



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

I hope the whole community enjoys the new BBQ in Allsopp Park. Council's Parks crew also replaced old uninsulated wires with insulated wires and replaced safety switches. As I am writing this, Council is hosting five exchange students and their chaperone from our sister city, Yamato Takada. Over their 14-day visit,

# The Nimbin community spoke, and Council acted

we organised tours around the LGA, including the Koala Care Centre, Lismore Botanic Gardens, Rocky Creek Dam, and of course Nimbin and the Candle Factory. Not surprisingly, they were very taken with the natural beauty of Nimbin and surrounds. Thank you for making them feel so welcome.

One of the best parts of being mayor is welcoming new citizens. At the end of last month, I was humbled to welcome 23 new Australians. They came from many countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Vanuatu, Thailand, Germany, Italy, Turkey, the Philippines, Iran, New Zealand, France, Thailand, South Africa and Taiwan.

Australia is one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world. Since 1949 we have welcomed over five million new citizens to our shores. Congratulations and welcome to our new citizens who are now part of the common bond that unites all Australians and respects diversity.

**Roads**  
I am pretty impressed with the work Council's Road teams are doing on Nimbin Road and would like to give everyone a quick update. As we all know there were two significant landslips on the road from the 2022 natural disaster. At the slip closest to the village, bulk earthworks are now complete and 80 of the 240 piles to secure the road are installed. Concrete works



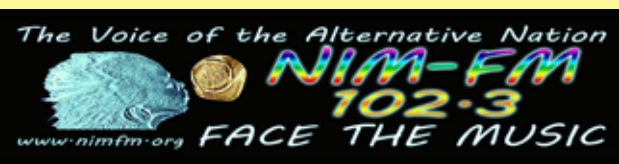
are due to start shortly. At the other site about four km out of Nimbin, there is about a two-week delay as Council's team constructs additional flood scour protection, which stops soil from washing away in heavy rain. Once completed, the pile installation will start. Work on both sites started in mid-May and is expected to take nine months to complete, subject to weather, contractor, and material availability.



This will involve piling and retaining wall construction works to allow repair of the landslips, reconstruction of pavement, reinstatement of road and guardrail barriers along with installing signs, guideposts, and line marking. Traffic control lights remain in place and the existing single-lane traffic control will remain in place during the works period. I would like to thank residents of the region for their patience during this time.



You can keep up-to-date with the progress by going to the Maintaining Roads and Bridges page on Your Say on Council's website: [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au). If you want to contact Council directly with any questions or comments, or register your contact details to receive updates, please call (02) 6625-0500 or email: [floodrecoveryroadsbridges@lismore.nsw.gov.au](mailto:floodrecoveryroadsbridges@lismore.nsw.gov.au) and include the title 'Nimbin Road Landslips – July Update'.



by Kevin Hogan,  
Federal Member for Page

This month I'd like to acknowledge the volunteers and supporters of Nimbin's unique community radio station 102.3 Nim-FM. Community radio plays an important role in bringing local music, news and information to our region. Each of our local stations reflects the unique character of the communities they broadcast to, and none moreso than Nimbin's very own Nim-FM. It takes a lot to keep a radio station on air 24/7, so I thank the many volunteers who've kept Nim-FM broadcasting to the people of Nimbin for more than two decades – and taking Nimbin's special sounds to the world since the advent of live streaming. The Federal Government supports stations like Nim-FM through the

Community Broadcasting Fund, and this year Nim-FM has been successful in obtaining two grants through the fund. The first, helping keep Nim-FM on air, a grant of \$10,670 to support broadcast and transmission. On top of that is a further grant of \$52,680 to support First Nations programming. These are very substantial and important funding allocations from the Community Broadcasting Fund. It reflects well on those involved in the programming and management of the station to have made such a comprehensive bid and have obtained a reputation for delivering unique local programming. Congratulations to all involved and best wishes to all the volunteer broadcasters as you take the unique Nim-FM Nimbin sound to the world!

# A welcome inquiry into insurers' response to the 2022 floods

I welcome the announcement of a Federal parliamentary inquiry into insurers' response to the 2022 floods across Australia and reiterate my call for a government-based insurance program. The joint announcement by Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services, the Hon. Stephen Jones, and Member for Calare, the Hon. Andrew Gee, said the inquiry will take a whole-of-economy view of the ongoing challenges faced by intense and frequent flood events. As the announcement correctly points out, the devastating 2022 floods in south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales are the costliest natural disaster for insurers in Australian history, with the Insurance Council of Australia recently estimating the cost to insurers at \$5.87 billion. In the aftermath of the



by Janelle Saffin MP,  
State Member for Lismore

Northern Rivers floods I called for the establishment of a flood reinsurance scheme for the Northern Rivers similar to the Northern Australia Cyclone Reinsurance Pool, which is backed by a \$10 billion government guarantee. Lismore was the epicentre of the Northern Rivers floods and right now we are seeing a situation unfold where a large swathe of South, North, East and Central Lismore residents are receiving letters from their insurers informing them that they are now uninsurable.

Not only does this leave homeowners carrying all the risk if something happens to their homes, it also leads onto a situation where their houses will become unsellable, unrentable and cause banks to decide the risk is too great for them and thus foreclose on houses still mortgaged. The US's National Flood Insurance Program is another example of a scheme that could be adapted for Australia's needs. This program has many great features including incentivising mitigation and resilience measures by homeowners and local councils to reduce risk in the event of disasters. It offers affordable insurance capped at a certain amount, which then allows the private market to step in and offer affordable 'top-up' insurance. The need to implement a scheme such as this is urgent and necessary, and the Federal Government is best placed to implement it given

it has the ability to raise the necessary revenue needed to fund it. In his announcement, Minister Jones said the inquiry will investigate all aspects of the insurance challenge, including the preparedness of insurers to respond to increasingly frequent disasters, supply chain issues, skills and labour shortages, claims handling and communication with policyholders. I support all aspects of the inquiry but reiterate the paramount need for a national government-backed insurance scheme. It would help promote and give certainty to members of the public along with the private sector, it would encourage appropriate mitigation and resilience measures to be taken, and it would significantly reduce the cost to governments who currently bear the majority of the risk and financial burden of recovery post-disasters.

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02 6686 7522  
ballina@parliament.nsw.gov.au  
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THE GREENS

# Turn up heat on government to turn down heat on the planet

As we continue on our long rough road to recovery from the climate induced extreme floods that changed our region forever, the extremes smashing the Northern Hemisphere are a stark reminder of the crisis we're in, that it's getting worse and it's affecting every region of this blue green planet.

The United Nations has now declared that the "Era of global boiling has arrived" and is calling for dramatic, immediate action.

Heat waves are underway in North America, Europe, North Africa and Asia. In California's Death Valley, temperatures reached 53.3. Parts of Italy reached 45 and Europe hit its hottest temperature on record of 48.8. China reached 52.2, shattering the previous record.

Wildfires are tearing through Canada, Greece and Spain, claiming lives, displacing people and destroying property. Extreme rainfall and flooding is ravaging communities and landscapes and have killed people across south and south-east Asia, including India, Bhutan and Nepal. Flooding in South Korea has killed 40 people, and parts of northeast United States flooded after up



by Sue Higginson,  
NSW Greens MLA

to two months of rain fell in a few days.

We know it's the unbridled belching of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, the skin of our beautiful blue green living planet, that is causing these more frequent, more extreme and more widespread catastrophic events and the pain and destruction that they bring. Global warming became global heating and now we are global boiling. We have two choices, do we switch off the boil to simmer or do we cook?

It's not too late to limit the boil, turn down to simmer and avoid cooking. In fact we are in the nick of time to do

so. Mirroring the advice of experts, the Secretary General said it is still possible to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 above pre-industrial levels, and avoid the very worst of climate change.

Some science says the boil is too intense to stay below 1.5, and we are looking at more like 2. Wherever we are exactly, we need to stop boiling and simmer down now. To do this requires dramatic and immediate action.

The UN in its call to action pointed at politicians and said, "The air is unbearable, the heat is unbearable, and the level of fossil fuel profits and climate inaction is unacceptable. Leaders must lead. No more hesitancy, no more excuses, no more waiting for others to move first. There is simply no more time for that."

Every single tonne of carbon and carbon-equivalent pollution emitted and drawn down is part of the accounting equation of whether we simmer or cook. We need to talk about carbon emissions the way we do inflation and interest rates and budget deficits and surpluses because this is the local, state, national and global economy of life or death, of survival or complete annihilation.

