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Where the wild clays are

by Anne Cook

French winegrowers use the term "terroir" (from terre, "land") to describe the environmental factors that affect a wine's individual character, traits and the wine's unique quality.

Nimbin Artists Gallery's artist of the month for July, Ali Walker applies the same principle to her ceramics practice. In her desire to create imaginative pottery that embodies the raw and earthy origins of the elements that are used, Ali sources wild clay from local valleys and rivers.

These wild clays are then processed in an environmentally sensitive manner by hand which in turn results in the creation of works that are both unique and that reflect the qualities of the beautiful Northern Rivers region's "terroir."

This contemplative and thoughtful process gives Ali a very strong connection to the natural world and the beauty that it embodies.

In addition to being the creator of inspirational ceramics, Ali also works in the areas of watercolour, acrylics and encaustic wax. Ali finds that these mediums allow her to explore a more illustrative and abstract approach to her creative skills and enable her to express her emotions and lived experiences through

'Jupiter Urn', wild clay
'Ancient Flow', watercolour and ink

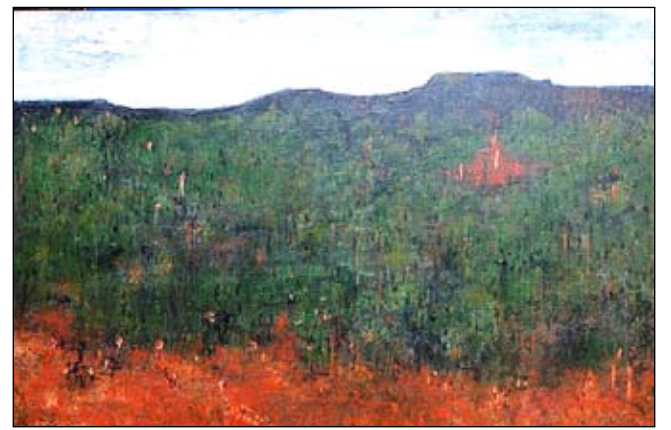
these diversified artforms.

Informed by literature, poetry and dreams, these lyrical works are both intellectually and visually stimulating for the viewer and they allow you to view the world in a different way.

Living in Blue Knob among the majestic mountains with meandering creeks, the spectacular rainforests and exploring the nearby sandy beaches with their wild ocean waves are the ineffable and profound sources of awe that have influenced Ali's creativity.

If you would like to experience these beautiful works, come and view them at the Nimbin Artists Gallery during the month of July. We are open 7 days a week from 10am to 4pm.

Also don't forget that the Nimbin Art Fair will be commencing Saturday 2nd July through to Sunday 17th July in the School of Arts Hall.



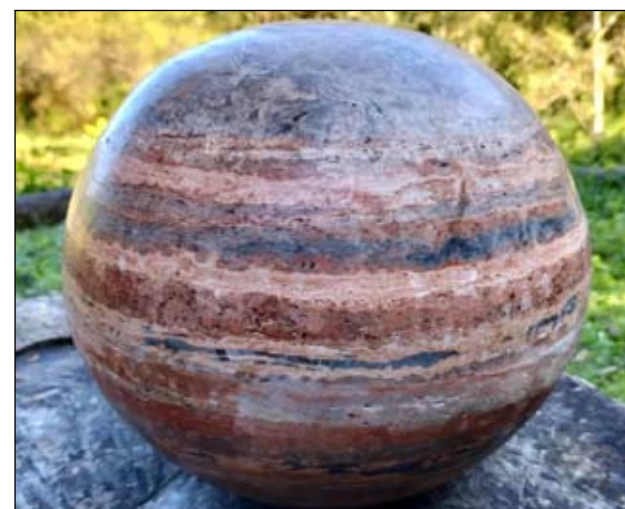
'Where the Wild Clays Are', acrylic on canvas



'Moon & Stars Pod', wild clay



'Mini Pod', ceramics



From newspaper to paintbrush with TAFE NSW

Northern Rivers local Nerida Woolley (pictured) has credited TAFE NSW with helping her make the switch from newspaper journalist to popular landscape artist.

According to the Australian Government's Job Outlook, the number of Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals in Australia has grown strongly over the past five years and is expected to grow to 15,600 by 2025.

Nerida worked as a rural newspaper journalist and had always wanted to study art in her younger years but went down a more 'sensible' career route.

"When my youngest child started school I made the decision to finally follow my long held passion for painting," Nerida said.

"After a lot of research, I decided Lismore TAFE offered the best fit with a well-rounded course covering topics like art history and the business of art as well as practical lessons in print making, drawing, ceramics, sculpture and painting."

Nerida enrolled in the Diploma of Visual Arts at



TAFE Lismore and is now living her dream as a full-time mother and painter. Her paintings reflect her love of and affinity with the land and this year alone has seen her exhibit in places including Inverell, Toowoomba, Walcha, Sydney and Dubbo, as well as fulfil a hectic commission schedule.

