

The ethics of sponsorship - SANTOS AT WOODFORD

by Wendy Sarkissian

It was hot under the lights, exposed to the scrutiny of maybe five hundred Woodford Festival patrons as a member of a five-person taskforce charged with responsibility for resolving the "sponsorship crisis" facing the Queensland Folk Federation (QFF), Woodford and The Dreaming.

This year marks the first time the Dreaming festival has been staged as part of the larger Woodford event. Many Nimbin folk will know about (and have participated in) the annual Woodford Folk Festival (27th December to 1st January). More than 2000 performers and 580 events are programmed and the seventh festival of The Dreaming is in a special precinct, featuring Indigenous music, theatre, talks and galleries.

On Wednesday, I delighted in the spirit and passion of the rockin' band of 70-year-old indefatigable Canadian Aboriginal singer and activist, Buffy Sainte-Marie. My hero!

The sponsorship crisis

It's all about sponsorship accepted by the QFF (\$75,000 annually for three years) from mining giant and coal seam gas explorer, Santos, twenty months ago, for The Dreaming festival. Because of floods and decreased government funding, The Dreaming was not held as usual in June; instead, it's part of the 2011-12 Woodford Folk Festival. The Santos funding was only for The Dreaming.

A Facebook campaign, begun in November 2011, called for a boycott of Woodford for accepting money from Santos.

The QFF organisers were confronted by a dilemma. On the one hand, they acknowledged that coal seam gas development is one of the major environmental issues of this time. Many QFF organisers and members are actively involved in the Lock the Gate Alliance, which originated at the Woodford Folk Festival. On the other hand, QFF argued that acknowledging a financial contribution for a good purpose is not necessarily a statement of support or advocacy. They said, "We believe that to turn our back on this commitment is unprincipled and could send a message that Indigenous projects should be morally obliged to refuse community funding from mining companies."

They argued that sponsorship deal was negotiated in good faith, with Santos requesting no advertising, other than simple acknowledgement. Twenty months ago, I believe, nobody in the Arts community could have predicted

the horrific social, economic and environmental consequences of the operations of coal seam mining companies throughout Australia (especially the 'cowboys'). I certainly did not see what was coming.

Responding to the passionate and emotional campaign, with some calling for a boycott of this year's Festival, QFF froze the funds and appointed a task force to consider the Santos funding and develop guidelines for funding of future QFF festivals, including The Dreaming.

The task force

Five people agreed to help resolve the dilemma. With them, I sat under the hot lights on Tuesday night:

- **Noel Blair**, spokesperson for the Jinibara Nation, custodians of Woodfordia;
- **Professor Ian Lowe**, president of the Australia Conservation Foundation, and author;
- **Drew Hutton**, president of Lock the Gate Alliance and spokesperson for Friends of the Earth;
- **Michael Williams**, Indigenous educator, QFF committee member and chair of The Dreaming; and
- **Wendy Sarkissian (me)**, environmentalist, community planner, author and activist.

Ian Lowe explained that our task force would deliver a report by June 2012. There will be a dedicated website, which will accept email correspondence until end of January 2012 for consideration by the task force. The session was videotaped and will be transcribed. We are committed to a transparent and ethical process.

The discussion from the floor

As a veteran of community meetings, I was prepared for almost anything. I know that many of my neighbours are deeply concerned and I could see some of them in the front row wearing "Don't frack with me" t-shirts.

The comments from the floor touched me deeply and echoed the Facebook comment of Cinta Graves:

"Spare a thought for the many businesses and people that rely on Woodford for income - is it really worth boycotting Woodford and all it stands for because of a sponsor? Much of the information I'm reading here is misguided - let's not jump on a political bandwagon without really considering the consequences. You will hurt many, many more than Santos."

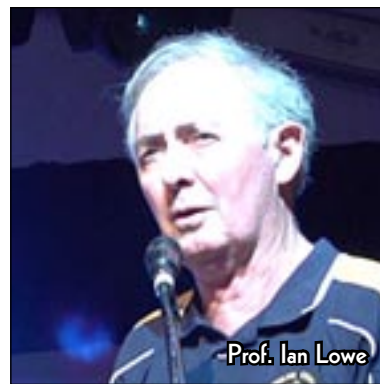
And some echoed Uncleduvy Jester on Facebook: "It would be nice if Woodford made a secondary response to all the disheartened woodfolk out there. It would be a



Noel Blair, Jinibara custodian



Drew Hutton



Prof. Ian Lowe

real shame if this caused the demise of the festivals spirit."

Others were adamant that Santos was no better than any of the other CSG mining companies. Daniel Robins, a passionate and eloquent teacher from Walgett, spoke of the desecration in his region. He said, "The counterculture needs to take a stand. The decision we come to will be heard all over Australia. We need to share the story."

A man who works in Indigenous media argued that he could not support the boycott. Finding the whole situation 'harrowing', he reminded us that there is no part of this land that is not sacred. Further, as white communities confront the invasion and destruction of their land by coal seam gas companies, "We are all in the same boat." Now white people are experiencing what it's like to have your land taken away and your livelihood and sacred places destroyed. However, he argued, Indigenous cultural events are always struggling for money. "Give us funding choices; give us alternative dollar-for-dollar sustainable funding," he begged.

