

The Dismissal and the Republic

by John Jiggins

In 1999, Australia held a referendum to alter the constitution to transform the Commonwealth of Australia from a constitutional monarchy into a republic by replacing the British monarchy and the Governor-General as heads of state with a President elected by a two-thirds majority of the federal parliament.

The referendum failed, with only 46% of Australians voting for the change.

Much of the momentum to remove the monarchy from the constitution flowed from the outrage over the misuse of the so-called reserve powers of the monarchy in the sacking of the Whitlam government by Governor-General John Kerr in 1975.

For decades, the narrative about the Dismissal was that Governor-General Kerr acted alone. The Palace maintained the Queen was not involved. This deception was exposed by historian Professor Jenny Hocking when she won a High Court Appeal in 2022 for the release of the Palace Letters – Kerr’s correspondence with Buckingham Palace – which revealed the involvement of Queen Elizabeth, our current King Charles, and the Palace in this tumultuous affair.

The Palace Letters confirmed that the Queen through her private secretary, Sir Martin Charteris, discussed the possible dismissal of the government with the Governor-General and advised him on the use of so-called ‘reserve powers’ to dismiss a democratically elected Government, against the advice of both the Australian solicitor-general and attorney-general.

When the letters were released in July 2020, the then Opposition Leader, Anthony Albanese, called the Dismissal an event that defined his generation. “The Whitlam government transformed Australia into the modern vibrant community that we see here today,” he proudly recalled.

“But I want to say this, that the actions of the Governor-General on 11th November to dismiss a government, to put himself above the Australian people, is one that reinforces the need for us to have an Australian head of state.

“The fact that we have waited 45 years for correspondence between the Queen and the Palace and the Governor-General in Australia says that there is something very wrong with our structures of government.”

Standing beside Albanese that day was the Shadow Assistant Minister for the Republic, Matt Thistlethwaite, who congratulated Professor Jenny Hocking for her decade-long campaign to uncover the contents of these important documents about the most significant political upheaval in Australia’s history.

He said, “The uncovering of these documents today highlights the fact that in the future, Australia must begin a mature and serious discussion about our future constitutional arrangements with a view to having a serious discussion about amending our constitution to finally appoint an Australian as our head of state.”

In 2023, Anthony Albanese became Prime Minister and Matt Thistlethwaite became Minister for the Republic. When Queen Elizabeth died later that year, Albanese announced he would not pursue constitutional change in his first term.

In the second Albanese government, the position of Minister for the Republic was abolished.

Greg Barns, the national campaign director for the Yes campaign in the 1999 republic referendum, said, “There’s no doubt that Buckingham Palace knew. There was correspondence with Prince Charles in which our current King congratulated Kerr on what he’d done.”

Barns criticised Kerr for his dishonesty, his deception and his secrecy. As Governor-General, Kerr’s duty was to consult with his Prime Minister, and he should have informed him about plans to dismiss the Government.

Instead, Kerr pretended he was following Whitlam’s plans to resolve the conflict over the blocking of supply by the Senate by holding a half-Senate election, while covertly negotiating with the opposition and the Palace to replace the Whitlam government.

“It was taking him (Whitlam) by surprise, which is the most egregious action on the part of Kerr,” Greg Barns said.

“In refusing to accept the Prime Minister’s request for a half Senate election, Kerr again showed that he was disrespecting and not taking the advice of his Prime Minister as is traditional. It is a demonstrable argument in favour of a republic.”

Albanese has said that he’s not going to have another referendum but he said the previous day that a republic was inevitable. “But he needs to act on it,” Barnes said, “and what he needs to be doing is getting the support of those on the other side of politics who do support a republic.”

Barns said that most Liberal premiers and leaders support a republic, and becoming a republic was not a huge change.

“This lie of the monarchy that it is expensive, unnecessary and will lead to instability is just nonsense,” he said. “All you’re doing is replacing the Queen’s representative with an impartial president.

“It will lead to no change in the political culture of Australia, except we won’t be doffing our hats to the British monarchy.”

Brisbane’s radical radio

Review by Kitty van Vuuren

Associate Professor Heather Anderson’s latest book, *People Powered Radio*, is a wonderful tribute to the thousands of volunteers, workers and supporters who have contributed to Brisbane community radio station, 4ZZZ, which celebrated its 50th birthday in December.

A 4ZZZ volunteer since 1990, Anderson earned her doctorate with a study of prisoner radio in Australia and beyond (Raising the Civil Dead, published 2012).

As a 4ZZZ participant and observer, she presents this rich and engaging history from the perspective of the first person: her eye-witness accounts and personal anecdotes give life to the people, events and issues that have defined 4ZZZ’s causes, culture and community.

The book is divided into three parts: ‘Home Is Where The Heart Is’ looks at 4ZZZ’s origins emerging out of the Whitlam government’s media policies that put community broadcasting on the new FM frequency spectrum.

These were the heady days of the peace movement, anti-nuclear and environmental actions; Aboriginal, worker, women and queer rights; and a progressive music industry that brought like-minded people together.

This part covers the station’s do-it-yourself technical, organisational, financial and ideological orientations. It covers 4ZZZ’s occupation of, and controversial eviction from its premises at the University of Queensland, and its eventual move to its current premises ‘Zed Towers’, the former Communist Party of Australia headquarters on Barry Parade, Fortitude Valley.

