



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

Full Colour and FREE

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We're shovel-ready!



Digging in. TOOT members, supporters and politicians rally for North Coast rail infrastructure.

Photo: Sue Stock

Is the long-idle north coast rail line a vital and 'shovel-ready' project that can immediately get going and bring jobs, transport and tourism back to the north coast?

Members of Trains on our Tracks (TOOT), The Greens and the National Party met recently at Murwillumbah Railway Station to demonstrate to Kevin Rudd and North Coast federal politicians that they thought so, and that the project is worthy of federal funding.

TOOT president, Karin Kolbe, told assembled supporters and politicians that the idle north coast rail line was a prime example of something that doesn't need much infrastructure money to get going, yet would have great benefits for our whole region.

"Rail services will support local jobs, local commerce and a sustainable tourism industry, whilst helping combat the climate crisis and reduce our dependence on crude oil," Ms Kolbe said.

"By 2050 the NSW government forecasts a quarter of Australia's population will be living on the coastal strip between Coffs Harbour NSW and Hervey Bay QLD. Clearly we will need rail infrastructure."

The federal government has been calling for Infrastructure Australia (IA) projects that are 'shovel-ready'. The NSW state government's submission to IA did not include the Casino-Murwillumbah rail line, which it closed in 2004.

"The Casino-Murwillumbah rail line is definitely a shovel-ready project. The line and the stations are already here. We just need some maintenance work, and the political will," Ms Kolbe said.

The assembled rail supporters were encouraged by Tweed MP Geoff Provest, who promised "110% support", Jenny Gardiner MLC and Senator Fiona Nash.

Several Byron councillors were also on hand with their shovels, and

MP Lee Rhiannon emailed, "The Greens are committed to making 2009 the year that we get trains back on the tracks between Casino and Murwillumbah, and the NSW government commits to extending the rail line to the Queensland border."

Ms Kolbe said, "There is a great role for the state and federal governments to show leadership and connect the rail across the border."

"Only as much as 26 kilometres of new rail track could be needed between Condong and Coolangatta. The Queensland Government plans have extended their existing railway from Robina to Coolangatta airport by 2015. It would be nice if we could meet them half way."

TOOT are now inviting people to write to their elected state and federal representatives to put the north coast rail line back on the agenda, and ensure the line gets its share of infrastructure funding.

TOOT's website is www.toot.org.au

Nimbin shows its big heart in Bushfire Appeal

The Nimbin community has so far raised over \$6,600 for the Victorian bushfires relief effort.

Most of the money was raised at an Appeal Day attended by over 250 people at the Nimbin Bowlo on the National Day of Mourning.

The telecast of the service from Melbourne was followed by a minute's silence for those who tragically lost their lives in the fires.

Fundraising initiatives included a luncheon of spit roasts and BBQ, social bowls for all ages, six local musical acts, facepainting, and a monster raffle of prizes donated by local businesses and individuals.

Additional donations from collection buckets at the Nimbin Hotel (\$560) and the Mt Burrell store (\$100) were also added to the day's final tally of \$5,500.

Event organiser Anton Eldridge said, "The response was just amazing. People from all sections



Helpers. Col Hannigan from East Lismore Bowling Club (left) helps Nimbin Bowlo director Derek Cooper carve one of the roasts.

of the community stepped up to contribute in any way they could, and the result just speaks for itself." "This is a great effort from a small community with a big heart."

Additional donations of \$620 were raised by Tuntable Falls Community School through collection buckets in the preceding week (see page 6), and the six-club Northern Rivers AFL executive have also voted to donate \$500 to the appeal through the Nimbin Bowlo.

Executive member Antony Burton said, "All the clubs have a good relationship with Nimbin, except on the field."

All proceeds have been forwarded to the Australian Red Cross appeal through the ClubsNSW Disaster Relief Fund.

More fundraising events are planned (see page 2).



Generosity. Indefatigable women's club member Maria DeRighetti with the fundraising progress tally board.



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