

Letters

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 GoodTimes.

Keeping one's head

It is important to realise that while a 'National Day of Mourning' may be cathartic and politically expedient for some persons, it will not do anything to resolve the fundamental issues that have been plaguing humanity for millennia.

If these are not resolved, crises will return again and again in years to come. Bondi massacre(s) will be perpetuated as long as we fail to see that:

- The Abrahamic religions have failed completely in their efforts to bring peace among their followers, while at the same time succeeding brilliantly in perpetuating wars, crusades and jihad;
- These thoughtless instigators care more for books said to be holy, than human beings;
- In an interactive world, major events and crises in one part of the globe have repercussions in others. The solution to the above lies in dialogue, disarmament and peace, achievable through the equitable sharing of resources, 'in the recognition of our common humanity.'

Marcello R Serini
Lismore

The space between empires

2026 will be remembered as the year the unravelling of the American Empire was publicly laid bare, even though the process has been on-going for years.

Failing health, shrinking support and a global distancing from the impending US collapse, have combined with Emperor Trump's ego to produce a

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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.



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panicked distraction from this reality.

Threatening inert countries within the Americas for reasons that make no sense and deliver no immediate financial gains to an ailing US economy, is a clear sign of weakness, not strength.

Even conservative voices within the US are talking about the prospect of JD Vance ascending to the throne and taking the Christian nationalist agenda to the next stage, namely a smaller US population of white Christians isolated from the world stage and any semblance of reality.

All empires have a biological cycle of birth, growth and eventual death. Their economic and military dominance, their cultural influence and the political sovereignty they once enjoyed, gradually morphs into something less and less, until finally its relevance disappears altogether.

The 'fall' of most empires is less a face-slam into the deck, than a rapid ageing and eventual demise, think Ottoman, British or Roman examples.

Stan Arnold
24th July 1952 – 9th January 2026



Stanley Charles Arnold, aka Longyard, was best known in Nimbin as a stalwart of the Nimbin Bowling Club for several decades.

A well-attended celebration of his life was held in Nimbin Cemetery on 16th January, with songs, poems and speeches.



February 2026

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ideologies?

You say that Zionism is from a supremacist cult. Just about any political ideology can be defined like that. Look at the US Republican party now, let alone the Catholic church, the Modi government in India, the Shia and Suni Muslims. The list goes on.

The 'land grabbing' genocidal colonial enterprise definition needs more pulling apart. Historically Zionism was an idea that Jews would be able to live somewhere where they would be safe from persecution. This was exemplified when the survivors of six million European Jews being rounded up and murdered looked for somewhere to live.

Initially Palestine Arabs and Jews had an accepting, egalitarian society. The Grand Mufti at the time was a friend of Hitler and roused conflict with the new settlers. This led to an increasingly divided society where now 80% of Arabs live in Gaza and the West Bank and 20% are integrated into Israeli society.

That 20% have a population proportion in all social fields including military and legal. In a world perspective, these 'new settlers' did not kill the natives through disease and guns, as happened in Australia, North and South America, and is still happening in the Tibetan and Weija areas of China.

The genocidal label is ironic in the historical context. That label put on Israelis in the Gaza conflict was decided by the 28% of the International Association of Genocide Scholars who attended. The decision has been vehemently argued against by some of them. (See: www.ajc.org/news/in-the-rush-to-vilify-israel-genocide-scholars-ignore-the-truth)

The idea that "Zionists feel they can commit any crime they want" is congruent to a statement like "all Australians like guns". Sure, there are some people who are Zionist and have that arrogance, but to come out with such a viewpoint on.

These are the debatable points:

How can you say that the root cause of conflict in West Asia is Zionism? There are a multitude of causes of conflict anywhere in the world. If you say that the root cause is one particular ideology, then what about the conflicting

Aircraft noise

Lismore Council runs the Lismore airport. It ceased operating passenger services after the 2022 floods, and the airport function changed to become an International Flight School training hub.

What that involves is that planes head out toward Girards Hill, cross the river about where the Memorial Pool is, go towards the towers on the road to Nimbin, turn, and come back to the airport over South Lismore.

Always the same route, frequently up to 100 planes a day, and often every minute for hours, from before 7am until 11.30pm. There is no dependable regularity that one could predict to avoid being home during the worst times.

