

# Coal miner Locks the Gate

by Scott Sledge

The Lock The Gate Alliance staged a rally and march at Jondaryan near Dalby in Queensland, about four hours' drive from Nimbin, on Monday 20th February. A number of people from Nimbin Environment Centre, Kyogle Group against Gas, Rock Valley Gas Rangers and Northern Rivers Guardians joined people from SE Queensland to protest about the proposed extension of the Acland coal mine.

Greens candidates and Friends of the Earth then marched side by side with Katter's Australia Party members, led by concerned locals, some on horseback, to Acland Coal's depot, where big trucks dump big black piles beside the railway line. The sides of the roadway are blanketed with coal dust.

A large contingent of Qld Police stood inside the gates, chained and locked by the company, who decided to take time off rather than confront the protestors.

Protest organiser Drew Hutton said the meeting was a major success. "The fact that we had 400 people there on a hot day, we had such a great turnout of groups and



Top: Scott and Danielle  
Right: Bob Katter and Alan Jones lead the protest march

of prominent Queenslanders to support us AND great media coverage means that protecting rural Queensland from the adverse impacts of mining has now become a key election issue and one that all parties will need to address," he said.

Drew shared the back-of-a-truck platform with prominent local son Alan Jones who went to primary school in Acland, which was once a thriving rural town due to the rich soils of the Darling Downs, but is now a ghost town with a permanent population of only one person. Alan Jones now lives in Sydney and is one of Australia's most controversial radio commentators. Jones called



on all parties contesting the state government election in Queensland to exempt usable farmland from mining.

"If we don't have clean water, we won't be able to live on this continent," Mr. Katter said, "It's as simple as that."

Greens Senator Larissa Waters expanded the call by saying coal and coal seam gas mining are damaging the environment and should be phased out by encouraging

and funding renewable energy techniques, particularly solar electricity.

On the way back to Nimbin some of the protestors stopped to see the devastation caused by gas pipelines being laid through farmland all the way from Tara/Chinchilla area more than 400 Km to Gladstone where dredging is destroying seagrass habitat for turtles and dugong. Each gas company will have its own pipeline and shipping port.

Gladstone locals say they cannot eat the fish there and many are worried about the impacts of a massive gas port and ship movements through the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The UNESCO World Heritage Commission is sending a team from Europe to see for itself on March 7 and 8.

A demonstration at Gladstone is planned to coincide with the visit by UNESCO to investigate the apparent ecosystem collapse there and its likely impacts of the world heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef.

This date also marks the arrival in Gladstone of June Norman who has timed the culmination of her Walking for Our Future journey along the pipeline route to meet the UNESCO delegation.

## Community Centre addresses homelessness

A number of complaints have been made to the Nimbin Community Centre recently in regards to homeless people residing on the Community Centre's grounds. The Community Centre has recently developed a protocol for managing homelessness on the site, which attempts to ensure that all homeless people are treated appropriately, receive support services if needed, and the Community Centre is safe.

The Nimbin Community Centre is inviting neighbours and concerned community members, to a meeting that will discuss the current situation of homelessness at the centre. The management committee would like to hear the concerns in a forum where the issues

can be discussed, in full consultation with those most affected.

Co-ordinator Nicola Garnsey said, "This is an extremely sensitive situation, and we do not expect to find a solution in the short term, though we would like input to manage the situation more effectively. So, if you are concerned about this issue or would like to voice an opinion, please come to the meeting."

The meeting will be held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March, 5.30pm in the Dance Studio, Nimbin Community Centre. Nicola is also happy to discuss your concerns prior to the meeting. Phone 6689-0000 during office hours, Monday and Tuesday (or by appointment).

## New doctor a familiar face



Dr Clint Leahy

Clint and his wife Laylai and their son Suny, who turns one this month, have found a home just outside of town, and are planning to stay indefinitely. "We returned to this area because we want Suny to grow up in a nice cultural environment in the country," he said.

As well as a great deal of experience working in Indigenous Health, family practice, paediatrics and emergency, Clint says he is passionate about social justice, and keen on sport, already playing cricket with Byron Bay, and keen to join the Bushwalkers Club.

He still does aid work in Papua-New Guinea, mostly working in the remote villages of the Western Province, which takes him away for about a month a year.

