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Nimbin Neighbourhood & Information Centre

NIMBIN FLOOD APPEAL
If you would like to donate to assist impacted Nimbin folk visit us to make a cash donation at The Nimbin Neighbourhood & Information Centre
71 Cullen St, Nimbin

OR Deposit to: NNIC Gift Fund Account
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Why should we vote Green?

The Greens have announced candidates across every electorate in NSW for the Federal election, but many still wonder what real effect a Green vote will have, and how it can help create real action in Parliament.

When you vote for The Greens, you are backing a party that has been developing and growing for 30 years.

We have policies backed by science, economists and experience that puts the community and the climate at the forefront, as we cannot be bought by large corporations.

With smart preferential voting, your vote will put progressive parties in the House of Representatives and won't be wasted.

By also voting Greens in the Senate we have the opportunity to get a second senator, David Shoebridge, to bring future-thinking policies to the forefront of the discussion. In the Senate, we can improve government laws and block the bad ones, becoming the third biggest party in Australian history.

Our plans for climate action are so much more than net zero – we need to reinvent and reimagine an economic

system that puts climate and renewable energy at the forefront.

With the right policies and leadership, Australia can be a renewable energy and green technology superpower.

The Greens already have people on the ground pressing the issues that matter and holding the Government accountable.

This Federal election is the time to be brave with your vote, as the climate crisis is here at our doorstep.

With Greens in the Senate and the House of Representatives, we will have the power to phase out



by Kashmir Miller
Greens candidate for Page

coal and gas and make the billionaires pay their fair share.

With The Greens in the balance of power, the government will need our help to pass laws. Your vote is powerful, and now is the time to be bold!

Integrity will strengthen our region, not a pork barrel

I have called for a Federal Integrity Commission with teeth, due to a lack of accountability at the highest level, because it is critical that we restore the public's faith in our political system.

We want to elect someone we know we can trust to act in our best interests. But the question we have to ask is: are your best interests being served?

Scott Morrison and Barnaby Joyce promised us a Federal Integrity Commission at the last election. What they came up with was labelled a "protection racket" for politicians and public servants by the Australian Federal Police Association.

Trust in our federal government is now so low that 67% of Australians have low to very low trust in our federal democracy. Does integrity matter? You bet your life it does!"

The \$7.4 billion promise for dam construction announced by the Coalition has been labelled the "biggest pork barrel in history", with most of it allocated to National-held seats in north Queensland.

In the week since the election was called, the Liberal National Government has promised an additional \$1.3 billion to prop up oil and accelerate gas expansion. That's \$150 million per day, equal to the total amount the National



by Dr Hanabeth Luke
Independent candidate for Page

Emergency Response Fund gives out in a year.

As a member of this Coalition, our current MP has consistently voted against us joining much of the rest of the world in a rapid transition to a carbon neutral economy.

Again, you may ask why both major political parties are taking us down a pathway of climate disaster.

It comes back to integrity.

When subject to climate-driven disasters, my friends and neighbours tell me they have been handed aid by media release while help is out of reach. It's high time to bring the balance back to our democracy.

As your Independent, I will fight to ensure that our taxpayer money is spent on the things that matter most to our communities – addressing our housing catastrophe, supporting climate action and a locally-run disaster preparation and response force.

But promises are cheap. It is integrity that ensures that funds promised are spent. It's what will ensure that the billions claimed to be going to flood relief will go to our families, farmers and businesses, who so desperately need them right now.

That is why I support Helen Haines' Federal Integrity Commission, because it has teeth – and that is what we need to hold all politicians to account, including me.

In the face of the huge challenges we face day to day, please pay attention to this election and consider voting independent.

Bringing integrity back into politics will ensure a better future for our families, farms and communities.

Indigenous Party fields candidate for Page



The newly-launched national Indigenous political party, recently registered by the Australian Electoral Commission, will be represented by a candidate from the Clarence Valley at the 2022 Federal election.

The Indigenous-Aboriginal Party of Australia (IAPA) was formed by Uncle Owen Whyman, a proud Paakindji man from Wilcannia.

The only Indigenous party in Australia, IAPA will be standing candidates for the NSW and Queensland Senate, and three candidates

for the House of Reps including Brett Duroux for the Electorate of Page.

Duroux, a proud Yaegl, Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr man, is excited to stand up for his community. A family man living with his wife and kids in Coutts Crossing, Brett currently works at the Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council and is the Chairperson of Gugiyi Balun Aboriginal Corporation.

Brett is a fantastic communicator, with a genuine interest and concern for people and the environment and is campaigning to give his community a strong voice and leadership, and to promote respect for the land and to encourage unity and equality.

He has always been an outspoken leader in his community, and now he is keen to use the platform of the Indigenous Party to raise awareness of the issues facing

the Clarence Valley, issues which are mirrored all over much of the country.

Duroux is opposed to coal seam gas exploration and mining in the Clarence Valley. Brett says, "Anything that puts our waterways and farmlands at risk needs to stop. We need to protect our water, farmland and towns."

IAPA policy is to return to the traditional ways of managing the land and rivers.

Also high on Brett's list of priorities is addressing unemployment and skills shortages. "I would like to see a massive injection of funds into TAFE," Brett said.

"TAFE is such an important educational institution, and if we could offer free TAFE courses, I believe it will not only help with the skills shortage, but also go a long way to assist with the mental health crisis our country is facing."

To this end, Brett will also be calling for Indigenous Head Spaces. "The suicide

and incarceration rates for Indigenous people are at epidemic proportions. I know there are some great organisations focussing on youth mental health, but the more we can do the better.

"I want to see our Indigenous kids going back onto Country, led by elders, teaching respect and the old ways. This model would assist all youth, regardless of background."

With a vast history and knowledge of the mechanics of Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Brett will also continue efforts to strengthen the relationships between Land Councils and Traditional Owners and encourage them to work together.

Brett says, "What interests me is talking to people about their concerns and getting answers for them and helping my community in any way I can."

"I believe in positive change for our community."

A community that cares deserves a government that cares

This Federal election is perhaps the most important one that Australia has faced in generations. It is possible our chance for Australia to change course on climate change policy before the cumulative impact of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere puts the world on a path to unavoidable catastrophe. Here in Northern NSW we've already seeing the grim reality of climate change with five long years of bushfires, droughts and destructive floods. Add in a pandemic and we've had a full deck of deadly disasters. My professional background is in child support, and I've worked directly with families dealing with extreme trauma. But what we have now is a whole community in trauma. The immediate challenge is to place housands of displaced families into proper housing.