To me, Anderson’s account of 4ZZZ’s genesis – its initial rejection of hierarchy, and adoption of consensus decision-making (Chapter 3) – is of particular interest. Community radio structures, processes and ideologies can empower volunteers to participate in democratic and fair decision-making.

‘Collective’ approaches practised during 4ZZZ’s early days can work extremely well in small tightly-knit groups, but when organisations grow larger they require more formal representative structures to encourage fairness and membership participation.

Anderson’s interviews demonstrate that 4ZZZ’s ‘Collective’ generated mixed feelings amongst its volunteers – loved by many, loathed by others. By the mid ‘90s the station revisited its legal obligations to have an active Board of Directors, which still stands today.

The station also rotates through its office bearers, thereby building collective strength and resilience based on volunteers’ shared experiences, knowledge and practices, particularly during emergencies. In this way, the station maintains its ideological orientation and a shared culture of support that can be passed on to the station’s future custodians.

Part 2, ‘Music Runs Through Our Veins’ turns attention to 4ZZZ’s central role in promoting local and alternative musicians in venues throughout Brisbane. Chapter 7 reveals the station’s plans to introduce live music events as early as 1976, as a way to generate income.

Brisbane’s massive void in local music venues quickly saw 4ZZZ becoming a major promoter of local, national and international acts.

Gigs, such as the ‘Joint Efforts’ held at the University of Queensland’s refectory, benefited the station, and the performers, audiences and volunteers. They supported

local record stores, and encouraged other independent music venues opening across Brisbane and the Gold Coast. In the words of one volunteer, the venues “were places where people felt like being part of a community.”

Chapter 8, ‘Market Dazed’, turns to 1990s 4ZZZ generation, when Joint Efforts gave way to Market Days as the major fundraising event. Anderson details the places and people – performers, volunteers, and supporters – that suggest a vibrant and exciting time ahead as the station settled into its new premises at Fortitude Valley.

However, station’s gigs have also attracted police surveillance. 4ZZZ has firmly and consistently been at



witness statements. While 4ZZZ received much community support, their submissions of allegations of police violence submitted to the Criminal Justice Commission were disregarded.

The Commission’s findings aligned with police versions of the event, further supported by mainstream media’s coverage of the incident. (Mobile phones were still a few years away, so there was no footage of the police raid.)

Part 3, ‘Without Community There is No Soul’, concludes this history with a focus on some of the interest groups supported by 4ZZZ since 1976, including First Nations, LGBTIQ and women, as well as more recent additions such as an accessibility program.

4ZZZ’s first feminist program, Through the Looking Glass, commenced in January 1976. It played only women’s music and focused on arts, literature, children, sexuality, abortion (then illegal), etc. In 1979 the program won the Australian FM Radio Award for Best Community Service Program.

Feminist programs not only addressed gender, power and violence more generally, but also encouraged greater acceptance within 4ZZZ, especially among male volunteers. The current women’s program, Megaherzzz, also gave rise to a newer program, Transmission, representing the transgender community.

4ZZZ has supported Queer broadcasting since inception (when homosexuality was a criminal offence), and continues today, including syndication of its program, Dykes on Mykes, to Joy-FM in Melbourne.

Coverage of First Nation issues also date back to the station’s inception. During 4ZZZ’s first week of broadcasting, the station presented a story about a land rights conference held in Cairns.

Aboriginal participation at 4ZZZ increased over the years, and 4ZZZ worked closely with the Indigenous community during Brisbane’s 1982 Commonwealth Games to put land rights on the public agenda.

By 1984, Uncle Ross Watson and others went to air with 4ZZZ’s Murri Radio, and six years later the Murri community successfully applied for their own community radio license: 4AAA on 98.9FM. Meanwhile 4ZZZ has continued to support and provide airtime to First nation broadcasters.

4ZZZ’s prisoner programs have also made important contributions to their communities of interest. During the 1980s, 4ZZZ journalists were at the frontline of the Boggo Road prison riots, reporting on inhumane prison conditions and prisoners’ grievances.

The riots led to calls for an inquiry into the prison system, but successful calls for reform were still some five years away. Today 4ZZZ continues to support prisoners through its weekly programs.

People Powered Radio is more than a history, but offers a critical reflection of 4ZZZ’s achievements, measured not by profits but by participation and impact.

Hard work based on respect, independence and creativity has encouraged the station’s community to stay true to its radical roots, first imagined more than 50 years ago.

The book will be launched on Wednesday 28th January, 6.30-7.30pm at Avid Reader, 193 Boundary Street, West End, Brisbane.

People Powered Radio: Fifty Years of Australian Community Radio 4ZZZ by Heather Anderson, Palgrave Macmillan. RRP book/E-text \$54.99. Dr Kitty van Vuuren was a 4ZZZ volunteer/employee (1981-84; 1994-95).

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The ‘Jewish’ problem

by Warwick Fry

Bondi has made us think. The labels, the definitions. The media trance state.

I would so want to understand the Jewish intelligence. I learned to play good chess from Jewish families.

They used to set up chess boards after the family dinner and practiced their opening theories. Male and female. They were magnificent hosts to two naive boys from the Bathurst Chess Club.

Bathurst Chess Club consisted of Australian railroad employees (mostly Chifley-era Catholics), an Anglo-Catholic President, a Welsh pipe-smoking lecturer from the local Teachers’ College, and probably a couple of Jews, not that we noticed, (maybe the one wearing a beret) in the Salvation Army Scout Hall across the road from the local Freemasons Temple.