In the meantime Dr Leahy is now seeing patients at the Nimbin Medical Centre practice Monday to Friday, and together with Dr Dan Oxlee, is on call for Nimbin Hospital on the weekend.

For an appointment with Dr Clint Leahy please phone Janet at the Nimbin Medical Centre on 6689-1410. He will also be on call for patients at Nimbin Hospital on the weekends.

Nimbin's stock of medical resources has had a shot in the arm, following the recruitment of a general practitioner to fill the vacancy created when Dr Oscar Serrallach moved to Mullumbimby last year.

The new doctor is Clinton Leahy, whose family still live in Lismore, and who went to school at Richmond River High and grew up around The Channon and Nimbin. He then went to university at Southern Cross before studying medicine at the University of Queensland.

Dr Leahy has spent the past 10 years working in far north Queensland, mainly in Aboriginal communities, in particular Palm Island, of which he said sadly, "My heart's still there."

### Tidy Kyogle

A meeting is afoot to form a steering committee responsible for organising the Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Awards weekend held over November 2-4. Interested member of the public are invited to attend. It will be chaired by Ian Judd, chairman of Kyogle Tidy

Towns.

It is anticipated that up to 400 visitors may visit Kyogle for this weekend, so people who have organisational skills would be of great benefit to this committee.

The meeting will be held at 5pm on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March, in the Exchange Hotel Dining Room (bottom pub) in Kyogle.

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ALL SKATERS WELCOME – SEE NOTICES (p.9) FOR CONTACT DETAILS



# Nimbin's Water Olympics a real lark



Andrew the MC



MM mermaids



Anthony, shirt and prize

by Sue Edmonds  
Friends of Nimbin Pool

About 100 people gathered in the barbeque pavilion, for the first Nimbin Water Olympics. The relay on noodles had the crowd on it's toes, the cork bob was hotly contested and the treasure dive for "Babies in the Water" had all babies saved in two minutes, a great inaugural record. In the Marathon, five times around the pool, Michael Hannan managed to hold off the hot competition from Lill, Vic, Peter and Greg.

The excitement in the crowd was palpable when the synchronised swimming was announced. Three teams were to contest for the title of Synchronised Swimming Team Champions 2012. The 'Magnificent Mammary Mermaids' thrilled the crowd



Love Cats

with their routine of daredevil water tricks to music. 'The Love Cats' were next, they were stunning to look at, the costumes were amazing and even included nose clips with whiskers. Their routine left the crowd gasping with admiration. The final team, 'Synch or Swim', performed an esoteric routine with sublime elegance, very difficult

in water with a head full of pink lotuses. The judges awarded points for costume, routine, originality, technique and crowd appreciation. You can see the winners, Nimbin Love Cats on YouTube.

A Hawaiian shirt parade was the final event of the afternoon and what a show it was, all shapes, colours, sizes and designs were

paraded before the breathless spectators. Anthony won the sought-after Red Ukulele prize.

The managers of the pool ran a great sausage sizzle and competitors and spectators mingled while the cups, medals and prizes were awarded.

People were generous with donations, and the funds will go towards facilities. Plans are bubbling for next year and rumour has it that some synchronised swimming teams have started working on their routines already.

Thanks to all the very generous sponsors for their gifts and produce. Thanks to Pauline Ahern and all the 'Friends of the Pool' for organizing and attending such a fantastic community event and to Andrew for being MC and to the lifesavers, Gwen and Karl.



**Fireys thank Kevin**

Kevin Soward (centre) received a 50 year service medal at the Rural Fire Service award presentation at Casino on 3rd March.

## Local genius designs flood-activated warning system

by Harry Neville

Tragedies occur due to floods nearly every year. Just recently a woman in her car was washed off a causeway whilst trying to cross without being aware of the depth of the water.

Innovation has always been at the heart of Nimbin, beginning in 1973 and continuing to this day. The very idea of a 'new' Nimbin was an innovation in itself. It is therefore heartening to see a modern day Nimbindian carrying on the tradition.

James Koker (pictured), has designed a complete system to bring about a Flood Activated Warning System (FAWS) to enable accurate monitoring of flood-affected roads. The FAWS system provides an on-site monitoring and display system which accurately measures the depth of water on roads and causeways.

