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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 jihads;
- 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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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.

The trick for those of us looking on is to avoid being caught in the train-wreck and, in Australia’s case, charting a careful course between the passing of one empire and the rise of the next.

R J Poole  
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

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 sweeping

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

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

Kay Phyllis Martin

19th May 1939 – 20th January 2026

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.



Photo: Arthur Bain

Campaign continues to end Aboriginal deaths in custody

by Chibo Mertineit

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



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

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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## 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.



One of the best parts of my job as Lismore City Mayor is celebrating the unsung heroes in our community, another is welcoming new citizens who have chosen to make our community their new home.

Earlier this month, I was lucky enough to do both at Council's Australia Day celebrations.

I would like to congratulate each of this year's Award winners and nominees. Our community would be much poorer without them.

This year's Citizen of the Year was awarded to Rebekka Battista, a long-standing champion for children's health and family-centred care across the Northern Rivers.

Rebekka has spent more than two decades strengthening paediatric health care across the Northern Rivers, working with Our Kids and Our House to ensure regional hospitals are equipped to



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](#)



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

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.

## 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.

#### Wollumbin

In December NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe announced that the temporary closure of Wollumbin (Mount Warning) summit and summit track has been extended until 30th June 2027.

This is with a view to re-opening the summit once safety and culturally appropriate options are resolved.

The additional time will be used to create a clear plan for the future of this special place that respects cultural responsibilities and safeguards visitor safety.

The Wollumbin summit and track were closed by the previous state government during Covid to address public safety risks and allow for consultation with the Aboriginal community and other stakeholders about management of the site.

#### Taking action on animal welfare

We all love and care for our pets, which is why the NSW Government is reviewing 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.



# 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.

He has reinvigorated his global alliance with far-right leaders in Israel, Hungary and Argentina, where authoritarian populism cloaks itself in security rhetoric while undermining democracy, the rule of law, basic rights and our humanity.

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.

The Minns Labor Government led the way with the introduction of more draconian anti-protest laws. The Albanese Labor Government

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.

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.

Federal ministers have failed to clearly answer whether peaceful criticism of Israel's conduct could see a person arrested under the Government's new laws.

In a time of genuine tragedy and public grief, political leaders have chosen to double down on control. Rather than investing in social community healing, they are deepening surveillance and stoking division.

Still, the Greens continue to stand where we always have – on the side of our humanity, of justice, of people and planet, of the right to speak truth to power and to build a future rooted in compassion, ecological care, and democracy.

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.



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.

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.

Joyce's old mates in the Nationals are panicking. Bridget McKenzie, a senior Nationals Senator, used her national platform to declare her allegiance to the state of Israel as a "proud Zionist". At the same time, Israeli leadership is facing allegations of genocide before the International Court of Justice.

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.

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?

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.

This moment in our World demands care, consistency, and honesty. We are facing a global turning point, not just in our climate and environment, but in

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.

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.

## Civil, respectful engagement and ethical leadership required

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.

My commitment is to speak plainly, work in good faith and advocate transparently. It is important that Council returns to a culture of civil, respectful engagement and ethical leadership if we are to genuinely serve our community.

In my capacity as a councillor, I do not attend Council's Australia

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.

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



Council notebook by Cr Virginia Waters  
Lismore City Council

possible, avail themselves of this grant opportunity.

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.

The Clunes Master Plan will be coming to the next Council meeting and represents a significant decision point for the community. I strongly encourage Clunes residents to contact councillors to share views on the most recent draft, including what works, what doesn't, and what needs changing before adoption.

In The Channon, there are serious and on-going

concerns regarding the proposed Standing Street footpath. Along with Councillors Guise and Knight-Smith, I have supported a rescission motion to allow Council to reconsider its earlier decision to proceed.

This follows sustained opposition from residents since 2023, including a petition from all occupied households and formal confirmation from The Channon Public School and P&C that it does not support the project.

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 wonderful place we call home.

