

## Kindness of strangers

I spent a few days around the Nimbin area in April, and found myself in the middle of nowhere on a country road after leaving my “friend’s” car to try and make it back home to Woy Woy by myself.

I had absolutely no idea where I was, where the nearest town was, where I could find a bus, nothing!

I am a 65-year old woman, raised in the UK and not given to displays of flapping my arms around wildly in the middle of an empty country road for no reason, but I tried flagging down two cars – one stopped, listened to what I had to say and drove off; the second car just drove straight past me.

Then I came upon a house and met a man and woman who introduced themselves as Nev and Avis. I cannot tell you what a godsend these two people were. They did not know me, I suspect my story sounded strange, and I was becoming distressed by the situation I found myself in.

After explaining my situation to them, they very kindly drove me to Casino where I was able to book a train home. I am so grateful to Nev and Avis for helping me, as there was absolutely nothing in the area to show me where I was going.

Karen Sinclair  
Woy Woy

## Climate modelling

Thousands of scientists from around the world have released an IPCC report that analyses future climate projections from dozens of climate models, produced by more than 50 modelling centres around the world.

This science-based report shows global average surface temperature to rise between 1-1.8C and 3.3-5.7C this century above pre-industrial levels for the lowest and highest emission probabilities.

The exact increase the planet experiences will depend on how much more greenhouse gas is emitted. Human generated greenhouse gas is continuing to significantly increase.

This is a slow moving, species-killing catastrophe. By comparison, the Covid pandemic is an amusing interlude.

I have a poor consoling thought: “Men go and come, but earth abides” (Ecclesiastes,1,4).

Michael Brooke  
Kyogle

## Biomass

At a time when coal-fired power stations are being phased out in most parts of the world due to the climate emergency, for some strange reason biomass is being used as an alternative power source in the Northern Rivers. It appears that we are replacing

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one carbon-polluting source with another.

What a double whammy!

This is completely nonsensical. While biomass may be, at a stretch, considered renewable, it is in fact a fuel that releases carbon dioxide contributing to global warming.

What a paradox!

We have a living thing, a tree, that does take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and safely store it. Why then do we have companies in the Northern Rivers that are being allowed to decimate native forests that are working hard to mitigate the effects of climate change?

We can use REAL renewable and sustainable energy sources such as solar and wind.

Both solar and wind have the advantage of having minimal impact on important habitat for our increasingly shrinking and vulnerable native fauna. As well, solar and wind do not damage our roads and contribute to our carbon footprint in a negative way.

The latest IPCC report unequivocally argues the case that we MUST stop releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere if we are to avoid an inhospitable planet.

Our politicians MUST be held to account.

Sue Page  
Upper Horseshoe Creek

## Water options

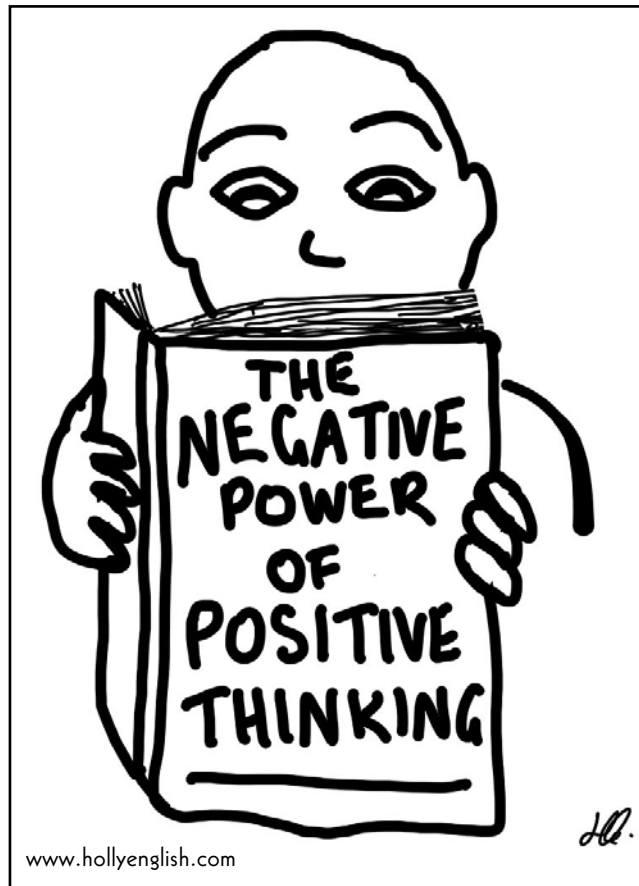
It would seem that a dam at Dunoon is still on some people’s minds.

It has actually been on a lot of people’s minds for a long time, and it is for this reason that it has been thoroughly considered by Rous Councillors over many years and finally dropped from being a viable source of water for our area.

Most Rous Councillors reject the dam and support a range of options that respect culture and protect the rainforest. This range of water options includes groundwater, desalination plants, recycled water and rainwater tanks on home and business premises.

The new Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan excludes the dam and is now with the Department of Planning and Industry for approval.

It has been said that the



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majority of local people supported a dam. Certainly, a majority of people signed petitions in favour of a dam, but as Chair of Rous Keith Williams said in his summing up, the effort to sign a petition can’t be compared to the effort required to put together an individual submission – which were well researched, thought through, and against building an expensive and destructive dam.

Let’s all support Rous to get on with the job of supplying us with water security and not rely on one source alone, which would have been on the same creek as the existing dam, and would have been rainfall-dependent as climate change increases.

We need a water system fit for the 21st Century!

Jen Ireland  
The Channon

## Enough is enough

The ‘conservative progressives’ cry outdated greedy and destructive methods of supplying water to the people, driven by the colonial mentality (Dunoon Dam).

I cry cultural genocide. The flooding of the graves of the ancestors of the Widjabul Wai-bul peoples is the direct continuation of the cultural genocide which has been implemented on this continent since the European invasion.

When will enough be enough? When so much has already been stolen, desecrated and destroyed, when there is so little left. So much more threatened to be lost in the face of climate change.

When will enough be enough? Entire species going extinct, collectively dead. The cause: anthropogenic poisoning, the sickness caused by the run off from imperial colonial capitalism.

When will enough be

enough? To understand the true value of our place within this planet, that the damage we do unto the world we do unto ourselves. For us to come together and support through the healing of the collective grief triggered by the destruction that has become us.

Exercise the honesty and integrity of compassion and care. We can meet our needs without destruction and pain.

Léandra Martiniello  
The Channon

## Assange extradition

Given the unfolding events in Afghanistan it seems more appropriate than ever to consider the plight of Australian citizen Julian Assange.

A defeat/retreat of US power such as this on the military front does not mean that there will be a corresponding defeat or retreat in the courtroom in London.

The US government seems as determined as ever to avenge Julian’s and Wikileaks’ publication of not only the ‘Afghan War Logs’ but also the ‘Iraqi War Logs’ including the infamous ‘Collateral Murder’ video.

We can only imagine how incensed the FBI/CIA US intelligence conglomerate would be following the disastrous and humiliating end of their imperialist project of 20 years to rid Afghanistan of the Taliban, only to allow them back again.

At the recent preliminary appeal hearing on 11th August, US prosecutors managed to successfully challenge the testimony of expert witness psychiatrist Professor Michael Kopelman and add weight to their application to appeal against the British court’s decision not to extradite Julian to the US.

# Notices

## Annual General Meeting

Nimbin Organic Food Co-op AGM: Monday 11th October at 5pm in the Green Room, Nimbin Community Centre, or via Zoom if gathering restrictions in place. All members welcome.

## About us

Managing editor Bob Dooley

Assistant editor Sue Stock

Sub-editor S Sorrensen

Layout Peter Chaplin, Andy Gough, Bob Dooley

Photographers Sue Stock, Chibo Mertineit

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

Bookkeeper Martha Paitson  
Web [www.nimbingoodtimes.com](http://www.nimbingoodtimes.com)  
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**NEXT DEADLINE:**  
**Friday 24th September**

Email [nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com](mailto: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.*

The prosecution won the right to appeal on the petty grounds that Professor Kopelman did not reveal that Julian had started a family with his partner and had become the father of two children while he was in the Ecuadorian embassy.

Presumably they are suggesting that this diminishes the possibility of Julian committing suicide if he is sentenced to more than three lifetimes in a maximum security prison in the US – as the judge in the first hearing gave as her reason not to grant his extradition.

Judge Baraitser has also revealed that she was aware of these details and that she considered it appropriate that the names of Julian’s partner and children should remain confidential in the interest of their security and safety.

The decision to allow the appeal to be heard in late October has left Julian still cruelly incarcerated for a further agonising two months for him and his family in the UK high security prison Belmarsh.

The true nature of the war in Afghanistan has long been revealed by Assange, Wikileaks and others, counter to the propaganda justifying and promoting war.

Julian has also established a permanent and invaluable archive of invaluable material of insight into the US and its allies (including Australia) occupation of Afghanistan. An archive that will no doubt be mined as the histories are written.

As Julian said himself in 2011 when speaking of vested interests “...the goal is an endless war, not a successful war.”

Although the next two months leading up to the appeal will be excruciating for Julian, it is only a short time for us to increase the

pressure on the Australian Government and our local representatives to demand his release and bring an end to the decade-long cruel and barbaric persecution of a journalist, publisher, Australian citizen, political prisoner and voice for ending imperialist war.

As events in Afghanistan demonstrate, never has the call for peace and justice for all peoples been more urgent. And given Julian Assange’s situation, never has the call for his release been more urgent.

I urge everyone to do what they can where they can whenever they can to not let Julian Assange be forgotten.

Roy Drew  
Mullumbimby

## Afghanistan

The Trump administration negotiated with the Taliban for American forces to depart from Afghanistan. The US-trained Afghan army simply stepped aside for the Taliban takeover.

