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33 Carrington Street (PO BOX 51), Lismore NSW 2480



# Local business continues growth

**H**ave you seen it? Nimbin Building Materials is building! The proud team at Nimbin Building Materials (NBM) are well into construction of their new business premises at 35 Sibley Street Nimbin (opposite the servo).

Nimbin Building materials has grown significantly over the last eight years since Ralph Mack bought the business from his long-time friend Andy Kindermann.

Since then, the business and its team has expanded along with the area.

In 2019 Ralph purchased land at 35 Sibley Street with the vision of relocating the business to a purpose-built facility with the help of his sons Ruben and Felix Mack.

The family-based team workshopped the idea and began the detailed design and approval processes. This came with many challenges. The site is a low-lying area with water table issues and soft and reactive clay soils requiring a complex civil design led by good friend, Nimbin-grown Stuart Thienpont of ADG Engineers.

Further challenges were found in dealing with Lismore City Council who at times seemed intent on stopping the project from progressing. However, with years of persistence the challenges presented by LCC and the difficulties of dealing with certain individuals there, were for the most part overcome.

## Unique, sustainable, local

The team's vision was to create a unique and sustainable project, in character with the surrounding landscape and the businesses principles. The design process, along with obtaining the required approvals and permits, took many years to complete.

Inspiration was drawn from the work of Malcom, Jens and the team at Timber Pole Constructions, who have been building log sheds in the area for several years. The logs were obtained from local and sustainable agro-forestry business Super Forest Plantations. These logs were grown locally at their Blue Knob plantation.



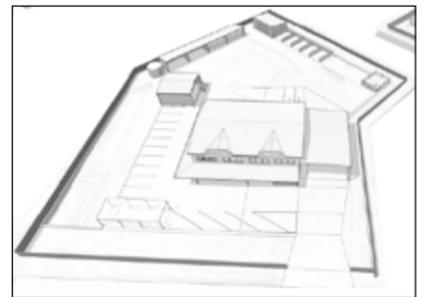
Construction started in October 2022 with the civil works, road widening, and construction of a footpath. This included the importation of over four thousand tonnes of fill material and quarry products. The civil works have equated to half of the project from a financial and programme perspective. These works will be wrapping up with the finalisation of the road widening in early July.

The team is now well into the fun part of standing poles, crafting logs, and building the structure they have long waited to see emerge from paper into the real world. Dealing with logs of up to 13.5m in length and weighing over two tonnes has been a challenge.

In addition to the main shed currently under construction, the project includes three smaller sheds, a nursery, landscaping bays and a gas ramp. We are anticipating an opening date in early 2024.

## Team builds dream

The NBM team find themselves in a unique position with inhouse resources and skills to manage the complex build. Project manager Felix Mack brought his experience working with commercial construction companies on the Gold Coast, along with his education in the



construction management field.

This, combined with Ralph Mack's background in stonemasonry, creativity, construction knowledge and local trade network, has allowed the project to flourish.

Ruben Mack, and other members of the NBM team, Hawk, Cam, Dave, Nerelle and Yumala, continue to provide NBM's famous customer service and wide range of products from the Gungas Road site.

The team at NBM would like to express their gratitude for the ongoing support they receive from their customers, the Nimbin and wider Community, which has allowed them to continue to grow and expand, leading to where they are today.

We look forward to serving you from the new premises and seeing what the future brings.

# Samaritan's Purse helps flood recovery

Northern Rivers residents might have noticed a proliferation of orange T-shirts in the area recently.

They're likely to be volunteers from Samaritan's Purse, a Christian humanitarian relief organisation who have been in the area in the past month, teaming up with Resilient Lismore to conduct repair works on homes.

They first visited and donated their time and efforts last year, and their Disaster Response Manager, Dan Stephens, said they decided to come back when they saw



the need was on-going.

"We just want to come in after disasters and just lend a hand to folks that are trying to recover and get back on their feet again," he said.

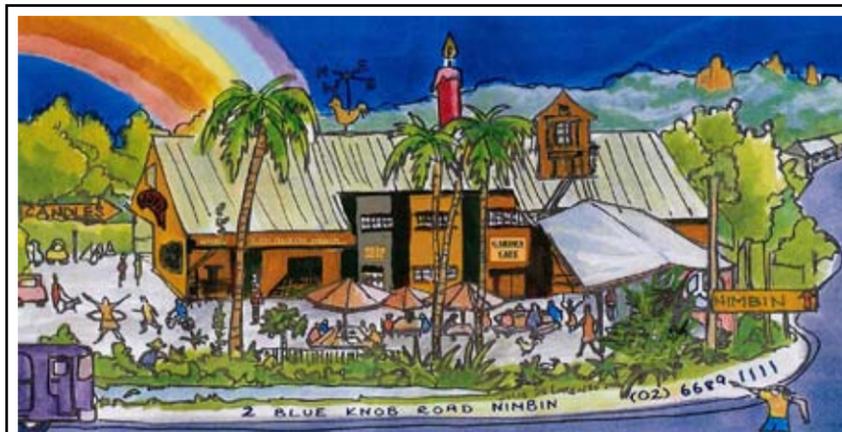
"Our team was here helping out directly after the big floods last year. And we heard

word that the recovery was still on-going and going well, but people could use an extra hand of support.

"We brought in a volunteer team with some tradies and other builders, just to help people repair, help their homes and help them get

back in."

About 20 volunteers, mostly retired tradespeople from across NSW, Queensland and Victoria, have been going out with Resilient Lismore teams to homes in the area, doing what they can to help the Northern Rivers community.



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# Solstice celebrations beat the winter chill

by Jagad Samuel

Lismore's Lantern Parade returned with a unique flavour on 24th June, drawing a significant crowd from both the local community and beyond.

This year, the parade embraced the theme of 'Gates of Renewal', which captured the essence of the festivities.

The event's website serves as a reminder that these celebrations pay homage to the Winter Solstice, symbolising the transition from the longest nights to the return of the sun.

This liminal space is characterised by magic and optimism, perfect for Lismore as it emerges resiliently from recent hardship.



Photos: Kiya Chaplin



## It's on with the Show

by Dave Fawcner

This year's Nimbin Country Show, to be held on 23rd and 24th September, will be the first since 2019, due to Covid restrictions and the aftermath of last year's weather events.

It's been a big year at the Showgrounds, three of our long-term office holders, Phil Williams, Neville Plush and John Lucas have retired after 22, 21 and 15 years of volunteering.

