

Tuntable Creek Road is coming along

I hope those who got along to the Nimbin Gnar Wall Skate event had a great time. It was a wonderful opportunity for locals to skate with some of the best in the world.

At Council's last meeting, we unanimously voted to write to Member for Lismore Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Page Kevin Hogan MP and Minister for the Arts & Tourism Ben Franklin MLC requesting financial support for the Nimbin Aquarius Festival to hold its 50th anniversary in May.

This promises to be a great event and re-ignite interest in Nimbin and its counterculture.

I also met with the Nimbin Advisory Group. These quarterly meetings are very productive and enjoyable. It is always good to talk with community members so that other Councillors and I can get a better understanding of what the Nimbin community needs and wants.

We covered a range of topics, including a water and sewerage update and a roads update.

In regard to water and sewerage, we are currently in the process of commissioning the Nimbin Temporary Drinking Water Treatment Plant.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Nimbin community for their patience, and to answer a few questions you may have about the new plant.

Why is it only called a "temporary" water treatment plant?

Council has been planning a permanent water treatment plant for Nimbin for some years now. Although we are still working toward a permanent solution, drinking water quality issues caused by last year's natural disaster has shown the need for a short-term solution. After consulting NSW Health, DPE and Public Works, we have hired a temporary package filtration

plant to filter Nimbin's drinking water.

The temporary plant will operate until a permanent plant is built. We expect a permanent treatment plant will be operational within the next two years.

How will the plant affect the water chemically?

The Nimbin Temporary Drinking Water Treatment Plant is simply a water filter. The plant improves drinking water quality by removing impurities like dirt and organic matter that may be in the raw water. We will continue to disinfect Nimbin's drinking water with small doses of chlorine, as we have always done. The water from the Temporary Drinking Water Treatment Plant will not be fluoridated.

What does this mean for Nimbin Rural Customers?

Unfortunately, we are currently unable to supply our Nimbin Rural Customers with filtered drinking water from the Nimbin Temporary



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

Drinking Water Treatment Plant. We are working on upgrading our network to pump filtered drinking water from the plant to our Rural Customers, but we expect this project may take up to six months. Until then, we encourage our Nimbin Rural Customers to register for the Nimbin Rural Bottled Water Delivery Program using the flyers they will find in their mailboxes.

Please remember that the current Boil Water Alert for our Nimbin Rural Customers remains in place until further notice.

As residents know,



Tuntable Creek Road
suffered extensive damage during the February 2022 natural disaster, closing the road north of intersection with Rose Road.

A temporary solution was designed to open the road and establish connection between Nimbin and The Channon while a permanent solution is designed.

The temporary construction consists of stabilising the embankment below the road and excavating into the slope above the road to make a single trafficable lane.

The stabilisation will use up to 160 eight metre soil nails and over 400m2 of sprayed concrete.

Additionally, crews are also reconstructing pavement through the slip zone and installing light traffic control.

The works are expected to be complete in March with the road opened to local access only and restricted during weather events.

Council would like to thank residents who have shown extraordinary resilience during this time, and their patience is greatly appreciated.

Additional updates for these works will be posted on our Your Say dedicated Maintaining Roads and Bridges page: <https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/maintaining-our-roads-and-bridges>

Animal welfare a priority

by Vanessa Rosayro, Animal Justice Party candidate for Lismore

As a Lismore resident, I have seen the devastating impacts of natural disasters on my community.

As a social worker, I have been privileged to walk alongside the women and children in our community as they journey towards healing from violence and abuse.

For these families who have already been disadvantaged, floods and natural disasters have compounded their precarious circumstances. I am passionate about representing and delivering a response which is grounded in kindness, compassion and equality for all.

What drew me to the Animal Justice Party was its value on rationality. We have the evidence that informs our approach and a strategy for seeking expert ecological consultation on matters concerning the environment, social and emotional wellbeing of our people and the strategies to end species extinction.

Our existence is one of interconnectedness. Our capacity to thrive in wellbeing, is linked to our environment and to our animals.

I am passionate about ending native species extinction, because the loss of koalas and kangaroos from our environment will have disastrous consequences. The establishment of a Great Koala National park, expanding habitat protection to private lands, appointing strategic ecologists and implementing road safety programs such as virtual fencing and land tunnels will ensure that our koalas can survive.

The flow on effects for our environmental sustainability through habitat protection, and establishing an independent commissioner for wildlife protection with the ability to enforce habitat protection, will have positive environmental outcomes. The health of our planet and the wellbeing of our animals are intrinsically linked.

Further intrinsic links exist between our wellbeing and our connection to animals. Some of the images which stay with me post-floods, are those of families and their animals on the roofs of homes waiting to be rescued.

Our community members went to great



lengths to rescue animals, because they are more than just pets, they are family.

I am passionate about progressing Veticare in NSW, a program similar to Medicare, whereby animals have access to publicly-funded health care. I believe that cost should not be a barrier to the animals of our families, and program such as Veticare can encourage animal ownership amongst the socioeconomic vulnerable because we know the social and emotional value of our connection to animals and how animals can bring us peace.

Addressing the climate emergency through long terms plans for animal welfare is a sustainable solution. It is a strategy for a lasting solution.

As a country, we have explored short term, immediate needs solutions, however we continue to have the same discussions about the impact of climate change.

I believe it is time for a new approach. An approach that is premised on kindness and equality for all, for animals, people and the planet. It is time for a new political approach, premised on values that focus on supporting our most vulnerable.

A vote for me and the Animal Justice Party will be that voice in parliament.

Nothing changes if nothing changes

by Cr Adam Guise
Lismore City Council

With the state election rapidly approaching, I'm savouring this last month of campaigning in our vibrant rainbow electorate.

We are an inspired, creative and engaged community, and are deeply connected to this place. Our collective love and commitment to the region shone brightly when we all stood together to stop the invasive coal seam gas industry from polluting our air and water. Here we are again, at the precipice of the largest existential threat to our survival. Only people power can meet the challenge.

It shouldn't have to be this way, yet because successive governments have privileged profit over people and the environment, it is up to you and I to make a stand. It's time to vote for the end of jobs for mates, dirty donations, pork-barreling, and privileging the big end of town.

We can't keep accepting politics like this. It's time for a re-awakening and so it is timely that the Nimbin Aquarius Festival is nearly upon us, and no better time is there for leadership, vision and integrity in politics. If not now, when?

It was therefore heartening to receive unanimous support in Council just recently for my funding request for the 50th anniversary of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival. State and Federal governments are happy to splash around cash for sports stadiums and horse racing, but festivals of the heart have to beg and grovel. Let's hope this is the zeitgeist for change and it brings the reawakening we strive for!

That is the Greens' vision I'm taking to the 2023 State Election. A fair society working for people and the planet. No better illustrated than with Jess Harwood's amazing art in this month's *Nimbin GoodTimes!* It's a bit of a Where's Wally of our region and I hope it brings you lots of joy and conversations.

The Greens are people-powered and unlike the Nationals, Liberals and Labor, we don't take dirty donations from corporations or fossil fuel companies. To take back our democracy we must ban corporate donations and remove the stranglehold of vested interests in politics. We can't allow companies making multi-billion dollar profits to buy influence.



Your vote is powerful and by electing a Greens member, we would send shockwaves through the establishment and kick-start the transformational change we so need. Electing just another puppet to the major parties will perpetuate more of the same: further climate inaction, more coal and gas, and a widening divide between rich and poor.

The Greens have the vision and the solutions to address the current crisis. Rather than handouts, let's tax corporations and billionaires their fair share so that families aren't shouldering the cost of living. We need to invest in public and affordable housing so that everyone has a home. We need real action on climate change by ending coal and gas and rapidly transitioning to a renewable energy economy.