The US lost this war, it lost the Vietnam war, it made and continues to make a botch-up of the continuing war in Iraq.

America’s penchant for war has caused the indiscriminate deaths of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children.

It appears the USA relishes the bombing, shooting and the killing of others, but is hopelessly incompetent at actually fighting. America’s holier-than-thou power is piteous when it is defied.

Perhaps the United States of America should confine itself to its own domestic mass shootings, homicides by its police, homegrown gun murders, and local riotous insurrections.

America is not a force for good in the world.

Michael Brooke  
Kyogle



## Chamber Chat

by Diana Roberts, president

### Lockdown support

Together with everyone at the Chamber, I hope you are well and are handling this very strange time we find ourselves in.

August 2021 has undoubtedly been one of the worst months in decades for local businesses. It is extremely distressing to see many local businesses struggling to stay afloat and others that have closed.

We recently circulated via email to our local business contacts, a list of all the financial support options out there. We hope you found this useful.

If you're a local business not on our email list, contact us and we'll rectify the situation. If you are finding it challenging to access the financial support available, please visit an accountant for assistance. I know our own treasurer is very busy helping local businesses access support.

There is no doubt that the current lockdown and Covid response is exacerbating feelings of alienation and fuelling division in communities. It's challenging to stay cheerful and manage one's mental health, a long-neglected and under-funded aspect of our healthcare system. It's depressing to see our village deserted. Wearing masks when away from home is generating anxiety.

In times such as this it is important as a community that we look out for each other and work together for the benefit of the whole. As for supporting local business, please shop locally wherever possible. Don't buy on-line if you can buy a similar product locally. It is support like this that will help local businesses stay afloat until lockdown is lifted and local shoppers return.

### Business reactivation

The Chamber has spent a number of months contributing to a Lismore City Council Business Activation Plan, designed to help support local businesses in Lismore and Nimbin emerge from very challenging times (see: <https://lismore.nsw.gov.au/business-activation-plan>).

Four simple themes underpin the plan, which is focussed on central business districts: vibrancy to encourage more people to visit and connect; experience to ensure our streets are safe and attractive; promotion to showcase local events, attractions and the business community; support to help existing and new businesses



to flourish.

The plan is heavily Lismore CBD focussed, as the special business rate levy collected there is significant. For Nimbin, there is little identified unless resources become available. Nevertheless, identification of ideas in a plan will assist to attract outside funding and support the on-going work of the Chamber.

For instance, the 50th anniversary celebration of the Aquarius Festival is mentioned several times as an event that could be worked up.

While responsibility for driving implementation of many initiatives for Nimbin in the short term will rest with the Tourism Destination Officer, it's also possible Council itself may fund some of the initiatives identified as necessary to create a more vibrant and attractive main street.

### Made in Nimbin

We are looking for 30, 100% Made in Nimbin products, to put onto our on-line shop.

If you have a product you would like to include – there is no restriction on size or weight but we need to guarantee reliable supply – please contact us at: [chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au](mailto:chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au)

We are still discussing merchandising terms.

### Visit Nimbin website

By the time you read this, the Chamber's website will be live on a new platform alongside the Visit Nimbin website (pictured).

Shortly all the businesses that currently appear on the Visit Nimbin site will be deactivated unless they are members of the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce.

The photo shoot to provide current images for our websites has been postponed until October. It's hard to undertake a photo shoot when everyone is at home! Nimbin would not look like much of a visitor drawcard.

### Why be listed?

There are many reasons to be listed on this site, especially if your business has visitor appeal. The Visit Nimbin website attracts 31,000

unique visitors. The website is appealing, accessible and easy to navigate; it provides high quality information about the area, including the opportunity for visitors to book their stay on-line.

Promotion of the website is featured on all advertising and promotional material produced by the Chamber and Council, and will be the call to action for all tourism campaigns.

The Visit Nimbin website features things to see and do, where to eat, stay and play. Having your business featured in the directory provides an opportunity to have your business promoted on various pages throughout the site.

### What is a Business Listing?

A business listing includes the business name and contact details, including links to your own website and social media accounts, a brief description (up to 250 words) and up to four images. For accommodation providers, visitors will also be able to book your product on-line if you are registered on the 'Wotif' reservation system. Your listing can be edited at any time, through your member login.

### Why is Chamber membership necessary?

The Chamber, in partnership with the Nimbin Community Centre, will be maintaining the website into the future and employing a local person to provide the service. We will be regularly updating the events page and keeping the what's on current. We will be maintaining and updating the business directory.

Our interest is in keeping the website as current as possible, depicting authentic images and stories of our village, ensuring only Nimbin businesses are on a Nimbin website, and protecting ourselves against the vagaries of outside funding support – support that can be withdrawn at the flick of a pen as we saw last year.

We are the organisation best placed to do this, but we need your support through membership to facilitate this. Our membership fees are low, but necessary to fund our efforts. So please,

if you would like to see your business continue to be represented on the Visit Nimbin website and you have not renewed membership or applied to join, contact us at: [chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au](mailto:chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au) or visit our website: [www.nimbinaustralia.com.au](http://www.nimbinaustralia.com.au) or complete the form that came with your email letter.

### Rainbow Road Walking Track update

Council is still waiting for the funding agreement to come through, so no work has commenced at time of writing. Nimbin Community Centre Inc is considering approaching Council with a view to the community managing this project.

This would be a big responsibility, but one that would undoubtedly lead to better inspired, local outcomes on the ground, and an initiative the Chamber would support. More on this later.

Steph Seckold is working on the signage aspect of our grant project. With a couple of notable exceptions (thank you) nobody has responded to her earlier requests for input to inform the historical building plaques or sign content.

If you would like to support Steph in her work, please email: [chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au](mailto:chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au) or leave a note at 7 Sibley Street. We're about to spend a lot of money on signage – help Steph to get it right.

A great activity to pass the time in lockdown, and Steph is a wonderfully creative spirit to engage with!

### Nimbin DCP meeting postponed

Due to Covid lockdowns, the meeting that was to be held to discuss the Development Control Plan for Nimbin village has been postponed.

As this meeting cannot be held face-to-face, we are proposing to live-stream it by Zoom on Thursday 9th September at 6pm.

27 people have expressed an interest in attending, and they will be notified. If you would like to be included, please email: [chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au](mailto:chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au) It's not too late.

### Open homes, gardens and farms weekend

Next year, around this time, we're thinking of holding an open homes, gardens and farms of Nimbin weekend. Look around your garden right now – would you be interested in being open to visitors this time next year?

As a community, we've run several similar events in the past, usually in August, and, apart from being very successful fundraisers, they portray our village and the local environment in a very beautiful light. Plus, there is immense pleasure to be gained from visiting the wonderful gardens of others.

Think on it.

# NIMBIN PIZZA & TRATTORIA

Open 5pm til 8pm, 7 days a week  
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A Big THANK-YOU to the community for the lovely messages of support & well-wishes Bennett & Gina have received, since becoming the new owners.

The CREW & the MENU remain the same & we all look forward to continuing to serve

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# State lockdown issues

by Janelle Saffin MP  
Member for Lismore

The extension of the state-wide lockdown to 10th September will cause further hardship and disruption in our region. And once again the community events that bring us together are being put on hold.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of the organisers of the Nimbin Roots Festival who have managed the difficult task of moving the event from September to November 20-21 this year.

The festival has a great line-up of artists, and music events like these need our support now more than ever.

### Supporting our creative community

Our region has a strong arts and cultural base – in fact we have the largest cluster of artists and arts organisations outside of the major cities. But once again, our arts community is bearing the brunt of the Covid-19 restrictions.

I recognise how important the arts are to us in so many ways, from community choirs and local pub bands to international events like

Bluesfest. From local potters to our regional galleries, from local eisteddfods to NORPA performances, the arts bring life and colour to our region.

Last year Covid-19 restrictions had an immediate and devastating impact on our live music scene, from local gigs to internationally recognised festivals like Bluesfest, Splendour in the Grass and Falls Festival.

For the second year in a row, our creative communities are suffering enormously from the impact of Covid-19. Something as simple as going to see a band at the local pub seems a distant memory. We have seen the cancellation of many annual festivals, local performances, workshops and education sessions.

And the impact the cancellation of Bluesfest for the third time and the cancellation of the Byron Writers Festival has a significant flow-on effect to the economy of our region.

Last year I called on the NSW Premier to deliver a state-wide rescue package for the arts, culture and heritage which the Northern Tablelands and Northern Rivers could benefit from.

I welcome the extra arts grants funding that has been

announced, but that does not address the crisis facing our local artists at this time.

Arts Northern Rivers has put forward a proposal for a simpler, more immediate way of supporting arts and individual artists, including a local Northern Rivers Recovery Fund, and I have taken this proposal to the Arts Minister Don Harwin and will continue to lobby for this.

### Business Grants

I have been contacted by a number of small businesses about their frustration at not being able to access the NSW 2021 Covid-19 Business Grants.

The problem is that businesses need to show that they had a 30% decline in turnover in the period 26th June to 21st July – the first three weeks of the lockdown in Greater Sydney.

I have written to the Treasurer about this, calling for him to extend the period of eligibility so that businesses in the Lismore electorate can access it.

During these uncertain times it is essential for the NSW Government to provide support and assistance to all businesses, including those in regional NSW, so they can survive and remain operating.

# Take care out there



Word of the Bird  
by Cr Elly Bird

Isn't it astonishing how much can change in a month?

Last month I wrote my column just as the elections were postponed, we hadn't quite gone into lockdown and I really didn't really have any understanding of where we were heading.

For some reason this lockdown and the unfolding race to be vaccinated has caught me by surprise. I knew intellectually what was ahead of us, but the lived reality of it has been difficult. I know that we are so lucky, in comparison to Melbourne for instance, who have endured so many lockdowns over such a long time but this one for us seems to have hit really hard. It's mentally and emotionally draining and it's sobering and scary to properly realise that we are moving into the phase of this pandemic that is about

'living with Covid'.

