

Bridge dilemma

At the recent community forum at Nimbin many residents spoke of their strong desire to keep the old timber bridge open for recreational use, once the new concrete bridge is completed.

While I respect their passionate desire to see the old bridge turned into a viewing platform and pedestrian access I won't be supporting the retention of the bridge. Council simply can't afford it.

Due to poor decisions by past council's we have two major swimming pools costing \$30m in total and \$3m pa to run. A previous council spent \$4m to upgrade Skyline Road as part of Lismore's ring road system. A complete waste of funds.

Just after this council's election we had the worst recession in living memory and the ramifications are still being felt. Council has had to tighten its' belt and the Lake Pool and the Koala Child Care Centre have had to close. In that light to spend several hundreds of thousands of dollars maintaining an old worn out bridge just doesn't seem fair. As councillors we must balance the best way to achieve the needs of all ratepayers with limited funding available

I would love to keep the old bridge open but what do we cut to provide the funds and more importantly what future projects will be rejected so that the old bridge can be maintained? What would the community of Nimbin go without to save the old bridge? Decisions like this are never easy and councillors do what they can to spread the joy and the pain of financial decisions.

Council finances are tight with a short term deficit of \$6m due to incorporation of the Richmond/Tweed Library and recognition of the full value of council's assets. Councillors have

done two budget reviews. Efficiency in planning and asset management have occurred and more reviews of staff activities will occur under the new internal audit system.

Council cannot continue to rely on rates to deliver services. Council raises \$22m pa in rates yet runs a \$100m business. Time is ripe for constitutional recognition of local government. That way councils could access, for example GST revenue. Without access to revenue other than rates, councils will be doomed to reduce services and cut maintenance. Not a nice thought!

Cr David Yarnall
The Channon

Put the Koala Plan on exhibition

In 2002 best-selling Australian author, Bradley Trevor Greive wrote: "For our wildlife we are their greatest enemy and their only hope.

These wonderful creatures will not argue their case. They will not put up a fight. They will not beg for reprieve.

They will not say goodbye. They will not cry out. They will just vanish.

And after they are gone, there will be silence.

And there will be stillness. And there will be empty places.

And nothing you can say will change this.

Nothing you can do will bring them back.

Their future is entirely in our hands."

(Priceless – the Vanishing Beauty of a Fragile Planet)

In a last ditch effort to manage and recover their wild koalas, several North Coast councils are preparing draft comprehensive koala plans of management.

Lismore's draft plan, which covers the south-east including urban Lismore, was approved for public exhibition by Council at its November meeting.

Exhibition has been delayed because of a rescission motion, the veracity of which will be considered at Council's December meeting.

Informed community debate and commentary are dependent on exhibition of the draft plan.

The future of Lismore's wild koala populations is in our hands.

Pat Barnidge
Lismore

Do something about weeds

I am writing in response to Geoff Dawe's response to Triny Roe's letter regarding weeds (NGT November 11).

Triny's statement, "If there were no introduced plants (weeds) present, the native plants would step up to the job" is entirely correct, Mr Dawe. The 'introduced' plants are here because they are introduced, it is as simple as that. Anyone who has spent time regenerating the land, like yourself, be it organically or using chemicals, will understand that with constant following up of areas to remove / kill / control the 'weeds', after time the natives will take hold and out-compete the 'weeds'.

The weeds are only here because Captain Cook and his Cronies arrived along with 20 million other people, and we have managed to bring with us plants from every country imaginable, and these plants have arrived here with no natural competition to keep them in check and some have become rampant and seriously destructive to Australia's endemic Flora and Fauna.

Mr Dawe, I respect that you may be making great inroads of weed control / bush regeneration / habitat restoration organically, that is great, that is admirable. Unfortunately for every one of you, there are 100 persons sitting on their backsides spouting your words of wisdom to justify their right to do absolutely nothing about the rampant weed infestation in this area. Why do you not target these persons in your letters instead of Triny Roe?

Geoff, I sense we are on the same side, yet we are taking different roads to Rome. Yes, I use chemicals, so what? It is the lesser of

all evils compared to doing nothing, or hiring bulldozers / tractors / excavators to come in and plough down the bush in an attempt to get rid of the weeds.