The homelessness crisis is absolutely urgent and must be a priority of all levels of government. Secondly, we need to keep the regional economy from collapsing. Thirdly, we need to make sure there are wrap-around services in place to support people through the long-term social and psychological impacts of the floods and everything that preceded them. And finally, we need to start a process for rebuilding devastated towns. Critically, we must build back in a way that protects people from the increased risk of fires and floods, and we need to protect ourselves from more frequent extreme weather events. All of this must be underpinned by a more ambitious approach to reducing greenhouse gases. Australia must again become a world leader, rather than a



by Patrick Deegan
Labor candidate for Page

world laggard. I'll be honest, there are times when I think about all of this and the challenges just seem to be insurmountable. Our politics is too divided, and our media is driven by conflict rather than consensus to find solutions. But then I think back to the way people across Northern NSW have responded to the event of the past two months. On the day of the February flood, there were hundreds of people putting their own lives

on the line to rescue others. In the following days, the community clean-up was an extraordinary display of collective effort. I saw people from all over the region, and even down from the Gold Coast, just walking around helping strangers to muck out their houses and to provide whatever support they could. Our society often feels like it's set up as a competition, where people are pitted against each other. But in a disaster you realise that our natural instinct is not one of competition, it's co-operation. Humanity is at its best when we work together, and when we tap into our instinct to care for each other. There is hope. It's time we elected a Federal Government that seeks to unite rather than divide us. It's time we elected a Federal Government that cares.

Democracy on the Edge:
A challenge to the candidates

by Robert Cameron

Many voters are losing faith in democracy and increasingly believe many politicians do not behave honourably and with integrity. Increasingly, democracy, equality and equity lose out to entrenched elitism and privilege. In his magisterial book, *Stalin: Paradoxes of Power* (1878-1928), Stephen Kotchin writes: "Instead of principles, there were objectives: instead of morality, means." This may neatly describe Senators and Members of Parliament. It may also serve as the epitaph for parliamentary democracy in Australia. In 2015, The Hon. Tony Fitzgerald AC QC developed a set of principles – or charter of governance – to counter the prevailing elitism and self-interest which is now regrettably the norm for some now in public office. Candidates in the forthcoming election should see this as a challenge to publically subscribe, prominently on their social media and websites, to the Fitzgerald Principles, viz:

1. To act honourably and fairly and solely in the public interest;
2. To treat all citizens equally;
3. To tell the truth;
4. Not to mislead or deceive;
5. Not to withhold or obfuscate information to which voters are entitled;
6. Not to spend public money except for public benefit; and
7. Not to use your position for your benefit or the benefit of a family member, friend, political party or other related entity.

Following the Australian Electoral Commission's publication of the list of candidates, all candidates received an email copy of this document. Refusal to endorse the Fitzgerald Principles should inform the decision on whether or not a candidate deserves your vote. Former US Secretary of State and Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, who only recently passed away, wrote at the end of her 2018 book *Fascism: A Warning*: "Some may view this book and its title as alarmist. Good. We should awake to the assault on democratic values that has gathered strength in many countries... "The temptation is powerful to close our eyes and wait for the worst to pass, but history tells us that for freedom to survive, it must be defended, and that if lies are to be stopped, they must be exposed.



RIP Madeleine Albright

- "...When we think about what questions might be most useful to ask, we should begin by discerning what our prospective leaders believe it worthwhile for us to hear.
- Do they cater to our prejudices by suggesting that we treat people outside our ethnicity, race, creed, or party as unworthy of dignity and respect?
 - Do they want us to nurture our anger towards those who we believe have done us wrong, rub raw our grievances, and set our sights on revenge?
 - Do they encourage us to have contempt for our governing institutions and the electoral process?
 - Do they seek to destroy our faith in the essential contributors to democracy such as an independent press and a professional judiciary?
 - Do they exploit the symbols of patriotism in a conscious effort to turn against one another?
 - If defeated at the polls, will they accept the verdict, or insist without evidence, that they have won?
 - Do they, beyond asking for our votes brag about their ability to solve all problems, put to rest all anxieties, and satisfy every desire?
 - Do they solicit our cheers by speaking casually and with pumped up machismo about using violence to blow enemies away?
 - Do they echo the attitude of Mussolini: "The crowd doesn't have to know," all it has to do is believe and "submit to being shaped"?
- OR

Do they invite us to join with them in building and maintaining a healthy centre for our societies, a place where rights and duties are apportioned fairly, the social contract is honoured, and all have room to dream and grow? "The answers to these questions will not tell us whether a prospective leader is left-wing or right-wing, conservative or liberal ... "However, they will tell us much that we need to know about those wanting to lead us and much, also about ourselves. For those who cherish freedom, the answers will provide reassurance or a warning we dare not ignore." Please use your vote on 21st May to challenge our representatives to work for the benefit of all Australians.

Why freedom matters in Page

by Thomas Searles
Liberal Democrats candidate for Page

I was born and raised on a remote property on the North Coast. I grew up without power, town water or sewerage. It was a long, arduous drive across rough bush tracks simply to access the nearest town; we were far from any neighbours and it was a lonely, dark walk on a moonless night to the cobweb-covered pit dunny. My parents grew our food and milked a cow, every day. We had access to both natural remedies and western medicine as my mum saw fit.

It was hard for my parents for sure, lots of work in building a homestead, no grants or government support and 18% interest rates must have been a nightmare. For me, life was awesome. They were both raised in busy Sydney and in the 70's pursued their dream of being free from city life. I imagine it would have been daunting to move into the bush, with no experience, no farming knowledge or even a phone nearby... to start a family and learn the skills of our ancestors.

I respect everything about that decision, which led to my wonderful childhood and the beautiful farm they created. The rise of the freedom movement has brought people like me into politics. I worked as a Registered Surveyor and spatial scientist in disaster resilience for years and spoke out against the gross government mismanagement of our National Parks preceding the fires of 2019. When the fires hit, I was on the ground, fighting to protect my community and our family farm where I was raised. Even though every major review, Senate inquiry, inquest, and CSIRO report for nearly 100 years had recommended the use of fuel reduction systems, such as indigenous cool burning practices, the recommendations had fallen on deaf ears. It appeared difficult to separate government policy that was



Thomas Searles (pictured on the right) volunteers with local groups such as the Tullymorgan Reserve Committee for ANZAC Day commemoration.

bewilderingly incompetent with that which was malevolent. I have travelled to China, Russia, Cuba and many other recent or current dictatorships and had naively assumed Australia's major and minor parties would agree that freedom is an important right to protect. I would never have believed that the public support of freedom would be criticised, censored and attacked. Many in the Northern Rivers have fought for systemic changes to governance or modification to unjust laws, such as the decriminalisation of marijuana, a position the Liberal Democrats support. Laws have been passed in the last two years that allow the government unprecedented access to your private data and communication. No debate on controversial topics can be free without the protection of personal information. My experience with disaster resilience and my extensive knowledge of 'just in time' food supply chains is an additional motivation for me to use a political platform to protect our local produce and community markets. Globally, local food production is severely under threat, with numerous countries passing laws to control food production and sales, in some cases outlawing backyard gardens for reasons such as seed pollination IP infringement. The largest economic forums on Earth, whose members' assets measure

in the trillions, openly discuss the need to control local food production and move to centralised vertical farms grown under artificial light in plastic soil. A truly resilient community would incentivise local production, small businesses and farmers' markets. In March 2020, prior to a single registered case of Covid in Australia, when there was enough evidence to support the conclusion that this pandemic would last years and not indeed be "two weeks to flatten the curve", I produced several documents to councils, state and federal agricultural agencies, including our National Party MP, regarding the coming food shortages. This detailed the threat to inalienable personal freedoms and the requirement for 'Right to Farm' protection. It all fell on deaf ears. The continued and gross mismanagement of government resources, the open and insatiable assault on our individual freedoms and the wanton destruction of my much-loved community has motivated me intensely. Freedom matters. Our vote matters. We can build strong communities, secure our food, curb this assault on our individualism and bestow on the next generation the spirit of freedom I was gifted with and that we all deserve. Thank you to the other parties openly supporting personal freedoms in this electorate.

