

# Wrapt in Nimbin

## Aquarius Fashion Show



Photos: Jeni Kendell

by Claire Larrivee

I am extremely grateful to have had the honour of working with the fashion designers, models, venue managers, sound engineers and lighting sculptors that brought the vision of ‘Wrapt in Nimbin Aquarius Fashion Show’ to its glorious fruition. The show was initially staged at the Bush Theatre on the 14th May (thanks for the wonderful venue David andKaz!), as part of Ellis D Fogg’s Lightshow, and then replayed at the Tuntable Falls Community Hall on the 20th May. I enthusiastically shout out a big thank you to all the wonderful people who made our “penniless” and “venueless” show possible. Thank you to our guiding star, Linda Jackson, for accepting my invitation to participate as a mentor in our show. Linda guided us gently “on how to and what not to do on stage” while encouraging us to allow the show to freely evolve. She graciously responded to my heartfelt request to participate as a designer by presenting the exceptional “Waratah Wedding Dress” in our show. The presentation of Linda’s exquisite Rainbow Collection was one of the highlights of Roger Foley’s (Ellis D Fogg) mind-bending lightshows at the Bush Theatre on 13th and 14th May. The garments’ fluorescent rainbow colours were brought to vibrant life under the magic wand of Ellis D Fogg’s UV lights. A moment of perfection! This remarkable synthesis of Roger’s lights and Linda’s designs was the result of over 30 years collaboration between the two artists, who also happen to be two of Australia’s most iconic creative spirits. So our fashion show became part of Ellis D Fogg Lightshow and not the other way around. Roger casually observed that models need a stage, and then kindly went on to provide us with not only a stage but also included us in his lightshow and the show’s promotions. Thank you and thank you again, Roger! The Wrapt in Nimbin

Fashion Group are truly grateful (we are no fewer than 24 models and nine designers) and appreciative of your generosity, patience and professionalism and the way you handled our show, directly resulting in the vibrancy of colour and mystique that your lights wove around our models. Many thanks also to all your crew, particularly the fabulous MC Ms Edwina Blush and your rock-steady sound engineer Ritchie. Thank you to Tuntable Falls Community for inviting us to stage our collection in your beautiful hall and for such a warm welcome. What an extraordinary and joyful occasion it was for us all to be part of! Much gratitude to the talented Tim Tonkin for providing and organising the lights (and event); to Wompy for providing the music technology; to Biskit for stepping up to be the MC; to Peter Walker for putting the music together for our shows; to Jeni Kendall who helped with more than suggestions, thank you, this show happened because you dreamed it; and to Paul Tait who came to our rescue at the last minute at the Tuntable show to capture it all on film. To Gill Jones, my ‘Wild Skin’s’ partner, big hugs and thank you for your amazing networking capacity and experience in fashion. Without you and Marilyn Smith, this unique fun experience would not have happened... and thank you to all my fellow local designers Myfanwy Stirling, Christina Chester, Honey Joy, Polly Stirling, Gill Jones, Zlatka, Marlene Roerich, Bobbin Joy whose wonderful designs were truly the nucleus of the show... and lastly to the beautiful models that graced the stage with poise and panache. Last but not least, much gratitude to the Nimbin Artists Gallery for their generous donation. What is clear is that local fashion design needs to be shared. We are looking forward with excitement to our next yearly fashion extravaganza!

# Tri-state plan to legalise cannabis

by Michael Balderstone  
president Nimbin HEMP Embassy & Legalise Cannabis Australia

