

Importance of community

It was great to attend last week's Nimbin Advisory Group meeting.

One thing that I have taken out of the recent natural disaster is the importance of our entire community standing and working together as one to help each other.

There were many topics covered at the meeting, which as always was very constructive and positive,

including current and upcoming roadworks, the Rainbow Walking Track and the Nimbin Pool among others.

The February natural disasters caused significant damage to roads around Nimbin, as well as across the entire local government area.

It will take years to get our roads up to scratch, but Council and the State Government are determined

to build back better rather than simply replacing like with like.

I am happy to report that there have been a record number of Council crews working on Nimbin roads, filling potholes including on Crofton Road near the first causeway and on the Nimbin to Lismore Road.

We are still working out the best way to repair two sites: Terania Creek Road and around The

Channon, but Council has just embedded a specialist Transport for NSW engineer who can assist with the crucial geotechnical studies needed to come up with a workable solution.

To keep up to date with all current and planned roadworks, you can go to our Your Say Lismore website at: www.yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au and look under the 'Maintaining Our Roads and Bridges' category.

Unlike last year, it looks like we may get a summer this year. Naturally, the

Nimbin Pool was an obvious topic of discussion at the NAG. Council staff are now preparing the pool to open in time for the Spring school holidays.

We also discussed the Rainbow Walking Trail. This is a really exciting project which you can read about in the article in this edition of the *Nimbin GoodTimes*.

Finally, I hope everyone enjoys the MardiGrass. It is a very unique event that Council is proud to support.

steve.krieg@lismore.nsw.gov.au



From the mayor's desk
by Steve Krieg
Lismore City Council

Voice for the voiceless

by Cr Adam Guise
Lismore City Council

What a year so far! I was lucky enough to be re-elected as a Lismore City Councillor and it's been a rollercoaster ride since then.

Having been personally impacted by the floods like so many – with flooding to the ceiling at my home in North Lismore – it's been a slow and arduous recovery. Off the back of the drought and bushfires, it's very clear we are on the climate frontlines.

As I crawled down from my attic as the second floodwaters receded, I realised the madmen are in charge and they are determined to hurtle us over the precipice. Thank goodness we've since had a change of Federal government, which gives us some breathing room to voice the insanity of the previous regime.

Nevertheless, the daunting challenges of our times remain, and we still have a state government focused on jobs for mates, pork barreling and profits for developers. Bring on the state election!

On the local front, we had the Krieg Regime elected with a majority, which in the first month saw them terminate a very capable general manager and install John Walker.

People may remember John Walker from the coal seam gas campaign when he was Richmond Valley Council's GM. Despite now being Lismore's interim acting GM, he's very quickly been given spending delegations – without the need for tenders – for up to \$1 million, and unlimited delegations for spending \$300 million



plus of taxpayers' monies under the premise of 'flood recovery works'. Amazing what happens during times of crisis!

With the Krieg Regime campaigning under the slogan "We are the change", we are very quickly seeing what this means to the residents and ratepayers of the LGA.

Since the devastating February and March floods, Mayor Krieg has called for a 'dictator' and more recently for councillors to be sacked so an 'autocratic' approach can be taken. This flies in the face of Krieg's democratically elected role and his absolute majority of councillors who should be leading us through these challenging times.

Instead, we've been subjected to frequent midnight meetings due to unnecessarily lengthy proceedings; councillors being left out of the loop with information and media announcements; and most recently, a reduction in public speakers at meetings to just four a side, and the introduction of confidential workshops and briefings. This wasn't the change that was promised pre-election, was it?

Thankfully, your re-elected and experienced councillors from previous terms are

giving voice to the voiceless. One such occasion was the koala-killing Invercauld Road housing development in Lismore, which threatens to impose a 203-lot cut-and-fill housing development on core koala habitat in Goonellabah.

Despite the Krieg Regime wanting to accelerate approval of this McCloy development by calling an extraordinary meeting, a majority of councillors voted it down, but only thanks to the mass mobilisation of community members and Burribi the koala opposing this destructive development.

The developer has appealed the decision and we hope the Land and Environment Court upholds Council's decision.

So as our communities slowly recover from these devastating floods, know that there are people with reason and compassion speaking up for the voiceless and advocating for the most vulnerable in our community.

We've seen it with the faith-renewing response of hundreds in our community post-flood and it's the reason I continue to fight for the representation and community-led recovery we so desperately need.

Feel free to get in touch: adamguise@gmail.com or phone 0478-684-497.

Full mobile library service to Nimbin

As Chairperson of the Richmond Tweed Regional Library, I am so very happy that we have been able to restore the full mobile library service to Nimbin and the other villages it services across our region.

We were able to purchase a second-hand trailer and fit it out, so that our many library users can now access and browse through a wider range of books, use the computers, and order items from our e-collections.

Another initiative of the RTRL has been to work with our police in the Tweed and Richmond local commands to provide a selection of books to be included in every police vehicles' child trauma kits.

Children can bear witness to confronting and challenging situations that can leave them quite distressed. Providing children with a book while they are in the back seat of a police vehicle allows the youngsters to redirect their attention and reduce the lasting impacts of trauma.

Through this program, our aim is to have a range of books in the back seat of police vehicles that can be distributed to a child in crisis, providing a welcome distraction and hopefully assisting in calming the child.

These books have been provided by 123Read2Me, a charity in Melbourne providing free books to children across many communities.

Lismore City Council is eligible to receive up to \$1.5 million in funding from the NSW Government Sports Priority Needs Program.

Council is seeking



by Cr Darlene Cook
Lismore City Council

information from community sporting groups to assist in the identification of priority projects for their sports. In order to meet the tight timeframes of this funding application, due by Sunday 11th September at 11.59pm, groups are asked to submit sport projects into the form on: <https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/sports-priority-needs-program>

Your co-operation in meeting this short timeframe will ensure Council staff have sufficient time to finalise application content prior to the grant deadline of 23rd September. For questions regarding this council process, please contact Community Recreation Planner, Jim Roberts on 02 6625-0500.

For information about the funding program, to review the eligibility criteria and suitability for your project, please visit: www.sport.nsw.gov.au/grants/sport-infrastructure-recovery-fund/sport-priority-needs-program

Nimbin Water Supply pipeline replacement project is underway. The water supply to Nimbin town is from Mulgum Creek, where water is drawn from a weir at the top of Gungas Road.

The supply pipeline

from the weir was severely damaged during the February and March 2022 flood event. This resulted in approximately 4km of pipeline and road being destroyed, negatively impacting the supply to DE Williams Dam. The damaged pipeline directly supplied approximately 80 properties in Nimbin town.

The immediate works which were put in place as a temporary measure to hasten construction and secure water supply after the flood event, will now be replaced with a permanent solution, that being 200mm diameter pipe to ensure hydraulic capacity is maintained.

The project has commenced with hydraulic assessment and options assessment completed. Construction is expected to take place between October 2022 and May 2023 (subject to weather, contractor and materials availability.) This will be followed by further testing and commissioning.

No water disruptions are anticipated, as this pipeline supplies the DE Williams Dam. Both the DE Williams Dam and High Street Reservoir have ample water supply available.

These past few weeks I've been out of circulation with a broken leg, which has meant I've been unable to attend a number of community events and meetings. However, I've been keeping on top of council matters as best I can, and I hope to be mobile and out and about in the community in a few weeks' time.

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



On
the
same
Page

Six months on from flood disaster

by Kevin Hogan,
Federal Member for Page

It is now six months since we were hit by Australia's second biggest ever natural disaster. We are still so far from where we need to be.

Government ministers and

bureaucrats need to act with the same speed, as if it were their families who are still not back in their homes and businesses.