I live on Girards Hill, west of Ballina Road. The hill, and Robinsons Lookout, is where all these low flying, really noisy planes aim for and then cross. It's like a motorbike running through your house every few minutes – really loud, really frequent – but surprisingly there's nothing you can do about it.

I have sent letters to Lismore Council about this. They don't respond to me anymore. Initially they did, and then they told me they were going to increase the traffic, not decrease it.

I have complained to the aviation authority, and they say it's a 24/7 airport, and there's nothing anyone can do about noise in the sky, just on land. I presume the airline industries have money and power enough to have managed this.

Lismore Council has a 'Fly Neighbourly' policy that is supposed to protect them from complaint, but the flight schools don't adhere to it at all, and so the only meaning it has is for propaganda, to be seen to be caring, I presume.

I don't know how many people are as upset as me. I'm 77 years old, and it's forcing us to move. I pity anyone moving in after us, not realising what they're in for.

I cannot be the only person who wants better than what the council is doing, that destroys the quality of life for a lot of people. I have lived in both America and Ireland for many years, and Byron Shire also for many years. All these places would make a fuss and protest about this. The noise just seems to be on-going with no objection.

Now they are spending a fortune on the airport to facilitate a bigger and better International Flight School training hub!

Jennifer Keane
Lismore

On Zionism

While I appreciate John Scrivner's concern about historical world ideologies (NGT Letters, Jan 2026), I think there may be other points of view concerning Zionism, which straight after the anti-semitic attack on Jews in Bondi, is a delicate subject to voice a fundamentally negative viewpoint on.

These are the debatable points:

How can you say that the root cause of conflict in West Asia is Zionism? There are a multitude of causes of conflict anywhere in the world. If you say that the root cause is one particular ideology, then what about the conflicting

statements not only shows your fervent fundamentalism John, it also shows your ignorance.

Mary B
Bangalow

Puppies for sale

I visited Nimbin for the first time on 20th December.

I have wanted to visit for some time, as I was keen to see firsthand how this free-thinking and kind-hearted community lived.

On the way to Nimbin, I was excited to see signs saying "Love" and "Don't eat animals". I thought to myself how lucky I was that such a place exists.

However, upon visiting the town centre, I encountered a sight that caused my

excitement to disappear. By the side of the road, in the centre of the town, a few people were selling puppies.

The pups were cramped in a small cage, and the mother was in another cage right next to them. It was a very hot day, yet the bowls of water were placed outside the cages, out of their reach. It was a distressing sight.

I have attached some photos I managed to take. I couldn't get many close-up shots as I was worried about causing a commotion.

I cannot reconcile how this kind of activity can happen in the middle of a town that advocates for the love and kind treatment of animals and nature.

Kevin Roberts

A new inquest hearing started in March 2019 where the psychiatric registrar said regarding staff concerns referring to Dungay's blood sugar levels

Kay left us peacefully, with Grant and Jenny by her side, on the morning of Tuesday, 20th January, after 86 incredible years, 66 of those with loving partner Len Martin (RIP).

Kay is survived by her children Kerry (aka Francis), Grant, Jenny and Gina, her seven grand-children Phyllis, Lenny, Thomas, Charlie, Max, Jake and Georgie and great-grand-daughter Elsie. Many thanks to all who helped Kay through recent years – particularly since

losing Len in May 2024 – most notably the wonderful team at Nimbin MPS. A memorial event for Kay will be held locally in the coming weeks TBA.

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Photo: Arthur Bain

Campaign continues to end Aboriginal deaths in custody

by Chibo Mertineit



Mother, Leetona Dungay speaking outside Kempsey police station, supported by Councillor Arthur Bain

Around 50 people walked from the Kempsey police station, Dungutti country, through town to the Riverside Park on Monday 29th December for the tenth anniversary of the death of David Joseph Dungay in Long Bay Correctional Centre.

He died after the Correctional Response Team came into his cell to move him, just weeks before his release, and you can hear him on the video calling out, "I can't breathe."

In 1991, the Royal Commission into Indigenous Deaths in Custody, which was established in 1987, came up with 339 recommendations. The commission investigated 99 Aboriginal deaths in custody in the time from 1980 to 1989.

It cost \$40 million dollars which is around \$95 million dollars in these days' money. To this day the government has not put all recommendations into practice.

David Joseph Dungay was diagnosed with asthma and diabetes in his youth and had some mental health issues. He was eating a rice cracker in his cell when the medical team raised the alarm.