The elegance of this system lies in its simplicity. FAWS is easy to set up requiring very little hardware and requires minimal maintenance. Once installed, the solar powered unit virtually looks after itself. Koker is to be congratulated.

The warning system



enables motorists to see what relative level of flow exists by grading the warnings into three levels. The first warns drivers that water is over the road ahead, the second level advises motorists to proceed with caution and the third advises that the road is closed due to flooding. The system also transmits this information via the GSM phone network and can send text messages to relevant authorities as to the state of the crossing. This same system also enables two-way voice contact from the flood site to relevant authorities.

This same information could also be made available on a flood related website which would enable motorists to check in advance of a road trip. Such a website would be able to receive updates from each FAWS site and, as each FAWS unit is also equipped with GPS ability, an accurate map of all crossings equipped with FAWS can be made available on the website.

# Get shaved at the Bowlo

Every year thousands of folk shave their heads or colour their hair to raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation. This year local identities Michael Winston and Martin Gill have got together to put on a big show at the Nimbin Bowling Club where anyone who has signed up for the shave can come along and get it done on Friday 16th March at 7.30pm.

Mike and Marty, who have both been touched by the nasty disease, have arranged a full night of entertainment with dynamic young Brisbane trio Greenthief (pictured); a local band led by Manju; and Mullumbimby comedian Obi McDonald-Saint. This will be a major event in the Nimbin calendar and should not be missed. Entry is by donation and there will be raffles and other fund-raising going on.

Local salon Snipping Heads will be helping with the cutting and colouring,



and the Bowlo is throwing all its resources behind the night. Chinese John from the Bowlo restaurant will be providing his excellent all-you-can-eat Chinese buffet for a mere \$15 and as usual the Bowlo will be providing the cheapest drinks in town.

All money raised goes to the Leukaemia Foundation who direct support in two main area; support for patients and their families and funding for research into a cure for leukaemia and the other blood cancers.

If you want help out you have

a number of options. Sign up at [www.worldsgreatestshave.com](http://www.worldsgreatestshave.com). You must be prepared to actively seek sponsorship from friends, relatives or the public. You can join or sponsor the Nimbin Head Snippers team. Go to <http://my.leukaemiafoundation.org.au> and use the Search for a Team function. If you can help Michael and Martin out with the organisation on the night please phone 6689-7255 or email: [mwinston1@hotmail.com](mailto:mwinston1@hotmail.com) or [lillianrock@bigpond.com](mailto:lillianrock@bigpond.com)

The Bowlo will also be holding a bowls benefit day on Sunday 18th March at 9.30am. It will be a day of social bowls, \$5 entry and open to everyone whether they've played bowls or not. The club will provide bowls and an experienced player to get you started. As usual the cheapest drinks in town will be available (it's a well-known fact that lawn bowls and alcohol are inextricably linked).

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# In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

Website: [www.nnic.org.au](http://www.nnic.org.au)



## Pay equity decision handed down

All staff at NNIC (other than our Vacation Care staff) are employed under the former SaCS Award and are directly impacted by the recent and long overdue decision to award a pay increase.

The majority of our funding comes from the NSW State government, so we will be busy negotiating with government in the next month to seek their support to fully fund the pay increase (otherwise it will mean we have to cut back paid staff hours).

You can support our sector and NNIC by writing or emailing our local State member (Thomas George) and asking that the NSW Government fully fund the wage increase.

## Nimbin bus extension – use it or lose it

The project came out of a community survey where lots of folks said they wanted extra buses between Nimbin and Lismore. The extra bus has been running since July 2011 and ends in June 2012 with the aim to establish a viable ongoing service.

To date, the bus is not being used enough for this to happen. One of the main reasons people give is the cost. At \$14 to Lismore and back for multi-tix (min 5 tix) or \$4.50 each way concession) and with petrol heading up past \$1.50 and likely to hit \$2/litre in the not so distant future, the cost issue is debatable.

Taking the bus also reduces the number of cars on the road, thus reducing accidents and wildlife hits, as well as being less stressful for the driver and reducing the community's overall carbon footprint. So get on the bus and ensure we get to keep this valuable transport option. See our website or drop into NNIC for timetable and ticket info.