When they took up a collection for my friend and I to enter the Junior State Chess championships, we felt richer than kings.

That’s when we were billeted in big, mysterious Sydney by a hugely generous and hospitable Jewish family; when we met Chess legends like Koshnitsky, who wrote the chess

column for a Sydney paper, and witnessed eye-opening scandals in the Sydney Chess Club.

Many chess players of the day were closer gays, and as 14-year olds, we were awed by a cat fight that broke out in the Sydney Club one night.

It’s hard to believe that these very human people, their children and grandchildren were the objects of a mass assassination. It’s hard to believe that the local police were handing out gun licences to individuals with a revenge motive.

It is not hard to believe that there was motivation, however perverse, to react animalistically to the yawning acceptance of an ignorant Australian population of the incremental creep of the Zionist takeover of Arab (Palestinian) lands since the terroristic events of 1948 (Zionists were designated by the British at time as a terrorist organisation).

This led to the Nakbah involuntary expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians who had incidentally accepted the accommodation of a controlled influx of Jewish settlers. Now look at the map. Doc Evatt’s vision perverted.

Little wonder that resentment lingers. That isolated individuals with an identified resentment are handed over gun licences by what must be the

dumbest coppers in the world, beggars belief.

But there is too much to beggar belief where a Hanson party can pull a 16% poll when so many Australians (as proven by the Bridge march), including some Jewish organisations, support recognition of Palestinian statehood’

So, where do we start, and when do we stop? I would like to think that we could deposit flower tributes to the Palestinian children, still dying in their tens of thousands. Not enough flowers, I suppose. But something that could sit beside the tributes at Bondi beach.

We could ask (speaking as a journalist) how our Prime Minister should be questioned by a defined war criminal by the UN for not having done ‘enough’ by an abysmally ignorant and ideologically disassembled opposition party.

I wouldn’t like to see the works of Ezra Pound banned from our libraries and universities, even though he wrote the poem USURA, which was blatantly anti-Jewish.

I wouldn’t like to see people putting flowers out for dying Palestinian children being tear-gassed by stupid police.

I don’t want to be shamed by a Prime Minister who, if he makes the wrong moves, will generate a resistance that none of us want to see.

Bushwalkers head out again



by by Peter Moyle, Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

Another year rolls around, and we have had some severe weather the last few years, so hopefully we will have kinder times for our activities.

A bit of paddling and short walks during the hot days. Later in the year we will rug up for the inland camps, Girraween and Mulligans coming up.

Historically we have always walked Sundays and camped on weekends. A bit more variety this year with some mid-week camps and walks on Saturdays to mix things up and enable members to pick a convenient outing.

We are not a big club, about 45 members, and we regularly have 12 to 14 on walks. Members come from all over the Northern Rivers and the Gold Coast as well as a good representation from the Nimbin area.

We mainly visit National Parks and sometimes private lands; this area is blessed with some lovely walks and over time we have modified some to take in the best features.

New members and visitors always welcome. When a visitor on walks a small fee to help with insurance is required, and this comes off the membership that year if you join.

Walks Programme
Sunday 1st February Brunswick Heads, on the river
Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498
A paddle on the river after

many requests. The tides are very good, so we will paddle up Simpsons Creek with helping tides both ways so not too strenuous. Bring your canoe, kayak or paddle board. This is a beautiful waterway and a must-do for anyone keen on paddling. Crystal clear water. A stop along the way for a short walk to a secluded part of the beach, a swim in the river or ocean always refreshing.

Meet: on the town side of the bowling club, arriving about 8.30am as we need to start no later than 9am. You must register with Peter to join in.
Bring: good sun protection and the usual lunch and water.

Saturday 14th February Goanna Headland at Evans Head
Leader: Peter Moyle
0412-656-498, please ring to register your interest.
Grade: 2-3. Some rocks to walk on and track can be slippery; care needed at drop-offs.
Meet: 9.30am at Chinaman’s Beach carpark. Two beautiful coastal walks: each year we come here, and we never tire of this wonderful spot and a nice coffee after. A walk to Goanna Headland followed – after lunch at the beach – by a walk through Dirrawong Reserve to Joggly Point. Each walk takes about 1.5 hours
Bring: water, lunch, and a hat. Good sturdy footwear needed. A swim after is always refreshing.



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Summer holidays: An ecological disaster

by Scott O’Keeffe, Ecologist

What’s black and red and flat all over? The two billion plus vertebrates lying dead on the world’s roads.

The actual number is much higher: two billion is an estimate based on counts by dedicated observers. Of the dead, 61% are mammals, 21% amphibians, 10% reptiles, and 8% are birds.

In Australia at least 10 million vertebrates are killed annually on our roads. The body count is 81% mammals, 9% birds, 4.9% reptiles, and .025% amphibians. These are the cuddlies and the cute. Heaven knows how many worms and insects are despatched every year.

Most of us have some understanding of the impact that roads have on individual species. The species we find attractive, quirky or familiar are the ones we know most about. Koalas, for example, are well studied. Research shows a general decline in their overall population. It shows that some specific populations may become extinct as a result of vehicle collisions.

Such a decline is tragic for koalas; all the more so if we consider how this might affect the ecosystems of which koalas are a part. The same is true of many other native animals. As they decline or disappear, the ecosystems that support them change. If they are apex predators or keystone species, the changes are likely to be dramatic.

