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AN UNHOLY WAR

by John Jiggins

When you watch the US Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth announcing Operation Epic Fury, his surprise attack on the citizens of Iran, you observe a performance crafted to mirror his vision of almost unlimited US power.

Hegseth presented himself as a God of War, the God of the Old Testament, righteously raining down fire and brimstone on the wicked people of Iran. His speech pictured the Iranians cowering, fearfully scanning the sky above in shock and awe at the godlike demonstration of US power he had unleashed.

"Looking up and seeing only US and Israeli air power every minute of every day, until we decide it's over, and Iran will be able to do nothing about it," he boasted. "B2's, B52s, predator drones, fighters controlling the skies, picking targets for death and destruction from the sky all day long!"

"We are playing for keeps. Our war fighters have maximum authorities, granted personally by the president, and yours truly. Our rules of engagement are bold, precise and designed to unleash American power, not shackled. This was never meant to be a fair fight, and it is not a fair fight. We're punching them while they are down, which is exactly how it should be."

Why was the US Secretary of War sounding so unhinged, bragging like he was some malevolent supervillain from a Superman spin-off, as he exulted in the enormous destructive power he was unleashing on tens of millions of innocent people? Why the Old Testament undertones?

The Secretary of War continued, mocking the Iranians. He conceded that the governing council might select a successor to Ayatollah Khamenei (whom he had murdered), but it wouldn't matter. Any successor would be too terrified to occupy a room with everyone else.

Secretary of War Hegseth bragged, "The state of Iran is being destroyed! Senior generals, midlevel officers, enlisted ranks, they can't talk or communicate let alone mount a co-ordinated and sustained offensive."

Sarcasm was the weapon Hegseth employed next: "The Iranian Air Force is no more. Built for 1996, destroyed in 2026! The Iranian Navy rests on the bottom of the Persian Gulf. Combat ineffective, decimated, destroyed, defeated: pick your adjective. In fact, last night we sunk their prize ship the Soleimani.

"Looks like POTUS got

him twice," he joked. If Hubris had another name, it would be Pete Hegseth.

The Sarajevo moment
The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, in Sarajevo in June 1914, lit the spark for World War One. An estimated 20 million people died in that conflagration.

The assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei and the attack on Iran launched on 28th February by the US and Israel may well prove to be this century's Sarajevo moment. The war is spreading as it metastasises, dragging in more countries around the region, destabilising the entire globe.

The new supreme leader of Iran witnessed his mother, his father, his wife and his children murdered in a surprise attack launched under the guise of peace talks. This is not going to produce a happy ending.

Trump's war of choice against Iran is joining up with two pre-existing wars in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe. The powers that created Israel – the UK, France and the US – will form Israel's tag team. Russia, China, North Korea and Pakistan will be drawn in to defend Iran and maintain the balance of power.

The strategic competition will involve eight nuclear powers: the UK, France, USA and Israel on one side, pitted against another four nuclear powers, Russia, China, North Korea, and Pakistan. Israel has gambled heavily on this war. The prize it seeks is huge. It wants to expand its borders to build Greater Israel and emerge as the hegemonic power of the Middle East. Like Samson, it believes it has the option of bringing the entire world tumbling down.

Trump's war is proving so unpopular that more than half the US population oppose it. Operation Epic Fury has been renamed Operation Epstein Fury because many think Trump cynically started the war to distract attention from the Epstein Files, while others believe the Israelis are blackmailing Trump with the files.

Who wanted this war?
Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, has dreamt of this war for 40 years. He sees it as his legacy. As Prime Minister of Israel, he is the one piloting the Chariot of War that is wrecking the world. Donald Trump is his panicking passenger.

Who else wanted the war? Zionists who plan to create Greater Israel. Christian Zionists who believe the destruction of



Iran will hasten the end times. Trump's Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, is one of several Christian Zionists in Trump's inner circle.

Among this inner circle, a quasi-religious cult exists who believe Trump is anointed by Jesus for a divine mission: that Trump is destined to play a pivotal role in the end times.

Mike Huckabee, the former Baptist pastor who is now the US Ambassador to Israel, is another powerful member of the cult. Since Netanyahu compared Trump to Cyrus the Great – the Persian king who freed Jews from Babylonian exile – Huckabee and others have taken to referring to Trump as Cyrus the Great.

When Trump moved the US Embassy to Jerusalem in 2018, Israel banners proclaimed, "Cyrus the Great is alive!"

For non-evangelicals, these Cyrus-Trump prophecies should be rightfully regarded as frightening. They centre on Trump's role in Immanentising the Eschaton, hastening Armageddon, signalling the return of Jesus and the end of the world.

Christian Zionism infects the US military command. At the start of Operation Epic Fury, over 200 complaints were made to the Military Religious Freedom Foundation about commanders telling troops the Iran war was "God's divine plan to trigger Armageddon and Jesus' return."