Our new president, Denise Whitney, is a born and bred local and more

than familiar with the Show scene. Denise and her partner Owen operate Mountain Top Coffee and have won prizes for their product at the Sydney Royal Easter Show over recent years.

Along with the usual fare of animal exhibits, pavilion displays, side shows and Sustainability Alley, this year's show will include the official opening of our new pavilion (pictured).

This asset, which is currently nearing completion, is the last in a series of improvements to be carried out under a Bushfire Recovery Grant received by the

A&I Society in 2020.

It replaces a building that adjoined the main pavilion and is thought to have been an animal enclosure before being converted to a pre-school in the 1980s. Its demolition revealed a number of issues, including dry rot, lead paint, and asbestos.

The new building will provide extra display space at the show, facilities for use in emergencies – including a planned commercial kitchen – and a venue for public and private events in the future.

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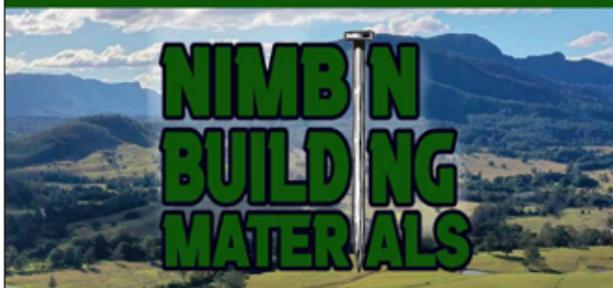


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# Nimbin Aboriginal Cultural Centre rises again



by Louise Graves

Birrigubba man Mahlie Bales (pictured right) has lived in Nimbin most of his life. Growing up, he watched his father and other Aboriginal elders develop the Nimbin Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

Last year the future of the Centre was in jeopardy, and Mahlie, honoring his father and past elders, stepped in with a breath of inspiration and energy.

Mahlie says the Centre will be run on three essential principles.

- Cultural teaching: including language, art, storytelling, dance, music and lore;
- Social: creating a safe environment for kids, where they can get a meal, use computers, explore and develop artistic skills; and
- Education: after school tutoring as well as kick boxing, Muay Thai, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ).

Mahlie says, "It's been a bit of a roller coaster; I've been going from overwhelmed, to really excited."

Last year the Cultural Centre received a grant of \$20,000 from Creative Koori Group. "With that money we've

been able to improve the entrance and make it more usable. We put in a rock garden, wheelchair access, steps to the street, and lighting inside to display artwork."

"We want to keep the Centre an open space where we can display art work and have a work station for artists," says Mahlie. "We recently sold our first artwork, a painting by an amazing artist called Elana Hickling."

I walk with Mahlie to the centre. The first thing I feel is a unique sense of warmth, even though the air was quite chilly. Artworks on display are entrancing; there are several I can't stop looking at.

In the back corner is a hairdressing salon set up. Hair products have been donated by King Brown.

Mahlie says the interest and support in the Centre has been really encouraging. Rekindling the Spirit (RRS), based in Lismore, is an organisation established in the 1990's, whose focus is on clientele who have substance abuse issues, problems with violent behaviours, and difficulty connecting with partners and children.

Mahlie tells me RRS intends to come out to the Nimbin Cultural Centre next month to run a podcast course for 12 to 18 year olds.

Last week Daniel Lorroway, a counsellor from the Strong Community Program discussed with Mahlie coming to Nimbin with a program providing free specialist mental health support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 12 years and over.

"We'll be open for Naidoc Week providing food, entertainment and activities for the kids," says Mahlie. Naidoc Week is from 2nd to 9th July.

As I walked through the Cultural Centre and talked with Mahlie I felt a strong sense of renewal and optimism. Mahlie impressed upon me the Centre is open to everyone where kids can feel both safe and free. Right across the road is the skateboard park. "We're in an excellent location," says Mahlie. "We're far enough away from the main street but close enough for parents to know where their kids are."

The future is bright for the Cultural Centre, resonating with goodwill, creativity and vision.

## Thank you Benny

by Renee English, secretary  
 Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc

After the 50th anniversary of the 1973 Nimbin Aquarius Festival, it is time to take stock and remember the meaning behind the movement.

Benny Zable (pictured), who has, among his many other forms of art and service, been the President of Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc (NAFI), is doing just that.

He is re-grouping and working on a new direction. So he has resigned as our President, and our Vice President Bob Dooley will be acting in the role until we officially elect new office-bearers at our AGM in September.

Now is the time to pay tribute to our dear, beloved Benny. I want to thank Benny for his incredible, most caring service to NAFI over many years, for his support and love in every action he has performed.

Benny is a deeply loving, gentle, vegan-y man with a heart of gold, who has for many years humbly served the earth and humans... from washing dishes and flying his flags at the Rainbow Chai Tent and setting up, sitting with and packing up the market stalls at the Bark

Hut with Katie Cawcutt, to world-stage peace activism and direct action through imagery, daring physical stunts and sheer commitment to showing up at the right times and places to make the most impact for true and meaningful change. Benny's work has kept us all connected to a higher meaning.

Benny's form of activist art has been a portal, carrying many people into true, effective protest and social change, for the Earth.

This is why Benny has stayed committed for all these years to this service at NAFI, and why he stayed strongly involved in the organising of the 50th events when new interest groups took things in a new direction.

It is because Benny wanted to make sure that the celebration of the counter culture was not a tourist attraction, or an opportunity to 'get high', but a platform for bringing people together to strengthen peace and social change.

Benny knows that the Earth needs custodians, that social change and movements exist to make this a reality. The clarity, deep messaging and meaning that Benny brings with his art and his actions is something that is totally unique in this world.



Benny was fortunate to have a number of great teachers which provided him with the foundations to his art. As a street artist in Melbourne, he painted soulful impressions of life around him.

As he moved with the times into the counter culture, his art became a life of activism, service and non-violent direct action. One of his mentors was Ralph Nader, who told him the most effective way to sort out differences is to do it one-on-one, eyeball to eyeball.

Throughout the years at every protest, blockade and at many celebrations, Benny's imagery and intent led the way for generations of protesters and earth custodians.

Through his Zany Bubbles imagery and ever-evolving Greed-dozer character, Benny found a way to expose the corruption, destruction and darkness of logging, nuclear power, fracking and

war. Through his imagery and direct action, he found a way to expose the truth and display the messages needed to speak out against corruption and greed, and call for peace and change.

The Nimbin community has been fortunate to have Benny's love, his art and his presence in the town throughout the last 50 years.