For example, Australia has four species of quoll (*Dasyurus*). The Tasmanian devil is a closely related species. These are marsupial carnivores that are apex predators in the ecosystems where they are found. They are the peak of the food pyramid.

Populations of all four Quoll species and the Tasmanian devil are declining. Road trauma is a major contributor to this decline and a serious extinction risk factor. Any change in the abundance of quolls will profoundly influence the populations of their prey and other organisms in their shared ecosystems.

Declining populations of these apex predators can result in an increase in invasive species. Feral cats and rabbits, for example, are suppressed by the presence of



An abundance of road-killed animals is transforming the feeding behaviour of Wedge-tailed Eagles in arid areas. Their flocking and scavenging behaviour has become vulture-like.

Photo: John Robert McPherson

quolls, by competition in the case of cats, and predation in rabbits.

An increase in feral cats can result in the decline of small native vertebrates. An increase in rabbits can dramatically alter native vegetation across whole landscapes. If you look at the scientific literature, you’ll see these kinds of impacts described as ‘trophic cascades’. Entire ecosystems are profoundly altered by animal road mortality.

Wildlife research clearly shows that for koalas and quolls roadkill is a major contributor to local extinctions and wider population viability. Modelling indicates that some populations cannot persist with current roadkill rates. Persistence of these populations is doubtful without active mitigation and immigration from other populations.

An abundance of roadkill can also change the behaviour of some species. A variety of native fauna now make use of roadkill as a food source and appear to benefit significantly. Crows, ravens and butcher birds, for example, make heavy use of the roadside diner. They congregate on roadsides where they consume carrion that might otherwise be unavailable.

Some species become dependent upon roadside carrion and change

their behaviour significantly to take full advantage. This can potentially have whole ecosystem consequences, especially where an apex predator changes its behaviour. Wedge-tailed Eagles are an example of this.

‘Wedgies’ are essentially predators that hunt, even though they sometimes scavenge. Typically, they are solitary or found in pairs. Their prey is varied. As an apex predator, wedgies can be important in maintaining ecosystem stability.

Rabbits are an important part of the diet for some eagle populations. In these populations, wedgies reduce the serious impacts grazing rabbits have on native vegetation.

However, in semi-arid and arid areas the wedgie’s behaviour and diet has changed. In the outback, long stretches of road are littered with enormous numbers of animal carcasses; the largest and most visible being livestock and macropods.

Vehicles of all types kill animals, but the scale of wildlife road trauma has dramatically increased with the proliferation of enormous road trains. These speed along outback roads without stopping for animals in their path.

As a consequence, many arid areas have an abundant, reliable source of carnivore food where

scarcity was previously typical.

In the outback, groups of up to 40 eagles gather to feed at large carcasses or where there are multiple road kills. Remarkably, the eagles tolerate each other. Studies show that juvenile birds are especially likely to adopt scavenging behaviour.

This suggests that juvenile birds will become more dependent upon carrion, and less capable of active hunting. We may be seeing a predominantly solitary hunting carnivore becoming a gregarious scavenger. Wedgies may be filling a niche occupied in other ecosystems by vultures.

Up to this point I’ve mostly discussed the ecological impacts of road trauma on animals. I don’t think I have ever heard any discussion of the impacts roadkill has on vegetation or soils. But this is definitely ‘a thing.’

Studies carried out in many different climates and ecosystems show that carcasses (usually referred to as ‘cadavers’ in the literature) are significant sources of plant nutrients and moisture.

Soil moisture around cadavers is high in the early stage of decomposition because of the water content of animals. Over time, the breakdown of cadavers alters soil texture, often increasing the ability

of soil to retain moisture.

Many studies show that the effects of cadaver deposition and decay are greatest at the onset of decomposition. However, the impacts are long-lasting. Cadavers produce mineral ‘hotspots’ where plant nutrients are elevated above what is present in the surrounding landscape. Such areas may support unique plant assemblages.

If large numbers of cadavers are present, a mosaic of diverse vegetation may eventually develop. On a road system where cadavers are continually refreshed, a linear ‘nutrient corridor’ may develop with plants that differ from the species found in the broader matrix.

There has been one study in Australia that looked at how animal remains affect soil fertility and plant growth over time. The five-year study examined a grassy eucalypt woodland near Canberra.

The key findings were that elevated phosphorus levels around carcasses persist for at least five years, and that pH levels remain elevated. The study also found that most carcass sites were rapidly colonised by exotic annual plants, with limited establishment of native plants.

On poor soils such as those that occur over much of Australia, ‘nutrient corridors’ such as those on roadsides, could support bands of vegetation that are distinctly different from what is found on adjacent land.

On Australian roadsides, these nutrient corridors might facilitate the spread of weedy species, including some that are highly invasive and environmentally damaging.

Most of the discussion about wildlife roadkill understandably focusses on individual highly charismatic species. But we’re ignoring a lot of ecologically important species and failing to address the whole ecosystem consequences of road trauma.

If you’re battling road traffic over the holidays, shed a few tears for the koalas and quolls that are dying. Think about what this means for the ecosystems they are a part of.

Then ask when last was there a sighting of the two-metre long Giant Tamborine Mountain Earthworm (*Digaster longmani*). Look it up!

Tin mining dangers

by Kaali King

Few of us know that tin is one of the fastest growing rare-earth mineral commodities in 2025, outstripping lithium, cobalt, silver and graphite.

