

Enviro Centre blues

The Nimbin Environment Centre is happy to announce we have a date for the long awaited Special General Meeting. It will be on Friday 23rd October at 4pm in the green room at Nimbin Community Centre.

Many of you will be aware there has been tension in the centre for a few months, backbiting and bickering. In view of this, the committee of management has decided to resign, to save our own emotional wellbeing, but also to stop any further damage to the centre.

The committee is proud of our record, particularly Venessa's efforts over the past four years. We are leaving the shop in a great situation: over the past year the shop has been re-fitted internally, painted inside and out and well stocked. I am particularly happy to have negotiated with Sophie to have the verandah sign redone and the creation of the beautiful banner on the wall, Sophie has refused any compensation for her wonderful creative efforts.

The shop is now fully staffed, except for Fridays after I leave, so we feel that we can walk away with heads held high. If you are an enthusiastic energetic person willing to give your time for the committee, please come to the meeting and put your name up for one of the positions.

You will need to be a financial member to stand and to vote, come along with love in your heart and an open mind.

Jak Murphy,
Committee president

Bravo to our Nimbin community!

We halted deforestation, the felling of our tall trees.

We created National Parks. We overthrew the Tower of Babel – and we created *The GoodTimes*!

If only we I could pick up 2Nim-FM as easily as we can pick up our local rag (Could they have given us a bit more range at the top of that tower?). Alas, I have to pack up early with a crackling radio.

And it's not the pigfat and bumnuts I hear every Saturday morning. I'm tuned to 102.3 FM on my car radio and heading towards Nimbin, driving hard into the range for better reception.

I so-o-o have my favorite shows! I even arrange on-site jobs at times and locations where my trusty truck radio can pick up the signal for my favorites. Keerong, Goonellabah, Daley Street Lismore, Stangers Road...

Tuesday 'arvo is to die for radio! Such a good meal – a bellyfull of satisfaction singing along with our indigenous music. What a menu!

Wednesday 'arvo – music, poetry ... such a great drivetime to go home to. Thursday too far away ... Friday ... can't get enough! Mmmm – Saturday morning. What a great wake-up – need 'dat caffeine frenzy! Mmm.

Sunday. "Viva la Revolution!" Home education in Hispanic Spanish, music, news and interviews...

Wow! Where did that week go? Monday already, again...

Gai Reid
Blue Knob

Nim-FM turns 10 in November this year, with a big party planned for Saturday 21st November at the School of Arts Hall – Ed.

Notices

Office/Consulting Room to let

20 sqm office/consulting room at the Nimbin Community Centre available for rent from \$45 pw + power. The room has a sink, benches, airconditioning, elevated and secure east and northern windows and is located adjacent to Cullen Street, next to the CTC and a shared toilet. Email EOI to ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au or phone 6689-0000 to arrange an inspection.

Studio for Rent

Studio large self-contained, right in the heart of Nimbin, \$180 per week including electricity. Phone 6689-0136.

Wanted to rent

2-3 br house on acreage, Nimbin-Mullumbimby-Tweed area. Mature, quiet, non-smoking person. Phone Janet 0438-430-109.

For Sale

Duck and chook eggs for sale \$4.50 doz. Muscovy ducklings \$10 ea. Also organically grown seasonal vegies, homemade marmalades and cordial. Come to us or can deliver in local area. Phone: 6689-0001

For Sale

King Size mattress in good condition. Brand: Simmons Beautyrest, Avignon. 2 years in use, very comfortable, pillow top, pocket coil. Cost over \$2,000, sell \$550. Reason to sell: won't fit in room allocated. Phone: 6689-0001.

Housework Wanted

Are you looking for an honest person to do your housework? Look no more, at \$15 per hour, Nimbin village only. Phone Shirley 6689-1150.

Meetings, Clinics and Events

Hemp Bar Chess Tournament

Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th October, 2009 from 10am, \$10/\$5 entry. Please book in early for your place in the tournament.

Northern Rivers Maternity Action Group

Next meeting: Monday 12th October 10.30 am, near CWA Rooms, Spinks Park, Molesworth St, Lismore. We are working to allow all women to access their preferred pregnancy and birth care choices; please come along and join us. Children very welcome. For more info contact: maternityactiongroup@gmail.com

Nimbin Immunisation Clinic for 0-5 year olds

2nd Tuesday of every month, next is 13th October. For Appointments call Lismore Community Health 6620-7687.

Nimbin Food Security Working Party

Wednesday 14th October, 6pm at Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (Elmo room – come to back stairs). Bring a plate of nibbles to share.



Dust Storm photo: Thorsten Jones

Police-Community BBQ

Friday 16th October, Allsopp Park, Cullen Street, 11.30am-1.30pm. All welcome.

Womens Health Service at Nimbin Hospital

3rd Thursday of every month, next is 15th October. Appointments can be made at Nimbin Hospital 6689-1400 or Helen 6689-1288

Tunable Folk Cafe

Friday 16th October from 5pm at the Tuntable Community Centre. Japanese menu to suit all tastes, homebrew and other delights, including the musical talents of Mooki and friends. Come along, bring your instruments or your singing voice and have a great night out in the valley!

Nimbin Dollars?