I am deeply worried that the NSW Labor Government isn't getting it. We have no plan yet on the table to stop fuelling the climate crisis, reduce our emissions and draw down carbon. In fact they are still approving new coal and gas, feeding enormous amounts of coal through the world's largest coal port, talking about delaying the planned closures of our coal fired power plants and logging our precious native forests.

Yet NSW is responsible for global boiling and fuelling the climate crisis more than most. It is our coal that is being dug up in the Hunter Valley, the Central West and the Gunnedah Basin, shipped out of the world's largest coal port at Newcastle to be burnt overseas and literally boil the planet. There is no actual plan or policy or road map to stop this until around 2050, when it's way too late.

Earlier this year, Labor took to the election a commitment to legislate a target of net zero by 2050 and 50% reduction in emissions on 2005 levels by 2030. The former Coalition was committed to net zero by 2050 and to cut emissions by 70% by 2035. One thing for

certain is net zero by 2050, including our scope 3 emissions – the ones we export and ship offshore – is too late, we'll cook.

In the past few weeks, the fossil fuel lobby has ramped up a campaign through the Murdoch media about the need to continue coal and extend the closure dates of our filthy old inefficient coal fired power plants, otherwise the lights will turn off.

Independent public interest think tank Climate Energy Finance just released a report which includes modelling that shows we can close Australia's biggest coal-fired power station, Eraring, on-time in 2025, secure renewable supply and put downward pressure on prices and drive decarbonisation of industry. It shows we can do the same for the planned closure of Vales Point power station in 2028/29.

Here in NSW we need to get to net zero as soon as we can and by 2035 at the latest – including our scope 3 emissions. We need to turn down the heat from boiling to simmer, which means we must end coal and gas by 2030 – that means no new coal or

gas and commence the real transition now.

To get to net zero by 2035, we must end logging our public native forests immediately and start regenerating them. This will stop some 3.6 million tonnes of carbon releasing into the atmosphere each year, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of 840,000 cars and 390,000 return flights to London.

Ending native forest logging immediately would prevent short-term emissions of 1.8 million tonnes of carbon per year and long-term emissions of around 76 million tonnes of carbon by 2050. This is a carbon mitigation cost of around \$2.5 billion, based on the current low costs of carbon per tonne.

We need dramatic, immediate climate action. We urgently need a commitment and a clear roadmap to net zero emissions by 2035. It is time for everyone to ramp up the heat on NSW Labor, to turn down the heat on our planet.

Please feel free to join the campaign to turn up the heat on Labor to turn down the heat on the planet on my website here: [www.suehigginson.org/the\\_climate\\_crisis\\_is\\_here](http://www.suehigginson.org/the_climate_crisis_is_here)

## Council rezoning of flood-prone land likely to cost over \$1 million in legal costs

by Cr Jeff Johnson, Ballina Council

Council decisions matter, and when councillors get them wrong they can prove to be very costly.

Ballina Council finally resolved to again rezone a property to prevent future development applications (DA's) being submitted. If the matter had been deferred again or discontinued the cost to the community would have only grown.

The controversial site on Burns Point Ferry Road was originally zoned for 'urban investigation' with successive owners seeking an urban zone since at least the 1990s. An urban investigation zoning doesn't allow a development application (DA) to be lodged, it only suggests that the land could be suitable for development subject to further investigations.

Ballina Council staff have recommended an Environmental Zone (E2) be applied to the site

since 2011 due to the environmental values (Endangered Ecological Communities – EEC's) and the high risk of flooding. The land on the edge of town is 56 hectares in size and is probably the lowest lying parcel of land in the Ballina Shire.

The decision in 2019 to rezone the land from 'urban investigation' to R2 (Low Density Residential) was one of the worst I've seen on Council in 15 years. The surprise zoning change was apparently the result of a 'land owner initiated application' that was supported by a slim majority of councillors (6-4 vote).

This land parcel has been the subject of many reports and the recommendations have always been that it was unsuitable for development. I have always opposed any development on this site and was genuinely surprised when councillors initiated the process to change the zone (land classification) in order to facilitate future development.

The result of that decision has already cost ratepayers over \$600,000 in staff time and legal fees. The zone change has allowed DA's to be submitted for the site. In 2020 Ballina Council received an application for a 230-site manufactured home estate on part of the site.

The developer quickly took Ballina Council to court over a clause in the planning laws that provides developers with an option to take a Council to the Land and Environment Court if their DA hasn't been approved/assessed within 40 days of it being lodged.

Development applications of this size are complex and require multiple reports and studies to be completed before being able to be properly assessed. Quite often applications require additional information and reports to be provided before the DA can finally be determined.

The applicant (Gemlife)

comprehensively lost the case with the presiding Chief Judge ruling that, "the development proposed would have serious and irreversible impacts on Ecologically Endangered Communities (EECs)". The evidence from the ecology experts demonstrated that the whole of the R2 zoned part of the land contains EECs.

Furthermore, the expert evidence and the court judgement in relation to the land's biodiversity values indicated that the site was not suitable for urban development, which is probably why Ballina Council staff have recommended the site be rezoned for environmental protection since 2011.

Following the Court's decision, Ballina Council staff recommended a Planning Proposal be prepared to amend the zoning of the property to better reflect the flooding risk and the clearly established environmental values of the site. Changing the zone of a property isn't a quick process, as

Council needs to apply to the State Government for what is known as a Gateway Determination.

The Government subsequently issued a Gateway Determination allowing the public exhibition of the proposal to rezone the land from R2 Low Density Residential to C2 Environmental Conservation with the condition that the matter be determined by the 15th August 2023. The Planning Proposal was subsequently exhibited and received 42 submissions in support and one against (from the landowner).

Despite the Court ruling, the developer, Gemlife, lodged a revised DA with Ballina Council. This time for up to 150 homes and once again took the matter to court once the DA had reached the 40-day 'deemed refusal trigger'. As a result Ballina Council is currently preparing for their second court case, which is likely to again cost ratepayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

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**Dear Education Minister Prue Car**  
**You're off to a great start. You care for teachers and are not afraid to stand up for them. Congratulations on reducing the admin hours! But an education wrecker, a spider, is hiding in plain sight: the NSW Education Standards Authority.**

**Drowning teachers and schools in paper work, their understanding of curriculum is awful. They want teenagers, who have missed much school, to do the same curriculum as the brightest and best.**

**Such nonsense! Their actions left 65 Indigenous kids on the streets, and closed their dearly-loved school, a few years ago. To challenge them costs hundreds of thousands. I know not one teacher or principal who has a good word to say for NSW Education Standards Authority.**

**Gab McIntosh (retired Principal)**  
**Education Spokesperson**  
**Indigenous Party of Australia**  
**IndigenousYouthEducation@gmail.com**

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Elly Bird interviewed by Yagia Gentle

**M**y disaster story really started back after the 2017 flood when I was part of an incredible group of individuals who responded to that event as Lismore Helping Hands. We ran a flood centre for about three weeks.

Then, between 2017 and 2022 I did a lot of resilience work both at the community level and in trying to do what I could as a councillor on Lismore City Council to get us in a better shape as far as disaster planning goes.

That was a really difficult thing to try and achieve. Council went through a lot of upheaval at that time, and it was hard to keep recovery planning on the agenda.

I kind of always knew that one day a big flood would happen because I focused on learning about floods and about disasters after 2017, but like everybody else I was totally caught by surprise by how big the February 2022 flood was.

As that flood hit us, a group of the same people from 2017 stood up again immediately and ever since then I haven't really stopped. I do big weeks and big hours, co-ordinating our community based flood recovery work. I work with an incredible and dedicated group of people doing whatever we can to look after people in our community, and there's still so much more we need to do.

We changed our name to Resilient Lismore, and we started with the immediate need of cleaning out homes and managing donations. There were lots of community initiatives doing that work, because there was so much to do. We started organising a range of community support, and we became a fairly central community initiative in the recovery.

I think from the time of the flood I've been doing something like 60-hour weeks. I administer a fairly large Facebook group, 'Resilient Lismore – Community Recovery and Resilience', and as the emergency started to escalate a team of us were doing what we could to amplify and share information. A couple of days after we started to build our organising systems, which use various internet platforms to organising works and help people.

We moved down to the CBD and worked out of an undercover carpark opposite the library, we were there for eight months. Distributing cleaning products, mould cleaner, organising and sending out volunteers, distributing donations and working with other groups to distribute furniture and other things.

In the initial response we were managing about 60 people. Coordinating, communicating, and organising, and that was just the administration. We've co-ordinated thousands of volunteers. We still run a tool library so people can come and borrow things that they need to work on their homes, and we run a couple of projects.