Demand for electronics and EVs, all of which use tin solder (48% of the global tin market) is fuelling the boom. Myanmar and Malaysia’s recent blanket-ban on tin mining (due to environmental toxicity in waterways and on agricultural land), has tin prices sky-rocketing and as global reserves dwindle, there is a perfect storm brewing.

With bipartisan support from State and Federal governments, First Tin’s tin mine at Taronga plans to come on-line at Emmaville, north-west of Glen Innes, in 2027.

Recent Federal government reforms to *The Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act* will fast-track critical mineral extraction, by-passing important environmental protections and safeguards, and it speaks volumes to the current situation.

As it stands, the Environmental Protection Authority, NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Heritage NSW and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Planning state the project doesn’t address the issues of water, monitoring, locations of tailing areas, mitigation of dust or heritage evaluation. Insufficient information is available for these agencies to make recommendations or apply approvals.

Still, this mine plans to be active in 2027.

Taronga Tin Mine landholdings (700 hectares) are on the southern reach of the Beardy River, which is a major head-water tributary flowing into the Murray-Darling Basin via several large river systems.

There are two deep, open-cut pits, approximately 2.6 km long strike, up to 260m wide and 150m-190m deep, covering approximately 52 hectares collectively. They will be operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for up to 10 years.

The disturbance footprint of the project is approximately 315 hectares. Further tin extraction points are proposed all around the sleepy historic village of Emmaville, to form a ‘hub and spoke’ approach, meaning this project is likely to turn the area into a vast tin mining district.

I know the Beardy River area well, because my family spent a lot of time at a community called Omshalom, during my childhood. This 3000-acre property sits neatly along the Beardy’s green, grassy banks and surrounding granite ridge lines at the far west of the Torrington Plateau.

Long-term locals may remember Omshalom for its wild people living off-grid, huge tipi lodges dotted across the landscape, its gorgeous river and excellent crystal hunting.

As kids, we would dig amongst the granite for native rock carrots, munching them for snacks as we marched up the

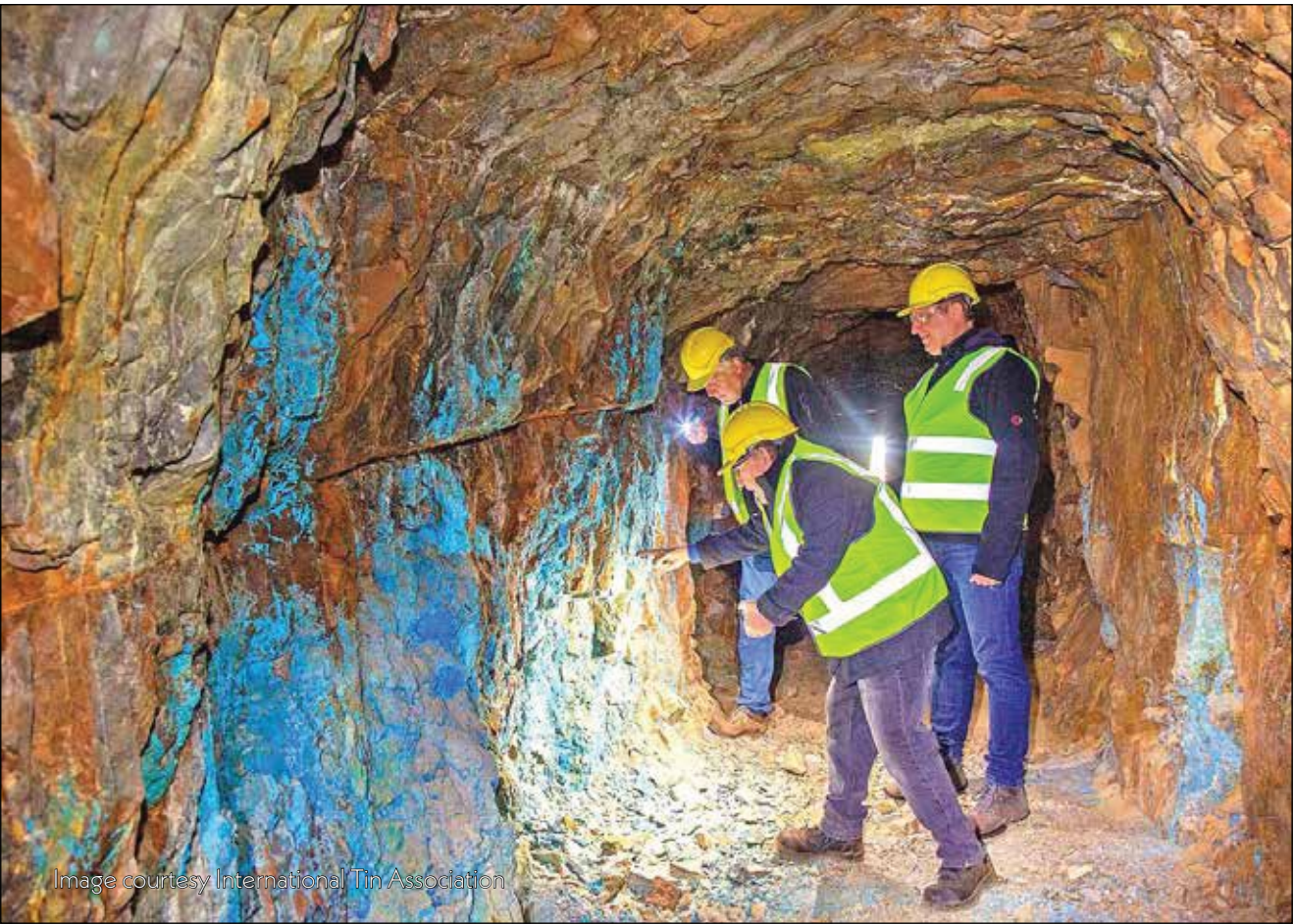


Image courtesy International Tin Association

ridge to the ‘crystal mine’. This mine wasn’t originally for crystal hunting. It comprised of a few blast holes in rocky outcrops created by pioneers a hundred years ago. They were searching for tin.

