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Flood survivors rally for a just recovery

by Miriam Torzillo

On a gloomy Saturday morning scores of people circled an impromptu stage at the Lismore Transit Centre in response to a call from community group ROR (Reclaim our Recovery) to begin visioning a just recovery for the Northern Rivers.

The crowd connected, listened and danced to local musicians; speeches informed them and conversations were had. Most importantly the crowd were able to give their own answers to some of the most important questions the Northern Rivers has faced in recent memory.

The event began at 1pm with a Welcome to Country by Widjabul Wiabul elder Aunty Marie-Ann Delbridge and continued throughout the afternoon including participation, by way of conversation and the recording of responses to a set of questions posed about recovery, justice and future visions.

Speeches addressed key issues of concern for the Northern Rivers community and brought different perspectives about what recovery could look like. Antoinette O'Brien spoke from the perspective of tenants and renters, forgotten by the agencies charged with recovery.

She said: "If (the NRRC) want to take everything off the floodplain? That's a great



ideal. But if what actually happens is that the only thing that comes off the floodplain is potentially affordable housing... then it was a farce."

Antoinette proposed a vision for the Northern Rivers that included affordable housing for all, respect for First Nations and history and for the river.

Alternative low-energy housing models were presented by Mike Hayden, who stressed the importance of energy efficient design. Harper Dalton called for a triage process for the Resilient Homes Program that would prioritise the needs of families in high risk areas over those of investors. Lastly we heard a humorous and personal perspective on floods and survival from Steve Posselt, well known kayaker for climate justice.

The Transit Centre in Lismore was kept activated throughout the afternoon with music from Lismore local legends HDM (Human Dinosaur Machine), soloist

Tahlia Colby and The Seeding from Byron. All musicians offered their services free to this event.

The crowd kept up their strength with food from the Rainbow Wholefoods mobile van and tea and cakes provided by members of local activist group SOAR (Socialise, Organise, Arts, Resist).

A member of the crowd "found it to be an uplifting and inspiring event, reminding... of the beautiful DIY 'don't ask permission, just do it' spirit that got people rescued and fed and supported by the community during and in the months of crisis after the Flood. The music was amazing – the sound quality, the talent – Wow! And there was a food van and free tea and coffee."

A key part of the event was participation. The crowd were invited to think about issues relevant to a just recovery and imagine a vision of the future they wanted. Questions were written on large boards around the edges of the space.

ROR members moved among the crowd, having discussions and providing post-it notes and pens for people to add their ideas to each. Community thinking was also gathered in short audio and video recordings.

The real nugget, the real purpose of the rally was to bring people together in conversations and to collect the thinking of the community about the issues that we face in our recovery and into the future.

This thinking will be collected in a document and presented to the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC), LCC and local state member, Janelle Saffin. ROR believes there is strength in numbers.

The intention of this gathering was to push for outcomes that benefit all of the people of the Northern Rivers, future generations and the local ecosystems that it exists within. This is part of an on-going organising effort that will continue until the people of the Northern Rivers achieve the justice they deserve.

A quote from a member of the crowd summed up the sentiment well: "NRRC needs to be community-led, we know what should be prioritised. Yes, we'd have shit-fights but they would be our shit-fights."

Email: ReclaimOurRecovery@protonmail.com

Free workshops for community carers

Plan C, a Northern Rivers not-for-profit grassroots charity, is delivering its popular Community Carers and Responders (CCR) training in Kyogle, Casino, Tweed, Ballina and Ocean Shores, and is welcoming locals to apply.

Plan C is establishing a volunteer network of 300 trained and mobilised CCRs who support their community through the prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery from disasters, in the wake of the 2022 floods that hit the region.

CCRs receive three days of free training, which include self-care, disaster resilience, community building,



emergency communications as well as food, water, and energy security, before completing a day of first aid and a day of psychological first aid training, also for free.

Upon graduation, participants are then mentored to lead a project that builds the resilience of their own community and are regularly invited to additional workshops, community events, and field visits to deepen their knowledge but also connections with each other throughout the Northern Rivers.

The aim is to build community resilience and regeneration for the six Northern Rivers local government areas affected by the floods.

Training commences in May. For more information and to apply, go to: www.ccrnetwork.org/apply



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Gully of Giants protector faces court

Forest protector Valerie Thompson faced court in Ballina on 20th April for mention after stopping forestry work in an environmentally-sensitive area of the Doubleduke State Forest for 30 hours over 9th and 10th March.

Valerie was charged under three forestry regulations relating to entering a closed forest and stopping work by being tied to forestry equipment while suspended from a tree. Her trial will begin in June.

The forest is now under an Environment Protection Authority-approved stop work order after Forestry Corp NSW were instructed to map all giant and habitat trees in Doubleduke for protection.

Lawyer for Valerie and North East Forest Alliance, Eddie Lloyd, welcomed the EPA's decision to require Forestry Corp to stop harvesting, but said it was, "absurd that concerned citizens like Valerie had to expose these Forestry crimes, when this is clearly the remit of the EPA, particularly during their investigation period."

"If it were not for Valerie and other concerned citizens acting to expose forestry crimes, those multi-hundred-year old trees would have been felled by Forest Corp," Ms Lloyd said.

"We have also noted over 100 'accidental' felling of trees that should be protected, and many more instances of damage to important habitat trees," Valerie said.

"What it shows is that Forestry Corp cannot be trusted to manage our state forests. Here again is evidence of a brazen industry culture of rule-



Supporters at the court in a chalk circle with the diameter of the tree marked for harvesting that Valerie (in red) measured. Photo: Sean O'Shanessy

breaking and dodgy practices that simply must stop.

"We call on the new NSW government to immediately act to protect these giants, put real controls on FCNSW forest malpractice and end all subsidies propping up this destructive industry. We need a rapid transition out of native forest logging to end this wasteful destruction for

good," Valerie said.

Tamara Smith MP, State Member for Ballina, commended the EPA for placing the stop work order on the forest, but acknowledged it was another case of too little too late.