"While I was studying at TAFE, I had three young and super-active primary age children as well as three high school aged step-children.

"Life at home was extremely busy, so my main personal obstacle in completing the course was finding time to fit it in with all the outside homework."

"I was so determined to complete the course I made the time and loved every minute of it. It was never work to me. Even to this day I continue to spend every night reading or researching art in books, online or attending workshops."

The more I learn, the more

I realise I have to learn."

When devastating floods hit the Northern Rivers this year, Nerida joined a collective of artists who banded together to donate artwork to #ArtForFloods and raise money for flood victims.

TAFE NSW visual arts teacher Steven Giese said Nerida's pivot from journalist to painter was such a success due to the clear passion and drive she has invested into her studies.

"It's very rewarding to see that Nerida has forged such a successful art practice using the skills she has acquired at Lismore TAFE. Nerida is part of a thriving arts community in the Northern Rivers and it's wonderful to see her giving back to the community," Mr Giese said.

Nerida said that she loved every minute of studying at TAFE NSW, and the flexibility of the course meant that she was able to successfully navigate her home life with her studies.

For more information about visual arts courses available at TAFE NSW, visit: www.tafensw.edu.au or phone 13-16-01.

Fabulous Fibre at BKHall

The first fibre exhibition held at Blue Knob Hall Gallery in 2005 was called "Feeling for Fibre" where 25 weavers, quilters, felt-makers and sculptors showcased the innovative, creative and functional forms that felt making and fibre were becoming.

It has become an annual event that continues to express the vitality of fibre in all its forms.

Felt making was transformed by the experimentation of two local women, Polly Stirling and Sachiko Kotaka who developed what is now known as Nuno Felt.

They began teaching the process and started a felting revolution that became a worldwide phenomenon.

The exhibition has continued to change over the years as artists use new and old forms of transforming fibre (natural man-made or

recycled) into the everyday items that we use, wear or admire.

The artists and artisans who are exhibiting at the Gallery have come up with the whimsical – Jennifer Edwards 'No Internet', an installation using her Tribal Barbie couple relaxing in their bamboo and palm woven hut; the practical – Kitty van Vuuren's knitted, crocheted and woven work made entirely from recycled yarns; and the mastery with Sachiko Kotaka's exquisite Nuno felted piece titled 'Walk Softly Through the Rice Fields'.

Anything goes when it comes to fibre, and this annual exhibition at Blue Knob Hall Gallery is dedicated to this wonderful multi-faceted medium.

The exhibition opened on Sunday 26th June and will run until Saturday 13th August.



'Walk Softly Through the Rice Fields' by Sachiko Kotaka

For more information regarding exhibitions or Blue Knob Café, please contact: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au or: bkgcafe@gmail.com or phone 02 6689-7449.



Crochet and woven hanging by Lorraine Lintern



Poncho, skirt and shawl by K.T.

Abstractions, poetry and more in Kyogle

by Ruth Tsimbinis

'Abstraction and Other' is the exhibition for July at the Roxy Gallery. The Woodenbong Arts Group, along with the Bonalbo Artists Alliance are bringing together a selection of works from their members that focus on abstraction.

A host of West-of-the-Range artists have come together to present an exhibition that focuses on the concept of abstraction, freeing themselves from representational to presenting artworks open to the viewer's interpretation.

'Abstraction and Other' will be on exhibition until 31st July, and will kick-start with a number of events to open the exhibition.

On Saturday 9th July, the Woodenbong Poets Breakfast will take place in the Roxy Gallery from 10am to noon.



'Soul' by Lucy Deslandes

Highlighting the diversity of talents living in the West-of-the-Range areas of the Kyogle region, this event will bring to the Roxy Gallery a taste of the poets that reside in the bush. This is a free event and members of the public are welcome to contribute with

their poetry readings.

The official opening of 'Abstraction and Others' will also take place on Saturday 9th July from 1pm to 3pm. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet the artists involved in this exhibition while contemplating the meaning of abstraction.

On Saturday 23rd July at 1pm as part of this exhibition, performance artist, Jayne Miller will be launching her new book *The Writings*, with a book signing along with an artist's talk on her multidisciplinary arts practice as a performer, filmmaker, poet and musician.

Continuing in the support of the Kyogle Writers Festival, on Sunday 10th July from 2pm the Roxy Gallery will be hosting the debut screening of *Crossing* – a poetic encounter between local creatives and our bridges. This is a free event and a Q&A will follow the film screening.

The woman and the wolf and Serpentine markets

by Corinne Batt-Rawden

In the last issue of the *Nimbin GoodTimes* 'Woman and Wolf' by Rebecca Bryant was featured and flood survivor Susan McLennan read the article.