A presentation from the Australian Institute for Complementary Currencies. Saturday 24th October, 6pm at Birth & Beyond. Please come along – all input welcomed! There will be biscuits and cheese.

Annual General Meetings

- Nimbin Health & Welfare Association Annual General Meeting Tuesday 13th October, 3pm at the Old Hospital meeting Room. Enquiries Helen 6689-1288.

- Nimbin Environment Centre Special General Meeting Friday 23rd October at 4pm in the Community School Room at Nimbin Community Centre.

- NIM-FM Annual General Meeting Thursday 29th October 2009, 1pm at the Community School Room, Nimbin Community Centre. Please pay membership before the meeting. (Non-financial members and non-members can address the floor but can't register a vote or nominate.)

- Nimbin A&I Society Annual General Meeting Tuesday 10th November, 6pm at the Showground.

- Nimbin CTC Annual General Meeting Friday 13th November at 6 pm in the CTC room, Nimbin Community Centre.

- * Nimbin Community Centre Inc Annual General Meeting Sometime late November in the Dance Studio, Nimbin Community Centre

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NGT is auspiced by the Nimbin Community School Co-operative Ltd.

Next deadline: Wednesday 28th October

Email: nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Please limit contributions to 600 words or less.

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Enquiries: 6688-6433

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Simon says...



by **Simon Clough**
Lismore City Councillor

Yes the tower has gone! It will no doubt return hopefully in a safer, less obtrusive location. It does show that local government, working with the support of the community, has some power.

One year into my first term on Council and I'm certainly aware of the limitations of power in this role. If I had real power I'd stop the maggies swooping innocent humans. I must confess to a conflict of interest here. I was dive bombed for over 100 metres the other day while riding my bike (maybe it was the lycra). By the way some envious (and dare I say less fit Councillors) have been muttering that no one over 40 should be allowed to wear lycra, at least on the outside!

A lesson on the limitations of Councillor power came my way when I innocently enquired about changing our street lighting to more energy efficient lighting. Well!!

a) the Network Service Provider (NSP) charges more for energy efficient lights, because it's claimed they require more maintenance. Anyway the really efficient globes have not been tested for Australian standards so aren't available.

b) to put in an approved but less efficient bulb prior to the current lighting's expected life will also cost a considerable amount as under the pricing contract Council will have to pay out the expected life of the bulb! Nonetheless there was headway being made under the previous manager of the NSP until he moved on to another job. Talk about light bulb jokes!

Yet despite this minefield, Council officers are collaborating across the region and are confident of making real progress. I have to congratulate their stamina.

Thinking of power and bureaucracy, I recently was informed of a community organisation which was awarded a \$350,000 grant to build a solar farm.

The NSP has offered the organisation 3 cents per kilowatt hour to purchase this green power. The same green power I pay on average 35 cents a kilowatt hour for! That's over 1,000% profit.

Does anyone else get the feeling our carbon-guzzling energy providers need a shake-up?

One of the most significant aspects of my first year on Council has been the friendly way Councillors of all political shades have been able to conduct themselves.

From attending meetings of previous councils over the years, I am proud of the improved level of respect shown by all members of the current council. Of course we do have our odd moments, which is only natural...

I'm hopeful that a report on the new Nimbin Sk8 park will come to Council's next meeting. I've been very impressed with the diversity, quality and quantity of lobbying that's come from the Nimbin community in favour of the park. Well done Nimbin!

Let's hope that it will all be resolved favourably for the needs of the community.

Isaac Smith was elected Deputy Mayor at Council's last meeting. Isaac is a young family man with the interests of the Lismore community very much at heart. I am confident that he will be an excellent representative in his new role.

Councillors are currently engaged in a full budget review of Council spending.

Unlike previous years which were mainly about replicating the last budget with a few modifications we are thoroughly examining all allocations. It's a modified zero budgeting process which aims at ensuring that Council's spending is in line with its Strategic Plan.

Don't forget you can contact me at simonclough@internode.on.net or phone 6624-2894 or 0428-886-217.



by **Jenny Dowell**
Mayor of Lismore

Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au

September Council Meeting

State Plan

At the commencement of the Council meeting on 8th September 2009, Councillors voted to endorse a submission to the Premier criticising the revised draft of the NSW State Plan.

Our main complaint relates to the Sydney-centric focus of the plan with scant mention of the regions in general and the North Coast in particular. Readers may like to check out the website www.nswstateplan.net.au for more detail.

Deputy Mayor

Cr Isaac Smith was elected as the Deputy Mayor for the next 12 months. This follows a year in which Cr Vanessa Ekins supported me and deputised for me both in Council and at numerous community events.

The annual change in the position enables more Councillors to experience the role and become better known to a wider community.

I congratulate Cr Smith on his election and thank Cr Ekins for her assistance.

McLeans Ridges

Regular readers will know that the previous Council was divided about the

From the Mayor's desk

development of rural housing in McLeans Ridges.

The current Council has refused a request by the developers of land at Roseview Rd to reduce their financial contribution for infrastructure such as roads, revegetation and community facilities.

Council also requested the developers to sign the Planning Agreement within 60 days or to withdraw the application. The developers refused and so Council voted not to proceed with the rezoning application and to advise all parties and the Department of Planning accordingly.