Legalise Cannabis aiming to message the Government

by Michael Balderstone, president, Nimbin HEMP Embassy and Legalise Cannabis Australia

MardiGrass might be postponed for Nimbin but not the Federal election, and Legalise Cannabis (formerly the HEMP Party) is running Senate candidates across Australia hoping to show, whichever party wins power, that for many voters legalising cannabis is of primary importance.

We have Senate candidates running in every state and territory, aiming to send a message to our difficult to reach politicians about the importance of legalising weed.

Your vote will not be wasted and neither will you be hopefully, because your second vote can then go to your next party of choice, should we not get elected, which is highly likely!

Cannabis users come from all walks of life. Ordinary people who have discovered this super safe and miraculous medicine changes lives and could dramatically help save the planet at the same time, given a chance.

Do not forget it has been illegal less than 100 years, and was in the majority of our medicines back then before pharmaceuticals.

As well, its unique long, strong, fast-growing fibre can replace woodchipping and build fire-resistant housing. It can also clean toxins from the Earth while it's providing a super food, high protein seed.

Neither of the potential Prime Ministers take us seriously, and think that now you can get imported expensive weed through a doctor the job is sorted. Even if you are not allowed to drive!

Big Pharma's endless lobbying in Canberra has them all still believing the lies about how dangerous cannabis is. Despite the plant being unable to kill anyone yet, while the war against it has now killed thousands, think Mexico.

It is very simple really. The war on drugs is all about who profits from pain relief and Big Pharma ain't letting go of control because they stand to lose billions.

They already are in American States where weed is legal as people discover it is safer, more effective with less side effects, and not addictive like pharma's pills.

Pain relief has to be the biggest and best business on earth and it's no wonder this easy to grow plant anyone could have in their vegie garden is outlawed.

It's all about profit. Why are we not allowed to grow our own plants in our big Aussie backyards (like they can in Canberra!) and why are we not allowed to drive unimpaired (like we can on any pharma pills, like methadone and opiates)?

The war on drugs is another class war, the rich own the shares in Big Pharma and collect the profits, and they can also afford whatever illegal drugs they want, while the poor take the risks, fill the jails and struggle with their rent. Same old story.

Send a message to the suits on the white Senate paper when you vote, and mark number one next to the leaf.

Candidates

The Legalise Cannabis Party is looking for volunteers to hand out info on voting day Saturday 21st May, and also in pre-poll booths.

If you'd like to help, please contact us at the HEMP Embassy in Nimbin by emailing: head@hempembassy.net or there is a Facebook group: Volunteers 2022 Legalise Cannabis Australia.

These are the Legalise Cannabis Senate candidates representing the plant you can vote for:

NSW – Michael Balderstone and



Gail Hester, Group Q for quality Queensland – Bernie Bradley and Suzette Luyken, Group C for cannabis

South Australia – Tyler Green and Angela Adams, Group T for tetrahydrocannabinol

Tasmania – Matt Owen and Oliver Fitzgibbon, Group E for endocannabinoid

Victoria – Elissa Smith and Wayne Taylor, Group E for endocannabinoid

Western Australia – Nicola Johnson and Aaron Peet, Group I for indica

ACT – Andrew Katelaris and Michelle Stanvic, Group I for I

work, I smoke, I vote NT – Lance Lawrence and Kelly-Anne Hibbert, Group D for decarboxylation

Also, the indefatigable and first-ever HEMP candidate Nigel Quinlan, formerly Nigel Freemarijuana is running for the seat of Longman in Brisbane.

In Colorado, where cannabis has made the state with Sydney's population a billion dollars in tax in less than ten years, it has also seen suicides, domestic violence and car accident deaths drop by a third since legalisation.

Vote 1 Legalise Cannabis and maybe they will hear us.

On the same Page

by Kevin Hogan, Federal Member for Page

NR School leaders event

Over 200 school leaders and their family members attended the school leaders' event I held recently.

This year's guest speaker was David Russell. David is a professional race car driver. He has won multiple Australian Championships. He finished the Bathurst 1000 in 3rd place last year. He has also had success internationally on the podium in GT racing in Asia and Europe.

Student leaders play an important role in the life of their school community and it's important to recognise them and thank them. It was wonderful to acknowledge

them, especially with this year being such a difficult one.

I would like to thank the students, teachers, mums, dads, carers and grandparents who came along to the event.

Support for people with Type 1 Diabetes

Everyone with Type 1 Diabetes will get access to life-saving glucose monitoring devices.

It means instead of paying \$5,000 a year, Australians with Type 1 diabetes will only pay \$32.50 a month for these devices.

Since 2013, more than 2,900 new or amended lifesaving and life-changing medicine listings have been made on the PBS with investment of over \$16.5 billion.

Nimbin issues on Council agenda

Peace Park

At the April Council meeting, a motion to stop any work in relation to a previous decision by council to transfer a portion of Peace Park to the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre failed to get any support.

A second motion to defer consideration of the proposal to transfer land to NNIC for 12 months was agreed, after representations by NNIC, so that additional community consultations could take place and a new concept plan for the site drawn up.

This is a great outcome for the village, as the previous concept plan is several years old and no longer reflects the current proposals for the site. Prior to the council meeting, Crs Bing, Cook, Krieg and Rob attended a site visit in Sibley Street with Nat Meyer and Matt Brumley, where we were shown the layout of the site and discussed future use options.

Nimbin Advisory Group

Also at the April meeting, the councillors representatives to the Nimbin Advisory Group for this term of council were resolved to be Crs Bird, Cook, Krieg (Chair) and Rob.

There were 15 applications for community representatives for NAG and 10 were selected for council approval. The successful applicants are: Amy-Kate Dillon, Diana Roberts, Doug Pinch, Gwen Trimble, Megan James, Michael Balderstone, Natalie Meyer, Nicolas Lindner, Sue Edmonds and Susan Stock.

Rainbow Road

Another item of business I am pleased to see get resolved was that the General Manager has been authorised to conduct and finalise all easement negotiations with affected property owners, for the completion of the Nimbin Rainbow Road Walking Track, including payment of any compensation.

This walking track has been planned and worked towards for a number of years, with an enormous amount of input by the Community Centre, the NAG, the community and council staff. It is terrific to see the project finally get funded and the



by Cr Darlene Cook
Lismore City Council

legalities of easements being worked through.

Local roads

Of importance to all of us who travel on our damaged Northern Rivers roads, was the announcement last week by the Minister for Regional Roads and Transport, Sam Faraway, of a joint Commonwealth and State government \$312 million Stage 1 funding package to enable damaged roads to be re-built to a better standard to enable them to withstand future

heavy rain and flood events.