We must fund our public sector to make health, education, transport and social services affordable and effective. Native forests need to be protected so that we can end species extinction and meet our climate targets. We need to ensure our flood recovery is equitable and fair in order to get people out of harm's way and keep our community together.

A fair and caring society which protects the environment is possible. It just requires the political will. Voting for more of the same won't get the change we need. Make this election count. Vote Greens 1 and get us on track to a safe and live-able climate and a fair future for all.

As always, get in touch at: adamguise@gmail.com or phone 0478-684-497.

We all need more Greens

by Sue Higginson MLC

This is it folks! Election fever is upon us. OK, well maybe just some of us. Whether you are feeling the heat or not, there is a State Election on 25th March and your vote here in our region counts more than most. Do you know how you are going to vote and why? Here are a few things to keep in mind.

The NSW Liberal/National Coalition has been in Government for 12 years. While the NSW Coalition may not appear to be as bad as the Scott Morrison/Barnaby Joyce Federal Coalition, it's all appearance, because they have an absolutely appalling record.

Under this Government we have seen 24 new coal and gas approvals since we signed the Paris Agreement in 2016. They have no intention of stopping coal and gas giants continuing their immoral and unbridled profiteering as communities, like ours, suffer catastrophic harm and loss from climate induced extreme weather events.

Over the past decade, land clearing has tripled, woodlands and grasslands are radically deteriorating and 62% of vegetation in the state is now under pressure from too much fire. The number of species in NSW threatened with extinction has grown to 1,043 and 64% of mammals are now considered to have suffered long-term reductions in their habitat range.

More than 70% of endangered plants, animals and habitats in the State are threatened by invasive species, with pest animals and weeds costing the State's economy \$170m and \$1.8bn respectively each year and it's not enough, because the problem is getting worse.

Since the black summer fires, the government has intensified logging our public native forests, notwithstanding over 40% of the forests were virtually destroyed by fire and billions of native animals perished. They have weakened koala protection laws and they have done nothing to clean up our dying rivers. Our river, the Richmond River system, is one of the sickest in the State, it just got smashed and there is no relief from this Government.

They have not begun Truth Telling and Treaty processes with First Nations people in NSW, unlike Victoria and Queensland. The incarceration rate of First Nations people, including children, is increasing and is at record highs. The number of First Nations people who died in custody or as a result of police operations in 2021 doubled the previous highest number which was 25 years ago.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage continues to be destroyed as we haven't even introduced stand alone Aboriginal Cultural Heritage laws yet, we are the only State in the Country which hasn't.

We are in a housing and cost of living crisis yet there is no real effort to actually do the things we need to make housing accessible and affordable, because let's face it, that would require regulating the free market system, the core of capitalism. Neither the Coalition or Labor have it in them to really do it.

Since 2014 they have introduced a suite of anti-protest laws which have effectively made us an anti-democratic, intolerant, police state that is servicing business elites while smashing our communities as they conscientiously object and non-violently dissent.

The war on drugs and people continues daily as we criminalise and destroy the lives of people simply for doing drugs. Our teachers and nurses still don't have fair pay, are overworked and don't have the right safe work settings they have been calling for.

I could go on, but I reckon that's enough. What is important about the things that I have highlighted above is that Labor in opposition has worked mostly in agreement with the Coalition while these things have happened. It has certainly not stepped up any fierce or strategic opposition to the government and it is not stepping forward



Adam Guise and Sue Higginson



Lynda-June Coe, Cate Faehrmann MP and Dr Amanda Cohn

with any bold vision for the State as we head to 25th March.

We don't know who will form government after 25th March. We are told it will be close and that any government will win or lose in Western Sydney. What we do know is we need change, real change. So, this election rather than focus on who will form the government, we should focus on how we can achieve meaningful social and environmental reform.

If we have more Greens in the NSW Parliament no matter who forms government we can work strategically to get outcomes and change. The State Election last year in Victoria delivered more Greens to Parliament. After only three months, they are already set to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 and legalise cannabis. I am certain they will soon bring forward the date to end native forest logging.

With more Greens here in NSW we will set forward with our clear, well-developed policy reform agenda to legalise cannabis and end public native forest logging. We will push whoever forms government to go further and faster to end coal and gas by 2030 and get us to being powered by 100% renewable energy.

We know what to do to address the extinction crisis and to clean up our rivers and we will make it happen. We will push to have safe nurse to patient ratios and public sector wages will increase. We will tackle the housing crisis, as we have laid down in our plan through ending the special treatment for those profiting from the housing stress and investing in public, social and affordable housing. We have led and wedged on pokies reform, and you can count on us to drive it home.

Voters here in this region hold the power to see more Greens in the NSW Parliament. Community champion Adam Guise is running for the seat of Lismore and if successful, he will likely join three or possibly four other Greens MPs in the Lower House. The Greens are running an incredible Upper House ticket with a real chance of getting three incredible Greens women elected, to join the two of us already in the Upper House.

Building a Greens team in the next Parliament who will all work together strategically for social and environmental justice for the next four years, no matter who forms Government, is something I reckon worth voting for.

If you are in any doubt about how you are going to vote on 25th March please check out the Greens NSW election platform: <https://greens.org.au/nsw/policyplatform2023> and feel free to contact me at anytime on 0428-227-363.



Janelle Saffin introduces Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative project lead, Senior Principal Research Scientist CSIRO Land & Water Dr Jai Vaze to The Knitting Nannas in Lismore's Central Business District.

Region charts a more flood-ready future

by Janelle Saffin MP Member for Lismore

I recently welcomed the first projects in a \$150-million Commonwealth package of flood mitigation and resilience measures for Lismore, Nimbin and the Northern Rivers region.

See this link: <https://nema.gov.au/programs/emergency-response-fund/northern-rivers-resilience-initiative> to their two reports titled, 'Rapid Prioritisation for Flood Resilience in the Northern Rivers region' and 'Characterisation of the 2022 floods in the Northern Rivers region'. They are compelling reading.

I joined Federal Minister for Emergency Management Murray Watt and Mayor Steve Krieg in Lismore where Senator Watt announced \$50 million worth of Tranche 1 priority projects under the CSIRO-led Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative.

About \$5 million will go towards increasing local communities' flood risk knowledge and awareness, including flood risk information campaigns and flood warning signs, floor level surveys for building across the region and assessment of evacuation routes.

Another \$3 million will fund a two-year program to establish or consolidate community-led resilience teams for about 70 communities across seven Local Government Areas, sharing local knowledge with emergency management organisations such as the State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service, and councils.

The bulk of this money (\$42 million) is for upgrades and maintenance of local councils' existing flood management infrastructure such as upgrading pumps and pump stations, many of them within the Lismore Local Government Area.

All pump stations will have their control rooms/towers raised, be fibre connected for improved communications and have power supply backups. Mechanical trash racks will be installed at all three major pump station inlets, reducing the risk of rubbish and debris being washed or sucked into pump intakes and causing damage to pumps.

A tractor-driven pump at the Lismore Rowing Club will be replaced with an electric pump station. I was working with local councils on these type of practical projects and lobbying for State funding in the months leading up to the 28 February 2022 flood, so the Albanese Government's focus on our region is most welcome.

These priority projects were identified after the CSIRO undertook a proper community

consultation process, where people and community groups with their passion and experiences, were really listened to.

Local people living and doing business on our floodplains and near our rivers and creeks need to feel a sense of safety and security, and this helps chart the way in.

All of this needs to be complemented by a comprehensive, wraparound economic and environmental plan to support our rebuild and reimagine

our communities, and to undertake the transformational adaption that is required now.

Priority projects still in play
With the NSW State election campaign in full swing at time of writing, I'm still pursuing funding for two priority projects for the Nimbin community.