I also do a massive amount of hand work – the chemical is just another tool for the job. And yes, weeds can work in my favour, sometimes I do let them grow, I just don't let them seed!

Injecting and killing of mature camphors / privets / celtis is far better than chopping them down or bulldozing them, as a dead tree standing is as important as a living one from a bird's perspective – this is by far a more gentle way to go. It is, as far as I'm concerned, 'best practice Bush Regeneration'.

The worst practice is Do Nothing, and unfortunately this is what most people seem to be doing, many of them relying on the much misinterpreted statement "weeds are our friends".

Omar Cat Hart
Wadeville

Say no to smart meters

Recently I have returned from a trip to Melbourne visiting friends and family. To my unpleasant surprise one friend was absent the day I arrived, he was having a CT scan for possible tumours. The surprise being that only a month before he was given a clean bill of health by his doctor. In his mid 50's my friend is also a reiki practitioner and lives a very healthy lifestyle. He had been experiencing constant headaches, sinus congestion, irritability and fatigue for several months.

The next day a TV current affair program reported a Melbourne family with young children were also suffering constant headaches, dizziness and other symptoms as were their neighbours in the same street. The blame was pointed at the newly installed Smart Meters, checking my friends house sure enough there was a Smart Meter on the wall just meters from his office and working space.

Searching the internet we soon found an enormous number of reports about Smart Meters which are a powerful radio/microwave transmitter that generate intense electromagnetic fields

Notices

Wanted to Rent – House

Local resident requires house within 20kms of Nimbin. Two bedrooms with mains power preferred, but anything considered. Reliable tenant with references. Experienced in rural home maintenance – solar systems, irrigation systems gardening etc. Phone 0458-229-199.

Wanted to Rent – Shop

Long term preferred. Phone 0459-739-397. Also wanted for shop – clothes, shoes, toys in good condition. Clean up for Christmas. Can pick up. Phone 0459-739-397.

Position Vacant

Nimbin Community Centre Administration Assistant, Part time 7 1/2 hours pw. Please contact Nicola Garnsey for the position description and selection criteria, which must be addressed in your application. Closes 21 December 2011. ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au or 6689-0000.

Situation Wanted

Child minder O/N. Great rates, phone 0459-739-397.

Horse Riding Clinic

The postponed one-day riding clinic with John Chatterton is now on Sunday 18th December, 8am start at Nimbin Showgrounds. \$125/day, fence sitters \$30/day, \$60 non-refundable deposit to secure a place, numbers are limited. Contact Laurelli 6689-1119 / 0447-891-119.

For Sale

Moo Poo. Delivered to Nimbin surrounds, from \$5 bag. Phone 0459-739-397.

160 times more powerful than a mobile phone when it transmits your power usage to the billing company as frequently as every half hour.

The reported health complaints and increased billing complaints were extensive in all the countries where they are installed. In some countries they are banned, in others entire cities have placed a moratorium on their installation.

So where does this leave my friend, an international power company seeking more revenue has installed a dangerous transmission device on his wall which is causing illness to the occupants and possibly his neighbours as well?

In the long term it will cause tumours.

With the recent sale of NSW state owned power assets to Origin Energy who have recently announced plans to install these same Smart Meters throughout NSW, you will soon be at risk from Electromagnetic Radiation exposure in your own home like those in Melbourne. Not only do we have multinational gas companies threatening

the health and lifestyle of rural residents but now the corporate power companies are about to severely impact the health, wealth and security in everyone's home, both city and rural.

Say no to smart meters now. Before it is too late.

N. Howe
Lismore

Woodford Folk Festival & Santos Mining

I cannot attend this year's festival; I cannot dance on the good land that is the beautiful Woodford site knowing that the dirty money of Santos is involved.

Are you not aware of the destruction of towns, communities, households, health, safe water, clean air, THE BARRIER REEF for crying out loud, caused by the unregulated actions of companies such as Santos? You call yourself a community arts festival and yet have partnered with a company that invests in environmental and community destruction.

I can hardly believe that your palm has been greased so readily in an attempt by Santos to improve their

Letters to the Editor

NGT welcomes letters by email or post by deadline, the last Wednesday of the month. Letters longer than 300 words may be cut. Letters already published in other papers will usually not be considered. Please include full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not necessarily those of NGT.