This proposal to allow "betterment" of the road network has been called for by councils for many years. Usual disaster funds only allow roads to be restored to the standard they were prior to the flood – hence the numerous patchworks of repairs.

This new funding will enable councils to completely reconstruct damaged road sections from the base pavement to the surface seal. The announcement states that this funding is the first round, and that further funds will be provided in the next year.

Neighbourhood Centre

I want to take a moment here to acknowledge the incredible work that the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre does in co-ordinating and hosting the many government and non-government agencies that are assisting the community affected by the floods in the Nimbin area.

While in Lismore, we have a host of community groups and agencies working to provide these range of services to flood affected persons and businesses, in Nimbin this role has been done primarily by the staff at NNIC.

So thank you to the Board of Management and staff of NNIC; the services and assistance you provide to the Nimbin community over many years is truly valuable and very appreciated.

I can be contacted by phone on either 6626-0154 or 0427-895-316; or via email: darlene.cook@lismore.nsw.gov.au



Vote 1

Serge Killingbeck for Page

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Contact: sergekillingbeck@tnl.net.au

"I stand for socially progressive Government working towards a more humane, sustainable and inclusive society predicated on open, transparent politics that is respectful of the people we serve, the voters who put us there and the environment we depend on"

authorised by Serge Killingbeck for TNL
53 Martin Place, SYDNEY, NSW, 2000



Vote

1

Hanabeth
LUKE

INDEPENDENT FOR PAGE



“As a local mum, scientist, teacher and volunteer, I care deeply for our region.

As your community Independent, I've been listening to your challenges. I'm free to stand up for us, without having to toe any party line.

I will fight hard for a liveable and prosperous future. Let's work on a plan to house our families, support our regional industries, respond to disaster, and act on climate.

This flood has intensified our challenges, but we can rise above them.”



FAMILY • FARMS • FUTURE

hanabethluke.com.au

Authorised by Hanabeth Luke, Independent, Evans Head



by Steve Krieg
Lismore City Council

From the mayor's desk

What a tumultuous two months it has been in the Lismore Local Government Area!

Never has our region seen flooding to the scale of what we have just lived through.

And then to have a second major flood only four weeks after the first catastrophic event really

tested our community's resilience.

What has been a shining light for me personally over the last eight weeks is what a truly inspirational community we live in.

From the community-led community-staffed evacuation centres, to the community hubs that have been in operation from the start of this disaster, it

has been wonderful to see people come together to help each other in a time of need.

As a region we have a long road ahead to repair and rebuild.

Our road network has been extensively damaged, our sewerage and water treatment plants need a lot of work, and just about every council-owned asset

has been impacted in some form due to the flooding.

However, the councillors and the council staff have been working extremely hard to get the support from both the state and federal governments to rebuild our LGA not only back to what it was, but better than before.

This will take time, and I ask for your patience as the reconstruction occurs.

I would like to publicly acknowledge the work that both Janelle Saffin and Kevin Hogan have done

for our LGA.

Both of our representatives have been working tirelessly for our local community and I thank them for their efforts.

It is going to take all levels of government working together to reconstruct our LGA, and I will do my best to keep everyone updated on the progress being made.

Until next time, stay safe.

steve.krieg@lismore.nsw.gov.au

Flood solutions must acknowledge climate change

by Cr Elly Bird, Lismore Council

I hope this column finds you well wherever you might be reading it, as we move into the medium-term disaster recovery phase for our community.

If you've been directly impacted, then you know how challenging the bureaucracy is, how difficult it is to navigate and how complex the tidal wave of paperwork is for so many of us.

And, we are navigating that complexity and disillusionment while we are also having big, deep conversations about what our future looks like as climate change continues to escalate.

Those who are left here in the centre of Lismore are contemplating a very deep question. Who are we and what do we look like in a changing climate? How do we navigate this together as a community? Where do we live and how will we thrive into the future?

Recently the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation was announced, and I'm cautiously hopeful that it will be a pathway for us to have these critical conversations. The wheels of government turn slowly though, and the challenge is that it's not timely enough for people that are making decisions right now about



Word of the Bird

by Cr Elly Bird

where they want to live and how they are going to rebuild their lives.

It's still only the beginning of this disaster recovery, and I believe that at all levels of government we absolutely, fundamentally, must find a way to support people to make the decisions that they want to make to keep themselves safe.

If that looks like being offered a way to move off the floodplain, then governments need to respond to that and offer people a pathway out of harm's way; and if that looks like embracing life on a floodplain and building truly resilient infrastructure that can withstand inundation, then we should find pathways to support people to do that as well.

Whenever I think about this work, I always come back to the fact

that so often our most vulnerable community members tend to live directly on the front line of climate change. This is particularly true when we look at flooding.

If you look at the SEIFA (socio-economic index of disadvantage) maps of Lismore and overlay them with the flood footprint, the footprint of the maps align exactly. This is not just a matter of giving property owners the choice of what to do with their properties; this is an urgent social justice issue.

We need to recognise that subsequent governments have failed to deliver adequate social and community housing for our most vulnerable community members. The cheap rentals are on the floodplain. When disasters hit it is so often our vulnerable and already disadvantaged community who become even more disadvantaged.

We have a social responsibility to care for those who cannot care adequately for themselves – we must resource our whole community to be able to make decisions for themselves that keep them safe.

That's what's been missing in this country for far too long now, and as we head into a fast and furious election, I really do fervently hope that this conservative government is finally going to get the message



Koori Mail Hub
Photo: Chibo Mertineit

that they do not and cannot care adequately for our community as we navigate the compounding complexities of climate change.

I hope that finally, after years of seeing community services being defunded and ignored and social equity undervalued and dismissed, we may see a change of government.

It's possible that a Labor government may not do much better on climate, but they have to do better than the current lot.

We know that Australian communities are increasingly disenchanted by politics because we don't feel like our basic needs are being met or recognised. This is never more obvious than in the midst of a disaster recovery.

As our community flounders in bureaucracy and struggles to navigate increasing complexity, policy failures are evident at every turn.

Climate change is real, it is here, we are living it and we urgently need a government that takes it seriously by putting in place decisive policy frameworks that will protect us as disasters like this continue to happen. It's not okay to flounder around in a reactionary space.

It's not okay to continue to ignore the science. We are living it. I see it reflected back at me in the faces of our community. We are tired, exhausted and overwhelmed and we know that that is climate change.

PATRICK Deegan
Labor for Page
LABOR WILL INVEST IN RENEWABLES NOT FOSSILS
A Better Future
Authorised by: Bobi Marra, Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch), Level 9/377 Sussex St, Sydney NSW 2000

VOTE 1 LEGALISE CANNABIS AUSTRALIA
* ALLOW HOME GROWN * EXPUNGE CONVICTIONS
* CHEAPER MEDICINE * RELAX HEMP RULES
* CHANGE DRIVING LAWS * SAVE OUR PLANET
Authorised by: M. Balderstone, Legalise Party, Nimbin - LEGALISE.ORG.AU

NGT’s field guide to candidates in the Federal seat of Page

by Dr Kitty van Vuuren, Sue Stock and Claire de Lacey

Candidates in the seat of Page were sent a list of statements to comment upon. Most candidates responded. Disappointingly, despite many reminders we did not receive any responses from the current Federal member for Page, Kevin Hogan, nor the candidates for Pauline Hanson's One Nation nor Clive Palmer's United Australia Party. The Australian Federation Party had not nominated at the time we sent out the survey.