Another NCO reported a briefing where the commander urged, "Tell your troops this is all part of God's divine plan." The commander then said that the book of Revelations revealed Donald J Trump was "anointed by Jesus to light the signal fire in Iran."

As a narcissist, Trump

was easily seduced by such flattery. Netanyahu and Christian Zionists like Hegseth convinced him it would be a short war, and one that was religiously ordained. "With God on his side," Trump launched their holy war, believing it would be a cake walk for the US.

A viable response to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz was not considered. There were no concerns about how low interceptor missile stocks were. The US and Israel would simply fly in and blow Iran away in four days and four nights, like Yahweh in scripture. God's servants would cleanse the evil land with fire and brimstone and await Iran's inevitable surrender.

A short campaign of shock and awe would energise the president's base. A speedy victory like Venezuela promised another sugar-hit for Trump's plummeting polls.

The war was launched on a delusion and a prayer. The date for the attack was chosen to coincide with the Jewish festival of Purim. (Yahweh would appreciate that!). Fire and brimstone would rain down on Iran for four days and four nights. Israel would win, then Jesus would return.

It was magical thinking. What is happening is rupture, not rapture. MAGA is splitting. The longed-for Nobel Peace Prize is looking even further out of reach. Trump has one more war to end, but he doesn't know how.

As the godlike intoxication of military slaughter wears off, Trump is realising how hideously mistaken his decision was. He is searching for an off-ramp but there is none. God save us all.

First published on-line by Independent Australia.

Calling all people of the plant!

by Miss Guidance

MardiGrass offers mind blowing ideas and education all weekend 1-2-3 May at the 2026 Hemposium.

For 34 years, MardiGrass has given voice to the Oz weed resistance tirelessly educating and agitating for an end to the war on weed! 2026 MardiGrass will showcase an impressive line-up of speakers who will share their cannabis expertise and experiences across medical, industrial, science, politics, culture and more!

MardiGrass is an extraordinary chance to share and learn about our favourite plant ally and healing herb. A Weed University weekend!

MardiGrass is also all about sensible law reform for ALL drugs, so in 2026 we once again partner with Entheogenesis Australis to present a program dedicated to a rainbow of medicinal plants.

We promise expert knowledge-sharing on iboga, mushroom cultivation, mescaline cacti, salvia divinorum, with Terence McKenna and a cactus auction, from Friday night to Sunday in the Psychedelic Tent in the Town Hall Garden.

Described by *Rolling Stone* as "the real drug czar," our international headliner this year, Erhan Nadelmann, is widely regarded as the

outstanding proponent of drug policy reform both in the United States and abroad. He founded and directed the Drug Policy Alliance (2000-2017), the world's leading drug policy reform organisation. We're very excited that such an eminent reformer will make it to Nimbin this year.

Women have always been part of cannabis culture as activists, healers, growers, storytellers and educators. In 2026, MardiGrass is creating a space to bring women's voices together across the whole spectrum of this plant to connect and share at a time when community is more important than ever.

Speakers over the weekend include Kyla de Clifford, Fiona Patten, Melanie Wentzel, Emily Rigby, Rachel Payne, Crystal White, Chloe Jean Teh, Chrissie Butler, Allison Wiseman, Christina Mc Mullen and Klara Marosszeky.

We'll kick off Saturday at 10am with Women of the Plant – Morning Tea Gathering at the Bush Theatre. And don't miss the panel on Saturday afternoon in the Town Hall, 'High on Hormones: Women, Sex and Cannabis'.

The 2026 Hemposium will also feature some Oz heavy hitters on law, politics and policy. After a break of five years, we're excited to welcome Dr Alex Wodak

AM, Emeritus Consultant, St Vincent's Hospital, back to MardiGrass. Local poet, ex-magistrate and Dean of Law at SCU, David Heilpern, will host a panel on the effective steps towards regulated recreational and medicinal cannabis in Australia, while Greens Federal Senator David Shoebridge will generate an important conversation about decriminalisation, convictions expunged, pilot programs, social clubs, home grow and more.

Legalise Cannabis NSW MLC, Jeremy Buckingham will discuss the (in)justice of Australia's roadside drug testing programs and efforts to secure driving exemptions for medicinal cannabis patients in NSW, while Dr Lee Miles will dive into how saliva drug tests actually work.

MardiGrass welcomes Sean Hocking, Karma Koala Podcast and editor of the Cannabis Law Report who will speak on the need for equitable, evidence-based approaches to cannabis regulation worldwide. Hemp Historian, John Jiggins, will let us in on "The Joke" of cannabis and corruption, and long-time local drug law reform advocate, Steve Bolt will provide real-time legal advice. Bring your questions!