She emailed the Serpentine Gallery and wrote: "My white wolf and I were rescued from 4.5m flooding in North Lismore. She really kept me going, I would like to buy that painting."

Two amazing women both with harrowing stories. Artist Rebecca Bryant decided to gift her artwork to fellow survivor Susan and her faithful dog Freyja (pictured).

Freyja woke Susan up at 3am that night warning her that the waters were coming. Susan recalls that Freyja was doing this Lassie thing trying to get Susan to follow her. She turned on lights and saw water coming in over the first step and rising fast.

Susan was unable to get support from SES and the



000 recommended she climb on the roof. After a frightful time and calling for help in the dark and storming rain until her voice was hoarse, they were eventually rescued by locals in a tinny around 10am that morning.

Hearing of Susan's plight, local artist Rebecca Bryant decided to gift her painting to Susan. Rebecca shares her story of that night.

"During the flood, we had five families swim or boat to our house being the highest house in the street. No one believed the water would come in. At one stage, we had



roughly 25 adults and kids and well as three dogs and two pet rats, a rabbit named Slippers, a Macaw and two cats all seeking shelter in our home.

"It was a very terrifying day and we all had to be evacuated to the Lismore South Public School library, where I work as a teacher's aide, then evacuated again across the bridges to safety. Personally, as a family we were able to save a lot more than most and have been truly blessed with kindness and generosity.

"I haven't felt able to create

any art. Aside from not having my materials, I have just felt depleted of creative energy. However, learning that my painting is to go to someone who also went through the floods has given me a real boost and I may find myself painting again soon.

"Thank you so much Serpentine. I hope the lady loves her painting."

Serpentine Gallery has a stall at each Lismore Car boot market and the monthly Channon Markets in Lismore. Come on down and say hello.

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A moment
by S Sorrensen

Riding a motorbike is scary. I mean, two wheels is less wheels than required for form stability. So, when you approach a corner on a road snaking through the forest, you have to lean. It's just physics: gravity versus centrifugal force.

Leaning gets you around the corner. If you don't lean, you go straight ahead. In my case, I would go straight ahead into Mangrove Creek. That would be bad.

Mangrove Creek itself isn't bad. The water is clear (yes, North Coasters, creeks can run clear) as it pokes its way to the pretty village of Spencer where the creek joins the Hawkesbury River. Yep, a beautiful creek bathed in sunset gold, but my bike and I do not want to bathe right now. We're more into staying on the road.

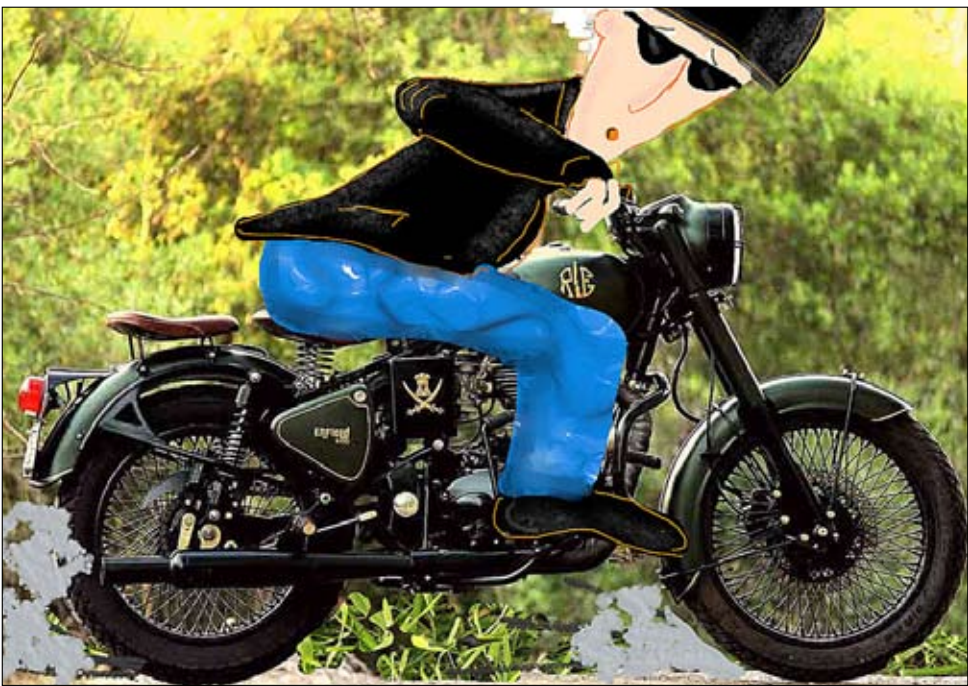
Motorcycling can be scary. But life is scary,

right? It's uncertain, despite our efforts to predict and control it. Climate change is here, so here come the floods, droughts and mayhem. That's scary. So, I didn't drive my Subaru down from the North Coast; I took a fuel-efficient train – which turned out to be an inefficient bus. Weird world.