The Correctional Response Team wanted to move him into a different cell with an installed video camera. He was injected with a sedative and he called out 12 times that he can't breathe. He died minutes later and all attempts to resuscitate him didn't work. He died from a cardiac arrhythmia.

His family fought for a coronial inquest and that started in July 2018, two and a half years later. Testifying there, the Commissioner of Corrective Services said that it was a misconception that a restrained person who can talk would be able to breathe. The inquest was running late and so not all witnesses could be heard.

A new inquest hearing started in March 2019 where the psychiatric registrar said regarding staff concerns referring to Dungay's blood sugar levels

didn't call for an immediate intervention and a cell transfer. The doctor on duty that day told the court that he could have done better and that he had never performed CPR before that day.

In November 2019 the coroner found none of the guards involved should face disciplinary action and their conduct "was limited by systemic deficiencies in training".

Leetona Dungay said after the findings were announced that justice had not been served and that the family would try to prosecute the guards. In June 2021 she said that she would lodge a complaint with the UN Human Rights Committee with the hope that that would encourage all governments to implement the 1991 Royal Commission recommendations.

She has the assistance of human rights lawyer Jennifer Robinson, who worked for Julian Assange, as well as George Newhouse.

As Arthur Bain, the Greens councillor of Kempsey, said in front of the police station, "In 2024/25 we broke the record for aboriginal deaths in custody. The system is broken and we can be a voice for change and we can draw attention to

this crime that is happening every day to First Nation people."

Thirty-three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died in custody last year, 26 in prison (highest ever recorded), six in police custody and one in youth detention. In 1991, 14% of inmates were indigenous, now it's 39%.

As of the 2021 Census, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders made up 3.8% of Australia's total population.

Aunty Leetona, the mother of David Dungay, said, "My son should be still alive. We all are wounded. Black lives matter!"

Councillor Arthur Bain said at the end of the march in Riverside Park, "The coroner said he died under controversial circumstances. It was murder... The first step is to stop putting kids in gaol!"

"A 14-year old isn't mature enough to go on social media, but they are old enough to be locked in a cage with a spithood. Stop jailing kids."

It's on us to speak up for urgent change, necessary training and the implementation of all the recommendations of 1991 Royal Commission.



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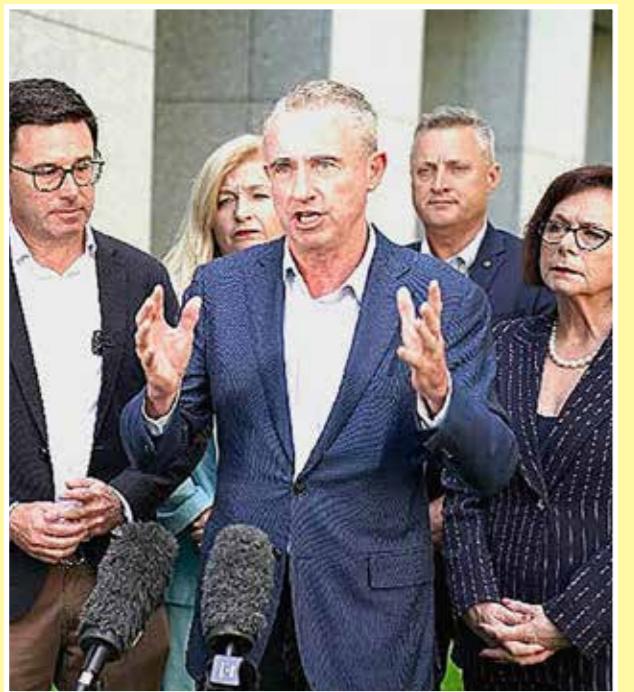
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Freedom of speech must be protected

On the same Page

by Kevin Hogan MP

The Nationals took a principled stand to protect free speech during Parliament recently.

We have stepped away from the Coalition after our Senators were asked to resign when they would not support Labor's far-reaching attack on free speech.

Therefore, I have resigned as Shadow Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment. My National shadow ministry colleagues have resigned as well.

I am still the Federal Member for Page; this has not changed. I am as motivated as ever to represent our region and our values in the Parliament.

Free speech is a basic democratic right. If we're not prepared to defend it, then we lose sight of why we're here in the first place. Principle should triumph over politics every time.



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

deliver high-quality care and that families can stay close to home during some of the most challenging times of their lives.