"The Greens are committed to ending native forest logging, which is the only way these forests will be protected for the future," Ms Smith said.

Remembering and healing

by Manuela Matheson

On the Eve of ANZAC Day, the Northern Rivers Peace group Remembering and Healing Inc. (RaH) organised their 14th Peace Ceremony to remember and honour all people who have suffered through war. This special event enjoys steadily-growing popularity among the locals.

As always, Jenny Dowell, MCed the event and led the 130 participants through the program which included speeches, musical entertainment, and a candle-lighting ceremony. People came to reflect on peace as they listened to the various perspectives offered by representatives of diverse religious and community groups from across our region.



From left to right: Rev. Greg Jenks (Anglican Church), Deirdre Paillas (Pianist), Micky Foss (Sanctuary Refugee group), Jenny Dowell (RaH Patron), Lisa McPhie (Men's and Family Centre), Auntie Thelma James (local Elder), Hélène Safajou (member of Bahai community).

To name but a few, Auntie Thelma talked about the importance of truth-telling; Rev. Greg Jenks about Jewish-Palestinian

friendships in Jerusalem; and Lisa McPhie informed us about the detrimental effects of traditional 'manly' behaviours.

Between speeches, piano sounds, masterly played by Deirdre Paillas, filled the air and the Clunatics, conducted by Imogen Wolf, added a superbly performed repertoire of peace songs.

After the formal program, many people stayed on to share their own reflections with each other and make new friends over home-made supper and refreshments.

It was a heart-warming event that nourished my soul and gave me much food for thought on what I can do myself to bring more peace to the lives of others in the spirit of Paul Kelly's song 'From Little Things Big Things Grow'.

Anyone interested in RaH, please contact Sabina on 6688-6214 or: rahow@internode.on.net

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by Benny Zable
NAFI president

The Rainbow Chai Tent first came up for the Aquarius 10th anniversary in 1983.

Chai Mic brought up a busload of chai mob from St Andrews, Victoria. Our 2023 artist-in-residence Mandy Pickett, was a young woman on that bus trip – be sure to see what she will be offering from the chai space below the hall and around the village during Aquarius50. Mic's son Sam Webb, will also return.

In 1981, the late Michael Webb – 'Chai Mic' – with his partner Christine, began a small herbal tea stall one summer at St Andrew's Market, in the back hills of Melbourne, which celebrated its 50th in April 2023.

Still needed and appreciated by the local community, it needed a tent for the winter. Marg Wardel gave her old square tent, and Balibah Singh gave Mic his chai recipe.

Bali had run a chai stall at St Andrews Market, and after the 1973 festival, Benny Zable would network there, relaying his travel stories from Nimbin to St Andrews, under his tarp.

The community continued to gather every Saturday, to talk, play music, to dance and enjoy community, the Chai

History of the Rainbow Chai Tent



"May the longtime sun shine upon you all love surround you and the pure light within you guide your way on..."

family grew.

It set up at Down to Earth's 'ConFests', and served all night, and the music kept flowing, the drums a' drumming. A rainbow tent was commissioned. It inspired other normal food stalls to provide seating, comfort, etc, for their customers.

Volunteers have always been the key to our existence. A team would sign on for each festival; meaning you worked when you wanted to, when there was a need, if you left to go swimming or go to a workshop, someone else would eagerly take your place.

There were often people pleading to help in the wash-up zone. It was the "place to be!" You drank as much chai as needed, and meals were free.

In 1985, one half of the Chai Tent mob travelled off on the Peace Train, around Australia, with a second rainbow tent commissioned.

When Michael Jack returned in his chai bus, he became the 'main-centre-pole' of the Chai Tent, and has remained the dedicated chai-wallah he still is today.

It is more of a community service, than a business. It serves the community as a place to gather. To talk with old friends, make new friends, to play music and dance.

Today, the set-up has grown: more cushions and carpets, Benny Zable's flags and banners, plus miscellaneous extras and a third tent. Set-up takes three hours plus, and we pack up in the dark, four hours plus, with all chai pots washed and scrubbed.

Michael continues to dream and design his new chai trailer, to facilitate an easier operation.

We celebrated our 40th anniversary during Covid times with two markets in 2020, but have been enjoying a very extended long service leave, returning in April

2023, into our new creek-side location.

Circa 2014 we added the World Peace Prayer Society's peace pole campaign slogan "May Peace Prevail On Earth" to our centre pole (see: www.worldpeace.org/peacepoleproject).

On 14th May, the Chai Tent will be the central site for the Aquarius50 celebrations at the Channon Market. The Rainbow Chai Tent has served at all five-yearly Nimbin Aquarius market gatherings.

We hope you enjoy the comfort of the Rainbow Chai Tent, the cushions the tables, the shade, the music, the cakes and of course the slow brewed chai.

Packets of chai mix are available for taking home, also available to order on-line at: rainbowchaitent.com

Please tag us in your photos on Facebook: *Friends of the Chai Tent*; or Instagram.

Donations and volunteers will always be gratefully accepted.

What Nimbin and Aquarius mean to me

by Renee English

There was a time, well maybe two or three times, in the rich and colourful history of Nimbin and Aquarius when everyone in the community was equal. This is what I want to talk about.

At the first, the 1973 Nimbin Aquarius Festival, it was a revolution, a revelation, a reaction against class, against the stultifying family values of the 1950's, against the lack of choices and the horror and hypocrisy of the Vietnam war.

In 1973, in the town of Nimbin, in the fields, in the recycled, re-purposed shops and halls of the town, everyone who was there felt a sense of beginning, of change, of possibility. Everyone had 'dropped out to drop in', throwing off the restrictions or advantage of the family, the education or the trauma that they had run from to be here, to be here together, at once, to feel and make change. Everyone was equal.

Everyone who came had some kind of awakening into a new life and a new way of thinking. Why? I know why. Not because I was there (the first festival happened seven months before I was born). Not because I think that this was as much a moment in history as it was just a part of a larger world-wide change in human society.

