

The resilient chickpea

Food Matters
by Neil Amor

The chickpea was originally domesticated along with wheat, barley, peas and lentils, about 10,000 years ago. Cultivation of domesticated chickpea is well documented from 3300 BCE onwards in Egypt and the Middle East. During the Neolithic Era, chickpea cultivation spread to the west and was established in present-day Greece by the late Neolithic Era. Chickpea mythology and lore centre on their ancient status as a Mediterranean staple, symbolising prosperity, luck, and resilience.



Folklore also features chickpeas as magical items in tales, sometimes used to confuse supernatural beings. Similar to rice or lentils, in some European folklore, demons or vampires are compelled to count chickpeas if they are spilled,

offering protection against evil. Chickpeas contain fibre, protein, and several key vitamins and minerals. Possible benefits of chickpeas include helping reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes and supporting brain and nervous system function. One of the most popular uses of chickpeas is hummus. *The Guinness Book of Records* has recorded the so called 'Hummus Wars' between Lebanon and Israel, and records have been broken multiple times over the decades. Currently, Lebanon holds the record for the largest hummus bowl at 10,452kg, set in 2010, and required the services of 300 chefs.

Garlic, sweet potato and chickpea soup

A super-comforting soup with a rich sweet flavour offset by a squeeze of lemon and black pepper added to each bowl.

Ingredients
8 big garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
1 onion, peeled and chopped
30g olive oil
350g cooked sweet potato
400g can of chickpeas, drained
800ml water
1 tsp salt
2 tsp dried thyme
2 tsp gr turmeric
½ tsp ground cayenne pepper

Method
Put the garlic, onions and olive oil

in a large saucepan with a splash of water: this creates extra steam to soften the garlic. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat and cook for 5 mins until the water has evaporated and garlic is very soft. Add the cooked sweet potato, chickpeas, water, salt, thyme, turmeric and cayenne then bring to the boil, cooking until the sweet potato has softened further. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly. Puree mixture in a blender until smooth. Return to the pan, adjust consistency with extra water if needed, then heat until boiling. Serve with a squeeze of lemon and cracked black pepper to each bowl. Until next month, eat well.

The stories we're told about horses

by Suzy Maloney

In the horse world, many of us inherit our beliefs without realising it. They're passed down through instructors, reinforced in riding schools, and repeated so often they begin to feel like truth. When we pause and really observe horses, a different picture often emerges. Here are some of the most common myths I've been told, and what we might discover when we begin to question them.

Myth: Horses can be naughty, lazy, or disrespectful

What we're learning: Horses are communicating. When a horse refuses to go forward, pins their ears, or swishes their tail, it's often labelled as bad behaviour. But when we look closer, we may find pain, confusion, or overwhelm. Instead of asking, "How do we fix this?" we could ask, "What is this horse trying to tell us?" When we shift from correction to curiosity, behaviour becomes information, not something to suppress, but something to understand.

Myth: The horse must fit the system

What we're learning: The system can adapt to the horse. Every horse brings their own history, sensitivity, body, and personality. Yet so often, we expect them to slot neatly into our methods and timelines.

A horse labelled as "too much" or "unsuitable" in one environment may become calm, willing, and expressive in another. When we adjust the environment, slowing things down, simplifying, creating space, we often see a completely different horse. Rather than working hard to shape them into who we think they should be, we can meet them as they are, and build from there.

Myth: Control equals safety

What we're learning: Safety comes from regulation, not restriction. We're often taught to manage every movement: shorten the reins, hold them together, don't let them make decisions. But when a horse is tightly controlled, they lose the ability to respond naturally to their environment. A small startle can quickly become a big reaction. When horses are given a little more freedom, space to look, to move, to process, they are often able to regulate themselves more effectively. What feels like "less control" can actually create a deeper, more reliable sense of safety. Those quiet pauses, the moments where the horse stops to think, are not resistance, they are learning. I often think of them as "digestion moments," where the experience truly settles in.