Please note, the opinions expressed here are my own and not those of Lismore City Council. Feel free to contact me at: [Virginia.Waters@lismore.nsw.gov.au](#)



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Authorised by Janelle Saffin MP, Federal Member of Parliament for Lismore



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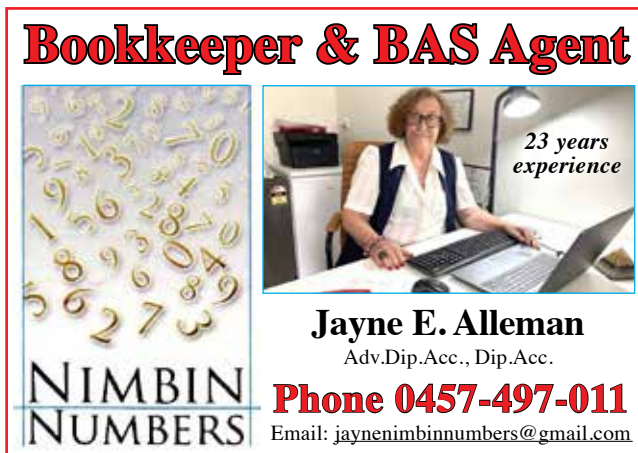


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## In your neighbourhood...

### Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

#### 19th Annual Nimbin Women's Dinner

5th March – tix now on sale!  
Available from Humanitix 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 on-line workshops and all sorts of tips and info and resources, plus book in and get discounts for on-site workshops.

NNIC members can join at less than half the price – just \$5 a month (non NNIC members \$12 a month). An absolute bargain to access a wealth of knowledge and resources.

See: [www.patreon.com/7sibleystreet](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

#### Did you know?

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

CWA, Nimbin Disaster Resilience Group, Nimbin Arts Collective, Nimbin Water Collective, Nimbin Community Collective Interagency, Men's Support Group, Nimbin Environment Centre... and more.

#### Donate to NNIC

Help us support the community. To donate, drop into NNIC or deposit directly into our Gift Fund account: Summerland Bank BSB 728 728; Nimbin Neighbourhood and Info Centre – Gift Fund A/C no. 22205341; Ref: your name plus DON.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Email us or drop in for a tax receipt.

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre is committed to Cultural and Child Safety. See our website: [www.nnic.org.au](http://www.nnic.org.au) for our Statement of Commitment to First Nations People, and our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

**Nimbin Aged Care & Respite Services**  
We assist frail aged people and their carers remain living at home and staying connected

**Home & Community Care** – our friendly, local support workers are qualified, certified, experienced, police checked, insured

**SOCIAL CENTRE with air-con and Veranda:** Mon-Fri 10am-2pm drop in for a cuppa, info on support services, computers, air-con

**DEVICE ADVICE:** Weds 9.30am-12.30pm, seniors can book for assistance with phone, tablet or laptop issues

**SENIORS SOCIAL GROUPS** - booking and fees apply  
Nimbin Tuesday Morning Tea at centre  
Garrimaa Café Group twice monthly Thursdays, 11-2  
Wise Ones, Koonorigan Hall 4<sup>th</sup> Mon, bring plate to share  
Bus Outings: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tues, scenic drives, cafes & site-seeing

All NACRS aged care activities and services require **MyAgedCare** registration and assessment – [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au) 1800 200 422

**Trustworthy** Respectful kind Reliable Healthy  
responsive Competent Boundaries  
Empathic personalised authentic  
Sensitive adaptive Supportive

Contact NACRS: 6689 1709 [enquiries@nacrs.com.au](mailto:enquiries@nacrs.com.au)  
or visit NACRS at Bottlebrush Studio, rainbow building at  
Nimbin Community Centre, 81 Cullen St  
[www.nacrs.com.au](http://www.nacrs.com.au)



## Nimbin Hospital information

#### Child immunisation

By appointment, phone 6630-0400.

#### Early childhood nurse

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

#### Women's health nurse services

Third Thursday of the month, next is 19th February. Phone 6688-1400 for an 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 19th February.

#### 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

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month, 9.30am in the conference room of the Nimbin MPS. New members always welcome.

## NIMBIN ENVIRONMENT CENTRE NEWS

by Scott Sledge

In spite of numerous warnings over several decades, the decision-makers of Australia (and the world) have failed to tackle climate change in any meaningful way.

The year 2026 is only a few weeks old, but climate disasters are already occurring in the UK, USA and Europe.

In Australia we have had wildfires, extreme heat periods and simultaneously heavy rain and flooding in Victoria and northern Queensland.