Because I know the whole story. I know the story of Aquarius in Australia from the days of the Sydney Push and the beatniks at the Royal George Hotel and Frank's Cafe, right through to today, when I drove out



Katie Cawcutt at Frank's Cafe in the 1960s

to Tuntabla Falls Community in my pyjamas with an aching heart and a thumping head, to try and start my mum's generator to augment the off-grid power, check on her brain health and make sure she had a warm fire and dinner and understood what was happening around her and what was going to happen tomorrow.

The second time in Nimbin when everyone was equal was during the late 70's. When I say everyone was equal, I do not mean everyone was safe. But we lived here, together, in what has often been referred to as a 'tribe'.

In the years between 1973 and 1982/83, activism, environmental protection, off-grid living, and freedom were the main shared values of this group of people. Most people in the town acted as a group, in town, at protests, and wherever we all chose to gather.

The roads were not as good or as easy to access the town. Lismore was a dull and semi-lifeless farm capital, and the Gold Coast and Brisbane could have been another country, as there was no connection between them and Nimbin then... That came much later, when drug culture and drug commerce and tourism became a major driver of the town's economy.

However, through all of this, there has remained a genuine spirit of the rebirth, the recycling of the town of Nimbin, the town that began and was recreated, wholly, solely, and only because of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival.

And this is why my mother, Katie Cawcutt, protester, carer of the disenfranchised, truth-teller, keeper of the dream (no matter how dim or debated), one-woman occupy movement... this is why my mother stayed devoted to the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation for the last 30 years, and still is to this day.

It is because of something so indefinable, so hard to explain that even she who knows it the most can't articulate it.

It is because this town, since the first Aquarius festival in 1973, was created to be a place where everyone, regardless of class, breeding, background or mental trauma, can be equal, can contribute to real change, and can have a place that is a safe home to be, and a place to heal and be themselves.

This is the Nimbin and the Aquarius that I know about and that means something to me.

Many highlights daily at Aquarius50

by Jeni Kendell

In his introduction to *Rainbow Dreaming*, a book on the Aquarius legacy, David Lovejoy, author and publisher of the *Byron Shire Echo* (now almost retired) writes: “If we are to make ourselves a viable future, it will look a lot more like the Aquarius Festival than the vision of polluted landscapes, global corporate domination and police state oppression offered by conventional politics.”

And now 50 years later we will celebrate what was, tell of what we have become and achieved, and re-inspire ourselves into our Aquarian Future.

With just a few days to go, we are almost there and we have an amazing Aquarius 50th Celebration and Festival organised (well mostly!). Gilbert Laurie and Waibal/Widjabal People and other First Nations folk will do ceremony, dance, workshops, music. Phillippe Petit will be here, as well as Fantuzzi, Professor Ian Lowe, Linda Jackson, Carol Perry, Jack Thompson, John Seed, Graeme Sait, Judy Aitkinson, Bruce Pascoe, Rhoda Roberts, Cigany Weaver, Greg Sheehan, The Heart Collectors, Tina Mews, Weedy Gardener, Mira Stannard, Judy Arpana and Mark Elliott.

Musos include Andrea Soler, Missus Hippy and the Lovehandles, K’Flunk, The Pagan Lovecult, the Lonesome Boatmen, Kooii, Seeding, Plywood, The Mia French Band, Mecha, Mecha, Scarlett Ruffles, David Hallett, Mic Conway. Ellis D Fogg will do two lightshows, Claire L’Arrive, Gill Jones, Samara Burcher have organised two fashion shows, Licorice Allsorts Day at Bush Theatre.

Tunable have an Open Day on 20th May, there are many building workshops at 7 Sibley Street and Djanbung Gardens has a wonderful program.

We have Peter Derrett’s 1973 ‘Aquarius Festival’ photographic exhibition; ‘Rainbow Dreaming – tales from the Age of Aquarius’ exhibition by Harsha Prabhu and Graeme Batterbury; Archival photos and records; tours to Dharmananda for dawn cheese-making and gardening; tree planting at Blue

Knob; biochar at ACU Misty Mountain. Tours and talks and tents with inventions at Rainbow Power Company. A whole program at Blue Knob Hall too, and at Black Sheep Farm!

Yoga and meditation, spiritual journeys, Deep Ecology workshop with John Seed; piano by Harry Freeman; Jyllie Jackson from Lightn Up will bring the Lantern Parade to our streets (as well as our footpaths!) on 13th and 20th May. There will be a special Aquarius Cabaret (tickets available at Perceptios); a First Nations Concert; Nimbin ROX Youth Concert; Comedy and storytelling night with S Sorrensen.

Some fantastic films will be on at the Bush Theatre like *The Last Violin* by Carla Thrackrah and afterwards music with her and Romanano Crivici (playing the last violin) and inviting Linsey Pollak to join them in performance. Other films include *The Giants* about Bob Brown, Ningle-A Na on the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Senses of Cinema with Tom Zubrycki, Tenzin Choegyal will sing *Be the Ocean* excerpts from *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

A whole day on 20th May of festivities for the young and young at heart with body percussion, Taiko drums, hip hop, skate park prog, uke workshop, kids forum in Safe Haven Tent near Skatepark, Youth Film Festival Retrospective and competition – ‘This is who we are, this is where we live’ with a \$500 Prize! Also an Aquarian Dinner and Women’s Dinner and more...

The last day will be a Children’s Naming Day with elders and music and ritual and joy as children receive a name or another name. It will mirror what happened in 1979 when John Fox and Sue Gill performed the same day then. Please register with us if you want to join in, as the elders want to know about the children in advance: paulandjeni@icloud.com

Then Benny Zable with participation by Phillippe Petit will put forward a tug-of-war team. This then morphs into a human peace sign and finishes with a spiral dance.

Ten themed days will take place at

the Showground, Town Hall, Bush Theatre, Birth & Beyond, Community Centre, Aquarius Church, the World Rainbow Cafe Tent and Chai Tent in Town Hall Garden. Tickets are available for sale via our website: aquarius50.com.au We will be supported by these ticket sales to finance the festival and you can also donate via the website or give a tax deductible donation via the Australian Cultural Fund, “Festivals” “NSW”.