Taronga is little more than 20kms away as the crow flies.

To say that water is a premium on the Granite Belt is a vast understatement. Unfortunately, tin mining is notoriously water-dependant. Dust suppression and extraction use copious water.

First Tin claims they’ll source and recycle water sourced at Taronga, but can’t confirm where the reservoirs are, or their capacity. Maps freely available on the project proposal don’t indicate any water reserves onsite, so where do they plan to get the water?

Tin isn’t toxic, but the by-products created during the mining process certainly are. Tailings and dust plumes can contain arsenic, lead, zinc, copper, chromium, cadmium, nickel and manganese, as well as radioactive materials.

Processing can leave behind sulphuric acid, cyanide, and petroleum byproducts. Acid and metalliferous drainage can occur when certain metal-rich rocks react with oxygen, which is a serious environmental concern.

Submissions against the mine opened on 7th October and were closed on 4th November last year, but no residents downstream on the Beardy River were given notice of the proposal.

Considering the northern mine proposal is two kilometres away from the Beardy River, this is a gross oversight by First Tin.

Information on the NSW government planning portal is confusing and hard to decipher, meaning for those who did receive notice, gleaning the correct picture out of the documents is complicated. The relevant information is only available on-line, creating further inequity for rural and remote stakeholders.

Perhaps First Tin are confident that fulfilling the recommendations set down by EPBC won’t be required at all; and without environmental monitoring, what hope does Omshalom, or any of the farming communities downstream, have of recourse or responsible, monitored mining activities?

My heart sinks for that beautiful land that grew me up. What really scares me is what this project means for critical resource mining regionally; because if environmental concerns aren’t properly considered when it comes to mining and extraction at Taronga, it sets a precedent for future projects throughout NSW.

The big question is, with so many critical minerals project beginning to come on-line in NSW, will there be enough people asking the important questions to safeguard the environmental integrity of the region’s precious water and land?

Further reading about this project can be found at: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/taronga-tin-mine and at: <https://epbcpublicportal.environment.gov.au/all-referrals/project-referral-summary/?id=92f02be2-ba65-f011-bec3-000d3aca90600>

Clarence Catchment Alliance delivers anti-mining dossier

by Shae Fleming, CCA Co-ordinator

In August 2025, the Clarence Catchment Alliance travelled to Sydney and delivered a comprehensive 120-page evidence dossier to the NSW ministers responsible, in Parliament.

It set out clear, lawful actions available to protect the Clarence Catchment from mineral exploration and mining.

That evidence covered flood risk, drinking water contamination pathways, threatened species, cultural impacts, landholder testimony and economic risk.

The Alliance, since then, has deliberately held back from media engagement to allow time for considered government responses.

Those responses have now arrived... or, in one case, not arrived at all.

Why this matters now

- One key minister has not responded at all
- The other has issued a generic, framework-based reply that does not address the Clarence Catchment-specific evidence or requests.
- This comes despite the Clarence Catchment being recognised by the NSW

Government as the highest flood-risk region in the state, and despite recent antimoney drection in the Clarence-Coffs drinking water system.

What’s in the dossier?

- A clear explanation of what the Alliance asked Government to do... and why
- The four specific, lawful actions requested under existing NSW planning and mining laws
- Why “it’s only exploration” is not a risk-management answer in a flood-prone drinking water catchment
- The implications of

ministerial silence and deflection for community trust and accountability

- Why precaution must occur before harm, not after contamination

This is not an abstract policy debate. It is about whether mining should proceed in places where contamination risk cannot be undone, no matter how strong the regulation.

We believe this story is in the public interest and warrants coverage, particularly given the scale of the water system at risk, the volume of evidence provided, and the absence of a substantive government response.



Clarence Catchment Alliance delegation in Parliament House, Sydney on 5th August with Richie Williamson MP, Member for Clarence, who is a strong supporter of the CCA.



Lillian was hit by a car, injuring her spine and sacrum and initially causing paralysis of her hind legs.

by Friends of the Koala

Car hits are one of the major threats to Koalas in the Northern Rivers of NSW.

Vehicle strikes happen all year round but particularly during breeding season between June and December when adult male koalas are moving in search of a mate and whilst the previous year’s juveniles are dispersing.

If you see what appears to be a sick or injured koala, it is crucial that you call our 24/7 emergency hotline immediately on 02 6622-1233.

Be proactive. Save the hotline phone number 02-6622-1233 and report every koala you see close to, or on a road immediately

What to do if a collision occurs

If you have struck a koala, or you see a koala by the side of the road, make sure to pull in safely and call us, whether the koala appears healthy, injured or dead.

Do not touch or try to transport koalas yourself as this could pose a significant risk to their health and safety, and yours. If you can, stay with the animal until a rescuer attends.