I continue to demand information and money to get us back on our feet. We urgently need:

1. The State Government to

hurry up and release details on the voluntary land swaps, buy backs or house raising program.

2. Critical food producer grants for our farmers, who need to replant crops and replace cattle and equipment that washed away.

3. Funding for shop owners to get their shops and sheds to a condition that the businesses can fit them out and re-open. We know we have a long road ahead of us. We are taking it one day at a time. But we need more support each and every one of those days.

Floods, safety and the dismal tide of neoliberalism

The flood enquiry report has been released and we are still in the dark about exactly what is proposed in terms of buy backs of flood affected properties.

The report is voluminous, probably well-meaning and full of many fine sounding words. There is recognition of the effectiveness of self-organised community rescue and recovery. There is recognition of the impact on First Nations communities and of the need to support emergent leadership within those communities.

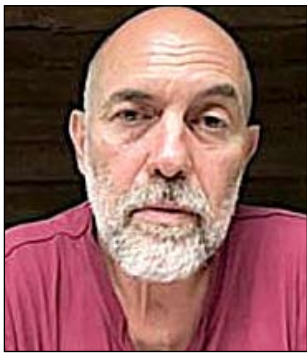
There is much more about what went wrong in the responses of state-based agencies and how to re-organise these resources.

It is to be hoped that a much overdue re-investment in river gauges, rainfall monitoring and predictive capacity will actually happen and improve the accuracy of forecasts and warnings.

I don't want to be too cynical about what we can expect in terms of implementation down the track, but it would be foolish to not at least be a little sceptical about what the wheels of bureaucracy and the dark hand of capitalism will serve up for the flood-ravaged communities of the Northern Rivers.

How did it all become so bad? Well for a start there was a catastrophic flood, 2.5m higher than post-colonial records. This has come off a decade of tumbling weather records and extreme events as the pointy end of climate change begins to become manifest.

Faced with a major disaster, the State -based agencies totally lacked the



by Aidan Ricketts

requisite surge capacity to respond. Should we be so surprised at this? You pay peanuts and get monkeys, they say. Well, when we repeatedly cut taxes (for the rich) in the name of small government, we should not be so surprised that the State turns out to be a very thin façade when real disaster strikes.

Small government is a popular neo-liberal mantra, but in reality what it leads to is a struggling public sector. Schools and hospitals, emergency services, all maintained as close as possible to the point of collapse perpetually.

It's like the airline CEO who makes huge savings by sacking the aircraft maintenance crews. It looks like a saving at first but when the planes start dropping out of the sky the reputation of the airline will be destroyed possibly forever.

So, if we really want to build a surge capacity in our public institutions for pandemics, fires, and floods we need to actually raise the funds and invest in it. Taxing the rich and the corporations would be a good start.

The state-based agencies collapsed on the day of the peak flood, and for



weeks afterwards, and our community filled the gap with remarkable speed and self-organisation.

This is something the Northern Rivers is good at. We do it for the Lantern Parade, we did it at Bentley and we do it in the face of natural disasters.

The community is always going to have an edge over State-based agencies in the immediate response for several reasons. The community is not a top-down, clunky command structure. It is a living breathing entity that just happens to be on site, at the time, all the time, with massive granularity, significant physical resources, local knowledge, and importantly it is not hamstrung by bureaucracy.

One of the most important and effective things that the government could do immediately at the time of natural disasters is to provide funding and

resources swiftly to emergent community self-help groups such as Resilient Lismore and *Koori Mail* and others. These groups offer maximum efficiency and bang for your buck in the crucial early weeks.

One glaring issue that the flood report failed to discuss was the maladaptive nature of safety ideology in the context of natural disaster. Now nobody wants to be unsafe, or see more avoidable harm occurring, but we need to be explicit here. A disaster is not a place where textbook safety procedures can operate.

The community rescuers, the tinny and kayak navy had one huge advantage on the day and it was that they weren't hamstrung by safety paralysis. In a widespread life-threatening situation, the imperative is the reduction of the ubiquitous risk, rather than adherence to a fantasy standard of safe practice.

It's not completely safe pulling people out of windows and roofs into boats, but it's a lot safer than leaving them there.

The other place where the ideology of safety proved to be maladaptive and harmful was in the widespread destruction of people's homes following the flood by 'make safe' crews deployed by insurance companies.

The sad fact is that for many who had insurance they ended up worse off than those who didn't when their control over their home was taken over by gangs of vandals subcontracted to insurance companies, who, in the name of safety destroyed many homes.

We all understood that gyprock and chipboard needed to be stripped out, but once unleashed on a home there are many instances of wooden lining boards being trashed by these crews, and bathrooms and kitchens destroyed,

rendering people homeless for winter.

For the uninsured, there was the choice of what to do, how much to dismantle and even to choose how and when to re-enter and camp on verandas.

My own home in North Lismore was able to be re-occupied in a very basic manner within a week, but sadly many similar homes were pre-emptively destroyed, only to then be told that any form of rebuild was either many months away or worse, was not actually going to be covered by the insurance anyway.

There are so many lessons to be learned from a natural disaster. The following are just a few things I have learned.

One is that floods and extreme weather are a reality and probably a reality that will occur more often in future.

The second is that individual and community resilience is the most important and reliable resource in the face of disaster.

The third is that the neoliberal state is but wafer-thin and not equipped with genuine surge capacity.

The fourth is that safety ideology both at the state and corporate level is a maladaptive delusion that actually paralyses responsiveness at the time of crisis and leads to perverse outcomes in the aftermath.

I do hope that good changes come about as a result of the inquiries, reports and recommendations, but my intuition is that our community is our strongest tool when times are tough.

Consultation key to CSIRO Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative

by Janelle Saffin MP
State Member for Lismore

The Australian Government has announced \$150 million for projects to make the Northern Rivers more resilient to flood-related natural disasters, and has asked the CSIRO to review and assess options, and do detailed modelling.

There's an opportunity for locals to get involved in the CSIRO's Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative to investigate possible flood mitigation projects.

In July the CSIRO met with seven flood-affected councils: Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore City, Richmond Valley and Tweed Shire, and with Rous County Council.

The CSIRO says it is planning consultation workshops from September for local stakeholders, and community members will be invited to put their views. There will also be consultation with First Nations communities.

I have called for community consultations for this project and said there must be participatory

planning when looking at any flood mitigation projects. There is a wealth of local knowledge and research to be tapped into.

Local voices heard

Late last month the NSW Flood Inquiry 2022 was released with 28 recommendations for NSW Government action. The Commissioners Professor Mary O'Kane and former NSW Police Commissioner Mick Fuller have done a comprehensive job.

Their report strongly reflects our experience of the systemic failure of emergency services, government agencies and infrastructure, and the enormous role of community volunteers – from preparation to rescue to recovery and rebuilding.

The key recommendations cover issues I had been raising since the flood:

- Providing a mix of buybacks, relocatable and land swaps, and changes to planning to help people move away from high-risk floodplains;
- Getting rid of Resilience NSW;
- A dedicated emergency management taskforce at

the highest level of NSW Government;

- A NSW Reconstruction Authority to be established;
- Support for community responders;
- Greater support and training for the State Emergency Service; and
- A greater emphasis on affordable housing in the Northern Rivers and Northern Tablelands with adaptation plans for towns to be developed.

I thank all the local people who made submissions to the inquiry and encourage you to read the executive summary and recommendations. There are a few surprises.

The recommendations are far reaching and address the ongoing crisis in social housing in our region, the need to adapt for the changing climate, and the importance of Indigenous voices being heard when it comes to stewardship of the land.

The Premier has committed to implementing all 28 recommendations. But we need a sense of urgency from the NSW Government and we needed a lot more to have happened late last month.