Homeless Shelter

Readers will know through other media that the Soup Kitchen is in the process of finalising purchase of the Winsome Hotel with the aim of providing crisis accommodation for Lismore's homeless people and relocating the Soupie to the Winnie.

Council had previously set aside \$100,000 as a contribution to a shelter. Council resolved to make that funding available for the purchase of the Winsome and has asked the community to comment on that proposal.

We will revisit the decision at our October meeting and then Council will step back as the Soup Kitchen and its consultants prepare a DA for the proposed new usage.

Other matters...

Skatepark

Thank you to everyone who has sent letters and emails to me and my fellow Councillors about the need for a skatepark in Nimbin.

The broad spread of correspondence from business people, community workers, parents, the school

and, most importantly, young skaters, has been overwhelming. I expect that the matter of funding and a proposal will be on the agenda for the October 13 Council meeting, and I would encourage interested residents to read the report from staff, let us know your views and to attend the meeting if at all possible.

As I write, staff are indicating some concerns with the ability of Council to meet the requirements of Federal Government funding.

Blakebrook Bridge

The long awaited \$2 Million new bridge at Blakebrook will be opened on Friday 16th October at 9.30am. It is a huge construction and will improve safety for all vehicles.

Delivery Plan

Councils across the State are working towards a new integrated planning approach for their long term strategic plans. Lismore has developed its new ten-year Community Strategic Plan and is now in the process of developing the four-year Delivery Plan that spells out what we want to achieve in the next four years.

The DP will guide the incoming Council of 2012 for its first 12 months before that Council then develops a new DP. The current process will take many more months but readers can be assured that there will be ample opportunity for input.

From the DP, a one-year Operational Plan will be prepared.

Budget Review

Councillors have commenced the difficult task of reviewing all discretionary expenditure in the budget.

To begin, we have quarantined all costs that we must pay to meet our legislative obligations. The

task for the next few months is extremely challenging as we attempt to find money that could be redeployed to priorities such as roads.

Nimbin Show

It was wonderful to see so many locals at the first show of the North Coast circuit in Nimbin on the last weekend of September.

It was my recommendation that Council have a presence and an information display this year and I am pleased to hear the positive comments from those who dropped by the Council's van for a cuppa and scones.

Well done to Nimbin's A&I Society for a great Show.

Arts and Children

I loved my visit to the Nimbin Spring Arts Extravaganza. The standard is always of the highest quality and a delight for the eyes.

I'm also looking forward to being at the International Children's Day celebrations on 23rd October and again the next evening at the Blue Knob gallery workshop opening.

Workshops and meetings

Oct 6 – Budget Review (continued)

Oct 13 – Council meeting

Oct 20- Extraordinary Meeting- Financial Reports

Nov 3 – Policy Advisory Groups- Chairperson's Reports

It is recommended that readers check this information in the NR Echo each week as the schedule may change. Unless listed as otherwise, meetings and workshops begin at 6 pm and are held at Council Chambers in Oliver Avenue Goonellabah.

To discuss any Council issue, please contact me on: 0402-651-394.

NIMBIN COMMUNITY MEETING

Residents and members of the local Nimbin community are invited to come along and meet with Lismore City Councillors at the annual Nimbin Community Meeting to be held on Monday, November 16, 2009.

The meeting will be held at Nimbin School of Arts beginning at 7.00 p.m.



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Janelle's Page

by Janelle Saffin, MP

There are some great examples of how the Rudd Government's economic stimulus measures are working to support jobs and the local economy.

The Grafton-based insulation business, Power Results, has gone from 20 to 130 employees to cope with the increased demand as a result of the Government's insulation rebates under the Energy Efficient Homes package. The business now has teams installing insulation from Kempsey to Tweed Heads.

The solar hot water rebates are also helping local businesses. Kyogle Plumbing Supplies, which installs solar heat pumps, has taken on an extra 11 employees to cope with demand. Owner Mick Thomson says because of the Federal and State rebates he's been able to expand the business, employ more locals and help to reduce the impact of climate change.

The latest OECD report singles out Australia's fiscal stimulus as being particularly effective in supporting employment. Australia is the only advanced economy to grow over the last twelve months, recording growth of 0.6 per cent.

As Kevin Rudd says, we are not out of the woods yet, but the evidence is that the Government's economic stimulus measures are indeed working to support jobs in Australia.

Pension reform

I've had some lovely responses from local pensioners very appreciative of the Government's pension reforms that came into effect



Janelle Saffin MP and Parliamentary Secretary for Employment, Jason Clare with manager Jo Doran and the team from Power Results.

Member for Page
63 Molesworth Street
Lismore
Phone 1300-301-735

at the end of September.

The Australian Government's Secure and Sustainable Pension Reforms will improve the pension's adequacy, simplify the way it is delivered, and secure its sustainability for the future.

These are the biggest changes to the pension in 100 years and will make a difference to the lives of thousands of local pensioners, people with disability and carers, many of whom are struggling financially.

For single pensioners on the full rate the increase in the base pension along with the new Pension Supplement and the recent indexation, brings the total increase to \$70.83 per fortnight, with total

pension payments now worth \$671.90 a fortnight.

The total increase for couple pensioners combined on the maximum rate is now \$29.93 per fortnight, bringing total pension payments to \$1,013 per fortnight.