Benny's artful messaging and his sense of total responsibility to the Earth and all people is what makes his every action meaningful towards world peace.

He has been the custodian of courage, truth and integrity in our community. He has led the way with love, non-violent direct action and emotional intelligence.

Thank you Benny for all you have done so far, and may your next adventures sustain you and make you very happy.

# Politics in the Pub returns to Lismore

by Yvonne Hartman

Lismore Politics in the Pub came back from a long hiatus after Covid and floods to present an absolute cracker of an evening on 22nd June at the Lismore Heights Bowling Club.

It was a stellar line-up of special guest speakers to discuss the upcoming vote on the Voice to Parliament.

Thomas Mayo, a Torres Strait Islander and one of the signatories of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, was accompanied by Northern Rivers men Josh Appanui and Kerry O'Brien.

Josh is a legal policy writer and advocate for indigenous affairs from the Tweed area, while Kerry is a well-known local famous for his journalistic work with the ABC and is co-author with Thomas on the *Voice to Parliament handbook*.

There was such a large crowd in



attendance that the club was obliged to shut its door after it reached maximum capacity. The audience was held spellbound by the speakers and engaged in a lively conversation after the presentations.

Audience members who were opposed

to a Yes vote in the referendum were also given a voice, and Thomas directly and respectfully addressed their concerns at length.

Thomas spoke about the need for a Voice to Parliament to be established as the first step in a three-step progression towards closing the gap. Josh spoke about his personal experiences and how he would have benefited from a committee such as the Voice when he was a young man.

Kerry gave us a detailed history of how Indigenous policy has been handled by past prime ministers across the 20th and 21st centuries. He expressed his view that the Voice is a great opportunity for reconciliation, and urged people to consider their vote carefully.

All in all, it was a highly successful evening that left people expressing a desire for more Lismore Politics in the Pub events. Watch this space!

# Reasons for The Voice

by Mark Pestell

## Reasons for the Voice to be in our Australian Constitution

Since 1788, first the British and later the white Australians wanted the continent's land.

So they took it. If Indigenous Australians tried to stop this, or often if they did not, evidence abounds how they were shot, poisoned or moved off to areas which they had no knowledge of how to survive using traditional hunting and gathering.

In Australia, being Aboriginal was a crime. Indigenous Australians had no legal rights, the law said 'they did not exist as Australia was classified as being empty in 1788.

Any scattered Aboriginal survivors continually suffered. Introduction of diseases, of stolen children, of forced detention, of harassment, of sexual predation, to alienation and mental despair of being handed drugs such as tobacco and alcohol thus forcing a process of forgetting their culture.

It was a deliberate destruction of their society and culture. Historians classify this process as genocide and it spread across the continent over the 19th century, Indigenous numbers once of at least one million were reduced to an official count in the 1901 census of around 110,000. It is estimated this was a decrease of nearly 90% of Australia's indigenous population.

The process of dehumanising Indigenous Australians can be summarised in a few words, Invasion, Extermination, Exclusion, Stolen.

The *Aboriginal Protection Act* of 1909 and later in 1915 put Indigenous Australians out of sight in camps known as Missions or Reserves. These were virtual prisons, controlled by the State. Here they received little or no education, forced to live in small over crowded conditions. The process brutalised native Australians as the comprehensive imposing of Anglo-Saxon values continued generation after generation.

Governments had broad powers to control Indigenous Australians, including where they could live, work, travel, marry, eat, talk. Freedom of movement was not allowed.

Until 1967 white society did not allow Indigenous Australians to be citizens in their own land, did not allow Indigenous Australians the right to Vote, not able to open bank accounts, not able to buy land. Not able to drink



in a public bar. Any opportunity to play professional sports was denied in Australia. Recognition of fighting for Australia in both world wars was denied, the ability to find employment outside of part time work, total lack of medical care until the 1970s, not given any civil rights in law.

Here are a few more examples of policies that have failed or are types of official repression carried out in Australia, some in living memory. These have perpetuated inequality and discrimination.

### The Stolen Generations

This policy involved forcibly removing Indigenous children from their families and communities, with the goal of assimilating them into white society. It has had long-lasting impacts on Indigenous families and communities, with many still experiencing the effects of trauma and dislocation today. Between 1908 and 1972 the number of children forcibly removed by white authorities is estimated to be 100,000.

### The NT Intervention

This policy, introduced in 2007, aimed to address issues of alleged child abuse and neglect in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. However, it was criticised for being paternalistic, discriminatory, and not based on evidence. It included measures such as income management and restrictions on alcohol, which were often imposed on Indigenous communities without consultation or consent.

### The Community Development Employment projects

This policy, introduced in the 1970s, aimed to provide employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people living in remote communities. However, it was criticized for providing low-paid, menial work and perpetuating

the idea that Indigenous people were not capable of participating in the mainstream economy.

### The Native Title Act

This Act, passed in 1993, was supposed to recognise Indigenous people's rights to land and waters, but it has been criticised for being complex and difficult to navigate. Many Indigenous people have struggled to establish their rights under the Act, and some have argued that it has been used to limit their access to traditional lands.

Nearly 75% of Indigenous men have done time in prison. This alone is an example of systematic racism, leading to discrimination, to poverty and a continued result of historical trauma. An official government method of structural silence was put into place.

Today life expectancy of an Indigenous Australian is 62 while for a Non Indigenous person averages at 80 years.

Government policies have so often failed Indigenous Australians. Even with the best intentions, failure has only worsened the situation. As a Nation, when the full facts are revealed it is an absolute disgrace.

Trauma over 250 years will take generations to repair. The Voice, though is a step in the right direction. Just like the few words can explain why the Voice would be successful where other directives have failed are as follows.

### The Voice will give:

- Recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples across Australia;
- Empowerment and self determination to allow Indigenous Australians to make decisions which they recognise to best for their peoples;
- Reconciliation – is critical to the healing process; and
- International obligations – under the United nations Charter of Human Rights, which was largely put together by an Australian, Dr Evatt, and which we as a country, as a Nation have signed; signature sealed since 1948, we are required to fully recognise Indigenous peoples rights to self-determination, cultural identity, and participation in decision processes that affect their lives.

Is it not about time we fully undertook this task, to fully recognise Indigenous Australians, to give this culture a Voice? As human beings we can help create a better fairer society, by voting YES to the up-coming referendum

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Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

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### NIS is changing

Genevieve Beggs, our dedicated NIS nurse practitioner, is finally retiring after 16 years of service to the Nimbin community and over 40 years as a nurse practitioner.