Janelle Saffin called for the independent Flood Inquiry report to be released locally. She is flanked by NSW Opposition Leader Chris Minns and NSW Shadow Minister for Emergency Services Jihad Dib.

Where's our housing package?

I was shocked when watching the ABC's *QandA* recently (18th August) to hear the Federal Emergency Management Minister Murray Watt say the NSW Government hadn't formally requested a Resilient Housing Package yet. Un-bloody-believable! The Queensland Premier

announced her state's joint Commonwealth housing package in March. Has the NSW Cabinet even considered it?

I have been bi-partisan, I have been reasonable, and I have been patient, but my patience is wearing thin!

I will continue to push for this to happen as soon as possible.

When injustice becomes law, resistance should be fun!

by Caroline Todd

Nimbin is used to protesting, and 30 years ago the first MardiGrass protest rally marched from the Bush Theatre to the police station where Bob Hopkins handed himself in for smoking a joint.

Really, that happened. Such was the frustration of the community with the police at the time that the event was created to protest the stupidity of the drug laws being enforced on peaceful people.

Choppers and ground troops were scaring schools, family homes and livestock in their eradication of cannabis program which was funded by Australian taxpayers, benefitting only the police industrial complex which includes police, lawyers, magistrates, judges, court staff and the big winner, privately owned jails.

We vowed to rally every year until we are no longer criminals for using and growing this herb. Prohibition does not work. Minor drug crimes can land you in jail. Lives get wrecked.

When we can celebrate the herb without fear of prosecution and persecution then MardiGrass will be a proper festival and



celebration! Ole!

And every year since, people from all over join the rally to protest the draconian laws still surrounding the use of cannabis, a sacred plant used for thousands of years as medicine, nourishment and for spiritual guidance.

The Ganja Faeries danced the rally in the second year and almost every year since (who remembers 2020 anyway).

They were inspired by the flamboyant MardiGrass marchers in Sydney, who to avoid police brutality performed and danced costumed, colourful and smiling. It worked, everyone loves a parade.

Five of the original Faeries will be dancing in 2022, Janie, Biko, Pammy, Linda and Chantico, good on you ladies!

You can join the troupe by contacting the Nimbin Ganja Faeries Facebook page, and if you are a far away faerie you can learn the routine there too.

The rally is led by Widjibal elders of the Bunjalung nation who 'smoke' the town. Then comes the Spring Queen in full bloom. Nimbin drummers and musicians follow with community groups and friends from all over with banners and flags.

The Plantems and the Polite Force will bring up

the rear with the Big Joint and tunes from Bob. The rally will be called by locals David Hallett and Duuvy.

The march is the main event, so please walk with us for cannabis law reform. Bring your friends, dress up, make a sign or carry one of ours.

Banner and sign painting will be happening daily at the Hemp Embassy, so drop in if you would like to help.

On Sunday 18th September at 2pm, we all meet at the exit of the western carpark, across the road from the Community Centre. The March starts at 2.30pm.

See you there and free the weed!

THE JOKE

A history of cannabis prohibition in Australia

by Dr John Jiggins

**Book launch – Town Hall garden
Saturday 17th September, 11am**

In 1938, a campaign that vilified cannabis was spearheaded in Australia by corrupt law officials and their accomplices in the news media. They painted cannabis as a vicious, evil plant – the devil weed with its roots in hell! Cannabis, it was said, was a killer drug that led to madness and the utmost depths of depravity. It was an evil sex drug, and they gave it a new, foreign-sounding name; they called it 'marihuana'.

In the decades that followed from the Reefer Madness campaign of 1938, to Brisbane's marijuana weirdos, to the criminal-police takeover of pot-dealing, this corrupt network prostituted the justice system in Australia.

The Joke charts the hidden history of cannabis prohibition in Australia.

The final part of the road to reform is in front of us. It's time, let's walk it together

I was part of the early drug law reform protests in Nimbin when the injustice in our street, homes and lives became so raw we spontaneously marched to the Nimbin police station.

It was there we waged our war, our non violent, direct, colourful, creative, evidenced based war, against the failing unjust discriminatory war on cannabis and us.

We committed there and then we would campaign in every possible way for drug law reform and we would not stop until we got it. A year later, in 1993, the inaugural Mardi Grass was held. Thirty years later, in 2022, we are still fighting against the failed war on cannabis. If we tighten up our solidarity, we will win very soon. The question is – are you on board?

In 1991 I didn't join the campaign to decriminalise cannabis because I was a cannabis devotee, as such. I was a frontline forest activist living every moment in the face of gross injustice as our old growth forests were being senselessly carnaged by the NSW State Government and good folk were being arrested for trying to stop it.

My radar for injustice and harmful laws was on constant alarm – I suppose that's why I went on to become a public interest lawyer, but that's a different story.

Anyone who is in this gig knows the case for the decriminalisation of cannabis was made years ago. More to the point, there was never actually a real case to criminalise it, but I don't need to go into that here, we all know it. However, in spite of the overwhelming evidence against



by Sue Higginson MLC

prohibition, we are still here.

Why are we still here? Well again, we all know, it's because of our lack of political power. However, that has just changed and now we are the closest we have ever been to reform. We have a clear path in front of us, but if we are to get there, we need to work together to build the last part of the path and walk together along that path, like never before.

In May, after over 30 years of environmental and social justice electoral work and movement building, the Greens changed the Australian political landscape forever. The Greens are now the largest most sustained third party in Australian politics, the dysfunctional self-serving and self-perpetuating two party system, which has been choking our democracy for too long, is now substantially disrupted.

The Greens are perfectly positioned to leverage up its sound social and environmental justice platform, upon which is 'just legalise it', a well designed, real and possible path for drug law and policy reform.

Having moved beyond

decriminalisation, the Greens took to the federal election a real plan to legalise the growing, selling, purchasing and consumption of cannabis, with suitable controls on age, amount and where cannabis can be consumed. The reform is well thought out, developed with experts, informed by international experience and deeply rooted in moving drug policy entirely from the criminal frame to a health and regulatory frame.

Under the legalisation blueprint, an Australian Cannabis Agency will be established which will issue licences for production and sale. The agency will also act as the single wholesaler of legally accessible cannabis, and police the regulations. Licensed growers will be required to produce cannabis containing specific levels of THC and CBD.

Retail stores that only over-18s can enter will be permitted to sell cannabis in plain packaging, with visible health warnings and require staff to undertake a responsible sale of cannabis course. The regulatory framework will allow users to grow up to six plants at home for personal use for people aged over 18, while rules would also limit the amount someone will be able to buy, and carry.

Is it a perfect scheme, to some, perhaps not. Is it one worth backing and is it attainable – absolutely.

We know from the ACT, through the power of the Greens working in shared government, that decriminalisation is possible. That experience has shown us what is possible and more importantly, what

is needed.

While the states and territories have direct control and responsibility over our drug laws, and we need state law reform to get to legalisation, a nationally consistent scheme would be the most strategic way to get the comprehensive reform we need. We now have a strong and powerful Greens presence in the Australian Parliament which is driven to deliver on the 'just legalise it' platform.

Conveniently, we have a state election coming up in March next year. As one of your Greens MPs in the NSW Parliament, I am committed, with my colleagues, to drive the 'just legalise it' platform through state politics, with the support of our federal Greens colleagues. The more Greens in the NSW Parliament after March 2023, the better the chances of delivering the 'just legalise it' platform.

The political reality is that Labor will not commit, the Coalition won't commit (and is possibly cactus anyhow), and while single issue parties may tickle your fancy, this is about delivering drug law reform in the most direct way possible to all of us. This is about electoral strategy and for it to succeed it needs us all to play our part.