I don't want to live in fear. That's what old people do. So when asked, "You wanna come for a ride?" I said, "Cool." But a tremor of anxiety tickled my ageing spine. It's been a while...

I drop down to third gear. The bike snarls and prepares to pitch into the right-hander.

I have had a love affair with motorbikes since I was 17. Freshly licensed, I played weave and speed with my mates in Brisbane traffic on a Suzuki 500. A bit older, I cruised the Sunshine Coast on a Triumph 650, my first great love behind me, holding me tight, certain our love was eternal.



Later, when I had moved to the hills near Nimbin (without her), I flirted with the potholes on a BMW 650, my young son holding on and shouting 'Do it again!' when my flirtations ended with a suspension-wrecking bounce that he very much enjoyed. That was a long time ago.

I had no fear then. I haven't ridden a big bike since. Until now... I'm astride a Royal Enfield 500 Bullet. It's a lovely bike. Traditional English design. It has a single cylinder punching up through the seat. I like that. I can't see all the way around the corner. There

are roadside trees. Hmm. I don't like that. We all want to know what's around the corner, but the future is increasingly unpredictable. And what predictions there are, are bleak. The old world lurches to chaos: regional train timetables are fantasy; flood zonings a

nostalgia; a house for your son a dream. But I have to assume the road around the corner is clear. What else can you do? Leaning the bike over hard, it dips westwards. All of a sudden, sunlight strobes through the trees. It's impossible to see. A blinding disco; the beat is four-stroke and the dance floor bitumen. Between flashes, I see blue blobs where I should be seeing road. I'm losing orientation. I touch the brakes – which snaps the bike upright – and it heads towards the creek. Not good. I release the brakes and lean the bike back into the blinking blaze. Riding a motorcycle is scary. I wish I was in my Subaru. Or in bed. I wish the world was nicer: no extreme weather events, overpriced houses, buses pretending to be trains – or blind corners. But it ain't. Life is scary. Hold on. Lean into it

An opportunity we must take

This year's catastrophic flooding and destruction has provided us with a significant opportunity for change; an opportunity we must take. It has wiped clean the slate of all our hoardings, indeed it has wiped away the slate itself along with our walls and ceilings. We could of course rush back in – slap up some plasterboard, staple down some lino and replicate what we had – just in time for us to have to gut it all and throw it into the street again. And many businesses have done exactly that.

Alternately we could use this period to transform our buildings and our society so we're better placed for what will be increasingly faster and larger inundations. At my place, my builder and I have taken this opportunity to tie the upper plate of the building together with the lower plate with threaded rod, metal tape the roof to the top plate and clamp the building down to the slab. This will bring it into line with modern requirements and countering the buoyancy of the timbers – buoyancy that destroyed dozens of buildings in March. The presence of walls and ceilings would've made that retrofit impossible. As a community we should start thinking ahead too.



Revenge of the Loon
by Laurie Axtens

Switzerland has extremely innovative laws and practices around squatting, and as much of Lismore's CBD will never be filled with small businesses ever again, we need to adopt their approach or rats and roaches will run these buildings instead.

We could also use the premises just as seating and keep the services and products in vans on the street for rapid redeployment.

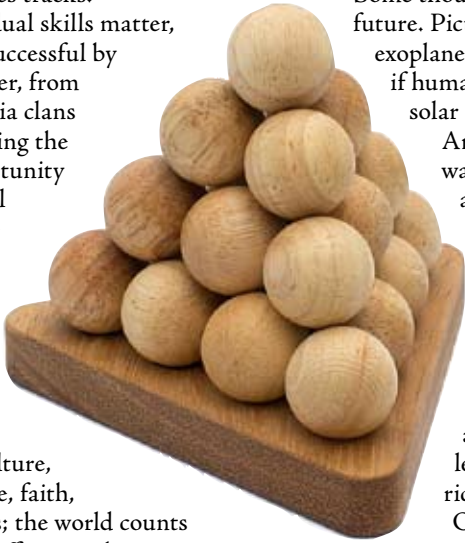
The big gig however is not the retreat of North and South Lismore – that's been underway for decades – it's the retirement and retreat of central Lismore, for the CBD is under the exact same threat as its previously-mentioned suburbs.