Further, he reminded us that nobody consulted the traditional owners about the Facebook 'boycott'. It may have cost more

in lost ticket sales than the sponsorship deal is worth. His plea to the audience and the task force was: "Inform yourselves about the reality of funding of Indigenous cultural events in this country. Heal the divisions. Consult with the relevant elders."

Is that Peggy Seeger?

The next speaker, an elegant grey-haired woman, turned out to be Peggy Seeger. Speaking calmly, she revealed that she'd been lobbied to boycott Woodford. She had made up her own mind: she chose to come and to perform. But in no way did she underestimate the seriousness of the situation. In her concert the next day, she read the poem she'd written overnight, "Santos at Woodford". She reminded us that she'd been campaigning against many forms of injustice for 55 of her 76 years. (see poem P.15 opposite)

Other speakers from the floor

A man from the Scenic Rim was author of the first Facebook post. He did not call for a boycott. Rather, he reminded us that QFF is a community, connected with the Earth and The Dreaming. What we all face is a massive ethical dilemma. The notion that Santos has been given a "social licence" is "almost irreconcilable to a lot of people".

Another had a simple solution. For him it was "a no brainer, a mistake; Woodford should walk away from it." By contrast, Damian argued that the mining industry "puts nothing back." However, Santos has asked for no advertising; it wants no say in how the festival is run." Another man echoed other feelings when he asked "Where will you draw the line regarding the hole in the Festival budget?" Reminding us of the power of this community, another man (there were many male speakers!) announced: "There are so many people here. We are in a powerful place right now." We should affirm our "interconnectedness with our Earth: do no harm."

Building on that view, another speaker challenged us to seek out alternative channels for funding: "What are the funding options? Can we create them as a community?"

A woman from Maleny echoed the call to community: "Woodford is a blueprint for the future. We need to hear and learn from our mistakes and do better and go further. There is so much at stake. We have to draw the line somewhere." She said she felt sad that so much compromise seemed to be required: the Great Artesian Basin is a huge risk. Like some others, she did not put too much stock in the impact of the Facebook 'campaign': "The

general public will make up its own mind. People have different reasons for not coming to Woodford."

A musician cautioned us not to "put economics first". We must put ethical things before dollars. Explaining that he would be willing to give up part of his performer's fee, he challenged: "Imagine the message if 75 musicians gave \$1000 back each year? That'd be the [Santos] sponsorship for one year."

Maggie told of her fear of mining leases: they are very scary. It's a huge issue. She reminded us that 18 months ago, we were told that CSG was clean. "They are all playing the same game." Nevertheless, given the option of being outside the tent pissing in, Maggie preferred to be inside the tent pissing out.

Nimbin's indefatigable bushwalker, poet and scientist, Dr Len Martin, explained that he and his wife had been lobbied to boycott the festival. Instead, they were attending, wearing their "don't frack with me" t-shirts. He expressed concern about the lack of consultation with Indigenous leaders about the Facebook campaign. He praised the audience's "wonderful comments" and begged the organisers to "publicise this as soon as possible."

The final speaker summed up two themes from the discussion. First, she said that a session at the GreenHouse had taught her more about CSG than any other source. She praised the program, which had left her "gobsmacked and appalled." On the second matter, she was direct: "Pick on Santos. Don't pick on Woodford. Boycotters, put your money where your mouth is. Let's put it [the sponsorship money] up out of our own pocket."

The task force said almost nothing in response. However, Drew Hutton reminded us that the University of Queensland is now accepting funding from CSG companies and thus are, in his view, "buying the researchers". He felt that these scientists are "guns for hire".

Peaceful end to stormy session

It might be hard to imagine that such an emotional hour ended with acclamation, but it did. All speakers were applauded, even the anxious task force members. We are now on our way to sorting out a very difficult problem. We have until June to report back.

Contribute to the discussion

Email for people's comments: taskforce@woodfordia.com

I am not on Facebook and I never intend to be, but I am on the phone 0402-966-284 and 6689-0432 or email wendy@sarkissian.com.au

To paraphrase Fran Peavey, "I am a person willing to listen."

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PEGGY'S POEM



Peggy Seeger

And doesn't deserve to be upped and left.

But it's kind of like when you read the news,
Do you stay in bed, singing the blues?
Go shopping, go mad, go out on the booze?
Boycott? Picket? Occupy? Choose?

There's a crook called Murdoch preoccupied with hacking,
There's a group called Santos, preoccupied with fracking,
Now fracking tears the country up, throws it all away,
Leaving absolutely nothing for any other day.

That's only one of Santos' jobbies there are many,
And their other enterprises? Do we like ANY?
They slash and rip and smash and cut,
And if ever they leave they don't clean up,
Groundwater gone, the countryside gone,
Communities gone, profits gone,
Overseas and then... MOVE ON.

Santos is wherever the coal is seaming,
Santos is here, sponsoring The Dreaming.

Before we go further I want to make it clear,
That I've opposed such things for fifty-five years,
Dozens of issues, time after time,
Government criminals, corporate crime,
Domestic violence, aggressive wars,
And fighting for what the unions are for.

Women's rights, Thatcher's poll taxing,
Which, without a doubt, was financial fracking,
Mining the pockets of the British poor,
To pay for an election and a Falklands war.