What we're learning: True posture comes from within. We're taught to focus on outlines, head position, and

Myth: Equipment solves problems

What we're learning: The

root cause matters more than the tool. When something doesn't feel right, it's common to reach for stronger bits, tighter nosebands, or more restrictive tack. But many of the issues we try to fix with equipment, leaning, heaviness, lack of responsiveness, are often signs of imbalance, tension, or misunderstanding. Addressing those underlying causes creates real change. Without that, stronger equipment can simply add more pressure and create more brace in the horse's body. Rather than asking what tool will fix this problem, we might ask whether we need it at all.

Myth: A whip is harmless if it's not used

What we're learning: Horses respond to what the whip represents. We're often told a whip is just an extension of the arm, like a gentle cue. But horses don't respond to it by accident, they respond because of what it has been paired with. The movement of the whip carries meaning for the horse, often a learned association with pressure or threat. When we understand this, we can explore other ways to communicate with our horse.

Myth: I'm a good rider if my horse looks a certain way

What we're learning: True posture comes from within. We're taught to focus on outlines, head position, and

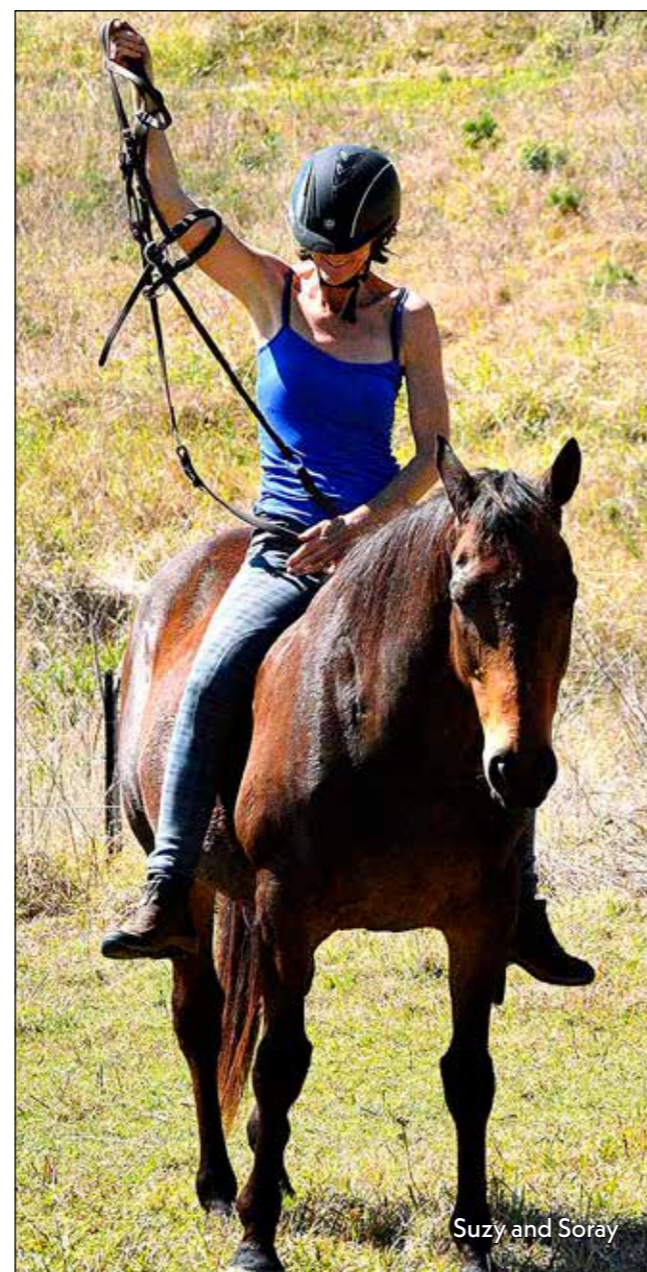
achieving a certain "frame." But posture isn't something we can place onto a horse from the outside. When a horse is held in position through rein pressure or devices, they may look correct, but underneath they can be braced, hollow, and disconnected. When we focus instead on balance, relaxation, and strength, the posture develops naturally. It may take longer, but it is real, sustainable, and comfortable for the horse.