Politics is hard and is not always the answer, but in this case it is. Our drug laws and policies are the problem, they cause fear and harm every day and only parliament can change them. So, what and who do I mean when I say more Greens in parliament after March next year?

In addition to voting 1 for your local Greens candidate, who will be

announced soon, the Greens NSW have just preselected their Upper House ticket for the March 2023 State Election. Leading the ticket is current Greens MP, brilliant environmental activist and long-time drug law reformer, Cate Faehrmann, second is Amanda Cohn, a medical doctor and former deputy mayor of Albury, who knows acutely the need to move cannabis to a health and regulatory framework, and third is Lynda-June Coe, a First Nations woman, cultural educator, teacher and fierce justice activist who knows the harms of criminalisation too well.

In March next year we have a real chance of electing all three of these incredible women. They would join me and Abigail Boyd in the Upper House. If all five of us are in the NSW Upper House next March, we will likely be in the balance or a strong position of power. From there, because we are five, progressive, hard working, unified, women, we will get more things done and we could 'just legalise it'.

As one of the original contemporary cannabis law reformers and one of the four founding Ganja Fairies back in the early 90's, this what I understood as our vision, our work and our electoral strategy. So back to the question – are you on board?

As always, your Greens MPs and local members will be at Mardi Grass. Please come and find us and let's talk about 'just legalise it' and importantly, let's talk electoral strategy. Let's talk about how we walk together on the clear path to win what we set out to do together 30 years ago.

Nimbin Advisory Group August meeting

by Gwen Trimble

Mayor Steve Krieg chaired the meeting with Council's assets manager, Scott Turner also attending to brief us on local road repair schedules and the current situation with the Nimbin water supply.

Road update

Mr Turner told us that Council had a record number of crews out each day making road repairs and the recent improvements to the Nimbin to Lismore Road were acknowledged by the NAG members.

Sites where landslips had seriously damaged roadways – Tuntable Creek Road and at the cutting south of the village – present particularly difficult engineering problems and there is still a long way to go before acceptable and safe engineering solutions can be found.

NAG members drew Mr Turner's attention to the parlous state of Tuntable Falls Road, Upper Tuntable Falls Road and also Blue Knob Road, near the northern boundary of the LGA, where road conditions had caused an accident in which a child was injured.

Mr Turner undertook to

have those roads inspected and prioritised for attention. He asked the community to report damaged roads to Council, so those in most need can be patched in a timely way.

The recent update, posted on Nimbin Hookups, sharing advice from Council staff regarding the damage and road closure of Tuntable Creek Road was confirmed as generally accurate. In short, Council has funding to design an engineering solution, and once that is found they can then seek a mix of State and Federal funding to re-build the road.

To assist and direct Council engineers to that end, Transport NSW has embedded one of their most experienced and senior engineers with Lismore City Council for a five-year period. Relocating the road via the acquisition of private land is still an option being considered.

Mr Turner said the principle of 'Build Back Better' had been identified for all of the disaster recovery rebuilding and that the community can find information regarding current road repairs on the 'Your Say' page on Council's website.

Rainbow Walking Track

The Steering Committee reported that the project was on target and made the following comments:

The walking track will be named 'Rainbow Road' and there are two creeks which need to be named.

'Right of footway' areas are currently being formalised. The entrance from Cullen Street will, of necessity, be a shared zone. A realignment of Alternative Way is being sought by the developer which will allow for final determination for the route of Rainbow Road in the location near Cecil Street.

There may be an opportunity to improve a drainage issue on the edge of the Headers grounds to make a small usable pitch when constructing the walking track in this location.

Concept design of the project is underway and will come back to the community for comment. There is funding allocated for artwork in the project, which will likely be facilitated via expressions of interest through Council's 'Your Say' page.

There was general agreement it would be a good idea to invite the community to a picnic day to introduce them

to the project and invite their feedback and ideas.

A date in November is under consideration for the picnic day, with the launch of Rainbow Road during the Aquarius 50th celebration in May.

Nimbin water supply

After the flood took out the Nimbin water supply, as a temporary measure to reconnect supply, four kilometre of pipe was connected and laid on the surface. That temporary pipe will now be replaced with a permanent 200mm diameter pipe.

Subject to conditions, the works are scheduled to take place between October 2022 and May 2023. No disruptions to supply are anticipated. For more information, go to yoursay.lismore.gov.au/nimbin-water-supply.

Nimbin Pool

Good news! Nimbin pool is scheduled to open on 24th September.

Not so good news: the well supported submission to Council for funding to construct a much-needed toilet block in Peace Park was unsuccessful. Both the mayor and Mr Turner

were sympathetic to NAG members' frustration that this worthy and well-presented project was not supported by councillors at their budget meeting.

They indicated that staff would look for grant opportunities that might provide the necessary funding, and we can perhaps hope for more support next year.

Unfortunately, outdoor seating, purchased by the community, intended for installation in the children's playground and given to Council staff to install, was installed in a position that made it difficult to view children in the playground.

The NAG requested council rectify the error.

Recovery support services

Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre are now accredited

to provide recovery support services to assist with every aspect of disaster recovery via a case management model.

Please refer to other, more specific information, in this edition. Extensions to grant closing dates have been agreed, so please register if you have been affected.

Aquarius 50th celebration

Currently a small group is driving the planning and would welcome some more contributors. The programme has been created and is ambitious.

Council has provided some event funding, and the mayor indicated his willingness to reach out to other mayors in the region to also provide support. It's anticipated to be a significant tourism event and so it's expected to attract more funding.

Crisp mornings, sunny days and chilly evenings were the hallmark of August in the Northern Rivers. Many of our southern brothers and sisters have been envious of the ideal weather conditions we are currently experiencing.

We are now on the cusp of the tourist season which will bring a welcome influx of visitors to Nimbin and surrounds.

The month started with a meeting between Lismore City Council (LCC) staff including the mayor, Steve Krieg and GM John Walker and various government service providers. Hosted by the Chamber and held at Birth and Beyond, the room was packed with engaged local businesspeople.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss business renewal strategies following the disastrous flooding event in Feb/March. Obviously road repair was high on the agenda, and continues to be an issue that the Chamber will relentlessly pursue at all available forums.

LCC have advised that they will be providing detailed information on planned road repair schedules via their website.

The impact of Council's current staff restructure programme on Nimbin and the other villages, and the removal of Nimbin's Visitor Information Centre and subsequent morphing of the tourism destination officer's role to that of an economic development role was discussed.



Chamber Chat

by David Hyett, president

So too was the need for financial and physical support to maintain our community assets such as the Community Centre, Sibley Street, School of Arts, Nimbin tennis courts, the sports fields, showgrounds and the walking trail.

It is critical that community business renewal runs alongside care of community and community organisations as they are an essential element of business health.

A call was made for agreement on a comprehensive plan for the growth of the village to ensure adequate services are provided to support ensuing population growth.

In the past, developer



contributions have been unfairly diverted away from the village. A review of the management of these funds has been requested which will address the inequities and hopefully improve local amenity.

Some Chamber members mentioned the difficulties imposed by Council's planning department. Business development is impeded by unnecessary bureaucracy.

DAs take far too long to progress and considerations are often not in line with community feedback. Building costs are rising and delays create extra costs as well.

Council was also asked to support our community by lobbying service providers about issues faced with power outages, and poor phone and internet connection particularly in the outlying areas.

A follow-up meeting between Council's bigwigs

(including the GM) and representatives of the Nimbin Chamber has been arranged.

The importance of Aquarius 50th celebrations to our region is becoming more evident. I recently attended a meeting with Chamber reps from Tweed Heads to Yamba, and the interest in this event is very encouraging.