Nuclear power, Greenham Common,
Anything with destructive labels on 'em,
Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan,
The endless chaos of man against man.

To say nothing about the fate of the Earth,
Global warming, pollution and the birth,
Of too many humans, and feeling so small,
That nothing you do seems to help at all.

So this Santos thing... it's not quite clear,
What the frack I'm doing here.

I discussed it with the agent, argued with myself,
Should I leave Woodford on the pantry shelf?
Woodford's great, it's caught in a cleft,

PICKETING'S good, it's been well tested,
Sit down, stand up, get arrested.
BOYCOTT'S an effective, economic boot,
It worked pretty well with South African fruit.
Just agree on the where, the when, the why,
Then get together and OCCUPY.

Letters to the editor, songs and tears,
I've done these things for years and years,
So what the frack am I doing here?

Of course I'm just a visitor, here downunder,
But I know the story of colonial plunder,

It happened in the country that I come from,
The native Americans got the crumbs,

Left over from European haute cuisine,
Like the white fellas picked the black fellas clean,
Took their land, silenced their voice,

And I'm going to question the blackfella's choice.
Of sponsors? ... These corporations,

They're in every corner of every nation,
The lengths they'll go to are beyond belief,
To cleanse their reputation, get tax relief.

We're all internally colonised,
They've got their sticky fingers into all the pies,
Into most of the media, most of the arts,

In the public body's most private parts.

They sponsor us all, you and me,
Where do we go for our coffee and tea?

Where do we bank? What do we eat?
There's the clothes on our backs, the shoes on our feet...
And when we read their sponsored news,
Do we Boycott? Picket? Occupy? Choose?

I chose. I'm singing. I'm playing. I'm here.

I support the Dreaming, loud and clear.
Even though I know,
That the devil is paying for part of the show.

Written by Peggy Seeger,
aided and abetted by Irene Pyper-Scott.



Hope, by Julie Crisp



From Hayters Hill by Carolyn Cleak



Garden Tapestry
A Window through the Seasons
by Monique McCarthy

Blue Knob Gallery

The opening of Blue Knob Hall Gallery's 'Windows' exhibition was a great success, with local identity Vale Mendelson opening the show in her usual wonderful style.

There was a good crowd of dedicated Blue Knob patrons who enjoyed a lovely night of art, food and wine – all at the same place!

The 'Windows' exhibition will continue to the 5th February 2012. Our 2012 exhibition program mainly revolves around home and belonging, and our first exhibition is titled 'Open House'. We will also have

our usual exciting annual Fibre Exhibition, along with a few favourite themes.

An exciting exhibition planned for later in the year is a first as a first-time collaboration between Blue

Knob Hall Gallery, the Roxy Gallery at Kyogle and the Serpentine Gallery in Lismore titled 'Home Sweet Home'.

Yum Cha – continues on the second Saturday of each

month. The next one being on Saturday 14th January at 12.30pm. Bookings are absolutely essential, phone the gallery on 6689 7449 if you are planning to attend.

The Farmer's Market continues each Saturday 8.30am to 1pm with a fabulous selection of local delicacies, veggies, seedlings and much more, so come and support your local organic and artistic community.



The Studio by Christine Wynyard



Mardi-Grass
by Johanna May

The Nimbin Artists Gallery hopes everyone managed to stay largely upright and have a fun and safe Christmas and New Year.

Drop into the gallery and say hi and



Black Heart by Jaqueline King

have a look at the latest work. We had a great hanging just after the last NGT was published with

new work from a number of Nimbin's talented artists. And we still have a display of superb glasswork by visiting artist Jaqueline King.

We are starting to prepare for this

year's Autumn Arts Extravaganza and are asking artists for submission proposals. There is no application form so write us a letter with some information about yourself and photos of the work you would like to submit. Include information on media and approximate size and price of your work. Note that artists cannot book or rent a cubicle or space for themselves and that the Nimbin Artists

Gallery curates the exhibition. That is, we view artists' proposals and their work and decide on what is finally exhibited. Many visitors to last year's Extravaganza commented on the ever-increasing quality of work on display, so choosing is not at all an easy task for us!

Have a prosperous 2012 and we'll see you around town.



Poppy Cat
by Donna Sharam



Manic screaming over the price
by Claire Larrivee



What things are made of
by Leigh Arnold

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Koala Kolumn



by Lorraine Vass

I trust your Festive Season has been joyful, peaceful and that the cooler weather has been to your liking.

On the koala front the holidays were relatively quiet with only one admission on Christmas Day and a Mum and older back-young admitted on Boxing Day. The back-young, a 2.5 kg female, is presently at the Australian Wildlife Hospital where she'll undergo further tests. We're hopeful she will survive although we suspect her rehabilitation will be lengthy. The two adults weren't as fortunate.

While we humans are focussed on family and friends or absent altogether holidaying elsewhere, the reporting on which Friends of the Koala depends to rescue koalas in trouble, falls away. Understandably our volunteers relish the novelty of fewer call-outs, but we are all aware that a koala in need could be paying a high price.

More broadly 2011 was a year of considerable promise for our Northern Rivers koalas but 2012 will see how much of that promise is fulfilled. The reason for encouragement and optimism, as I have mentioned in several previous Kolumns, is that the councils of Tweed, Lismore and Byron are all committed to preparing comprehensive koala plans of management for parts of their local government areas.