Forgotten Australians

You may have heard in the media recently about the Forgotten Australians, the term refers to adults who were sent to institutions or out of home care as children from the 1930s to 1970s.

Since 2001 three Senate inquiries have documented the sexual and physical abuse, deprivation, poor health care and poor education along with the sense of abandonment suffered by these children.

I have made strong representations on this issue to the Minister for Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin and I am delighted that she has now announced the Government will make an apology before the end of the year.

This apology is long overdue and will be an important step in the healing process for these Forgotten Australians.

If you know someone affected, or are yourself a survivor of these institutions and wish to be involved in consultation on the apology process, please contact my office on 6621-9909 or email Janelle.saffin.mp@aph.gov.au

Janelle.

More than 27,300 Richmond pensioners to benefit from increased payments

by Justine Elliot, MP

More than 27,300 pensioners in the Richmond electorate will now benefit from an increase in their pension payments.

Nationally, the pension will increase for around 3.3 million age pensioners, disability support pensioners, carers, wife and widow pensioners and veteran income support recipients.

These are the most significant reforms to the pension since it was introduced 100 years ago. They are a vital investment in preparing Australia for the future. The Rudd Government's pension increase for people on the Far North Coast will provide much-needed support. We have listened to the concerns of local pensioners and taken decisive action to provide security and certainty for them now, and into the future.

A single pensioner on the maximum rate of the pension will receive an increase of \$60 per fortnight in the base pension, an increase of \$5.00 per fortnight in the new Pension Supplement and Indexation increases of \$5.50 per fortnight in the base pension and \$0.33 per fortnight in the Pension Supplement.

This is a total increase for single pensioners on the maximum rate of \$70.83 per fortnight, bringing total pension payments to \$671.90 per fortnight. Pension payments for singles are now set at two thirds of the rate paid to couples combined.

Couple pensioners combined on the maximum rate of the pension will receive an increase of \$20.30 per fortnight in the new Pension Supplement and Indexation increases of \$9.20 per fortnight in the base pension and \$0.43 per fortnight in the Pension Supplement. This is a total increase for couple pensioners combined on the maximum rate of \$29.93 per fortnight, bringing total pension payments to \$1,013 per fortnight.

Full details of the changes to rates and thresholds are available at www.australia.gov.au/pensions

BLACK SPOT UPGRADES COMPLETE

Work to improve the safety of a 23 kilometre section of the Lismore to Murwillumbah Road between Lillian Rock and Uki north of Nimbin has been completed.

The work included improved line marking and signage along the entire length of the road and installing curve warning signs and alignment markers. The project cost \$170,000 and was carried out on behalf of the RTA by Kyogle Shire Council.

Work to improve the safety of a three kilometre section of Kyogle Road west of Kunghur is also complete. The \$280,000 project saw the installation of guard rails, line marking, improved signage and the widening of shoulders on selected road curves.

The projects were nominated by Tweed and Kyogle Shire Councils and funded under the Nation Building Black Spot Program, as part of the Rudd Government's commitment to increasing road safety across NSW.



Member for Richmond
107 Minjungbal Drive
Tweed Heads South
Phone 1300-720-675

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND LAND MANAGEMENT GROUPS

Guidelines are now available for small grants to support local environmental and land management work with the establishment of a new \$5 million program.

The Community Action Grants program, through Caring for our Country, was announced recently by the Rudd Government in response to feedback from community groups. It is expected to provide around 500 grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to support smaller, local projects run by groups such as Landcare and Coastcare, as well as Indigenous groups.

Community groups carry out invaluable work and these grants are designed to support environmental and land management work. Eligible community groups may include community groups involved in coastal rehabilitation, restoration and conservation, indigenous partnerships involved in protecting or improving the environment or groups of farmers or land managers working on sustainable farming or improving natural resource management.

Applications are available on-line and are due by 22nd October 2009. For more information go to www.nrm.gov.au or call 1800-552-008.

NEED HELP?

If you ever need help with any Federal Government matters please call my office on 1300-720-675.

Justine.

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NIMBIN STREET SHUFFLE

by Undacuvva

FROZEN KOALAS

Once the word reached Sydney about the frozen koalas I knew there'd be dramas. The Big Boss's wife is a wildlife carer obsessed. I got the job 'cos of my intimate connections with a certain Well Known Tourist Attraction who supposedly had a frozen K in their fridge. Plus it was me who put in the report about the Rally rumours.

It was hard to get a look in the WKTA fridge, but I managed to work a way in the dead of night. Sure enough there he was, a big frozen male taking up most of the freezer, and a goanna, and a small wallaby! From there the rumour mill went berserk until we found ourselves on the trail of giant catapults which were supposed to hurl the frozen hairy 'rocks' at the rally cars from hundreds of metres away.

It was all nonsense I realized, when I found out the whole freezer was emptied for a celebratory indigenous feast well before the rally, but by then the story was a reality and no one believed a word from me.

REGISTERED SQUIRTS

One of Nimbin's six registered informers has been giving us false information, making it very confusing. It's very rare for us to have double agents in this game but the Boss let slip that I might use this column as a warning to any of our registered and unregistered informers (RIs and UI's) that any play like this is risking a public taserings.