We hope these survey results are a useful summary of some policies for our readers.

The big issue

We also asked each candidate, "What do you see as the biggest challenges for the seat of Page over the next three years?" Their responses follow.

Brett Duroux – Indigenous Party of Australia: No fracking or mining near the Clarence or any rivers of the far North Coast; Massive improvement in emergency response and funding for areas devastated by flood or fire; Huge increase in TAFE funding to help supplement state funding. No teacher over load and all courses free; Indigenous youth Head Spaces to try to reduce horrendous rate of Indigenous Youth Suicide.

Hanabeth Luke – Independent: The cost of living while dealing with climate disruption, practically and emotionally. A strong regional economy that copes with the shocks and knocks we face.

Patrick Deegan – Australian Labor Party: We need enormous support to recover from fires, floods and the pandemic, and to be more resilient to climate change in the future.

Thomas Searles – Liberal Democratic Party: The impact of global economic forums dictating rights to work, grow food, travel and have bodily autonomy.

Kashmir Miller – The Greens: Page needs to adapt a community and environment-led disaster recovery plan that addresses the climate catastrophe and the affordable housing crisis, while creating local sustainable employment.

Serge Killingbeck – The New Liberals: The economic and ecological impacts of climate change turbo charged extreme weather events and the resulting social disruption and dislocation and environmental damage.



Candidate	Brett Duroux Indigenous- Aboriginal Party of Australia	Hanabeth Luke Independent	Patrick Deegan Australian Labor Party	Thomas Searles Liberal Democrats Party	Kashmir Miller The Greens	Serge Killingbeck The New Liberals
Commonwealth Role in Natural Disasters						
• The Federal Government should establish within the armed services, a dedicated force to assist in natural disasters to avoid any delay in providing necessary support.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
• The Federal Government should provide greater funding for our emergency services so they have greater capacity to provide support during bushfires, floods and cyclones. This funding should include the purchase of a national fleet of aircraft that could be used to fight fires, as well more equipment and support for volunteer organisations.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
• We need a Commonwealth/State package, as a matter of urgency, to help Northern Rivers residents rebuild, elevate or sell homes damaged in the 2022 floods	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Indigenous Issues						
• The Federal Government should as a priority give a Voice to the First Nation peoples of Australia by fully implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Action on Climate Change						
• The Federal government must listen to the science and introduce a whole-of-economy plan to reduce our CO ² emissions by 75% by 2030.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree
• The Federal Government should not have a role in subsidising the transition to electric vehicles.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
• Regenerative agriculture can improve the health of farming land, as well as contribute towards carbon reductions, but it is not economically viable.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
Environment						
• The Federal Government does not need to change its environment protection laws and regulations to reduce Australia's biodiversity loss.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Telecommunications and Transport Infrastructure						
• Reliable high-speed Internet and telephony is not a luxury. It is essential 21 st century infrastructure that should be available to all.	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Media						
• Political bias in news media threatens democratic processes; the Federal Government must establish a Royal Commission to examine the impact of biased reporting and media ownership on our democracy.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Aged Care						
• The Federal Government should fully implement the recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission, including provision of nursing services and adequate nutrition	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Child Care						
• There is no need for the Federal Government to support a significant increase in the remuneration of childcare workers.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
International Affairs						
• The Australian government should oppose the extradition of Julian Assange to the US, and bring him home to Australia.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Health and Welfare						
• Dental care is a serious public health issue and belongs in the Medicare safety net to ensure al Australians have access dental care.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
• Out-of-work Australians receive adequate unemployment benefits.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Education						
• Australia needs more skilled workers; this can be achieved by investing in vocational training and offering young people free TAFE education, which will improve their economic prospects.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree

Adaptive resilience vs safety paternalism

Resilience means more than our ability to return to a previous state after disruption. It means being able to respond and adapt in meaningful ways that take a new set of conditions into account.

The climate crisis is upon us, and already in Australia we are witnessing displacement as a result of increasingly intense and frequent climatic events. Many of our bushfire survivors who lost their homes in 2019/20 are still languishing in tents and caravans and struggling with local authorities to be allowed to rebuild. Now in Lismore and in the hills around the Northern Rivers we are seeing another wave of displaced people.

We certainly need to move past climate denialism and into an acceptance of the dangerous and unpredictable future we have collectively chosen. Part of that acceptance needs to be about genuine surge capacity in our disaster preparedness, and an honest mea culpa from our political class for lying about climate change for three decades.

But crucially we need to develop a sense of how we are going to respond to the scale of destruction and displacement that we have unleashed. Denial is the enemy of adaptive response and it comes in many forms.

What I am witnessing on the ground in Lismore is the clear and present danger of allowing 'safety paternalism' to take over from intelligent, adaptive and socially just responses.

There is a massive disconnect between the ideology of peak safety that has become a standard for



by Aidan Ricketts

our workplaces and homes in what I might call 'peacetime' (normal times is a meaningless term now).

Of course, when things are stable it is prudent to identify all manner of potential harm and try to avoid it, but in times of disaster, risk itself becomes the terrain and clinging to an imaginary gold standard of safety becomes not only maladaptive, but worse it can become a foil for blame-shifting, impact-shifting and extreme forms of paternalism that only worsen the impacts of a disaster upon those most affected.

Our region stands at a crossroads. Do we accept the increased risk that has become our reality (fire, flood, storm, coastal erosion and landslip) and explore the myriad ways in which we can adapt to it, or do we allow a remote, disconnected bureaucratic cookie-cutter vision of 'safety' to become the excuse for large scale unjust paternalism?

Right now on the ground, many impacted people are doing all they can to respond creatively

to their new situation, but are being hamstrung specifically by safety paternalism. My mail isn't delivered, my gas isn't delivered and my power not reconnected because 'safety' is being used as an excuse to shift the burden of adaptation from the supply authorities (who we pay) onto the affected. Demanding we employ, at our own expense, impossibly busy tradies to re-certify everything until basic services will be restored.

This kind of inflexible safety obsessionism is maladaptive in actual disaster. But worse, it reveals how quickly seemingly good intentions become the vehicle of injustice. Dare I remind us of the many times in the past that paternalism over people who have been deemed to be a 'problem' has worked terrible injustice, even as those who perpetrate the injustice argue and internally self-rationalise that it is for 'their own good'.

The historic examples are many and while I don't for a moment suggest equivalence, this kind of paternalism as injustice is what we have subjected indigenous communities to ever since colonisation, it is what we do to our genuine international refugees and we are now starting to do it to our growing class of internally displaced climate refugees.