And we haven't forgotten science or medicine! Plant Tissue Culture wrangler,

Allison Wiseman from Cymra Life Sciences will share a functional sterilisation protocol for in-vitro Cannabis work. Pot aficionado, Orion Cross will explore why terpenes are important, how we can use them for specific effects, and demonstrate how to make our own Mellow Mix.

Join us for a Q&A session on automated cultivation with Bruce Cox, vertical farming expert, or learn how to assess cannabis quality with Gabriel Younes, Head of Curation at Sohma House. Join Dr John Teh and Chloe Jean Teh, from PlantMed Medicinal Cannabis, for a medical cannabis Q&A. John and Chloe have been working within the Medicinal Cannabis industry since the legalisation of cannabis for medicinal use in Australia in February 2016.

Legalise Cannabis MLC WA, Dr Brian Walker will present the "heresy" of medical cannabis – and it's not what you think!

2026 MardiGrass welcomes politicians from across the spectrum to pull back the curtain on the weed state and let us know their priorities and strategies for meaningful drug law reform.

From Legalise Cannabis Party: Jeremy Buckingham (MLC NSW), David Ettershank (MLC Vic), Rachel Payne (MLC Vic), Dr Brian Walker (MLC WA),

Fiona Patten, Miles Hunt and Andrew Fenwick.

From Australian Labor Party: Stephen Lawrence (MLC NSW) and Lachlan Hall (Young Labor); and from the Australian Greens Party: Federal Senator David Shoebridge and Sue Higgs (MLC NSW).

This year's MardiGrass Industrial HEMP Expo will feature hempstone and hemp puppet-making workshops by molecular sculptor Martin Ernegg; a hempcrete building demonstration by Jason (Jazz Construction) and Klara Marosszeky (Australian Hemp Masonry).

A grower's workshop will be held at the Bush Theatre where Richard Gasser will explore the limitless possibilities of hemp seed,

fibre and resin, and Gerald Taylor of the Hemp Club will show us how to grow our own health care.

Meet licensed hemp farmers and see demos all weekend at Northern Rivers Hemp Growers Co-op, 46 Cullen Street, and the Hemp Club, 80 Cullen Street.

And a massive shout-out to MardiGrass legends and stalwart supporters of cannabis law reform who will share their expertise and inspiration again with us in 2026: legendary master gardeners, Tony Mullaways and Kog!

The 2026 MardiGrass Hemposium is a space to inform, learn, agitate, inspire and connect in this massively important green revolution.

Make peace not war, come to MardiGrass

by Michael Balderstone

Who knows how the war war will be going in a month's time when we have our 34th MardiGrass in Nimbin?

You can be certain the drug war will still be going. Drugs and armaments are the two biggest businesses on the planet. Controlling the pain relief market is a sure way to make a fortune but close behind are the weapons manufacturers.

Us hippies have been calling out to make peace and end wars for 50 year now, but they're intrinsically linked to multiple billion dollar industries, which is the name of the game for capitalists. Who dies with the most wins, right? It's a real life selfish monopoly game.

So there's a lot of support for keeping the drug war going, and with that comes a huge propaganda machine to make sure the stigma stays strong.

But hang on, it's legal now and you can pick up your legal weed from the chemist with a script. Oh that cannabis, that's different, that's safely grown inside big tents by people with white coats who control the temperature, light and nutrients. By people who don't trust nature.

We had a terrific MardiGrass meeting last night, always at 420 on Friday in the HEMP Bar. I'm always impressed by Nimbins here 'n now attitude, ready for change and living with uncertainty. Short of a total lock down I can't see anything stopping our annual protest in support of the most useful plant in the creation.

There is a mountain of sheer frustration about the ongoing saliva testing. Did you know in NSW alone each year we test more drivers' saliva than if you added up the total number of tests done by every other country on the planet!

I thought prescribed patients might be able to legally drive to MardiGrass this year, with a script for the white coat weeds of course, but even that is too much for our premier it seems, even though he's promised to make the changes. Is his eye on getting re-elected or doing the right thing?

Seriously, think about it, what other plant has super high protein seeds, the strongest fibre for clothing or building, the safest and best medicine in the flowers, is extremely fast growing and in any climate from the snow to the tropics.

No wonder it was called God's gift in Biblical times, and no wonder the capitalists made it illegal because anyone could grow it in their backyard and no-one profits then.

Come join us please for this most important protest and we will do our best to make sure you have a good time. There's a great line-up of speakers on all things cannabis and other plant medicines at the Hemposium. Sorrensen and Glover are doing the Iron Growers Event again, by popular demand.

Brommers has organised a terrific music program, and Katie as well on the High Vibes stage near the skatepark, while Amulet is sorting out 50 stalls to feed and entertain you. There will be all sorts of creativity around the village, which is what you get with weed and its glorious stimulation of the imagination.