Further meetings with Council, Tourism NSW and other government agencies have been helpful with planning the event.

September and October are shaping up to be very exciting months with a great deal of entertainment which includes MardiGrass, the Nimbin Fashion Show, the Green Cabaret and the Performance Poetry World Cup.

The Chamber would like to welcome its latest members Cat Balkin (Jewellery), Fernando Velazquez ('The Cactus Hut Mexican Food'), Tim Apps (Northern Rivers Removals) and Ginja O'Brien (Jallum Swim School).

With our members' support we look forward to building a better, stronger and more vibrant village for our children and the community as a whole.

For details, visit our website: www.nimbinaustralia.com.au



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Ballina votes down EV charging station grant proposal

Last month in this column I talked up a proposal that I had submitted to Ballina Council in support of applying for the NSW Governments EV Charging station grants.

The grants provided for up to 75% of the costs of supplying and installing EV chargers in public carparks across the Ballina Shire.

I was expecting the proposal to be unanimously supported: grant funding for public infrastructure that also assists with Council's climate change action plan goals would be supported right? Not so in Ballina at the moment.

Surprisingly, the proposal was defeated with the conservative majority voting down the proposal and in the process calling it "an extreme greens policy". It would be funny if it wasn't so pathetic.

As a result, our community has missed the opportunity to apply for this funding. I will try again when these grants come around again next year. They aren't just for EV charging stations, they also include Council fleet renewal (to electric of course) and for our region to be part of a highly promoted EV tourist trail.

I actually wrote to the NSW Treasurer, Matt Kean



by Cr Jeff Johnson
Ballina Council

(now the Deputy Leader) to confirm that local Councils were encouraged to apply and received the following response: "The level of NSW investment in EVs and EV charging is unprecedented, and if there was ever a time for councils (and businesses) to access this funding, now is the time."

I was particularly interested in seeing a few EV chargers at the Ballina Airport carpark which has recently had a 100kW solar carport installed. It would also be a great place to promote Ballina Council's Carbon Neutral 2030 policy and initiatives to the 500,000 plus visitors per year.

On-going housing crisis
The August meeting also saw a recession motion

debated to stop Council writing a letter to ratepayers to highlight the housing crisis and to encourage those with multiple properties to consider a long-term rental arrangement rather than listing on Short Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) sites like AirBnB.

There has been a dramatic shift in recent years, particularly in holiday hotspots like Lennox Head, for homes to be listed year-round for holiday rentals rather than long-term tenancies.

This initiative came about due to the Mayor of the Eurobodalla Shire writing a similar letter with quite a bit of success. As a result of the letter more than 30 properties have been added to the Eurobodalla Shire's long-term rental pool. The actual figure is likely to be higher.

It's a shame that the majority of Ballina Shire Councillors thought that the cost of approx \$16,000 to post the letters was too great an expense, despite Ballina Council having over \$100 million in term deposits and a massive cash surplus forecast for this financial year.

Again, what should have been a positive initiative

by the Council turned into quite a nasty debate with outrageous claims that it was "the politics of hate" to blame people with multiple properties for the housing crisis.

I think that sort of attitude misses the point. For me it was about explaining the crisis and to encourage those that were able, to consider long term tenants instead of short-term ones.

The recent Sensis data

revealed that up to 7% of all homes in the Ballina Shire were vacant. If that figure was reflective across the Northern Rivers, then it would amount to 1000s of homes. Clearly the housing crisis is a bigger issue than just encouraging more long-term rentals, but it is a way to achieve something.

It's a crazy set-up when tax incentives can actually encourage people to have homes left vacant rather than having local families

live in them. Housing shouldn't be considered as simply an investment/wealth strategy.

Of course, the housing crisis now means lots of developers are pushing for new land re-zonings under the guise of 'affordable housing'.

Well, it's not affordable when it's drip-fed onto the market and most of it is bought by investors who already have a home to live in.



Hollows in the debris at
Wild Cattle Creek
Below: Measuring stump

North Coast conservationists are shocked and alarmed at footage of the devastation being wrought in Ellis State Forest south of Grafton.

Investigations over the weekend documented dozens of breaches of the logging rules, including several giant trees felled and koala and habitat trees seriously damaged.

"We have notified the EPA and they will carry out an inspection on Tuesday but unless they immediately issue a stop work order these serial offenders will be able to continue their reckless rampage through the giant old trees and koala habitat," North Coast Environment Council vice-president, Susie Russell said.

"The area clearly has many old growth trees. The Forestry Corporation uses LIDAR technology which enables them to see individual trees. They can pick out the areas where there are large trees left and target those.

"The 2019/20 fires burnt through this forest. The oldest, largest trees were the best survivors, providing refuge for animal survivors. Now they are being killed, and the animals that depend on them will probably also die.

"This part of Ellis State Forest was identified as being core habitat for one of the largest populations of koalas on the north coast. That was before the fires of 2019/20.

"Instead of pressing pause on logging to assess the full impact of the fires on the forests and give koalas a chance to recover, then forestry minister John Barilaro, renown for describing koalas as 'tree rats', pushed to keep logging, hiding a secret government report that warned forestry rules were inadequate to address the combined impacts of forest and logging.

"If they do see a koala in a tree, they wait until it comes down and then take the tree. There is absolutely no recognition that koalas have home trees and home ranges and favourite places. By destroying them, koalas become homeless, stressed and in many cases die.

"Now, despite accepted scientific advice that koalas are hurtling to extinction and may well be gone from the wild in less than



30 years, all levels of government are still signing off on destruction of their homes," Ms Russell said.

NEFA president Dailan Pugh said, "We have been waiting years for the EPA to progress breaches reported two years ago. The EPA have allowed the Forestry Corporation to rampage through the Proposed Great Koala Park for years. It took them four years to get the Forestry Corporation fined \$285,600 in June for logging into a Koala High Use Area, rainforest and a rainforest buffer in Wild Cattle Creek State Forest.

"Meanwhile they are refusing to take any action in response to NEFA's complaints from over two years ago that the Forestry Corporation recklessly damaged centuries old old-growth trees and koala feed trees, legally required to be retained, in the same area. And a couple of weeks ago, after a brief inspection NEFA reported another 20 cases of reckless damage to retained old-growth and koala feed trees in another part of Wild Cattle Creek State Forest.

"While its great to see the EPA taking some token prosecutions, they take far too long to hold the loggers to account, while they are turning a blind eye to most offences and allowing them to continue unchecked. It is therefore not surprising that the Forestry Corporation is continuing to recklessly damage oldgrowth and koala feed trees, while continuing to cut down giant trees elsewhere within the proposed Great Koala National Park," Mr Pugh said.

NEW!!! Nimbin Recovery Support Service

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- Wondering what to do next and not sure where to begin?

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With a particular understanding of landslips, damage to internal infrastructure such as roads and driveways, and Rural Land Sharing Communities (aka MOs).

To register: Contact Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre on 66891692 OR email us on nimbinrss@nnic.org.au. Our new RSS staff will be in contact with everyone already on our list at NNIC during September.



Life on Earth brushed aside with the wave of a hand

Sometimes in life we have an event that puts everything in its rightful place and it might have only been a fleeting moment but it stuck all the same.