These are one-off funding grants to Lismore City Council to build a new amenities block in Peace Park and financial support for the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce's Organising Committee to help stage the Aquarius50 Festival in May this year.

Renewables to be turbo charged
A Minns Labor Government will create the NSW Energy Security Body, a state-owned body that will accelerate investment in renewable energy assets. It will be seeded with a \$1-billion investment from the existing Restart NSW Fund.

It will partner with the community and private sectors on projects that provide affordable, accessible and reliable energy to New South Wales, including:

- Community batteries to maximise the benefits for households of rooftop solar. Only 1 in 60 NSW households with solar have batteries, mainly due to prohibitive costs.
- The NSW Energy Security Corp will work with the Commonwealth and industry to ensure NSW gets an outsized share of community batteries to deliver lasting cost-of-living relief to households.
- Medium to long duration renewable storage solutions like pumped hydro, as well as any other commercially viable technologies able to provide grid stability.





Get ready to vote

The NSW State election is on Saturday, 25 March, and the NSW Electoral Commission is asking NSW voters to get ready to vote by enrolling to vote or checking their enrolment is up to date.

NSW Electoral Commissioner John Schmidt said with much of the state on a break, now was a great time to get election ready. "Whether you need to enrol for the first time, update your details or just check where you are enrolled, it's quick and easy to do online."

"Go to: elections.nsw.gov.au and you'll get all the information you need."

Mr Schmidt said more than 100,000 people in NSW would be eligible to vote, but are not on the electoral roll.

"It is compulsory to enrol to vote in NSW if you are eligible and 18 or over."

"With a state election coming up, we want as many people as possible enrolled correctly and ready to have their say."

"All you need to enrol is a driver's licence, an Australian passport number, or have someone who is enrolled confirm your identity."

Mr Schmidt said he also encouraged anyone who had moved recently to check, and update if needed, their enrolment.

Find more information on the NSW Electoral Commission website.

Meet Ballina candidates

The state elections on Saturday 25th March are coming at an important time for local residents.

All candidates standing for the State seat of Ballina which encompasses the Ballina and Byron Shires have been invited to attend at the Ocean Shores Country Club auditorium on Orana Road, from 6pm for 6.30pm on Monday evening 13th March to raise issues vital to the Byron North. This is an opportunity to meet and hear from them and a large crowd is expected.

The Ocean Shores Community Association (OSCA) expects the main discussion point to be the lack of response by local authorities to the harm caused by the two 2022 floods. Many people are not back in their homes, one year on.

OSCA has launched its campaign "2483 Flood Free" to focus on bringing people back home and also to plan for future mitigation to let the floodwaters out of the northern towns and villages.

For the first time ever, flooding was experienced in Brunswick Heads. For the story of flood history go to: <https://brunswickvalley.com.au/flood-history/synopsis.htm>

There are many issues, so come and let the candidates know. The Ocean Shores Community Association (OSCA) enquiries line is 0431- 477-445.

The NGT state election candidate survey results

The NSW state election will be held on Saturday 25th March, with pre-polling starting on 18th March. All candidates in the seat of Lismore

who had announced their candidacy were sent a list of statements to comment upon. All candidates responded.

The survey was sent out before all candidates put in their nominations due to time constraints, so there may be unknown candidates who decide to

nominate. We hope these survey results are a useful summary of policies affecting the seat of Lismore.



Candidate	Alex Rubin Nationals	Matthew Bertalli Shooters and Fishers	Adam Guise Greens	Vanessa Rosayro Animal Justice	Janelle Saffin Labor
The key to funding the state’s proposed \$110 billion infrastructure projects is to borrow cash and privatise state-owned assets, rather than increasing taxes on the wealthy and corporations.	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The proposed gambling reforms may destroy our community clubs. We need to work with clubs to identify problem gamblers and help them.	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral
The NSW government needs to invest in large-scale publicly owned housing that recognises residents’ needs, concerns and aspirations.	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Agencies need to take actions early in the development to inform design and construction of public housing projects, based on a thorough understanding of community needs, aspirations, and priorities.	Agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Public Housing agencies should consider the Finnish model of supported accommodation services included in public housing, that has been shown to make savings in emergency health care, social services and justice system.	Strongly disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Anti-protest laws will hurt democracy in NSW.	Disagree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The South Australian Government has introduced a First Nations Voice Bill, 2023, which would be an advisory body made up of First Nations people who will have input on decisions that affect their lives. To what extent do you agree with this in NSW?	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
We need a Waste-to-Energy Incinerator to be located near Casino (Richmond Valley Council), to reduce waste, generate green electricity, and create jobs.	Neutral	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly disagree
To support public transport -- especially for the elderly, disabled, young and poor – the State Government needs to reinstate the Casino to Murwillumbah railway service.	Neutral	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Nurses, midwives and paramedics across NSW have been repeatedly striking and are quitting in droves due to unsafe working conditions and poor pay. The NSW Government needs to remove the wage cap and give a substantial pay rise to nurses, midwives and paramedics, as has happened in Queensland.	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
New higher-paid roles for outstanding NSW teachers should solve the problem of the large and growing shortage of teachers.	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Dunoan Dam proposal will destroy the Widjabul burial sites, and threatens koala and platypus habitat, so should not be built.	Strongly disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Protecting native forests is a low-cost, effective and immediate way to take real action on climate change. Protecting native forests reduces emissions and allows forests to draw down considerable amounts of carbon from the atmosphere.	Disagree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree
The only action that will protect koala populations is protecting and linking fragmented habitat. No government to date has provided koalas with adequate protection. Current local and state environment and planning laws are failing our koalas. Urgent reform of state laws is required to protect koalas in all environmental, planning and land clearing legislation.	Disagree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

The first anniversary of the February 28 floods

The first anniversary of the February 28th floods will raise many mixed emotions in our community; while we need to allow ourselves time and space to reflect on the impacts of that trauma, we also should take some pride in what we have achieved in the recovery and rebuilding of our city, our villages, our homes, and our lives over the past twelve months.

There are a number of events planned across the region to recognise the impact of the flood, and to bring together our communities.

I'm hoping that many of you were able to attend and participate at the Nimbin Gnar Walls competitions at the skate park, the community BBQ, the 'From the Heart' concert and opera at the Turf Club, or the T20 cricket match between local players



by Cr Darlene Cook
Lismore City Council

and retired professionals, led by Adam Gilchrist.

For those who need assistance to cope with the emotion of this anniversary, a number of professional help services are available at the Wellbeing Hub at the Quad, which is at 110 Magellan Street in Lismore.

In recent weeks, Lismore Council was told by the state government that the

Minister had decided to impose a Local Planning Panel on us which will permanently take over all planning decisions for the future of Lismore.

This means that all planning and development matters will be determined, not by your local elected representatives, but by a panel comprised of government approved strangers.

The only other councils who have had this stripping away of their planning powers are either in administration, or are one of the metropolitan councils who all lost their planning powers as a consequence of a corruption investigation by ICAC.

At the February Council meeting, Lismore Councillors were told that we must choose a number of preselected individuals to sit on this panel; that

we would bear all the costs incurred by this panel; and that we were forbidden to assist our community in any disputes with developers or developments – even those that may have disastrous environmental consequences.

Lismore Councillors, correctly I believe, refused to comply with this forced removal of our decision making powers, which we were elected to perform.

There are numerous examples in Western Sydney where some planning panels have permitted residential developments on significant farmlands, with zero green space, and no access to public transport, shops or jobs.

There is evidence of the government forcing council staff to sign confidentiality agreements to prevent elected Councillors finding out about local developments: <https://lgnsw.org.au/Public/>

Media-Releases/2023/0224-State-government-caught-out.aspx

Lismore Councilors believe that local planning decisions must be made by local people with the knowledge of local conditions and with the support and input of our community. It is now up to the Minister to decide if he wants to enforce his decision, in the small amount of time before the government goes into caretaker mode.