If you cannot stay, try to be as exact as possible about the location: specific addresses, GPS points or landmarks are

incredibly helpful. Between May 2023 and May 2024, 71 koalas were hit by vehicles, of which just 13

Slow down. Be attentive. Save lives.

JANUARY 2026 LOCAL GIGS			PLANET MUSIC
07 JAN	Not Quite Folk Open Mic Night Eltham Hotel	WEDNESDAY	
08 JAN	Vanlife Comedy Blah Bar Lismore	THURSDAY	
09 JAN	Yolan, DJ Spex Hotel Lismore	FRIDAY	
10 JAN	IV, Catpiss, Ten Pack Screwdriver Blah Bar Lismore	SATURDAY	
10 JAN	Rochelle Lees Band Hotel Lismore	SATURDAY	
11 JAN	Slim Pickins Eltham Hotel	SUNDAY	
13 JAN	Johnny Fritz, Josh Hedley, Chris Acker Eltham Hotel	TUESDAY	
14 JAN	Monthly Irish Folk Jam Eltham Hotel	WEDNESDAY	
14 JAN	Open Mic Night Lismore City Bowlo	WEDNESDAY	
14 JAN	Open Mic Night Nimbin Bowlo	WEDNESDAY	
15 JAN	The Ocelots Pearces Creek Hall	THURSDAY	
16 JAN	Adam Hourigan, DJ Lazy Dom Hotel Lismore	FRIDAY	
16 JAN	Private Wives, Deadcrow, Hooch + More Blah Bar Lismore	FRIDAY	
16 JAN	Nooriyah The Northern Byron	FRIDAY	
17 JAN	Sabotage Band Hotel Lismore	SATURDAY	
22 JAN	Monthly Bluegrass Jam Eltham Hotel	THURSDAY	
23 JAN	Emmy Hour, Dahlia, Pippin Blah Bar Lismore	FRIDAY	
23 JAN	Luke Vassella, DJ Spex Hotel Lismore	FRIDAY	
24 JAN	Hochiku, Lucy's House, Nazare, Zam Blah Bar Lismore	SATURDAY	
24 JAN	Tubed Radio Band Hotel Lismore	SATURDAY	
25 JAN	Child, Valhalla Lights, Couch Wizard Blah Bar Lismore	SUNDAY	
26 JAN	Cath Slimes Band Hotel Lismore	MONDAY	
30 JAN	Adam Gardiner, DJ Lazy Dom Hotel Lismore	FRIDAY	
31 JAN	Operation Ibis, HDM + More Blah Bar Lismore	SATURDAY	
31 JAN	Push Band Hotel Lismore	SATURDAY	

Submit Gigs to gigguide@planetmusic.com.au to be featured on our weekly guide on Instagram!

Movies

NIMBIN BUSH THEATRE

6:00pm Kitchen opens | 7:30pm Film starts | \$15 / \$12

BOOGIE NIGHTS

Boogie Nights (R18+)

2/01/2026

MAGNOLIA

Magnolia (MA15+)

9/01/2026

HOLLYWOOD

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (MA15+)

16/1/2026

MINECRAFT

A Minecraft Movie (PG)

18/1/2026

SUNDAY SPECIAL

THE MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS

The Men Who Stare at Goats (M)

23/1/2026

THE PRESTIGE

The Prestige (M)

30/1/2026

VENUE HIRE

Looking for a unique venue surrounded by nature? The Nimbin Bush Theatre is ideal for private parties, weddings and ceremonies, workshops, film nights, and community events. Facilities include an indoor theatre, outdoor space, lush gardens, kitchen, café, and more.

Contact: theatre@nimbinbushtheatre.com | 0476 008 278

On stage at Woodford



Photos: Kurt Petersen



Peace in practice – A new year at Flourish Sanctuary

by Jagad Samuel

This year's World Peace Festival at Flourish Sanctuary has had a start none of us could have predicted.

The Festival was held in the immediate aftermath of the Bondi tragedy, an act of violence that shook the nation and rippled deeply through our collective nervous system.

Rather than feeling abstract or idealistic, the theme of peace has become immediate and embodied. It asked something of us, not as a slogan or belief, but as a lived practice.

How do we remain human in moments of fear? How do we respond to violence without amplifying it? How do we hold grief without turning away from one another?

Special thanks must go to LJ and Tiana, who travelled all the way from California to support the Festival.

They arrived with open hearts and immediately became part of the backbone of Flourish, helping wherever needed, often behind the scenes, and always with good humour and generosity.

Their willingness to cross oceans to serve a gathering dedicated to peace reminded us that this work truly transcends borders.

A New Year, a fresh beginning

With the Festival complete, Flourish Sanctuary now turns gently toward the year ahead.

There is a sense of renewal in the air – not rushed, not forced, but grounded.

I have recently returned from a silent meditation retreat, bringing back a renewed commitment to simplicity, depth and steady practice. Silence, once again, is informing sound.

As always, Flourish continues to offer



Baba Ji and Jagad during a Puja Ceremony at Flourish Sanctuary

regular weekly programs that support inner work, community connection, and care for the land.

Weekly offerings at Flourish

• **Monday Morning Meditation** – 10.30am to 12pm. A quiet, welcoming space to settle the mind, soften the body, and return to centre. Suitable for beginners and experienced meditators alike.

• **Wednesday Morning Garden with Bodhi** – 9am to 12pm. Hands-on, practical permaculture in action. These mornings are about learning through doing – working with soil, plants, and natural systems while cultivating patience, awareness, and respect for the land.