The rickett price hasn't changed in years, and we are not about making money; this is a protest about being bullied because we love nature just as it is!

Visit: nimbinmardigrass.com

Parliament has still got its head in the sand: but we have a plan

by Senator David Shoebridge

You'd think by now they'd have worked it out. Cannabis has been part of Australian life for decades. Half the country has tried it. Plenty of people reading this grow it. And yet Federal Parliament keeps treating the whole subject like it's radioactive, too scary to touch, too political to fix.

The Greens put up our serious legalisation bill in 2023. It had been through a rigorous Senate inquiry. People were hopeful. Labor, One Nation and the Coalition looked at the evidence, looked at the community, and collectively decided that cops and courts were still the answer. The bill went nowhere. Everyone went back to their offices. Nothing changed.

Here's the thing that never gets said loudly enough: criminalisation doesn't stop cannabis use. It just decides who gets punished for it. And that decision isn't random. If you're poor, if you're First Nations, if you're in a regional town where the local sergeant has nothing better to do, you're the one who ends up with a conviction. Everyone else keeps going. "Everyone does it, only some people get caught" isn't just a saying. It's how the system actually works.

The ACT figured this out and legalised personal possession and home growing back in 2020. From my work trips to Canberra, I can report it doesn't seem like the sky has fallen down. Victoria, South Australia and WA have all quietly softened enforcement on personal amounts too. State by state, the country is inching forward, while Parliament pretends it's still a debate.



So what would it actually take to get federal movement? Removing cannabis possession from the Criminal Code for personal amounts would be a start, and while we're at it, expunging the convictions that never should have happened in the first place.

There's also a strong case for giving the Office of Drug Regulation a genuine mandate to work with states toward consistent national laws, rather than the current patchwork where what's tolerated depends on which side of a border you're standing on.

If they're too scared of legalisation despite all the evidence supporting it, maybe pilot programs in communities willing to try a properly regulated model, with real monitoring and real evaluation, would help build the evidence base that politicians keep claiming they need.

And none of this should crowd out the longer goal: a legalisation model that puts communities first. Social clubs, home-growing amnesty, local growers before global corporations. That vision isn't going away.

These approaches are running in various forms across Canada, parts of the US, Germany and elsewhere. The community has been ready for years and we hear you, even if many of those in Parliament pretend they can't. The evidence is in. The political courage of the major parties to admit they got it wrong and stop blocking reform is the one thing missing.

Whenever Parliament is ready, the rest of the country will be here waiting. Same as always. See you at MardiGrass.

Nimbin Art Fair returns in a celebration of creativity

by Linda Frylink Anderson

The much-loved Nimbin Art Fair is set to transform the town into a vibrant hub of creativity this autumn, from Saturday 4th to Sunday 19th April, 10am-4pm. One of the Northern Rivers' most anticipated arts events, the Fair will once again fill the historic Nimbin Town Hall with colour, texture and imagination.

Proudly presented by the Nimbin Artists Gallery, this annual celebration brings together an inspiring collective of local artists, showcasing an eclectic array of works spanning painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, mosaics and more.

Visitors are invited to immerse themselves in a rich and diverse exhibition, where every corner reveals something new – from intricate handcrafted pieces to bold, expressive artworks that capture the spirit of the region.

Adding to the excitement, the Margaret McLaren Art Foundation continues its generous



'Strawberry Trio' by Helen Otway



'Under the Gaze of an Ancestor' by Katherine Carson



'Grounded' by Michelle Jeffery

Feature artist for April

Michelle Jeffery's feature exhibition 'Landscapes of the Imagination' continues until the end of April. Michelle paints luminous, dreamlike landscapes inspired by the microscopic beauty of nature.

Working in acrylics, her atmospheric scenes balance the familiar and fantastical, often leaving space for the viewer's imagination to complete the story.

Based in Kyogle, she brings over 30 years of experience to her gently surreal work.

support with \$5,000 in prize money, including a \$3,000 award for Best Artwork and a \$2,000 Emerging Artist prize, championing both established talents and rising creative voices.

A true highlight of the season, the Nimbin Art Fair promises a joyful and inspiring

experience for art lovers and curious visitors alike.

For more information about the Nimbin Art Fair or the Nimbin Artists Gallery, contact: nimbinartistsgallery@gmail.com Phone: (02) 6689-1444. Open daily 10am-4pm.

For the love of...

by Ali Walker

The new exhibition in the Members' Gallery at Blue Knob is entitled 'For the Love of...' – a theme that has been intentionally open-ended to allow for a wide range of interpretations.

The artworks reflect passions, people, places, processes, materials, causes, memories – and sometimes something wonderfully unexpected.

In the Solo Space, local artist Shannamay presents her exhibition 'R.A.W. – Reclaiming Ancient Wisdom.'