Myth: A difficult horse needs more work

What we're learning: Sometimes they may need less. When a horse becomes tense, reactive, or resistant, the instinct is often to do more, more riding, more pressure, more correction. But many horses in this state are already overwhelmed. Time off, quiet turnout, bodywork, or gentle in-hand work can allow their nervous system to reset. From there, everything becomes easier, not because we pushed through, but because we listened.

Questioning the stories we're told about horses doesn't make us less effective, it makes us more aware, more adaptable, and more compassionate in how we work with horses. We don't need to become more forceful or more controlling. We need to become more curious. When we begin to listen, to really listen, we often find that horses have been

showing us the answers all along. And when we work with that, rather than against it, welfare isn't something we have to chase, it becomes the natural result of how we choose to be.



Suzy and Soray

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A great time of year to get out and weed

Weed Words
by Triny Roe

As the days cool, it's a great time of year to get out and weed. The soil is still moist and the weeds come out easily. Be strategic. For weed trees, like golden rain tree, *Koelreuteria elegans*, Easter cassia, *Senna pendula*, or groundsel bush, *Baccharis halimifolia*, off with their heads. Remove flowering branches to prevent fruit development and seed set. Reduce your future workload. Protect the environment. Don't let weeds spread.

You can make a difference, if bush regeneration is the aim. Working slowly and gradually will give results. Not to mention the health benefits to the weeders themselves when exposed to beneficial chemicals exuded by plants and the ones found in the soil. These various compounds have been shown to boost the immune system and lift the mood. Sad and depressed?

Anxious? Irritable? Get weeding! The Bradley Sisters, Joan and Eileen, restored a patch of weed infested and degraded bushland in Mosman, Sydney, in the 1960s. They laid down many principles of bush regeneration still followed today. They didn't use tractors, heavy machinery or lots of herbicides. Rapid vegetation clearing and soil disturbance leads to massive invasion of new weeds. The Bradley Method aims to preserve the soil structure. Working from the best bits with highest concentration of natives to the more heavily weed infested areas allows natural recruitment to easily take place. As weeds are removed, the natives germinate to take their place. Extra plantings can augment the diversity of species and increase the biodiversity.

Lantana, *Lantana camara*, is a ubiquitous weed. It has colonised many roadsides and ex-farms in the Northern Rivers as logging, dairy, pigs, bananas, etc give way

to tree-changers and life-stylers. Steep hillsides and deep gullies are very prone to invasion as they are difficult to access. If not managed, this scratchy pest continues to spread. One plant soon becomes a dense patch as the low stems stretch out along the ground, rooting at intervals and sending up new vertical shoots. Existing vegetation is quickly swamped and no new germination can occur. Lantana exudes allelopathic chemicals into the soil to prevent competition.

Lantana can also scramble several metres up trees, blocking the sunlight from reaching the leaves, and eventually smothering them. The weight of the stems break branches. Easter cassia, *Senna pendula*, with its perky bright yellow flowers, is another weed that likes to clamber over other vegetation, its snaking stems reaching to five metres. Despite rumours to the contrary, neither of these plants are nitrogen fixers. The cassia is in the sub-family *Caesalpinioideae*



Golden rain tree seedlings come up everywhere

and whilst in the legume family, *Caesalpinioideae* generally do not nodulate. Lantana is not a legume, though it has featured in trials to boost soil fertility/organic matter in India, mainly because it was readily

available as a roadside weed. Weeding is not a one-off, job done. Follow up is essential. Many tough weeds like giant devil fig, *Solanum chrysotrichum*, night-blooming jasmine, *Cestrum nocturnum*, and even lantana can regrow from a bit of broken root or branches. Chewing up and mulching woody weeds like this can make the problem worse as stem fragments can root, shoot and keep growing, especially in moist valleys of Northern NSW. Follow up follow up, follow up. New propagating material will always continue to arrive. Seeds will blow in. Some, like the fluffy white seeds of groundsel bush can travel on the wind for kilometres, or come they via vehicles, animals or floodwaters. Anywhere that was flooded in the big wet of 2022 could expect to have new weeds appearing. Stop the spread. Address existing weed infestations and be on the lookout for new arrivals. Happy weeding.