Coming up on 25th March will be the NSW State Election. Once again, we are asked to choose who to vote into parliament and to decide which party will comprise the next state government. For many of us it is time for a change at the state level; for others, continuity of the current regime is preferred.

The candidates for the seat of Lismore are Labor's Janelle Saffin; the National's Alex

Rubin; the Green's Adam Guise; the Animal Justice Party's Vanessa Rosayro; and the Shooters Fishers and Farmers' Matthew Bertalli.

As I am a member of the Labor Party, I will be supporting Janelle Saffin's campaign for re-election.

Janelle has worked incredibly hard for this region, and she has been instrumental in obtaining urgently needed funding and resources to help us with the recovery and rebuilding since the floods.

Whomever you vote for, think carefully about what they stand for and what they represent, and whether they truly have the best interests of our villages, our towns and our lives in their hearts.

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

We need to focus more on flood mitigation



by Kevin Hogan,
Federal Member for Page

We have reached one year since we were hit with Australia's biggest ever natural disaster.

It will be a long road to recovery and with a disaster on such a large scale, unfortunately the recovery will never be quick enough.

\$50 million in projects were announced last week as part of the \$150 million I announced just after the flooding event last year.

This funding was intended to be spent on shovel-ready flood mitigation measures, ahead of the extensive CSIRO study to be released next year.

I'm astonished there was

Kevin Hogan with a local business owner after the devastating 2022 flood.

not a bigger focus on flood mitigation. It has been spent on upgrading water pump stations, improving evacuation routes, and other flood infrastructure.

These are all important and need to be done – however they do not reduce the height of a flood.

I hope the remaining \$100 million will have a greater focus on the engineering flood mitigation options.

Engineering solutions to flood mitigation provides our community with hope and make us feel safe, making our homes safer, our towns, farms, our road network, industrial estates and villages.

Reaction to Lismore Planning Panel

The Greens have condemned NSW Planning Minister Anthony Roberts for stripping planning powers away from Lismore City Council at a time when the local community is crying out for more involvement in decisions about their future. (See story p. 3)

Adam Guise, Greens Lismore City Councillor and candidate for Lismore said, "It's outrageous that the Minister is riding roughshod over our community and sacking Lismore councillors from local planning decisions.

"What this means is that councillors will be sidelined from important decisions about where and how our community rebuilds. Subdivisions will be allowed to bypass the normal development process and be carried out on land where it is currently not allowed by the Local Environmental Plan."

It appears that Lismore Panel had been imposed in response to a request made by the then GM (John Walker) and the Mayor. Lismore Council decided at its February meeting not to constitute a planning panel.

State Member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin said that whatever happens with our flood recovery, nothing at this time should be foisted on our local community; major decisions and changes must be done by agreement.

"I have sought and received an undertaking from NSW Shadow Minister for Planning Paul Scully that if NSW Labor forms government, he will come to Lismore to listen first-hand to councillors' and community concerns about all planning and related matters," Ms Saffin said.

Community Centre upgrades and improvements

by Nimbin Community Centre Management Committee

Last year, as part of an organisational review, which is still ongoing, we decided to separate the functions of our two casual hire spaces and work on upgrading and improving the facilities of each.

This was prompted by a need to improve the availability of rooms for half and all-day events. A 1.5 hour booking in the middle of the day effectively locked out all-day bookings for workshops, longer meetings etc.

We are hoping this decision will optimise usage of both the dance studio (81 Cullen Street) and Birth & Beyond (54 Cullen Street).

All regular classes and meetings were transferred to the dance studio with a commitment to improving the storage and amenities in

the space. In early February we had two dual cycle air-conditioners installed and are exploring storage options for activities such as yoga.

Our regular hirers are already commenting on how much easier it is to run their meetings and classes on hot sticky days and how lovely it will be during those winter days when everything feels icy.

Facilities include a ballet barre, a mirrored wall, a concertina wall to divide the space if needed, stackable chairs, foldout tables, and a sink with filtered drinking water.

Dance studio bookings include regular yoga classes, a ballet barre class, tai chi, wing tsun kung fu, belly dance, NIA dance, and a mixed media art class – part of the Nimbin Open Learning Program.

The space also hosts a weekly meeting for the NA and AA support groups as

well as providing occasional meeting spaces for other community groups.

Our Birth & Beyond Meeting Room is now available for full and half-day hire and is an ideal meeting/conference/office/workshop/event space. Atwork Australia (a disability employment service) is a regular user.

The Birth & Beyond meeting room contains a kitchenette with filtered drinking water, stackable chairs and foldout tables. Projection and sound equipment and a screen can be included in the venue hire for a very reasonable fee.

If you would like to rent either of these spaces you can access our online booking service via the "venue hire" tab on our website: www.nimbincommunity.org.au

If you have queries that are not resolved by going to the website email: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au

nimbincommunity.org.au and we will get back to you.


We also have our regular Sunday markets (4th and 5th Sunday) and our regular CWA Nimbin open days where you can browse for second hand items, pick up homemade baked treats and preserves or enjoy a delicious and inexpensive home cooked lunch.

To contact Steph, the Nimbin Market coordinator, email: nimbinmarkets@gmail.com or text 0475-135-764.

Keep an eye out on the CWA Nimbin Branch Facebook page for info about their open days and other fundraising events.

Thanks to all those who actively support these precious community resources.

If you'd like to volunteer in any capacity please contact Nimbin Community Centre at: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au



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Updates on Nimbin roads, water, Aquarius50 and more

by Gwen Trimble

Roads

At the February meeting of the Nimbin Advisory Group, Alan Madden from LCC provided an update on roadworks. Financial, priority and logistical constraints dictate the current plan, summarised as:

- Nimbin Road – tenders closed for major slip work, will require micropiles to stabilise, works expected to begin this year.
- Blue Knob Road – design in progress. Cameras at lights to be reassessed by Traffic Advisory Committee following recent collision.
- Stony Chute Road – more complex than previously thought, may require major works, bridge.
- Tuntable Creek Road – temporary single lane almost complete.
- Wallace Road – still in design phase.
- NAG has requested urgent repairs to major potholes in Thorburn Street.

A program of works timeframe is being developed for the planned 900km of roadworks, with funding submissions to be made to Transport NSW and the Federal Government by end March.

Water

Matt Potter outlined the plan for the 75 customers in Gungas, Basil, Anderson and Kirklands Roads, who draw from the rural mains, to be offered bottled water

for six months while repairs are being completed. Eligible residents need to register on the LCC website.

Matt gave more detail on the clearing of Mulgum Weir and the progress on the temporary treatment plant, which is expected to be operational for two years, and which is already delivering higher quality water than ever before, meaning less chlorine is needed and taste is improved.

An Open Day is planned for the R.E. Williams Dam in the near future.

Rainbow Road

If you missed the very successful and well-planned community consultation day, you may view the current plan. The Working Group is still keen to hear your suggestions about design, thematics, signage, artwork, facilities, lighting etc. Expressions of Interest for artwork are also sought.

The DA is about to be submitted by the Working Group. Construction is not expected to begin before July, with completion expected by November this year.

Wayfinding Project

Wil Polson reported on the implementation of village improvements funded by the DPIE and Traffic NSW. These include the upgrade of the pedestrian footway beside Birth & Beyond to give access to the rear carpark; additional signage including disabled parking locations; speed humps; possible shade

and ferro-cement seating at the Blister; a parklet outside the Green Bank and audio signage.

Speed bumps are on trial for six months and are being monitored for traffic management planning, but can be moved sooner if requested. Community feedback on all aspects of the project is still open via Council's Your Say.