Shannamay says, "As we find ourselves in a time of unravelling old power structures, the chaos of the world grows louder. It can feel as though we are constantly bombarded with increasing amounts of information, dysregulating our nervous systems and

drawing us into that chaos. "Moving into stillness, bearing witness, and regulating our own nervous systems is, I feel, one of the most powerful things we can do right now – for ourselves, our community, and our planet."

"Art and creative practices bring us back into our being – into the present moment – a place of stillness. Here, we strengthen our power as creators, a power that can ripple outward into the remaking of our world. The people have the power."

Both exhibitions will run until Saturday 21st May.

- **Kin Café** is open Thursday to Sunday, 9.30am-3pm, serving a delicious selection of fresh, seasonal dishes featuring the best local produce, with as many organic ingredients as possible, crafted into vibrant, flavour-filled plates.
- **Blue Knob Writers Group**



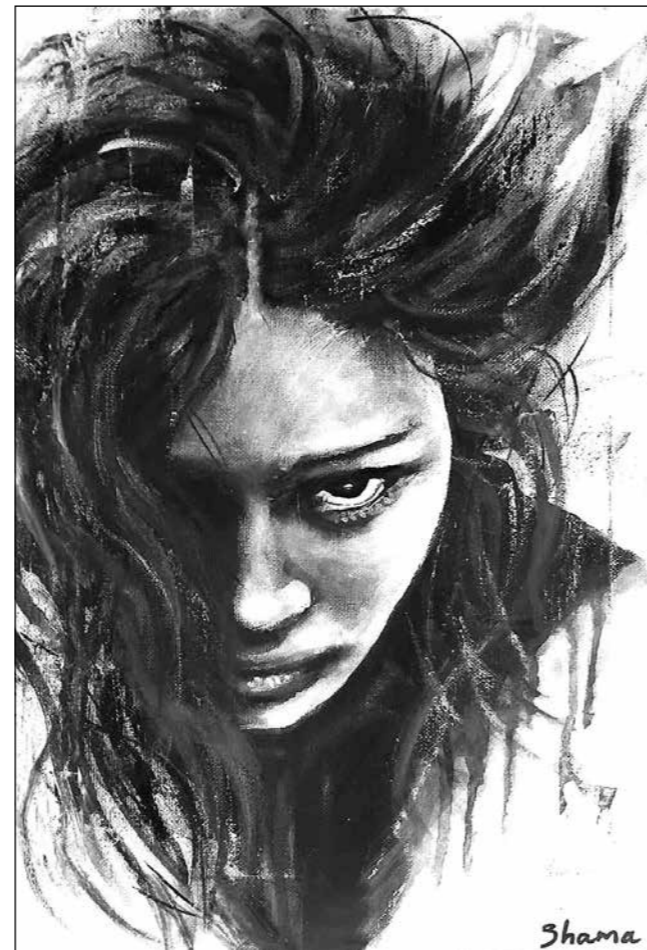
'For the Love of Learning' by Amanda Doran

meets weekly at Kin Café on Sundays. For more info contact Alex 66897-268 or Helen 0487-385-134.

- **Blue Knob Singers** meet on Thursdays from 4pm. Everyone is welcome. For info call Peter 0458 487 865
- **Sound Journey with Amma** – Gentle Breathwork Flow

& Sound Journey Meditation, Wednesday 6th May, 6pm. Cost is \$20. Bring yoga mat and cushion.

- **Life Drawing** is held every third Wednesday in the gallery, 5-7pm. All welcome. Cost is \$25. bkhgallery@iinet.net.au Phone 6689-7449. Web: blueknobgallery.com



'R.A.W.' by Shannamay

Reflection and connection

by Liina Flynn

Two April exhibitions invite reflection and connection' For the month of April, the Serpentine Community Gallery in Lismore is proud to present two compelling exhibitions that explore both inner worlds and the natural environment.

Opening the program is 'Selective Retrospective', a major solo exhibition by artist Soren Carlbergg. Opening after Easter on Wednesday 8th April from 5.30 to 8pm, the exhibition offers audiences an immersive journey into Carlbergg's conceptual and painterly practice.

Carlbergg's work invites viewers to move beyond the familiar and engage with layered visual narratives. Through the use of line, form, colour and movement, his paintings explore the possibility of dimensions existing simultaneously – intersecting, diverging and coexisting within the same space.

"As an artist, my interest is in

developing a narrative where the viewer finds their own unique vision and interpretation of the artwork," Carlbergg explains. "In looking beyond the world we know, we begin to understand something we were not programmed to recognise."

His works suggest a depth that extends far beyond the two-dimensional surface, drawing the viewer inward into complex, shifting visual environments. These imagined dimensions relate to one another in subtle and often unpredictable ways, creating a sense of both connection and independence – an abstract reflection of the worlds we inhabit.