We run the Two Rooms project, where we co-ordinate volunteers to go out and build walls, and we recently delivered a partnership with the Reece foundation around restoring bathrooms and toilets, and essential plumbing.

We're just working as fast as we can to scale that work up and keep helping the people that need our help. And there's still a lot of them. We don't just work in Lismore, We work in surrounding communities as well. We work downstream in places like Wardell, Woodburn, and Coraki, where they've been hit badly too.

Many other community initiatives haven't been able to maintain their efforts using volunteers, or haven't managed to get funding, whereas we have, we've



managed to sustain ourselves so we can keep helping our community.

Because we had our experience from 2017, we knew how long this recovery would take, and we know how important it is for a community-based initiative to be here for the long term. That's why it was so important from early on that we focused on stabilising our funding model so that we can continue to be an effective, functioning entity.

We didn't want to burn out. In the 2017 flood recovery we ran with 100% volunteers, and we just ran out of puff. It's not sustainable that way, so we made sure that we put in grant applications, and we have been successful in receiving some grant funding through Healthy North Coast, Department of Community and Justice, Northern Rivers Community Foundation, and various other philanthropic organisations. That funding is keeping us going.

Resilient Lismore has now evolved to a point where we are helping people rebuild their homes, which we call a 'Repair to Return' model. We are helping people by making sure that they have some walls in the house so they've got somewhere where they can keep warm, we try to make sure people have a working toilet and we are starting to repair bathrooms and kitchens.

We operate now from the old Trevan Ford showroom on Keen Street four days a week, and we are still very busy here helping people with donations. At the moment we are surrounded by blankets and stuff because it's winter. We do a lot of donations.

Personally, I've also done quite a bit of advocacy since the floods. I sit on various committees and talk to a lot of bureaucrats about what our community needs. I try to share data and information about what we're seeing on the ground with the people we are working with. I'm also on the Lismore City Council so I navigate those processes and challenges as well.

Disaster recovery is a very complicated landscape. It can get very confusing. There're disaster recovery arrangements in place which involve the state and federal government sharing the cost of disaster recovery programs.

There's a number of bureaucracies, including a reasonably new one at the Federal level called the National Emergency Management Authority. Then there's the newly established Reconstruction Authority of New South Wales, and the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation. It is incredibly complex and complicated and how it all intersects with the council is another layer of complexity.

The recovery committees and structures are State government committees. Council staff often participate in those processes,

particularly around infrastructure.

Council hosts some staff who are engaged in the recovery committee process, and councillors themselves are engaged at a strategic level with getting updates and information from the Reconstruction Corporation wherever possible, and getting feedback through those forums, which isn't an easy process and it's often frustrating.

I think we have a really long way to go as a community, we have a lot of thinking to do, a lot of conversations to have about how we live in a place that has such a high risk, and is still recovering from one of the worst disasters Australia has ever seen.

I think as it moves into history and becomes something that is more in the past, it's important that we remember the significance of what's happened here. We have a long way to go, not just in terms of repairing people's homes so that they can live somewhere with dignity, but how do we exist as a city that lives right on the riverbank in a place that is such a high risk, one of the highest risk places in Australia.

We have to have some big conversations together to work out how we manage that risk.

How do we retain our vibrancy, and the things that make this place such a special part of the world. I think we just have to keep talking to each other. And we have to move through the hard bits with compassion for each other and for everyone else that's in the landscape.

As a community we are incredibly frustrated at the moment, and rightly so, because it's a huge recovery and we have so many layers of bureaucracy to navigate and a tangled government response.

It's very easy to get angry about how that's all playing out, but for me it's important to come back to the value, the strength, and the benefit that we have in being a community that is relatively well-connected. We have to look after each other as we move through that, and we have to have brave, courageous, and honest conversations with each other.

Structurally it's going to be interesting to see what happens as the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation rolls up with the NSW Reconstruction Authority and how that will influence what is happening at the State level.

Apparently, there is a community engagement process starting soon, which will be a significant process, so I'm hopeful that that's going to be a space where we can have the big conversations we need to have about what our future looks like here on the floodplain.

I often say here at Resilient Lismore that it's a big life. I think that sums it up well enough. It's a big life, and often it's a really hard life, and if I know anything, it's that here in this community, we know that.

# Big changes afoot for Community Centre



### Some history

In 1996, the NSW government set about building a new school for Nimbin and offered the existing school and playing fields to Lismore Council for \$280,000.

Council agreed provided the community paid. Faced with a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire buildings for delivery of community services and to house community groups, the Nimbin community commenced fundraising, and we did it.

Nimbin Community Centre, owned by our community, is home to a multitude of valued services and activities.

With our agreement, Council subdivided land to create new locations for the Fire Brigade and public toilets.

We also purchased Peace Park, formerly the school's playing field, but never took title, as we couldn't afford the public liability insurance associated with the skate park.

In 2013, we purchased Birth & Beyond, that very special building that houses the Nimbin Environment Centre and Nimbin Apothecary.

Most recently we purchased Aquarius Park, a dream that will come to fruition over the next 12 months.

Can you imagine Nimbin without all these, and many more, community-owned spaces?

### How are things changing?

While fundraising, Council required us to prove we'd be able to manage such a responsibility through the development of management guidelines.

For over 25 years we have used the same business model and management plan, with minor tweaks over time.

No more! Faced with the reality that rents were no longer covering the escalating maintenance costs associated with buildings that are between 50 and 120 years old, we are changing how we operate.

The major expense beyond maintenance has always been wages. In a bid to reduce costs while more effectively meeting our greatest needs, we have changed our staffing



Rain & Wick

structure; we are leaving our office, which will be rented as a commercial proposition; and we are saying goodbye to the role of co-ordinator.

Our focus into the future will be property management. To this end we have employed Andre Finch.

In Andre's words, "The Aquarian values Nimbin was built on have played a significant role in shaping my character over the past 30 years. As a result, I feel a strong affiliation with Nimbin and its surrounding communities.

"Taking on the property manager's position is an exciting way to get involved in the community again, and I am keen to work with the committee to help shape their vision for the community centre into the future."

We have also engaged a digital communications team who will manage many of our responsibilities as property managers remotely. Rain and Wick are the creative minds behind The Aether Agency, a unique off-grid multimedia agency.

With a strong passion for community and humanitarian development, they blend their artistic talents and sustainable lifestyle to make a positive impact.

From storytelling through captivating visuals to empowering community initiatives, Rain and Wick's work reflects their commitment to creating a better world, one project at a time. Working with them to date has been a delight.

The future will see the management committee take on more responsibility in a volunteer capacity, and we are looking to the many wonderful young people in our community to step up and take this on.

If you are young with lots of energy and would like to join our committee please step forward. There is a fantastic core group forming and you could be part of it.

Electricians, plumbers and builders cost us dearly



Andre

so, if you are qualified and feel like volunteering one of those skills, we would love you forever.

Maybe events can become a major income stream and draw more people into the centre.

### Rents going up

Alongside these changes we have been reviewing our rents, our main source of income. Nobody likes having their rent put up, and some tenants reacted on receiving letters indicating that was our plan.

A tenants' group was formed and for the first time since we purchased the centre, tenants have actively engaged in understanding how we run the centre.

It's wonderful that our base has expanded, others will become involved, and tenants have a better understanding of the issues we're facing.

We are not an elitist decision-making group or corporate capitalists, as some have described us. We are a small group of highly dedicated community members who volunteer our time because we love our community and find joy in the connections we make.

### Rooms to rent

But, back to business. We currently have two small room vacancies.

If you're looking for a small space to use as an office, artist studio, therapy space etc contact us via email: [ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au](mailto:ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au) or go to our Facebook page, and we'll send you information.

### The mandarin tree

The mandarin tree in the laneway next to Birth & Beyond, a tree we watched grow from a seed, is going to be cut down.

We argued strongly with the landscape team to save it, but have reluctantly accepted it will compromise the plans for the pedestrian link from the car park to Cullen Street.

We have been assured many trees will be planted to compensate for the loss.



Networking opportunities in the village of Nimbin are alive and well.

During the past month, many members of the Nimbin community have generously given their time and energy to participate in various meetings both in the arena of community services and business.

The focus of the meetings has been on generating beneficial outcomes for our community while maintaining values which we collectively hold close to our hearts.

A good number of new participants in many of the organisations that exist in the village bring to the table new skills and a great level of enthusiasm. Thanks to you all.

For those new to Nimbin, once you've unpacked and settled into your new home, there is no better way than to participate in community to reward your spirit, and make new friends who can assist in supporting you in your journey.