The vaccination debate has escalated and I am seeing people on both sides becoming increasingly anxious and angry. There seems to be next to nothing available for businesses as they hang on through the lockdown with support packages still tailored to Sydney businesses and with no adjustment for regional NSW.

The Covid situation in Wilcannia is really distressing as we see that the most vulnerable in our community are hit the hardest. I'm seeing more messaging about 'managing Covid fatigue' and the importance of daily practices and discipline to manage our mental health.

I consider myself a fairly resilient person, with pretty big capacity, but I'm not shy to say that it's taking a toll, and some days I just want to lie in the sun and remember when we could dance freely in large groups!

I think that is what cuts the deepest sometimes, not knowing when we will be able to experience those things that we so often took for granted.

As far as vaccination goes I am solidly in the pro-vaccination camp. Before the pandemic, I wasn't a

huge fan of vaccination and when I was younger I relied on homeopathics to fortify me on overseas adventures, but this is a whole other situation.

This is not a time for us to be vaccine hesitant, we need to trust the science, and take this necessary step to protect the most vulnerable in our communities. I don't want to see people dying and our medical system overloaded because we can't keep up. I hear that people are worried, but I urge you to have a conversation with a medical professional and get their perspective.

There is too much reliance on questionable on-line sources, and I am really concerned about what this level of hesitancy will mean for our community. Many of us ingest and consume all manner of foreign substances without question, so let's turn that trust towards something that is going to protect us in the long run.

Take care out there, and make sure you are taking as many opportunities as you can to feel a whole lot of this glorious sunshine on your skin.

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

# Clarification of Kyogle Local Environment Plan changes

by Cr Danielle Mulholland,  
Mayor of Kyogle

Kyogle Council has voted to combine the two previous rural zones into a single RU1 Primary Production zone under the Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

To give some context to this decision, this has been a nine-year journey, with Council approving the LEP as its principal planning instrument on 11th September 2013. In March 2016, following consideration of the recommendations of the Department of Planning and Environment's Northern Councils E Zone Review, Council resolved that all agricultural land should be classified as RU1, negating the need for a separate RU2 zone. The

decision at Council's August 2021 meeting reflected this resolution from 2016.

Integration of the two principal rural zones into a single zone (i.e. the RU1 Primary Production zone) will help simplify Council's planning framework and will minimise occurrences of multiple zoning over land that has substantially the same primary use – i.e. rural production.

The introduction of the biodiversity overlay at the same time recognises the significant environmental values which exist in the Kyogle LGA, and provides a mechanism to protect those values from the impacts of future land use and development through the statutory planning framework.

The biodiversity controls apply, where relevant, to the entire LGA.

The biodiversity overlay mapping layer has been prepared by the Biodiversity and Conservation Division of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

The LSPS adopted by Council in 2020 laid down the strategic pathway and priorities for strategic land use across the Kyogle Local Government Area. The finalisation of this proposed LEP amendment serves to address two main Priority Actions, and is a critical first step in the delivery of these strategic planning priorities as follows:

1. Support growth and diversification of our agricultural sector; and
2. Protect and enhance areas of high environmental value and biodiversity.

The presence of the overlay does not change the types of development that do or do not require development consent from Council. If something was previously Exempt or Complying Development under the State Environmental Planning Policy, then it remains so.

If development required consent previously, then it will still require consent, with the overlay and associated development controls taken into consideration where the proposed development is within the biodiversity overlay area.

These amendments to the LEP and the biodiversity overlay are the first steps in kick-starting a number of environmental controls in our Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) which complements the LEP as our principal planning

document. Having one zone for primary production land is a sensible step forward by reducing red tape and avoiding the imposition of multiple zones on what is essentially agricultural land. However the biodiversity overlay is intended to protect land which may be environmentally sensitive. Kyogle Council is an open, transparent, environmentally conscious Council with an agricultural base, and now after nine years of ongoing consultation with the community, in combination with the development of our LSPS and the biodiversity controls, Council has achieved a healthy balance.

I hope this helps clarify the issues for everyone in response to Ms Hallett's article from the last edition (NGT August, p.21).



## Standing up for our community during these uncertain times

Authorised by Tamara Smith Member for Ballina.  
Produced using parliamentary entitlements.

TAMARASMITH.ORG.AU

Here for you if you need help.

### TAMARA SMITH MP

MEMBER FOR BALLINA

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





# Planning for utopia



by Cr Vanessa Ekins,  
Mayor, Lismore City Council

I recently received an anonymous message complaining about hippy cleansing in Nimbin. This raises some very interesting visual images, but upon asking for more information I was accused of modern-day genocide.

It turns out the concern is about the Nimbin Development Control Plan that is currently on public

display, and that money coming into the village could move a generation of locals out.

Nimbin has seen a significant increase in new development activity over the last five years, with Lismore City Council approving 129 development applications in and close to the village. Will this have a negative impact on the village qualities loved by residents and visitors? What about the cumulative impact on roads, water supply and other infrastructure? These questions led to the current review of the planning controls for Nimbin, and you can have input now.

My anonymous messenger suggests Nimbin will become a yuppie utopia. I see it differently. People are attracted to the relaxed village lifestyle, the stunning landscape, strong active community, and these are the values we want to protect. A moratorium on rural residential development

and requirement that all new homes supply their own water from rain tanks may alleviate some of the pressure to provide housing and services.

The whole Northern Rivers region is struggling with housing provision and affordability. How can we ensure that local people have homes to live in and also meet the demands of tree changers escaping the cities? This is a big question but I think locals are the priority and smaller homes a solution.

My mayoral motion to develop an affordable housing strategy is well underway with the appointment of a dedicated planner. It is time to talk about housing, where it will be built, what it will look like and who will live in it. Please contact me and introduce yourself.

Contact Vanessa on 0417-245-502 or email: [vanessa.ekins@lismore.nsw.gov.au](mailto:vanessa.ekins@lismore.nsw.gov.au)

## Lockdown challenges



by Cr Darlene Cook,  
Lismore City Council

Well, here I am again – the council elections have been postponed until December, which means I get to write this column for another few months.

There are rumours with Covid lockdowns that the elections could be postponed yet again – however we will deal with that if and when it happens.

This month we are all living with the lockdown and the stay at home orders. For some of us, it gives more time to get into the gardens and get our veggie patches ready for spring plantings, and to take a bit of time away from the stresses of our busy lives.

But for many in our community, working from home – especially if you have children needing home schooling – can add extra stress to our lives. I know many families who struggle with poor internet connections while trying to complete work and school assignments.

I really feel for our local small businesses which have closed once again. The current business assistance programs appear to be

designed for Sydney and not for the regions. The Covid supplements for Jobkeeper and Jobseeker have not been extended to these lockdowns and this is having a very detrimental effect on business's ability to survive and re-open once the lockdown is lifted.

The best we as a community can do is support our local businesses. Do your shopping with those businesses which can operate during the lockdown with click and collect and takeaway services, and be extra supportive of those who can re-open after the lockdown is lifted. Don't do your shopping with multinational companies on the internet – your money leaves this region and doesn't contribute a cent for local business and local jobs.

At council, we are back to holding briefings and meetings via Zoom once again. There is a totally different atmosphere in the meetings held remotely; I find I don't experience the feeling of engagement and responsiveness to other councillors, staff and members of the public that face-to-face meetings have.

This is even more pronounced when a matter of great importance to our community comes up, and we cannot go to community forums and hear all the opinions in person. The community forum to discuss the recent changes to the Nimbin Development Control Plan was scheduled for mid-August. It has been deferred twice and it seems likely that it will be held online in the next month.

Again this disadvantages those community members who want to participate but have poor or non-existent internet access. While every effort will be made to include as many people as we can, I am still concerned that some voices may not be heard. I encourage anyone who may not be able to Zoom into a virtual meeting to give your input to the Neighbourhood Centre, Community Centre or Chamber of Commerce and they will represent your views.

The advertised position for a full-time tourism officer to be engaged to work with the Nimbin community and the proposed Visitor Information Centre received a number of applicants. Council is currently reviewing the applications and the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce and Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre will have input into the selection process. Hopefully an announcement will be made in the next weeks, and it will be another step towards getting the Nimbin VIC up and running post-lockdown.

I have been endorsed as the Labor candidate for Mayor at the Lismore Council elections on 4th December. I am very pleased that three members of my team live locally, in Dorrroughby, Repentance Creek and Booerie 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](mailto:darlene.cook@lismore.nsw.gov.au)

## On the same Page

by Kevin Hogan MP

### Covid financial support

Anyone who has lost work due to a hotspot being declared can access the Federal Government's COVID-19 Disaster Payments.

That's \$750 a week for those who have lost more than 20 hours work in a week, \$450 a week for those who have lost 8-20 hours of work, and a \$200 a week top up payment for those on income support who have lost 8 or more hours of work.

For more information on the Federal Government's Covid-19 Disaster Payments, visit this link: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/covid-19-disaster-payment>

To apply for these payments, visit: <https://my.gov.au> or call 180-22-66.

### Business support

This includes a one-off payments to help with cash flow, on-going payments to help maintain employees, and payroll tax deferrals.