Lismore's Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South-East Lismore is presently on public exhibition and I will say more about that below. Tweed's Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for the Tweed Coast is in preparation and will be on public exhibition later in the year. Byron's has a bit further to go. Koala supporters need to ensure that their voices are heard by responding to the call for public comment.

While the development of comprehensive koala plans of management give some hope for future koala recovery, koala supporters need to be mindful of the plethora of developments, large and small, which are operating within the existing framework of individual, site-specific, koala plans of management.

The proposed residential community at Kings Forest on the Tweed Coast which is perhaps



Mikala and her healthy back-young Bianca, were brought in from Monaltrie on 7 November. Mikala's right ear had been lacerated by attacking birds. She was also found to have a low blood count and to be suffering from heat-stress. After five weeks at the Koala Care Centre they were released back to the wild.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting, or to book a tour of the Koala Care Centre please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: 6622-1233.

For information about koalas and their food trees, or to seek assistance with writing submissions on the Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South-East Lismore, visit:

www.friendsofthekoala.org or email: info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone 6622-1233.

the most significant of these developments will one day be home to more than 10,000 people. It will comprise 23 residential precincts, a mixed use town centre, community and education facilities, a business park, a golf course, open spaces and associated infrastructure.

The Concept Plan was given the go-ahead in mid-2010. The approved documents included a Koala Plan of Management. At the end of 2010, in response to a Project Application for Stage 1 of the development, the Department of Planning Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements called for an update to the Koala Plan, taking account of a number of specific factors.

The Application for Stage 1, including the new Koala Plan of Management is presently on public exhibition. The new Plan's 'exclusion' approach is probably a more realistic attempt to protect the site's small koala population but its components need to be far more robust than currently presented. Some shortcomings were identified and discussed with the proponent during a presentation made to the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Group in early December but many more need to be drawn out from the unnecessarily complex

and confusing cross-referenced documentation.

To assist local residents interested in preparing a submission a Public Information Night is being held on 11 January 2012 from 7pm-9pm at the Cabarita Beach Sports Club, Cabarita Road, Bogangar. Tweed Council is also preparing a detailed response to the new Plan which will be presented to the Council Meeting of 24 January for endorsement. The business paper containing the report will be available on the Council's website from around 19 January. The Department of Planning will be receiving submissions up to COB on 25 January 2012.

The Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South-East Lismore and accompanying documentation are available on Lismore Council's website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au (click on Draft Koala Plan). I wrote at some length about the Plan in last month's Kolumn. All I can do now is to repeat our plea for all koala supporters to make the time to read and discuss the documentation and most importantly, to write supporting submissions. Council will be receiving submissions up to COB on 3 February. A majority of councillors must approve the Draft Plan in order for it to be forwarded to the Department of Planning for signing-off and implementation. Needless to say it is important that councillors hear from the Plan's supporters.

Friends of the Koala welcomes visitors to the Koala Care Centre in East Lismore. Tours are held at 10am and 2pm but we request that you phone beforehand because we need to keep groups small. Included in the 14 koalas presently in care are half a dozen delightful orphans that are enjoying a change of scenery while their home-carer is on holidays.

Make a stand for sharks



Madi with tiger sharks in the Bahamas
Photos Ernst Stewart

by Madison Stewart

Oceans are controlled by politicians with no understanding of their relevance and no respect for their structure, under the command of those who see money where there was once perfect equilibrium.

The oceans have historically been run by the sharks, apex predators which are linked to the health of fish populations, even to bacteria in the oceans. The oceans can't live without sharks – creatures most people want to see dead.

Judgment on their nature has led to their extermination. Australia's most prized possession, the Great Barrier Reef, is the largest coral reef system in the world, and it has become subject to the removal of an estimated 78,000 sharks every year.

It seems Australians have been silenced by their fear of sharks. Sharks kill on average five people worldwide each year, while humans kill 100 million sharks. They are now hunted legally in the Great Barrier Reef marine park, only 30% of which is actually protected.

Two hundred commercial gillnet vessels target sharks through the Australian East Coast Inshore FinFish Fishery. They accidentally catch turtles and dolphins, critically endangered and protected species. The second highest catch in this fishery is the endangered scalloped hammerhead.

This fishery is operating without a scientific base, with no information about shark numbers or viability as a species. Research has been underway but the information on these sharks is not being taken into account.

Sharks can take up to 25 years to reproduce, and habitats around the world have collapsed.

I lived on a yacht in the Great Barrier Reef when I was two. At 12, I was a scuba diver, at 14 I left school to begin home schooling and never looked back. Now, at 18, I have

logged more than 450 dives, most with sharks.

I have spent my life diving with tiger sharks, silkys, hammerheads, reefies, a great white – and the only thing I have come to fear is the destructive power of the human race.

The sharks showed it was possible to separate yourself from the human race's narrow view of the planet and its creatures. They taught me about balance, survival, and the irrelevance – yet power – of fear.

I recently dived on the remote far northern Raine Island, where more than 50 turtles covered one reef, there to lay eggs. Two manta rays glided past, and I saw about 40 small sharks, reef sharks, pelagic sharks and a bull shark, all looking at us as if they had never seen a human before, because they hadn't.