I visited Jeremy Buckingham’s office in NSW Parliament House on my 75th birthday in June. His little verandah overlooks the garden where they do media interviews and he wants a big plant to water while the cameras are there. Anyone want to make him a legal look-alike? Plastic or whatever? Recycled something? Jeremy has a wicked sense of humour and knows weed like we know weed. He grew up with weed, his old man growing and smoking weed. Him with a bong habit in his teens. He knows the culture and he’s one of us in many other ways with a house near Bellingen where he clearly loves gardening and has a huge one with a terrific orchard. And he loves politics! WTF! Also, we can see now he is down in Sydney that his six years experience with the Greens is clearly invaluable. He’s popular and been warmly welcomed back to Macquarie Street by other MPs, who have been very supportive in general it seems with Legalise Cannabis getting a seat at the table. The first absolute priority for him is getting Roadside Drug Testing rules changed. First step will be a medical exemption which is a total compromise as far as I can tell, funnelling everyone to get legal weed via a doctor, mostly imported from Canada. Meanwhile this week we launched simultaneously in all three states where we have elected Senators, a bill to allow us to grow our own. What about driving then? It has to be about impairment not presence. I guess we must be grateful for small steps towards fair play. The Regulation of Personal Adult Use of Cannabis Bill 2023 will legalise the personal consumption of cannabis in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia. This unprecedented legislation will allow adults to responsibly possess and grow small quantities of cannabis at home and has been modelled, in part, on the ACT regime that has been in operation since 2020, with positive social and economic outcomes. Our plan recognises the need to approach the issue of cannabis regulation from a public health perspective keeping the needs of patients and consumers as a priority. Rachel Payne, Legalise Cannabis Victoria MP said, “This Bill actions sensible and meaningful reform to end the criminalisation of people who consume cannabis. It’s time our governments reformed outdated laws, in line with community expectations.” The Bill will facilitate the legal regulation of cannabis, allow sharing between adults and carers to grow on



behalf of others. Importantly, the Bill will not allow people under 18 to access cannabis or allow people to drive while impaired by cannabis. There have been over 700,000 arrests in Australia for cannabis-related offences since 2010. Over 90% of these arrests were merely for possessing or consuming cannabis. This Bill will significantly reduce the cannabis black market, estimated by police to generate organised crime profits of \$8 billion per annum. This Bill will be the first of a three-stage process proposed by the Legalise Cannabis Party to responsibly legalise cannabis across the nation. Legalise Cannabis Victorian MP David Ettershank said, “Cannabis laws make criminals of ordinary Australian consumers and perversely, create a huge illicit market run by real criminals.” National Secretary of Legalise Cannabis Australia, Craig Ellis said, “An arrest for cannabis can have a massive impact on a young person’s life, negatively affecting their ability to get work, travel and source rental accommodation. This Bill is the first step to ending the unfair and damaging criminalisation of otherwise law-abiding people who choose to use cannabis.” NSW Legalise Cannabis MP Jeremy Buckingham said, “This Bill is a nationally coordinated, modest and responsible first step toward the legal regulation of cannabis. Our framework for regulation focuses on responsible adult use, maintains protections for children and ensures better public health outcomes. “It’s time to take cannabis supply and quality control out of the hands of organised crime and make the needs of the community, patients and consumers a priority.” At right is the basic three-step plan of the Legalise Cannabis Party to change the laws. We all know it’s overdue in Australia and with the Greens who have been proposing similar changes, and the Animal (also plants?) Justice Party firmly on-side, and with the balance of power so important in NSW and Victoria, maybe it really is time.

Queensland Northern NSW Drought & Innovation Hub, which has a strong presence in Lismore through its partnership with Southern Cross University and the Regenerative Agriculture Alliance. The team is working on a range of new projects to help the community become more climate-resilient. The Hub’s Lismore Node Manager, Luca Peters, said the Holistic Decision-Making workshop would give people the confidence

Whatever, for years the police have been saying to me you have to get elected to change the laws, it’s the politicians who make the laws. However, time and time again I see the police oppose any drug law reforms. Never do I see their support, and that has to change with the times. Vested interests have to be put aside for the common good. We all know the truth of that. Like we all really know drug use is a health issue. So, looking forward to their compassionate understanding and support now we have a senator, I sincerely want to congratulate the Nimbin community, the people who have come to MardiGrass for 30 years, the volunteers in the HEMP Embassy, members of the HEMP Party now Legalise Cannabis Party, the whole Nimbin community who have insistently been calling out for justice for weed for decades. Finally we are being heard. Well done Nimbin. Patience is wisdom!