For more information and to apply, click this link: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/2021-covid-19-support-package/businesses-sole-traders-and-small-not-for-profits#covid-19-business-grants>

### COVID-19 DISASTER PAYMENTS

For work lost due to lockdowns

20+ hours lost \$750pw

8-20 hours lost \$450pw

8+ hours lost \$200pw  
(and receiving other income support)

my.gov.au

180 22 66

### Mental health support

Remember if you need support, you can get in touch with:

- Beyond Blue 24/7 Coronavirus Wellbeing Support Service – 1800-512-348 or: <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au>
  - Kids Helpline – 1800-551-800 or: <https://kidshelpline.com.au>
  - Headspace – 1800-650-890 or: [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)
  - Head to Health: [www.headtohealth.gov.au](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au)
  - Lifeline – 13-11-14
- Please stay safe and take care of your loved ones.



by Cr Jeff Johnson,  
Ballina Council

At the June 2021 Council meeting I proposed that Council, local housing providers and the State Government work together to identify appropriate State Government-owned land within the Ballina Shire that could be developed for affordable housing.

As part of this motion, it was acknowledged that there was a housing affordability crisis in the Ballina Shire. Both of the above points were supported unanimously by all Councillors at the meeting.

Ballina Council has now written letters to the State Government seeking support for the initiative which aligns with their recently released policy: *Housing 2041: NSW Housing Strategy*. Unfortunately, Council still hasn't received a response.

Speaking with Council planners and comparing all of the potential sites it has become clear that the most appropriate site for a meaningful project is the 'old depot' site that Ballina Council currently leases from Crown Lands and is primarily used as a storage depot. This block of land is approximately six hectares in size and is a short walk to shopping centres and a range

## Affordable housing

of local services.

At the August Council meeting I put a motion forward that proposed the 'old depot' site for an affordable housing project. My proposal is that the State Government provides the land, Ballina Council to master-plan the site and take the lead role in developing the site, and a local housing provider take responsibility for the ongoing management and support.

This model is practically spelt out in the *Housing 2041: NSW Housing Strategy* where two of the stated aims are:

- strengthening partnerships and collaboration with councils, and,
- testing new housing types, tenures and delivery models to demonstrate best practice on government-owned land

While some might say that Councils shouldn't be involved, and I traditionally would have shared that view, I now see this as an area that Ballina Council can make a meaningful contribution. New ideas are needed to address the current housing affordability crisis and local government can lead the way to actually make a difference in this important issue for our community.

When you have housing vacancy rates below 0.2%, local businesses unable to fill staff vacancies due to a lack of housing, and when you have long-term renters being kicked out of their homes due to greedy landlords taking advantage of the surge in rental prices, then something needs to be done. The above assumes that this seemingly never-ending lockdown will one day be

over and businesses can re-open.

Ballina Council has long been involved with land development and has an extensive portfolio of commercial property including a shopping mall, an industrial building, an office block and substantial commercial holdings which provides additional income for community infrastructure projects.

An affordable housing project on State Government-owned land could make a significant difference to many in our community and provide a large number of homes for the long term rental accommodation pool.

Furthermore, by delivering a pilot project like this with the State Government, it would provide a template for other Council areas. If the State Government is serious about housing affordability and working with local government to deliver more housing options where it is urgently needed, then this project should be given serious consideration. At the very least it should go to the next stage of completing a Feasibility Report.

Unfortunately, the majority of Ballina Councillors didn't support the proposal. I will provide them all with more information and reach out to explain the many positives to this initiative both for Council and our community.

The housing affordability crisis will only get worse unless additional properties are added to the long-term rental pool in our area. While projects take time to deliver, if we don't act now to get the ball rolling and exploring new options then nothing will happen.



# Covid, class and the addiction to certainty

by Aidan Ricketts

Watching the unfolding horror of Covid Delta in NSW has been a roller-coaster for us all.

Throughout the month I felt compelled to write about the massive class bias embedded in almost everything to do with Covid, but especially in NSW, but as the roller coaster ride rattles on I feel more compelled to urge people to embrace the universal experience of uncertainty.

First to class. What an apocryphal story the NSW outbreak has been. The new variant arrives with special rich people who still travel abroad, then they give it to their limo driver on the way from the airport to Bondi. The NSW government simply can't imagine locking down the good burghers of the wealthy eastern suburbs, so the virus is allowed to spread to western and south western Sydney.

Bingo, once it hits a working class area, the lockdowns are severe, the army was called in and it was time to get really tough. All the while, with a dazzling array of special exemptions for rich people to keep visiting their holiday homes in the regions or going on grand tours to shop for more real estate.

But the crowning class irony? All of the useful essential work was actually being done by the people in west and south west Sydney. We could have locked down the interior decorators, share traders and poodle groomers of Bondi and no-one would have noticed, but without the logistics workers the country would grind to a halt.

But the ultimate tragedy, the ongoing failure to contain the Sydney outbreak has found its way to vulnerable and under resourced Indigenous communities in the state's west.

Why do we elect widget-selling liberals to government, they don't even believe in government and can't mount a national emergency response for the life of them.

OK, the class thing has been appalling, but we are all in this together right?

Well not here in the Northern Rivers, we are tearing our social fabric apart with our oppositional views on the pandemic and how to respond.

We live in an age where social media seizes upon every person's confirmation biases and then arranges a bottomless feed of information from the same echo chamber. It is fuelling terrible extremism across the world, hate, white supremacism, purity spirals, cancel culture, conspiracism, incels, you name it, if there's a marginal view there's an online community popping up to feed and reinforce it.

There are plenty of reasons to distrust authority, government and corporations (including big Pharma). There is an observable history of corruption and dishonesty enough to cause any sane person to be highly sceptical.

But here is the thing, what do you do with your scepticism of authority, do you trade it in for total unquestioning belief in some alternative narrative that appears on your online feed? Why would you do that? How is the contrarian dude on YouTube any more

reliable?

These are frightening and most of all uncertain times. The big question, for true sceptics, is can you really sit with uncertainty? Can you simply not have the answer? Can it simply be beyond your expertise? Is it really you who has to solve it?

Humans are prone to addiction, but none so prevalent as the addiction to certainty. It's a reaction to the sheer (beautiful) unknowable complexity of our universe. It drives us to religion, to fundamentalism, to fascism, to ideology, to terrorism, to conspiracies, and to yelling "Wake up sheeple" at people.

If you are absolutely certain of your stance on Covid, lockdowns, and vaccines, then you've probably already gone down a rabbit hole of some kind. Try being uncertain, try not having to know the answer. The good thing about sitting more comfortably with your uncertainty is that you are more likely to be open to new information and less likely to be offensive to other people online.

The thing is we can't know how the virus might affect us personally, we can't know whether we might get unacceptable side effects from getting vaxxed; there's no amount of 'doing your own research' is going to bring certainty on these questions.

The point of all of this is that most of us aren't experts (YouTube doesn't create experts) and we are being asked to make personal decisions with limited info and understandable amounts of personal scepticism of government media and big pharma.

But for goodness sake, can we all calm down, stop yelling at each other for having different views on a topic almost none of us are experts on?

Not knowing is actually our natural state. No amount of fascism, religion, war, conspiracy, has been able to overcome the inherent chaos and unpredictability and lack of safety that we all face. In fact, probably one of the very few things over the millennia that has helped us overcome our lack of knowledge and make ourselves a little safer has been science.

Personally, I don't believe any conspiracy that relies on the proposition that thousands of people (particularly doctors and scientists) worldwide are keeping a secret; secrets are hard to keep. I also don't believe any explanation that requires our different world governments to all be in agreement, Russia, China, US, North Korea and the Taliban all agreeing to pretend there's a pandemic. Nup, not buying it.

Am I deeply worried about whether the control measures introduced for the pandemic will be properly rolled back later? Of course that's a worry. Am I worried there will be further pandemics, sure.

Do I support policies treating the vaxxed differently to the unvaxxed, (vaccination passports)? Personally, no I don't. I think it will only inflame the divisions already tearing at our social fabric and won't deliver a substantial enough public health benefit to be worth the social harm it will cause.

Am I right? I don't know.

## Welcome to Country

by Aniko Papp

About four years ago, I stayed in Montreal Canada, and I was interested in finding out more about the indigenous "Native Americans" and the Inuit peoples.

In Montreal, it was as if they didn't exist. It seemed to me that the primary focus of Montreal and Quebec residents was to maintain their French language and culture: fiercely guarding any attempt to make English their primary language and culture.

Despite searching, I could not find any museums about indigenous cultures until I stumbled on the Canadian Museum of Civilization during my time in Quebec as part of my trip to that quaint old city. I was intent to find out more.

Overlooking the steel blue Lawrence River, which was littered with ice, was this wonderful museum with galleries dedicated to the indigenous people of Canada. Sepia photos of villages scattered along lakes and forests with families gathering food, hunting and fishing with racks of fur lined clothing were tastefully displayed. Interactive stories to explore within vast halls were beautifully made.

Then came the photos of indigenous

children. The forlorn faces of children taken from their families and land haunted me. Taken into schools supposedly for their education from every indigenous community across Canada and placed with sometimes well meaning, other times seemingly plain nasty and vicious religious and state organisations. Taught to lose their culture, forbidden to speak their language, used as cheap labour.

The storyboards spoke of many indigenous communities wracked by substance abuse, plagued by violence, poverty stricken and dysfunctional. Vast tracts of forest, land rich in resources taken and eons old communities forcibly removed.

Dirt grounds filled with tiny skeletons of children removed from family, lost forever to their loved ones; discovered in those same schools, now fill the news from Canada. The same schools that the settlers who took indigenous lands, that were supposed to protect them. To educate them. Many were but at what cost to their culture. To their sense of self?

I travelled to South America that same year. I explored ruins with Chiapas indigenous guides. With my broken Spanish, we managed to communicate. I was told of land stolen, of culture only now celebrated due to the tourist dollar. Native

people were often like the gypsies of Europe: side-lined to begging in their colourful clothing and selling handmade trinkets.

Spanish South Americans seemed to look down at them, often ostracising them. Many of these indigenous communities appeared to be beset by the same violence and substance abuse problems as I saw in Canada.

It all seemed very familiar to me growing up in Australia. Generations of social discord. Decades of government reports into our own indigenous communities and people seem to endlessly record the same problems. Those costly and lengthy tomes seem to reflect little abatement or any solutions. How can so many indigenous cultures in separate continents like North and South America and Australia all have the same tragic outcomes?