The human mind, and consumer choice

Shapeshifting
by Anand Gandharva

The human mind, and consumer choice, is often referred to as a black box in market research, psychology, planning, economics, etc. Regardless of which discipline, no-one knows exactly how it works. To grasp behaviour, one measures what's put in, and what comes out. Society predicts these changing needs, like traffic and parking, water use and charges, security and laws, environment and economy, employment and education, even currency, land, food, technology. Governments, enterprises, institutions, community organisations, small business, councils, work overtime keeping up, and regulate fair discussions. Rules on tax, building, car manufacturing, OH&S, etc. are often more complicated than any non-specialist understands. Enterprises comply with ever more regulations. Prices rise accordingly. It's unsustainable. And that's for organisations. Individuals have to decide whether it is worth it to join the rat race, or sleep under a bridge. There is a simple way around this: switch the black box. As long as people consume like opportunist apex predators, their black boxes process data that way, but if they see the world as meritocratic herbivores, their black box,

or brain, changes tracks. While individual skills matter, humans were successful by working together, from family groups via clans to tribes, climbing the ladder of opportunity through natural selection of 'the fittest'. But there are over eight billion people now in a divided Global Village. Skin colour, culture, family, language, faith, looks, priorities; the world counts well over 500 different tribes in some 200 nations, overharvesting bounties of nature, pressurising others, running out of land, fouling the nest. It can't go on. All people are DNA relatives. It's time to bury the hatchet, switch from small group predators to large group herbivore meritocrats. It's not difficult. We are sharing one Earth. Protein is protein, whether it comes from a mammal or a plant. There are plant-based civilisations. Herbivores, like elephants and oxen, can be strong and clever. The idea that it is good to be apex predators may get opportunist leaders, harsh economics, wars, and deliver snarly individuals arguing over territory, but undermines community, society and fills gaols. Good for a few of today's businesses, but bad for mankind.



Some thought experiments on the future. Picture omnivores eating exoplanets bare and consider if humanity should leave the solar system. Are humans in a forever war with other tribes and enslaving species? Why? Does genetics place people as relations of mammals? Then decide if cow, pig or poultry businesses are the future? Why not avocados, macadamias, lentils, potatoes, wheat, rice, etc? One of the strongest growing groups in society today are herbivores.

Future markets

Humans have to eat. Whether that involves 'domesticated' livestock, fish farms, sliced pig, chicken wings, dahl or potato soup is a matter of taste. Taste is taught in childhood, and it would be wrong, and impossibly hard, to force people to comply right now. After all, Aquarius affirms foremost to enjoy life. But environments and many spirits, are being polluted. It is not just that, it is increasingly hard to keep dissenters at bay. Robot cops, computer surveillance, war in the streets, pandemics, more gaols, dictatorships? It is time to switch the black box: Ahimsa laws.

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The largest industrial reform of our generation is coming

by Rosalie Shearer,
Rainbow Power Co.

Rainbow Power Comany (RPC) is a medium sized company employing 45 staff located in Nimbin, RPC specializes in designing and supplying renewable energy technologies to customers across Australia and the Pacific. We have been in business for over 35 years and during this period have seen dramatic change in the renewable energy industry.

Over the past three years, unprecedented bushfires and floods have directly affected the Northern Rivers community. Prior to the recent election ABC *Vote Compass* had recorded 30% of voters stating that action on climate change was their number one concern. Although the widespread acceptance of the risks of climate change has seen all credible political parties adopt 'Net Zero by 2050' policies, the pathway to achieving this remains at best vague.

Over the past 20 years we have seen the renewable energy industry transform from a small alternative sector into the major growth sector in the energy industry. We have seen the cost of renewable energy plummet to become the cheapest form of new build energy production on the planet. This is one of the few good news stories for government to take practical action on climate change.

The political conversation has now rightly moved from questions relating to subsidizing limited government programs, to economy wide reforms. RPC sees political credibility now relies on more than general statements of support and long-term targets. A practical plan for how our politicians and the elected government will lead the largest industrial reform of our generation is

now overdue.

RPC sought consultation to hear from our local candidates as to their vision on the transformation of the energy sector - what challenges they see ahead and what role they see Federal government will play in this transition.

Below is a list of issues RPC has identified as roadblocks to the growth of our sector and we welcome and encourage comments and suggestions from the public as well as the official replies from the politicians, which we will be publishing in a later article.

Climate change policies

- "Stop the fighting" multi-party support for climate change policy;
- Carbon emissions targets leading to net zero by 2050;
- 2030 and 2040 target allowing industry to plan with certainty;
- Practical penalties for not achieving targets providing a clear signal for action.

Electricity Network

- Federal government to take an active role in network planning for the transition to a net zero grid;
- Support of an external federal body looking at driving investment into the network, based on the location of future renewable energy resources;
- Support for mainstreaming the renewable industry; review and removal of all counter-policies that work against renewable energy projects;
- Allowing renewable energy projects to compete on an even playing field, including the removal of hidden subsidies for fossil fuel projects;
- Accurate costing of environmental damage in all energy projects including environmental, waste and clean-up costs;



- Research into and recognition of the financial benefit new technologies provide the electricity network, and leading energy market reforms to value these contributions;
- Supporting microgrid demonstration projects that help build resilience in the network and protect against extreme climate events;
- No subsidies for ageing fossil fuel infrastructure. Clear planning and stable policies allowing clear market signals for new infrastructure to be built.