**Legal Regulation of Cannabis**

**STAGE ONE**

**Personal Adult Use**

- Legal to possess cannabis for personal use
- Legal to securely grow up to six plants at home – indoors or outside
- Legal access to seeds
- Social sharing (gifting) – up to 50 grams – will be legal
- Carers will be allowed to grow for the person they care for
- Storage of cannabis to be inaccessible to minors
- No consumption in built-up areas or around children

**STAGE TWO**

**Social Clubs**

- Consumers can assign their home-grow rights to a growers co-operative
- Clubs to be licensed and not-for-profit
- Licenses will regulate production, safety, transport, storage and rules surrounding distribution to registered members
- All forms of advertising prohibited
- Cannabis to be provided to members in child-proof containers
- All historical personal-use cannabis criminal records to be expunged

**STAGE THREE**

**Commercial Distribution**

- Growers, producers and retailers to be licensed
- Safety of product and cannabinoid profile to be verified by a state regulator and clearly stated on product displays and labels
- Controls on industry participants to favour small operators and exclude large corporations
- Retail outlets to be prohibited near schools.

9th and 10th August: Two-day workshop at Southern Cross University’s Lismore campus; 21st and 22nd August: Follow up one-on-one sessions to develop a personal action plan; Follow-up mentoring support. The cost of the workshop is valued at \$600, but for residents of the Northern Rivers and surrounds, it is \$100 per person or \$150 per couple. For more information or to book, go to: <https://bit.ly/helenlewisworkshop>

## Powerful workshop for Lismore community

A two-day workshop teaching vital decision-making skills will be offered to residents in the Lismore region to help develop post-flood recovery strategies and action plans. Holistic Decision-Making will be hosted by Helen Lewis, a Savory Institute-accredited professional educator with more than 20 years’ experience in empowering people with tools to achieve their goals. The workshop is an initiative of the Southern

plan a future that aligned with their vision and values. “Lismore is very much still in recovery mode after the 2022 floods, and we all know we still have a long road ahead of us,” Luca said. “At the same time, El Nino might soon bring bushfires and drought. “We believe this workshop with Helen will help people put strategies in place for the region’s next climactic event.”

**Workshop details**

20th July: Welcome webinar;



# Uki Moon Theatre presents *Mother*

The Uki Moon Theatre committee are excited to announce their next production, the critically acclaimed *Mother*, by Daniel Keene.

*Mother* is the story of Christie, a homeless woman trying to survive in a detached, harsh, and fragile world. The play explores the disenfranchised, living on the fringes of safety and teetering on the brink of darkness and despair.

"We are living in a time when for many people the most vulnerable amongst us are objects of scorn," playwright Daniel Keene, said.

"Not everyone shares these attitudes. But there are enough people who do share them to make them an aspect of our society that we cannot ignore.

Uki Moon Theatre artistic director, Penny Irving said, "Daniel Keene has written a strong play. I saw *Mother* with Noni Hazlehurst performing as Christie in 2020 and I loved it!

"Shelley McNamara is our 'Mother', and she is bringing a local flavour to the role.

"I had previously directed her in her 10-minute play, *The Well*, at the 2022 Hot Shorts Drill Hall. Shelley was playing a mother, which reminded me of Christie – both had enormous struggles and losses.

"I asked Shelley to read *Mother* and if she liked it, would she consider playing Christie. To my delight, Shelley said she would, and so began our journey into Christie's world.

Shelley McNamara, who plays Christie, said, "As a solo performance, *Mother* has its challenges, but the profundity of the character and the exquisite writing drew me to the role.

"Christie is as complex as she is wise – her ability to cut to the heart of the



matter with raw honesty will leave you uncomfortable in your laughter and tender in her truth."

*Mother* was written specifically for one of Australia's most esteemed actors, Noni Hazlehurst, who toured with the play for over two years. Wherever this production travels, audiences are swept away by its profound impact.

Tickets for *Mother*, by Daniel Keene, are available now at: [https://www.](https://www.trybooking.com/CIQUM)

[trybooking.com/CIQUM](https://www.trybooking.com/CIQUM)

For more information about the play: <https://www.ukimoontheatre.com.au/productions/mother>

*Mother* will be playing on Fridays and Saturdays, 14th, 15th, 21st and 22nd July at Uki Town Hall. Doors open 6.30pm, and pre-show starts at 6.45pm for a 7pm start. Chai tea, coffee and cakes will be available at the venue. BYO.

## THE GOOD TIMES ROLLED

A unique blend of electronic music artistry and community choir had a rapt audience singing along at the top of their voices in the closing hours of the Byron Music Festival in June.

Groove Terminator and the Shire Choir's goosebump-inducing renditions of classics such as 'I Feel Love' and 'Love is in the Air' proved irresistible, with the huge crowd joining in what is certainly the happiest musical experience of the year.