Believe me, we know how easy it is to set anyone up for a 'squirrel' as we say. We have strict instructions to only use the glock handgrip on the taser, which very conveniently cuts off the camera, though the audio will still be on to record your screams.

There is going to be quite a few public taserings in Nimbin to pull you rabble back behind the white line, be warned.

UNDA ALONE

Mind you, the ultimate unda nightmare nearly trapped me the other day. We had our full force (FF) operating in Cullen and surrounds when the local uniforms (LU's) started handing out move on orders (MOO's) like they were going for a record. Later I discovered they were.

Suddenly the only people left on the street were unda's, RIs, UI's and a few lonely looking shopkeepers. I disappeared fast, which is a regular feature of unda life.

NIMBIN WINS PIPS

They didn't get the record that day but I can tell you five LU's are driving down to Sydney this month for the annual PIPS night. We all know Nimbin is one of the easiest places in NSW to improve your bust rate. Even the most hopeless LU's can get a dozen MOO's and RCS's (reasonable cause searches) in a Nimbin week. 'Reasonable cause' according to the new points system, makes Nimbin policing like taking candy from a baby.

Five points for a long beard (two for short), 5 for long hair and 5 for no hair or 'very, very short', 5 for 'hippy' clothes



and 5 for being in a known druggie zone which is all of Nimbin. And we only need a total of 10 for reasonable cause to be reasonable. No argument there.

STAMPING OUT JOBS

I'm off now on the LEAP tour with the renegade Stamper who's trying to convince our Big Bosses to legalize all drugs. Is he mad, we'll all be out of a job.

He was an unda for over twenty years in Seattle and then did the full rebirth. Couldn't handle watching kids getting beaten up outside a supermarket one day when he was deep unda, or so the story goes. I must admit he's making sense on the drugs thing and the oldtimers in the Force are very nervous and furious at their younger workmates, 'smartarse new-age LAGs (legalize all drugs) they call them. Lots of them are girls, and have they been getting a hard time. The hour before dawn is the darkest, as they say.

I'll be back for the BBQ which is coming up to the park to test how safe we feel in the 'Bin, and I'll be around for the new Tower and Towcom erection also, so stay sharp.

Australian tour by Dr Norm Stamper

The visit to Australia by a top US ex-cop this month could radically change the way our policy-makers look at drug prohibition strategies.

Norm Stamper is a 34-year veteran police officer who retired as Seattle's chief of police in 2000.

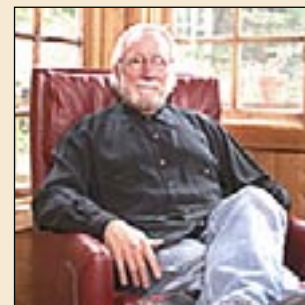
He is currently a speaker for Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (www.CopsSayLegalizeDrugs.com), a 10,000-member organization representing cops, judges, prosecutors, FBI/DEA agents, prison wardens and others who now want to legalize and regulate all drugs after witnessing horrors and injustices fighting on the front lines of the 'war on drugs'.

Dr Stamper argues, "Any law disobeyed by more than 100 million Americans, the number who've tried marijuana at least once, is bad public policy. As a 34-year police veteran, I've seen how marijuana prohibition breeds disrespect for the law, and contempt for those who enforce it."

In addition, he adds, "The major police corruption scandals of the last several decades have had their roots in drug enforcement."

Dr Stamper is a highly credible and articulate spokesperson, having earned his bachelor and master's degrees in criminal justice administration from San Diego State University and his Ph.D. in leadership and human behavior from United States International University. He is also a graduate of the FBI's National Executive Institute.

As a cop dedicated to protect and serve, Norm believes the war on drugs has done exactly the opposite



for people. "Think of this war's real casualties," he writes in his book, *Breaking Rank*, "Tens of thousands of otherwise innocent Americans incarcerated, many for 20 years, some for life; families ripped apart; drug traffickers and blameless bystanders shot dead on city streets; narcotics officers assassinated here and abroad, with prosecutors, judges, and elected officials in Latin America gunned down for their courageous stands against the cartels; and all those dollars spent on federal, state, and local cops, courts, prosecutors, prisons, probation, parole, and pee-in-the-bottle programs. Even federal aid to bribe distant nations to stop feeding our habit. The war on drugs is costing the United States more than 69 billion dollars each year.

"Let's make policy that helps, not handcuffs, those who suffer ill effects of marijuana or other drugs, a policy that crushes the illegal market — the cause of so much violence and harm to users and non-users alike."

Norm Stamper's capital-city tour will bring him to Brisbane from 19th to 22nd October. The tour is organised by the Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation, for more information see their website: www.adlrf.org.au

US leads the way in cannabis law reform

Liberalisation of the enforcement of American medical cannabis prohibition laws is bringing about sweeping changes to pot consumption there.

"How pot became legal" is the title of a feature story in *Fortune* magazine's September edition by senior editor Roger Parloff, which details the extent of a "cultural pendulum swing" on US attitudes to medical cannabis since the election of President Obama.

He writes: "A crucial policy reversal was quietly instituted by President Barack Obama in late February, when his attorney general, Eric Holder, confirmed at a press conference that he would no longer subject individuals, who were complying with state medical marijuana laws, to federal drug raids and prosecutions."