We are a festival put on by the community and organised by volunteers. Please give generously if you can and thank you to Ben Hartley, Branka Adlington, Rhoda Roberts, Gilbert Laurie & local FN people, Jenna Laird, Paul Tait, Jeanette Krohn, Mira Stannard, Claire L’Arrive, Sledge and Daniele, *Nimbin GoodTimes*, David Hallett, S Sorrensen, Johnny Allen, Leigh Davison and Jen Ireland, Lea Jellinek, Louise Graves, Kezia Geddes, Janelle Saffin, LCC, Binnah Pownall, Michelle McQuay, Megan James, Mandie Hale, Biko, Anna Lusty, Virginia Lloyd-Tait, Stu Anderson, Ruth Miller, Pauline Ahern, Kaz, Dolph Cook, Vic Florey, Paris Naday, Rainbow Power Co, the Webers, Jagad and many, many others for all your fantastic help and encouragement. Thanks for the generosity of Michael Balderstone, Jenny Cornish, Christopher Dean and David Hyett. And thanks to our committee.

Last thing we will do in the Festival is to reaffirm our connection to country with First Nations guidance song and dance. Vocal Minority will sing two of Mooki’s wonderful anthems to “guide our way on” in peace and gratitude. We hope you have a wonderful and safe and inspiring, informative and joyful Festival. You are the festival! Let the dream live!

We still need many more volunteers: drivers, venue support and management, information centre staff, movers and shakers, cooks, cleaners, and many, many more so please offer help.

“The dream that you dream alone remains a dream. The dream you share becomes reality!” – anon



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Tunable Falls Aquarius Anniversary events

Join Tuntable Falls community on Saturday 20th May to celebrate the rich history of the Tuntable community and the influence of the Aquarius festival that has resonated across the Northern Rivers.

Learn how like-minded people came together historically and are still coming together today to create and sustain one of the biggest fully-functioning communities in the world. Listen to members tell of its history and culture.

Bear witness to some of the amusing and sometimes dark stories from the early days. Learn how the governance has overcome some of the issues and consider how Tuntable might face some of the challenges of the future with regard to climate change and aging.

Finally, learn why some of the younger generations have returned to live an intentional community life, helping it to thrive into the future.

Enjoy a tour of the photo gallery, the creeks and buildings, including the community school, and feast on delicious food while listening to some music from our local talent.

Day program

9-9.30am – The community’s inception post-Aquarius Festival, the early years; legal set-up, the rules and community development
10.30-11am – Morning tea



The Red Eyed Frogs

11am-12.30pm – Governance learnings and issues
12-1pm – Question time
1-2pm – Lunch available to purchase. Freowin Harper, piano and vocals, will be performing during our lunch time break, and keep an eye out for our flash mob fashion show
2-3pm – Next and subsequent generations panel
3-5pm – Guided tours: The community’s school including food garden and the regeneration of the creek’s riparian zone. This time slot includes time for afternoon tea and for viewing the videos and photos displayed in the hall.

Night-time event

Gates open 4pm. From 6pm food will be available from Miesha’s Vegie Fiesta Van with vegan/vegetarian/gluten-free options, plus there will also be other food available at the venue.

Artists performing:

Hannah Pearl: Hailing from the green hills of Nimbin, Hannah Pearl is a talented girl-rock poet performing a vibrant blend of original songs and artful covers.

Missus Hippy and the Love Handles: good-time rocking band doing a psychedelic 60’s set.

Neil Pike (from the Pagan Love Cult): Neil plays his very unique style of psychedelic folk, with a backdrop of swirling visual treats.

Red Eyed Frogs: Much-loved rocking band are back from the swamp, freshly mutated and ready to blow the roof off, for a very special once-only show. Big band funk/dance.

All tickets can be purchased from our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/3571127109789901 Just click on our page for the link to Eventbrite ticketing to buy tickets to both events This will give you access to the day event and the night-time event.

The price of \$50 (+booking fee) includes all day and night. For the night-time event only, tickets are \$20 (+booking fee) or at the gate on the night.

This is a fund-raising event and all funds will go back to the community for the much-needed restoration of the Tuntable Hall painting by Oral Roberts for our sign.



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In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

It's all going on this month in Nimbin with MardiGrass followed by the two-week 50-year anniversary celebrations of the Aquarius Festival.

Fifty years ago, a group of students and young creative thinkers from around the country converged on the quietly fading village of Nimbin for the Aquarius Festival.

The Festival changed the face of Nimbin and indeed the Northern Rivers region forever, as many of the participants and many more like them decided to make their home here, enriching the area with their ideas, art, music, interest in 'alternate' ways of living and youthful energy and optimism.

The following years of DIY community-based culture resulted in the development of strong community relationships, significant community ownership and control of many community assets in Nimbin and an overall commitment to self-sufficiency and sustainable and culturally-rich lifestyles that continues to this day.

The young people from the Aquarius Festival are now our community elders and the baton must inevitably pass to the new young people of our community, to bring their own fresh minds and ideas and energy to the awesome on-going story of Nimbin.

At NNIC we are keen to support new people to get involved in the community and the multiple groups and activities going on – drop by and ask for Nat or Nicole or else email us on: admin@nnic.org.au for more info or to find out how.

Channon Markets Charity of the Day

Many thanks to the Channon Market crew for inviting NNIC to be Charity of the Day on Easter Saturday.

The weather was great and the markets were humming

and the NNIC team, with the support of the CWA women, raised just over \$1500 via the generous donations from market goers on the day.

Gratitude to all who rattled the donation buckets throughout the day and to everyone who donated to us.

The funds will be used to support our Food Relief and other activities.

Nimbin CDAT needs three actors

The Nimbin Community Drug Action Team is looking for three kids aged between 10 and 12 years to be photographed in acting roles for an educational story book aimed at pre-school to primary school aged kids and their parents regarding safety around sharp things.

It will involve a one-day shoot in various locations around Nimbin. The photos will be used as illustrations in the book.