Electric Vehicles (EV's):

- Planning for EV standards;
- Planning for network upgrades to support EV charging requirements;
- Establishing standards for vehicle to grid technologies;

- EV chargers mandated in new homes in Australia.

Training

- Supporting a "just transition" for workers in carbon intensive industries;
- Provide support for renewable companies to help staff improve skills and training as a strategic industry;
- Incentivise uptake of electrical apprenticeships with a focus on renewable skills and accreditation;
- Training of solar accredited installers to be a priority training area; and
- Break the Clean Energy Council's monopoly on accreditation, training and qualifications for solar. This should be the same as all other electrical qualifications and be

administered by Fair-Trading. Multiple providers should be able to provide accreditation.

Rainbow Power Company Ltd is an unlisted public company, incorporated in 1987 to design, manufacture, sell and install renewable energy equipment based on solar, wind and hydro energy sources.

We are extremely proud to have been a major protagonist for the increased use of renewable energy both in Australia and in overseas countries.

With an unparalleled commitment to education, demonstration and innovation, our primary objective since the start has been to turn the tide away from environmental destruction and towards environmental harmony.

A fishy capture reveals a prized tropical species moving south

A fishing expedition on the NSW Mid North Coast has hooked an unexpected catch for a Southern Cross University marine researcher.

When brothers Benjamin and Daniel Mos went fishing over summer, the pair did not anticipate their catch to be anything other than a photo opportunity or dinner.

Instead the fish they captured and released, commonly called the Barred Javelin, is rare to find in New South Wales waters.

"While this species is likely well-known to fishers in Queensland, it is not something we typically find here. We had to look through a few fish books and websites to identify our specimens," said Dr Benjamin Mos, a marine biologist based at Southern Cross University's National Marine Science Centre.

A scientific paper, outlining the pair's discovery, is now published in *Journal of Fish Biology*.

The captures in late 2021 and early 2022 are the southern-most records for the barred javelin reported to date. And there may be more around the area.



Barred Javelin have a golden-green back, silvery belly with traces of brown vertical bars. The juvenile has a brilliant silvery green back with golden silver sides and a silvery white belly, with 12 or more faint vertical bars that comprise small dark brown spots or irregular blotches. Courtesy Westag

"At the end of May 2022, we saw posts on social media about a barred javelin caught from Deep Creek, which is just north of the Nambucca River where we found our specimens," Dr Mos said.

The species has been previously sighted in the Richmond River and Clarence River systems on the NSW North Coast, which are around 200 kilometres north of the Nambucca River where the latest specimens were discovered.

It is not known if the arrival of the Barred Javelin this far

south into NSW is due to changing ocean conditions.

"It is possible the sightings this far south are a one-off event. However, our sightings fit with a broader pattern occurring in the waters off south-eastern Australia which points towards a role of climate change," said Dr Mos. "In our region, dozens of tropical species are moving southwards where oceans and estuaries are also warming faster than the global average."

According to *Atlas of Living Australia* records, the Barred Javelin has not been collected

in NSW in more than 50 years.

The Barred Javelin's southern-most stronghold is Queensland's Moreton Bay, off Brisbane, where the species supports economically important recreational and commercial fisheries.

The species is a popular sport fish and reportedly good eating. The Barred Javelin grows to around 80cm in length and is found in estuaries and offshore to around 75 metres deep.

Dr Mos said the newcomer was not of particular environmental concern at present. The barred javelin's relative rarity in NSW and generalist diet means it is unlikely to out-compete local species.

In the Mediterranean, tropical fishes moving into sub-tropical or temperate areas pose threats to biodiversity, public health, and fisheries. Two examples include herbivorous rabbitfishes chomping away at kelp forests, and poisonous silver-cheeked toadfish fouling fishers' nets and stealing their catch.

In contrast, the Barred Javelin may be welcomed by NSW recreational and

commercial fishers.

"It is important that we understand where this species is showing up, and in what numbers," Dr Mos said.

If greater numbers make their way to NSW over coming decades the Barred Javelin may become a more common catch. It might then be necessary to look at whether specific size or catch limits are needed to ensure more fishers have the opportunity to catch this fish.

Because the Barred Javelin has been rarely captured in northern NSW, there are at

present no specific catch or size limits for this species in NSW.

A maximum daily bag limit of 20 applies to all fish in NSW that do not have specific bag and size limits. A 40 cm minimum length and bag limit of 10 applies in Queensland waters.

Fishers, divers, and the general public can help scientists track the movement of fish and other marine organisms to new locations by reporting unusual sightings to RedMap Australia at: www.redmap.org.au

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July 16 DIY Luscious Soaps and Natural Cleaning workshop 10am-1pm

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Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Kerry Hagan

After having to cancel our last two garden club meetings, the weather gods really smiled upon us this month, with a perfect winter afternoon at Pauline and Sue's.