Her work has helped fund essential medical equipment, improve local health services and provide practical, compassionate support for families navigating serious childhood illness.

Charlie Murray was named Young Citizen of the year. Charlie is a young woman with agriculture

and farming at the centre of her work and advocacy. She has represented the region through major awards programs and events, while also volunteering her time to support community causes.

Other winners were Bruce Sheaffe (Services in the Community – Individual), Rainbow Roos (Services in the Community – Group), Cooper Williams (Sportsperson – Junior), Connor McCarthy (Sportsperson), Marist Brothers Rugby League (Sports Team), Ina Engermann (Environment), Jacklyn Wagner (Arts and Culture), Felicity Hyde (Economic Excellence) and Dr Chris Ingall (Academic Excellence).

Once again congratulations to them all, and congratulations to our newest 52 citizens, including 12 children, who came from 20 countries, including Germany, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, China, Nepal, the United

Kingdom, South Africa, Spain, Vietnam, Kenya and Papua New Guinea.

Road repairs

In other news, remediation of the damaged culvert and landslip along Rock Valley Road is making great progress.

We temporarily opened a single lane over the long weekend and then closed it again to allow staff and contractors to continue the rebuild. Weather depending, works will be completed by the middle of this month.

Repairs to a 1.9km stretch of The Channon Road near Dunoon is also underway, with one lane closed. This work should be complete by mid-July, once again, weather dependent.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to residents and road users for their patience and co-operation throughout both projects.

Updates about both roads will be shared via: LiveTraffic.com

Expanding NSW Government programs for prevention of violence

by Janelle Saffin MP
Member for Lismore

The Minns Government is rolling out a strengthened Respectful Relationships Education program to 150 more public schools from early 2026, as part of its broader Pathways to Prevention strategy to prevent violence before it occurs.

The expansion of the project builds on the success of the pilot trialled in 10 schools, last year, where evidence informed, age-appropriate learning has helped students develop the skills needed for healthy, respectful relationships.

The program takes a whole school approach, providing teachers, leaders and staff with professional learning, resources and expert guidance to address the drivers of gender based

violence and promote equality.

Every NSW public school will have access to new K-12 curriculum materials designed to embed respect, empathy and safety into everyday school life.

This work is complemented by an \$8 million investment in the All-In Early

Education program, which supports early childhood educators and families to engage young children in conversations about respect and inclusion.

Preventing violence requires action on many fronts, and education is central to long term change. Since its launch a year ago, the Government's Pathways to Prevention strategy has been working across communities to shift attitudes and behaviours that enable domestic, family and sexual violence.

Taking action on animal welfare

In December NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe announced that the temporary closure of the animal welfare laws (circa 1979) to meet current community expectations.

The proposed changes include:

- New offences for leaving a dog unattended in a hot vehicle; using or possessing prong collars that are currently illegal to import; and possessing glue traps that are already illegal to set in New South Wales.
- Strengthening animal fighting offences to address potential loopholes and support NSW police in addressing their links to organised crime.
- Strengthening enforcement powers and penalties to send clear signals to perpetrators of animal cruelty.

Consultation with peak animal welfare organisations and other stakeholders is continuing, and the Government expects to present a bill to Parliament in the first half of this year.

I thank Minister for Agriculture, Regional and Western NSW Tara Moriarty for her commitment to protecting animals from harm and promoting their welfare.



Because we care for our pets, (like Jet, pictured) the government is updating animal welfare laws this year.



Australia Day honours

Big picture, little Nationals

The world feels uneasy. We are experiencing wild climate change-fuelled weather, rising prices and costs of living, and both literal and metaphorical smoke on the horizon.

The world rules are shifting, with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney nailing it when he called it a "rupture of the world order".

In the United States, the Orange Monster has returned to the White House. He has lost no time smashing his claw into the world as the dominant bullying-force in a resurgent international movement of nationalist strongmen.

His government is aggressively expanding executive exploitative powers and threatening war with Venezuela over trade and oil.

He has triggered mass protests across Greenland and Denmark by demanding that the autonomous Arctic nation be transferred to US control, even threatening to use force.

Meanwhile, criticism of the Israeli state for its actions in Gaza, where over 240,000 Palestinians have been killed or wounded and entire neighbourhoods levelled, has become increasingly difficult in public discourse.