My view, such that it is, gleaned after working in indigenous communities as a lawyer, is that Europeans have long lost their connection to land in a spiritual and visceral sense. Europeans, including the English severed their ties to their own land, generations ago. It seems that settlers preserve their cultures derived from Europe, yet relegate the cultures that they conquered in their quest for land



and resources, as sub-human.

I cannot speak for indigenous people, but I recall one of my indigenous co-workers who told me that when she goes back to her country, she knows when she has arrived. Her country is spread across sparsely vegetated thousands of kilometres of red earth: no fence or boundary lines mark her homeland. Yet she says as she drives or walks nearer to her country, she just knows where it starts, where her heart is, where her spirit dwells. When she crossed that invisible boundary, she is home. She tells me she is complete then.

Unlike indigenous people, the land isn't our mother, our family, our source of self: it isn't us. We don't seem to be tied to our land or our country. Europeans move about fairly readily: sure, they can be displaced from their homes, from their cultures but their identity isn't not necessarily

tied to the land, to the earth itself.

That I see as the primary difference. Perhaps this explains that when the settlers take their land and with it, destroy that indigenous culture, they create the dysfunction which seems to be endemic in many indigenous cultures all over the world.

The oft-expressed sentiment "get over it", "assimilate" is beyond hypocritical when one sees the settler culture intent on preserving their own language and culture imported with force only a few generations ago. The far older culture that came with the land that was taken, is dismissed as being less worthy.

Recent genomic studies show Aboriginal Australians are the oldest known civilisation on Earth, with ancestries stretching back roughly 75,000 years. Yet, we describe the Europeans that tried their darndest to destroy indigenous culture, as civilised.



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# CODE RED – time to take action on forests

by Miriam Torzillo

A new phrase has been introduced into the lexicon, a sign – a warning. It was the phrase used by the United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres in response to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The report, released on 9th August showed that greenhouse gas emissions needed to be halved to limit heating to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, indeed a 'code red' for humanity. In the words of Guterres, "The alarm bells are deafening and the evidence is irrefutable: Greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk."

This makes it even more urgent that measures be taken to adapt and save what is left. Forests are a key component of eco-resilience and adaptation to changing climates. The Black Summer bushfires burned far more temperate forest than any other fire season recorded in Australia.

A recent paper has challenged the idea that logging did not increase fire risk. In fact the authors assert that “Taking timber from forests dramatically changes their structure, making them more vulnerable to bushfires.” And crucially for the Black Summer bushfires, logged forests are more likely to burn out of control.

The lead author of this report, Phillip Zylstra argues that “It may be the eleventh hour, but we’re better placed now to stand with the forests and add what we can to their fight to survive climate change.” Therefore it would seem that the work of forest protectors is more urgent than ever.

Following in the great local tradition of forest protection, a group of dedicated conservationists have been quietly gathering in the forests of Northern NSW, seeking evidence of the value of those forests, and what will be lost if they are logged in line with Forestry Corporation plans.

These citizen scientists, led by environmental scientists, biologists and ecologists, have been going into forests in the North of the state to look for evidence of koala habitation, endangered flora and other species endemic to the area.

Their discoveries show that State forests including Cherry Tree, Bungabee and Myrtle are far from degraded. Koala scats, brushtail possum, fungi, possible rosewood saplings, and ripple leaf muttonwood were sighted in the area of Cherry Tree State Forest scheduled for logging.

The origin of this project lies in an understanding that “People act for nature because nature is meaningful to them, connected to a life that makes sense and a difference in the world.” According to Susie Gipton, “Deep love of forests is part of our human heritage – being in the



Cherry Tree Forest Photo: Daniel Param Berg

forests reaches into my being and a much saner world."

Commitment to the natural world is forged in the embodied experience of going there in order to give something back. Being in the amazing diverse forest of Cherry Tree confirms Dee Mould's commitment: "It confuses me why anyone would think of bringing machinery in here and ripping it apart... If you don't want to lose the amazing forests that you have in this part of Australia then you need to stand up and let the powers that be know that it's not acceptable."

Fridays for Forests travel to forests and initiate community meetings on alternate Fridays with the aim of community education and network building; to plan and train for a koala-led recovery, using new tech tools and physical presence. The work of Fridays4forests, with the direction

of North East Forest Alliance (NEFA), is helping to provide the evidence needed to take on governments or indeed the Forestry Corporation.

According to Sean O'Shannessy, campaign manager for NEFA, "The objective of going out into the forest is to find the values there . . . and to publicise them."

This evidence will help to support a Federal Court Challenge to the NSW Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) by the Environmental Defenders office acting on behalf of NEFA, arguing that the agreement, originally signed in 2000 and renewed in 2018, does not take account of the situation since including the devastating bushfires that ripped through native forests in the RFA region, including areas of the World Heritage-listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia.

It is clear that any agreement must be made with regard to endangered species, the state of old growth forests and the impacts of climate change. At present, Forestry are making decisions and acting on an agreement that is 20 years old.

The recent news of bipartisan support in the NSW Parliament for the recommendation that native forest biomass not be allowed in energy generation facilities has empowered activists, providing proof that the persistent and consistent actions of activists does have an effect.

The parliamentary inquiry into 'Sustainability of energy supply and resources in NSW' determined that Native forest biomass was not a renewable energy source and should never be classed as renewable energy, nor eligible for renewable energy credits.

NEFA and the Fridays4forests team are now joining with environmentalists across the state to send a strong message, both to the Minister to accept and implement the recommendations, and to those wanting to profit from burning our forests including the power stations at Condong and Broadwater.

If you want to assist with this, go to: <https://www.nefa.org.au/biomass> or come and join Fridays for Forests. Check out the FB page for updates on forest visits and meet-ups during and post lockdown.

# *We can't let them rip up our railway*

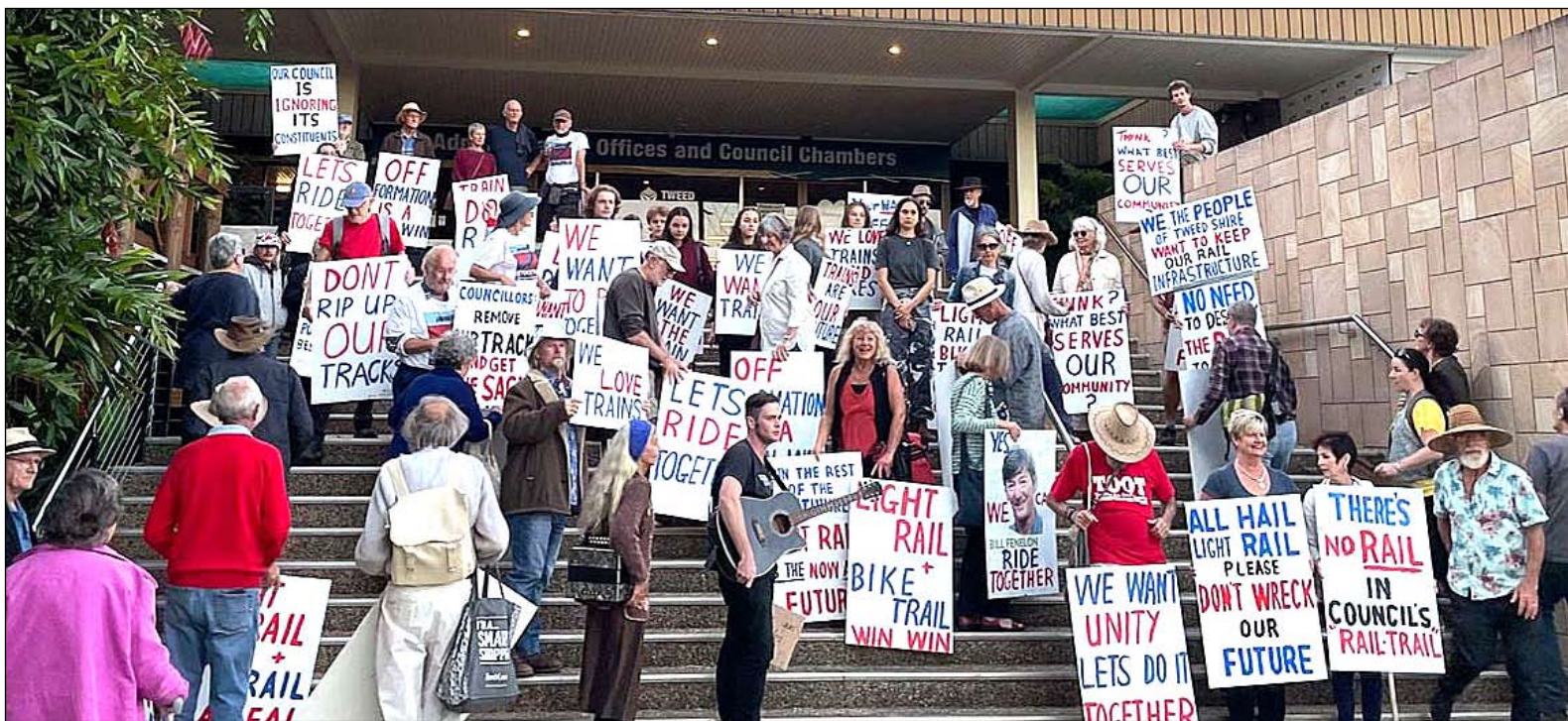
by Beth Shelley

Do people in the Northern Rivers want trains running again for a trip to the beach or a night out in Byron? Up until 1990 we had daily and nightly trains between Casino and Murwillumbah until they were suddenly replaced by the XPT Sydney service. The timetable change, along with a reduction of total daily seating capacity from 1,600 to only 434, resulted in a huge drop in patronage.