If you are or know anyone in this age group who enjoys acting and may be interested, please contact Nat on: admin@nnic.org.au

Note: consent from parent/guardian is required, this is a child-safe and supervised activity.

Nimbin Community Disaster Plan on line

If you haven't checked it out yet, the final version of the revised Plan is available for viewing or downloading on our website (Disasters page).

The results of the Plan Feedback Survey conducted in Nov-December 2022 are also published on our website, go to: *About Nimbin – Survey results*.

Community Care Team

We are still looking for CCT members in the following areas:

- Upper Stoney Chute;
- Lower Stoney Chute;
- Blue Knob South;
- Blue Knob North;
- South Nimbin (through to Boyles Road);

- Crofton Road;
- Lower Tuntable Road; and
- Rose Road.

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

CCT members will receive support and training in skills that are valuable in everyday life as well as numerous occupations.

To register your interest please complete the EOI form which can be downloaded from our website (Disasters tab) and send it back to us. Or you can pick up a hard copy from NNIC.

Recovery support services

How are you going with your flood recovery journey? If you are still struggling,

you are not alone. Recovery Support Services are available to support you across the Northern Rivers region.

The Nimbin and District Recovery Support Service (Nimbin RSS) can assist you to develop a recovery plan; apply for grants and financial support; link you with key services, suppliers and expert advice; investigate housing support/solutions and support you to disaster-proof your life going forwards.

You can contact our RSS staff by emailing nimbinrss@nnic.org.au or call/text 0488-144-647, or drop by 7 Sibley Street, Monday-Fridays 9am-4pm.

This month we warmly welcome to the RSS team Samantha Cropvoets as our new Program Manager. Sam joins Alison and Shae to support you through your flood recovery.

www.nnic.org.au
www.facebook.com/pages/Nimbin-Neighbourhood-and-Information-Centre

Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services

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



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

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

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

SENIORS SOCIAL GROUPS – booking and fees apply

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

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

www.nacrs.com.au

Nimbin Hospital information

Child immunisation

By appointment, please phone 6630-0400.

Early childhood nurse

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

Women's health nurse services

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

Wound clinic

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

Drug and alcohol counselling services available

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

Nurse practitioner clinic

Diabetes clinics: third Thursday of the month, next is 18th May.

Community Registered Nurse

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

Nimbin NSP

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

Health advice line

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

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

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



New ALP state government - will they protect forests, endangered species?



by Scott Sledge, president

The NEC has been involved in weeds identification and replacement with native species over the year, especially as the catastrophic floods of 2022 caused landslips and blockages of waterways in the areas surrounding Nimbin.

We have supported the Mulgum Creek Bush regeneration project and Gungas Valley Landcare, and recently a grant to Webster's Creek Catchment Landcare for a regeneration project.

Much of this year's NEC work has focused on the worldwide climate change crisis. We see saving forests as the most effective way to reduce atmospheric carbon. Similar concerns dominate the state-wide Nature Conservation Council (NCC).

As part of the NCC, we organised a community picnic at the Ngulingah Native Plant Nursery near the Nimbin Rocks in October 2022.

Many NEC members are also activists for the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA), who have campaigned to protect and preserve the forest remnants, especially at State-owned reserves such as Bunyabba, Myrtle Creek, Cherry Tree and Doubleduke State Forests.

We join with other activists to promote wildlife refuges and lobby hard for reform of land-clearing laws. A recent success has been having North Coast lawmaker Geoff Provest (Nats MLA) kill off bad legislation by threatening to cross the floor to vote against the Coal-ition government.

NEFA awaits a ruling on its court challenge to the legality of the NSW logging agreements. Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) from the 1990s have expired and continuances have been allowed despite no reviews. NEFA President Dailan Pugh says that Cherry Tree State Forest west of Casino may be saved.

Justice Sandra Duggan in the Land and Environment Court has directed the Court to hear two challenges by Widjabul-

Wiabal Elder, David Mundine to the logging approvals of over 800 hectares of critical habitat in that forest, forcing NSW Forestry Corporation to give undertakings to the Court in lieu of an injunction to cease all logging operations until the case is heard.

The case is challenging the validity of the harvesting plan in relation to implementing ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM). The argument is that logging Cherry Tree is not a valid plan because it does not comply.

NEC and other forest protectors have been busy at Doubleduke State Forest north of Grafton. We have delayed logging of the forest there, and NEFA has succeeded in getting the EPA to stop loggers cutting giant trees until the required mapping is completed. We are lobbying for this vital area of unburnt trees to be spared to save endangered animals.

Many people are skeptical about politicians' commitments to the emissions reduction agreements made last year, after hearing that the Albanese government has approved a number of new coal and gas projects. Their reasoning is that Australia can't make the needed changes so rapidly.

In April the Federal environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, told ABC Radio, "We've approved 11 renewable energy projects in the 10 months since coming to government... The change has come about by removing brown tape and giving business more confidence in investment. And that's because we put more resources into the Department of Environment to speed up the approvals, and it's because we've created an environment of certainty.

We've got more businesses wanting to invest in renewable energy projects because they know we've got a target of 82% renewable energy in our grid by 2030."

Minister Plibersek attended the COP15 global Conference on Species Preservation in December 2022, which voted to preserve 30% of the earth's surface by 2030.



Knitting Nanas demo at the south end of Glencoe Road, New Italy while trucks carried logs from Doubleduke SF. More than 80 protested at the north end of the road, blocked by police. Below: Doubleduke logging damage

NEC has been active in the campaign to stop SANTOS coal seam gas development in the Pilliga region of NSW. The Kamilaroi, Pilliga's traditional custodians, have filed court action which could hold the project up for at least another year.

In his 2022 book *The Big Switch*, Australian energy expert Saul Griffith says we can cut carbon emissions by 50% largely by changing household habits. "Electrify everything" is his mantra, and he specifies using renewable energy. He is engaged in helping his community of Wollongong, on the Coal Coast, get to 100% renewable by 2030.