Later in the month, Serpentine presents 'Sighted', opening Friday 24th April, featuring the work of five artists based in the Kyogle region: printmaker Jenny Kitchener, painter Rodney Brown, mixed media artist Deborah Brown, multidisciplinary artist Rebecca Tapscott and ceramicist Denis Hopking.

While each artist brings a distinct approach and medium, the exhibition is united by a shared reverence for the



'Seed totem II' by Jenny Kitchener

natural world. Drawing inspiration from the Northern Rivers landscape, the works explore both the intimate and expansive qualities of place.

In Kitchener's work 'Seed Totem', she reflects on the decline in pollinating insects and birds worldwide, driven in part by human encroachment into wilderness areas. "I see this work as bringing awareness to the important role these pollinating animals have in maintaining biodiversity," she says.

Rebecca Tapscott's work explores habitat loss and environmental change through cyanotype prints created from contact-printing deceased animals. Works such as 'Australian Raven in Lismore' create a spectral stillness, helping to hold these creatures in our collective memory.



'Ancient Paths' by Soren Carlbergg

In her installation 'Carry Their Country Within Them', each silhouette becomes a painted window into the landscape where the animal was found. Tapscott suggests that to truly see an animal is to recognise its habitat as inseparable from its body – a singular entity where the loss of one inevitably leads to the disappearance of the other.

Alongside this celebration of beauty, the exhibition acknowledges growing concern for the future of our environment. Several works reflect on the impact of human activity and the fragility of ecosystems, inviting audiences to consider both



'Floral Magpies' by Deborah Brown

responsibility and care.

Together, these two exhibitions offer a thoughtful balance – one turning inward to explore perception and unseen dimensions, the other grounding us in the tangible beauty and vulnerability of the natural world.

Visitors are warmly invited to attend the opening events or experience the exhibitions throughout April.

For more information, visit: www.serpentinearts.org or follow Serpentine Community Gallery on social media.

Skin and structure at Flourish

Flourish Art in South Lismore is kicking off a big run of events across April and May, bringing together exhibition, workshops and practical learning.

First up is 'Structure & Skin: A Life Drawing and Nudes' exhibition, opening Friday 10th April 5-8pm at Flourish Gallery.

The exhibition runs until 24th April and focuses on the human figure, looking at both structure and surface. Works range from quick studies through to more resolved drawings and sculptural pieces, offering a cross-section of approaches to life drawing.

Opening night will include drinks and a chance to meet the artists with artworks available to purchase on the night.

The gallery is wheelchair accessible and open Wednesday to Friday, 10am-4pm, and Saturdays, 10am-2pm during the exhibition period.

Also on the program on Sunday 10th of May is a Mother's Day workshop designed as a relaxed, shared experience. Led by artist and tutor Jeht Burgoyne, the session focuses on drawing a floral arrangement using oil pastels.

Participants will be guided through a few simple techniques before working at their own pace to complete a finished piece. With afternoon tea and a glass of bubbles included, it's a straightforward way to spend



'Structure and Skin' by Jeht Burgoyne

time together while making something to take home.

In May, local painter Marty de Weerd will run a four-week landscape course at Flourish Art.

Held on Monday mornings from 10am to 1pm, each session focuses on a different element – trees, water, sunsets and clouds – with an emphasis on practical skills such as composition, colour mixing and brushwork.

The course is suitable for beginners as well as those looking to build on existing skills. All materials are provided, making it easy to take part without needing to bring anything along.

For bookings and more information Marty can be contacted on 0406-021-897 at: marty.deweerd@gmail.com

Flourish Art is located at 15 Casino Street, South Lismore.



'Within the Mist' by Marty de Weerd

Holding Ground at the S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney

by Nell Schofield

Lae Oldmeadow and Gerard Lynham and I drove down to Sydney for the opening of 'Holding Ground', and what a wonderful event it was too.

Curated by the fabulous Gavin Wilson, the show features 17 artists from NSW including Janet Laurence, Imants Tillers, Sophie Cape and John Wolseley.

All artists are passionate about using their creativity to emotionally connect audiences with the natural world and inspire action to protect it.

In my opening address I recounted the story of the first Local Action Group that I helped form 35 years ago.

We held a multi-national coal mine at bay for decades, standing up to the developers and challenging a system that supports them.

In his latest book, Bob Brown writes: "Defiance is about taking action. It's about defying the laws that serve those who are exploiting the planet and its people, while upholding the



laws of nature." "Holding Ground is on until 3rd May, so check it out if you can.



And if you haven't heard it yet, here's Lae speaking with Professor Pedram Khosronejad on the 'Inside

the Gallery' podcast: www.insidethegallery.com.au/e/inside-the-gallery-australia-lae-oldmeadows-the-garden-neram

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Go to: nimbingoodtimes.au and click away



Some of the Nimbin bushwalkers who rallied for bushland

Mid-week camp set for April

by Peter Moyle
Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

Last month the club decided to support the Bob Brown Foundation and their March for March to bring awareness to Native Forest Logging.