### Highlights of the month

Nimbin Women in Business group, an initiative supported by the Chamber of Commerce, met for the first time at the Nimbin Bush Theatre. 23 women gathered to share ideas, aspirations, and dreams in a safe and supportive environment.

For those of you who were not able to attend and are interested in finding out about future activities, please



### Chamber Chat

by David Hyett, president

check out their Women in Business Facebook page where you can apply to join.

The Tourism Strategy Meeting, a Lismore City Council initiative was well attended by over 20 stakeholders from Nimbin business and community.

Information was provided by all participants and recorded for future strategic planning. It was evident from suggestions made by stakeholders that the unique flavour of Nimbin is embraced by the community and should be fundamental to our marketing efforts going forward.

Much work is to be done to recover the inflow of tourist dollars that help support our local economy.

A comprehensive report will be provided to the Nimbin community after the content of the meeting is disseminated and packaged for our review.

Huge congratulations go out to Nick and Nicole Lindner, owners and creators of Contained in Nimbin, a new accommodation business which recently won three prestigious North Coast Tourism awards. The big one, 'Business of the Year', as

well as two other categories, 'Outstanding Tourism Start-up' and 'Outstanding Accommodation Experience'. What an amazing effort and well deserved. Thank you both for doing yourselves and Nimbin proud.

Council have replaced the much used and worn-out barbeque in Allsopp Park with a brand new shiny one. Jungle Patrol will be making sure it is kept sparkling – please everyone, give it some love after using it.

Plans are also afoot to gurney the footpaths of Cullen Street in the business precinct on the first three Tuesdays of August: 1st, 8th and 15th. Any action we can take to support Council and improve the cleanliness of the village during August would be beneficial to all.

### Membership

Memberships of the Chamber have been growing steadily in the past months as business owners are acknowledging the results of work that the current committee members are doing to stimulate business in the area.

A full list and further details of Chamber member business's is available at: [nimbinaustralia.com.au/members/directory](http://nimbinaustralia.com.au/members/directory)

Together we are stronger! If you own or run a business in the Nimbin area, please consider joining the Chamber and adding your voice to support outcomes that are good for the village we love.

## Home gardener competition

Spring is in the air, it is time to start planning the planting of your entries in the Home Gardener Competition for the Summerland Giant Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival 2024 Festival.

There will be competitions for the usual range of fruits and vegetables such as tomato, cucumber, zucchini, onion, sweet potato and carrot categories as well as the Most Unusual Garden Product and the Best Garden Harvest Basket.

Let's use this competition to showcase the range of fresh produce that can be grown in this area and to educate people about the taste and use of some of the produce displayed.

The Festival will be held in Kyogle on Saturday 20th January 2024. Giant Pumpkin & Watermelon seeds are available from various shops in Kyogle. If you have any trouble accessing packets, please contact the Festival through their Facebook Page, or phone John on 0428-170-561.



# Rail trail: boom or bust?

by Louise Doran

There have been reports that a total of 70,000 cyclists, or 4,048 per week, had used the recently opened Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek rail trail in first three months after opening. It's been claimed that "businesses along the trail have told us of their successes," according to the Tweed Mayor, Chris Cherry. No important details are given as to how much business has increased or how many new jobs have been created.

As \$14.4m of public money was spent destroying 24kms of the Casino to Murwillumbah (C-M) rail line to build the trail, despite large community protests calling for the trail to be built next to the train line, the community has a right to know the actual economic benefits of the rail trail. Some local councillors still insist the rail trail cannot be built alongside the train line, which is untrue, as the above photo shows. According to experienced rail engineers, the cost of building the trail next to the line is \$50,000 per kilometre, or a total of \$1.2m instead of the \$14.4m it cost us. The track next to the line is wider and safer as there are no dangerous, steep embankments on either side for cyclists to fall down and injure themselves, as has occurred. We can have rail and trail.

Locals say reports of such large numbers using the trail are at odds with what they are seeing and hearing from local businesses. While there has been extra traffic in the towns, as most wanting to ride the trail have to drive to it, there haven't been hundreds, let alone thousands of vehicles. So locals have been doing their own forensic research. On one perfect sunny Sunday during the school holidays locals counted a total of 314 vehicles parked along the rail trail in Crabbes Creek, (12) Moobal, (38) Burringbar, (43) Stokers Siding, (19) and Murwillumbah (202). Over two days, that's 628 or, 2,512 vehicles per month. Even if the number of vehicles is doubled, each carrying two people, that's at most 2512 people per week. Locals claim that due to perfect weather, the numbers are closer to 7,000 per month, nowhere near 17,638. Surely trail enthusiasts aren't exaggerating the numbers.

Numbers using the trail are irrelevant, as a trail built alongside the train line would be just as popular, but cheaper and safer, without depriving so many of a train service. In Murwillumbah, most businesses are closed from midday on Saturdays with only a couple of cafes and a hotel open on Sundays. The only bicycle seen in town was outside the hotel, most likely a local enjoying a cold one. In smaller towns along the trail, businesses which sell food and drinks were empty at lunch time. The Moobal Hotel was empty apart from three locals drinking out the front. When owners or staff were asked if cyclists are spending a lot of money in town the reply was, "Not really, a few buy drinks or have lunch." Not one business claimed great economic benefits from the cyclists. Some, when asked if



Photo: Tweed Shire Council

regular train services on the line would be a good idea enthusiastically replied, "That would be great! We'd love to get the train to Byron." The majority of people have been saying this for 20 years.

The latest Destination NSW study reports 11 million people visited the North Coast up to December 2022. Of these, 5.2m visited the Tweed, Byron and Lismore Local Government Areas, which the train line traverses. When billions are being spent on a rail link to the new international airport at Badgery's Creek, why would any government be demanding millions of public money be spent needlessly destroying the C-M rail line for a trail without rails, rather than provide the train service as promised to reconnect most North Coast major population centres, in the most visited region in NSW. Why not build the rail connection to Coolangatta airport as promised? After so many years of campaigning for train services, some locals suspect there are sinister motives behind their actions.

Unlike the free bike track, people pay to use trains. Train lines are much cheaper to build and maintain than roads, they save money on road building and maintenance. Towns are much safer for cyclists and pedestrians as trains reduce traffic gridlock and emissions in our towns. They account for 50 times less emissions than planes.

The Labor government closed the one, terrible, daily Casino to Murwillumbah train service in 2004 amid community outrage, despite 11,000 people per month paying to use it. They claimed it would cost \$88m over ten years for maintenance to the line. The service possibly took as many as 6,000 vehicles off local roads. Even if four thousand cyclists per month used the free rail trail, it's not taking one vehicle off the roads as many are driving hundreds of kilometres in gas guzzling vehicles to ride the trail. That's not exactly eco-tourism. It appears taxpayers are getting little return for the dollars spent on 'cycling tourism'. It does not provide public transport for the community, or 5.2m visitors per year.

Given the shameful findings of the NSW ICAC, which found former transport minister, treasurer and Premier Berejiklian had engaged in "serious corrupt conduct". Ms Berejiklian provided grants totalling \$15m for a clay shooting organisation and an Eisteddfod in the electorate of Wagga, despite bureaucrats recommending they not be funded as they

had little merit. Geoffrey Watson SC, a former counsel assisting previous ICAC investigations, states these grants were plain pork-barrelling.

Ms Berejiklian, a strong defender of pork-barrelling on the basis it's not illegal, conceded her government had engaged in massive pork-barrelling, involving the commitment of several hundred million dollars from the Building Better Communities Fund (but not our community) to build infrastructure in the lead-up to the 2019 election in a way that benefits the interests of a political party rather than the public interest. Mr Watson SC claims "Few, apart from the former Morrison government, have engaged in pork-barrelling on anything like the scale of the Berejilian government." (*The Saturday Paper* July 1-7)

People need to ask why State government politicians can throw taxpayers' money around like confetti on pork-barrelling, but at the same time do a shameless backflip, refusing to fund the Casino to Murwillumbah train service they'd promised for so long.

Local councillors should be asked why they're supporting this needless destruction of a rail line worth billions, when the Liberal/Nationals had rightly claimed for many years a 16-trains-a-day commuter train service for locals and 5.2m visitors, and the rail connection to the Queensland rail system, would have "enormous social, environmental and cost benefits" and would cost less than the expensive diesel coaches which replaced the train.

They even spent \$2m on a dodgy 'study' to try and give their shameless backflip a veneer of credibility. Why are they now insisting that funding for the bike track will only be provided if the train line is needlessly destroyed in the process?