Genevieve was one of the first nurse practitioners accredited in Australia, and we have been so lucky to have her for so many years. Her retirement is well deserved, but the NNIC team and the community will miss her greatly. Thanks for everything Gen.

Her retirement, together with the cessation in March of the funding provided to NNIC by Healthy North Coast to support NIS, means that the NIS model as we have known it for the past 16 years will be undergoing significant changes.

A new model of service to meet community mental health and AOD (Alcohol and Other Drugs) support needs is being developed by the NSW Local Health District in partnership with NNIC.

Sadly, the nurse practitioner position will not be replaced, partly due to difficulties in recruiting NPs and partly due to funding constraints. We are working together to try to ensure community needs can still be met despite the end of NIS as we have known it.

### Food Pantry

NNIC is establishing a new food pantry where community members in need of food support will be able to purchase a range of groceries for very cheap prices at least once a week. The food pantry will be operating from the garage in the carpark next to the Neighbourhood Centre.

We will also use the space for other food relief activities during the week. Watch this space (and our Facebook page and website) for more info.

### Membership renewals

All NNIC and Tools Library memberships expire on 30th June. Drop into NNIC to renew your memberships.

Membership to NNIC is \$5.50 per year (inc.GST) and your membership is very valuable to us so if you haven't ever joined before come on down! Cheapest membership in town! Tools Library membership is \$22 per year (inc GST) and you must be a NNIC member to be a Tool Library member (i.e. total annual cost is \$27.50). Excellent value when you consider the large range of tools and equipment you can borrow from the Library.

To see the list of equipment goes to the Sibley St website - Tools and Equipment Library tab at: [www.7Sibley.org](http://www.7Sibley.org)

### 7 Sibley Street and the basketball court area

Thanks to everyone who responded to the survey. A report will be prepared for Council, and the matter will likely be discussed at the July Council meeting.

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Back in stock at NNIC and available FOR FREE (also available at the NSP and the Pharmacy), by appointment.

Naloxone is a lifesaving drug which temporarily reverses the effects of an opiate overdose. Anyone who may become exposed to opiates, whether by prescription or otherwise, is at risk of accidental overdose. Naloxone buys valuable time for an ambulance to arrive.

It is available for people who are at risk of an opioid overdose or adverse reaction, their carers, friends and family members and any other people who may become first responders. Naloxone can be administered by

injection or delivered through a nasal spray. To get some for your first aid kit, make an appointment with Nat or Nicole.

### Community Care Team

Feedback from the inaugural meet and greet and training day held on the 3rd June was very positive. Thanks to the Bowlo for the venue, Heidi, Ron and Darren for the BBQ lunch, and of course to everyone who has signed up to join the Community Care Team so far. We are still looking for more CCT members.

In the event of a disaster, especially where residents become isolated or communications are compromised, CCT members will work in partnership with the Nimbin Emergency Radio holders to communicate with local response agencies and assist by checking on the wellbeing of neighbours in their localities.

CCT members will receive support and training in skills that are also valuable in

everyday life and numerous occupations.

To register your interest please complete the EOI form which can be downloaded from: [nnic.org.au](http://nnic.org.au) (Disasters tab) and send it back to us. Or you can pick up a hard copy from NNIC.

### Wellbeing survey

Congratulations Nimbinites! Once again, more people from Nimbin completed the state-wide survey than any other area.

We have the Nimbin-specific results of the survey and will publish them on our website (About Nimbin>Surveys) once we have analysed them to determine how they may direct our services and activities.

### Did you know?

NNIC is a registered DGR charity, which means that donations to our charitable activities, or bequests in your will, are tax deductible.

Contact us on: [admin@nnic.org.au](mailto:admin@nnic.org.au) for how to donate.

## Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services

We assist frail aged people, NDIS participants and carers to stay living at home and connect socially.



**All NACRS support workers** are qualified, certified, experienced, police checked, Covid-safe trained, insured and locally based.

**SOCIAL CENTRE with Veranda** - Monday-Friday 10am-2pm. Drop in for a cuppa, access support services, info and computers.

**DEVICE ADVICE** - Wednesdays 9.30am-1pm. Seniors can book for assistance with phone, tablet or laptop issues.

**SENIORS SOCIAL GROUPS** - booking and fees apply

- Nimbin Tuesday Morning Tea, 10.30am-1pm. Tea/coffee, conversation, music and snacks, weekly \$5
- The Outsiders Group 1st and 3rd Thursday, 11am-2pm at various rural cafes, self-funded plus donation to NACRS
- Wise Ones at Koonorigan Hall/Dunoon 4th Monday, 11.30am-1.30pm, bring a plate to share
- Bus outings - 2nd and 4th Tuesday. Scenic drives, cafes for morning tea & lunch (you pay), bookings essential, fees apply.

Phone **6689-1709** or visit NACRS at Bottlebrush Studio, the rainbow building at Nimbin Community Centre.

[www.nacrs.com.au](http://www.nacrs.com.au)

## Nimbin Hospital information

### Child immunisation

By appointment, please phone 6630-0400.

### Early childhood nurse

Every Tuesday. Baby checks, weighs, post-natal support. For appointments, phone 6630-0400.

### Women's health nurse services

Confidential service, checks, advice, general health information. Phone 6688-1400 for appointment.

### Wound clinic

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8am. For self-referral, phone 6688-1433. Referrals also from Nimbin Hospital and GP clinic.

### Drug and alcohol counselling services available

For an appointment, please contact 6620-7600. A trained professional will ask you a few confidential questions and will provide you with an appointment time.

### Nurse practitioner clinic

Diabetes clinics: third Thursday of the month, next is 20th July.

### Community Registered Nurse

Monday to Friday, 8am-4.30pm. Assessments, wound care, referrals, advocacy, provision of palliative care in the home, medication support. Phone 6688-1433 - leave a message, will return call swiftly.

### Nimbin NSP

Needle and Syringe Program open Monday to Thursday. Arrangements can be made to see a Community Registered Nurse.

### Health advice line

Phone 1800-022-222 if you have a health issue. 24-hour, seven days a week, free service. A Registered Nurse will assess whether you need to go to an Emergency Department.

### Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

Monthly meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month, 9.30am in the CWA room. New members are most welcome.



by Scott Sledge, president

**Trees and climate-friendly action**

It's time to re-consider where we all stand on fossil fuel emissions and what can be done to rein in global climate change. United Nations President Antonio Guterres says: "We are hurtling towards disaster, eyes wide open. **It's time to wake up and step up.**"

Mr. Guterres was speaking to journalists at UN Headquarters following a meeting with civil society climate leaders from across the world. He said limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C is still possible, but will require a 45% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. However, current policies will lead to a 2.8°C temperature rise by the end of the century, which "spells catastrophe".

He called for immediate global action toward net-zero emissions, which "must start with the polluted heart of the climate crisis: the fossil fuel industry." He further declared that countries must progressively phase out fossil fuels, "moving to leave oil, coal and gas in the ground where they belong" and massively boost investment in renewable energy.

Acceleration Agenda calls on governments to phase out coal by 2040, end public and private international coal funding, and shift subsidies from fossil fuels to renewables, among other measures. "But the fossil fuel industry and its enablers have a special responsibility," said Guterres, noting the record "\$4 trillion windfall" in income last year.

"Yet for every dollar it spends on

oil and gas drilling and exploration, only four cents went to clean energy and carbon capture combined.

Trading the future for 30 pieces of silver is immoral," he said. Plans must also establish clear, near-term targets towards the transition to 'green' energy.'

Australia, though, is one of the world's largest miners of coal and gas and has only a modest commitment to limiting emissions. Recently the federal government has approved new gas and coal extraction and has given some undertakings to promote renewables, but not very convincingly.

**Saving forests**

When it comes to positive action, environmentalists around the country have called for an end to native forests logging, which would have the additional advantage of preserving many endangered plants and animals, as well as ensuring some abatement of carbon emissions. Trees are the cheapest and most reliable means of carbon capture and storage. We have heard pandering politicians telling lies in public. One is that we need to log native forests to provide timber for much-needed home building. Yet Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told Parliament this week that 90% of wood used in our construction industry already comes from plantations. We can easily grow what is needed without destroying wildlife habitat. If the PM was wrong, he would be in serious trouble for lying to Parliament. Lobbyists for the Forest Products Assoc like to say that if we stop logging native forests Australia

will have to "import" timber from countries that "lack our serious conservation standards." This is a most egregious fairy tale. Maybe these ningnongs need to learn that Australia tops the list for species extinction. Yes, we are Number 1, but not for conservation: just the opposite. And it continues! Even our iconic species like koalas and glossy black cockatoos are threatened with extinction. We were promised a Great Koala National Park by the incoming NSW government, but even this has not been enacted. Rather it seems the government-owned Forestry Corp has been given permission to rip through any likely habitat before we declare it "protected." Instead of "world's best practice" we see incredible disrespect even for the rules they agree to follow.

If you doubt that, all you need do is visit one of the areas where logging has been progressing. Trees and bushes are bulldozed to clear the land if they are not taken away for milling – or worse, for chipping. Do you want chips with that? No thanks, leave the forests alone. Stop subsidising their destruction. Logging in NSW does not make a profit: taxpayers pay in an average of \$15M per year. NEFA has evidence that funds intended to repair roads damaged by recent floods have been allocated to logging tracks.

Last month a group from Fridays4Forests went to Braemar SF south of Casino, site of massive amounts of grading and graveling to facilitate trucks carrying off the timber. This is our disaster relief money at work! I wonder how many of us would rather see repairs to public roads? In the Nimbin area we have many roads controlled by stop lights due to flood damage that occurred 16 months ago! Yet we are often prohibited from entering the areas closed "by authority of



A pile of trees and stumps at Doubleduke State Forest including one with a clear "H" (for habitat) painted on it.

Forestry Corp".

In March some of us went to witness what trees were being taken at Doubleduke SF near Evans Head after the EPA halted logging due to loggers' failure to protect old-growth trees. Seven police cars blocked our way on Glencoe Road. Forestry Corp may not want the public to see what they are doing. Those who walked into the public forest there were arrested and fined for their interest. The real criminals were protected from scrutiny while we were moved on "for our own safety" although the logging was so far away we couldn't even hear the machines or the trees crashing. Another lie to cover a dirty business.

Not far away a resident photographed a pile of trees and stumps bulldozed into a pile including one with a clear "H" (for Habitat) painted on it indicating it had been marked to leave standing because animals lived in it. No longer!

If you want to help, please write or phone your parliamentarians,

contact the media, come to a demonstration. One will take place at 9am outside Casino Court on 20th July for a Nimbin volunteer who stepped into the Doubleduke forest on 16th March.

A stall at Murwillumbah's World Environment Day on Sunday 16th July will be staffed by volunteers from NEC and Northern Rivers Guardians, with maybe a few from Kyogle Environment Group. Stop in to chat and maybe buy tickets for the raffle which will be drawn at the end that day. There is something planned by the Caldera Environment Centre to interest everyone: speakers, entertainment, arts and craft and a display of electric vehicles.

We are facing a global climate crisis of existential proportions. If we want to leave a livable world for our children and grandchildren we have to support political action now and shout down the lies told for the blatant advantage of special interests.

# Dying Matters Café

by Mimi Zenzmaier

You have questions, we have answers and we're here to help you find your own answers.

Dying Matters Café is based on a long tradition of drawing close together with a hot brew, a vulnerable heart, and mortality consciousness.

Sacred Earth Funerals and the Northern Doulas have created Dying Matters Café and are bringing this opportunity to Nimbin Town Hall on Sunday 23rd July from 1.30pm to 4pm.

We will launch the booklet *Dying, Death and Beyond: Do it (mostly) yourself with support*, a guide written by Saskia Kouwenberg, specifically for the Nimbin community.

The philosophy behind Dying Matters Café is to create space and spark interest in talking about dying, death and what comes after.

Our café-style format centres on a facilitated discussion to get you thinking about end of life wishes, fears, questions and absolutely anything you're curious about.

You may want some information around what to



do when someone you love is dying, or the role of an End-of-Life doula, and when might you need one.

Would you like to discuss which planning documents are essential? Or maybe you're in touch with those very natural and existential fears of death and dying, and you'd like to find solace. Are you wondering about your choices in how to return your body to the Earth?

We offer education, information and upcoming support courses and workshops for all of it.

**What you bring:** your questions and your thoughts on your own mortality, a plate of goodies to share for our table discussion, and \$5 - \$10 to cover costs and hall hire.

**What we bring:** our love, experience and knowledge. We are funeral directors, end-of-life doulas, end of life planners and guides all here to de-mystify the process of what happens as we die, what really happens to bodies after death, and what are the important priorities in planning for the end.