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sordid corporate image, whilst you demonstrate zero integrity for what? Money. Where is this place of 'optimism and nurturing' (see your website) that you intend to create, when the money behind your creation is born of environmental and community destruction. Nothing can justify getting into bed with such destructive corpocracy.

The power of the mighty dollar. This is a very sad, depressing, outcome. Dirty money from disconnected industrial gangsters who will buy/destroy anyone and anything to make a profit, with no respect or empathy. You have clearly been bought. Perhaps they've assured you they're not going to drill on your site? Or perhaps it's just a matter of time before they do.

Please change your mind Woodford, or is the taste of Santos money, however soiled, too alluring?

Jennifer Martin
Nimbin

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

Politicians and mining companies keep banging on about mining creating jobs and making us all rich, when in fact, more Australian jobs will be taken away by the mining industry.

They say Coal seam gas mining "works well with farmers". How can it, when it will over the next thirty years, dramatically reduce the sweet underground water, which farmers need to grow food into the future.

What happens when the salty, contaminated 'produced' water is released, or escapes on to the land and into the creeks and rivers including the the Murray-Darling. What happens when it floods and flows into the sea?

How can farmers sell their

properties, surrounded by flaring gas wells lighting up the land and make a living elsewhere when they can't sell?

And what happens to the fishermen? How can they make a living from contaminated waters like Gladstone? They too will be losing their jobs, the fish have cancer, and their children can no longer swim in the once clean water.

And what about the tourism industry and its operators? It is the largest, most profitable business so far, in Australia. Yet it too will diminish as the gas wells creep into the landscape and environment, destroying its biodiversity along the way. Noone wants to see dead and dying fish, dead dugongs, dead turtles, bellies full of toxic waste.

Then there are the renewable energy jobs. Politicians seem to have forgotten about all those jobs that could be created now, using the sun and the wind. But it's all too hard when it can be sooooo easy to make a quick dollar in coal seam gas now and to carry on regardless with our over indulgent, comfort-driven lifestyle at the expense of future life on this planet.

The mining industry may create a few high paying jobs for a few but will destroy the lives of others, now and into the future. The fly-in, fly-out tent city mentality of mining companies will only serve a few and will only bring misery to local towns, fracturing their communities and all for jobs, jobs jobs, or so they say.

Our governments were not using reason, but treason, when they gave Australia away to the mining companies.

Coralie Summerton
Tuntable

Casino's CSG-friendly Council

I attended a meeting in Casino on 8th November to raise awareness of the coal seam gas (CSG) industry and what potential ill effects this could have on the Richmond Valley.

There were many guest speakers, who spoke with a passion on the gas, they explained how and why they were against it and why it is so important to them that we here in the Richmond Valley join the fight. We were amazed at just how far reaching and how long term the problems with CSG can stretch and last for.

A man who had travelled for over 5 hours got up to speak on what the CSG was like to live in. A frightening story of nosebleeds, sore itching, watery eyes, breathing problems, asthma. These symptoms were not everyday events prior to the CSG but now are happening more and more. These health problems are affecting people living 10 kilometres away. He spoke of the sky in the distance and how there was a murky brown haze that sat above the land over the gas site and when the wind blew that same murky brown air blew through his home and town. No government body can explain the murky brown air and they will NOT test it either.

The stories of the people who have to live closer, who have said yes to the "gas man" when he called are full of desperate attempts to get peace from the constant noise of heavy machinery, the dust, the traffic, the lights, the smell..... These people will never be able to sell their land it is now worthless. To escape means walking away from everything.

Richmond Valley Council is the only council for this region NOT to sign to the moratorium on CSG. Stuart George our deputy mayor, is now working for Metgasco. This is the same Stuart George who is one of our representatives for Rous Water. He also threw his hat in to be selected as the National Party representative for our recent by-election. My question to him is how long has he been working for Metgasco, and has this been

a conflict of interest?

I along with many other residents are now questioning this close association with Metgasco. Is this the reason WHY many of the motions and decisions over the last few months that have been discussed at council meetings and at Rous Water, have been voted against by both our Mayor Col Sullivan and his deputy Stuart George?

This is our water, our land, our air. We deserve to be listened to. It only takes one mistake!

Jill Lyons
Casino

Block the gate

Opposition to the Coal Seam Gas threat to our clean water has been strong in this area.