Before that, the federal government had periodically raided and prosecuted defendants who at least claimed to be complying with state medical marijuana laws. Such laws were contradicted and therefore preempted by federal drug laws, the Justice Department reasoned, and the U.S. Supreme Court upheld that position in 2005.

Since the new approach was signalled, 13 states now have laws that let residents use



The Greening of America

marijuana medicinally, typically to alleviate chronic pain (particularly nerve pain caused by diabetes, AIDS, and hepatitis); manage movement disorders and muscle spasticity (especially for multiple sclerosis patients); as an anti-nausea and anti-vomiting agent (for those, say, undergoing chemotherapy); and as an appetite stimulant for those with wasting diseases like AIDS and cancer.

Another 15 states are weighing legislation or ballot initiatives that could turn them into medical marijuana states by next year.

Dispensaries

The article goes on to detail what has happened in California:

"Like most medical marijuana states, California permits doctors to "recommend" marijuana use for patients who suffer from

specific serious diseases.

California's law then adds a catchall provision that lets doctors also approve marijuana use for "any other illness for which marijuana provides relief." Accordingly, California doctors are authorising patients to take marijuana to relieve such ailments as anxiety, headache, premenstrual syndrome, and trouble sleeping.

As a result, there are an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 medical marijuana patients in the state now, and the figure is rapidly growing. More astonishingly, there are about 700 medical marijuana dispensaries now operating in California, openly distributing the drug."

Tax advantage

The bottom line, however, may be more monetary than compassionate:

"In California, the fiscal crisis is so grave that the state has had to issue vendors more than \$1 billion in IOUs. Gross statewide medical cannabis sales are estimated to be approaching \$2.5 billion, generating taxes of around \$220 million."

With this fiscal incentive for governments, could we see pot becoming legal soon in cash-strapped NSW?

Read the *Fortune* article in full on-line at: http://money.cnn.com/2009/09/11/magazines/fortune/medical_marijuana_legalizing_fortune/index.htm?postversion=2009091413

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Repco Rally – the lessons learned

In praise of boulder rollers

by Graeme Dunstan

What a great flowering of Greenie people power the No Rally in the Valley campaign became! Victory to the people it was, and a totally appropriate way to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Battle of Terania Creek, the first ever successful defence of rainforest anywhere ever. The biggest turn-out was in Uki on Sunday 6th September where about 250 people lined both sides of Kyogle Road brandishing placards and chanting, more people than I have ever seen assembled in Uki ever! Great feeling. Great spirit. John Seed of the Rainforest Information Centre was moved to suggest that Repco be given some kind of good corporate citizenship award for the services rendered in reviving social action in the Tweed valley. As with the Terania battle, the proponents, the Rally organisers and their backers in government and the corporate media, are still in denial about the impact of our resistance and reviews and assessment reports are yet to come. But the plain truth is that the racing was stopped in Byrill Creek on the first day, a PR disaster for the Rally organisers, and the Rally in the Valley is as good as dead. Should I be wrong about this and a second Rally attempt be made in 2011, I say: bring it on! Our resistance can only grow, become more effective and make us collectively better prepared to deal with corrupt and unresponsive government as we face the challenges of climate change and peak oil. The very extent of the Rally transgression, from

Kingscliff through the Tweed valley to Kyogle and beyond to the Richmond Ranges made organising a coherent resistance a major challenge. Praise and gratitude to the people who put in the time and effort to build this resistance. Many they were and a few warrant special mention:

Katie Milne, Greens Councillor of Tweed Shire, held firm against personal vilification and tremendous pressure. The crowd at the last protest rally in Kingscliff on Sunday afternoon crooned to her: "We love you, Katie." Michael McNamara, deputy principal at Murwillumbah High, did admirable work researching, analysing and rebutting the Rally organisers claims and getting letters published in the press. Scott Sledge, the all round good guy in the white hat, and his partner Danielle who, with residences in both Kingscliff and Barkers Vale, were mighty in their mediation and leadership. Janeke, wrathful protector of Byrill Creek, was magnificent in her determination and relentless drive. If the sheer quantity of resistance placards and banners had been enough to stop the Rally, Janeke would have had 'em plastered in the pits. But above and beyond them all, my praise and admiration goes to the unnameable hero who rolled the boulders on Byrill Creek Road and caused the cancellation of the racing stage there.

The rock of community resistance! Direct action, civil disobedience and personal courage; when push comes to shove, this is what makes the difference. Everytime. Upon such a fulcrum, big changes can turn.

Thanks Repco

by Scott Sledge

Let's take a moment to reflect on what the World Rally Championship has brought us now that the dust has settled from the rally cars hooning around our gravel roads. (Yes, it was those damned rally cars that stirred up the dust storms in September!)

Apart from giving the good people of this region nightmares for nearly a year, the rally provided about seven months non-stop campaigning for the residents to try to minimise the damage or stop the event altogether.

The residents were never asked if we wanted this event: it was imposed on the region by the State government who seem to love nothing so much as the exercise of power.