Maintenance

Maintenance of Wayfinding Project outcomes, Rainbow Road, Peace Park and other community spaces needs to be considered by Council. If a permanent staff member position is not established, Jungle Patrol will need increased funds to cover these areas.

LCC is prioritising LEAP program funding for apprentices, especially with regard to grants projects, but staff agree that a community-based maintenance person would be most effective.

CCTV

LCC is responsible for maintenance, management and security of cameras. The NAG requested a report from Council staff to inform community about accessing CCTV footage when needed. Currently there can be a delay in police response, as they follow the access protocol.

Given concerns raised about the slow response of police to view footage, LCC is planning to meet with police to review access protocols.

LCC policy about releasing footage to community groups needs also to be reviewed. There are no privacy issues in regard to footage recorded in a public space.

Changed meeting times

Diana requested a change of Advisory Group meeting time to allow for comprehensive notes to be published in *Nimbin GoodTimes*, and the meeting agreed. Meetings will continue to be held on Thursdays, but earlier in the month.

Arboretum

Gerard Payne, who has purchased the land on High Street, which includes Barry Walker's Arboretum (established some 45 years ago and much neglected since his death) would like community feedback on how best to develop the land in such a way that the Arboretum will be maintained.

He has already spent over \$100,000 on restoration and is wondering if the subdivision and development of six lots under community title could be effective in maintaining this work.

Aquarius50

The NSW Government is now in caretaker mode, so state funding is not immediately possible. However, the Mayor will be in discussion with politicians at the state level once the election is over. He is also exploring Federal funding possibilities.

Chamber Chat

by Daffyd Hyett, president

Trading/staffing

February is a notoriously slow month for retail and hospitality due to the overspend from January which occurs during the holiday period, combined with the cost of getting the kids back to school.

Nimbin still has a bit of a buzz about, with most traders reporting solid results.

Adequate staffing is however still an issue. People looking for employment stand in good stead if they have relative experience for roles on offer, as well as an up-to-date resume to support their interest in finding a role.

Lismore City Council

Council has appointed a new General Manager Jon Gibbons, to replace the out-going General Manager John Walker who chose not to renew his contract.

The revolving door of general managers (six in nearly as many years) at Lismore City Council is both very costly and disruptive.

In recent times the Chamber has had several meetings with LCC general managers, but we have to this point lacked enough continuity to feel we are having our voice heard.

Our most recent meeting with Council earlier this month was attended by LCC's Eber Butron, Executive Manager Economy and Growth, and Tina Irish Manager Destination and Economy. Items of interest that were discussed were:

- Council's preparation of a Nimbin Master Plan to evaluate and provide



solutions for details of implantation of water supply, public facilities and roads and traffic. The plan is due to go on display this May.

- Feedback was sought on Council's commitment to a Visitor Information Centre to be located on the main street following Council's lack of support after closing the VIC which was in the centre of the village and their failure to assist the Nimbin Bush Theatre's efforts to fill the gap in the service.
- The Visit Nimbin website which has a high hit rate and is hosted by Council has become outdated and unworkable. It needs to be replaced. The Chamber is considering taking it out of Council's hands and tailoring a new site to meet the needs of the village.
- The roll-out of the Roads and Traffic funded Wayfinding project has started with speed bumps being installed in Cullen Street. Further traffic studies are underway to inform future designs.
- The Rainbow Walking Track is progressing well, but unlikely to be completed before both the MardiGrass and Aquarius50 festivals.
- Visitor signage has been installed at the three entries to the village, as well as building plaques detailing the background and significance of buildings with historic value in the town and village.

Potholes

It is noted that Council have not updated their pothole weekly report on the Lismore Council Your Say website since 2nd August 2022.

The most obvious damage to streetscape is in Thorburn Street which has potholes deep enough to swim in, as well as the entry and exit to Lismore on the south side of the village. Both locations carry large amounts of traffic and could do with some love.

Major events

During the month, the Nimbin Hemp Embassy conducted another successful Medican information session on medical marijuana covering the law, distribution, health benefits product and literature displays. Over 100 people attended the event and went away better informed on health matters with a good feeling about our village and what we offer the world.


Aquarius50 is moving ahead. A programme will be out soon and visible on the website: www.aquarius50.com

A two-day Events Management course was conducted at the Nimbin Bush Theatre by Dr Rob Evans of Event Management Australia, a world leader in his field, which was very informative.

Funding and volunteers are two main areas now. Friends of Aquarius50 have a call out to solicit support from the community in both areas. Donations are appreciated, as is any offer of in-kind or committed energy.

With our members' support we are working towards building a better, stronger and more vibrant future for our children and the community as a whole.

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Lismore rally for Julian Assange on 20th anniversary of Iraq War

by Assange Team Northern Rivers

It was Julian's quest to bring us the truth about the Iraq war, where 36 million people protested against it ever starting. One million civilians died, which made up 90% of all deaths, a figure that has risen incrementally from 10% in World War 2 to 50% in the Vietnam War. Two people ended the war... Julian was one of those two! "The first casualty of war is the truth" – Julian Assange

The rally will take place on Saturday 18th March, 11am at Lismore Memorial Baths.

700,000 documented war crimes were leaked by Chelsea Manning. These documents were published by Julian along with multiple news corporations as a matter of public interest.

Both Manning and Assange went



to jail; Manning was later pardoned. Julian is still in jail and fighting an ominous extradition to the US, where CIA operatives had been planning to murder Assange

before he was 'released' from the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he was granted asylum for seven years.

After threats that the US would make life very difficult for Ecuador and a large sum of money was transferred from the US to Ecuador, his asylum ended abruptly without due course and he was taken to Belmarsh prison in 2019. Julian has been placed in the highest of security under appalling conditions.

Lismore (Goolmangar) is Julian's home town and we will rise up and cry out on the 18th as part of a global rally to bring our boy home. So let's be loud and impassioned from our core. Bring your message to the world in banners, signs and use our hearts.

Learn more at: #FreeAssange and register for the latest news

from Julian's family, lawyers and supporters.

The rally will feature a letter writing and picture drawing (for the kids) station. Send a message of support to Julian, to the Belmarsh Prison.

So what of truth, justice and the future of us all? We – those people – not only expect, but deserve the truth, because it gives us a much needed strength to believe in our societies, our militaries and our governance. To believe in our leaders.

If we are expected to contribute things like faith, time, patience, hard-earned money etc towards our leaderships globally, and therefore expected to blindly trust that what they're doing is the "right" thing, then surely it stands to reason that every so often we should be able to reserve the right to have a really

good squiz – a really good hard look – into what's actually going on...

Quite unfortunately throughout history, anytime anyone has stood up for these sorts of ideals they get sidelined, slandered, framed, threatened, punched, kicked out, shot-at, silently or loudly murdered or worse – rarely get written into history!

As if all the blood, sweat and tears and selfless bleeding-hearted efforts were literally worthless in the eye of our collective history.

Speakers at the rally will include Graham Dunstan, prominent cultural and political activist, and Eddie Lloyd, lawyer, humanitarian, environmentalist. More speakers to be announced.

For updates, join the Northern Rivers NSW 4 Assange page on Facebook, or check in at the Nimbin Environment Centre.



by Rebecca Ryall

Kyogle Writers Festival – the small-town festival with big ideas – again lived up to its ethos, bringing award winning Kurdish Iranian writer Behrouz Boochani (pictured), along with his translator and collaborator Omid Tofighian, to the Kyogle Uniting Church Fellowship Hall, to discuss their new book *Freedom, Only Freedom*, their writing process and their inspiration.

Their first book together, *No Friend but*

This is happening in your name

the Mountains: writings from Manus Prison, published in 2018 and winner of the Victorian Prize for Literature, and the Victorian Premier's Prize for Nonfiction in 2019, was famously written on a mobile phone, in Boochani's mother tongue, Farsi, and delivered (through advocate/collaborator Moones Mansoubi) via WhatsApp to Omid, his translator.