Road transport is one of the biggest contributors to global warming. People are shocked by the record heat being experienced in Southern Europe and America. The North Coast community, who have suffered so much from fires, floods and droughts, are dreading what the next climate disaster will bring.

If we keep accepting rubbish from the State government, and allow taxpayers' money to be wasted on projects which have little merit, rubbish is all we'll ever get. We need to demand they provide the train service we've needed for so long, which would provide public transport for locals and 5.2m tourists, while reducing dangerous emissions and making our towns safer for locals and tourists.

## Exciting rail news

Lydia Kindred,  
Secretary, Northern Rivers  
Railway Ltd (NRRL)

The Northern Regional Railway Company, in partnership with Northern Rivers Railway Ltd, has been granted access to the Byron Shire section of the Casino – Murwillumbah railway corridor.

This licence will enable local not-for-profit railway companies to carry out a degradation study. The entire line will be inspected and assessed on the cost of restoring the line for future use by trains as a first step to gaining a full license to run regular train services again.

We also support a bike/walking path within the railway corridor as well as regular train services – a win-win for the whole community and for visitors to our region.

If you support the return of rail services and want to help clearing the tracks please go to: [www.northernriversrail.com.au](http://www.northernriversrail.com.au) where you can volunteer or fill in our survey which will assist our planning. Membership is \$20/\$10

concession or make a donation, or just register as a supporter by emailing: [admin@northernriversrail.com.au](mailto:admin@northernriversrail.com.au)

There is no obligation to attend meetings but we need numbers to show local councils that we have widespread support for our plan.

The first stage we are planning to extend is a zero emissions service from the current Byron Bay solar train (the first in the world) to Mullumbimby, for which we have received enthusiastic support from locals.

Extending services south to Bangalow and north to Billinudgel would serve over 7,000 people at Ocean Shores, South Golden Beach and New Brighton, as well as Brunswick Heads.

Splendour in the Grass support the train service being extended to Yelgun, just across from the North Byron Parklands festival site.

We acknowledge that there is widespread support for the return of train services to the Northern Rivers, but we need your vocal endorsement to keep moving rail services forward.

## Fairy wren garden day

by Dot Moller

Fairy Wren Gardens began in 2018, when I realised that many suburban gardens were missing these delightful small birds.

This is partly due to the building of homes where developers wipe out any previous vegetation, leaving a barren landscape where no little birds can survive.

Behind our property, there has been a new subdivision with many houses placed in what was farming country. The Fairy Wren Garden Day grew out of my concern for the impacted little birds by this development.

As I delighted every day in our resident and visiting fairy wrens, honeyeaters, butterflies and native bees, I wondered if others knew how easy it is to grow native plants which will attract fast growing delicate beauties.

Perhaps I could show my native garden to others and

generate interest? So easy to pop in some of these pretty plants, and don't forget the bird bath and see what happens... Thus began an annual Spring event.

Every August, our garden is open for one day.

Byron Bird Buddies do a bird survey on our property annually and will be in attendance.

There is afternoon tea, conversations, a garden tour and a plant sale of native plants perfectly matched to Northern Rivers gardens.

Friends of the Koala nursery guru Mark Wilson will be there. The garden and plants for sale encourage fairy wrens, red-browed finches and honeyeaters into your little piece of paradise.

You will leave with a full tummy and a list of suitable native plants for bringing back the little birds.

Find out how you can bring back the little birds on Sunday 20th August, 2pm – 4pm at Boat Harbour. For more info, call 0417-203-041.



Shop 1, 66 Cullen Street, Nimbin



# Are we on a path to war with China?

## An interview with Greens Senator David Shoebridge

**John Jiggins:** Professor Jeffrey Sachs is director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions network and has served as special adviser to three UN Secretary Generals. At the recent Saving Humanity and Planet Earth (SHAPE) seminar in Melbourne, he said US actions are putting us on a path to war with China. Are we on a path to war with China?

**David Shoebridge:** We are, I think, unfortunately on a pathway to war with China. It's one that's been largely designed by the US, and we seem to be following along behind like a self-funded poodle to join in the US's war planning, particularly against China.

I think the United States sees China as a strategic threat to their global dominance, and probably in part they're right. Their response, though, is a strategy of containment: a defence-led containment strategy.

Australia has proven – whether it's the Albanese Labor government or the coalition government – an extremely dependable unit for that US approach. I think it's extremely dangerous for the planet, and especially dangerous for Australia.

**JJ:** On Saturday, you will be addressing a conference organised by IPAN, the independent and peaceful Australia network in Brisbane, on the need for a peaceful Pacific. How do the Greens see Australia acting to build a peaceful Pacific? Should we see the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) extend to the South Pacific, as the US proposes, or do you see we should adopt different paths?

**DS:** It's a ridiculous proposition to extend the NATO to also cover the Pacific. It's more of a kind of statement of intent rather than a real policy proposition from the United States. They want a NATO equivalent in the Pacific.

The real problem with Australia's posture in the broader Pacific region is that we have adopted a strategy of projecting force well beyond our borders. The Defence Strategic Review decided to move away from a defence-of-Australia model – where we defend our approaches, and we defend continental Australia, use the geography we're blessed with, which is relative isolation in the South Pacific – to move away from a defence of Australia and its continental defence model into a model which is kind of more traditional aggressive approach from Australia to be part of imperial war-making and to be projecting force alongside whoever our global powerful friend is, and to be able to project force, in this case, into the South China Sea, to be able to be an element of unsettling China.

The core thing we need to do, the starting point for the peace movement in Australia, is to understand what the strategy is. The current strategy of our government is to defend Australia by threatening our neighbours and being able to threaten, to some extent, China in the South China Sea - to acknowledge and realise this and pull us back from this model.

**JJ:** Margaret Reynolds is the national president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and was a former Labor senator for QLD. She has called for an inquiry into AUKUS. She said that AUKUS, like Robodebt, was another significant political decision made by former prime minister Scott Morrison, which has not received proper scrutiny.

Morrison negotiated his secret defence agreement without the knowledge of his cabinet colleagues or consideration

by John Jiggins

**U**S Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin had just arrived in Brisbane. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was due the next day.

The duo planned to meet their counterparts, Defence Minister Richard Marles and Foreign Minister Penny Wong, to discuss US plans for the Pacific.

Blinken and Austin's visit coincided with the 2023 Talisman Sabre military exercises, the most massive series of war games ever staged in this country. Running over two weeks, the exercises involved an airborne drop, mass amphibious landings, live missile firing and submarine hunting.

More than 30,000 personnel from over a dozen US allies participated in a series of mock-battles all around the continent. The message this costly piece of war theatre sent was clear, though few dare voice it.

As the guns of Talisman Sabre blaze out their message around the Pacific, the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) sent a counter-message with their conference

of the Parliament, apparently deceiving French President Macron in the process. This was to avoid criticism just ahead of the 2022 election. Margaret Reynolds labelled this opportunist and reveals that a few nervous politicians were more focused on their electoral futures than the wellbeing and security of Australia. What's your view on this?

**DS:** One of the most extraordinary moments in politics in the last five years has been watching Anthony Albanese, notionally from the left of Labor, adopt, without any internal democracy within the Labor Party, without any public investigation of it, adopt wholeheartedly Scott Morrison's AUKUS plans.

Scott Morrison, who's not known for his strategic thinking, came up with this thought bubble one day, based upon a kind of European-centric history to join a military and technological alliance with the United Kingdom and the United States, in which we would be the smallest player, called AUKUS.

He had another thought bubble about getting nuclear submarines for Australia; there was never any credible strategic underpinning to that, no detailed analysis by the Department of Defence. It was a Scott Morrison thought bubble, which, I think, he thought would be useful in an electoral context.

So rather than pop the bubble, or even assess the bubble and have a kind of internal inquiry within Labor, or a serious consideration by Defence, Anthony Albanese swept into office and said not only will he do AUKUS but he's going to throw his whole political weight behind it, and the Labor Party political weight behind what will probably end up being a half-trillion dollar programme, where we buy someone else's nuclear submarines and help subsidise their nuclear industry.

It's perhaps one of the most extraordinary betrayals of the public interest and Labor's historic anti-nuclear platform that I can recall. And the only explanation for it is that Anthony Albanese is happy to go along with Scott Morrison's plans for an increased militarised Australia, deeper involvement in the United States military plans because he sees it as somehow politically convenient to him.

He's chasing former coalition voters,



Photo: Marie Cameron

in South Brisbane Saturday 29th July, calling for a Peaceful Pacific.