• **Wednesday Afternoon Beginner Mandarin & Tao Teachings** –

2pm to 3pm. A gentle introduction to Mandarin language and Taoist philosophy. No prior experience required – just curiosity and an openness to learning something new.

• **Thursday Morning Sound Healing with Michael** – 9.30am to 10.30am (\$20). A deeply restorative session using sound and vibration to support nervous system regulation and inner harmony.

• **Saturday Morning KYM Program** – 9am to 12pm. Our weekly rhythm of Kirtan, Meditation and Yoga.

This integrated practice offers movement, stillness, and devotional song as a way of grounding into the weekend with clarity and heart.

• **Saturday Evening Havan with Mata** – 5pm to 7pm. A traditional fire ceremony open to all, supporting purification, gratitude, and collective intention. A powerful way to close the week and reset for what lies ahead.

• **Voices on the Airwaves** – Our weekly radio program has also returned to NimFM 102.3, broadcasting each Monday morning from 7am. The show offers reflections on community life, spirituality, ecology and the lived experience of practising presence in an increasingly complex world.

In a time when the world can feel fragile and unpredictable, Flourish remains committed to offering spaces where people can slow down, reconnect, and remember what it means to be human together.

The Peace Festival reminded us that this work is not optional – it is necessary.

For details on any events, retreats, volunteering opportunities, or future festivals, please visit: www.FlourishSanctuary.com.au or phone 0433-173-508.

The Northern GoodTimes Rainbow Region Property Guide

Lifestyle retreat with two residences and spectacular views

442 Blue Knob Road, Blue Knob
5 Bed 2 Bath 3 Car 120 Acres
\$1,440,000 - \$1490,000

In the rolling green hills of the Rainbow Region, where the air is fresh and the views stretch to eternity, a truly exceptional property has come to market.

Nestled on 120 acres overlooking the iconic Blue Knob, 442 Blue Knob Road offers the ultimate escape – a private paradise blending historic charm, modern comfort, and sustainable rural living, just 5km from Nimbin's vibrant village.

Increasingly, buyers from metropolitan areas like Sydney and beyond are discovering the allure of our hinterland, drawn by the promise of space, serenity, and a genuine tree-change lifestyle away from the urban hustle.

The main residence, a beautifully renovated circa 1900s home, fuses classic character with contemporary elegance.

Wrap-around verandahs invite year-round outdoor living, while inside you'll find a spacious master suite with luxe ensuite, a

modern kitchen with gas cooktop and walk-in pantry, open-plan living warmed by a wood heater, and additional bedrooms perfect for family or guests.

Established gardens, orchards, and a workshop complete this serene sanctuary.

Set privately on an elevated site, the second dwelling – a stylish conversion of the original dairy shed – is currently off-grid and has proven popular as an Airbnb retreat.

With two bedrooms, open-plan living, a modern bathroom, and a large deck capturing panoramic vistas, it offers income potential or a peaceful guest haven.

The land itself is a dream for hobby farmers or those seeking self-sufficiency: spring-fed dams, a large dam with island and bridge, stockproof fencing, a private swimming hole, and capacity for up to 30 head of cattle.

Solar power, NBN readiness, and abundant water sources



underscore its sustainability.

Add convenient touches like school bus at the gate, proximity to Nimbin's cafes and services, and easy access to the Gold Coast – this property delivers lifestyle, productivity, and

possibility in equal measure.

Whether as a family haven, working farm, or eco-retreat, 442 Blue Knob Road is a rare gem in our beloved hinterland.

A little-known fact: Nimbin Hills Real Estate (now trading as

Hills2Coast) is proudly one of the top listing agencies across the entire Northern Rivers region, with extensive reach and proven results.

If you're considering selling your own piece of paradise, now

is the perfect time to list with the local experts who know this market best.

Contact agent John Wilcox on 0428-200-288 for your private inspection today. Don't miss this piece of paradise!



John
0428 200 288



Jacqui
0439 15 6666



Samara
0429 806 288



Suzy
0429 492 477



Vicki
0409 914 433



Michelle
0489 238 889

Currently **3rd** Highest
selling Agency in
Northern Rivers
For properties **SOLD** on realestate.com.au

FEATURE PROPERTIES

Slice of Heaven!

67 / 265 Martin Road,
Larnook
2 Acres



\$399,000

Agent: Jacqui



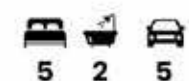
Escape city life with this charming 1-bedroom, 1-bathroom timber home in Billen Cliffs Strata Village. Located on 2 acres, it features a loft, open-plan kitchen/living room, verandah, and outdoor bath. Surrounded by old growth trees and wildlife, the property offers tranquility and rustic charm. Fully off-grid with solar power and a rainwater tank.



On a lush hillside in The Channon Village, this handcrafted basalt home blends creativity, tradition & innovation. With thick stone walls, catenary arches & abundant light, it sits amid gardens, terraces & rainforest. Inside the home is split level creating private spaces, screened verandahs for year round use, fireplaces, a loft with its own private access, studio & 3 bedrooms. Built using ancient techniques, it offers timeless beauty. Additional dwelling opportunity.

A Living Work of Art!

14-16 Nimbin Street,
The Channon
1930 Sqm



\$ CONTACT AGENT Jacqui Smith



(02) 6689 1498

realestate@nimbinhills.com.au
www.hills2coast.com.au