Their latest offering is a collection of essays by Boochani and others, offered as a chronological context to their earlier work.

Boochani, after being denied asylum in Australia and detained in off-shore detention for six years, was eventually offered resettlement by New Zealand, allowing him to travel freely in Australia today, to promote his work and, more importantly, continue to expose the ongoing violence of Australia's response to refugees and asylum seekers.

The pair reminded the audience that there are currently 70 people still detained by Australian authorities in Papua New Guinea, and another 70 being held at Nauru. This brutal regime, experienced by refugees as a dictatorship, is being enforced in our names.

These numbers, and the language that is employed to speak about the people they

represent, actively deny their humanity, their stories, strengths and dreams.

Boochani sees his work as reinstating this humanity, as a political act against the dehumanising systems and policies, enforced by our governments in the name of national security.

"Who is really in prison in Australia?" they asked their audience, "What national identity has been constructed for you by your government?" and "When will Australians create change?"

Freedom, Only Freedom directly links our country's on-going mistreatment of refugees to the violence of on-going colonialism, oppressing our First Nations brothers and sisters. Australia itself, they remind us, was created as an off-shore detention centre and has a history of enforced displacement, exile and torture.

Both Boochani and Tofighian acknowledged the advocacy and activism occurring in Australia, highlighting the networks of care established here, which supported the men incarcerated on Manus Prison, when our government pulled their funding, leaving more than 300 men in a compound with no power, water or food, for more than three weeks.

They recognise that these activists and advocates are the first in our society to encounter the knowledge of their systematic brutalization, and the direct and indirect lies of our elected representatives.

The important work of organised activism in awareness raising and direct support is on-going. Also present at the Kyogle event were representatives of the Lismore Region Refugee Support group.

This group is organising to welcome a refugee family to our region and supply on-going, necessary financial and social support.

Actions such as these empower us as individuals to refuse the brutality being wrought in our names and recognise the humanity in those who come seeking refuge.

This group can be contacted at: LismoreRegionalLRRS@gmail.com and the books by Behrouz Boochani and Omid Tofighian can be purchased at the Book Warehouse in Lismore.

To make sure you don't miss out on important events like this one, visit: kyoglewritersfestival.com and sign up to the newsletter. The team is curating a calendar of events over the coming year which are, like this one, sure to get you talking.

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Janelle Saffin MP
MEMBER FOR LISMORE

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Legalise cannabis: Now is the time for change

by Mirembe Campbell

Over 40 years ago while travelling around Afghanistan, Michael Balderstone (*pictured*) first learnt about medicinal cannabis. He experienced how beneficial the plant was for his PTSD and migraines. “I couldn’t believe the relief,” he says. “It was life-changing.” Today, Michael Balderstone is president of the Nimbin Hemp Embassy, a not-for-profit incorporated association. He is also president of the Legalise Cannabis Australia Party (now holding two seats in the Legislative Assembly in Victoria and West Australia). Michael decided to dedicate his life to educating others about cannabis and its many healing properties. And because of this, 30 years ago with the help of key people, the Nimbin Hemp Embassy was born. For Michael, the mission of the Hemp Embassy is educating people about Cannabis. “We’re teaching people, dispelling myths, combating misinformation and straightening out the lies,” Michael adds passionately. Through cannabis education, Michael has observed progressively less and less social stigma associated with medicinal cannabis. The interest is growing, “we’re getting more and more visitors enquiring and wanting to learn.” This correlates with research from National Drug Strategy Household Survey showing public support for legalising cannabis has almost doubled in six years. There is no

doubt serious political pressure is mounting to legalise cannabis. Greens Senator David Shoebridge agrees: “legalising cannabis makes social and economic sense”. Senator Shoebridge explains that making cannabis legal ensures it can be regulated and taxed, subsequently injecting “billions of dollars into Australia’s economy.” This means more funding to address social inequities, and paves the way for harm reduction by keeping people out of the criminal justice system. Michael firmly agrees, “this is why the Legalise Cannabis campaign is so important. I think people are seeing just how many of us are suffering needlessly.” The evidence suggests he is right. But NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman says the NSW Government does not support decriminalisation of cannabis. He argues cannabis causes serious health, social and economic harm to users, their families and the wider community. Michael says this is bullshit. He reasons that the government and big pharmaceutical companies have “made everything about money.” He accuses them of “placing profits before people’s health and profiting off our pain.” Interestingly, there are stark differences between big pharma ‘legal’ cannabis and home grown ‘illegal’ cannabis. Michael explains, “big pharma cannabis is grown under strict hygienic conditions and mostly indoors. Various solutions are used and the cannabis product is not organic.” By

comparison, Michael says “illegal cannabis grown on the Northern Rivers is organic and typically grown outdoors in fresh air and sunshine!” Michael explains his passion for cannabis reform and his years of activism stem from the ‘injustices and overall unfairness of the cannabis laws.” Michael says, in the eyes of the law, he has lived the majority of his life as a criminal. “I’m not at all comfortable with that,” he says. At one time Michael was charged with ‘driving under the influence of medicinal cannabis’ but he took it to Court and won. He adds: “the driving laws are infuriating; the government have made a lot of people angry.” There is no adequate testing for intoxication of THC that reflects whether someone is driving impaired. The tests identify a presence from substances that may have been taken up to two weeks previously. For people who use medicinal cannabis this puts them at significant risk, and in a regional area with little or no public transport may impact their treatment options. Dr Thomas Arkwell, Research Fellow and Psychopharmacologist at Swinburne University, Melbourne agrees. He asserts that patients face potentially severe penalties for driving with legal THC products in their system. He claims this is a major barrier for patients either contemplating or receiving medicinal cannabis treatments. Although he opposes decriminalisation even Mr Speakman concedes current drug

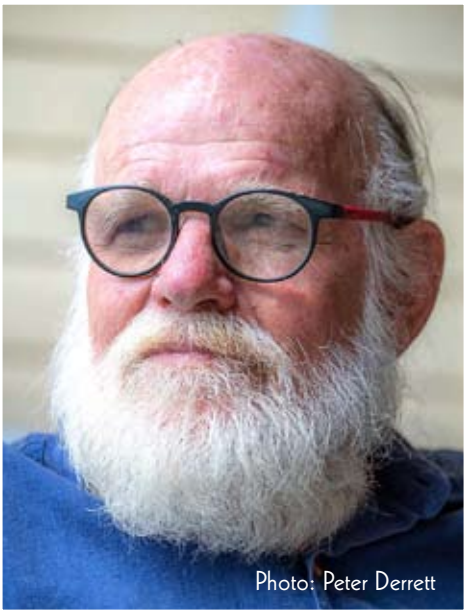


Photo: Peter Derrett

policies in NSW are ‘clearly not working’. While he is a hypocrite he is also right. It is also clear that a change of policy could be of enormous benefit to all Australians. A recent report from the Parliamentary Budget Office shows legalising cannabis could generate \$28 billion in taxes. Commenting on the report, Senator Shoebridge says the research provides yet another “28 billion reasons” for the government to move forward with legalising cannabis. Now is the time for change. It’s not rocket science. It’s actually just science. And good economics. Legalise Cannabis. *The 2023 Nimbin MardiGrass Protestival will be held form Friday 5th to Sunday 7th May. More info at: <https://nimbinmardigrass.com>*