## Sustainable Nimbin

The final funding body/government friendly version



Katrina and Gail serving up the Friday Soup to all comers at NNIC

of the Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan is now available on our website.

Folks have been busy out there implementing different parts of the plan and NNIC will be meeting with Council during March to see where Council can play a role. The plan will mainly be implemented by YOU, the Nimbin community, so have a look through and consider how you may be able to contribute.

## Community forums

We are looking to do three forums in 2012 to follow up from the Planning Day held in June 2011 – a Community Energy Plan forum, MO/Intentional Communities Forum (where have we been, what has and hasn't worked, strengthening existing MOs, future MOs), and Bushfire/Disaster planning forum.

If you are interested in any of the above forums and have ideas for agenda/discussion items, or expertise in any of the above areas or would be willing to help us coordinate them, please get in touch with us on [nimbinnic@yahoo.com.au](mailto:nimbinnic@yahoo.com.au). Or else phone or drop in and leave your details.

## Food security

We have changed the meeting dates from the regular last Thursday of each month to: Thursday 15th March, Thursday 17th May, Thursday 21st June and Thursday 19th

July. No meeting in April. All meetings held at 6pm at NNIC's Elmo room. Come around the back steps and food is always welcome! We have a lot of work to go ahead with so new members always welcome.

Post Harvest Processing Equipment Library: we are still awaiting delivery of the last equipment... Keep watching this space. Sorry about the delay folks... and contact NNIC if you can help with the shed erection at Blue Knob.

## Interested in wildlife?

Need to do volunteer/mutual obligation/work for dole hours? Volunteers are needed for the WIRES Hotline. You can work from home – 8 hour shifts – can count towards your volunteer hours.

The next WIRES Hotline training will be on 10th March in Lismore. Contact WIRES via their website for more info: [www.wiresnr.org](http://www.wiresnr.org)

## Send us your weblinks

The links on our website are getting quite a few hits. Send us your website links and we will add them to our website. We are especially after links from Nimbin organisations, and links related to sustainability issues. Email them to us on [nimbinnic@yahoo.com.au](mailto:nimbinnic@yahoo.com.au).

• Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre is a local charity and community organisation run by locals for locals.

# New marketplace for 'shed stuff'

## BUSINESS FEATURE

Things aren't always what they seem, and cleaned up and shown off, quite unpromising old artefacts can turn out to be surprisingly attractive and useful.

Never has this been more true than with the proud new proprietors of the Treasure and Trash shop, Anthony Burton, Lorraine Keen and Pat Kerslake.

"We're old mates and work together well," Anthony said. Old is right – they are dead-set long-term Nimbin locals, and could be mistaken for a farmer's wife, a Kombi Klub organiser and a footy fanatic. "I'm not a salesman, I'm a political activist," said Anthony, the footy fanatic, and there is a touch of the politically correct in their entrepreneurial recycling, but it was never really intended.

"We just all had sheds full of stuff," Anthony explained. "We thought about doing market stalls together, but when the shop came up and we looked at the sums, and the time, packing and unpacking, the vagaries of the weather... well, we thought we'd give this option a go, and so far, well it's kept us busy."

Anthony said he has been surprised with the custom the shop has seen since



Pat, Anthony and Lorraine

it opened mid-February. "Locals are all coming in to sticky beak of course, and they're often surprised because we have new stuff coming in every day, but it's amazing how many visitors are picking up 'finds' too, especially old hand tools, toys and implements. Some of our best customers have been men. The turnover is amazing."

Surely, the dilemma with trash and treasure is what price to put on the ticket, especially in the age of eBay, but Anthony said, "Pricing has to meet your market, and we price articles to sell here in Nimbin. We decide the pricing of each item between the three of us, based on our combined experience, and it's been unanimous so far."

He waxed lyrical about his newfound occupation. "It's great to do this work,

it feels good at the end of the day, people find obscure stuff they've been looking for, everyone is really friendly... We'll try to help people source items they have been looking for, and a couple of times we've been able to supply the following day."

And for the future? "We've put a foot in the water, and would like to be there for the long run. We've still got lots more good stuff we've had for ages sitting around in sheds, and it seems a lot of other people do, too. Anyone who wants their shed cleaned out for free, call into the shop and let's discuss it. I've already done one for a lady, and we've established that there's a thriving second-hand market," Anthony said.