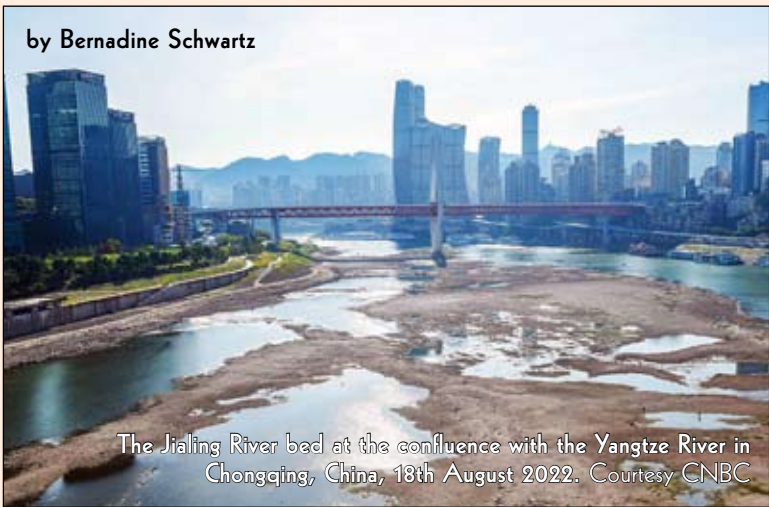
I was watching the ABC nightly news when a report on acid rain in LA came up and it bothered me for weeks, and after much deliberation I came to the shocking conclusion we might have the ability to destroy the planet.

Being only 19, I was utterly overwhelmed and I never dared to say it out loud. So I put the thought out of my mind as best I could, but many a time it's been a reminder as to why I'm here and the importance of all I see around me, our Mother Earth.

The UN Environmental Program was founded fifty years ago, around the same time and is widely recognised as the birth of the international environmental movement, but look at the state of the planet!

Inger Andersen is the current executive director and she calls the crisis a code red for humanity, but in the same breath excuses the world's lack of progress and explains that many legal scholars say there are limits to international cooperation on pressing issues like global warming! Apparently we all have to understand that making a transition from a fossil fuel economy to a new economy, isn't a simple matter. Listen to her plead for sympathy on behalf of the economy! Our children and billions of years of evolution brushed aside, with the wave of her hand. But what else would you expect, she's a soulless economist.

Cold, damp England reached 43 degrees Celsius, and Manchester – my birthplace – was on fire, along



with countless other countries, and they're calling it a "heat apocalypse". It's brought death, destruction and total chaos; roads and runways literally turned to sticky goo, railway tracks buckled, all causing major disruptions to transport, as well as massive power outages.

Bangladesh is in absolute tatters after a monsoon brought the worst flooding in over a century, displacing 7.2 million people. Deadly storms rained down on Italy, causing flash flooding with incredible wind gusts of 180 kph that clear-felled thousands of acres of forests like matchsticks.

There'll be no looking back on this with a sigh of relief. The summer of the future is here and it's taken spring with it. A study published in Communications Earth and Environment says it's here to stay, showing that by 2030 almost every nation will experience higher temperatures with the passing of every year.

Today almost two thirds of the European Union is under a drought warning, and some are on high alert

status. According to the World Economic Forum more than half of Europe itself is drought affected. 44% of Africa has become a victim of drought, while in America forty states are experiencing some form of drought conditions, totaling 43% of America's landmass.

Data from Relief Web International shows 2.3 billion people are currently facing water stress including 160 million innocent children. There was a time when we could say 'it can't get much worse', but after reading a report from the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the worst is yet to come, predicting that by 2050, 75% of all humanity will have no water, affecting up to 5.7 billion people.

Meanwhile, mountainous areas are warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet, including the Italian Alps where the Marmolada glacier, classified relatively risk free, took 11 lives after a huge section crumbled, and another massive crack has already been discovered.

The Arctic is warming four times

faster than before, and scientists can now say with high precision that we are very close to losing it forever. They believe this summer will go down as the worst ever on record for diminishing glaciers and ice fields, which will bring another disastrous outcome.

Back in 2017, Dr Graeme Swindle from the School of Geography in Leeds, explained global warming was creating a rapid ice melt in volcanically active regions, including Iceland, putting us on a path of increasing volcanic eruptions as changes in surface pressure, no matter how slight, affect the complex interactions between rifts in continental plate boundaries. Iceland's recent volcanic eruption is the second in less than a year and experts believe it's a hint that Iceland's Reykjavik Peninsula will become one of the most volcanically dynamic areas for several generations to come, adding more carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and other toxic gases to an already heavily polluted atmosphere.

This is only a brief overview of the new world Inger Andersen thinks we can survive in while she and her money-mongers breathe life into a new economy but again, she isn't the only one to blame. She points out it's also a job issue and people always vote with the economy in mind, making it a politicised issue.

Those one-eyed voters of Australia immediately come to mind. It was them and them alone, who led the nation into the political wilderness and for years, shaping governments and in turn their policies, and the aftermath lingers on.

An international team of researchers have written a perspective piece in the Proceedings

of the National Academy of Sciences, pointing out that more than half of all cumulative carbon emissions have occurred since international climate negotiations began in 1990, and things are not about to change.

Most scientific estimates show under current policies the world is headed for a rise of 2.4 to 2.7 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. However, scientists believe there are substantial changes in atmospheric processes that would make it impossible to limit warming to 3 degrees Celsius. They say we're facing a future of "accelerating global warming, while blind to the worst case scenarios, naive risk management at best and at worst fatally foolish." The paper explicitly says "the time has come to start paying attention to catastrophic climate outcomes; accelerating extinctions, mass climate migrations, pandemics and the disintegration of social and political structures," with an emphasis on war!

This year in China, 900 million people were affected by the extreme heat, and the nation has received less than half its average rainfall this year with vast chunks of land becoming wastelands. Hydro reservoirs are down by as much as half, and China's natural resources that were once abundant, are close to depletion. According to the experts, internal conflict over water is inevitable but even more concerning is conflict outside their borders.

They'll be on the war-path for resources, including water, and they won't be alone, as the world turns into a battleground, adding the finishing touches to our demise.

Rainbow Power Co celebrates 35 years of service

by Fabien Prevost
Rainbow Power Co.

True pioneers of renewable energy and entrepreneurs of fresh business ideas, Peter, Jack and Dave, in 1985, created one of the first renewable energy companies in Australia.

Where many have come and gone, from humble ma-and-pa start-ups to big behemoth giants, Rainbow Power Company (RPC) has powered through – overcoming the highs and lows and becoming known as a leader and authority in solar renewable energy and battery storage.

When RPC started there were only eight solar companies in Australia and renewables were much more expensive. Now there are hundreds if not thousands of solar companies and solar has become relatively affordable for all, families and businesses alike.

Responding to a need for jobs in the local area, Peter van der Wyk came up with the concept of offering renewable energy options to the many people buying into communities and vacant land, needing an alternative to connecting to the grid.

Peter came up with the name 'Rainbow Power Company' and an early version of the logo, which featured a lightning bolt striking the Nimbin Rocks, plus the rainbow

beautifully placed over the whole scene. The lightning represents renewable energy and the rainbow a reminder of the 'New Settlers' and original hippies who named the unique Northern Rivers area the Rainbow Region.

Peter, together with friends Dave and Jack Van Hest developed the idea, pooling their resources, making up different items based around Peter's ideas and selling them at local markets. Early products such as torches and other simple items soon developed into inverters, turbines and fully fledged off-grid solutions.

The alternative counter-culture that was growing in Nimbin was a great motivation for RPC to start their business in this area.

These three visionaries were inspired by the like-minded people all sharing similar visions, following on from the Nimbin Aquarius festival, which was the reason Peter came to Nimbin in the first place.

Originally capitalising on a grant to help create jobs in the local region, Rainbow Power Company started with these three founding members and now employs 42 locals with another three jobs currently being advertised. Many talented, passionate and technical staffers have helped build the company from its humble beginnings to where it is now – proudly the largest private employer in Nimbin.



The shop, warehouses and manufacturing premises were originally in different locations; eventually the chaotic early days gave way to structure and organisation as RPC quickly gained recognition as a one-stop shop for alternative energy sources, as well as knowledge and research on the subject.