Let's go forwards a bit. There is much talk now of what the 'solution' is for Lismore and surrounds. But be very careful about who takes control of this conversation and what kind of ideology becomes implicit. Beware of the risk of injustice disguised as care.

Lismore needs creative thinking, but that is best placed

to come from the flood-affected communities themselves, not from remote bureaucrats and corporations seeking to make a buck.

Maladaptive paternalism tends to seek top-down, one-size-fits-all 'solutions' rather than empowering bottom up 'responses' informed by the lived experience, aspirations and ingenuity of the affected communities.

Solutions is also the wrong word; there is no solution to runaway climate chaos, there is only responsiveness. In Lismore this would mean a wide variety of responses suitable to individual locations and circumstances.

Some houses can be raised to 16m (the topographic landscape limit of flooding), some can't be, but can benefit from internal reconstructions with flood resilient materials, some houses could have a loft added above 16m with a bay window to enable evacuation when required. We could explore floating structures anchored to moorings where the allotment size is large enough, or floating structures with pylons.

We can also look at voluntary buy-backs with market equivalence. There is a deep fear of compulsory buy-backs in which homes will be exchanged for a mere deposit in some newly created development of Uplandia, where once again private developers would make a motza out of the 'solution' and the affected would be forced deeper into poverty.

Working with communities and individuals to fund and choose adaptive responses is the way forward. Climate chaos is coming for everybody, it is a global

phenomenon. When the uber-wealthy properties are falling into the sea along the entire east coast beachfront, will we impose paternalism on those people as well?

Government lacked the adaptive capacity to deal with the scale of the floods and landslips on the day, and this task fell to community who had the on-the-ground knowledge, resourcefulness, and granular capacity to take the necessary risks to achieve a very successful large scale civilian rescue.

These same adaptive resourceful communities need to be the ones that drive their own futures, a climate compromised future, but one that they are best placed to negotiate.

If our governments really want to find solutions, there's plenty of work in their own backyard ending fossil fuel subsidies, ending the corrupt culture of political donations and favours, and investing in surge capacity for inevitable disaster relief requirements.

All communities are going to be affected, nationwide and globally, and we are going to have to understand the complex and nuanced nature of adaptive responsiveness – it involves compromises and it involves risks.

This disaster has revealed powerfully how absurd it is to try to impose a safety ideology based on stability onto an emerging risk-laden future. Life on this planet was never safe, but it's going to get a whole lot less safe in the future, and we need to make sure justice and self-determination remains a priority for all communities.

Killing truth

by John Jiggins

Australian journalist Julian Assange has been subjected to what Ciaran O'Reilly describes as a slow-motion crucifixion, a death by a thousand court cases.

After more than a decade of confinement, denied even sunlight, Assange's frail appearance at his wedding shocked his family. He suffered a stroke in October under the pressure of the High Court appeal. A wedding photo was taken on the stipulation that it not be published. As usual, the UK authorities seek to hide the evidence of their crimes.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Nils Melzer, described Assange's

persecution/prosecution as 'legal torture'.

The English language version of his book, *The Trial of Julian Assange*, was released in England on 8th February, but for reasons unexplained, it won't be released in Australia until 31st May, a date conveniently after the coming Federal election.

Fresh from attending the marriage of his son, Julian Assange's father, John Shipton, spoke in Brisbane and Northern NSW to urge the Australian government to stop the never-ending punishment of Julian Assange.

Julian Assange has been subjected to a "Niagra of malice" by four governments, he told me in our recent

interview: "The UK, the US, and Sweden, acting in cahoots with a complicit Australia, are doing their best to destroy Julian Assange."

If the prime minister and the foreign minister were serious about helping Julian, they would be talking to their US and UK counterparts, advocating strongly for him, and pointing out that he is an Australian citizen, and is not subject to US laws. Instead, they background against him and make empty offers of meaningless 'consular assistance'.

As John Shipton says, all Scott Morrison has to do is pick up the telephone and talk to Johnson and Biden, but he won't.



"The Australian government has been flaccid, feeble and acquiescent. Its acquiescence to the mistreatment of Julian Assange, this thirteen-year long persecution of an Australian citizen shows it is complicit," John Shipton said.

It remains to be seen whether this will change if Labor wins power. In this regard, the party

most represented in the Parliamentary Group to Bring Julian Home is the Greens. Labor has two members, as do the Nationals.

So that is the situation. We have an Australian government, which is cool with murdering an Australian journalist who represents the truth.

Petition

Change.org is co-ordinating a petition to UK MPs, and also to Australian federal election candidates, to protest the extradition of Julian Assange to the US.

Over 700,000 people have signed so far.

Go to: www.change.org/p/free-julian-assange-before-it-s-too-late-stop-usa-extradition




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Australia's 20% reduction in GHG emissions: Who can really claim credit?

by George Pick

In announcing climate change policies, the federal government often talks about how well Australia is doing in reducing GHG emissions, especially compared to other developed nations like NZ and Canada.

Using government department figures, they have repeatedly announced that by end of 2020 (the last year data is available for) the country's emissions are approximately 20% down on 2005 levels, well on our way to achieving our 2030 Paris Accord commitment of 26-28% reduction.

The government even projects this figure will be 30-35%, but Morrison has stubbornly refused to increase what is considered to be a low target. Many of our trading partners have committed to 50% reduction by 2030.

The impression given is that all the hard work to arrive at this point of 20% is due to LNP policies. This flies in the face of what has transpired over the past decade or so. Let me explain:



Photo courtesy Guardian Australia

The Labor Government arrived in 2007 and lost to the coalition in September of 2013. During this time a number of policies were instituted by the government, initially under Kevin Rudd and later by Julia Gillard.

Most of the early reductions were achieved by limiting the amount of

land clearing on farmlands. Later, as part of a deal with the Greens and other cross-benchers, the minority government of Julia Gillard put in place the carbon price. These two policies had the effect of reducing GHG emissions from a peak in 2007 to mid-2014 – when the carbon price was repealed – by

approximately 12% on the 2005 level. This was a dramatic decline.

During the years up to the onset of Covid-19, the Coalition government under its Emissions Reduction Fund, later repackaged as Climate Solutions Fund under Malcolm Turnbull, achieved miserly emissions reductions. The pandemic's effect on the economy, however, meant many sources of GHG emissions like aviation and transport were turned off, virtually overnight.

This accounts for approximately 5% reduction on 2005 for the year 2020. That means under the Coalition Government their contribution to the 20% reduction in emissions has been only 3%.

Not only that, under Tony Abbott's leadership an attempt was made to undo a range of Labor Climate Change policies: for example the carbon price was repealed in July 2014; he tried to dismantle the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) which has provided funding for countless renewable energy projects.

The required legislation was

blocked by the Senate.

He also attempted to dismantle the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) which provides larger amounts of finance to clean green energy projects. This was also blocked in the Senate.

Without these two bodies it would be doubtful the country would have achieved the level of renewable energy penetration (one of the highest in the world).

In summary, judging by past performance, the best outcomes for meaningful action on reducing GHG emissions is a Labor minority government with the Greens and Independents (especially those part of Climate 200) holding the balance of power.