The conference, attended by speakers from Pacific countries, as well as Greens spokesperson on defence, Senator David Shoebridge, raised awareness of the massive impact on Pacific people, whose lands have been taken and used to base US military forces, as well as the enormous threat to the economy and the environment that the people of the Pacific face from a war between the US and its allies and China.

The following is an interview with Senator David Shoebridge for Bay-FM about the peace conference and the prospect for war or peace in the Pacific.

and moving us to the right. But the idea that we would commit to a half-trillion-dollar programme, totally change our defence posture, and do that without even the most basic of inquiries is not only deeply undemocratic, it's deeply dangerous, and it is leading us down a pathway to war.

**JJ:** Does the Australian Strategic and Policy Institute, (ASPI), need to be investigated? Twelve days before the writ for the 2022 election was issued and the government went into caretaker mode, Peter Dutton replaced Peter Jennings with Justine Bassi as head of ASPI. Her previous job was chief of staff to foreign minister Senator Marise Payne. Before that Bassi had worked in Malcolm Turnbull's office and before that for LNP attorney-general, George Brandis.

As well as appointing this ex-coalition staffer to replace Jennings as head of ASPI, Dutton also appointed former LNP ministers John Anderson and Michael Keenan to the board of ASPI.

**DS:** I don't think anyone could look at what happened and not be deeply troubled by what's happened in ASPI. For the record, I should be clear: my brother, Michael Shoebridge, who I love dearly but have many political differences with, was a former director at ASPI.

But you know, I'm a Greens Senator and it won't surprise you that I often am deeply at loggerheads with ASPI's analysis and direction. But I think the way in which the former coalition administration not only stacked the board, but also chose the successor for ASPI from within their own political ranks... I mean, how can anybody look at that and think that ASPI is genuinely independent or genuinely credible?

ASPI receives a chunk of its funding from the Department of Defence and receives some of its funding from the United States government and also receives some of its funding – a significant part of its funding – from arms manufacturers.

I think we should also look at their funding and question whether or not they can have a genuinely independent approach to strategic analysis.

I think many people have started discounting ASPI. I think it's got a credibility gap that I can't see them overcoming.

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## The HIPPIES are Right!

# Watching Lismore rise out of the mud

Over the last 20 years, since my father's death, I've walked through North Lismore into the city and back to keep fit. During that time, I've failed to keep fit but I've watched as businesses emerged and submerged; prospered and dwindled; and there has always been something innovative; something hopeful and new.

That stroll now only contains a lethal dose of nostalgia; laced as it is with empty businesses, like the site of 20,000 Cows, that will never again re-open; and derelict and deserted homes increasingly circled in cyclone fencing and government wrapping awaiting demolition.

And if we are to have believed the propaganda of the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation; the annihilation of the suburbs west of the Wilsons River is a given and will continue at pace for the next few years. Of course the reality will be nothing of the sort.

Many of the houses have been or are being rebuilt and rented out; and slowly the streets will come to look like a beggar's mouth full of missing teeth.

After all, the housing crisis is much more pressing than the risk of drowning in catastrophic flooding and they are 'only renter' (for those offended, that's called being facetious... I'm happy to wait so you can look it up).

Fortunately renters being the most prosperous of our citizens, most of them have jet skis and powered flood boats so we need not concern ourselves with their wellbeing? (I proposing that that is ironic hyperbole...



**Revenge of the Loon**  
by Laurie Axtens

and these bracketed bits are didactic paternalism... again just for comic effect).

As I continue my walk I enter the Central (to what) Business District where economic CPR continues unabated; despite the overwhelming irony of destroying the very suburbs the CBD services (where the homes are metres higher than the CBD buildings) that are being completely refurbished.

Unsurprisingly, this has been a positive boon for some of our local politicians who have been buying up big. A pub here, another pub there.

And maybe they're right... maybe post catastrophe tourism is about to boom. And getting in when the drinking establishments are cheap and rebuilding them with government stimulus monies is genius. Genius.

There is another word that comes to mind though but I'm done patronising you my dear reader, you'll need to work it out yourselves; after all you voted them in.

# Danger

by Alex Manzi Fe, Blue Knob Writers Group

Alert! Alert! Warning! Warning! Danger! Danger! Release adrenaline. Fight or flight? Alert, alert. Be ready. Be afraid. Definitely be afraid. Now you are ready to be led, guided by Authority.

And all this time Fear is clouding your brain, like grey fog, dark, almost black like the sky before the thunderstorm.

It's getting worse, lightning will soon strike. You are helpless. Everything is Fear.

But there is another way. Fear is not inevitable; you have a choice. Forget the News, the Media, bombs and war for a moment... What's the choice? Trust! Trust in what?

Trust in the Universe. Trust in your place in it. Trust in the unfolding, generating, organising dynamic – sometimes known as g.o.d.

It's not about trusting that someone, something else can solve your problems – it's trusting that YOU can. If you want to change the way things look, change the way you look at things.

See Danger as an Opportunity. An opportunity to give up Fear of what might come and to sow the seeds of the New Age.

# All ears for local stories

by René Norwie

This year locals from all around Nimbin have been gathering to share true personal stories at Nimbin Storytellers' bi-monthly events and informal monthly story groups.

The stories being shared are witty and light-hearted, tender and sad, inspiring and uplifting. The atmosphere is supportive and warm. We leave full to the brim knowing that we are not alone and we see that, despite our differences, everyone is trying their best to make their way in the world.

Through this ancient ritual of storytelling, that is both modern and timeless, we find a connection with one another that feels essential and life affirming.

Storytelling is an important part of being human. We are all storytellers by nature, and nurture. We've been told stories since the day we are born, and we continue to hear and tell them in our daily lives. These everyday stories create narratives that help us to make sense of the events and moments that shape us.

Nimbin Storytellers is a space for people to come and share true personal stories about something that, in some big or small way, has contributed to who they are today. And as we are all natural born storytellers, you don't need any previous



experience to tell your story.

Our events are open to everyone. We always have some local tellers lined up for the night, but we also love spontaneous stories. There is no obligation or pressure to tell a story, we need listeners just as much as tellers.

However, we always extend an encouraging invitation to anyone who is keen on having a go. Often people come with no intention of telling a story, but after hearing a few stories you may find yourself feeling inspired to tell a tale of your

own.

Our events follow a simple, time-tested format; real people telling real stories on a set theme and told in about 5-10 minutes. Event themes are there to help jog your memory and are open to creative interpretation. It's always great to hear the variety of stories sparked by a theme.

However, if there is a story inside you, calling to be told, don't worry if it's not on theme, just tell it anyway.

So come and experience a

night of local storytelling at our next event on Saturday, 19th August, 6.30pm at the Nimbin Bowling Club. The evening's theme is Nourished. Join us to listen to a few good yarns, and perhaps even tell one yourself.

And for those who want to test the waters in a more informal setting, our next Story Group is on Sunday 27th August at the Nimbin Bush Theatre, 10am-12pm.

Find out more about us at: [www.nimbinstorytellers.com](http://www.nimbinstorytellers.com)

# A moment

by S Sorrensen

It's hot. I need shade. Oh, there's a place. A pastelaria, which is a sort of Portuguese café.

Two older blokes are sitting under the pastelaria's awning, which extends into a small courtyard. I suppose you get to an age when you can't do much except hang about and wait for the end. Bit sad, really...

The two older men sit separately and each has a beer in front of him. It's 11am. One inhales slowly on a cigarette, holds the smoke in his lungs for a long while, then exhales. The smoke drifts languidly into the sunlight, making a faint shadow on the split-stone pavers.

I was thinking I'd have a café com gelo. That's an iced coffee. It comes in two cups: your normal café of choice in one and ice in another. You add your coffee to the ice as desired. DIY deliciousness.

The Portuguese love coffee. At the start of my walk, I wandered into a pastelaria where two young workmen were drinking coffee and scrolling through their phones, legs jiggling, to start their working day. The coffee



is super strong and comes in tiny cups that looked even tinier in their large hands. I ordered one as well – an early morning hit to give me energy to walk a long way so I can, um, walk a long way back. Yeah, it's sort of pointless, but that's life, right?

A woman emerges from the pastelaria and comes to my table.

"Bom dia," she says, smiling. "Bom dia," I say, practising my new language skills.

"Super Bock," I say, pointing to the beer the older blokes are drinking, "e uma pastel de Tentúgal, por favor."

Bugger coffee, I'm having a beer. It's 11am.

"OK," she says, smiling (at my excellent Portuguese, I reckon).