It always felt like a David vs Goliath situation ... only worse: the rally had a long-established international organization headed by the infamous Max Mosely while we had to start from nothing with no resources except the passion of our people. The rally had all levels of government either in their pocket or afraid to oppose them, and the media was sickeningly sycophantic, with some notable exceptions. *The Tweed Shire Echo* and the *NGT* gave excellent coverage and printed many letters from residents expressing their opinions on the subject. Tony Johnston on the local ABC radio also gave the issue coverage and fair comment.

And finally the juggernaut ran over us and the press said when rape is inevitable don't struggle. But we did struggle, and the results were sometimes astonishing. Perhaps the strongest indicator of our success was the statements by rally car drivers that they would not be allowed to rally so close to peoples' houses in other countries, and certainly not near National Parks. The eventual winner said that he didn't want the rally to come back to an area where so many of the locals opposed it.

Opposition to the event was conveyed to the world

by the media, who often misrepresented what was happening. The rally was scheduled to desecrate the Byrill Creek wildlife sanctuary but was stopped there by local activists. A story went out that the rally cars were "pelted with rocks" by protestors, even though the drivers themselves said it didn't happen. The police kept the rock throwing allegation alive saying they were "investigating." Suddenly all residents who opposed the imposition of this dinosaur fossil fuel fest were violent protestors who put the drivers' lives at risk. The storm of vilification against protestors slowly subsided after the organisers admitted there was "never any evidence of rocks being thrown at Byrill Creek."

Will the Rally return? I hope not. We were successful in getting the "special legislation" amended to include a review following the first rally. We will continue to oppose the rally as an inappropriate "entertainment" in this time of crucial environmental challenge. We hope the review is comprehensive and unbiased. Will we find out who got the \$31 million promised by the rally organizers? Will the public ever learn how much of our tax money went into this elite "sporting" event?

Whatever the cost, the rally had one good outcome: the coming together of people who live in our region. Many of us have spent 30 years or more planting trees and looking after the magnificent biodiversity which makes this region so special. The rally highlighted a unique local culture that prizes such things. We have had an opportunity to redefine ourselves as guardians of the environment and local culture. We celebrated the 30 years' anniversary of saving the Terania rainforest. Together we resolve to protect the Rainbow Region for the future and generations to come. The rally provided the chance for us to remember who we are. For that we can thank Repco. And thank the rally for going away!

May peace prevail.

Searching for the Truth

by Bob Tissott

OK. Tell me straight. Do I look like the kind of person who would stretch the truth? The sort of penny-ante, rumourmonger who would take the merest shred of a fact and from that, manufacture a lurid green twin-set complete with matching handbag?

Well do I? Of course I don't! What use have I for a shred of a fact when a complete and total fabrication will suit my purposes even better?

And so it was, dear reader, on a pre-rally episode of the HEMP Hour, that the idea of frozen road-kill was first aired. That wee germ of an idea just floated in through the door without a grain of reality, was given voice by Michael and then warmly embraced and embellished by the Goddess (sic) and myself. Cheap, throw-away radio. Kyle would have been envious. Little did we realise that we'd lit the fuse of a global media bomb!

It smouldered unnoticed behind the ever increasing pro and anti-rally articles appearing in the local press until, on the first day of spring, it blossomed like a native orchid from the mouth of Supt. Michael Kenny, head of the Tweed-Byron Police. "Road kill has been put in freezers to throw on the road. This is a rumour at best..." Suddenly the media hounds were paying attention.

But it was left to Garry Connelly, chairman of Repco Rally Australia, to utter the immortal words that there was a "threat of a frozen koala being thrown on the track" and the deed was done! "Frozen Roadkill on World Rally," screamed the front page of the Northern Star and within a matter of hours the story was being carried by hundreds of online media outlets.

"Frozen Koalas may be thrown at rally cars," wrote Christine Kellett in the Brisbane Times and her story was reprinted verbatim in The Melbourne Age and dozens of other predominantly sporting websites.

What a media coup. Suddenly the protestors were being portrayed as koala-kidnapping sickos, scaling gum trees to collect their diabolical ammunition.

Blog sites around the world ran wild with the story (as blog sites do) with the Lonely Planet blog slipping from frozen koalas to frozen kangaroo tails; apparently the weapon of choice in a melee which occurred near Alice Springs in the '90s.

Well, now they were on a roll, and nothing was going to stop them. "Rock-throwing protestors stop WRC," the Byron News hysterically proclaimed. Rally cars "pelted with rocks," said the Star.

"The protestors involved in this rock-throwing incident have shown total disregard for the safety of competitors and officials involved in this stage of the event," Supt Kenny said.

And all of this based on nothing more than a spectator telling an official that another spectator had told them that they'd "seen someone throw something".

It was left to the Sydney Morning Herald to point out on the 10th September. "Car Rally Rock Attack Story False". The Herald went on to say "...race organisers have now conceded that the rock attack claims were based on a second-hand account from a spectator, and no cars were struck by rocks on Friday."

Naturally this goaded the Northern Star to respond two days later with "Organisers and police stand by claims", a story in which Garry Connelly reaffirmed the claim that Steven Shepherd's car was struck by a rock on Day 3 at Kyogle. But the original story concerned Byrill Creek on Day 1.

And the final rally tally, according to their web site, was 2 lizards, 4 snakes, 9 birds and 1 mammal (unidentified).

And the only question that remains to be answered is... what the hell are we going to do with the frozen wombat??