Pauline and Sue have lived on

Jarlanbah for the best part of 30 years, but moved to their present location 15 years ago.

At that time, the garden was scrappy and neglected. They set about clearing and then planting food trees.

The result today is a gorgeous orchard, with fruit trees groaning

under the weight of produce and a very productive vege garden.

In the common land adjoining their property, cabinet timbers have been planted under a canopy of ancient eucalypts.

The most notable of these are a stunning Queensland maple, celery pines, red and white cedars and

white beech.

All of this is set against a glorious backdrop of Blue Knob and Mt Neville.

It was a truly wonderful afternoon, with many of us taking home oranges, mandarins and tangelos, all fat and juicy.

Thank you Pauline and Sue.

Our next meeting is at Nana and Hendrik's place on Saturday 16th July, 2-4 pm at 694 Stony Chute Rd, Stony Chute.

Car pooling is essential for this one, as parking is extremely limited.

Please bring a cup, a chair and a plate to share. Guests are welcome. Look forward to seeing you there.



Bushwalkers on the move

by Peter Moyle

The weather has come around and now we are having gorgeous clear days and we have been out and about.

Unfortunately, our walk schedule is still all over the place as we struggle to get access to our regular and planned walks. We had planned to tackle Christies Creek in the Moobal National Park, a beautiful off-track walk along the creek, but the rains have caused serious land slips and trees down necessitating National Parks to close the area for 12 months.

This is not an isolated closure as a lot of our local National Parks have serious damage to access and infrastructure.

A bit of restructuring our schedule has seen us still maintain our dates but locations have changed at short notice. The walk leader always has the latest information, so if interested give them a ring to check for updates and to register.

Walks program

Sunday 10th July

Rocky Creek Dam – the full circuit

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498

Meet: at Rocky Creek Dam Picnic Area at 9am. We will follow the tracks we did at the AGM before continuing into 'The Big Scrub' in the Nightcap

National Park. On tracks, but as usual some can be uneven and slippery. Good walking shoes/boots needed as well as water and lunch. A nice after-walk get-together at the picnic area.

Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th July

Black Rocks Campground, Bundjalung National Park

Leader: Megan Myers 0415-063-302
Grade 2-3: Another of our great camp weekends. Camp for a night or two and day walkers are welcome on both the Saturday and Sunday. Visitors welcome: \$10 to help cover insurance. Day walks will start at 9am. This is a lovely coastal camp area under trees just south of Evans Head. Jerusalem Creek runs from here to the ocean so some will canoe and kayak while there is a nice walk besides the creek and ocean walks as well. We have booked sites 1, 2 and 5 so plenty of room to share, ring Megan if you want a spot or book your own. We have sites booked from Thursday to Monday. National Park vehicle pass required \$8 a day or buy an annual one. Camping \$12 per person per night.

Sunday 7th August

38/38 and the Hidden Valley – Whian Whian State Conservation Area

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498

Meet: 9am Rummery Park camp area near Minyon Falls in the Whian Whian SCA. We were out this way earlier in the year and have decided to return to these beautiful valleys. There will be some scrambling over rocks and some steep climbs up and down, suitable for experienced walkers only. If in doubt ring Peter for advice. Bring: water, lunch, and hat. Good walking footwear essential.

Plant of the month



Kangaroo apple

Solanum aviculare

by Richard Burer

Kangaroo apple is a widespread small native shrub often found on rainforest margins.

After a rainy season this year, its having a good season in regenerating forest as it acts as a pioneer species and is very useful for "quick cover".

It likes disturbed areas and its regeneration is common after removal of Lantana and it can come up after slashing the edges of forest.

It's really worth getting to know your native Solanums as they can often go unnoticed and can be mistaken as weeds as they may regenerate with weed species including

wild tobacco and hence be included in careless removal.

This species grows fast with attractive distinct leaves which resemble the hind feet of kangaroos, and orange-red fruit that contains solasodine a steroid drug used in the manufacture of oral contraceptives, which is cultivated on a large scale together with related species in other countries.

Common locally, kangaroo apple is often found adjacent to and within Nightcap NP including Mt Nardi.

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based local natural area restoration contractor and consultant:
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Practical exercises for connection

by Suzy Maloney

I recently had a powerful result with a client from doing connection exercises. He told me he had been spending 90 minutes treating greasy heel on his horse, and he was doing it daily. The horse was sore, and constant rain meant they were not getting better.

I was impressed by his dedication but felt this was not sustainable. I asked if I could work with his horse for a while and proceeded to do some connection exercises.

Later, after I left, he messaged me saying he had been able to treat his horse in 20 minutes. The following day he did the connection exercises I'd showed him and completed the task in 10 minutes. This had gone from 90 minutes to 10 minutes! Even I was amazed at such a huge response.

