



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

Eco-Friendly and FREE

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Opposition to rail sell-off grows



Lee Rhiannon MLC (centre, in black) and protesters at Murwillumbah station.

A coalition of pro-rail and sustainable transport groups around the State has been formed to oppose the Government's plan to sell off the state's rail lines.

The NSW government's proposed *Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2009*, which will come before Parliament this month, would allow the NSW transport minister to order the removal of railways across the state, by administrative order only, without consulting Parliament, let alone the community.

The government says this legislation has been prompted by community requests to turn disused rail lines into bicycle, walking and horse-riding tracks, but Greens MP and Transport Spokesperson Lee Rhiannon says this is a smokescreen.

"The government's 'rail trail' talk is cover for its real objective: to close down rail lines, sell off associated land to developers and pocket the cash.

"The government's attempt to justify this dangerous piece of legislation by making out it is all about promoting cycling and pedestrian infrastructure is laughable," she said.

The issue has brought together activists from a range of political parties: the Greens, the Nationals and even sections of the ALP.

Page MP Janelle Saffin has launched a community petition, which can be signed at her Lismore electorate office, aimed at lobbying the NSW transport minister to "quarantine" the Casino to Murwillumbah line from potential sale while NOROC's 'Integrated Regional Transport Plan' is conducted.

Ms Saffin however, could make no promises of federal support or funding for the line.

The North Coast is attracting the more mobile of the ageing population, and needs an accessible transport system, not a car- or bus-based transport system.

The Minister for Ageing, Richmond MP Justine Elliot has been silent on her 2004 election commitment to restore rail services to the Casino to Murwillumbah line.

President of Trains on our Tracks, Karin Kolbe said, "We must protect and retain all our existing railway corridors, whether operating or closed, and associated infrastructure, to ensure that all possible options are maintained for the future."

Ask Minister Campbell to drop the bill, on 9228-3777.

Weaving and Mending

The fifth annual Weave and Mend Festival, held at the start of October, was the longest – five days – and the best attended yet.

The continuous weaving workshops were full every day, and there was music around the hearth each night.

Michael's Chai tent and Stuart, ex-Nimbin Gourmet restaurant, provided delicious sustenance throughout, and their marquee, together with dozens of tents, two teepees and a dome, made a colourful addition to the wooded lawns of the Nimbin Central School grounds.

Co-ordinator Granny Breath Weaver, of the Wednesday Women Weavers group, said she was very happy with the way the festival went.

The day after the festival she said, "We're going to have a meeting in a little while to talk about how everything went, but I thought it was great – I had a good time!"

"I was really really pleased to see so many children there. Weaving is perfect for children."

"I'd like to thank everyone involved for the magnificent effort they put in to make it such a beautiful event, including our major sponsor the Nimbin School of Arts," she said.

Proceeds from the Festival will go into the Children's Art Trust Fund at Nimbin Central School.

"I don't know how much yet – there's just a pile of notes and coins I have to count," said Granny Breath Weaver.

Be on the lookout for the many baskets, bags and other woven items produced from natural fibres during the Festival.

They are works of heart.

Wednesday Women Weavers meet Wednesday afternoons at the Nimbin Community Gardens.



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