Everyone in NSW wants to get to the beach at Byron, which makes it hard for locals to get there as the traffic is usually horrendous. Never have the Northern Rivers communities been asked if they want rail services to Byron again or not, let alone ripping up the railway tracks for a bike path. There has been no community consultation.

On the 17th June 2021, Tweed Shire Council (TSC) chose the option of ripping up the railway tracks instead of putting the bike path next to the tracks. In a time of climate change when we need to be getting cars off our roads, this decision is a disaster.

Mayor Chris Cherry said, “We have received more than 2000 signatures from mostly Tweed Shire residents asking us not to remove the railway tracks. We have at least 200 emails from people all over the country to remove the railway tracks, so we are being pulled either way. If we read through the summary section



of the report under Consult it says “actively seeking the communities views” and I guess I have to ask when this has really been done on this issue. That is the biggest thing that the community feels on this, that they haven’t been asked.”

A local group, 'We Can Ride Together', in Murwillumbah organised a rally before the TSC meeting to ask that the council choose the option of putting the bike path next to the track. Civil Engineer Tom Rayner made his presentation to the Councillors in that meeting, delivering the proposal of having both rail and trail.

During the meeting, Cameron

Arnold, Vice President of the Norther Rivers Rail Trail, spoke of discussions with John Barilaro, NSW Deputy Premier, and made a shock announcement that the Government Rail Trail funding was “only ever awarded for an On Formation construction”.

He stated that to award an Off Formation tender at this stage, the Council would risk the funding entirely. Tweed Shire mayor and councillors, as well as staff, appeared to know nothing about it, and this has not been confirmed by John Barilaro.

Most people in our community want to keep the tracks for the possibility of future rail services

and we don't trust that this government is caring for the community. The biosecurity risks of people travelling through farmers' back paddocks has barely raised a mention.

Farm biosecurity is meant to reduce the risk from diseases, parasites, pests and plants that damage animals and crops. Exotic diseases include foot and mouth disease, swine fever and mad cow disease. Pests in some areas of Australia include cattle ticks, tick fever and Panama disease fungus.

In Victoria, there are problems on rail trails with trail bike riders and vandals, and we have problems in this area with illegal camping.

Police cannot easily access remote sites even if they have resources, and fire is the traditional nightmare of every Australian property owner. Additionally, there is Public Liability risk with anyone bushwalking off a rail trail onto private property.

It's just not good enough to see government constantly ignore the needs of regional areas, as well as the need to act on climate change. We need help to take the Tweed Shire Council to court to get an injunction to stop them ripping up the railway tracks, so if you can help in any way please get in touch through this website: <https://northernriversrail.com.au>



# Our forests aren't on fire, they're being cremated

by Bernadine Schwartz

I'm living in a picture-perfect world that strives for perfection, but only for the sake of appearances, particularly when it comes to our children.

We always claim to put our children first and foremost, and to prove we really care, we have child protection agencies, schools to educate them, rigid safety standards to keep them safe from harm, that are upheld at all times. That's what it says on paper.

We also teach them that good things come to those that wait and patience is a virtue. Well how long have all those fresh young souls been waiting for climate action? Their entire lives! What they got instead was this mock war on global warming that still hasn't come to an end! Now we've left them just as defenceless and vulnerable as every other species on Earth.

The apocalyptic Northern Hemisphere summer of 2021 will never ever be forgotten, when nature with all its pent-up vengeance turned against us, unceremoniously cremating forests, alongside billions of animals. The latest IPCC report suggests the summer just gone was only a mild sample of what's to come. It clearly states "no part of the planet will be spared", ending with what's become a repetitious plea for the world to act immediately.

There are wildfires still active in Southwest Canada, US, Bolivia, Peru, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Algeria and Northern Siberia and it seems the only thing that will stop them is when they've exhausted the forests around them.

In Northern Siberia fires are rapidly moving further north into the taiga forests, venturing



where fire has never been before. While in Northern California, they're battling the largest wildfire in the state's history, Dixie, that illuminates the night sky for miles and miles. The forestry workers and firefighters are completely exhausted after months of fighting and want to give up and let the fires run their course. With forests already dead or dying, it's only creating more fuel for next season's fires, that inevitably will put more lives at risk.

Understandably, environmentalists want them to continue on, knowing full well that when these forests go, they will never be returning. Generations of giant sequoias, Joshua trees, conifers, Norwegian spruces to name a few, are diminishing rapidly all over the world, including species here in Australia.

According to the CSIRO, the Black Summer wildfires in Australia entirely burnt over 100 plant and tree species and halved the population of another 816, leaving most of the

forests at a high risk of not regenerating.

The report emphasised the consequences of upcoming tipping points, such as an escalation of forest dieback, which is already taking place. Increasing droughts that won't come to an end, plus deadly floods and ice sheets rapidly falling apart. And again already happening.

Today's events are the result of emissions from decades past, and what we've pumped into the atmosphere in recent decades is yet to take effect. So it doesn't mean a damn thing anymore if we reach net zero emissions by 2050!

Scientists once thought that as temperatures rose they would slow, but now they're suggesting that temperatures could run away rapidly and cross a critical tipping point, triggering a deadly greenhouse run-away effect.

According to scientists roughly 11 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> goes into the atmosphere annually

and the planet's engine rooms, the forests, grasslands and oceans combined, absorb six gigatons. This leaves five gigatons in the atmosphere and it's accumulating every year. Now our oceans have officially given up the fight, the forests are our last line of defence.

Don't go thinking planting a trillion trees is the answer. A huge factor often overlooked is where do you plant all these trees when the only land now available and suitable is agricultural land and cities? A stable climate is also essential. We also haven't got the luxury of time of waiting at least a century for them to come to full maturity.

According to forest scientists, reducing the burning of fossil fuels immediately, is the only solution and bolstering the forests we have is far more important. David Breshears is an Ecohydrologist for the University of Arizona and he puts it bluntly: "We'd like to plant more trees to slow down global warming, but the warming we're trying to stop is killing the trees."

The world shirked its most important responsibility, protecting our children. Society couldn't even manage to sacrifice a bit of meat on their plate, when that alone could have achieved so much. Nobody ever asked them to starve!

Forests aren't just vast storehouses of wood. They were Mother Earth's crowning glory, and we have systematically dethroned her, without remorse.

Our children didn't want to survive, they wanted to live and experience Walt Whitman's "fill the senses with nature's bright green shady path." But it's all coming to an end.

Now even Joni Mitchell's hope for at least a tree museum is looking grim.

## The situation is hopeless. We must take the next step.

by Simon Clough

I share Bernadine Schwartz's pain and deep frustration at the current world situation regarding the catastrophic nature of climate change ("This planet wasn't meant for us", NGT August 2021).

Bernadine presents an impressive catalogue of climate disasters caused by humanity's addiction to fossil fuels, especially because of our mindless commitment to continuing economic growth.

I find Bernadine's article puzzling because of its single focus on scientists as though they are the only ones who have worked on the issues of climate change. Her failure to acknowledge the work of literally millions of citizens committing the hearts and minds to fight against the fossil fuel industries and create sustainable and more modest ways of living seems disrespectful.

Even more puzzling is this attitude against the backdrop of Nimbin, where many in the community have worked tirelessly and for decades to create co-operative social structures, contributed to sustainable agriculture, developed renewable energy systems, pioneered low cost and sustainable home building and of course defended the earth with their bodies from some of the worst excesses of our mainstream economic system.

Who can forget the social movement that the Northern Rivers community created against the coal seam gas industry. The community really only swung into action after the industry had drilled over 60 wells and had courted many of the community leaders and convinced them of the benefits of the industry.

The state government, the local

member and many local Councils were all ardent supporters of CSG. It had all the hallmarks of a lost cause. Yet with a grassroots movement in just over a year the Lismore community voted that 86% of people were opposed to the industry and its development. Many of the people involved in this movement were concerned about the impacts of the CSG industry on agriculture, water, air and landscapes; however a large proportion of people saw it as a direct action to prevent greenhouse gas emissions contributing to global heating.

I'm old enough to have participated in or witnessed many causes that were believed to be hopeless turned around, for instance the coming down of the Berlin wall and the reduction in the nuclear arms race, the peaceful transition of power in South Africa and the major social movements around feminism, gay and lesbian rights and land rights and racism.

I'm no Pollyanna, I don't see these issues as being fixed or solved, but huge gains have been made against what seemed impossible odds. As someone once said to me, "So often it feels like you're banging your head against a brick wall on these issues, but you never know how thick the bricks are!"

Bernadine should spend more time with the younger generation before saying things like, "And it seems what good traits society once had have been shed like skin with the passing of each generation." The work of school students on climate change is inspiring, especially those involved with the school strikes for climate action.

And don't forget for a moment



the eight school students supported by an elderly nun who brought an action against the Environment Minister Sussan Ley claiming she had a duty of care to future generations to reduce the impacts of climate change:

"Accordingly, the court has determined the minister has a duty to take reasonable care not to cause the children personal injury when exercising her power ... to approve or not approve the (coal) extension project," Justice Bromberg said.

Ava, a 17-year old student said outside court, "This is the first time a court of law, anywhere in the world, has recognised that a government minister has a duty of care to protect young people from the catastrophic harms of climate change."

"My future and the future of all young people depends on Australia stepping away from fossil fuel projects and joining the world in taking decisive climate action."

"The court accepted our evidence that the emissions released from the mining will contribute to serious and wide ranging physical,

mental and financial losses, but will now recognise that environment ministers (are) in a position of power to prevent harms."

In the same week as Justice Bromberg's decision, what's been described as "arguably the most significant climate change judgement yet", a court in The Hague ordered Royal Dutch Shell, a global oil and gas company, to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 45% by 2030 compared with 2019 levels, via its corporate policy. It was also a week when Exxon (another oil giant) shareholders declared two Board seats be reserved for climate activists.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2021 report was authored by 234 leading climate scientists, drawn from 66 countries, citing more than 14,000 pieces of research, believes that there is time to limit further deterioration from greenhouse gas emissions.