The shop, on the blister in Cullen Street, is open from 9am Monday to Friday, and Nimbin market days.

## Chamber Chat...



Mark Young from the Northern Rivers branch of NSW Business Chamber was invited to speak at the February Chamber meeting. It was a very informative meeting where Mark discussed the NSW Business Chamber's goal to bring all the Chambers of Commerce in this region together. He presented key insights from the local Chamber Alliance Program and spoke about the benefits of being a member such as helping businesses with their IR obligations, OH&S, help improve the performance of business – trade, marketing and business improvement, and help business skill their workforce through apprenticeships and so forth. The NSW Business Chamber are the "voice" for business in NSW at a regional, state and federal level and presently boast some 8,800 members. Nimbin Chamber is very small compared to other Chambers and

the NSW Business Chamber is looking at ways to make membership attractive to our Chamber, should it be feasible for Nimbin's Chamber members. The Nimbin Chamber also welcomes its newest members, Grey Gum Lodge and OzKat Clothing.

Last week the Lismore Chamber invited the Nimbin Chamber executive to an event at Zen Sushi Japanese restaurant. This was a great opportunity for Nimbin Chamber to do some networking and to experience how other Chambers are run. It was a good night meeting business people and experiencing the delights of Japanese cuisine. Chamber members are also invited to future Lismore Chamber breakfast meetings with key speakers presenting. The Nimbin Chamber is considering running events and meetings similar to the Lismore Chamber and is looking for feedback from its members and the local business community.

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# Anyone for Tofu?

After 15 years Nimbin's Choice Tofu have recently reduced to making only one batch of tofu a week, supplying Nimbin only. At one time they made three batches a week, supplying stores in Lismore as well. One batch takes six to seven hours in order to produce 18-20 kilos of tofu.

Nimbin's Choice Tofu is hand-made and sold in Nimbin, for most of the last eight years overseen by Chris and Richard of Falls Road. Due to the "aches and pains" of their advancing years, they want to see the business continuing in the hands of "younger, vigorous Nimbin folk".

All of the equipment is currently available for a fraction of the cost of starting from scratch, and Chris and Richard will happily guide, advise and work initially with potential new owners. There is a lot involved to keep up this valued local enterprise. "But you will not get rich overnight," Richard warns. "If money is your only interest, do not apply. You will make money, but don't give up your day job."



The tofu is made by soaking organic soybeans overnight, the beans are then ground into boiling water. After straining out the bean pulp the hot soymilk is coagulated with epsom salts and the resulting bean curds are pressed in stainless steel moulds, cut into blocks, washed in cold water, vacuum packed and labelled. A dedicated space is required with sink, hose, rainwater tanks (uses about 250 litres of rainwater per batch), 240volt power and gas, plus workbench, cupboards, shelves etc.

It is also necessary to be fairly fit and technically capable. This is a small-scale industrial process and can be hot and heavy with large

volumes of boiling water and moving machinery. Lots of cleaning-up is also involved. Continuity is important, as customers expect to see you with an esky full pretty promptly after their shelf empties.

The tofu sales can produce extra cash and you get to decide how much you do and make; and can have a sense of pride in doing something worthwhile for the community. You will also have a never-ending supply of fresh tofu offcuts in your fridge.

If, after reading this article, you are still considering taking on this loved local enterprise, you should contact Chris or Richard on 6689-1018.

# New faces at the pub

Nimbin Hotel and Backpackers' new licensee was given a warm reception when she was introduced to the large Friday night crowd of customers at the end of February.

Robyn Perry came up from the Ryde district in Sydney with her partner Marcelo Angulo, who together comprise the new co-management team for the hotel.

Robyn has long experience in managing pubs in the Western suburbs of Sydney, including 18 years at the Town Tavern, Blacktown.

Marcelo's family emigrated from Chile in 1977, and since completing his uni degree in commerce and marketing, Marcelo has had many jobs before getting into pub management, including financial services, running a cleaning company and a building restoration company, and has operated a bistro and a café, as well as writing a book on health matters.



Marcelo Angulo with new publican Robyn Perry

"We had been looking to move out of Sydney for some time," Marcelo explained, "so we answered an ad in the paper to run 'a hotel in Byron', which, after we came up turned out to be a hotel in Nimbin."