Thirteen members met up in Lismore and what a hoot, the choir had us all singing along and multiple performers kept us entertained before a well organised march through the streets with the bands drumming away.

There was a big turn-out and it was great to be a part of the effort to save our forests and the wildlife they support.

After lunch we headed off to the river and followed the levee bank downstream before heading up to Robinsons Lookout, a short strenuous walk but with great views over Lismore city.

Now for some walks in the bush; visitors always welcome to come along and meet the friendly group.

Walks Programme

Tuesday 21st to Friday

24th April

Mulligans Camp in the

Gibraltar Range NP

Leader: Mark Osberg 0408-113-125.

Grade 3-4: Another of our

great camps, this one mid-week. Camp for as many nights as you like some going for two, others four and more. Cost \$6 per person per night, day walks will start at 9am. This is a lovely camping area with sites well apart with fireplaces and flushing toilets, west of Grafton about three hours from Ballina and Kyogle. We came here last year and loved it; so many interesting walks, many we didn't do, so we're back this year. National Park vehicle pass required: \$8 a day or buy an annual one.

Saturday 9th May
Billinudgel Nature Reserve – New Brighton
Leader: Helena Hodson 0403-144-236

Grade 3: A walk through coastal paperbark forest before finding mountain and coastal views. This is a lovely bit of coastline which has seen rehabilitation and maintenance. Return with a short distance on the beach and a swim for the keen ones.

Meet: 9am at Saly Mangrove next to the New Brighton General store in River Street. Last time some of us had a coffee and a snack at the café after finishing. Confirm with Helena, as numbers limited.

Bring: water, lunch and hat.

Bring an umbrella and watch for fans

by Scott O'Keeffe

It's the right season for walking around staring at the ground. Warm, wet and with mild temperatures – just what you need for spotting mushrooms.

Here's one I discovered while inspecting a hill I cleared of pine tree saplings. As you can see in the photo, it's growing on the cut surface of a pine stump. That's exactly the sort of place we should look for this orange blob, according to the scant literature on the species.

This orange blob is known by the plodding common name 'orange fan-shaped jelly fungus' (OFSJF). The

scientific name is *Dacryopinax spathularia*. The tops of these jellies have pores on their surface that disperse small clouds of reproductive spores. This characteristic distinguishes the jelly fungi (*Dacrymycetales*) from the gilled mushrooms (*Agaricales*).

This fungus has an enormous distribution. It's found in warm, moist environments on all continents, except Antarctica. It is most abundant in tropical areas where it can be seen all year round. In warm temperate areas it's usually seen in the warmer months only. With cool weather the jellies dehydrate and shrivel up.



Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Kerry Hagan

We at the Nimbin Garden Club had great plans for our March meeting. We were going to do the Rainbow Walking Trail under guidance from the Aquarius Landcare Group, which is responsible for the many plantings along the walk.

However, Mother Nature had other plans for us and decided to bucket down just at our appointed meeting time, so we



will save that for another time. Fortunately we had an alternate plan, and we met at Pauline and Sue's new house on Cecil Street for afternoon tea. It turned out to be a lovely afternoon, and we were able to check out the huge amount of work that Pauline and Sue have done since moving in last August.

The rain held off long enough for us to see all the citrus and other food trees that have been planted and enjoy catching up for our famous feast of cakes and other



goodies under their very large verandah. Thanks Pauline and Sue for coming to the rescue!

Our April meeting is at Cherie and Russell's place, Lor 6 Jarlanbah, 78 Cecil Street on Saturday 18th April, 2-4pm. There is plenty of parking at Jarlanbah Hall, and we advise car-pooling wherever possible to save fuel.

We will be able to meet regardless of weather, and we hope to see you there. Please bring a cup and a plate to share.

Building flood resilience in the Lismore catchment

Richmond Landcare Inc is putting out a call for action, seeking community volunteers to help us deliver our pilot project: Nature-based Solutions: Building Flood Resilience in the Lismore Catchment.

This important pilot aims to collect evidence that will demonstrate how revegetation of riparian and floodplain areas in upper sub-catchment streams can reduce flood peaks and subsequent flood risk to downstream communities, as well as improving water quality through reduced sediment loads.

The pilot is focussing on sites along the Tuntable and Terania creeks upstream of The Channon.

We require community volunteers to support the project, either through participating in planting trees and sedges at key sites, and/or through undertaking maintenance activities such as weed removal around newly planted sites, to help the trees and sedges not just survive, but to thrive.

It is critical that these plantings reach their full potential to act as barriers that will slow surface runoff from upper catchment foothills and hold floodwaters breaking their banks onto the adjacent floodplains.