"The climate we and the young generations will experience depends on future emissions," the report says. "Reducing emissions rapidly will

limit further changes, but continued emissions will trigger larger, faster changes that will increasingly affect all regions. Some changes will persist for hundreds or thousands of years, so today's choices will have long-lasting consequences."

I totally reject Bernadine's nihilistic view that "Now all we can do is watch on as nature takes its destructive course. Will it be a long drawn-out process? Will it come in one foul swoop? Let your imagination run away with you for a moment, then times it by a thousand."

It's worth noting that these IPCC scientists are not saying "I told you so!" as Bernadine suggested, they are working extremely hard to remedy this appalling situation. We should all take inspiration from their dedication in the face of despair and hopelessness that can be all pervasive.

Perhaps the IPCC scientists share my experience that the best antidote to despair and hopelessness is constructive action. Not to forget the extraordinary negative power of the fossil fuel corporations and most governments which seem determined to carry on business as usual in the face of the unequivocal evidence presented of the catastrophic nature of climate change.

I am inspired by the statement by Pablo Casals, the legendary Spanish cellist and composer who said "The situation is hopeless. We must take the next step." The first sentence is beyond pessimism; fatalistic, defeatist. Then: "We must take the next step" is a clarion call to action for myself and millions of others in defence of Mother Earth.

*"It always seems impossible until it's done."* – Nelson Mandela



# No end in sight for Assange trial

by John Jiggins

At the end of Julian Assange's extradition hearing in January, the judge, Vanessa Baraitser, denied extradition because of fears Assange might commit suicide if subjected to the harsh conditions inside a US Supermax prison where he would be housed if convicted.

Although the US lost, they appealed her decision to the UK High Court and they objected to bail being granted, so Assange remains in prison.

The US appeal argued that the judge ought to have brought up her concerns about the harsh nature of US prisons and her fear of suicide during the trial and sought assurances from the US about this.

Their appeal pledged that Julian would not be held in total isolation if imprisoned at Florence, the supermax prison in Colorado, which will be Assange's destination if found guilty, and they offered that any prison sentence given to Assange could be served in Australia. They also wanted to dispute the psychiatric evidence about the risk of suicide.

The grounds for the appeal were subjected to a preliminary examination by High Court Justice Jonathon Swift, who certainly was not swift in the justice he dispensed: he dawdled for six months before granting most of the US grounds, though he refused their grounds to dispute the psychiatric evidence.

The US then appealed Justice

Swift's decision on the psychiatric evidence, arguing that the psychiatric evidence had overstated the risk of Assange suiciding. Another month later, on 11th August, another two High Court judges overruled Justice Swift and granted the US permission to include the psychiatric evidence, granting the US everything they had requested for the appeal.

The US argued that Assange's suicide attempts were not serious enough to be taken into account, which caused Assange's father, John Shipton to mock their logic: "If he was serious about committing suicide he wouldn't be here. So as an unsuccessful suicide, he is safe to go to the United States!"

John Shipton dismissed the other US assurances as "tricks".

"The assurances the prosecution gives about incarceration in the US are falsities. If the CIA thinks or suspects that Julian will reveal the name of a US agent to a prisoner or anybody else, they can have Julian detained arbitrarily under SAMS (Special Administrative Measures), which are solitary confinement where there is no end.

"The other offer about serving a sentence in Australia again is nonsense. There is an agreement between the US and the UK that anybody given a jail term in either of those two countries can serve it in Australia. It is already there as a right.

"This disguises the fact that there are three levels of appeal in the UK: the High Court, the Supreme Court and the European Court of Human Rights, which could take up to three years to exhaust.

"In the US, before a person can serve their jail sentence in Australia,

all avenues of appeal must be exhausted. The average time it takes to get to the Supreme Court in the United States is between 10 and 15 years, so there is 15 to 20 years of court cases in jail before the possibility of serving a sentence in Australia.

"It is all just tricks. The horrible, vile persecution of Julian Assange, an Australian citizen.

"What this amounts to is a recycling of comment and news broadcasts on to Julian Assange and his children and his partner, Stella Moris, the mother of his two children, instead of the malfeasance, procedural irregularities and crime upon crime – a whole Mount Everest of crime – that Julian Assange has revealed. These revelations have led to the end of the Iraq and Afghan wars."

The full High Court hearing on the US appeal is scheduled for 27th October.

## Is Nimbin sustainable?

### Shapeshifting

by Anand Gandharva

What is it to be renewable? Blaming 'the system' may be placing the chicken before the egg. In a consumer-driven world, personal habits and behaviour count.

Most people like to think of themselves as sustainable, but are they?

Years ago, in front of the initial, tiny Rainbow Power shop in Cullen Street, a well-known interviewer, fancying himself an environmentalist, admitted to driving in a fossil fuel car from his city apartment heated by coal. His footprint was substantial. Better than nothing, but not very sustainable.

He was an 'aspirational environmentalist' and did not put his habits on TV. He may have thought "I am not the issue; they are". Wrong. Individuals are the issue. Separating individual actions from collective needs too far makes communities unsustainable.

Like lemmings, humanity is heading for the proverbial cliff. Too many bad habits. How to rein in water wasting, pollution, vices, logging, land clearing, stupid purchases, pyramid schemes, greed, self-aggrandising habits? With laws, autocracy, injections?

In China today, computers may give points to individuals for transgressions against the common good. Transgressors can be re-educated to social norms making 'better citizens'. This computer and camera technology is coming here too.

But what is community need? Why fine someone who wears no seatbelt, but overlook some company transgressions, like pollution? How to improve society?

It is driven by consumer choices.

Nimbin's early adoption of renewable energy helped make Australia and the world go solar, buy electric cars, build a sustainable Earth. Why pay for pollution, when the sun gives energy?



Nimbin valley people are trend-setters when it comes to sustainable lifestyles, celebrating creative community, respect for environment, tolerance, drug and law reform, etc. These credentials were further earned years ago in Terania Creek forests.

Aquarius put Nimbin on the map, but its on-going social activism keeps it relevant. It truly is a Woodstock in the Southern Hemisphere. Creative, joyful, inventive, symbolic icon,

university of life.

The need for global sustainability helped promote solar power, compost toilets, hemp walls, mudbricks, sand sawdust and cement, recycled clothes, local crops, wall paintings, amongst others.

With so much goodwill, how come many still eat like troglodytes? Help fuel the industrial predatorial machinery that one opposes as unsustainable?

Are people apex predators, or is that an evolutionary stage? In a carnivore clan the most devious alpha will lead, set strategy, straddle the economy, but in an herbivore group merit is not opportunistic; they have leaders, but the social contract is not vicious.

People are protected by laws against betrayal. Knifing someone in the back, or being a wolf in sheep's clothing, may be winning strategies in raw nature, but may land someone in jail in society: like duels, incest, and much more to help form sustainable community. One learns to control the worst impulses.

In order to solve environmental crises, and occupy the galaxy, mankind has to enact herbivore laws by 2100. In delay, the environment may suffer, but it is not fair to have retroactive rules, or discriminate against omnivore taste taught by parents.

You may be gone by then. It may take generations before the global village is united and renewable.

## The devil came knocking

by Diana Gosper, Rainbow Power Co.

There are a lot of solar companies doing door knocking at the moment, but much like any door-to-door sales, I wouldn't recommend buying what they spruik.

When contemplating a new solar system for a home or business you would be wise to consider these five factors and age-old advice.

**1. You get what you pay for.** Don't go with the cheapest quote, you will end up paying more in the long run for replacements and service costs. Ever wonder why an item is so much cheaper on the net than in your home town solar shop? That's because the online seller has no staff costs, no warehousing, no product development, no after sales care and no design support. Possibly even no proper warranty support. Often you just get the product and then good luck. A local Company will cost more but it's like comparing apples to oranges. To find a trustworthy company you could go to: [cleanenergycouncil.org.au](http://cleanenergycouncil.org.au)

**2. Buy once, cry once.** A well designed and installed system doesn't need a guardian or an angel to look after it and maintain it. Most quality system components last at least 15 years without needing to be replaced, just requiring the occasional fuse change or wiring check. Make sure your solar provider includes after sales support in their T&C's, have an after-hours support number, lots of good reviews and have been around for more than a few years – more than one solar company goes into liquidation per week, leaving its customers with little or no after sales care, often

just jumping in and out of the industry, quick to make a buck at the expense of the Australian public who are simply trying to do the right thing by going green and going solar.

**3. Don't throw good money after bad.** I wouldn't recommend adding to or trying to fix an underperforming or non-functioning

system (excepting existing RPC systems which deserve a good diagnosis and health check before decisions are made around whether to upgrade or start again possibly). With cheap systems you are better off just starting again with a new system you can rely on.

**4. All that glitters is not gold.** The cheap solar systems on offer these days are often a dangerous trap for consumers, with fine print hiding extra expenses, sub-par products, and companies hiring and sending out comparatively inexperienced workers to install what can be

fundamentally one of your biggest ever purchases and investments.

**5. Money doesn't grow on trees.** That is true, but a fortune is there in the rays of the sun, theoretically saving hard earned cash every day, why wouldn't you help the environment at the same time as putting money back into the family coffers.

RPC can design a system for you that will power on for years, and you can rely on them to answer your questions, take your call, and fix any unlikely issues. They won't charge extra for that service though, that is just part of being a business and offering a quality product and service to the community – like they have since 1987.