The building at 1 Alternative Way was built to house everyone and everything all in the one place, proudly opened by Midnight Oil's Peter Garrett in 1992.

Not only does RPC keep abreast of policy and legislative changes and safety updates, they have actually been instrumental in the research, development and advancements in products and policies, suggesting

changes and becoming an adviser to the national and state solar regulating bodies and authorities.

The aim of RPC has always been to turn the tide away from environmental destruction and towards environmental harmony, and all these years later that objective is being met with thousands of happy customers.

Rainbow Power Company have supplied grid-connected and off-grid power solutions and battery storage Australia-wide and into the Pacific: Vanuatu, Fiji, PNG, New Caledonia, New Zealand and the Solomon Islands.

Our passionate staff members all live by the motto to #makeadifference and most live on

solar power themselves, along with composting toilets, rain water tanks, and riding to work on their e-bikes.

One of my favourite sayings from founding member Dave is that: "Australia should be a powerhouse when it comes to solar, and if we had a solar array 75 miles by 75 miles we could power the world." (He is English so we will excuse that, but in kilometres it would be 120x120).

From Peter, "I used to be regarded as an extremist greenie who shouldn't be taken seriously, but now my views have become mainstream." (Thank goodness!)

Whether you only have \$2,000 or \$1,000,000 you can make a difference by going solar, and RPC can help you achieve your needs including an ability to expand and grow as your situation changes.

With a range of new products including e-bikes, hot water diverters, lithium batteries and our famous on- or off-grid systems, Rainbow Power Company has been powering through to provide alternative power solutions. Call us to arrange your next solar installation or dispatch.

Happy Birthday RPC, here's to the next 35 years!

Be part of the solar revolution and #GoSolar today! Call 02 6689-1430, visit: rpc.com.au, email: sales@rpc.com.au or drop in to our showroom at 1 Alternative Way in the beautiful and unique town of Nimbin.



Roll up for Open Mic

The Nimbin Bowlo Open Mic nights have been well-attended, attracting a diverse range of high quality performers each month.

The house band has been re-jigged this year, with Rodney Davis guitar, Eddie Fisher drums and Bob Dooley bass, able to back all comers and present interesting top-and-tail sets.

Regulars Neil Amor, Maxx Maxted, Frewin Harper and Pat Hall reliably produce tuneful offerings, as do many walk-up players – you never know who is going to turn up.

The early start time of 5.30pm has been a drawcard during the chilly winter evenings for players and listeners alike, with Sibley's Bistro serving delicious meals from 5 to 8pm.

So, bring your songs and your instrument, put your name on the board and use the supplied back-line and PA to let it rip.

A workshop is proposed to train more people in how to set up and operate the digital PA mixer. If you're interested, come to an Open Mic night and speak to the house band.

The next one is on Wednesday 14th September.



Pictured are Pat (guit/vox), Rod (guit/vox), Frewin (keys), Max (harp), Neil (uke) and the house band rhythm section in action. Photos: Mel Williamson



The Great Green Cabaret



One of the performance highlights of the MardiGrass weekend is the Great Green Cabaret on the opening night, Friday 16th September.

Featuring an action-packed, fast moving variety of different performance artists, the evening show will headline the Miss Renee Simone trio, along with Nimbin favourites Neil Pike and Peter Pix and Nina-Rae Saunders, plus Coalescence dance, performance poet Daniel 'Triple Nip' Pearson, Sometimes 7, Bella Frankie trio, comedian Greg Sullivan, poet/host David Hallett and more.

Entry is \$25 or MardiGrass wristband, tickets at the door, doors open 7pm, first in/best seated. Show starts 7.30pm. Dinner and supper are available at the verandah cafe.

New comedy explores perils of looking for love on-line

This month, the Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby presents *Eight Gigabytes of Hardcore Pornography*.

Before the censorship police come storming into Mullum, the director of this new production, Liz Chance, is quick to allay concerns.

"Sorry guys, there is no actual pornography in this show," says Liz, "but there is some nudity."

This is a fiercely funny play written by Declan Greene, an award-winning theatre-maker, director, playwright, screenwriter and dramaturg.



Kasadevi Curtis and John Rado



Tom Bannerman

Well-known local actors, Kasadevi Curtis and John Rado are highly experienced. Rado is a NIDA-trained director of 40 years with experience in 60 TV, screen and theatre productions. He has appeared in feature films including *Treasure Island*, *Game of Swords* and *Burns Point*.

Curtis has appeared in 35 stage productions and has performed in short films and TV. She appeared in *Mr Bailey's Minder*, *Mark Colvin's Kidney* (Drill Hall

Theatre) and *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* (Ballina Players).

The production's Sydney-based set designer Tom Bannerman has a considerable body of work – well over 200 productions.

Recent works include *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *HIV Monologues*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *Marat/Sade*, *When the Rain Stops Falling*, *Jerusalem* and *That Eye, the Sky* (New Theatre), *Charley's Aunt* (Newcastle Civic Playhouse), three different designs for *Bondi Dreaming*

(Belvoir Downstairs, Bondi Pavilion and Seymour Downstairs), *Penelope* (TAP Gallery) and *The New Electric Ballroom* (Stables).

Eight Gigabytes of Hardcore Pornography opens on Friday 16th September at the Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby, and runs for three weekends until Sunday 2nd October.

Doors open at 7.30pm on Friday and Saturday nights, and at 5pm on Sundays. Tickets \$30/\$25.

Bookings can be made at: www.drillhalltheatre.org.au

Renowned Australian chef to speak

One of Australia's most celebrated chefs, Christine Mansfield, will be speaking at an event organised by the Kyogle Writers Festival Committee on Saturday 8th October at 2pm at the Uniting Church's Fellowship Centre, Bloore Street, Kyogle.

Christine has spent her life pursuing – and perfecting – her love of cooking, and her culinary work draws on the tastes and flavours of many cultures.

Her professional life as restaurateur (1993 - 2013) culminated in three highly acclaimed restaurants: Paramount and Universal in Sydney, and East@West in London.

An award-winning author, Christine's books, including *A Personal Guide to India and Bhutan*, *Dessert Divas*, *Tasting India* and *Paramount Cooking*, have spiced up the lives of keen cooks everywhere.



Nigella Lawson noted, "Christine woke people up to the flavours and influences from around the world through her food."

Christine has also led bespoke gastronomic tours over the past 20 years to exotic destinations such as India (where she has visited more than 40 times), Bhutan, France, South-East Asia,

Italy and South America.

Since relocating to the Tweed coast in 2020, she has been promoting sustainable food production and celebrating the produce of the Northern Rivers region.

Join Christine in conversation with Southern Cross University food historian, Adele Wessell, as they talk about her cooking career, her travels and her latest book, *Indian Cooking Class*, published by Simon and Schuster.

Christine will also be selling copies of her books at the conclusion of the event.

Tickets are \$15/\$10 and are available through the Kyogle Writers Festival website: www.kyoglewritersfestival.com and at the door an hour before the event begins.

Don't miss this delicious opportunity!



Dracula is coming

Lismore Theatre Company is pleased to announce that its next production is *Dracula*, the dramatic version freely adapted by Crane Johnson from the novel by Bram Stoker.

The play ran a successful

season at New York's Royal Playhouse. Our show will be directed by Sylvia Clarke (pictured) who directed *The Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *Lipstick Dreams* and the sell-out show *Steel Magnolias*.

There will be four shows only, between 28th and 31st October, with the final show on Halloween.