In March, NSW voters refused the Liberal/National Party Coalition another four-year term. The new ALP-led government of NSW will need to get its skates on to keep the people happy while it transforms how we do things.

Primarily we have to see if they have the will to make changes to energy production, prioritise ecology in land management, and protect our forests and the endangered flora and fauna.

They will need to generate enthusiasm for positive change on a continent where most change that has occurred in the past 200 years has been damaging to the environment. We need to get behind this historic turn towards a sustainable future and not simply stand by and watch.

Already there is a grass-roots network of organisations both small and large with similar goals. All of us can add to the momentum in some way, even if it is what I call



"clicktivism" – adding your voice to the discussion via the internet.

Best of all is membership and support for the NEC. We helped organise the Nightcap forest 40th anniversary in October and shared a stall with Northern Rivers Guardians (NRG) at World Environment Day at Murwillumbah in July.

NEC takes part in community activities such as promoting the new Nimbin Walking Trail and lobbying our representatives to improve facilities. Lismore MP Janelle Saffin has promised to seek funding for a new toilet and change rooms block to be built in Peace Park.

NEC marches in the annual MardiGrass parades in Nimbin, and we congratulate Jeremy Buckingham for winning a seat on the NSW Upper House for the Legalise Cannabis Party. The NSW Greens also did very well, so we expect the new government to make some long-overdue improvements to drug laws.

The NEC will help with the Aquarius50 celebrations. We will screen environmental films in the Birth and Beyond room from noon to 5pm on Tuesday 16th May, and

will facilitate a public conversation about Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) in the Nimbin Town Hall that morning from 10am until noon with many well-known activists taking part. The focus then changes to the History of Resistance in the Northern Rivers from 3.30 to 5pm. Music and singing will cap off the Town Hall gathering that evening.

As part of our AGM in April we elected a new committee for 2023-24. I continue as president, Trinity Roe as secretary and shop steward, Marco Bobbert as treasurer. I am grateful for the excellent support by Committee members Daniele Voinot, Lisa Costello, Cath Smith, Mark Palmer and Benny Zable. Benny has stepped down, replaced by Ashoka Joblin for the coming year.

The NEC Shop on Cullen Street now has an EFTPOS card facility, but we still prefer cash.

Trinity and the other volunteers have continued to keep our shop open all year despite many challenges. Their dedication allows us to offer information on the street level, and all profits go to help environmental causes. Purchases at the NEC shop help to make a better world.



This new addition to the back of the bus stop at Allsopp Park in Nimbin was painted by Bennie Zable in loving memory of his wife Marsha Silvestri who designed the poster which this creation was copied from.



NIMBIN'S SUSTAINABLE LIVING HUB

7 Sibley Street

May
What's On!

\$15 unless otherwise noted

Bookings: text 0475-135-764

or email: sibley@nnic.org.au

In celebration of the Nimbin Aquarius 50th Anniversary we will be hosting a series of low-tech building workshops.

Workshops: 10.30am – 1.30pm

• Fri 12th: Raising a Tipi – presented by Amanda King of Electric Tipi. (Featured at Illuminate Nimbin on Saturday night!)

• Sat 13th: Wattle and Daub – A favourite of our pioneering forebears and found throughout the world, this simple, low-cost technique can be made with nothing but earth and sticks but provides excellent insulation and, protected with waterproof roofing, stands the test of time.

• Tues 16th: Weedcrete – Join Martin to learn more about this innovative technique and make some samples, using woody weeds with a magnesium-based binder for in-fill walls and insulated ceilings.

• Wed 17th, 12.30pm: Reciprocal Roof – How to span a large diameter without a

central supporting pole.

• Thurs 18th: Build a split bamboo Star Dome – Using a widely available, renewable resource, a Star Dome is based on a 2v geodesic dome, but without complicated angles and joiners, offering maximum space for minimum material. Mini-kits to take home also available.

• Fri 19th: Cement Fabric – \$25 Waterproof burlap or finer fabric for any shape shelter you like.

• Wednesdays: Weaving circle, 10.30am – Bring a project and join like-minded crafters.

• Community Tools Library: Every Saturday, 10.30am – 2pm. For home repairs, garden tools, food and craft equipment. Basketballs & pumps available, \$5 deposit.

www.nimbingoodtimes.com

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Blinded by population growth

Imminent population growth and its ugly twins, ecological destruction and resulting industrial pollution, was the theme of my first public speech.

That was in high school back in 1972. I warned the packed school hall to avoid this; we all had to aim for less... aim low. (Plus Ultra – Aim High, was our school motto).

No one clapped. I was socially ostracised. The winning speech was on being nice (superficially at least)... oh, and the speaker being pretty helped.

I'm not. 'Shapeshifting' by Anand Gandharva (NGT April, p.33) believes that for a sustainable future the problem is not population: The solution is 'charge real prices' that reflect the true ecological/planetary cost.

Good idea, but what about those who already have amassed vast fortunes, live in huge mac-mansions and pretty much own everything?

Unless these past planetary plunderers aren't included in back-paying 'real prices' for their part of the problem (in fact being the direct cause of it), the entire burden is placed on those still struggling to attain anything... and the unlucky generations that follow.

Azan Mann
Evans Head

Lessons from native bees

On the veranda near the chair where I sit native bees have made a hive.

A hive in a corner, inside the wall, in a hole behind the weatherboard wall. Sometimes I can smell their honey and the musk of their wax and the sharp tang of bee breath.

They come and go with some disregard for my presence. Now and again one will flit about close to my face studying me, this strange creature that is not a fixed thing to set a fast flight path by, but not bothered by me, nor really properly curious, perhaps surprised that such a large living thing

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

which moves slowly can change their landscape.

Whereas they are quick and mostly their landscape is fixed and reliable – being an outlook that is of course changed by a nature of which they are part and so is fairly changeable.

Quick yellow and black stripped snippets of life.

Smart, too. Obviously they realise I am not harmful. I suppose I am a simple oddity. Sadly, I accept, I am not part of the nature to which they belong.