Former deputy prime minister Barnaby Joyce, mired in scandal

and no longer welcome at the big table, has defected to Pauline Hanson's One Nation. Joyce has seen the political wind turn – fuelled by weeks of media

fearmongering, a national security

panic and racist political posturing

about immigrants and refugees

– and he has bolted to the furthest-right.

Here in Australia, the mood is

tense and confused. The Bondi

Beach terrorist attack shocked

the country and left communities

reeling. We have seen moments

of solidarity and reflection,

but we have also witnessed an opportunistic political response that has sought to curtail

democratic protest and deepen

racial division.

That clarity has never been more

important, and it has never been

in starker contrast when compared

with the behaviour of the National

Party over the past two months.

Once again, in a seemingly coercive control move, the Nationals have broken up with their coalition partner. Like narcissists they have made our collective societal problems all about them! What are the Nationals offering right now other than opportunism, backflips, and bad faith?

not far behind, has fast-tracked a series of new offences that make it easier to criminalise protest, restrict movement, and silence dissent – particularly when that dissent takes aim at powerful interests.

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by Sue Higginson
NSW Greens MLC

The Liberals and Nationals in opposition are not defending freedoms or standing up for principle. They are just self-interested politicians that are scared that their rotting base is falling apart faster than ever.

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Here again, in a seemingly coercive control move, the Nationals have broken up with their coalition partner. Like narcissists, they have made our collective societal problems all about them! What are the Nationals offering right now other than opportunism, backflips, and bad faith?

It is important to name it clearly because they are not standing for civil liberties. They are not taking a principled stand on surveillance or authoritarian lawmaking. They are reacting to a political firestorm of their own making, desperately trying to find relevance while clinging to the politics of power, resentment and fear.

These comments reflect a deep alignment between conservative political identity and uncritical support for the most aggressive, inhumane and nationalist foreign

policy actors in the world.

Simultaneously, Nationals MPs have been falling over themselves to posture as defenders of "freedom" and "free speech" in Parliament in a last-ditch attempt to contain the damage from Barnaby's defection and the collapse of their alliance with the Liberal Party.

Three of their Senators voted against the Labor Government's hate speech laws, not because the laws were poorly drafted or dangerous (which they are), but because they saw a political wedge.

Kevin Hogan, the local Nationals MP for Page, abstained entirely from the vote and then jumped into the media spotlight once it was safe to do so, using the moment to promote himself and his so-called principles.

He showed no courage in the vote, no leadership in the debate, and no interest in the consequences for our community.

That includes continuing to speak clearly and firmly about the genocide being carried out in Gaza, and continuing to oppose the growing censorship of protest and speech in Australia.

The Nationals didn't support Labor's dangerous laws, but it was for the wrong reasons. They did it out of political panic. They did it because they are obsessed with themselves; any overlap with genuine public wellbeing is an illusion and an accident.

This year, 2026, will be a year of reckoning. We are living through converging crises – climate, housing, inequality, war – and we will not get through them by retreating into fear or division.

We will get through them by organising together, by holding power to account, and by standing on the side of what matters most.

The Greens, as always, are here for that work.

democracy itself.

The rise of authoritarian politics is unfolding in real time – in the Supreme Court decisions of the United States, in the silencing of opposition voices in India, in the crackdowns in Iran and Russia, in the mass surveillance infrastructure being deployed in China and its growing influence on Australia's neighbours.

In every country where nationalist governments rise, the same pattern emerges: protest is criminalised, critical media is attacked, exploitation is normalised and the language of freedom is used to justify exclusion and control.

Here at home, the Greens are continuing to resist that tide. We are pushing for real investment in communities, for a politics of peace, for strong environmental protection, and for an economy that centres people rather than profit.

That includes continuing to speak clearly and firmly about the genocide being carried out in Gaza, and continuing to oppose the growing censorship of protest and speech in Australia.

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The Greens, as always, are here for that work.

Civil, respectful engagement and ethical leadership required



Council notebook
by Cr Virginia Waters
Lismore City Council

As we move into the year ahead, I want to acknowledge the learning that comes with serving as a councillor.

Council work is complex, with competing priorities and challenges across a diverse community and a large organisation. Over the past year, I've valued building respectful working relationships with fellow councillors and council staff.

I also want to be clear about the values I bring to this role. At times, the standard of discourse by some falls short of the integrity, honesty and respect our community deserves and expects.