Campaigns have been well attended by a wide cross-section of the community and the community's voice has been expressed loud and clear. We don't want it.

As could nearly and unfortunately be anticipated, (beyond the lip-service and stalling of politics) our voice has fallen on deaf ears.

Under duress, we are now called upon to respond on the next level.

We must now stand up and use our physical, individual presence to BLOCK THE GATE.

Direct action is a tradition on the north coast and the people are called upon to use their power to stop something that we believe is wrong for us and our children in the long run.

There is a call out from the Lock The Gate Alliance, through a letter to communities from President Drew Hutton that has come through our local focus body, the Northern Rivers Guardians for people to get active in a real sense now.

If you would like clean free water for your children, you are urged to now contact your local Environment Centre, Action Group, Lock the Gate or Northern Rivers Guardians and leave your contact details - particularly a phone number to join a local phone tree, should a blockade of a site or road commence soon near you, and you can be notified to be involved and pass the message onto neighbours.

People power has been proven to work time after

time. It is a necessity if we are to stop the short-sighted greed we are faced with.

Come and join the fun on the front line and don't be afraid to express your freedom and love of OUR system!

Water - more precious than anything (...besides air...)

Binnah Pownell,
Nimbin

Antimony threat

Do we want poisonous heavy metal pollution in our waterways, threatening fish stocks and town drinking water?

The effect of antimony mining has already shown itself in the last six months, with serious contamination of the Macleay and its tributaries, from Hillgrove to the ocean. Now there is a huge new open-cut Chinese antimony mine ready to be approved for the pristine Nymboida River.

Labour has decided (after years of indifference) to study the problem. The Nationals have taken a "balanced" stance where we can perhaps have clean drinking water most of the time, and poison ourselves when accidents inevitably happen with the storage ponds. The Greens instead have already put a motion to the NSW Upper House to deny approval for the mine, at least until a Land Use Plan has been developed for the Mid North Coast. The Liberal-National Coalition opposed this motion, and indeed the State Government says that such a plan is a "low priority".

So we are destined to see a hole, measuring 1.5 kilometre by 0.5 kilometre, opened up to extract and process a poisonous combination of sulphur and heavy metals, with a tailings dam perhaps

many times the size of the Hillgrove version that recently overflowed 900,000 litres into the river system.

This new one ultimately connects through the Nymboida to the Shannon Creek and Karangi dams and thence to the taps of Coffs residents.

A clean water supply is a privilege in this country. It's hard to see an issue that is more important this time around. For all the talk about the "radical" Greens, safeguarding our water seems a whole lot more rational than pussy-footing with "development" that could be very, very expensive to our river, our fish stocks, our environment and our very health.

(Dr) Paul Bryce
Bellingen

A Green Revolution?

As the presently major parties become increasingly deaf to the policies which their electorate wants, there is a great opportunity for the Greens to rise to mainstream status.

Take the three main issues of the day - refugees, the live cattle exports and, at state level, coal seam gas. Both major parties are blatantly ignoring what the polls demonstrate - that we want onshore not offshore "processing"; that we demand exported cattle be stunned before killing and that we are vehemently opposed to coal seam gas despoiling the earth and polluting our irreplaceable aquifers. Only the Greens espouse these policies.

This breakdown of communication is happening because the ALP and LNP do not have effective processes with which to translate community opinion

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Please limit contributions to 600 words or less.

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Vast experience with Multiple Occupancy Communities

into party policy. The ALP machine is so atrophied that they are trialling US-style "primaries" which play into the hands of the richest candidates, while the Coalition parties have never had effective structures to transmit their grass roots' views to the party hierarchy.

Consequently both parties increasingly rely for their policies on focus groups in a vain attempt to desecrate public opinion. But an analysis of the methodology used to select their members and analyse their views shows that these groups are not representative or reflective of the opinion polls which, while they too have significant methodological flaws, are less error-prone.

In his Andrew Ollie Media Lecture, veteran journalist Laurie Oakes makes predictions on the future of the Australian mass media which could operate to the Greens' advantage. Firstly, the rise of the Internet media will continue to weaken the large media organisations' oligopoly of information and secondly, "spin" masters and public relations hacks will become "even more pervasive and powerful" while "Bloggers will start to usurp the role of determining what is news."