Recreational activism saving our forests

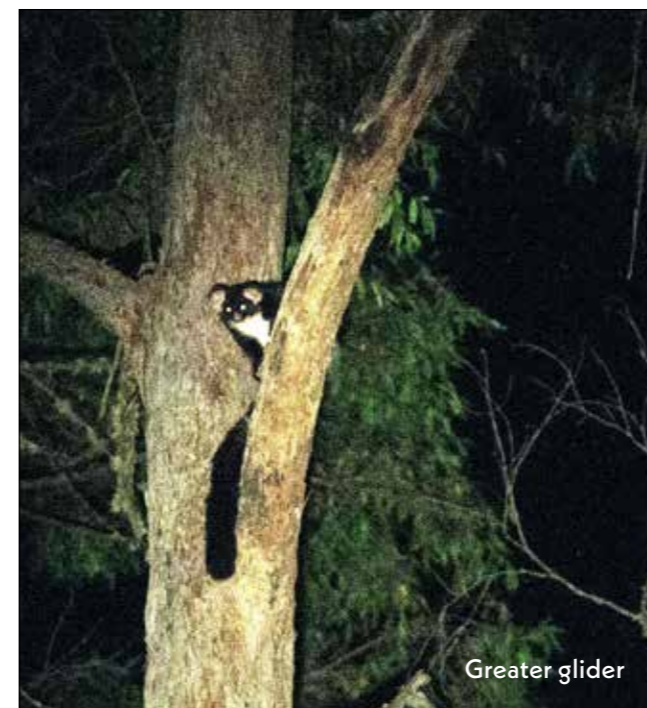
by Kendall Nesci

Out in the state forests of Northern NSW some interesting creatures are gathering. They come together every month or so to share meals, skills, stories and experiences. They also come together to fight. These beasts don't fight each other – they fight for the forests, and what's within. For many people, the idea of participating in activism can be quite intimidating.

The images and symbols the word conjures are often the most extreme cases. Take a moment now to reflect on what comes to mind for you.

Now how about the words "camping", "wildlife", "community" and "science"? A self-organised group of citizen scientists, environmental activists, ecologists and naturalists from all walks of life have been coming together and adventuring into state forests to scout out threatened and endangered species.

These are beautiful ecosystems selected to be logged. The forests contain undocumented plants and animals that legislation demands protections for.



Greater glider

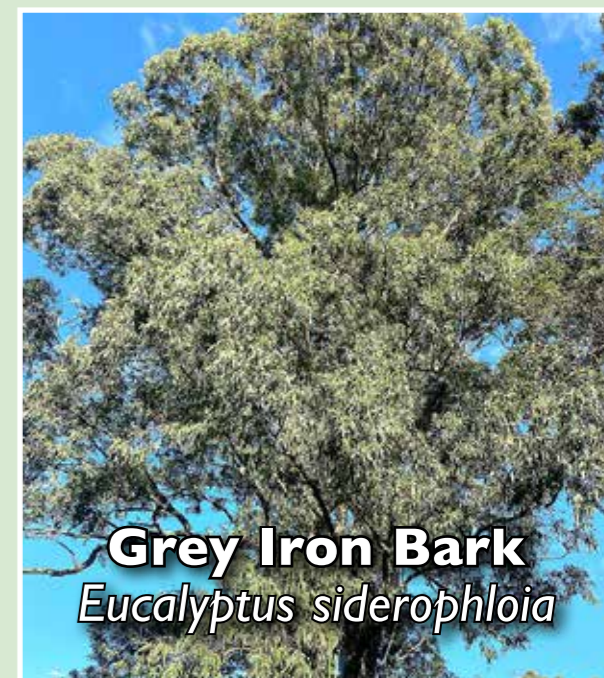
For whatever reason, Forestry Corporation has been unable to properly document large numbers of these threatened species – and they have not received the protections they require. Considering Forestry Corporation reported a loss of \$32 million in the 2024-25 financial year I assume they cannot afford to pay the rates associated with surveying at night-time to properly document nocturnal creatures, like the greater glider.