The feelgood session summed up the atmosphere of the entire Saturday in the park event, which saw kids dancing on dads' shoulders to the funtime rock of Bunny Racket and devoted fans soaking up the eclectic sounds of an exhilarating range of bands, from the emerging, such as Band Called Stereo, to the established (JK-47, Resin Dogs, Hussy Hicks), all of them having some connection with the Northern Rivers region.

Fifty bands played across a variety of stages in Byron Bay, from the opening night at the Great Northern Hotel to the closing party at the Treehouse at Belongil.

Saturday's main event was held in balmy weather with the panorama of Byron's



glittering sea-scape as its backdrop.

The beachside Denning Park featured three stages and 35 acts, each with a hard core of followers in attendance, and fresh converts to music that was stunning in its diversity and excellence.

Punters took to social media to broadcast their enthusiasm: "The best festival in Byron Bay," enthused one; "Definitely the best festival Byron Shire has to offer," echoed another; while pinkzinc entertainment simply said: "Was EPIC."

Their delight was shared by Byron Music proprietor and BMF Director, Nick Sergi, who said the 2023 festival proved to be the gift to the community he had hoped for.

"Our local musicians have faced a huge struggle in recent years with the pandemic stopping all live performances, and audiences have also been denied

the experience of joining with other music fans in a celebration of what they passionately love.

"This weekend we were able to give them that experience in spades. Everyone was happy: the paramedics, who didn't have to deal with any dramas, the police, the musos, and all of the locals who were able to enjoy the talent and warm vibe and the reminder of why this is such a special place to live."

The family-friendly event lived up to its multiple objectives, summed up in three words: Community, Culture, Country. "We are grateful to have been supported by a number of wonderful local businesses who enabled us to provide a safe and friendly venue for families to have a day out enjoying a range of locally-made musical experiences," Nick said.

"BMF also encouraged

and supported the region's performing artists; and demonstrated care for country and respect for its traditional custodians, from the opening welcome to country featuring Arakwal and Bundjalung Dancers to our 'no plastics' rule, to the Sunday morning beach clean-up, alongside sustainability partners Positive Change for Marine Life (PMFL)."

The clean-up collaboration saw 27 community members, festival crew, and PCML volunteers prevent 33kgs of waste from washing into the ocean – nearly 4000 separate pieces of litter; cigarette butts, balloons, aluminium cans and food containers.

Although the waste didn't come from the Festival site, organisers were determined to go beyond the Festival's covenant with Byron Shire Council, the town's residents and traditional owners, and leave the area better than they found it.

"We are grateful for the support we have received from the community to bring BMF back to Denning Park. To express our appreciation we were committed to ensuring that our footprint was light, and we fulfilled that commitment," Nick said.

Plans for next year's Byron Music Festival are already underway.

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Rainbow Ridge Steiner School:

[marga.helms@rainbowridge.nsw.edu.au](mailto:marga.helms@rainbowridge.nsw.edu.au)

Applications close: 21st July

## TENDERS SOUGHT CLEANING CONTRACT at NIMBIN BOWLING CLUB

Enquires: Pat Kerslake 0447-890-016  
Tenders close Friday 21st July



### NIMBIN BOWLING, SPORT & RECREATION CLUB Pty Ltd

#### 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 30th July, 9.30am

in club rooms at 25 Sibley Street, Nimbin

- Nominations for Office and Notices of Motion close at 9.30am on Sunday 16th July.
- Postal votes for members unable to attend the AGM must be received by the Secretary before 9am on the day of the meeting.

Please bring your Membership Card

### NIMBIN BOWLO

25 Sibley Street Nimbin  
Phone 6689-1250

#### ADVICE FOR MEMBERS & GUESTS



#### Club opening hours:

Wed-Sat 2.30pm to close, Sun 8.30am to 4pm  
Sibley's Bistro open Wed-Sat 5 to 8pm, 6689-1473

- Open Mic night, Wednesday 12th July, 6pm
- Social Bowls, Sundays 10am, all welcome





# Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Peter Brooker

So, you looked out your window at the two metre by four metre veggie plot and wondered where to begin.

What you need is a plan, a schedule, a routine.