The technology of the Internet affords the Greens a more level playing field than ever before where money does not necessarily buy dominance. As this trend grows so may the Greens wane and the majors and their spin doctors wane.

The Greens would be foolish to ignore this opportunity to seize the initiative.

Graham Irvine
Nimbin

More protection for children

The Senate passed the Family Law Legislation Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2011 in November. The hope is that this will translate into reforms to better protect children from family violence and child abuse in Family Law matters.

Family violence and the fear of family violence remains prevalent in our community and it is unacceptable that this continues to affect our

families and our children.

The amendments to the family violence measures aims to give greater weight to the protection of children from harm when determining what is 'in a child's best interests', and better define what a court can consider in relation to family violence orders as part of considering a child's best interests.

A comprehensive risk assessment framework for family violence and child abuse will be developed across all disciplines so that all of us working with children and families in post separation service are able to screen for family violence and other risk factors.

This will mean solicitors, psychologists, social scientists etc. may need to have similar training and understanding. A key aim must be to create a shared understanding across all disciplines in the family law system about the predictors of risks to safety, how they can be better identified and how to effectively respond to these risks.

These are significant reforms which we hope will increase protection for children and families in our community.

Julie Leete
Area Manager, Interrelate

Social Inclusion

Research by the Mental Health Co-ordinating Council (MHCC) states that 'for people living with a mental illness, social inclusion plays a central role in recovery.' The Federal government is putting more money into services for people with mental illness. Services want to help people find a meaningful place within society in order to aid their recovery.

However, people with mental health issues often use illegal drugs to alleviate their symptoms. They choose to self-medicate. The Drug Laws cause them to feel like they are outside of and excluded from the rest of society. They don't want to go to services where they might feel judged or at risk of being arrested or of being attacked by sniffer dogs.

MHCC suggests that social support and social relationships are important

for good mental health. For those recovering from mental illness, re-connecting with society promotes recovery. However feeling paranoid of police can keep you indoors and isolated. Drug Law reform is important for the recovery process of those who medicate themselves with illegal drugs.

How many people with mental health issues do end up in jail for drug offences? A great many. How can we help them? We can accept that a gentler, more supportive attitude to drug use would aid recovery for those of us who are suffering with mental illness.

Beth Shelley
Booerie Creek

Dominant Drug Culture

It's ironic that Nimbin, the alternative society's flagship village, and the *Nimbin GoodTimes* (NGT), the "Alternative Journal of the Rainbow Region", when confronted with their own hometown dissenting voice, provokes a concerted and vituperative response from the town's dominant drug culture status quo. What is it about heretical ideas that challenge power structures, if not the fear of losing credibility and power?

Adrian Williamson, a long time village resident with a track record of fighting the good fight for environmental and social justice, has for the last year or so been publicly critical, via the letters page of the NGT, of the manifesto, motivation and methods of Michael Balderstone in promoting Nimbin as a mecca of unregulated cannabis use and distribution. Adrian's last such letter (October NGT), edited unacknowledged to the extent of robbing it of much of its point, has been met with a full tilt reprisal combining condescension, vilification and silly politics.

Like all people who play political games, and who love and depend on media attention, Michael is subject to criticism pertaining to his public pronouncements. In much the same way as is Tony Abbott, John Howard, Paul Keating, Julia Gillard et al. Their statements (and that of the comments of Michael that Adrian challenged) are all of a political nature, in the

public arena, and they have to wear responsibility for and accept criticism of them. You can check back through Adrian's published letters and you'll see that there are consistent points he makes and are all in response to Michael's pronouncements.

It's not easy going against all the spin-bemused majority and the grubby politics and gossip of the small town main drag. It takes courage and the power of insight to poke your head above the ramparts and call a situation that is created, encouraged and profited from by people who get to go home at night to their rural retreats and ignore the ongoing turmoil in the town centre. But the reality is there, and quite clear to see if only you're prepared to look: the greed, self interest, lack of ethics, the violence, grief and despair, and an emotionally exhausting landscape for the residents of the village. The Emperor's clothes, when examined closely, are decidedly lacking the finery of the claims presumed in its favour indicate.