Everyday people are stepping up to fill in this gap. It's a perfect combination of recreation, education, community and activism. The black and white nature of the results make it easy to witness the power of grassroots action and understand your potential to drive conservation. A greater glider den tree demands a 50m protection area, excluding logging activities entirely. So not only do you get to spot one of these adorable and curious

marsupials, but you also get to find its home and make sure it doesn't get destroyed. Despite \$32 million in combined losses reported for activities related to these forests, Forestry Corporation posted a profit of \$28 million from softwood timber production – a result of 230,000ha of regenerative plantations the size of the ACT.

I am not an accountant, but it would seem more profitable to swing the axe at the part of your business that is obviously bleeding profits and pivot into something more sustainable. Something like educational, recreational, eco-tourism. Management of state forests should align with Australia's commitment to the 30 by 30 goal: protecting 30% of landmass and marine areas by 2030. These forests are easily accessible, and a brilliant showcase of country, they should have priority in that 30%. Seeing the infectious energy and action of these camps first-hand paints a hopeful picture of a way forward. One that can dispel apathy and inspire you to return time and time again. If you'd like to learn more, send an email through to: moreforestinfo@proton.me

Plant of the month



Grey Iron Bark
Eucalyptus siderophloia

by Richard Burer

Let's break from tradition this month for the first time in the *Nimbin GoodTimes* history and feature a different plant this May as our successful festival is behind us and I know you all know everything about the weed!

Iron Barks are just looking glorious in the morning sun after this pre and post MardiGrass drizzle spell. Like a queen taking court in the glory of her world, this stunning tree with fresh blaze of leaf and bud in these May days is a pleasure to the eye.

Take your pick of our large tree friends this month, Redgum in early flower, shiny Brush Box developing early flower, commanding Tallowwood it's the month for planting a hardy iconic local tree. It's been a nice early warm autumn and late wet autumn, so everything

aligns with some nice environmental conditions in our part of the country and great flowering this season will be one, although early winds can cause havoc. Growing to 40 metres, Grey Iron Bark is a common tree in the Nimbin area, particularly west of the village, and consideration is required when planting it on your property. I don't plant it that often, but its growth rates are modest and it grows nice and straight. It's drought-hardy but needs reasonably well drained soil. It grows easily from seed, but is often not that commercially available. It's not really a tree for the garden, but a great planting for the farm or conservation project. Take advantage of this May for possibly the last of good wet conditions for some time to establish your tree plantings as dry conditions are around the corner. I'm gonna really go for it!

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based natural area restoration contractor and consultant: richard.burer@gmail.com

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ANZAC Day march



The town of Nimbin came together this ANZAC Day to honour the brave men and women who served in the armed forces. A heartfelt memorial service was held, marked by a spirited parade featuring students from Nimbin Central School, who proudly represented their school and community. Students from Nimbin Central School marched with pride, carrying the school banner and participating actively in the service. The primary students played a special role by carrying the banner and laying a wreath to commemorate those who sacrificed so much. Meanwhile, the school captains delivered moving speeches that resonated with attendees.

Camilla, a student participant, shared her feelings about the experience: "I felt really good walking in the ANZAC Parade because my grandpa would have been happy for me as he was in the war. I learnt what a wreath was, how to lay it and why it is important to acknowledge our soldiers. The 'Last Post', bagpipes and the speeches were very emotional, and I think it's important to remember those who cared for us."

First-time marcher Josie added, "It was my very first ANZAC Day march and it felt good being a part of it. I like remembering the fallen and the sacrifice they made. I got to lay the wreath; it was so heavy! I think it is important to be still and quiet to show respect during the ceremony, I will definitely go again next year."

The Nimbin Central School community is immensely proud of its students for their respectful and meaningful participation. Their involvement not only honoured the ANZAC spirit but also helped to educate the next generation about the importance of remembrance and gratitude.

As the community reflected on the sacrifices of the past, the voices of these young students ensured that the legacy of courage and sacrifice continues to be remembered with dignity and pride.

The service concluded with a poignant moment of silence, as the community of Nimbin joined together in quiet reflection, embodying the true spirit of ANZAC Day.