It's clear to me that bees know where life ultimately leads whereas I don't. I don't belong to a hive.

I don't know what I want or what to want. Even by trying and erring again and again I fail to find life's shape, find my flight path.

I have learned to walk by tripping again and again but little more than that. But for my native bees, it's so obvious, all the answers they ever need, about the right way to live a life, emerge not before them but in them, in their hive soul.

Michael Brooke
Kyogle

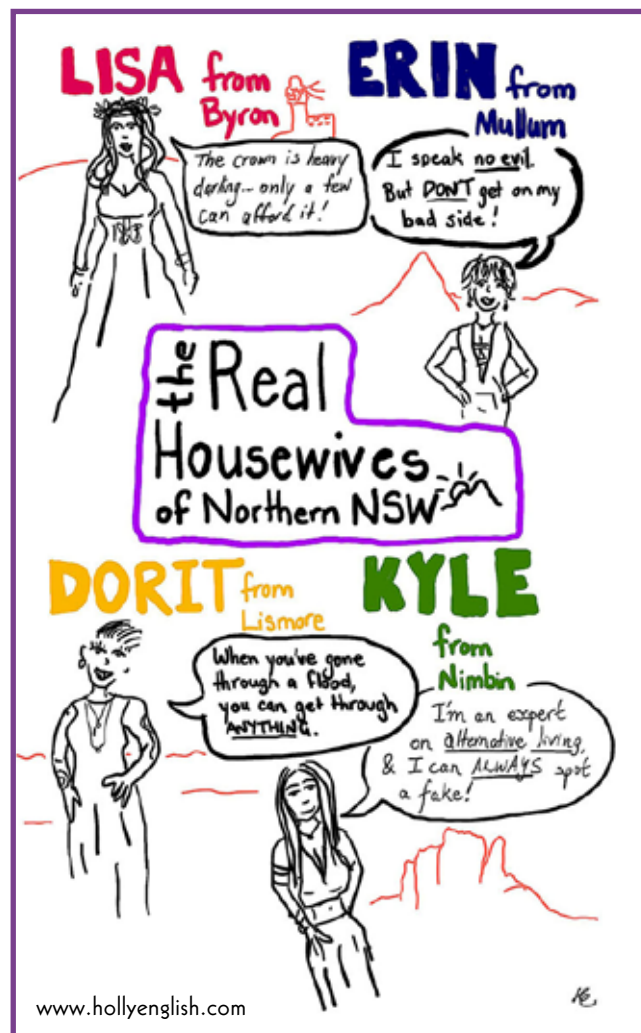
Send Adani packing

The traditional owners Wangan and Jagalingou have been fighting to protect their land for a decade.

The site is in the Galilee Basin, Qld and Adani want to destroy the area for the Carmichael coal mine.

Adani, which in 2019 renamed its Australian unit Bravus, has been given approval by the Qld and Australian regimes: why? This company gets tax breaks to invest here.

Adani/Bravus aren't just



into coal mining, but also weapons manufacturing. Maybe the Australian regimes have a deal going with them to supply weapons?

I support the traditional owners by donating to the Wangan and Jagalingou Owners Corporation: <https://wanganjagalingou.com.au/donate>

I'm sure they would love it if you could make a donation, big or small.

Paul Brecht
Evans Head

Plateau development a 'white elephant'

The term "white elephant" is typically used to refer to a costly or burdensome project, program, or property that is considered to be of little or no value or utility to its owner or users, such as the proposed developments on the North Lismore Plateau or the 'Sleeping Lizard' – massive alterations to the watershed close to Lismore.

Basically development on the plateau will change the watershed and alter the natural flow and speed of water movement in the area, impacting North, South,

Central and parts of East Lismore.

Any further change to the plateau will disrupt the natural balance of water flow in the river, leading to increased erosion, sedimentation, and flooding at Tsunami speed!

North Lismore Plateau is part of our watershed and close to Lismore's centre. A bit like Mt Vesuvius from Pompeii, and the impact will be another disaster if the land is developed.

Water that falls within a watershed drains to a single point, and will drain directly onto Lismore impacting greatly the flow of water close to the city.

Proposed land use changes, such as deforestation, heavy urbanisation, construction of roads, houses school, shops, sewers, gardens, playing fields, etc. will lead to increased run-off and flooding levels at heights and speeds which are as not yet experienced.

The steepness of the topography and its shape will see many millions of more litres of water pour into Lismore if the plateau is developed. Without

the current foliage north Lismore Plateau soil becomes compacted and less able to absorb water, which can increase runoff.

This will result in more water charging into the Wilson river and creeks, leading to increased water levels and a greater risk of flash flooding.

Similarly, if an area is urbanised, more impermeable surfaces such as roads, buildings, and parking lots can prevent rainwater from infiltrating into the soil, leading to increased run-off and the potential for flooding.

These changes to the plateau will disrupt the natural balance of water flow in the river, leading to increased erosion, sedimentation, and the potential for flooding during heavy rainfall events.

This is not an imaginary statement but a true one. If the development occurs, it will be remembered as a giant 'white elephant'.

Therefore, it is important for the LCC to carefully consider the potential impacts of any changes to the 'Sleeping Lizard' and to implement appropriate measures to manage water flow and prevent flooding.

In other words, do not change what is already in place. After all it has one of last heavily populated areas of koalas and is totally unique to the local Bundjalung as a sacred site.

I feel these things are

worth protecting the Wilsons River is already one of the most polluted rivers in Australia. Develop the North Lismore Plateau and it will become the most polluted.

A far cry from when Captain Rous who sailed up to the area today known as Lismore in 1842, described how "he could see the bottom of river, so pure were its waters."

Mark Pestell
Nimbin

Obituary

Harmony my friend, from the day we met you taught me to stand up, speak up, and never forget being outspoken is not popular

But it is my right to have clean water, safe children and communities day and night.

To say no to a man or anyone who tries to beat me down is a good choice to make. Remember those frackers, and shut the bloody gate!

Harmony my friend you leave a legacy, a key from the Pilliga to Scone, Bungawalbin to Bentley, Kyogle to me.