The word 'unprecedented' keeps popping up. Floodwater run-off around Sydney has caused unprecedented shark attacks on humans trying to keep cool at the beaches.

Land clearing and urbanisation have caused the heavy rainfall to wash silt and urban filth into the water causing turbidity, so we can't see the sharks coming in to clean up.

#### Massive deluges

Landslides turned deadly in New Zealand and have paralysed parts of Queensland. Gurrudyula Gaba Wunggu, Waddananggu Cultural Custodian for the Wangan and Jagalingou people of Central Queensland wrote a desperate appeal:

"For over 1,600 days, the Cultural Custodians have maintained a permanent

presence on our homelands on the Adani/ Bravus Carmichael mine site – conducting sacred ceremonies and protecting ancestral birthing trees, burial grounds and sacred places.

"This week we experienced rainfall unlike anything we've seen during our entire time here at Waddananggu. The dam at Waddananggu broke its banks, and within just 15 minutes floodwaters surged through our kitchen, sleeping and living areas, damaging tents, solar panels, equipment, food supplies and personal belongings.

"We're doing everything we can to salvage what's left and move essentials to higher ground, but with more rain forecast, we urgently need support. Leaving is not an option. If we leave, this place and the springs will be destroyed.

"Your support ensures we can remain on Country safely, uphold our cultural responsibilities, and continue protecting this land and the sacred Doongmabulla Springs."

NEC has responded with a donation: <https://standing-our-ground.org/about-us/>

#### Tax the rich

This week, Oxfam Australia urged the government to introduce higher taxes on the super rich.

They highlighted that Australian billionaires

increased their wealth by roughly \$600 million every week (about \$860,000 a day) at a time when average incomes progressed slowly if at all, and cost-of-living pressures drove more Aussies into homelessness.

Median house prices in capital cities and Northern Rivers coastal towns are now more than a million dollars.

What is wrong with this picture?

#### Orange ogre

As a society we cry over casualties, but do little to create the 'commonwealth' that is part of our name. We need to address the imbalance of the crony capitalism that is shaking our world.

The USA can't stop Russian aggression in Ukraine but donated billions in military 'aid' to Israel.

Their president condones missile strikes that murder boatmen in the Caribbean Sea and recently abducted the President of Venezuela while seizing any ship carrying Venezuelan oil.

He then sells the oil and pockets the money! This used to be called piracy: now it is good for American business.

Trump's goons 'arrest' migrants and deport them. The murder of native-born Renee Good by ICE agents in Minneapolis serves as a blunt warning what can happen to people of any colour who don't



bow down to the wishes of the orange ogre.

#### Forests

NSW Forestry Corp continue their vandalism in our publicly-owned forests, while the State and Federal ALP governments fail to advance protections for our wildlife.

While we wait for the Great Koala National Park to be legislated, March for Forests has been meeting in Lismore, starting a campaign to stop subsidised logging in publicly-owned forests in the Northern Rivers and declaring them wildlife/nature reserves.

T-shirts and information can be obtained at the NEC shop or on-line (search for Richmond River Koala Parks.)

Planning has started for the annual March in March on Sunday 22nd March at Lismore.

Word has got out that wildlife guru and forest ecologist, David Lindenmayer (and others) have been invited to speak at an information evening on Saturday 21st March. Watch for details in the next edition of the NGT.

#### Inappropriate investments

Toxic chemicals from coal seam gas (CSG) and minerals mining are leaking into our groundwater (the Great Artesian Basin). More fossil fuels are dug up for domestic use and export.

The 8000 people who attended the protestival of Rising Tide at the Port of Newcastle in late November made little impression, it seems. The Court in Newcastle has adjourned proceedings until later in the year against the 129 people who were arrested.

The fate of the coastal wetland remnants slated for devastation at Wallum, near Brunswick Heads, remains on hold pending a decision by the Land and Environment Court.

The Nature Conservation Council (NCC) of NSW has appealed to the state government to implement its promised revision of land-clearing laws.

The Redbank power station has been refused approval to

re-open with its plan to burn bio 'waste', but has put in an appeal.

NEC has donated to the Environmental Defenders Office, which is running the case for NCC and NEFA.