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A week of community spirit at Barkers Vale



Barkers Vale Public School proudly celebrated a wonderful week that showcased what makes our small school community so special.

At Barkers Vale PS, strong connections between students, families and community members continue to create a welcoming and supportive environment for all.

On Thursday 23rd April, the school held its annual school cross country races. The day was filled with enthusiasm as every student participated, cheered on by teachers, parents and friends.

Our unique school grounds provided a challenging course, complete with steep hills and a little mud along the way – adding to the fun and sense of achievement for all runners. We feel



incredibly fortunate to have such a fantastic track right here at Barkers Vale PS.

The positive atmosphere throughout the day reflected the strength of our school community. Families gathered to encourage students, creating a vibrant and supportive vibe from start to finish.

The P&C generously provided a free lunch for everyone, treating students and families to a sausage sizzle, cake, fruit and drinks. It was a wonderful example of the generosity and spirit that

defines Barkers Vale PS.

On Friday 24th April, Barkers Vale PS held its annual ANZAC ceremony at our school memorial, with many community members attending alongside students, staff and families. Together, they respectfully reflected on the service and sacrifice of those who have served our country.

We extend our sincere thanks to Narelle Parkes, who organised the morning tea for community members, and to our students for running the ceremony and



helping to make it such a meaningful occasion.

Students continued to honour ANZAC Day by participating in the local march on Saturday 25th, proudly paying their respects alongside the wider community.

The week concluded with a successful Bunnings sausage sizzle fundraiser organised by the P&C, where parents and staff volunteered their time to support the school. A special thank you goes to Wren for her outstanding contribution.

Early childhood music at the Con

by Ngyrie Starkey

I have a message for parents, grandparents and carers. While music is something special, you don't have to be gifted or talented to share it with children.

Kids don't care if you think you can't sing. Any singing is better than no singing at all. You don't need to know lots of songs either. Children love repetition. You can sing 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' over and over and they will be completely content.

You might ask, what is the point of singing and making music with children? Can't you just put on The Wiggles or a Disney soundtrack? Of course you can. But it's worth remembering that parents and close family members are the most important people in a child's world. You are their role models, and you have the greatest impact on their development, especially in those early years.

When I was four years old, my dad used to sing 'Ghost Riders in the Sky' and play



it on the guitar. Years later, I told him how much I remembered and loved it. He replied, "It was the only song I knew how to play." It didn't matter. What stayed with me was the connection, the moment, the memory.

In my work as an in-home carer, I supported a two year old child with complex needs, including cerebral palsy and a hearing impairment. Each morning began with a simple ritual, a parent singing to their child. It was a gentle and loving way to begin what was often a challenging day.

Later, when the child was resting, you could hear her quietly singing to herself, her pitch perfectly in tune. Music had become her language, her comfort, her expression.

Beyond creating connection and special memories, music offers many holistic benefits. Singing, movement

and playing even the simplest instruments such as tapping sticks, shakers, drums, support numeracy and language development, coordination, spatial awareness, and social and emotional wellbeing. Music is a powerful and accessible way to nurture the whole child.

In a world full of electronic noise and constant distraction, there is something deeply valuable in simply singing together.

Ngyrie Starkey is the Early Childhood Music teacher at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium, where she leads a welcoming and joyful program for young children and their families.

Classes include:
• Little Sprouts (1 to 3 years) Tuesdays, 9:30am to 10:15am.

A gentle introduction to music through songs, nursery rhymes and simple

percussion, creating shared moments of joy and connection.

• Seedlings (3 to 5 years) Tuesdays, 10:30am to 11:15am.

Playful and engaging sessions that build musical foundations through singing, movement, dance and percussion.

• Saplings (K - 2) Tuesdays, selected dates, 4pm to 5pm.

A six-week transition program supporting children as they move towards learning an instrument.

All classes are held at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium in Lismore and run each school term – Bookings for classes essential.

Everything we do is for the love of music – if you want to find out more go to: <https://nrcc.edu.au>

Putting feelings into words

When a client comes to work with me one of the first things I ask of them is to write down feelings, thoughts and dreams.