The HEMP Hour can be heard Fridays, 12-2pm on 102.3 Nim-FM.

Main photo: The protest in Uki

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Spring Arts

Springing forth (above): The opening crowd, (left): Lois Kelly, (right): "A Day in the Garden" (acrylic) by Daniel Cooper.

"It blows me away, what talent we have in our community," said Lismore Council's Lois Kelly, a Nimbin resident, when she opened the annual Spring Arts Exhibition at the Nimbin School of Arts Hall.

The Spring Arts Exhibition is in its 19th year, and shows no sign of flagging any time soon, with a vibrant array of work in diverse media on display throughout the hall.

Lois Kelly made special mention of the work by younger artists in the show, which include some well-

crafted woodwork pieces made by school students.

Artists and friends at the opening were entertained by Nimbin's Vocal Minority choir, led by Val Mace.

Live music will be played throughout the season, and the artists themselves are on hand, staffing the showing.

And if you see something you particularly like (and you will), most works are for sale.

The Spring Arts Exhibition is available for viewing 10am-4pm every day through to Sunday 18th October at the Nimbin School of Arts Hall.



Artists go wild

Australia's natural flora and fauna are undoubtedly amongst the most diverse and unique that there is on offer.

'The Wild Side' art exhibition at Blue Knob Hall Gallery is showcasing a slice of this diversity in a wide range of local and interstate wildlife artists.

Katherine Castle, local wildlife artist, has won many awards including the Tursa Art Award and was a finalist in the Tweed Naturally Art Award. Maxwell and Williams are releasing six of her bird paintings on mugs this month

to be sold across Australia and internationally.

Katherine says of her art, "I have a desire to recreate the natural wonders of our world and give people the opportunity to experience the beauty of wildlife close-up."

"My hope is to encourage people

to make a connection with wildlife, to be inspired by all its wonders and to create an environmental awareness through my art."

The exhibition also features Ballarat printmaker Vida Pearson's hand-coloured lino-cuts; studies of creatures large and small by photographer Len Martin; and a variety of works by Carole Barrett, Margie Rojo, Ian Fitzsimmons, Rikki Fisher and others.

The Wild Side exhibition was opened by Lorraine Vass (pictured) on 2nd October and runs until 29th November. It is open Thursday to Sundays, 10am-4pm at Blue Knob Hall Gallery and Café, 719 Blue Knob Road, just 10 minutes from Nimbin.



Top to bottom: Lorikeet Study 2 by Rikki Fisher, Greeting the Dawn by Katherine Castle, Yellow tails by Vida Pearson.



Lisa Gair at Nimbin Artists Gallery

Review by Stephen Wright

The idea of inviting artists to exhibit in a gallery space is an excellent one, and Nimbin Artist's Gallery (NAG) currently have extended an invitation to Lisa Gair to exhibit the ceramics in her "Alice" series.

A gallery is – or could be – among other things a place for dialogue, provocation and interaction, a place where ideas and opinions can collide and produce something unexpected, something previously hidden. Perhaps the new weekend Artist's Café, just started out the back of the NAG will provide a forum for artists of all kinds to haggle and argue over good coffee.

Lisa Gair's "Alice" series of ceramic sculptures are a welcome addition to the NAG. The subject of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland were a famous and fruitful source of imagery for Charles Blackman's own "Alice" series of paintings, and Lisa Gair's sculptures are both a homage to Blackman and a reworking of its alchemy. The problem with Carroll's book – if it's a problem at all – is that if one were to try and make sense of it by imposing some kind of symbolic equation on it, it would be a reasonable proof that one were just a little bit mad.

Alice is in many ways a mad book, a book of the unconscious if you like, and when reading it we can never be sure whether madness or whimsy is getting the upper hand. That's why it is so rich a source of imagery and offers possibilities for artists like Blackman and Gair, that Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, say, doesn't.

In this sense Lisa Gair's work is an acknowledgement of the idea that nobody goes mad without some sanity at work somewhere - to go mad from, as it were - and Lisa takes



the darkness of Blackman's work and Carroll's book, and runs with it all the way to a kind of ironic whimsy.

Whimsy without self-irony just looks like an Anne Geddes calendar, and Lisa seems no more convinced of the need for a total victory for whimsy than she is for the victory of something called sanity. Sanity, after all, is not a way of abandoning madness. To think you are really sane is a kind of madness in itself, and Lisa's sculpture is a turning of the madness of Carroll and the imagery of Blackman into something very grounded but still able to resonate with the madness within us that makes living and imagining possible.

The sculptural qualities of Lisa's work are exquisite and it's rare to see such finely-moulded work that doesn't look like it was made in a Chinese Imperial workshop 5,000 years ago.

Have a look at Lisa Gair's Alice series while you can. There is more of her work at her Studio 9 in the main street of Uki.



The Big Band at the End of the Universe (above) was the dance band for the highly entertaining 10-act Blue Moon Ball in Nimbin on 12th September.

The next Blue Moon Cabaret will be Saturday 7th November, featuring Elisabeth Lord and the Leigh James Ensemble, Somersault, Nick Penn, Mick Daley, Tuntable Falls Circus and more... Tickets are on sale now at Perceptio Bookshop, 6689-1766.

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