**What we share:** anything you wish to know. We are particularly keen to give you the information that will empower you to have the best life and then the kind of death that gives you the experience of deep peace and effortless surrender.

We can embrace the inevitable by being informed and honouring our hearts. Our mortal lives are so much sweeter because this all ends. The question is, how are we going to meet The End?

Upcoming workshops and courses in Lismore: Living with Grief; Existential Fears of Death; Death Conversation over Dinner Party; and Practical Matters: End-of-Life Planning Documents.

Enquire for any of these by calling Sacred Earth Funerals/End-of-Life Doula, Mimi Zenzmaier on 0478-600-778.

# Enviro Day festival at Mur'bah

Caldera Environment Centre will again host the World Environment Day Festival on 16th July in Knox Park at Murwillumbah.

This year's UNEP theme is #BeatPlasticPollution. Anthony Hill will join other environmental speakers to discuss the global issue and provide insights into the big picture behind the problem and offer local solutions.

A major focus this year will be native forest destruction and the growing momentum for ending native forestry in Australia.

Terri Nicholson (of Terania forest fame) will deliver the message of the forests with her soul-moving songs and lyrics.

Other topics on the program include native forest destruction and what is to be done; glossy black cockatoos and their significance; earth building and its

manifold benefits; forensic insect and fungi photography of the weirder kind; and native stingless bees for your garden.

There will be an Elders yarning space and demonstrations of speaker's topics.

Entertainment includes Mudjai and Kids Caring for Country dancers, Luna Junction gypsy-folk, and the power and energy of Taiko drumming troupe 'Kazuna'.

Mandy Nolan will be MC, bringing her unique style and humour to the event.

There will be food and hot drink vans, issues and sustainable goods stalls. This year's festival will also have a focus on EV's and the surprising ways they will power our future.

Come along on 16th July, from 10am to 3.30pm at Knox Park, Murwillumbah. For more info, email: [Caldera@calderaenvironmentcentre.org](mailto:Caldera@calderaenvironmentcentre.org)

**NIMBIN'S SUSTAINABLE LIVING HUB**

**7 Sibley Street**

**July What's On!**  
\$15 unless otherwise noted  
**Bookings: text 0475-135-764**  
**or email: [sibley@nnic.org.au](mailto:sibley@nnic.org.au)**

**This month – food gardens for all seasons (El Nino is coming!)**

<p><b>Workshops:</b> 10.30am – 1.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sat 8th: Garden adaptations for extreme climate</b> – Exploring a range of strategies for continuous food supply \$15.</li> <li>• <b>Sat 15th: Floating gardens</b> – Learn to build drought resistant gardens on bamboo rafts and floating vegetation (off-site, bookings essential) \$15.</li> <li>• <b>Tues 18th: Knitting with Sue</b></li> <li>• <b>Sat 22nd: Low-tech edible mushroom</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>cultivation</b> – with Ashley \$50</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sat 29th: Wicking beds</b> – Conserve water while growing a bumper crop \$20</li> <li>• <b>Wednesdays: Weaving circle, from 11am</b> – Bring a project and join like-minded crafters.</li> <li>• <b>Community Tools Library:</b> Every Saturday, 10.30am – 2pm. For home repairs, garden tools, food and craft equipment. Join at NNIC. Basketballs &amp; pump available, \$5 deposit.</li> </ul>
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**Inflation is the rort of the day**

Our Reserve Bank Governor has stepped in with interest rate rises aimed unfairly at the family homes of the workers of our country.

The Reserve Bank had been advised that lowering of the interest rates had no effect in the EU and US economies for stimulus, but some clever rich boys and girls saw an opportunity for cheap money.

Houses everywhere were built, bought and sold with the prices going everywhere except down. Huge profits were made.

Thus we have our housing crisis.

"Oh, we will increase the interest rates to deflate spending," says the RB Governor.

Why did the rates go down in the first place is the question not asked. Why didn't the Federal Treasurer increase the taxes?

Fiscal Policy would have been a better option, but then would the rich or our MPs want that?

We see the rate of tax set to rise except for those that just happen to be in the same tax bracket as our

Members of Parliament, our Reserve Bank Governor and those with incomes above and beyond.

So for the majority of those who labour and sweat... double whammy... interest and tax rises assured while our MPs divert attention to sex in parliament, a Russian hero camping nearby and a Voice where hearing aids will need to be acquired before it will ever be heard.

Ian May  
Urbenville

**No mandate to reduce LCC chamber numbers**

Dear Mayor Krieg,

In your column in the April *Nimbin GoodTimes*, you outlined your priority to decrease numbers in the chamber.

I had a read of what you wanted to achieve as mayor, pre-election, and there was no mention of reducing council numbers in your election publicity. I do not believe you have any mandate to reduce numbers in the chamber.

NGT welcomes letters and other contributions received by email or post prior to deadline. Letters longer than 300 words may be edited for length, and articles for accuracy. Please include your full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not necessarily those of Nimbin GoodTimes.

You failed to outline any advantage in reducing representation in an LGA that has so many problems and people in need.

While you have outlined many times how you don't want the job, on national TV and radio, and even at a leadership conference at Trinity, it would follow that you do not want to stand again. Is it right to commit time and money to a referendum that, if successful, you and your team would not be around to implement?

Your council has little to show in the way of achievement apart from making koalas more vulnerable. Most councils see koalas as a tourism boon. Your Lismore does not want to scare developers away and reduce real estate profits.

Do the real estate agents on your team remove themselves when there is a conflict of interest in the chamber?