He said he now realised he needed to connect with his horse before everything. I was over the moon at his understanding of how important connection is. The following is a brief intro to some of my exercises.

Follow the leader – I do this whenever I meet a new horse or if there have been issues. It establishes me in the role of herd leader, a trusted person who will look after them. With a halter and lead I walk off in front of the horse and expect them to follow me. If they do not, they will bump into the end of the rope.

Usually this lets them know they need to follow me. If they do not, I walk off sideways a bit and squeeze on the rope. The moment the horse follows I make sure there is slack in the rope again.



Every time they stop, they feel the rope, every time they follow, they feel nothing. Every now and then I stop and go or do gentle turns. Gentle turns make it easier for your horse to follow.

Yields – These help the horse release their entire body. I ask them to yield the head towards me and away, both sides, the hindquarters, and shoulders both sides, forward and backwards and dropping the head. This is a lot of yields, and it may take a few sessions before your horse is comfortable with all of them.

Circles – I do this on a 12 foot lead, this also establishes me as herd leader and introduces the horse to watching for my body and to voice cues. I ask them to move around me by twirling the end of the rope and clicking. When they move forward, I remove all pressure. I do this both sides and only in walk and trot as it's too small a circle for canter.

Following – Another following exercise to reinforce and check our connection. This time I do not want to

put any pressure on the rope, I step out and use my body language to invite the horse to follow me. By this stage they should be tuned in to me and will follow me everywhere with zero pressure.

Touching all over – By now I am hoping the horse sees me as a trusted leader. This exercise tests this and softens the horse's body, helping it to relax even more. In halt I throw the lead over the horse's neck, or ground tie, and walk around touching every part of the horse's body.

This includes inside nostrils, the mouth, nipples, sheath, under the dock, everywhere. If the horse moves at any point, I hold my hand on and wait until they still, remove my hand, then repeat until they do not move.

Presence – This is something that is within all the other exercises, it is not a separate exercise. By presence I mean being totally and completely with the horse. Being aware of every tiny little signal they give, having nothing in the mind, being present and open to the communication that is flowing constantly backwards and forwards.

With these tools, connection with your horse should grow into a beautiful relationship where they trust you and feel safe. When this happens, issues may change or disappear, without ever working directly on them. Everything, absolutely everything, is easier with horses if you connect with them first.

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The uniqueness of personality

by Les Rees

Looking back to the animals that have been part of my life, I can say is that they have all been special characters, each one having a unique personality that made them interesting and endearing to all who encountered them.

An old friend was remarking on this recently, which got me thinking about the reasons for it. The answer is that they were all treated as valued members of our extended family. They've all been given plenty of love and a lot of attention to their well-being, so it's not surprising that they've been able to develop special personalities.

There are a few who consider this as spoiling them, but generally by those who lack compassion and empathy, those who think that animals can be there when they want them to be but expect them to distance themselves when they are not wanted. I can always tell if an animal is not respected, and it eats away at the very essence of my being.

Our horses generally get along because each one plays a unique role in the herd dynamics. Their individual strengths serve to keep balance and maintain the herd's integrity.

Gypsy, our oldest member



of the family, seems to be the matriarch who quietly maintains order and has opinions on everything. She likes to supervise at meal times when I am making up the feeds.

She watches me closely, doing a time and motion study, occasionally nudging the wheelbarrow to let me know that she is counting the time it takes for the food to arrive. She has even worked out how to open the roller door. If I'm not quick enough to stop her, she slides her neck under it and pushes it up so that she can have a better view. This is her general 'self-appointed' position in life!

The others also have specific roles they like to play within the herd which

is fascinating to watch and the more I study them, I realise that it gives them the confidence to further develop the uniqueness of their personalities.

The importance of calm energy around animals is the key to maintaining balance within the herd. Calm energy resonates outwards, influencing emotions and enriching shared positive experiences that encourage relaxation.

A lot of people have a problem with this because they are aware that horses are much bigger and faster than themselves but if you think that way, the horses will pick up on the fear and associated defence mechanisms that accompany this kind of energy.

This is because horses are masters at reading energy and can spot it from meters away. Given that they are flight animals, this is not surprising. I believe that the secret is never to allow myself to get cross. I simply just take a deep breath, increase my energy level and look directly at them. This seems to have the desired effect.

Our horse Red was two years old when he joined our family; he was absolutely full of himself managing to irritate all the other herd members. If he had been sold to the wrong person, it's possible that he would have been beaten into submission.

Unfortunately, there are many who still think that this is the way to train horses to do their bidding. However, I'm happy to say that it took minutes to show him that he was being annoying by gently pushing him away before he could put his head in my face.

Once he realised what he was doing, he dropped his head downward and gave out a huge sigh. For this he was rewarded with a cuddle to tell him he was a good boy. A couple of sessions of this changed him into the perfect horse, not only with me but with the rest of the herd.

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