Now imagine that single plot has become four or five. Some are 40 metres by 40 metres, some are 40 by 30 metres, with up to 26 rows of vegetables per bed stretching over two massively productive acres and watered from four dams. One dam was severely damaged in a land slip during the floods.

That's what Jake and Lani see from their window at Hanging Rock Farm. It all began with a 20 by 20 metre plot

that produced too much for their needs and on the verge of shrinking that plot, rather than waste food, they saw an advert in this very paper, about a market starting in Nimbin.

Hanging Rock Farm has now supplied that market for roughly ten years, expanded to supply Lismore market for the last five years and sends around 15% of stock to a few local Nimbin shops.

Now, as that cabbage white butterfly hovers above the red cabbage you've been watching, panic sets in because that butterfly is only one of a myriad of vegetable destroying insects about to attack.

Hanging Rock Farm of course is certified organic, so not so easy, any insecticide, all the compost, now sourced

from Grafton, and all their seeds are certified organic.

The seeds, due to new bio-security rules, are becoming problematic, so Jake and Lani are beginning to save their own seeds, which they propagate in a large seedling house. The seeds are labelled and all information stays with the seedlings so their origins, etc. are known.

Those of us fortunate enough to have made the trip to Barkers Vale were well rewarded as Jake and Lani gave freely of both their time and a truly impressive amount of knowledge.

Don't forget these organic vegetables are picked on Wednesday morning, taken to Nimbin markets and could be on your dinner plate hours later.

A great turn out for this meeting and of the 35 people who came, a third were



newcomers.

We hope they all come again carrying a chair and a plate to share when we go

to Anna and Olof's garden at 955 Terania Creek Road, Terania Creek on Saturday 15th July at 2pm.

## Birds

The pre-dawn gloaming recedes to reveal a blue sky, chilled with the expectancy of another sunny winter's day.

Birdsong emerges with the cacophonous cackling of the kookaburras, the roosters defiant vocal battle. The maestro composers, the butcher birds, prove yet again that they can warble with the best of them.

A myriad of smaller birds, energetically squeeze out their high pitched chirps and squawks. The melancholy of the low-throated rainforest doves provides a base note to one of nature's finest symphonies.

This morning I'm listening anew. What's it all about, I ask myself. Sex of course. Morning is the time for it... The family of kookas are probably saying, "If you can hear this then you are too close to our girls!"

The butcher birds might say "C'mon love how bout it, I'm just over here." The roosters are showing off to their females by saying "I'm the greatest lovemaker...right over here miss Henny."

Birds, and in fact most animals, are polygamous or at least serially monogamous, looking for and finding new genes to combine with as many times as they can over a lifespan.

They commit to each other for the purpose of breeding and rearing young (and maybe a nurturing, healing relationship too) without attaching themselves emotionally so they can better ensure the survival of their species.

Humanity is more complex. Our fragility ensured that we used collaboration as our main survival technique for the bulk of our evolutionary timeline. We paired off, often for life, as a means of building a cohesive tribe geared to survive.

Most organised religions realised this long ago and wrote it into their dogmas to promote the marriage ideal. These days however, survival is a lot easier and we



### View from the loo

by Stuart McConville

can choose freely between a monogamous or polygamous lifestyle.

Our base animal instincts tend to lead us towards polygamy, old conditioning and values developed as social constructs by religions pull us the other direction by making polygamy sinful.

As organised religion becomes weaker in our society, we are less likely to feel intimidated about choosing for ourselves which lifestyle we lead. Ironically, this new-found freedom has the power to bring us even closer to god.

*"Any attempt to restrict the natural expression of love is a denial of the experience of freedom – and thus a denial of the soul itself. For the soul is freedom personified."*

*"God is freedom, by definition – for God is limitless and without restriction of any kind. The soul is God, miniaturised. Therefore, the soul rebels at any imposition of limitation, and dies a new death each time it accepts boundaries from without."*

– N.D. Walsch (1998)  
*Conversations with God – An Uncommon Dialogue.*

Ancient Tantric philosophers understood this and accepted that people are free to choose either path, and that both have spiritual significance at different stages of our lives. Left (polygamous) and right hand (monogamous) path Tantra are valued equally as two facets of the same coin; to cater to the complexity of human sexuality.