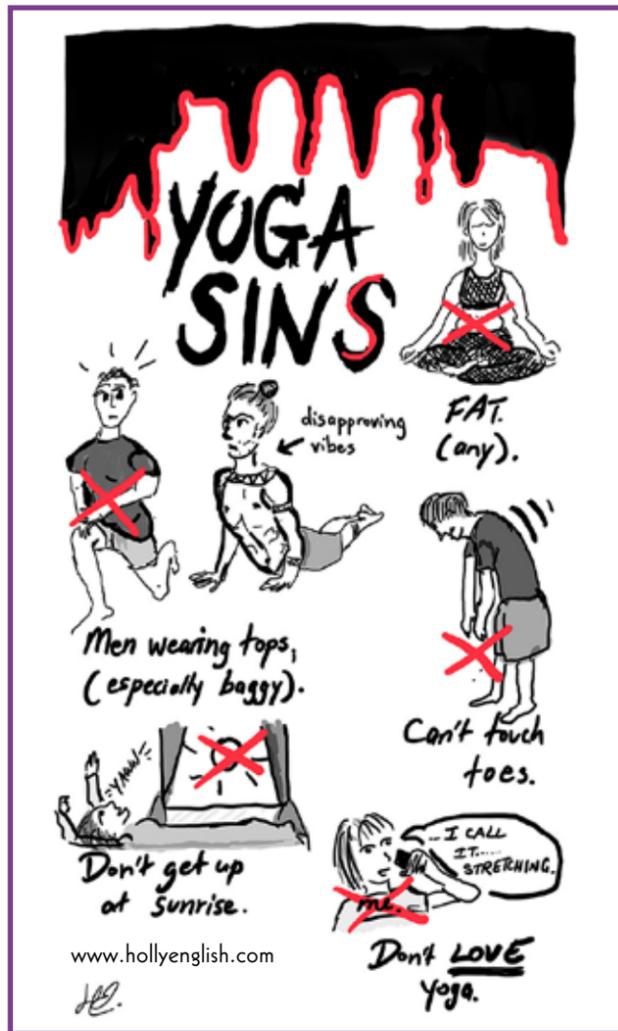
Your team was mostly invisible in the flood crisis. The electorate knows who on Council was a help.

The hallmark of your Mayorship has been little knowledge on how things work. You could not get your choice of CEO, when you had the votes.

Most of all, your legacy will be making Lismore the safest ALP seat in the state and the first called in the recent election.

With the new State government, your aim to reduce council numbers is unlikely to get much of a hearing from the new minister informed by our local member.

If it's still so important for your team to reduce representation, you can



have the courage of your convictions and resign.  
Karen Grimditch  
Lismore

**The Loon replies**

I'd like to thank Germaine Daly and Amy Stark for reading 'Revenge of the Loon'; I've often thought it's just me and the editor that read my advertising spacer articles.

I'd also like to thank Germaine and Amy for showing concern for incarcerated women in our country. There are three transitioning women in NSW prisons who are responsible for no assaults on their fellow prisoners, none. Just to allay your fears.

However, strip-searching is still regularly performed on residents of our women's prisons, no matter how traumatised they are, despite the existence of non-invasive technologies that could easily do the same job.

Furthermore, the present bail system means that many women are in prison awaiting trial purely because they can not afford bail; this particularly affects indigenous women who make up 28% of the NSW women's prison population.

If, and I hope you are, interested in women in women's prisons, the Human Rights Commission is running a number of campaigns to overcome these significant injustices and stop the traumatic treatment.

I think I did make it reasonably clear in my article that I'm referring specifically to transitioning men in women's prisons; as sending them to male prison would be placing them at undue risk.

People need to be assessed as individuals. It's really that simple and in the case of transitioning men, the numbers of people we are talking about is minute in comparison to the numbers being ill-treated at present.

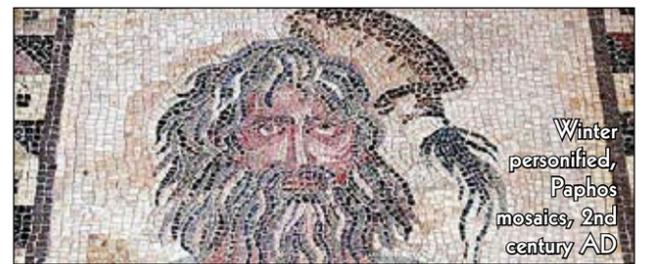
As to the TERF (trans exclusionary radical feminist) war – this is all part of what Chomsky refers to as the artificial construction of constituency. Politicians of the far right only represent the super-rich, but they can't win elections or hold on to power based on being liked by a few hundred people, so they need to conflate minor issues and fan the extreme emotional responses around these issues.

At the moment the world environment is going to hell in a handbag; polar caps are melting, islands are going under water, we're being smashed by flooding and fires and species are dying out en masse, but what seems to matter to my TERF friends is that a minuscule population of individuals, who want to transition to the opposite sex, can't be accommodated.

And their fury is being championed by Fox media commentators like Andrew Bolt and represented on the national stage by politicians like Matt Canavan.

This however I admit is true: I confess my style is too flippant for important topics. And maybe I've done no service to my transitioning friends. It's definitely an area that requires sensitivity and compassion. For this I beg their pardon.

Laurie Axtens  
Lismore



**Winter poem**

As the winter settles in, I notice how my body is responding, moving at a slower pace, easing into the shorter days and cooler nights.

As an observer, I acknowledge the cyclic rhythms held in nature, as it ebbs and flows. I am forming a new knowing, noticing how I am part of the emotional and natural ecology, part of a larger system.

There is an innate interconnection between self and the seasons. In reverence to this new knowing, I formed a poetic response.

Kate Parker  
Lismore

*Silver threads dash golden strands, autumn gently hums.  
Seasons shed to greet the tides: birds sing up the sun.  
Summer's pith lay buried, gecko's kiss the air.  
The autumn of my body harks an essence of what was...  
there.*

*Now cicadas chirp out the moon, they wait for winter slumber.  
Will they dream of  
spring? Shells from tides yonder?*

*Silver threads dash golden strands, autumn gently hums.  
She blooms to fade again, this cyclic song of time.  
In chorus we sing, we kiss the air, my body soaks the moon.  
I'll chirp with you cicada.  
I'll dance on winter's edge.  
We'll meet again in spring,  
As bird?  
As lizard?  
As bug?  
As breath.*

Notices

**Northern Rivers Youth Orchestra**

Free concert on Thursday 6th July at 6.30pm at the Whitebrook Theatre, Southern Cross University, with guest conductor Patrick Brennan, featuring works by John Williams, Hans Zimmer, Shostakovich, Vivaldi, Coldplay, and themes from TV and movies including *Star Wars*, *Game of Thrones* and *Spiderman*.

**Women in Business**

First meeting in Nimbin to connect and lay the foundations for a regular group: Saturday 22nd July, 9.30am-1pm at Nimbin Bush Theatre. Workshop, networking and brainstorming. Free for members of Nimbin Chamber of Commerce, \$25 for non-members. Registration essential at: <https://nimbinbushtheatre.com/events>

**Table talk**

Blue Knob Writers are holding another Table Talk at the Blue Knob Gallery and Cafe on Sunday 23rd July from 11am to 1pm. There will be music, poetry and prose readings and, of course, delicious coffee and food. Everyone welcome.