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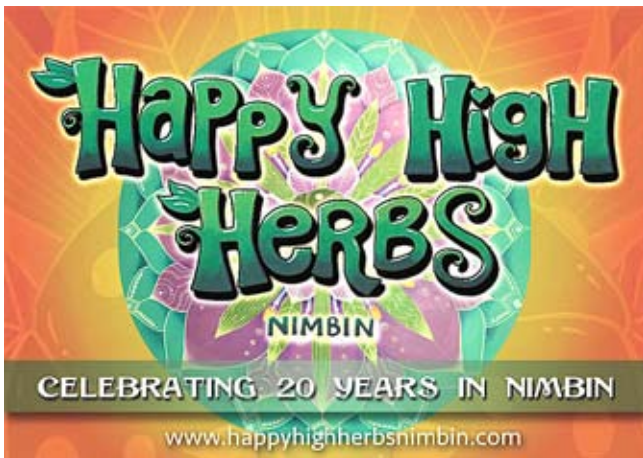
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# The Quarar-teenyboppers

by Simon Thomas

A guilty admission – I like living in hotels. It's a special freedom to be able to leave your abode behind at an hour's notice.

I have lived in all manner of temporary digs – from a derelict shack on the roof of a ramshackle hotel in Delhi to Mexico's answer to Club Med, where the breakfast buffet alone offered such bewildering choice that bulimia beckoned as a lifestyle option.

Having spent Covid secluded to the sunny shores of Corsair Bay, Christchurch, Kim and I took advantage of the opening border in June. I had just stripped the kitchen out of my daughter's house in Lismore when Chairperson Jacinda pricked the Tasman travel bubble, and offered to treat us to 14 days hotel quarantine upon our return.

I felt like a leper, disembarking in Covid-free Auckland International on a flight from Gladys' Sydney. Staff, swaddled like cling-wrap mummies, herded us towards a raft of health check booths before we could draw our passports.

Collecting our own baggage was deemed too dangerous, and we were not obliged or even allowed to run the



Photo: Sam Saxton

gauntlet of the duty-free shop. Instead, we were lined up like sheeple at the nearest exit where buses idled, waiting to flush us into the septic tank of Managed Isolation Quarantine.

It's not like you get to choose your hotel, or even the city where your sentence is served. Our rescue flight took us to Auckland for quarantine, with the onward Christchurch leg timed for 14 days later – to the hour!

We waited our turn to board the bus bound for Rydges Hotel in the city, only to find that the sliding doors slammed shut ahead of us. Instead, our destination was the rather agreeable alternative of Waipuna Resort, a conference centre

20 minutes from town.

With comfy beds, a dining table, bathtub and pleasant enough views over a tidal lagoon, the room was a palace compared to some previous abodes of mine. I had my computer and a new guitar, it was perfect!

Four times per day, we would hear a door knock and a scurry. A brown paper bag of surprisingly tasty food was left at the threshold, as the hotel worker sprinted down the corridor before they could become infected.

As for alcohol, you could buy it on-line but security allow only a six pack of beer or bottle of wine per person each day. We can live with that. Still, it seems weird ringing the navy to plead

for the delivery of your own plonk.

Day one, we were confined to our rooms until summoned to the Covid testing station, guarded by fresh-faced naval cadets. After having the back of our skulls scraped with a steel bristled toilet brush to collect some snot, we were marched back upstairs to our comfy lair.

Day two, the Covid-free in our midst were granted a blue, festival-style armband which allowed us to book daily 50-minute outdoor sessions. We paced a strip of lawn back and forth, trying to walk off a few of the accumulated calories. No exercise other than walking permitted!

The yard was enclosed from the public with parallel cyclone wire fences several metres apart. When family came to visit, they gawked at us like zoo exhibits and shouted encouragement across the void. Lobbing of illicit substances over the barrier was strictly prohibited and all deliveries searched.

Ironically, our release coincided with the first case of Delta in New Zealand. So, as I write we are locked down at home, reminiscing about the days when meals came delivered to our door.



## Sonnet 1

by S Sorrensen

Locked down, shut in, separated from you,  
The day unwraps, rolls into the future,  
Like a toilet roll rolling (I've a few)  
Into more of the same, maybe crueller.

Separation by social media,  
Physically distanced, except for shopping,  
Behind my mask, I've become needier:  
My Dan Murphy's trolley overtopping.

Lockdown extended, Facebook tells me,  
So Netflix and sparkling ale fill my night,  
Bit drunk, I remember when I was free,  
I could travel, and see you, oh what delight!

The world has changed for us, it's hard to cope,  
But love remains, and, yes, in love lives hope.

## An early Rolling Stones show

by Maxx Maxted

In his 20s, Maxx worked as assistant manager of the Odeon Theatre in Cheltenham, London, which in 1964 was a premier entertainment venue.

The Rolling Stones were as big as they were going to get at the time, before the days of utilising sports stadiums to accommodate the increasingly large number of fans.

Nevertheless, they all embraced their popularity. We had booked them for a tour after their first self-titled album. We got them cheaply in a package with The Beatles tour earlier the previous year.

By the time we were ready to stage their shows, the popularity of both bands worldwide had increased massively. In the meantime, they were both demanding – and getting – a lot more money than we had offered. But they were stuck with a contract they had to fulfil.

The Rank Organisation lawyers

were on the ball.

Both bands decided to fulfil their contracts immediately before their planned tours of the USA and Australasia.

For the Rolling Stones show, the senior theatre management managed to stay out of the way as usual and left me to it. I was in my element, confident and capable.

The ice-cream girls were loaded up with plenty more in the freezer, and I left the imported security, off-duty firemen and policemen, to work themselves out under their own bosses.

We had developed a system of demountable scaffolding to prevent insistent fans from invading the stage. Anyone trapped underneath could escape the pressing mob and recirculate back into the crowd.

For anyone who has only seen old movies of screaming girls and roaring crowds during a Beatles or Stones concert, it is impossible to describe the total

assault to the senses an event like this can engender. You have to have actually experienced one to fully understand. Every sense is heightened and on edge.

The reason for this is that the acoustics in theatres are designed to funnel the sound from the stage outward to the audience in a harmonious and balanced manner so that the those in the back row can hear without distortion and understand without struggling as easily as a person sitting in the front row or in any other seat in the house.

When, on the other hand, the sound is being generated by the audience from many points and directed towards the stage, a Doppler effect kicks in. The sound begins to have a palpable rhythm to it, a pulse where the various sound-waves double up on each other and amplify the sound, towards the stage.

During the two Rolling Stones concerts I attended, as a working



RIP Charlie Watts

observer, this phenomenon became more obvious as their charged performances reached a crescendo and it became increasingly difficult to rise above it.

Like rogue waves, some male members of the audience from the back rows managed to elevate themselves onto the shoulders of audience members in front, propelling themselves forwards and upwards until they were 'crowd-surfing', level with the stage.

Like all surf, however, it usually broke into a tumble when it reached my barricade of scaffolding and they fell heavily, to be scooped up and taken to a safe place where they were then unceremoniously thrown out through the various fire exits by the burly off-duty policeman and firemen, who seemed to enjoy the task.

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# Sunset Soirées at The Regent

The Sunset Soirées are the newest addition to the Balcony Sessions at The Regent, and are slated for every Saturday evening from 5 to 7pm.

Opened in 1947, The Regent is the Art Deco jewel in the crown of Murwillumbah and the cultural heart of the M-Arts precinct. The Balcony Sessions are intimate sit-down shows on the alfresco balcony, with great views over the town from Hospital Hill to the award-winning Knox Park.

This is the perfect place to watch the sunset, whilst enjoying a sublime selection of musical artists – with a cocktail and canapés as part of the ticket price of \$30. The cocktails will change weekly and will showcase some exciting local distilleries making big waves around the world with their amazing creations, complemented by fresh canapés and tapas delights.

Excellent musicians have been curated from our incredible local music scene and include Andrea Soler on 18th Sept; Ilona Harker on 25th Sept; and Jesse Witney on 4th October.

The Weekly Wind-downs (\$15/10) are every Friday night from 6-8pm with Bone Lazy on 17th Sept; Craig Atkins on 24th Sept; and Mel Scarlett on 1st October.

Plus World Music (\$15/10) every Sunday from 1 to 3pm with Ali Baba on 19th Sept; SoLar on 26th Sept; and Sahar on 3rd October.

Lockdown permitting, The Regent Cinema will re-open for the school holidays from Friday 17th September. More details at: [the-regent.com.au/special-events](http://the-regent.com.au/special-events)



Andrea Soler



Jesse Witney



Ilona Harker

# Fascinating memoir of a change agent

Book Review  
by Sian Evans

From secret communist meetings, to sugar daddies and busking throughout Europe “wasting taxpayers’ money”, *Beat Your Breasts* is a fascinating and entertaining read that will have you in turns laughing out loud and shaking your head in disbelief.

Author Sue Edmonds has lived an amazing life, her choices brave and unapologetic, and she has been a driving force in the woman’s movement in this country. Although you would forget that as you read this memoir.

Her humble understatements and subtle wit are littered throughout as if to remind you that she is an ordinary person just living her life; finding creative ways to change what is unjust. All this while being dogged by ASIO, which had accumulated a huge file on her.

It is impossible to separate Sue’s personal life with all its crazy exploits from her political one, as they are intricately linked in every choice she makes. As Sue writes, “The personal is political”.



The title of the memoir comes from the one album that Sue’s band The Ovarian Sisters produced, which can still be found on Youtube. A review of the album describes it as “...some of the best female dominant tunes I’ve ever heard, especially when it comes to politically themed music.”

Sue Edmond’s memoir is not only a fascinating read but an important part of Australian history. Her

voice is one from the fringe and gives hope that through grassroots movements it is possible for change to occur.

Give yourself a treat this month and pick up a copy of *Beat Your Breasts*. I promise you will not be disappointed.

*Beat Your Breasts* is on sale at the Nimbin Artists Gallery, The Bush Factory and the Chocolate/Whisky shop on South Bruny Island, Tasmania.

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