On my pointless walk today I passed a lot of pastelarias, so named because as well as coffee and beer you can buy a delicious pastry (pastel). And at each pastelaria sat at least one older man, sipping coffee. These blokes don't look down at a phone, scrolling for distractions, but rather just sit and gaze out into the street, into the heat, into the world. They don't seem bored or frustrated, even though they obviously don't have anything to do.

The woman brings my beer and pastry. "Obrigado," I say.

We three older blokes sit and look at another older bloke cooking at a fireplace in the courtyard. He sweats through his flannelette shirt.

The man puts a large dried and salted cod in a wire grill and places it on the coals. This is Portugal's national dish. Bacalhau. Occasionally, one of the older blokes says something and they all laugh.

The courtyard fills with the aroma of bacalhau cooking. Beyond the courtyard, Europe is cooking, but here in Southern Portugal the wind off the Atlantic Ocean offers some relief.

The pastel de Tentúgal is wonderful. I can't help but moan and roll my eyes with delight as I taste it. The two older blokes look at me and smile. One raises his glass to me. The pastel has an egg-custard centre wrapped in layers of super-thin dough baked golden brown.

"Isto é delicioso," I say. The woman cackles from inside the pastelaria.

One of the blokes says something – and we all laugh.

I should get going. I have a long walk back to my house among the olive and carob trees. I got stuff to do. But I like sitting here. With these older blokes. Just... sitting.

Then I realise: It's not that these blokes are past it and can't do anything; no, it's that they're wise and know there's really nothing to do.

I'm staying.

TAFE students create costumes for Dead White Males

by Elysha Mitchell

In an exciting partnership that merges education and local arts, the Wollongbar Fashion Design & Technology class from Northern Rivers TAFE has joined forces with Lismore Theatre Company to create stunning Elizabethan costumes for their upcoming production, *Dead White Males*.

The collaboration has resulted in remarkable garments that transport the audience back in time and bring the characters to life.

Portrayed as a character in the play, Shakespeare truly embodies the essence of the Elizabethan era, thanks to the exceptional craftsmanship and creativity displayed by the Wollongbar TAFE students.

The attention to detail and dedication to authenticity in each costume has left the theatre group impressed beyond measure. The cast members themselves feel as though they have been whisked away to another era.

Lismore Theatre Company eagerly awaits the moment when audiences will witness these extraordinary costumes first-hand.

The Company applauds the exceptional talent and hard work



demonstrated by the students, and encourages aspiring fashion designers to consider the courses offered at Wollongbar TAFE.

These hands-on, creative programs provide students with the opportunity to cultivate their skills, develop a comprehensive portfolio, and gain practical experience while studying.

Sharon Brodie, the director of *Dead White Males*, is very grateful for this collaboration and extends her deepest appreciation to Northern Rivers TAFE

for their invaluable support.

This partnership exemplifies the importance of fostering connections between educational institutions and the local arts community, showcasing the immense talent and potential that exists within the region.

*Dead White Males* opens on Friday 11th August at the Rochdale Theatre. It runs each weekend until 26th August. Head on over to: [www.lismoretheatrecompany.org.au](http://www.lismoretheatrecompany.org.au) to purchase tickets.

NIMBIN'S POETRY CUP TURNS 20



by Vincent Stead

The annual Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup has now been running two decades.

This is due to the tireless efforts of Gail M Clarke organising the dedicated group of volunteers who help run the event, and the generosity of the Nimbin community who donate all the finances needed.

2023 saw the fastest filling of entries ever, with 36 poets from Tasmania, Victoria, New South

Wales, Queensland and the Northern Rivers signing up in eight days.

There is an almost equal number of male and female poets, with ages ranging from 20 to 75 years old and a wide range of different poetry styles represented.

Heats will be run at the Nimbin School of Arts on Saturday 2nd September, with the Semi-finals and Final staged on Sunday 3rd September.

For details go to 'Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup' facebook page.



Blue Moon Cabaret

Nimbin School of Arts will have its second fundraising Blue Moon Cabaret for 2023 on Saturday 26th August.

It's yet another BIG show of the performance arts and tickets are selling out fast.

The cabaret will feature singers Luke Vassella, Neil Pike with Nina-Rae Saunders and Mia French, the Veil of Dreams dancers and the Shiva Shimmer Squad, poet Luke Robinson, stand-up comedian Ellen

Briggs, circus/acro Diva, bouzouki maestro Byron Triandafyllidis, grand pianist Stephanie Hamlet, pole dancer Raha Star, and finale act cabaret artiste Jex Lopez with double bassist Melissa Hunt, plus poet/host David Hallett and more.

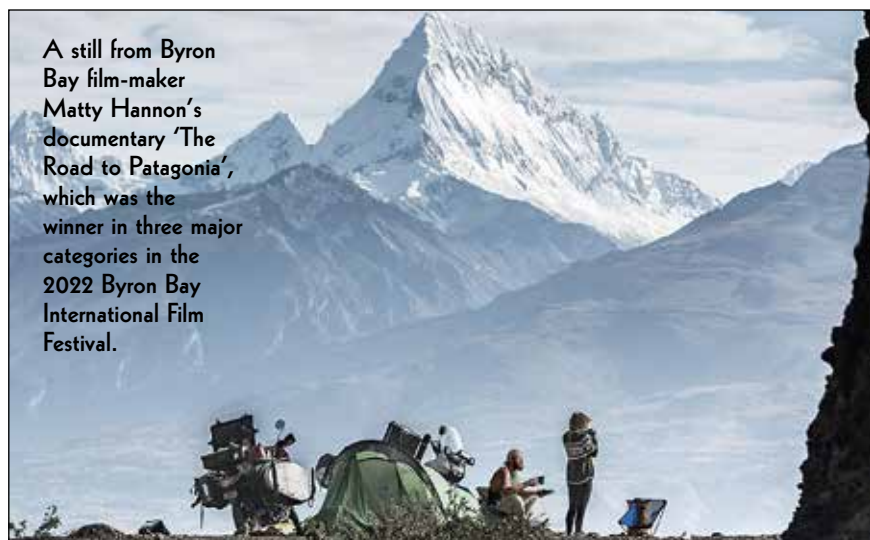
Booking tickets and table reservations are essential at Perceptio Bookshop, phone 6689-1766. The event is fully catered by Feast, doors open at 6.30pm for dinner and drinks (no BYO).

Byron Bay Film Festival calls for local entries

Time is running out for Northern Rivers filmmakers to submit their work for a possible screening at the Byron Bay Film Festival in October.

Local film creatives have until 18th August to present their work for a chance to have it seen by their community at the town's iconic cinematic event, which attracts independent films and their makers along with industry insiders from all over Australia and around the world.


Submissions are closed for out-of-area films but as part of the Festival's mission to support the region's creatives, organisers have extended the entry date for local submissions in the category of Byron Bay Filmmaker, for Northern Rivers residents only.



**Nimbin Rural Fire Brigade**  
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Sat 28th of October 11:00am  
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Nominations for Office close 13th August  
Vacant positions may be filled from the floor  
All members welcome  
Please bring your Membership Card

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Phone 6689-1250  
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Sibley's Bistro open Wed-Sat 5 to 8pm, 6689-1473  
• Open Mic night, Wednesday 9th August, 6pm  
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# The facelift: inside/outside

by Karen Welsh

When one walks into the Nimbin Artists Gallery, one is presented with a plethora of colour – and now we have had an upgrade in colour on the exterior walls as well.

The fab new exterior paint – a collaboration in the end – is a great improvement, and we are pleased with a bit more colour on the outside.

On the inside, business is brisk despite the overall depressive economy. Does this not confirm that art, colour and form are soul-soothers to many of us?

A lifter of spirits in our beautiful village.

Melissa Hume's felting continues to prove quality and uniqueness never goes out of fashion. Jenny Mac's up-cycled garments are also one-off, unique pieces.

Denis Meagher's local landscape focus and Maureen Whittaker's strong vibrant and textural artworks... all are uplifters of the spirit.



Celebrated botanical artist and author, Ali Jane Rice (pictured above) on a recent visit, was well-pleased with her purchase of a 'Melissa vest'.

If you haven't been for a while, why not pop in for your own personal



A Jenny Mac up-cycled garment

assessment of art – wearable, sculptural, for your wall or desk space, or just the new external paintwork?

The gallery is open seven days a week, from 10am-ish to 4pm-ish, at 49 Cullen Street. See us also on Facebook.

## Sustaining ourselves in a troubled world

by Ruth Tsimbinis

Turbulence and complexities are what we all have been facing in a myriad of ways, shapes and forms.