The Labor party in recent times has been cowed by the LNP government on climate issues and it's uncertain whether they would take the strong and necessary action to deal with the climate emergency, assuming it became a majority government.

We desperately need a Federal government that is prepared to act quickly and decisively.

Final warning but the world just isn't listening

by Bernadine Schwartz

Like a broken record, that word "unprecedented" is becoming all too familiar. Unprecedented droughts, temperatures, heatwaves, wildfires, rainfall, flooding and storms, and all a distinct sign something is seriously amiss.

Here in the Rainbow Region, global warming left us another calling card, after the rain came down like the biblical forty days and forty nights, causing historic flooding, and even now the rain is persisting. But when the clouds do decide to finally head off somewhere else, there's no longer any guarantee they'll come back.

Mother Earth has governed this planet through a complex network of cycles that bring about and support life, and like safety mechanisms they also buffered us from the worst of it.

However, new research is showing global warming is shifting the planet's carbon cycle, creating remarkable extremes in both hemispheres.

The IPCC had predicted global warming's impact on La Niña and El Niño wouldn't be felt until after 2050, but according to Wenju Cai, director of the Centre for Southern Hemisphere Oceans Research in Australia, already it's fuelling wild swings, demonstrating the destructive effects are already here.

In March, unprecedented heatwaves struck both of Mother Earth's poles simultaneously. Eastern Antarctica, the coldest region on Earth, experienced record temperatures, causing the thinning Conger Ice Shelf,

(pictured) that covers an area of 1,200 square kilometres, to completely crumble.

Temperatures surged 29.5° C above the usual sub-zero temperatures causing surface melting, something scientists say was previously unimaginable.

The Siberian Arctic saw the mercury rise by 10° C and what scientists found extremely alarming is the Arctic was emerging out of winter and Antarctica was at the equinox and about to descend into winter's darkness.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has confirmed the reef is struggling with an unprecedented sixth mass coral bleaching, something that wasn't expected during this cooler La Niña.

They were hoping it would give the reef time to recover but aerial surveys have revealed widespread mass bleaching, particularly between the Whitsundays and Cooktown, where not a single reef has been left untouched.

The majority have 60% of their coral bleached or dead and the spatial footprint is extremely severe and widespread. Scientists are again urging UNESCO to declare the reef in danger.

The Amazon is another dangerously close to tipping, after a study in the journal *Nature Climate Change* revealed it's rapidly losing the ability to restore itself to its once stable state, and highly possible it could tip far sooner than current models are suggesting.

The hidden truth is the Amazon is a treasure trove of resources that corporations and industry can't get their hands on quick enough.

There's substantial deposits of gas and oil plus iron, aluminium, copper, gold and tin, that somewhere along the line will end up being labelled, 'Made in China'! But it's all for a worthy cause, capitalism.

Throughout the vast northern boreal forests and Great Lakes region, dramatic changes are clearly visible as the climate grows steadily hotter and drier, causing frequent wildfires that are destroying the soil's deep organic layer. It's accelerating the thawing of permafrost and peatlands, that increases methane emissions and is actually drowning trees in the process.

Mother Earth's peatlands store twice the amount of carbon dioxide compared to all the forests on the planet, which makes this vast boreal ecosystem an enormous carbon sink. It's also an important annual nesting site for roughly three to five billion birds that fill the skies above Canada and Northern America, when they finally journey home. Some travel the longest migrations in the world, such as to Argentina.

The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's preliminary analysis on global methane emissions is another great concern, showing emissions surpassed 2020's record of 15.3, reaching 17 parts per billion last year.

Carbon dioxide can remain in the atmosphere for centuries, whereas methane lingers for roughly nine years, but it's far more capable of heating up the atmosphere.

Over a 20-year period, greater concentrations of methane traps roughly 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide, and over a century,



Photo courtesy forbes.com

25 times more, which according to scientists makes methane the second leading driver of global warming.

Capitalism is a constant thread throughout this world and it's growing tighter and tighter, allowing profit margins to make hasty decisions for us, with criminal consequences. New findings in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* revealed ethanol was a fatal mistake, only fuelling global warming even further, creating 24% more greenhouse gases than unleaded petrol.

The research took into account the growing of corn and soybeans, a huge factor that forced grasslands and forests to be mowed down, then converted into croplands, increasing CO₂ and defeating the whole purpose, but all conveniently overlooked all for the sake of capitalism.

The IPCC gave their first assessment back in 1990 and have maintained a relatively positive outlook over the decades, giving hope, but their last two reports offer nothing. Instead they warn the world that global warming is spinning out of control and options for adaptation are waning, ending with a blunt summation from the UN's Secretary General Antonio

Gutierrez: "Delay is Death", labelling the mitigation report "an atlas of human suffering" with a final ultimatum: "It's now or never."

The IPCC believes the world will most likely burn through its carbon budget before the next mitigation update that wasn't due for five to six years, and they're asking for immediate and deep reductions in emissions across all sectors. If not, staying close to 1.5°C will be impossible to achieve.

Paul Maidowski is a climate policy researcher and activist and he believes the report is full of ifs and the future availability of sequestering carbon dioxide is a prime example. Other researchers have described the report as a mechanism to determine what's politically possible, outlining choices society can make to affect the trajectory of global warming but obviously the scientific realities can't be reconciled with economic and political assumptions.

According to the report, emissions have to peak by 2025 but many scientists believe that trajectory requires an enormous leap of faith, including NASA researcher Peter Kalmus, who said the report is absolutely harrowing. "Wake

up everyone, we know what to do. It requires taking toys away from the rich."

Back in 1990, almost two-thirds of all disparities in emissions could be explained by national rankings of pollution, but after three decades of rising income inequality worldwide, it's no longer the best way to understand the problem.

According to analysts from the World Inequality Lab, it turns out that personal wealth does more than national wealth to explain the science of emissions and climate progress, and according to Oxfam, the trend is generally clear: emissions rise alongside wealth.

We're all shareholders of capitalism, just some have a greater share than others, and droves of people are still filing into airports and shopping malls every day and they've no gun to their heads.

In the meantime, humanity is getting pushed and shoved into a new world order but on nature's terms and surreal as it may sound to most people, the world as we know it is coming to an end.

No melodrama here, no nihilism, just the naked truth that society has avoided, eyes shut tight and hands over their ears, but it comes at a great cost to our children and our Mother Earth.

Voters conveniently like to believe a change of government will do the trick because the reality is, they have no intentions of redeeming themselves, their duty lies first and foremost with the global holy trinity.

In the name of Money, the Economy and the Holy Ghost of Capitalism. For god's sake, we couldn't even appreciate the beauty of a rainbow, there had to be a pot of gold!



