

The Alternative Journal of the Rainbow Region



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THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

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New mural transforms amenities block



Photos: Sue Stock

by Bob Dooley

Nimbin is truly blessed to have always had beautiful art around the village.

Thanks to Julie De Lorenzo for her latest piece on the newly-built amenities block which adjoins Peace Park, the swimming pool, the skateboard park and the Aquarius Walking Track.

Funded by the NSW Government as part of the \$400,000 construction budget for the toilet, shower and changeroom facility opened in April, the design was chosen from expressions of interest, with input from the Nimbin Artists Gallery. The plight of Nimbin's

above-awning murals in Cullen Street is less certain, with some looking in dire need of repainting.

In the lead-up to the Aquarius Festival in 1973, the late Vernon Treeweke, an Australian psychedelic artist, came up with the original idea to 'paint up' the village of Nimbin.

The Rainbow Cafe was the first facade painted, and this inspired many other artisans, among them Lindsay Burke, Dick Weight and 'Peter Painter'.

In 1977, a mural project to refresh the deteriorating facades was facilitated by Graeme Dunstan in his role as director of the Lismore

Arts Festival. This project saw Benny Zable paint a whole new sequence of murals with rainbows and "zany" bubbles.

In April 2013 'Over the Rainbow', a mural by Benny Zable on the Rainbow Cafe building, was restored by Benny and team of young artists.

Thanks go to support from Lismore City Council, NNIC, Nimbin Chamber of Commerce, Tumble Falls Co-op, Lismore City Council and the studio space generously provided at Nimbin Birth and Beyond.

This mural, and the building, was unfortunately destroyed in the 2014

Nimbin fires.

The murals have a rich and ever-evolving history, a story contributed to by many local artists.

Significant importance is placed on murals created by our First Nation's people with major contributions over time from Burri Jerome, Gilbert Laurie, Oral Roberts, Lewis Walker, Alan Barker (Black Al) and Herbie Roberts.

The mural in Allsopp Park depicting an important creation story from the Bundjalung Nation was commissioned by Lismore City Council in 2017, painted by local indigenous artists Gilbert Laurie, Lewis Walker and Oral Roberts.

In 2018, Nimbin Community Centre received a grant from the Commonwealth Indigenous Arts and Languages Program to explain the mural's story in dual languages.

Supporting the evolution of vibrant street art and village beautification is a priority for the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce, working alongside local organisations, businesses and artists to revitalise and add to the colourful village streetscape.

Murals don't last forever and their contribution to the streetscape requires constant maintenance and management as new works are created or fading ones

restored.

A mural sustainability plan has been developed and progress has been made on renovating the murals.

In 2024, the Arts and Culture Focus Area of the Community Plan was revised at a workshop.

The plan encourages local businesses as stakeholders in on-going maintenance and renewal of the murals.

To support the Chamber's contributions to this community endeavour, there are donation tins located in businesses throughout the village.

Please consider dropping your loose change into these tins.

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