To support us through these times, artistic members of the Practising Artists Network (PAN) have taken to turning their creative energies into producing work that will pause our thoughts and allow viewers space to reflect on the value of family, relationships and the environment, and the increasing importance of our intimate connection in their current exhibition at the Roxy Gallery.

'Intimacy' is a selection of new works produced by 25 PAN members who have been working in a variety of mediums, creating their response to sustaining ourselves in a troubled world.

Based in the region, PAN provides members to its



'Felicity the talking Kombi van' by Rikki Mason

group with opportunities to collectively participate in social events such as life drawing and plein air activities, along with contributions to group exhibitions.

'Intimacy' is an exhibition that incorporates works produced in both two and three dimensional art practices working in sculptural mediums of wire and reclaimed materials to collage, printmaking and painting.



'Nesting' by Belinda Sochacki

This exhibition will run through to Sunday 27th August providing visitors with an opportunity to enjoy solace through art.

### Proposals invited

Roxy Gallery is now accepting exhibition proposals for the 2024 exhibition program.

Welcoming applications that display innovative approaches to contemporary arts from regional and local artists, designers, curators, community, and cultural groups.

The gallery features a program of up to 10 exhibitions per year, four to six weeks in duration.

The Roxy Gallery aims to support established, emerging, and aspirational artists from Kyogle LGA and the wider region with an objective to connecting content which will inspire creativity in artists and audiences both local to the region and visitors.

Applications are assessed by a panel once a year for the program February to November.

The closing date for proposals to be submitted is 3rd October. Applications and further information can be found on-line through the Roxy Gallery page of the Kyogle Council website: [www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au/recreation-community/community-facilities/roxy-gallery](http://www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au/recreation-community/community-facilities/roxy-gallery)

For more info, email: [roxygallery@kyogle.nsw.gov.au](mailto:roxygallery@kyogle.nsw.gov.au) or phone 02 6632-0230.

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## New exhibitions at Lismore Regional Gallery

Two new exhibitions are lined up for Lismore Regional Gallery – Joe Swepson's 'Don't Cry Muma' and Jodi Woodward's 'How much art can you store under the bed?' Both will run from 26th August – 23rd September 2023.

'Don't cry Muma' captures the artist's identity and body as a series of fleeting iterations, generating alternative versions of the self.

Body, gender, artistic, social, and personal identities are all in flux. These constructs are not final – they are objects of vital, ongoing, empowered creativity.

Joe Swepson received Lismore Regional Gallery's VERGE Graduate Award (Southern Cross University) in 2021.



Joe Swepson, 'Don't look back 2020', digital image.

Jodi Woodward deconstructs and reconstructs past drawings and works on paper into new reimagined artworks investigating materiality and residual marks.

In this new series, the artist questions our relationship

to the environment, which she invites into her process by exposing the works to the elements and the natural dyeing characteristics of native trees.

The work continues her exploration of the unseen labour of the artist, duration,

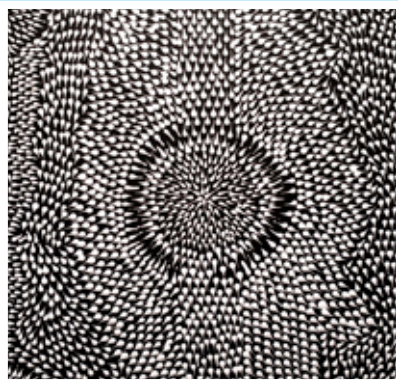
persistence, perseverance, and chance.

The Lismore Regional Gallery pop-up space is at 46 Magellan Street, Lismore and is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am – 4pm, Thursdays until 6pm. For more information, go to: <https://lismoregallery.org>



Jodi Woodward, 'Paperbark II 2022' (detail)

# Pre-loved, re-loved



‘Porcupine Quills’ by Yorga



‘Secret Garden’ by June King



‘Bangalow Bride’ by Robin Moore

Blue Knob Hall Gallery is having a ‘re-used’ art sale and exhibition called ‘Pre-loved, Re-loved’.

This exhibition was inspired by a community gallery in Auckland NZ who were the first to stage an annual exhibition in that country for a ‘re-used’ art sale. We were getting a number of enquiries from members asking about re-selling artworks, so we thought we would give it a go.

This exhibition was an opportunity for members who might be downsizing or divesting themselves of artwork, to sell and re-home once-loved, original artworks including paintings, ceramics, photography, prints and sculpture (no jewellery/clothing).

The artwork that has been offered up for re-sale could have been purchased from anywhere or gifted to the seller. There is also the possibility that local artists’ work will re-appear for re-sale.

While the seller could retain the proceeds of the sale (less commission) they also had the opportunity to donate part or all of the proceeds as

a fund-raiser for the Hall. Any new artwork entered by members/artists is on the condition that all proceeds are donated.

Artworks that sell will be taken away, so we hope this will be a changing feast of works.

This is an interesting challenge for us at the Gallery, and we hope that many of the pieces will also stay in the local community. We would like to thank our members and artists for supporting the Gallery and being involved in helping raise some always-needed funds for Blue Knob Hall Gallery, Cafe & Ceramic Studio.

This exhibition will run until Saturday 16th September.

## Blue Knob Writers Group

The group held a successful morning on Sunday 23rd July with their Table Talks event. A variety of members and visitors recited poetry, prose or a song to a warm reception.

This will be an ongoing bi-monthly event. For more info regarding the Writers Group, which also meets weekly at Blue Knob Cafe on Sundays, you can contact Alex 02 6689-7268 or Helen 0487-385-134.

## Blue Knob Cafe

The Cafe has an all day breakfast menu, meals, specials, cake and coffee. Monthly Sunday morning music is on-going. For information, dates and who’s playing, check our Facebook page.

## Back-Yarders at Blue Knob

From 9am to 12.30pm, the Back-Yarders table at Blue Knob continues to add that extra bit of local interest on a Saturday morning.

For more info or enquiries on what’s happening at Blue Knob, go to facebook: Blue Knob Gallery, Cafe & Ceramic Studio, web: [www.blueknobgallery.com](http://www.blueknobgallery.com) email: [bkhgallery@iinet.net.au](mailto:bkhgallery@iinet.net.au) or phone 02 6689-7449.

## DIANBUNG GARDENS

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**August 26** Prepare for Spring  
**October 7-21** Permaculture Design Course  
**October 28-29** Growing Abundance

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Open hours: Wed and Sat 10am-3pm  
Other times by appointment: 0429-147-138

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# Unseen, untamed worlds



‘Wings of the Mystical Sooty’ by Locky Coopers

by Artis Tree

What does spirit mean to you? Serpentine Community Gallery’s up-coming themed group show invites the notion of ‘spirit’.

The exhibition welcomes Northern Rivers artists, and is open to all mediums and explores the unseen, untamed world of spirit.

This exhibition is where art becomes a gateway to the ethereal. ‘Spirit’ runs to Friday 18th August.

Photographer Locky Cooper’s image ‘Wings of the Mystical Sooty’ was taken during surveying for a threatened species project in Upper Main Arm, NSW.

“I truly believe the sooty owl is my spirit animal; I have had some up-close encounters with these beautiful owls,” the artist said.

“The greater sooty owl is listed as a vulnerable species in NSW, threatened by loss of habitat and a lack of natural hollows.”



‘Dante’s Inferno’ by Dervis Pavlovic

Artist Dervis Pavlovic’s oil painting ‘Dante’s Inferno’ references the 1850 work, ‘Dante and Virgil’ by the French artist, William-Adolph Bouguereau, which depicts The Divine Comedy, by the 13th century Italian poet, Dante.

The heretic alchemist, Capocchio, and the trickster, Gianni Schicchi are condemned to hell to fight on forever for their sins.

Dervis asks: “What if Dante had been able to see into the future to our time and beyond... to the wars in Ukraine and Sudan and others yet to come, to the consequences of climate change, to the summers burning like hell with the hottest temperatures ever recorded on Earth?”



‘Storm spirit horse’ by Maria Heaton

## Triple opening

Then we are proud to present a triple opening, featuring exhibitions ‘Don’t let them tame you’ by Sharla La and ‘Calling the Birds’ by Michelle Gilroy and ‘Art With Wings – Create to Connect’.

Opening Friday 25th August, 5.30pm – 8pm, this will be a dynamic and engaging exhibition. It runs until 8th September.

Visit: 3/104 Conway Street, Lismore. Contact: [gallery@serpentinearts.org](mailto:gallery@serpentinearts.org) or phone 0492-964-819.

Serpentine Community Gallery acknowledges that we are located on the lands of the Bundjalung Nation and pays respect to all Aboriginal people past, present and emerging.

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