This is what the Great Barrier Reef should look like. This reef was different because the fishermen can't reach it. I have been alive for 18 years – in the next 18 years, more than a million sharks will be taken from the Great Barrier Reef. The body of the sharks is sold as flake for fish and chips in this country so the fins can be exported to Asia.

Will we sacrifice our marine park to allow Australia's contribution to the shark fin trade to continue?

As an Australian, or as a member of the travelling public, it is your voice the government will listen to, and our reaction is the sharks' only hope.

The review of this shark fishing inside the Great Barrier Reef is happening in February 2012. Let the government know the world is watching. You can send your own letter or email, or use the one at www.elements5.blogspot.com and email me at pelagic_pip@hotmail.com

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Sharing a passion for sustainable living

Some might call him a maverick, others a genius, but Northern Rivers identity Dolph Cooke (pictured) is passionate about sustainable living and biochar – and in the last 12 months has shown that he is a man of action.



- Some (but by no means all) of his achievements in the last 12 months include:
- Forming The Biochar Association of Australia, and Biochar Industries—and securing the 'Hill of Abundance' 3000 acre forest site at Kunghur as a base;
 - Constructing the first commercial Adam retort biochar kiln in Australia, and making it available for community use. (It is also the first in the western world.)
 - Holding community talks on biochar, and creating Biochar Action Learning Circles;
 - Receiving the United Nations

- Millennium Project Award 2011-2012 (Australasian Node)—for the Biochar Project's sustainable education program;
- Being awarded a Commonwealth Government grant for the Biochar Project's sustainable community 'Weeds-out, carbon-in' initiative;
- Setting up the 'Hill of Abundance Project' – the goal being food security for 500 families;
- Hosting sustainable living working bees on site, ranging from swale-making

to crop planting to compost making to biochar production to constructing buildings;

- Formalising plans for an organic compost site and biochar production facility for community use on Kyogle Road, Kunghur; and
- Making biochar from 'The Hill of Abundance' available commercially, and marketing TLUD units (Top Lit Up Draft Gasifier) that make biochar and double as a cooking stove.

With this groundwork in place, 2012 looks even more action-packed. If you want to get involved or know what's going on, log in to <http://biocharproject.org/news> and get onto the mailing list. Sustainable living and social responsibility are the hot issues for 2012, and Dolph is a hands-on trail-blazer with a knack for turning big ideas into practical reality. Watch this man!

A word on weeds

by Triny Roe

It is ironic that many of our weeds are useful herbs and plants from other countries.

On a recent trip to rural Victoria, the pretty yellow flower which grew abundantly around our campsite was St. John's Wort, well known as a treatment for depression. How useful is that with the high incidence of mental illness in today's society?

Does nature know best and is she giving us what we and the planet need?

If a tree falls in the rain-forest and there is no-one watching... not even a hippy... the eternal circle of life continues. Local species which have already germinated in the vicinity of the downed tree and have been patiently biding their time, waiting in the seedling stage for their big opportunity, now put on a growth spurt, availing themselves of the increased light. If there are non-native 'weed' (or naturalising or migrant species, as permaculturist David Holmgren calls them) seeds present these can sometimes out-compete the native species and adversely impact on the existing ecosystem.

Because some introduced species are more vigorous than local ones does this mean they should be allowed to take precedence? Are they really any better at protecting the soil and the ecosystem and do they make a positive contribution to the environment? Or is

this just an excuse used by people who have different priorities and don't want to do anything about weeds on their properties?

The permaculture movement has been credited with introducing a number of so-called 'environmental' weeds into Australia. And in the permaculture context these plants can be useful and important food and energy resources. But this is the key. The plants are being 'used' and managed. The seed crop, or the plant itself, is harvested for benefit. It is not a case of the species being left to grow uncontrolled and spread to neighbouring properties or nearby bushland.

'Weeds' are a diverse group of plants with different habits and variable impacts. Many have been observed and closely studied throughout the decades. The lists of noxious and environmental weeds have been created by people with on the ground experience in dealing with biological ecosystems. They have seen first hand the environmental damage and loss of biodiversity caused by these introduced plants running amok.

Lantana is one of the WONS – Weeds of National Significance. It is widely distributed across the country, is toxic to stock and vigorously establishes where bushland has been cleared and the canopy interrupted. In this region of high rainfall lantana can climb fifteen metres up a tree. Its sprawling,



Pioneer species, Stinging Trees, stepping up to fill the gap left by a tree blown down in a storm

many-branched habit can smother the affected trees and the weight of the strangling stems can break branches. This is not a regenerative process. Without help the tree will die.

The key to successful land and weed management is about creating or restoring a balance. Bulldozing large areas of weed affected land, burning or spraying with herbicides is not the best solution, though in some cases may appear expedient. Seed in the soil will continue to germinate, often several years after the parent plants have been removed. Plants can also develop resistance to herbicides and these chemicals can be damaging to the animal populations, not to mention the human ones.

Long term strategies can involve modifying the ecosystem to create an environment unsuitable for the undesired species. If the tree canopy is restored and light excluded from the ground, the lantana cannot grow. It can take a number of years for the canopy to develop sufficiently and

during this time the lantana must be kept off the emergent trees to give them a chance to flourish. Follow-up and regular maintenance is essential.