Of the barrage of letters directed at Adrian, first salvo off the rank was from an anonymous (why would anyone neglect to own up to their views, especially when so supportive of the status quo?) and pompous type, sermonising Adrian to task and reverting to the old ultra-right wing "love it or leave it" argument (ie either shut up, join the majority or shift out of Nimbin). Sadly we aren't able to ascertain who was in Nimbin first (Adrian or Mr Name Withheld) but that really isn't important. This was a rap on the knuckles for Adrian for being uppity and daring to challenge what is obviously seen by the toady tone of the writer as the true hierarchy.

This was followed by a bit of a meandering lecture on how things change (eg Byron and Bellingen), then a rather more than generous (and wholly undeserving) attribution of credit for changes in legal processes to Nimbin HEMP. Ho hum! Adrian's criticism of the HEMPen pronouncements were dismissed as "continuing personal attacks", "a bee in his little bonnet", "carping on", "personal attacks"

(again), and then finally a "simplistic narrow-minded blame game". Thank you Mr Name Withheld.

This was followed by letters from the three presenters of the HEMP radio show on Nim-FM. First up was Bob Tissot who, to his credit, dealt simply with issues, made some suggestions, and refrained from sticking the boot into Adrian. Next, Michael Balderstone's defence was a typical all-over-the-place discourse on inhaling plastic bong fumes, dodgy quotes from the Buddha, the fact that the press are being sympathetic when they seek him out, and then telling Adrian to come down and talk with him to keep from "getting the facts wrong". Adrian's letter was characterised as "vitriolic", probably a similar response Inspector Lyons feels about Michael's taunting smart-arse mentions of him in the "sympathetic" press outings.

But the big gob-smacking surprise has to be the third letter, this time from Gerald Taylor, a patronising, sneering, untrue personal attack that should never have been printed. Bob Dooley, the NGT Editor, who has depicted Adrian's letters as a continuing personal attack and a "relentless hammering of one person" rather than fair comment, and defends his editing processes as a "conservative approach ... to vilification" in print, obviously means some letter writers are more conservatively equal than others.

Not only is his (Taylor's) claim that Adrian was guilty of embezzlement downright inaccurate and wrong (and as a consequence possibly defamatory), but is a nasty, vitriol-loaded, personal shot that was irrelevant to the issue at hand and is obviously driven by a need to win points at all costs by crushing those who challenge the local hegemony. Not only that, much of the rest of the letter is either wishful thinking

or hypocritical references to Adrian's statements of being "inaccurate ... hypocritical rants", "tiresome ... carping", "slagging", and of "hate for the man". By their words you shall know them.

I believe Michael must accept a large part of the blame for what now manifests on Cullen Street. Back about 1997, Michael began ringing a bell to alert dealers whenever the police were about and he really hasn't changed tack significantly since then, continuing to run interference between the dealers and the police whilst continuing to uncritically boost cannabis. Any overall movement toward a fundamental change in the drug laws has stalled pretty much completely and, if anything, gone into reverse. That's not exclusively Michael's fault, but his policy outpourings consist of a pile of tired old slogans and really silly irrational stuff that's good only for rallying the troops of self-interest. Think, who else but the town traffickers, the bong shops and the tourist bus impresarios benefit from the HEMP Embassy's strident presence in local politics?

Issues like this should have been right up Nimbin's alley and could have resulted in the development of truly creative and visionary solutions, which would have justified Nimbin's claims to being at the cutting edge of change. But like Mr. Name Withheld says, all that idealistic Aquarian stuff is now long gone and despite the efforts of a few devoted souls (Katie Cawcutt and Benny Zable, take a bow), unlikely to come back! As the social critic Eric Hoffer (a Woody Guthrie-like intellectual social critic of a generation back) pointed out, and it still rings true: "Every great cause begins as a movement, becomes a business, and then turns into a racket".

Bob Hopkins,
Founding editor NGT

Apology

Adrian Williamson has never been charged with embezzlement, as was implied in a letter from Gerald Taylor in last month's print edition of the NGT. We apologise to Adrian for any hurt this may have caused him.

Nimbin HEMP Embassy

NIMBIN CANNABIS LAW REFORM RALLY and **MardiGrass**, the annual gathering on the first weekend of MAY.

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...and business arising

Howzat!

A hat trick of letters getting stuck into me (NGT Nov 11) from the Holy Triumvirate (I kid you not, that's what they call themselves... check Nim-FM's website). The president (Tissort), the mayor (Balderstone) and the goddess (Taylor). I won't include the no ball from 'name withheld'.