Stuart McConville runs Pooh Solutions, compost toilets and waste water services:  
[www.poohsolutions.com.au](http://www.poohsolutions.com.au)  
phone 0427-897-496

## Gibraltar Range NP and Mulligans



The group at Mulligans

by Peter Moyle  
Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

Another month out and about and more rescheduling needed. Christies Creek was planned but the reopening date was pushed back by National Parks at the last minute. We will try again later in the year, as this is one of our favourite walks.

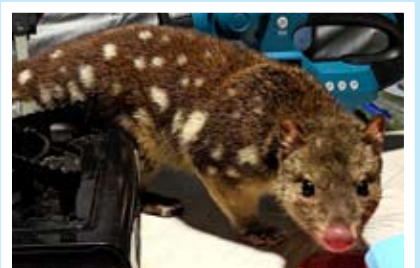
For a nice get away we headed out west of Grafton to the Gibraltar Range NP and Mulligans campground. Ten of us made the trip and the facilities and layout of the camp made for an enjoyable four days. The nights were cold, but we were well prepared and

comfortable especially with a good fire to keep us warm.

This is a sunny campground, and the days were mild enabling us to get down to t-shirts for the walking and the variety and number of different walks gave us plenty to do.

Some ventured over the highway to the Washpool NP for a day's walking with some beautiful rainforest contrasting with the open woodland of Gibraltar. A lot more protected and shadier, normally a better option in hot weather.

One of the highlights of the trip was sitting around the campfire and noticing a spotted Quoll rummaging



An inquisitive Quoll

around the group kitchen looking for its dinner, a real treat. Most of us had never seen one in the wild and their numbers are reducing with the destruction of their habitat.

## Walks programme

**Sunday 16th July**  
**Mount Nardi in the Nightcap National Park**

**Leader:** Mark Osberg 0408-113-125  
**Grade: 3.** Some rocks to walk and track can be slippery, care needed at drop-offs. Meet: 9.30 am at Mount Nardi Lookout or possible carpool from everywhere. When registering discuss options with Mark. We will take us on a couple of the popular walks in this area about 10km, great views and some gorgeous forest. Been a few years since we have been out in our own backyard  
**Bring:** Water, lunch, good walking footwear and a hat. A coffee and chat after always an option.

## Gungas Road Creek Walk



You are invited to a field day to see the riparian restoration work, which is underway on Mulgum Creek.

This section of creek was hammered by the 2022 floods. Massive landslides in the valley dumped thousands of tonnes of soil and rock in the creek, forcing it to carve a new path down Gungas Road.

Lismore City Council contractors did extensive earthworks reshaping the creek and repairing the road.

Following the earthworks, Local Land Services, Lismore City Council and Richmond Landcare provided funding and support to Gungas Road Valley Landcare to revegetate the riparian zone to stabilise the creek banks.

First there was hydromulching

with a seed mixture followed by plantings. About 3,500 sedges and grasses, including lomandra and carex, are establishing in their new home. Some 450 trees, including casuarinas, sandpaper figs, wattles, and bottlebrush have also been planted.

Come and check it out by registering at: [gungasroadlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:gungasroadlandcare@gmail.com) or phone 0427-022-295 for further info.



# Horses moving toward wholeness

by Suzy Maloney

Over the past few years, I've met horses who have undergone what can only be described as a transformation.

While I'm happy to see this, I lacked an understanding of what was going on. It took studying humans to shine a light on what was happening.

My clients are usually open to seeing horses as sentient beings with feelings, thoughts, desires, wants and needs. For some horses, this is the first time they've encountered a human who asks the question 'How do you feel about this?' It's the first time someone was present enough to notice the horses' small messages, to consider the horse in everything they do.

When these horses start receiving indications they're being listened to, they can start to talk quite loudly. All the years of things they've been wanting to say suddenly rumbles out and the horse can start appearing very different.

It can look like the horse is regressing, suddenly they have issues with things that were easy before. By returning to the beginning, they re-learn old skills in a new way. This is what I've been doing, and the horses find their way again, but I never really understood what was happening.

It has to do with the nervous system. Horses (and humans) have a parasympathetic and a sympathetic nervous system. The parasympathetic system is dominant when a horse is relaxed and feeling safe, the body slows down and runs life sustaining systems.

The sympathetic system activates when the horse feels stress or danger, it's the system triggered when a horse needs to run from predators. This part

is well known.