**Nimbin Open Learning classes**

Term 3 at the Nimbin Open Learning Centre will commence on Wednesday 26th July, with enrolments open the preceding week. Courses are still being finalised, and we are always looking for reliable tutors. If you have a skill or field of expertise to share, call us on 6689-1477 or message us on facebook at Nimbin Open Learning.

**Stewards needed**

The 2024 Summerland Giant Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival committee is looking for stewards to assist with: Taste of Kyogle (eateries); Window Dressing (promotion); Home Gardener; Watermelon Eating and Gum Boot Throwing competitions. Email: [cheviotdowns@gmail.com](mailto:cheviotdowns@gmail.com) or [cullenrob@hotmail.com](mailto:cullenrob@hotmail.com)

**Free notices**

Keep it short and of interest to our readers, get it to us by deadline, and we'll run it here for you for free.

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*The Nimbin GoodTimes acknowledges the Bundjalung people, the traditional owners of the land and waters on which we work and live, and pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.*

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Email [nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com](mailto:nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com) or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

# If nothing changes, nothing will change

Constitutional referendums in Australia are painful and frustrating affairs.

Partly because the threshold for a successful referendum is so hard to reach, and partly because the same old tropes get trotted out every time to propel a No vote.

Constitutional law is an area of professional expertise for me. I have taught Constitutional Law in universities in Australia and the South Pacific, where I needed to keep abreast of the constitutional structures of twelve different Pacific nations, including Vanuatu where I was living for some years. Our Pacific neighbours have been through their own long journeys from colonisation to independence and have much to teach Australia.

Before we get into the merits of the current proposal for change, let's first look back over the history of referendums in Australia. Of forty-four proposed changes since 1901 only eight have succeeded. The reason for this low success rate is partly because of the need for a double majority, meaning an overall majority of voters voting Yes nationally in addition to a requirement that a majority of voters also vote Yes in a majority of states. This means that it only requires the three smallest states to vote No for a proposal to fail.

So it's always an uphill battle from the start.

The next reason why so many fail, is more frustrating. Regardless of the merits of any proposal, negativity is easier to popularise, and has much more room to manoeuvre and manipulate arguments than the Yes case, which inevitably is constrained by the need to advocate entirely on point.

Over my life I have watched many constitutional referendums fail. It has been frustrating to watch, because every time the same tropes get trotted out to keep our boring old colonial constitution in its outdated and racist nineteenth century form.

The tropes that get used

every time are to tell you to vote No for the following reasons:

1. I don't understand law and the Constitution;
  2. There is not enough detail;
  3. I don't trust politicians;
  4. The proposal is not perfect;
  5. I can think of a better idea;
  6. The proposal might have some unseen magical future effect that can't be predicted;
  7. It's a conspiracy and is designed to do something secret and evil (even though it's an exhaustively transparent process);
  8. I feel like a radical and an individual when I vote no;
  9. I'm actually a right wing conservative who at least has an honest desire to resist change and maintain privilege so I will vote no.
- I respect that there is a range of opinions on the current referendum (especially the broad range of opinions being expressed by First Nations people) but the actual question that you need to answer responsibly as a voter when the time comes cannot be genuinely addressed by any of the first eight tropes above. If number nine is for you, well, at least you are admitting it.

The only real question you are being faced with is whether you would prefer to keep our outdated and racist nineteenth century constitution in its current form, or whether you would prefer to see an Indigenous voice to parliament permanently enshrined. Because make no mistake, if the referendum fails, the only outcome is that the constitution remains unchanged.

We can try to improve on what we have or we can not do so, it's really that simple.

Also beware of the false dichotomy argument. It's not a choice of Voice vs Sovereignty, or of Voice vs Treaty, these are false dichotomies. The unresolved arguments at international law about the very real flaws in Australia's colonial project will remain unaffected by the outcome of this referendum, and the process of Treaty, similarly is one that is envisaged by the Statement from the Heart as part of



by Aidan Ricketts

the core work of a Voice to Parliament.

Several of our Pacific nations neighbours, who have more modern constitutions than Australia already feature a version of the Voice to Parliament, that is intended to enshrine a custom voice in the constitution. Vanuatu, Fiji and the Cook Islands for example already each have a council of custom chiefs that has an advisory constitutional role.

Another ploy by the No campaign is to complain of a lack of detail. Constitutions are meant to be low on detail and big on values, so your choice is a values choice about whether you want to see an indigenous voice to parliament... Or simply not at all.

You may well feel that the proposal does not go far enough, you may well feel that it will be little more than token, but neither of these arguments of limitation in themselves are reasons to keep our constitution unchanged. It can't be helped that proposals for change need to be fairly moderate to have a chance of succeeding. The rhetorical allure of popularised negativity experienced in each and every constitutional referendum shows us how hard it is to succeed, so by necessity, proposals for change need to be as modest as possible. (although I personally think the Voice to Parliament is quite fundamentally significant)

Cast your mind back to the republic referendum. We went into that one with a clear majority preferring to have an Australian rather

than monarchical Head of State, but the corrosive popularisation of negativity ultimately defeated the proposal and what we have as a result is King Charlie still as our Head of State. We didn't get a better republic as a result, we got nothing at all. If the no vote succeeds, nothing changes, and that's just how the conservative white racists in this country want it to be.

I know Australia's Constitution well. It is a very limited document, basically a compact of federation written up by the colonial equivalent of the current State Premiers prior to 1901. It was written in an age of very overt racism particularly against our indigenous peoples as well as against Chinese settlers at the time. Australia does not even have a Bill of Rights partly because these old white politicians in the nineteenth century were worried that it might have impacted their ability to enact laws to discriminate.

A Voice to Parliament may not be perfect, it certainly won't magically fix the major problems faced by First Nations Peoples here, but it can provide a platform for progressing First Nations' views in the nation's capital that is protected by the Constitution from being dissolved at the whim of future politicians.

It can put Australia in better company with our Pacific nations neighbours, who will be watching very closely how we vote, and along with the rest of the world, forming a picture of whether Australia has the will to move forward on resolving its colonial legacy or whether we want to remain stuck in the nineteenth century forever.

First Nations People will have their own range of views and that's to be expected of any diverse group and respected. But the task facing people with a settler heritage is to really ask ourselves, do we want to see the beginning of national reconciliation or do we want to keep our constitution frozen just the way those white racist men in the nineteenth century designed it. Your call.

GROW



Mental Wellbeing Peer Support Group

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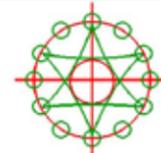
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