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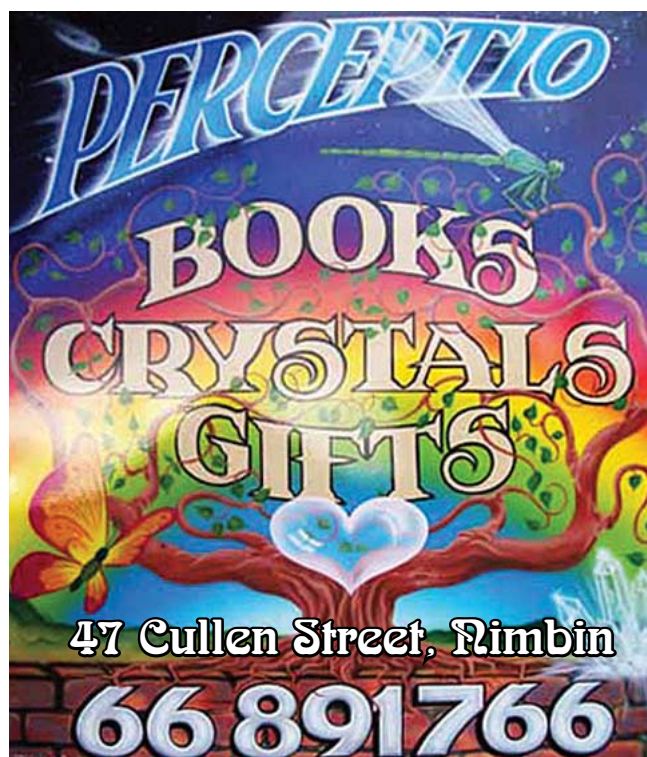
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CWA responding to community needs

Kaz, Tash and Linnet Photo: Sue Stock

by Linnet Pike,
president, CWA Nimbin Branch

The torrential deluge of late February changed our Northern Rivers world in ways that we are only just beginning to understand, absorb and reflect upon.

For many out here in the Nimbin area, the muddy landslips and broken precarious access to homes and properties continues to foreshadow a precarious future.

For our Branch it's been an extraordinary period as we have tried to support our community in any way we can. For much of the time since the deluge, our CWA Nimbin door has been open, and in that first overwhelming week or two post-flood, we started cooking.

We supplied meals to clients of Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services, the Evacuation Centre at the A&I Showground, lunches to workers all over the community (from the Info Hub at the Hall to workers who were servicing road clearing), and prepped frozen meals for NNIC needs.

From our room we offered both food, including morning porridge and

lunchtime soups, and free essentials of all kinds to locals and refugees who were stranded, or without power.

As community needs became clearer and we were able to start getting supplies in, we were able to offer broader assistance to support many folks experiencing deep challenges as they attempted to weave their lives back together under harsh conditions.

We are so grateful for the generosity of locals, near and far, donations of the most practical and comforting kinds have flowed in – everything from much needed bedding and warm clothes to a cache of earrings to gift to local Mums for Mothers' Day.

For now, our Branch will be having Open Door Days most Wednesdays. For the foreseeable future, everything from bedding to toys and clothes for all will be available, at very modest prices. We invite any women interested in dipping their toes into the mysterious, arcane and wonderful world of the CWA to drop in and meet some of our Branch members.

On 20th April, 100 years ago, on the last day of the Bushwomen's Conference held in Sydney, the Country Women's Association was formed. In the tumultuous century since then, much

has changed in the lives of rural women however the CWA continues to be a grassroots organisation with a wide-ranging set of interests that has always echoed the spirit of the times and often, led the way towards change.

For example, the CWA called for equal pay for women in the 1930s and has strongly advocated for many environmental and social causes. As the saying goes, the CWA is "more than tea and scones" although we are sure most Branches can turn out gun scones and good cuppas.

We've had such a wild journey since our Branch re-formed in early 2019. It really is a truth that change is the only constant. However, we feel profound gratitude to be still standing strong and able to support our community in a wide variety of ways, adaptive and responsive to both our capacity and to community needs.

Now as the season changes, we are looking to provide a segue into recovery dynamics while still providing direct support on basic needs.

Look out for everything from recovery workshops to cook-ups over the next months as we forge our way into whatever the coming months present.

Nimbin Garden



Club notes

by Kerry Hagan

Due to the ever continuing rain, our host garden for April became a hazardous and boggy situation. We, unfortunately had to cancel, and we will reschedule that visit for later in the year.

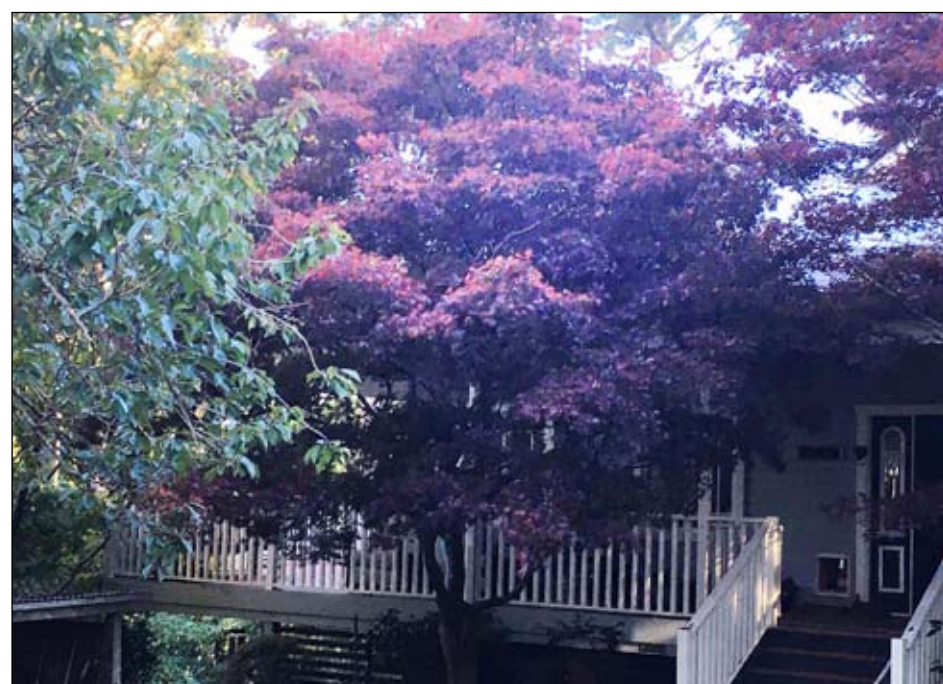
Meanwhile, I have spent the last three weeks in the Blue Mountains.

I arrived just at the beginning of the autumn display and slowly watched as the colours strengthened.

Many visitors come to the Upper Mountains and in the spring visit the many magnificent open gardens of Leura and Wentworth Falls, but, to me, give me autumn.

Usually a riot of colour from glowing yellow through to burgundy and all shades in between, this year has been a slightly more subdued show, with heavy rain and strong winds destroying some of the glory.

Even so, it's still a sight to behold. Streetscapes, parks and private gardens all vying for your attention and the ground covered thickly with leaves. A very bracing walk in the misty



afternoon, with the backdrop of escarpments drifting in and out of view, autumn in the Blue Mountains is a truly beautiful experience.

Our May garden is at Pauline and Sue's, Jarlanbah, 78 Cecil Street Nimbin, Saturday 21st May, 2-4pm (don't forget to vote).

Please bring a cup, a chair and a plate to share. Visitors and guests are most welcome.