Some farmers such as Peter Andrews, "Back from the Brink", have learned to use weeds to reclaim degraded soils. In his natural sequence farming he writes about slashing the weeds and letting them lay to build up organic matter in the soil and increase fertility. David Holmgren also restored a damaged landscape in Spring Creek Gully through the blackberry which grew abundantly there. He smashed the plants down to the ground, without removing them. This enabled tree species to emerge and establish whilst the blackberry vegetation and resultant mulch still protected the soil.

It's not about kicking back on the deck and letting everything that germinates be free to grow, reproduce and spread with abandon. It's about implementing sustainable systems of weed and land management and caring for country.



by Rob Carroll, President

The past in pixels

A heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers who have helped the NEC throughout 2011. Without you there would be no Nimbin Environment Centre.



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Beware of medical madness

by Leanndrah

To be diagnosed and prescribed medication and being medicated can lead to personal disempowerment. Prescribed drugs can save lives and keep people functioning.

The fact is that YOU know what is best for you. Who else knows you as well as you do? Who else is present and able to observe you and understand your needs 24/7? No-one has the right to tell you otherwise. It is foolish to think and believe automatically that 'Dr knows best', that all things illegal are bad for us, and all things legal are good for us. Give yourself credit enough to decide for yourself.

Similarly it is up to you to decide which information to give out to individuals about yourself. It is up to you to retain this right. In this day and age there is increasing risk towards being disempowered by the system by being too truthful or informative to particular registered medical practitioners and those working inside the system. Centrelink may enforce that you to take your prescribed medications by withholding your payments if you do not comply. It's on the cards that those school children diagnosed with ADHD cannot be in school without taking their prescribed meds.

It is important not to go off your prescribed medications without your doctor's advice. However, everyone has some idea on what agrees or disagrees with them. I have had reported to me a reaction to a doctor prescribed drug that was to address one element of pain management that was contraindicated in low blood pressure. This person has low blood pressure and did have an adverse reaction to the prescribed

medication even on halving the dose. She doesn't want to go back to this doctor or any other doctor now as there was no taking of her vital signs and personal care involved in the quick consult in front of the computer screen, and feels that he was perpetuating a cycle of prescribed drug dependence. She has consequently been prescribed a herb by Leanndrah that has successfully addressed the same uncomfortable symptom as the prescribed drug without the adverse affects associated with low blood pressure and dependence. In fact the herb is beneficial to low blood pressure.

All health care practitioners, not just GPs, are at risk of mismanaging your case. Remember not to make changes in your medication until you know its safe. Gather your facts in order to make an informed choice about your own wellbeing.

In 2007, one in five Australians were suffering from anxiety or affective (mood) disorder. Every year another 20,000 Australians are diagnosed with a mental illness. Unfortunately, current orthodox medications and treatments fall well short of dealing with the problem effectively, with some studies suggesting they are no better than placebo. I have had quite a few reports from those who have presented to the doctor with depression. Similarly, they have learnt to keep quiet about such issues, it seems the doctor response is to prescribe anti-depressants or to certify in order to admit for analysis. Many prescribed medications have side effects that can often be worse than the initial condition they are treating. A representative from the Nimbin Hemp Embassy from years of experience and observation believes that antidepressants are a negative therapy, more

likely to exacerbate symptoms then reduce them. Another representative from the Nimbin Hemp Embassy, with a long history of hard and soft drug use, Alan Salt said, "I don't think there is an effective 'medical' cure for depression."

Seek wholistic and natural treatment first for depression, anxiety and mental illness. There is no diagnosis necessary in order to affect your health and frame of mind in a positive sense. Harmful drugs are not necessary in order to achieve mental balance in the majority of cases. But a combination of: good diet, relevant detoxification, micronutrient balance, adequate clean water intake, herbs, homoeopathics, flower essences, energetic medicines, vibrational therapies, lifestyle and body work, IS necessary for the individual to achieve mental balance when things get a bit wacky or unwell.

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Leanndrah (pictured) is available for appointment through the Nimbin Apothecary, Cullen Street, on Saturdays. She is a Naturopath and has been practising from the Birth & Beyond rooms in Nimbin for 8 years. Leanndrah also has a country practice in Wiangaree at The Turquoise House. Wiangaree is only 10 minutes drive north of Kyogle. There is a medicine garden, colour healing studio, and well stocked dispensary of homoeopathics, herbs, flower essences and supplements.
Phone for appointments 6636-2356, or book in with Nimbin Apothecary for Saturdays on 6689-1529.

INJURY-FREE EXERCISE

by David Hoffmann, David's Health & Fitness, Lismore

There are six great ways to reduce the risk of injuring yourself exercising, whether it be playing a sport, exercising in a gym or just at home. They are:

1. Have a non specific warm up to your session. That may mean if you are going for a session in the gym, have a walk on a treadmill to get the body a little warmer.
2. Have a more specific warm up. This can really switch the mind and the body onto what you are about to undertake. For example if you are playing a sport like soccer, have a few quick direction changes, some long and short kicking and any other specific things you may like.
3. Always when you are exercising at home or in the gym use controlled technique on every exercise. Whether you are doing a faster exercise or a slower paced one, control is always the key element.
4. Have a good cool down and stretch afterwards. This returns the body back to a normal heart rate, allows blood flow and oxygen distribution back throughout the body and will allow you to relax the mind a little.
5. Make sure you intake good recovery fluids and food into the body afterwards, and finally
6. Allow the body to have a rest before undertaking another session. If this is not an option, the steps above are then absolutely essential.