The first reaction in horses to a stress is to flee, because they're flight animals, but sometimes this isn't possible in the domestic world. We constrain horses and get them to do things using our tools and gadgets. If we do this often enough, and don't deal with what's happening for the horse, then stage two steps in. Stage two is created by the parasympathetic system and results in immobilisation. In horses this can be partial immobilisation, also called learned helplessness.

Many have seen this with a cat and mouse. The mouse runs away as fast as possible in fear from the cat, having a full-blown sympathetic response. If the cat catches the mouse, they suddenly go immobile, this is the parasympathetic system swinging into overdrive. The body, insensitive to pain, goes completely limp, eyes closed, limbs splayed, heart rate decelerated, they can appear dead. Sometimes this results in the cat thinking the mouse is dead, whereupon the mouse takes off and survives. Sometimes the cat bites into the mouse. Either way this system benefits the mouse.

When a horse is listened to, they embark on a journey of healing. But they can't go straight from stage two to normal relaxation, they must first pass through the initial sympathetic response to get there. This means they return to all the fear and anxiety they initially felt which wasn't listened to. By revisiting everything they express anxiety about, and being present and supportive, they can then reach the relaxation characteristic of the normal parasympathetic state. It can take patience and time, but the results of a mentally and emotionally healthy horse



who is willing and engaged makes it well worth it.

It was such a revelation for me to realise this. I'd been very clear on how I wanted to be with horses but was confused when sometimes a particular horse didn't seem to initially appreciate being with a considerate human. By now carrying this understanding, I feel I can be much more supportive and helpful to horses and people who are working at this level.

*Happy Horses Bitless  
Considerate horsemanship  
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www.happyhorsesbitless.com  
Phone 0401-249-263*

## Animal acts of appreciation

by Les Rees

One of the delights of helping animals through acts of kindness is their appreciation. There are many documented cases of different types of animals that can be found on the web that define their sentient nature and appreciation of kindness when directed towards them.

Some time ago I attended a wildlife course given by a Vet from Kununurra WA who was teaching us how to treat injured animals. She was an incredibly interesting person who had a lot of stories concerning her work, but one just stood out because it involved a Komodo dragon that she had been treating at a zoo over there.

She had become great friends with this enormous dragon during this time, and it had always been happy to see her whenever she visited. Some years later she heard that the animal had been moved to another zoo, so she decided to visit her dragon friend.

When she arrived the zoo wasn't happy to let her go into the cage with such a dangerous animal but after a lot of argument with the zoo's



curator they eventually let her in to see the dragon.

This amazing creature was so pleased to see her it got up on its hind legs and wrapped its arms around her shoulders. It certainly hadn't forgotten who she was or how she'd helped him.

I've certainly witnessed this on a less dangerous level, often when I've massaged horses especially when combining massage with energy work and it makes it worth the effort when you're on the receiving end of the appreciation that the horse gives out in return.

I often get nuzzled and licked by equines, and some horses will rest their heads on my shoulder for a while. One of our horses likes to hold on to articles of clothing in

order to keep me closer for a bit longer. He picks up on my energy changing as I'm about to walk away. This I find interesting, because animals are far more aware of changes in energy levels than most human animals are.

Horses can receive information from a person 20 metres away and ascertain your emotional state of mind. During the time it takes for you to walk those few metres towards your horse, it will have formulated how it will respond to you, as well as conveying the information to the others in the herd.

I guess it's hardly surprising when you consider the nature of living in the wild. They're highly aware of their surroundings and can have extremely quick reactions if

they pick up on something that doesn't feel right. A typical flight animal can assess the situation and leap into high speed mode within a split second in order to get away from impending danger.

I find that most animals respond well when you direct your energy to good intentions, and they will generally show their appreciation in some way. I'm always saddened by some of the horses who have shut down and have been emotionally damaged by trauma in their lives. It can be quite challenging and sometimes dangerous to deal with when working with them.

However, having worked with many traumatised equines, I can honestly say that perseverance combined with good intentions and a routine that provides them with stability can bring about a complete reversal of their emotional responses.

The very best part is that once they begin to feel safe, they start to show their appreciation and when this happens it is pure gold.

*Les Rees is an equine naturopath and sports therapist.  
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