Finally, a breakthrough on RDT

by Michael Balderstone

I still expect police roadblocks at MardiGrass this year but finally there is some light at the end of the long dark tunnel cannabis users have had to drive through for years now. The two newly elected upper house MPs in Victoria from the Legalise Cannabis Party introduced a bill on Wednesday to change the *Road Safety Act*. “People who have been prescribed a medicine and can drive safely should be allowed to drive,” Legalise Cannabis MP David Ettershank said. “This is how we treat every single prescription medicine in Victoria, except medicinal cannabis, and it’s time for that to be corrected.” “Medicinal cannabis patients can drive in Tasmania if unimpaired,” said Rachel Payne, his fellow Legalise Cannabis MP who called on Victoria to follow suit. Good on them for opening the batting so strongly in almost

their first week in Parliament. I actually think the ridiculous war on cannabis-using drivers is a big reason why our vote numbers are so high in recent elections. Thousands of people would love to be trying cannabis medicinally but the risk of losing your driving licence is just too great. Especially for country people. And it’s a no-brainer that the issue should be about impairment and not the mere presence of a skerrick of cannabis in someone’s saliva. Be it dementia or drugs, old age or anger, tiredness or trauma, impairment is obviously the issue. We are just being bullied by a bad nonsensical law. My almost 90-year-old father stopped suddenly in the middle of a busy roundabout with me in the passenger seat one day. “I’ve forgotten where we’re going Mike.” You can be nodding off with a gut full of methadone (method one invented by the Nazis) or opium based medications, but no saliva test will worry you because

Big Pharma’s best pain killers are opium based. And of course you will be a better driver if your pain is kept at bay, so long as you’re not sleepy! The horse has seriously bolted as far as cannabis use in Australia is concerned. Every day hundreds of new patients are getting prescriptions. Legal weed is all over the shop. Mostly from Canada but increasingly grown here in Oz. It all has to get irradiated before humans can consume it I hear, but I have no real idea what that means or what it does to the buds. The suppliers, the growers, are all Big Money operations. They’ve cornered the legal market because it takes millions of dollars to get the permits. And now we are cornered and pushed to buy their legal products so we will be allowed to drive. Big Business wins again. For now! I expect the next step for our Legalise Cannabis MPs will be to try and get home grown weed allowed. Then will we be allowed to



drive if we smoke our own? Plenty of changes have to happen and they will. The genie is out of the bottle and the truth will eventually set us free, when greed gets out of the way. Legalise Cannabis is running quite a few Lower House candidates in the NSW March 25 election, giving the issue as much air as possible. We are also running for a spot, or even two again in the Upper House and if elected the first job will be to tackle the RDT rules. It’s not just in Tasmania where they leave medical pot drivers alone, it’s also in Canberra. In the ACT people can grow two plants,

or four between two people, and there appears to be no saliva testing of drivers at all. Even big music gatherings are left alone. Of course if you are impaired it’s another matter. Both David and Rachel, as well as the two WA Legalise Cannabis MPs are coming to MardiGrass and maybe, just maybe, with some newly elected NSW Upper House MPs as well. Make sure you seek them out and tell them your weed story. The longer I live here in the Nimbin community the more I realise how well educated on illicit drugs we are. It’s not normal.

A tribute to Roa Dart

by Keith Gasteen

Pot hole artist Roa Dart was a great storyteller: a picture worth 1000 words. Like the character in 18th Century English satirist Alexander Pope’s story, our unknown artist would “Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.” Will we see a continuation of the Roa Dart school? As we drive on our post-flood roads, we see pale imitations of his artforms. The most promising is a potential

master from his academy and a worthy disciple, hailing from the Tuntable hills and, at the age of 11 possessing the sort of character that his master would have approved. I’m reliably informed that he is continuing this work because he likes to ride his bike fast and therefore needs to be able to see where the potholes are. An English woman of Cornish extraction told me that potholes got their name from the practice of the local potters mining the roads for their fine clay, which was already

partly prepared by the churning of the wagon wheels. I tend to prefer the notion that the potholes are where the pot heads choose to hide when the chopper raids are on... Let’s hope we don’t suffer a decline of this art form similar to that forecast by art historian Karel Kupka, should the government legalise the herb superb any time soon. *Roa Dart and the Quest for a New Rosetta Stone* is my account of the work of this pot hole artist, who I met at The Channon markets some time



in 2009 and decided to write a little story about his “primitive” artworks. There is a serious side to these stories which send up the academic tradition and our (mis) understandings of Australian first nations’ artworks; and politics and a



whole lot of other stuff. Signed copies of the book are available for \$25 at Nimbin Artists Gallery. Hopefully it will add something to the spirit of Aquarius in this 50th anniversary year.

Time to end mining in the Clarence Valley

by the Clarence Catchment Alliance

Residents of the Clarence River Valley have made their opposition to mining exploration in their catchment very clear, yet the Federal Government recently gave a \$50,000 grant to Corazon Mining to continue drilling operations at Mt Gilmore west of Grafton at the junction of the Mann and Clarence Rivers. This is hard-earned taxpayers' money and comes on top of \$200,000 provided to the same company by way of a co-drilling grant a year earlier.

This is despite every candidate for the Page electorate at the 2022 federal election, supporting the call for an end to mining activities in the Clarence River catchment.

A petition with 11,000 signatures opposing mining in the catchment was lodged and debated in the NSW parliament last year, with speakers in support of the ban coming from Labor; Shooters, Farmers and Fishers; and the NSW Greens.

Speakers against were from the current coalition government, including our own Clarence state representative.

The petition was supported by a written request from the Clarence Valley Council to end mining in the catchment, and also supported in writing by five neighbouring

councils. Clearly, mining has no social licence in the Clarence catchment, and it is equally clear that existing exploration licence holders are aware of that fact as they have steadfastly refused to consult with concerned resident groups for the past four years.

This lack of a social licence was conveyed to mineral exploration licence holders and mining lease owners in the catchment in a mail-out by the Clarence Catchment Alliance, early in the new year.

However, indicative of the contempt for residents' concerns that has been a feature over the past four years, not a single response has been received and, more significantly, 10% were returned to sender unopened, with Australia Post being unable to find the address.

Enough is enough. There is a state election looming, so if you want your rivers, drinking water and ocean protected, not to mention our beautiful hinterland scenery, and species, find a candidate that will fight for a mine-free Clarence catchment and vote accordingly.

For more information or comment please contact Shae Fleming, CCA co-ordinator: ccashae@fleming@gmail.com

Facebook: Clarence Catchment Alliance Web: <https://linktr.ee/Nominesclarencevalley>



Junction of the Mann and Clarence Rivers. The Corazon mine site is at top left.

Casino to Mur'bah rail service still sorely needed

by Louise Doran

A group of Murwillumbah residents (pictured) gathered outside the office of Member for Tweed, Geoff Provest in February demanding the state government stop wasting taxpayers' money destroying the Casino to Murwillumbah train line.

They want Mr Provest and the National Party to provide the "enormously socially, environmentally and cost-effective train service" on the line, and build the rail connection to the Queensland rail system, as promised.

This fast-growing region with millions of tourists has needed this service for many years, residents said.

Rally organiser Ms Luxford said: "Neither Mr Provest or the state

government have ever gone to an election asking the people if they want their train line destroyed and replaced with a bike track costing \$14.4 million just for the first stage of track.

"They know very well people would not have voted for it. People voted for Trains On Our Tracks and the Liberal/National Parties promised for so many years they would "get the trains running."

Our community has been devastated by catastrophic floods. Roads are a mess and people whose homes were destroyed are still living rough and don't know when they'll get decent housing. But Mr Provest and the state government can prioritise wasting \$14.4 million of taxpayers' money, destroying part



of a billion-dollar train line for a bike track. There are more urgent needs in our community right now!

"We all know it would cost much less to build the bike track alongside

the train line," Ms Luxford said. "So many locals have worked so hard for so long to have the commuter train service we've needed for so long provided, and to stop

our valuable train line from being destroyed.

"After Geoff Provest and the National Party promised us for so many years that 'you can have your trains back' people are very upset and angry to see them now wasting so many millions of taxpayers' money turning our valuable train line into scrap metal."

