

Christmas Bush Edition
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81 Cullen Street
Nimbin 2480
phone: 6689-1148
email: nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com

In Community Hands

Nimbin vision for school site realised



Closure. In exchange for the final community payment of \$1, Lismore Mayor Jenny Dowell (left) hands over the title deeds to the Nimbin Community Centre to secretary of Nimbin Community Centre Inc., Diana Roberts.

Saturday 29th November was an auspicious day for the Nimbin community, when Lismore Council transferred title of Nimbin Community Centre to the Nimbin Community Centre Inc (NCCI), marking the end of a 13-year odyssey. Though the event was more symbolic than real (as Diana Roberts explained, "Nothing as simple as it seems"), the hand-over represented a significant achievement for the community, which has raised a total of \$294,470 to purchase the old Nimbin Community School site. "In 1995, the Nimbin community was presented

a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to keep the very heart of Nimbin in the hands of the community forever," said Ms Roberts. A committee was formed, later to become NCCI, and within 18 months raised the \$140,000 deposit required for purchase. The acquisition balance and associated development costs were provided in the form of a loan from Lismore Council that was repaid in six years, except for \$1. This kept insurance liability in Council hands for the remaining term of the loan. The property comprises two acres of land with eight buildings, and sections of land have been committed to a Rural Fire Service shed, public toilets and a yet-to-be completed skate park. Over the past ten years the Community Centre has provided a home for over 41 different community groups and currently houses 17. Many worthwhile community projects have emerged from the Centre, including youth initiatives and activities focussed around community safety, community resilience, community media and economic development. Music and circus performances accompanied the hand-over, held on the 10th Anniversary of the monthly Nimbin Aquarius Markets. In presenting the deeds, Mayor Jenny Dowell said, "It shows that if you have the mind and the will, and a fantastic community behind you, you can achieve anything."



Police weigh in on SK8park funding

In a move that surprised many in the Nimbin community, Richmond Police commander Bruce Lyons has thrown his weight behind funding the completion of the ailing Nimbin skatepark as a crime prevention measure. He told Mary Mann for *The Northern Star*, "I know community members would see it as a safe place to have kids do something worthwhile, off the streets." Crime Prevention Officer Snr Const Michael Hogan agreed the skate park could be a crime prevention tool, especially for 14 to 24-year-olds. "The skate park would give them a place to learn new skills and challenge themselves...there are so many life pointers there it's not funny," he said. The move is timely, as Lismore City Council is set to receive \$1.049 million of more than \$3.3 million being injected into local councils through the Federal Government's Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program. (See page 10) The money must to be spent by September 2009, so existing projects such as the skate park should get close consideration. In a letter to Councillors, NCCI secretary Diana Roberts wrote, "We estimate that \$50,000, less than 5% of the funding on offer, would complete the sound mitigation required. An additional amount would allow for shading. "We are confident that the noise mitigation works proposed will result in a facility operating at noise levels acceptable to neighbours and are keen to progress the work as a matter of urgency." Friends of Nimbin Skatepark spokesperson Duncan Wilson said, "I would urge any parents out there in the community with an itchy activist finger to write letters and make more petitions highlighting the importance of having this skatepark open and completed. "Good skateparks create stronger communities, by being somewhere



Commander Lyons consults with community members. (File photo)

to have fun and make friends in a positive and free environment," he said. Diana Roberts said, "It would be a tragedy for the project not to be realised due to its considerable benefit to the youth of Nimbin, who persist on using the SK8 Park despite our best efforts to keep them out. "In addition it would serve to lift community esteem which is currently undermined every time we drive past." Council will decide on several projects for the Community Infrastructure Program funding at its meeting on 9th December. To get involved, call Duncan Wilson on 0427-889-815 or visit the website <http://sk8park.nimbincommunity.org.au/>