At the end of the day, exercise is meant to help us either become healthier, recover from trauma and just make you psychologically feel better in yourself, not decrease the quality of life through injury.

Babies and Birth & Beyond



Mums learn some new tricks for massaging their infants

by Kirrah Holborn

B.Clin.Sc (complementary medicine) Traditional Wisdom

Birth & Beyond is going to have a new flavour in 2012. It started last month when Emma Geraghty offered to come and teach mums some new tricks for massaging their infants. In the first sessions we had eight women and their babies come and fill the Birth & Beyond room with joy and love. Emma was very talented at teaching and holding the space and demonstrated the massage techniques on her baby doll. All the women who joined us had come through Birth & Beyond when they were pregnant. It was really lovely to see them return with their infants ranging in age from 4 weeks to 8 months.

It has inspired me to hold more sessions catering for 'mums n bubs'. Kerry Negus will be jumping in to help me co-ordinate this year, and we plan to have the first and third Friday in the month aimed for pregnant women and their partners and the second and fourth Friday will be for new mums and their babies.

On the 20th January (at 10am) I have a special treat for everyone. I will be screening the movie 'Babies'. This wonderful film follows four babies from their first breath to their first steps. The babies live in Namibia, Mongolia, Japan and California and their upbringing is worlds apart! It is full of love, mischief, laughter and adventure and you simply must make time to see it!

Birth & Beyond meets every Friday from 10-11.30am. For more information contact: kirrah@traditionalwisdom.com.au or phone 0429-308-851.

January Birth & Beyond Schedule

- 6th: Learn to draw a labyrinth and discover how it can be used for labour preparation
- 13th: Complementary medicines for new mums
- 20th: Screening of the movie 'Babies'
- 27th: Complementary medicines for babies and infants

Nimbin Hospital Info

Immunisation Clinic at Nimbin Hospital

Birth- 5 years. Clinics held on 2nd Tuesday each month. Next clinic 10th January. Phone 6620-7687 to make an appointment.

Nimbin Womens Health Service

Every 3rd Thursday of the month at Nimbin Hospital. Next clinic 19th January. Phone 6688-1401 to make appointments.

Physiotherapy at Nimbin Hospital

Every Monday and Thursday. Phone 6688-1401 to make an appointment.

Nimbin Community Nurses

Nurses 8am-4.30 Monday-Friday 6689-1288 – Assessment, treatment and referral (office at hospital).

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Ending the beginning



by Dave Reynolds

In order to learn from our experiences, we need to be able to make sense of them and the way we do that is to arrange our understanding into a coherent story.

As the year turns and we look back over our lives, certain memories seem easy to recall, bringing with them a sense of order and completion.

Other memories are less easy to organise and seem unfinished, as we try to work them through we get drawn into circular thinking patterns and confusion. This article is about how this unfinished business affects us and how early experiences contribute to our ability to make sense of our lives.

Unfinished business can interrupt our ability to be present with what is happening here and now if current events activate our unresolved past experiences. This process can prevent us from meeting our day to day responsibilities and we accumulate more unfinished business. We may find ourselves being triggered into withdrawal, defensive or aggressive responses to everyday situations, creating a vicious cycle of damaged

relationships and lower self esteem. As we attempt to organise these painful and disjointed memories into a coherent story, we may be struggling against an unconscious limitation. Our ability to make sense of our adult lives is greatly influenced by our early childhood relationships with our caregivers.

All children need to feel securely connected with their caregivers and this connection is dependent on the adult's ability to remain present and caring during times of stress for the child. When a baby cries out for something, ideally the caregiver will quickly determine what the baby needs and meet that need gently and confidently. No parent can manage this all the time of course and inevitably there are times

when we can't meet our children's needs. What matters at these times is that the parent remains present and in empathically attuned communication with the child.

If we experienced this type of parenting when we were children, we are likely to have learned at a very deep level that the world is a safe place for us. Children who are securely attached to their caregivers in this way learn to express their needs directly. As attuned adults respond to them in appropriate ways, the connections between the child's inner world and the outer world of others are formed. These early patterns of relating between self and other form the basis of all subsequent relationships, shaping the way we make sense of the world around us as adults.

Most parents struggle at times with their own unfinished business relating

to the way they were parented themselves. If we didn't get the message early on in life that other humans understand us and can help us, we are likely to have learned how to meet our need for safety in other ways. These may include dismissing other people's feelings, avoiding intimacy with others or remaining entangled in difficult relationships. Much research has shown that the security of the bond between infant and caregiver is the single biggest factor influencing the mental health and wellbeing of the child as they mature into adulthood.

Fortunately, research also shows that as adults, we can do things to heal the childhood wounds caused by imperfect parenting. We can begin to work through our unfinished business with a close friend or counsellor so that we can tell a coherent story about our lives, freeing us from the limitations of

the past. We can commit to developing effective and heartfelt communication skills and we can decide that we are going to work to build healthy relationships with our own children and with other adults.