The cast will be announced shortly and tickets will be available at: www.lismoretheatrecompany.org.au

Websters Creek Landcare needs help

by Liliias Cotterel

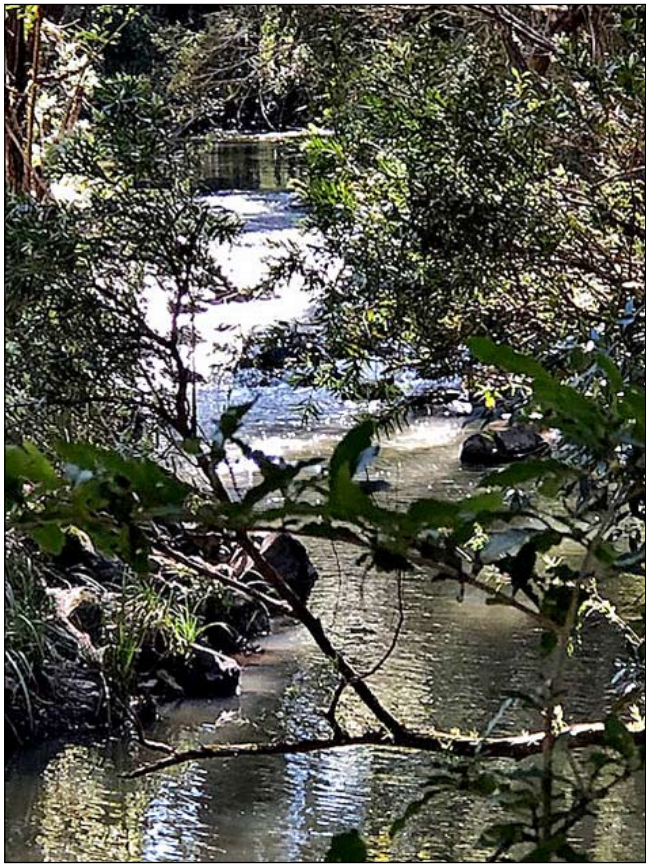
Photos can never truly convey the beauty of our creek landscapes and one of those is the Crown Waterways Webster Creek reserve located on Stoney Chute Road just before the bridge that divides the Lismore and Kyogle councils.

We have obtained a small grant with which to plant 300 trees on the site by November this year. We have planted about 150 so far.

We are having a planting day on Sunday 25th September, but we do not have a lot of volunteers, so are asking for helping hands to plant, stake, mulch and water trees, and would love for you to join us.

We will start at 9am and will be there till 1pm. Please bring gloves and boots. We are fully insured for public liability for all volunteers.

The site is located about one kilometre west of Campbell Road, on Stoney Chute Road on the right hand side



(coming from Nimbin), and there is a white letter box which will be signposted

'Websters Creek Land Care'. Enter via the cattle grid. Most of the trees we

are able to obtain easily. However, we are seeking certain trees:

- Rough leaved Elm (*Aphananthe philippensis*)
- Pepperberry (*Cryptocarya obovata*)
- White Booyong (*Heritiera* or *Argyrodendron trifoliolata*)
- Yellow Carabeen (*Sloanea woollsi*)
- Hard Quandong (not blue) (*Eleocharis obvat*)
- Hibiscus (*Heterophyllum*)
- Maidens Blush (*Sloanea australis*)
- Grey (or cinnamon) Myrtle (*Backhousia myrtifolia*).

If you have any of these trees or seeds you wish to donate, we would be grateful to receive them.

You do not have to become a member to join the planting day, however, we would be glad to have you as a member of our Landcare group. Our joining fee is \$25.00.

Contact Lil on 0400-766-910, or email: lcotterell58@icloud.com for any further information, or if you want to donate trees.

Julian Assange and Labor's 'diplomacy'

by John Jiggins

When Labor won the Federal election in May 2022, the hope of Julian Assange supporters soared.

In 2021, Mark Dreyfus, the new Attorney-General, had issued a statement saying that Labor wanted the Assange matter "brought to an end", while Labor's leader Anthony Albanese had declared that he couldn't see any purpose to keeping Assange in jail. "Enough is enough," he affirmed.

That hope was fuelled further when, in the government's first week, the ABC reported on 26th May that Albanese was a signature to an online petition, the Bring Julian Assange Home Campaign.

Signing the petition seemed odd because the petition went to Albanese as Prime Minister. However, Albanese did not deny the story, which was confirmed by a reliable source who disclosed Albanese had signed up on his first day in office, even before he flew off to Tokyo for "the Quad" meeting with the Japanese PM, the Indian PM and US president Joe Biden.

Despite Albanese's alleged championing of Assange, there was no indication that he discussed the US extradition of Julian Assange.

At a press conference on 31st May, a *Guardian* journalist asked Albanese whether it was his position that the US should be encouraged to drop the charges against Assange and whether he had made any such representations to the US government.

Albanese sidestepped the question, replying it was his position "that not all foreign affairs should be done by



Julian's wife Stella Morris, on her wedding day at Belmarsh prison

loudhailer." Labor claimed they were practising "quiet diplomacy."

Following the UK Home Office signing off on the extradition of Assange on 17th June, former Labor Foreign Minister Bob Carr said Labor should demand Assange's release.

"In the context of Australia's role as an ally – the debt we deliver for the US empire – a decision to let Assange walk free rates about five minutes of President Biden's Oval Office attention."

Labor's response was criticised as inadequate by retiring cross-bench Senator Rex Patterson and "looking too similar to the contemptibly weak line taken by their predecessors." Albanese met Biden again at the NATO summit in Madrid on 30th June, without a whisper about Assange.

Mounting concerns about Labor's undetectable diplomacy surfaced in the new Parliament on 4th August, when Greens Senator David Shoebridge questioned the government about what was being done for Assange, asking whether 'quiet diplomacy' had become 'no diplomacy'.

On behalf of the Prime

Minister, Labor's Senate leader, Senator Don Farrell, repeated the previous Government's position that Australia cannot interfere in another country's legal process, declaring "the extradition case is between the United States and the United Kingdom, a legal system that we respect."

Has US pressure turned Albanese's promise of 'quiet diplomacy' into a policy of 'no diplomacy' with the transformation hidden behind a shroud of secrecy? Assange's supporters and his family have a sinking feeling that this is so.

Julian's father, John Shipton, contrasted the treatment of the Assange family with the treatment of Kylie Moore-Gilbert, who was interned in Iran for two years, while the government negotiated her release.

"In the case of Kylie Moore-Gilbert, the family were kept informed, and so we expect the same from the Prime Minister and Cabinet. If there is such a thing as quiet diplomacy going on, we would like to be kept informed.

If we are not informed, we have to assume naturally that there is no such thing happening. If we are not informed, we have to assume

it is a hollow promise. I make that very clear because we cannot simply rely on assertions," he said.

"We have lawyers all over the world who have accumulated considerable expertise in the case of all the aspects of Julian's case. The lawyers have not had any contact from the Department of Foreign Affairs or Prime Minister and Cabinet.

"From those two things – that we are not informed, and the lawyers have not been contacted – we have to assume that quiet diplomacy is yet to start.

"Don Farrell, in taking that position that they can't involve themselves in the legal processes of another country, is repeating a mantra that is hollow and makes the Australian government complicit by acquiescence to due process anomalies, procedure irregularities, and the disproportionate punishment of Julian," he said.

"Disproportionate punishment is that Julian is not under house arrest for remand, but he is being detained in a maximum-security prison with murderers and terrorists.

"The spying on Julian's discussion with his lawyers, the confiscation of his legal papers, procedural irregularities, all demonstrate the collapse of due process.

"All of these are opportunities for genuine assertion of Australia's position regarding Australian citizen Julian Assange.

"Holding Julian in a maximum-security prison when he is on remand is disproportionate punishment. I remind you that 'on remand' means innocent," John Shipton said.



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