I appear to have rattled their cage by writing a couple of letters questioning Balderstone's authority to speak on my and others' behalf as well as his failure as President of the Hemp Party to legalise the recreational use of marijuana. Readers can obviously make what they want from the response.

Yes, sometime last century the small estate agency I ran was randomly audited. This audit showed up discrepancies in my Trust A/c. The shortfall was immediately rectified by transferring funds from my business a/c. Trust account law is rightfully very strict. The Real Estate Licensing Board considered I may not be 'a fit and proper' person to hold a real estate license. I agreed. I hated the job, I was depressed and drinking too much. I had no one to blame but myself and I was ashamed and embarrassed. At no time was embezzlement (larceny) mentioned. There were no charges, court hearings, fines... nothing. It was treated as a Dept procedural matter. My 'crime' was sloppy bookkeeping.

Even if I had embezzled, stolen, plundered or pillaged, it is beyond me how this somehow abrogates my right to question the status quo, as Taylor suggests. Hey, since you're throwing mud, let me help. I am guilty and have been charged with the following... DUI, cultivation, possession, utensils, resisting arrest (anti-apartheid rally 1972 Springboks tour), whacking John Kerr with an egg at ANU 1975 (weekend

detention!) and numerous charges (and more weekend detention!) at Mt. Nardi logging protests. Guess I am just a bad guy!

Funny thing is, the real estate debacle resulted in a very positive outcome for me personally. I gave up drinking and smoking dope and discovered something I actually enjoy and appear to be good at... I'm a woodworker! For 12 years I have run a thriving little business making quality outdoor furniture from recycled wood in a workshop run entirely on solar power. I sleep well at night... how do you Gerald, with all your bile and angst?

I have had a couple of cordial conversations with Michael and I hope it helps him to understand where I am coming from. I ask readers to check my two and a half letters in the NGT archives. You will find I have questioned Michael's strategies and motives, but not him personally. In my first letter I wrote he was genuine of heart.

I will use my wood working skills to build that box Taylor wants me to get back into, but alas Gerald, I will use it to stand on and continue my campaign of pointing out the inconsistencies and failures of Michael's odd polemic. There they were again last week running around Canberra with the big joint to no avail, whilst at the upcoming National Labor conference gay marriage and uranium sales to India are on the agenda... sadly no marijuana debate.

The box will also have the advantage of lifting me above the gutter, where you, Gerald, choose to dwell.

I would like to thank all the people who have offered support during this little dust up. Thank you. Thank you.

Adrian Williamson
Nimbin

No Censorship

I think that Gerald Taylor's

letter in the last edition of the NGT deserves a comment. Although I generally agree with his comments regarding the long running Adrian Williamson saga, I do take exception to his final paragraph. For those readers who may have missed it, I quote---

"And while I'm at it; Bob Dooley, you should be ashamed of yourself for giving the fool so much oxygen... you just like to see a good old barney played out in your otherwise pretty good rag. You should know better and you can do better."

Well, really! Whether Bob thinks that Adrian Williamson is a genius or an absolute cretin, he does NOT have the right to withhold letters from the NGT. He only has the right to edit letters for length. Otherwise, you are asking him to be a public censor, which he should not, and indeed must not be.

I think you owe Bob an apology and hope to see it in the next edition of the NGT.

Ossie Osborne,
Nimbin

Broadband Blues

I thought I was alone with my broadband problems, but it seems after talking with friends, that many others in the Nimbin area are also having frustrating experiences with broadband connectivity, regardless of which ISP they are with.

I regularly (every day) experience widely varying download speeds from extremely slow to average, and worse, have numerous drop-outs where there is no ADSL connection at all. My ISP (dodo) has been very helpful in sending out technicians, who pulled connectors out of the water (in the Telstra pits) on two separate occasions, and reported a damaged cable needed replacing. Months have gone by and nothing has been done.

Others have told me of

similar slow speeds and regular drop-outs, all becoming worse in the last two to three months? Significantly they live in widely separate areas of Nimbin.

Yes we have done isolation tests, changed modems, changed splitter filters, and used different computers, some with LAN connection some with Wireless.