"The state government can spend \$250 million of taxpayers' money on pork-barreling but refuse to provide a single cent for the train service they promised.

"Enough is enough! The deceitful way Mr Provest and the National Party have treated this community, in the middle of a climate crisis, is a disgrace and shameful, and we will not tolerate it."

NEFA fundraiser

by Shae Salmon

On Saturday 4th February, about 100 people turned up to support the NEFA (North East Forest Alliance) fundraiser held at the Axtens' residence in Lismore.

From the beginning the atmosphere was one of enthusiasm and camaraderie with everyone there embracing and acknowledging the wonderful and vital work that NEFA has done and continues to do. Of course, a night filled with local music and fun was also appealing!

NEFA are one of our most valuable and active groups that are forefront in trying to save our precious forests and wildlife. It was formed in 1989 as an alliance to principally protect old growth forests, wilderness environments and threatened species.

NEFA have been involved in vital court cases such as



defending Chaelundi State Forest, and the money raised on the night will be going towards further on-going campaigns, legal matters, scientific research and direct action.

Indeed, one of the founders and president of NEFA, Dailan Pugh was there on the night; an absolute hero, fabulous artist and defender of nature.

As for the music, the talented Chris Fisher (pictured) started the evening with a set of his original and fabulous songs. The powerful punk vibes of the Gusset

Rats followed and had the audience on their toes.

Last up was one of Lismore's favourite bands The Verbals, who packed the dance floor blasting out some solid tunes and had to keep on playing as the crowd demanded multiple encores!

S Sorensen was doing what he does so well – being MC for the night, and our Greens MP for the NSW Upper House Sue Higginson gave an impassioned and rousing speech on how important our forests are, and how the need to protect them is now greater than ever.

Huge thanks to Sean O'Shannessey and Mick Daley for organising the event, the Axtens' family for providing the wonderful venue, and the volunteer crew on food, drinks and the door.

As Sean summed it up, "It was a fantastic energising night. The community came together to end forest logging and have a good time!"

You have to start somewhere

by Rene Norwee

Nimbin Storytellers held their very first event at the Nimbin Bowling Club on Saturday, 11th February. By all accounts, it was a fabulous occasion!

Here's some of the feedback we received: "What a great evening this was. Well done everyone who took the stage. So many amazing life stories! Can't wait for the next one!"

"It was such a good feel night. Great stories and very bonding as a community. Thanks to all those who shared their amazing stories"

Seven locals shared personal stories on the theme of 'You have to start somewhere', and we were captivated by stories about holding your nerve in the Israeli desert, discovering a love for teaching in the grasslands, reuniting with the one that got away, how a hippy traveller found her stride for teaching on the banks of the Darling River, how one gets out of a tricky situation with good manners, finding comfort in the welcoming embrace of trees, and how a chance request led to discovering how the other half lives.

Some of these stories are available to hear at: www.nimbinstorytellers.com/listen

Next event: Saturday 1st April, 7pm at the Nimbin Bowlo. The evening's theme is 'Life Lines'.



Curious about how to participate in live storytelling? Want to test the waters?

Join us for our monthly Story Grouptalk, when we meet over coffee to run through our story ideas in a friendly, supportive group setting. Or come along if you are interested in learning a bit more about us and live storytelling. All are welcome.

Contact us for a time and place: nimbinstoryteller@gmail.com

Upcoming event themes for your story inspirations are: 'Belonging' and 'Nourished'.

Hari Ommmm

The House of Bliss collective are gathering for a first evening of community chanting for 2023 on Saturday 11th March, when the Mullumbimby Uniting Church Hall will be transformed into a sacred temple by decor divas.

The evening will begin around 6.30pm with an acknowledgement of Country and a short meditation to drop into our hearts to prepare for an evening of singing, dancing and silence.

The Byron and Tweed Shires are recognised as the kirtan capitals of Australia, with a number of different groups now regularly putting on high quality evenings and festivals.

This night will continue the standard with an exhilarating line-up of Tanya (harmonium/vocals), Lucy (violin/vocals), Juan (electric guitar), Prhlad (bass/vocals), Peter (percussion), Kat

(vocals) and this month's guest Shunya (acoustic guitar/vocals, pictured).

The invitation is to sing – call and response or unison – with a range of mantra styles from the traditional to the newly written. The band will take you to the celestial realms where the Hindu deities of Vishnu, Lakshmi, Shiva and Saraswati come alive, returning to Earth around 9.30pm.

Shunya's new self-produced CD *Prana Spark* will be available from the merchandise table.

Doors, food and drinks from Amma's kitchen at 6pm, cash only please. Bring a water bottle or a pillow or blanket for your comfort;



some chairs will be available. The Uniting Church is on the corner of Whian and Dalley Street. Tickets are \$25 general

or \$20 concession and are available in advance through Humanitix, via the *House of Bliss* Facebook page, or on the door if not sold out.

Enjoy Chilean world music with Subhira Quinteto

One of the most innovative ensembles in the World Music genre, Subhira Quinteto from Chile will already be in Australia after arriving to play at the Port Fairy Music Festival in mid-March, and through local connections have decided to play in the Northern Rivers, rather than just the bigger cities.

"It is a total treat that they are coming here! I met Subhira, the composer and 'soul' of the band, 25 years ago while helping run deep ecology workshops in Chile. I love how connections can stay alive and help bridge cultures – and what better way than with music? Do not miss seeing them play here," local Terri Nicholson said.

Subhira Quintet have played at many of the main world music festivals of Chile, North America and Europe. Their progressive musical style combines world music, jazz, electronica and folk, and their



compositions mix rhythms and languages from the native people of South America. It is eclectic, exquisite and danceable. They call their style, "wild contemporary world music".

The soul of the band is Rodrigo Cepeda, alias Subhira. He graduated as composer from the Modern School of Music and Master of the Arts on Composition at the Conservatory of

Music, University of Chile in Santiago. After more than 25 years on stage, he has released 15 albums, played hundreds of concerts and international tours.

Also an environmental activist with indigenous Aymaran ancestry, Subhira's music celebrates the magnificent forests, mountains and other natural places of Chile, and has sound-tracked major

environmental campaigns. The quintet will also be playing a benefit gig for the Bulga forest campaign while in Australia.

Alongside Rodrigo Cepedo on piano and other eclectic indigenous instruments, the other band members include: Francisco Martinez on cello, Fernanda Jachi Prieto on violin, Ema Morales on flute and Rebeka Martinez on drums. What they weave musically is stunning.

The visual component plays an important role in the work of this quartet, and their concerts are often accompanied by footage about the lives of different South American ethnicities.

Subhira Quinteto will perform at the Byron Bay Theatre (Community Centre) on Saturday 18th March, 8pm – 10.30pm, where they will share their stunning music and culture. Tickets through: byroncentre.com.au



by PAC

Wall of Love played to an appreciative audience at the Nimbin Bowling Club on Saturday night, 25th February. They played a range of their original music and threw the odd cover song in now and again.

The band had five members including a female singer who played the keyboard as did the saxophone player.

The others were a drummer and two others who swapped between lead and bass and also sang.

After the restaurant shut the volume went up and it was a memorable evening for the people who stayed until the show was over.

And for the people who didn't turn up, you certainly missed out, so keep your eyes peeled for their next gig around the Nimbin area.

Kylie Costello's 50th



by PAC

Kylie Costello of Barkers Vale celebrated her 50th birthday at the Nimbin Bowling Club on 4th February with a rocking theme of 1980s dress and music.

The turnout was great, and I'm sure Kylie would like to thank everyone for their attendance.



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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 8th March, 6pm
- Trivia night, Saturday 18th March, 6pm
- Social Bowls, Sundays 10am, all welcome