#### Local matters

As to the local scene, Nimbin has progressed well through the higher-than-average temperatures during January and looks fresh and green. Our free public pool has been well-used, and the nearby new Rainbow Walking Track offers a pleasant alternative to rushing about on our roads.

Thanks to the many Landcare volunteers who continue to develop and maintain the Track. I suggest people keep their dogs on leads in Aquarius Park to protect the wildlife there.

Visitors and locals call into our main street shop to buy local products and discuss the direction politics have taken in recent months. NEC membership may be obtained by an application at the shop with annual dues of only \$10.

## Plastic piling up: Time to push back

by members of KEG

Plastic clings to the edges of creeks and estuaries like a second skin – bread bags caught in mangrove roots, chip packets snagged in flood debris, silage wrap shrouding trees, fragments breaking down but never quite disappearing.

Soft plastics have long been the Achilles heel of Australia's waste system. Lightweight, ubiquitous and hard to process, they are easily landfilled, easily lost to the environment, and too often dismissed as "unrecyclable". Yet the real problem was never public apathy, nor the material itself, it was the absence of infrastructure capable of dealing with soft plastics at scale.

That gap was laid bare in 2022 when the REDcycle scheme collapsed, leaving mountains of soft plastics stockpiled across the country. People had done what they were asked – collecting, sorting, returning – but once the bags were full, there was nowhere for them to go. Participation wasn't the failure. The system was.

Now, that story is beginning to change.

Near Taree, Australia's first large-scale soft plastics recycling facility is operating, proving



that "scrunchable" plastics – bread bags, chip wrappers, cereal liners and cling film – can be processed and reused.

At the iQRenew Soft Plastic Engineered Commodity (SPEC) facility, soft plastics move along conveyor belts where magnets and optical scanners separate polymer types before the material is washed, dried and transformed into flakes and pellets.

Those pellets are not waste. They are feedstock – used to make new products such as buckets, bags and industrial packaging. Some streams are already being turned into new plastic bottles, while others use advanced chemical recycling to convert plastic back into oil that can be reused to produce food-grade materials.

This is circular economy thinking made tangible: keeping materials in use, reducing demand for virgin fossil fuels, and stopping plastic before it becomes pollution. And the implications are close to home.

In the Northern Rivers, the political landscape around waste is shifting. Richmond Valley Council has stepped back from support for energy-from-waste proposals, reflecting growing community concern about

environmental risk, toxic emissions and the way incineration undermines recycling and waste reduction. Burning waste may reduce landfill volumes, but it locks regions into on-going waste generation and creates powerful disincentives to reduce plastic at the source.

Landfill is not a solution – it is a delay tactic. Space is finite, contamination risks grow over time, and buried plastics do not disappear. They fragment, leach, migrate and resurface in waterways and soils long after the tipping fees are paid. Continuing to rely on landfill simply pushes today's plastic problem onto future generations, while locking councils into an ever-expanding cycle of waste creation and disposal.

The scale of the challenge is undeniable, with Australians using an estimated 70 billion pieces of soft plastic each year, with most of it still ending up buried, burned or leaking into waterways.

However, the site in Casino previously earmarked for a waste-to-energy facility could be a solution. With the right planning and political will, that same site could instead host a soft plastics recycling and remanufacturing facility – one that keeps valuable material out of landfill and incinerators.

Such a facility could create skilled, future-



proof local jobs, help councils manage shrinking landfill space and deliver real regional benefits aligned with national circular economy goals.

We cannot recycle our way out of the plastic crisis. Reducing plastic at the source, eliminating unnecessary packaging and shifting to safer alternatives must be central to any long-term solution, and facilities like SPEC show that the answer does not have to be landfill or incineration.

They offer a practical, immediately available alternative – one that treats waste as a resource and keeps materials circulating locally instead of exporting pollution elsewhere. Soft plastics recycling and remanufacturing offer a pathway that reduces landfill dependence now, while buying time for the deeper work of reducing plastic use altogether.

The question is no longer whether we have somewhere to put our waste. It is whether we have the courage to stop burying the problem.

**FREE CAR BODY REMOVAL**  
LOCALLY MINDED  
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**THE NIMBIN UNICORN**

Shop 1, 66 Cullen Street, Nimbin