Thank you, I love you.
Harmony RIP

Kaelana
Nimbin

Notices

Boatharbour Landcare event

Landcare4Lifestylers will be presented by Boatharbour Landcare and Lismore Council on Saturday 20th May, 12-4pm.

An outdoor, family-friendly event set in a 12-year-old revegetated forest at Boatharbour, it includes expert advice on growing natives, site planning, bird, bugs and weed ID.

Address will be provided on event sign-up at: www.eventbrite.com.au/e/landcare4-lifestylers-tickets-610439670487

Nimbin CWA Open Door Days

On the second and third Wednesdays, Nimbin CWA Branch opens its room as a welcoming space to have a cuppa and a yarn, and browse through clothes and handicrafts. They're in the Community Centre, off Sibley Street.

Free notices

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

About us

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

Bookkeeper Martha Paitson
Web www.nimbingoodtimes.com
And find us on Facebook

NGT is published by the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation, 81 Cullen Street, Nimbin.

NEXT DEADLINE:
Friday 26th May

Email nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.



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RIP Moksha 1952 – 2023



by Ayla Erftemeyer

It is with sadness that I share the passing of my grandmother, Daniela Erftemeyer, aka Moksha, Granny Breath Weaver, on Sunday 16th April.

A woman who was renowned for her weaving skills, community initiatives and no-grid way of life, she was a thread which was woven deep in the Nimbin community – an elder and confidant to many, who often provided shelter and kindness to anyone in need.

She will be sorely missed by her grandchildren Dylan, Kira, Sean, Hannah and myself and her daughters Adriana and the late Rachel ‘Mantis’.

We hope her and Mantis may find each other in the afterlife where they shall sing and dance together, and surely smoke a bit of yarndi.

For those who feel called, please join us in memory of her at Nimbin Allsopp Park on Wednesday 3rd May at 2pm.

May she rest in peace.

RIP Jessica Louise Bodegraven



Much loved member of our community has passed over.

“May our darling faerie fly free.”



Nimbin’s ANZAC Day



Photo: Sue Stock

The Nimbin community turned out in force to remember those killed and injured in war, and their loved ones. Over 100 people attended the Dawn Service and the gunfire breakfast put on by the Bowling Club, while the march and mid-morning service attracted many more, including representatives from three local schools. Nimbin Central School student Savannah Trezise gave the commemorative address. A well-attended Om for Peace followed. Over \$800 was raised for the Lismore RSL sub-branch from the sale of badges, and donations of \$800 for the RFS came from the two-up in the pub.

The Voice to Parliament

by Mark Pestell

What are the suggested changes to Australians Constitution via the referendum on the Voice?

To create an Indigenous Voice, this question is being put by our democratically elected Labor government and will be put to the Australian voting population later this year.

The proposed change to the Australian Constitution via a referendum refers to the creation of a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous Voice to Parliament. The idea is to provide a mechanism for Indigenous Australians to have a direct say in matters that affect their communities and to ensure that their perspectives are considered in the decision-making process.

The proposal has been put forward by the government-appointed Indigenous Voice Co-Design Senior Advisory Group and would involve establishing a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice, which would advise Parliament on matters that affect Indigenous Australians.

The proposal would not give the Indigenous Voice a veto power over parliamentary decisions but rather would provide a mechanism for Indigenous perspectives to be heard.

The referendum on the voice is currently being considered by the Australian government, and if approved, it would require a change to the Australian Constitution.

The process of changing the Constitution requires a referendum, which must be approved by a majority of voters in a majority of Australian states and territories. If the referendum is successful, the government will then work to implement the changes to the Constitution and establish the Indigenous Voice.

How would the Voice advantage Indigenous Australians and bring about greater equality?

The proposed Indigenous Voice to Parliament would be designed to give Indigenous Australians a greater say for the first time since 1788 in matters that affect their communities, and provide a mechanism for their perspectives to be heard in the decision-making process.

There are several ways in which the voice would advantage Indigenous Australians.

Greater representation: The Indigenous Voice would provide a more direct form of representation for Indigenous Australians in the decision-making process. It would ensure that their perspectives and priorities are taken into

account when decisions are being made that affect their communities.

More effective policy-making: By providing a direct channel of communication between Indigenous Australians and Parliament, the Indigenous Voice could help to create more effective policies that better reflect the needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities.

Increased accountability: The Indigenous Voice would help to hold Parliament accountable for its decisions and actions, ensuring that it is more responsive to the needs and concerns of Indigenous Australians.

Recognition of Indigenous sovereignty: By creating a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous Voice, the proposal recognises the sovereignty of Indigenous Australians and acknowledges their status as the first peoples of Australia.

The Indigenous Voice has the potential to empower Indigenous Australians and help to address some of the historical injustices that they have faced. It would provide a platform for their voices to be heard and their perspectives to be taken into account in the decision-making process.

The concept of the ‘Voice’ is not going to threaten Australian society. What it will do is strengthen our country.



Application for Appointment of Board Members

Hanging Rock Hall Land Manager

Ever wondered who is responsible for keeping Crown reserves operating?

Countless facilities like showgrounds, local halls and parks are run by Statutory Land Manager Boards, made up of people just like you. People who understand the need and have a desire to manage public land and assets for the benefit of the entire community.

Your role as a Board Member is voluntary, but the rewards of giving something back to the community are priceless.

We are looking for a good mix of people with a variety of skills, however, sound business and financial management skills and objective decision-making expertise would be a distinct advantage.

Don't let this opportunity to do something for yourself and your community pass you by –contact us today.

The Hanging Rock Hall Land Manager manages the Reserve No. 91046 at Wadeville notified on 24-Feb-1978 for Public Recreation. The term of appointment will be for a period not exceeding 5 years.

Application for membership can be made via portal.crownland.nsw.gov.au

All applications are required to be lodged by 29 May 2023.

For further information contact:

Joe Endean on (02) 6642 9204 or go to reservemanager.crownland.nsw.gov.au

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