There has been an important outcome worth sharing. Landslip-affected residents across the LGA are now eligible to access the \$15,000 housing grant, which was previously limited to flood-affected households only.

This change recognises the very real impacts landslips have had on homes, access and safety, particularly in our hill communities. I encourage anyone who has been affected to check their eligibility and, where

Day celebrations. I do, however, acknowledge and congratulate the recipients of awards and the incredible contributions they make to our community and wider society.

My position is not about diminishing those achievements. Rather, I support changing the date to one that can honour these contributions without marking the invasion and dispossession of First Nations peoples, for whom 26th January remains a deeply painful day.

In Nimbin, a clean-up blitz was carried out just prior to Christmas, focusing on the village centre. This was well received and forms part of on-going advocacy to see the village better maintained, refreshed and cared for.

This work needs to be consistent and on-going, not reactive. I will also be following up again on the Nimbin pedestrian crossing, which was scheduled for delivery late last year but

has not yet been completed. I have been contacted by a number of Nimbin residents seeking an update on the Nimbin water supply. Water security is fundamental to daily life and to the long-term sustainability of the village.

This includes understanding storage levels, system outputs, reliability during dry periods, and what monitoring, reporting and works are underway.

I have requested updated information and will report back in the next edition of *Nimbin GoodTimes* once this detail is available.

Residents have raised legitimate concerns about lack of meaningful consultation, local safety knowledge, loss of shade trees, drainage and run-off impacts, and whether the proposal aligns with the intent of the Transport for NSW Get Active funding.

If the rescission is successful, the grant funding would be returned. This is about listening to the community, respecting place, and ensuring infrastructure decisions

reflect how people actually live and move.

On a positive and practical note, Clean Up Australia Day is coming up, with the Lismore Greens hosting a local clean-up on Sunday 1st March. I'll share the location on my Facebook page once confirmed. I encourage everyone to join in or take action locally.

I will also be holding monthly Listening Posts across the LGA. I had a great Listening Post in Nimbin on 24th January and look forward to continuing these as a way to hear directly from the community.

The next one is on 28th February, 9.30-11.30am at Lismore Quad. In the meantime, keep planting, keep nurturing and keep showing up for this

NSW Seniors Festival 2026 Local Achievement Awards

Nominations close 20 February
contact my office
for nomination forms



Janelle Saffin MP
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Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

19th Annual Nimbin Women's Dinner

5th March – tix now on sale!
Available from Humanix and at NNIC front desk. \$22 including GST but NOT including dinner. Dinner available \$15-\$20. On the night: cash is queen!

Farewell Nicole

Nicole, our dedicated front of house client care navigator, has left NNIC for greener pastures and she will be missed greatly by us all.

Thanks to Nicole from all the team and customers and clients for her contributions over the past six years. We wish her the very best for her future endeavours.

7 Sibley Street workshops and more

Join the 7 Sibley Street Patreon site to access online workshops and all sorts of tips and info and resources, plus book in and get discounts for on-site workshops.

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See: www.patreon.com/7sibleystreet

CDAT Sharps Safe booklet

The booklet is available from NNIC and is aimed at primary school aged children and their parents/teachers around what to do if you find discarded sharps in community settings.

It is full of useful info for the adults and safe messaging for the kids. Drop in or email us at: admin@nnic.org.au if you would like a copy.

Looking for work experience?

Maybe you just want to get involved in the community? We have lots of different roles at NNIC and right now



Some of the many staff of the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre farewelling Nicole (centre)

are looking for front desk support volunteers.

Certificate qualifications in community services or similar an advantage. IT skills also helpful.

We have so many different things to do – there is sure to be something that you will enjoy. Contact us at: admin@nnic.org.au or drop by and chat to our front desk staff.

Nimbin Disaster Resilience Group

A community radio day is coming up. There will be info on types and operations of different radios and how community members can link into our local response agencies in the event of a disaster resulting in the loss of phone and internet connectivity. Watch this space for more info soon.

It is full of useful info for the adults and safe messaging for the kids. Drop in or email us at: admin@nnic.org.au if you would like a copy.

Did you know?

We support many community projects and groups by assisting with things like admin, auspicing, sourcing funds and supporting grant applications

including:

Nimbin Death and Beyond, Nimbin Community Drug Action Team, Nimbin Youth,

and many more.

Statement of Commitment to First Nations People, and our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

and many more.

and many more.