The turning of the year is both an ending and a beginning and can represent a powerful marker for us in terms of who we are and how we have grown. Personally, I have experienced the power of deep communication and relationship in 2011. I encourage you to develop nurturing relationships in which you feel safe to be yourself and then to use these relationships as places where you can show up with ever greater levels of authenticity.

I wish you all a happy and growthful 2012.

Dave is a Gestalt Psychotherapist working on Fridays in Nimbin. For appointments, phone 6689-0426.

Stu's view from the loo

by Stuart McConville

The sun rises over the sandstone ridge-line that delineates Glenworth Valley near Peates Ridge. Mist starts burning off and the tent-littered valley floor below is revealed.



smell of your piss gassing off in the morning sunlight just next to their tent. There are no inherent evils in piss, unless you count the drugs that your body didn't have room

for the night before.

Shitting in the bush is slightly more complex, but nothing the average Neanderthal couldn't cope with.

Preparation is worthwhile, but if you haven't included a small shovel in your kit then don't panic, a sturdy stick will suffice. Go out of camp at least 50 paces, uphill and away from gullies and creeks. Try to find some soft earth. I've used rotten tree stumps or natural build-ups of organic matter that occur uphill of fallen logs.

Dig a hole about six inches deep, pile the soil from the hole uphill of the hole and as close as possible. Find your squatting position and get comfortable. Older folk may need to consider a log to hang over.

After you've made your deposit into the soil bank, take a look (this seems weird but I bet you will) and bury it, tamping down the soil on top.

Now go forth with the knowledge that the soil bank biology will break down your deposit and loan out the nutrients to the surrounding organisms – who will make their repayments.

The festival is in its second day, and around 12,000 people are packed onto flat and sometimes soggy ground dissected by a small tidal creek.

I've walked a hundred metres or so up toward the northern ridge to dig my loo hole and find my view. About halfway through proceedings, I hear a sound behind me. Shit!

I think I've been busted by some acid-tripping sunrise-seeking hippie kid, but as I slowly turn my head I see a lyrebird about three metres away, scratching happily at the leaf litter. I bury my leavings soundly and head back down the hill, almost tripping on someone else's crap on the way, an unburied landmine that will wash down the hill after the flies have had a good feed and pollute the creek, the dam and spread e.coli bacteria far and wide.

How hard can it be to dig a hole somewhere off the track? This is how you do it.

The general rule for pissing out doors is 20 paces away from camp. This is just a courtesy to your fellow campers who may not enjoy the

Patient, client, collaborator, journeyman



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

Last night I was bouncing around my tongue the words, patient and client, wondering which more accurately describes the persons who come to see me.

Wondering, too, how they viewed themselves, and wondering which I like when I consult a colleague.

The two words feel different in the mouth. Pay-shent is soft and rather nice to say, while kli-ent has a much more mechanical, clipped quality to it. The Latin derivation of patient is patiens, meaning "to suffer or bear," while the word client is derived from cliens, which means, rather scarily, "one who is obliged to make supplications to a powerful figure for material assistance". I don't think I like the implications of either, but I need a word, a recognizable word.

My profession of counsellor/psychotherapist customarily uses the word client, while medical professionals (GPs, specialists, physiotherapists, etc) and

most of the alternative health professionals (acupuncturists, naturopaths, herbalists, etc) use patient. Does this mean, when a person comes for physical healing they are automatically seen as someone who suffers and is fixed by an expert, in a passive sort of way, but when they come for mental and emotional work, they must actively bow down to the so-called expert, or as one commentator says, be responsible for their solutions because an expert says so. A modern interpretation of client is one who is engaged in business with an operator. Urk!

The power play implicit in both words of patient and client irks me. Two studies I've read on what people who go to health professionals prefer to be called got contradictory results. One claimed the majority of customers (there's another word) prefer to be thought of as "patients," while the other asserted that they like to be called "clients". So there you go. Perhaps both studies were biased in the way their questions were designed and got the results they expected, perhaps the two samples were too radically different to bear comparison; who knows?

As I see it, coming for therapy, whether for physical, emotional, or mental pain/

dis-ease is collaborative work. There must be a willingness on both sides to find and enhance the best course of action for greater whole self health, to facilitate a person feeling well in themselves. So, maybe I could call the other person my collaborator. I rather like that – even with its dual meanings of double espionage, as well as those who work together on a joint project (we'll forget about the spy bit, though).

Words, words, words. Instead of choosing one word over another perhaps I could use whatever word suits the quality of relationship.

A health forum I visited in preparation for writing this article queried why we need a word at all, but this is a cop out because we still refer to those who come to us as either "patient" or "client" (and each word comes with

a portmanteau of meanings and assumptions, and the word we choose betrays our bias). Also, those like me, who write about our cases, albeit disguised, need a good word.

Parts of me lean towards "patient," for its soft tone; parts of me has been conditioned by my professional training and the idea of the person actively participating in their healing, likes "client". I best prefer, though, "collaborator" for its sense of partnership in a joint endeavour, of fellowship on a journey where the process of discovery (of choices, awareness, insights, etc) is the destination, not the destination as an end, and I am a guide, for I have journeyed with many over the years. At the heart, I am a fellow journeyman. We journey together.



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