The reason is not just to create a text for reflection and discussion, but to develop the process of learning to witness their unconscious processes. It's a practice I've been engaged in for practically all my adult life, and I can attest to actual changes in my approach to living.

What happens with such witnessing is that the waves of emotion no longer have a big grip on daily life. I began the process decades ago because I realised that if I allowed those massive deluges of emotions to dominate my life, I probably wouldn't survive.

I understood that it really was critical for me to find a way to live moderately, with awareness. And so, I started writing. This writing has evolved into many variations on the original theme, from self-observation to others. It now incorporates my professional and academic insights. The insights have

become insights (if I may call this article one of these).

Writing, as therapeutic tool, is much used by psychodynamic practitioners like myself in various ways. The psychodynamic approach suggests that human behaviour is generated by unconscious processes and that the therapeutic purpose is to bring such unconscious things into conscious awareness for fundamental change in everyday life.

The process of writing does not include interpretation, though these may be suggested in the psychotherapeutic session itself by both client and therapist. It merely records whatever the clients wants to bring up. The text may be accompanied by drawings, if the client wishes.

Until recently, I just intuited tangible shifts in awareness in myself and my clients, but now I've discovered that neurological brain research has found that this has a measurable aspect as well. Brain imaging studies show the writing down one's feelings changes how the brain works. The

emotional circuits of the brain (the amygdala) show reduced activity.

The amygdala lies deep within the temporal lobes and is an essential part of the limbic system. It is primarily responsible for processing emotions, particularly fear, anxiety, and aggression and attaches emotional value to memories. It also triggers fight-or-flight responses.

What happens when you write your feelings down, instead of being overwhelmed by such feelings – as these brain studies have shown – there is reduced amygdala activity along with an increased engagement of the prefrontal cortex.

The prefrontal cortex supports planning, reasoning, and self-regulation. Simply put, writing things down reduces the welling up of emotions to being able to manage life more effectively. Your thoughts are structured and externalised into written form and thus they lose much of their grip, thus cutting down feelings of stress.

You can step back and observe your interactions and



by Dr Elizabeth McCordell

behaviours and thus proceed in emotional safety without being swept up in realms you can't manage.

There is an added benefit to the process of writing: you end up with a record of your therapeutic journey which, in itself, can be used to develop other possibilities for your own life. Maybe the writings can become a memoir, a novel, a series of poems, theoretical discoveries, whatever.

I've had clients utilise their writings in the form of all these things, which delights me. And of course, the very activity of the writing process itself is therapy, and a very valuable and wonderfully self-clarifying one.

Responsible waste management starts at five



Revenge of the Loon by Laurie Axtens



By the time we're five years old, almost all of us are toilet trained.

In short, we have learnt our first lesson about taking responsibility for our own waste.

Sadly, many adolescent boys (mostly boys) fail to learn much more about taking responsibility for their mess until they're tortured by the military, or their employer to do so.

Tragically, some never seem to become house trained at all.

And it seems at least a few of these domestically blind souls have found jobs in the NRJO – Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (of local councils) – which ironically deals with waste management

among other things.

And I kid you not, their idea is for Lismore to play 'mum' for all the unrecyclable wastes of all the other councils from the Tweed to Coffs.

Blakebrook quarry is now planned to be the depository for all northern region's disposable nappies, decomposing furniture and foulest of the foul filth!

Byron is to host the organics and Ballina the recyclable cans and bottles. This, I was assured by Lismore Council staff is the only viable option.

As they spoke all I could hear was a five-year-old, having shat his duds, saying to me that I have to clean his bum now, it's the only viable option?



Photo: David Lowe

"Well look little man, your mother and I aren't cleaning up your filth anymore. You need to do that for yourself, and I don't want to hear any more of that pseudo economic rationalism from you either."

The pressure to create a circular economy to reduce, reuse and recycle is utterly

undermined if they can simply send all their filth to Lismore.

It's time this region grew up and councils take some responsibility for their own mess.

Don't dump your crap on us, boys.
Don't dump your crap on us.

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