho out of a bottle and light a cigarette and blow themselves up.

The government had put a semi-poisonous ingredient in there so this wouldn't happen.

The book that my father is referenced in, is called *Keep Moving*, written by Frank Huelin. That's what the police used to say to him, keep moving.

I was told of a story of a sergeant and two constables who came to the camp and said keep moving. They said, "We're not going anywhere."

One pulled out his gun and said, "Now keep moving, we don't want you in this town." Their pistols had to primed in those days.

The hobos said, "Yeah, you might shoot one of us but the rest of us will tear you apart." So the three coppers turned tail and took off.

It wasn't an easy lifestyle and my father's name was Fred. His nickname was Fast Freight Freddy, and he was a leader to the other men. Often the other men would come to him and say, "What are we going to do Freddy?" They heard of work in a nearby town.

The engine driver and the railway inspector hated hobos, and so when the engine driver came into the station he used to let all the passengers off the train and then they'd shunt about two miles up the track.

They'd load up the fire and then come back through the town and up the hill so quickly the hobos couldn't jump aboard.

As the engine drivers went past they'd give them the thumbs up. So all the hobos said, "What are we going to do Freddy? We've got to get on that train."

My father said to them, "Leave it with me boys, I'll see if I can come up with something."

He was walking around the town just on dark and the butcher came out with his garbage which was full of rotting suet.

Freddy waited until it was dark, took the garbage can up to the railway tracks, and him and a few of the hobos greased all the railway tracks up the hill.



So the train came through and the driver gave them the thumbs up, when he hit the greased tracks it took the train over two hours to get up the hill. So all the hobos just sauntered over and comfortably got on the train.

Later on there was a 50 pound reward posted up to find the whereabouts of my father. They never got him though.

In the late 60s or early 70s when Gough and Margaret were in power, they gave lots of money to the Arts, and they were going to do a three-part TV series on the book *Keep Moving*.

My father was only mentioned in the book twice, but when they were making the film, they decided to put him in the film because he had such a charismatic personality. My father was so excited!

When they illegally and viciously sacked Gough and Margaret Whitlam as the leaders of Australia, and the liberal Murdoch country party got in, they cut all film funding, so the series was never made.

My mother was only 17 when she met my father, when he was 20, in 1936. They were madly in love and they got married on 18th December 1937. I was born in December 1938.

I'm proud to say this poem was written in tribute to my father.

When she's not in lockdown, Jazmin can be found doing Tarot readings in Cullen Street.

Fast Freight Freddie

by Sam Kelly

*Those were the days
When Fred was on the track
A billycan and swag
Hanging on his back*

*Now Fast Freight Freddie
Would always travel free
He'd jumped the rattlers
From Ballarat to Willow Tree*

*In one little country town
He was told he couldn't stay
The sergeant in this little place
Liked to always have his way*

*The train was backed up the line
For the station master was sly
Now race it through the station
They won't catch it going by*

*The swaggies stood and watched
her pass
And all were tensed to go
To travel with Fast Freight Fred
You never could be slow*

*The driver gave the thumbs up sign
As the train came racing by
Fast Freight Fred was a jump
ahead
He'd greased the railway line*

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On Saturday 23rd October at 8pm, Three Lords will present a spectacular audio/visual show curated by Dashboard Animals and Three Lords, converting The Regent Theatre into a 30-minute sci-fi subversive live music and visual experience for your senses to warm you up for James Cameron's *Aliens*.

Tickets \$35/\$30 available at: www.the-regent.com.au/live-events SE Asian menu, pizza and bar available.

The Balcony Sessions at The Regent

The Balcony Sessions are in full swing in Murwillumbah – every concert on the alfresco balcony features quality musicianship, great food and a vibrant bar in a fantastic setting.

Every Friday from 6-8pm are the Weekly Wind-downs, tickets are \$15/10 and children under 12 are free. Featured this month is the continental folk of Andrea Soler on 8th October, the electro-acoustica of Ollie Twohill on 15th October, the alt-hillbilly-blues of Bill Jacobi on 22nd October, blues' n' gospel with Bone Lazy on 29th October and the low-fi Jazz Siren, Sarah Stando on 5th November.

Saturday evenings are the Sunset Soirées from 5-7pm. The ticket price of \$30 includes a cocktail of the day and tapas-canapés upon arrival, plus some incredible local talent including Welsh songstress Sali Bracewell on 9th October, alt-rock balladeer Mick Daley on 16th October, the dreamy-groove of Mykaela Jay on 23rd October, the folk-noir of Ilona Harker on 30th October and the lyrical soul of Jesse Witney on 6th November.

Sundays are the World Music Sessions from 1-3pm for \$15/\$10 and feature the crystal slide of Shivam Rath on 10th October, the sublime Gallic/Gaelic music of Vasudha Harte on 17th October, the rhythmic nu-folk of Shani Forrester on 24th October, Will Henderson's Flamenco to Soul on 31st October and the Persian-world-soul of Sahar on 7th November.

Khanthaly's Kitchen authentic SE Asian menu, pizzas, licensed bar and cinema available every weekend. Bookings advised. Find out more at: www.the-regent.com.au/live-events



Andrea Soler



Jesse Witney



Mykaela Jay



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