Trees and sedges planted in gullies will also reduce erosion and impacts of sedimentation on water quality.

The event will be held on Saturday



Site of the community planting

18th April, 8.30am-12.30pm at 239 Tuntable Creek Road, Tuntable Creek. For registration, go to: <https://events.humanitix.com/nature-based-solutions-community-tree-planting-day> or use the QR code above.

Ivy Young, on ground works project officer, said "These volunteer events are great opportunities for the broader community to connect with each other, and have meaningful impact to the

health of our waterways."

If you are interested in participating and unable to make this event, please contact Ivy Young at: projects@richmondlandcare.org to be added to our volunteer panel. You will then be advised when future events will be held.

This Nature-Based Solutions project received funding from the Australian Government.



Dacryopinax spathularia, the orange fan-shaped jelly fungus seen here growing on the dead stump of an exotic pine tree in Nimbin. Photo by the author

orange jellies.

As with most Australian fungi, little is known about its distribution and ecological functions. There are a few records of the fungus in Australia and it's not much studied. There's a job here for citizen scientists!

If you see this fungus, photograph it and submit it to iNaturalist: www.inaturalist.org with some simple notes about the landscape it's in and what it's growing on.

New records will help improve our knowledge about this interesting fungus.

Lemon and Wiggles - a story of hope



by Kyi Van Hooff

Some readers may remember a story last October about a little joey who was admitted to the Northern Rivers Koala Hospital after being caught in a barbed wire fence.

This little joey was very young, approximately eight months old and still very attached to mum. The rescuers were unable to free the joey because the wire was so deeply embedded and the little joey was so hard to keep still (hence the name Wiggles).

With distressed Mum watching on, our rescuer Ina decided to cut the fence rather than continue to struggle, so Wiggles was transported to our superintendent veterinarian, Dr Kate, still tangled in wire.

Our other rescuer, Paul set a trap to try to catch Mum. Unfortunately, due to the severity of the Wiggles' injuries, the two could not be successfully reunited, so Mum was returned to her home while Wiggles remained in a critical condition in the hospital.

The vet team discovered that the wire had punctured Wiggles' abdomen and her pouch was torn. Wiggles' injuries required multiple surgeries to repair the wound and reconstruct her pouch.

She had three rounds of intensive antibiotic therapy, which in itself is a miracle for a koala to survive.

There were many touch-and-go moments and hours of care and investigation over many months until Wiggles' wounds healed.

Her home care nurse spent many days and nights caring for Wiggles until she was strong enough to be assessed as ready to start Kindy, and guess who was there when she arrived?

When Wiggles met Lemon

Lemon's story is also a traumatic one. Lemon was still back-attached to mum when the pair were attacked by dogs one night in August last year.



Nurse Marcia with joey Wiggles (left) and Wiggles now

was time for their next big adventure. Freedom.

Our release co-ordinator along with a team of experienced rescue and rehabilitation volunteers found the perfect 'soft release' spot for the pair. While it's rare to release adult koalas together, we do try and aim to "buddy up" our joey koalas so that they aren't released into the big bad world all alone. It's not always possible if we don't have joeys of similar size but we sure aim for it, and in the case of Wiggles and Lemon, it seems it was written in the stars.

The soft release spot in Homeleigh, just outside of Cawongla consisted of three Forest Red Gums and one Tallowood in a small compound, just big enough for them to gain confidence and explore whilst still in the easy reach of the rescuers if needed.

Wiggles and Lemon moved to their new home not more than three weeks ago and for the following days were closely monitored to ensure they were eating, climbing and demonstrating proficient koala skills.

Lemon took off and headed straight for the stars, Wiggles was more tentative, cautious at first, but within a week she was higher than Lemon, brave and happy, in the fork of her tree, just a stone's throw from Lemon's. On Thursday 19th

March, and after hours of monitoring, day and night (we even have some epic night vision shots of them showing off under the moon), both young koalas were deemed ready for the big wide world.

So, on a happy, sunny morning in March, the gates of the soft release were opened and so was the road to their new world. An abundant, healthy koala food corridor. And freedom.

For every person who played a part in these two miracle stories, thank you. The fact that these two joeys survived their injuries and challenges is nothing short of miraculous.

For the team at Friends of the Koala, seeing them in their trees, living their best lives, is the perfect reminder of why we do what we do. In the rain. In the dark. When it's hot. When it's cold.

Our volunteers keep turning up, for Wiggles and Lemon and all the other koalas that depend on them.

Thank you to the community for caring, to the landowners for their guardianship and support, to our amazing volunteers, and of course our incredible vet team.

Wiggles and Lemon have been a source of so much joy and pride for our team. Many of the people who've been part of this journey will be thinking the same thing as they reflect on them...

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