Frustrated with not getting a service I'm paying for, I wrote to our Hon. Federal Member Justine Elliot, her office contacted me, "shock horror we had no idea about this situation, please get others with similar problems to contact us asap so we can lodge a formal complaint with the Minister!" Some folks in the Nimbin area may live in Page, your member is Janelle Saffin, you may still write to Justine though.

So if you are experiencing broadband (cable ADSL) drop-outs and regular, very slow download speeds, PLEASE contact Justine Elliot, her email address is: Justine.Elliot.MP@aph.gov.au and make her aware of your specific problem.

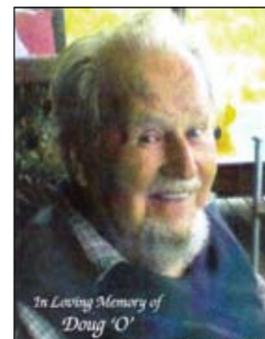
Many people in Nimbin rely on broadband for business, education and other important activities, having an unreliable, antiquated broadband infrastructure is simply not acceptable. I seem to remember a lot of hype and election promises regarding the NBN (National Broadband Network) prior to the last federal election. How is this ever going to happen when Telstra cannot even maintain the existing prehistoric cabling and/or exchange?

I'm now taking photos of the numerous "dodgy" cabling and connectors, strung over trees and taped to barb-wire fences, which I will send to Justine Elliot's office. The "powers that be" cannot fix problems if they are not aware of them.

Rob Harle,
Nimbin

Douglas Charles Ogilvie 09/02/1930 – 21/11/2011

After enjoying a full and very exciting life, Doug sailed away on 21st November on his next great adventure... He worked as a school teacher in Lismore/Alstonville area before accepting the head master position at Tweed Heads High School. He moved to Tweed, then out to Bilambil, where he spent the rest of his time.



Doug finished his working days lecturing at St Lucia University in Brisbane. Once retired he wrote books about his passion for the Gnostic philosophy. Doug will be greatly missed by his family and friends. "Thanks for coming and thanks for the great memories".

Alan Keith Ross aka Sag Al, Stan Mundo, Big Fella 21/12/1955 – 23/11/2011



In memoriam of an old friend, and a dear member of the community.

"Don't throw away your dreams, just throw them in the garden because that's where they'll grow."

– Quoted by A.K. Ross,
20/11/2011

Public Exhibition of Draft Lismore Local Environmental Plan 2011

Council undertook the public exhibition of the Draft Lismore Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010 from the end of April 2010 to the end of August 2010. After considering submissions to the 2010 Draft LEP, Council resolved to make a number of amendments to the exhibited document. Council also resolved to re-exhibit the revised plan as the Draft Lismore LEP 2011 (Draft LEP 2011).

In accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and associated Regulation, notice is hereby given that the Draft Lismore Local Environmental Plan 2011 is on public exhibition between 17 November, 2011 and 30 January, 2012.

The Draft LEP 2011 and accompanying documents are on exhibition and available for inspection between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday during the exhibition period at: Council's Corporate Centre, 43 Oliver Avenue, Goonellabah; Council's CBD Centre, 55 Magellan Street, Lismore; and Nimbin Visitor Information Centre, Cullen Street, Nimbin.

The Draft LEP 2011 and supporting documents are also available on Council's website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au

The Draft LEP 2011 will apply to the whole of the Local Government Area (LGA). It has been prepared in accordance with the NSW State Government requirement that all councils prepare one LEP based on the Standard LEP Instrument. The Standard LEP Instrument, State Environmental Planning Policies, the North Coast Regional Environmental Plan and the Section 117 Directions applying to the Lismore LGA substantially govern the content and operation of the Draft LEP 2011. Council has had regard to these documents when preparing the Draft LEP 2011 and they are also available for perusal during the public exhibition period at the places listed above.

Public Submissions

Any person may make a submission relating to the Draft LEP 2011 during the exhibition period. Submissions should have regard to relevant State Environmental Planning Policies, the NSW Coastal Policy, the North Coast Regional Environmental Plan and current Section 117 Directions.

All submissions must be in writing and addressed to: The General Manager, Lismore City Council, PO Box 23A, LISMORE NSW 2480.

Submissions close: Close of Business Monday, 30 January, 2012

Enquiries: Council's Customer Contact Centre on 1300 87 83 87.



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