Having visited Nimbin before, they were delighted to take the job. Marcelo said, "We share a common

ideology with people up here: one race – mankind; one religion – love."

Robyn and Marcelo are looking at various ways to improve the facilities of the hotel, and involve it more in the community, but it is early days, and they are both doing a lot of listening.

As one customer remarked, "I think they'll be good."

# New tattooists add colour to Nimbin

## BUSINESS FEATURE

Nimbin Ink and Body Piercings has welcomed two new tattoo artists to the studio.

Marcus has been tattooing for four years, after drawing and painting since childhood. "I always loved tattooing and wanted to get into it," he said.

Marcus did his training in a parlour in Ulladulla, where he continued working before moving to the Rainbow Region in August.

He is into sacred geometry, psychedelic art, abstract and other-worldly images influenced by the likes of Alex Guy and Salvador Dali.

"I prefer to do custom designs, worked out one-on-one," he said.

An apprentice, Brad, is also doing his training at Nimbin Ink, after making art and clothing for over eight years. His work has been



Marcus (left) and Brad

diverse, and included stage installations for festivals and album covers. Brad moved up from Adelaide two years ago.

"I have worked in several mediums – drawing, hand-painting, printing, digital – and now I'm keen to explore body art as a medium," he said.

Brad is developing his style, known as visionary art, into a tattoo style. Examples can be found at his website:

[www.izwoz.com.au](http://www.izwoz.com.au)

"I'm used to working collaboratively to create designs and art, so I'm especially interested in custom work," he said.

Nimbin Ink and Body Piercings, at 76 Cullen Street, is a Health Dept approved skin penetration studio that will celebrate its sixth year in Nimbin this MardiGrass. For enquiries, phone Sharon on 6689-0376.

# Get your eyes tested by Nimbin Optical

by Tina Fuller

Thanks to the support of more and more locals who have been coming in to have their eyes checked, I'm now able to reduce the amount of time I spend working away from Nimbin. The Nimbin Optical practice at the Community Centre is once again open two days per week, Tuesdays 8.30am to 3pm and Thursdays from 2pm to 7pm.

My Thursday mornings are spent doing vision training exercises with children at Nimbin Central School. Children's vision and its impact on learning is special interest of mine, and I will write a bit more about it next month.

Our NSW government, with very little notice, has pulled the plug on the VisionCare spectacle scheme. Apparently the funds have run out for this financial year, so there will be no free glasses for pensioners until 1<sup>st</sup> July. This is likely to affect a lot of people

throughout the state, so NSW optometrists and the private labs which were contracted to the VisionCare scheme have come up with subsidised spectacles for eligible patients. Single vision glasses are priced at around \$60 complete, and bifocals at \$75.

I have spent the past few months sampling frames from various suppliers. Guided by the needs and requests of my patients, I have been able to get a good selection of styles to satisfy the diverse tastes of this region, while keeping the

prices reasonable. They range from funky and colourful to minimalistic and rimless, as well as the basic, strong and practical. I also have some 'end of line' frames for those on a really tight budget.

If you haven't had your eyes checked yet, give me a call. It's important to make sure that your eyes stay healthy, even if you choose not to get any glasses. The test is fully covered by Medicare, so it won't cost you a thing if you have a current card. Appointments can be made on 6689-0081.

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Tina Fuller (B. AppSc - Optometry)

Now at Nimbin Community Centre

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# A helping hand for Nimbin Preschool



Lismore MP Thomas George is thanked by children and staff for the funding at the preschool in December.

The preschool has appointed Kylie Kingston as early childhood teacher for 2012. Kylie joins the team as an educator with Diane Wilder (nominated supervisor and educator), Barbara Mills and Gordon Ellard (educators). The Parent Committee is very pleased to have Kylie's expertise in early childhood teaching at the preschool.

The preschool is moving in new directions this year with a focus on emergent curriculum and a brand new building. Each child is their own agent for learning and discovery. Aided, supported, guided and assisted by the competent staff at Nimbin Preschool, each child directs their learning and exploration and contributes to the decisions made each day with the staff about what they would like to do and how they would like to play and learn.

Many children are completing their own journals as a record of their ongoing work at preschool, and several children are already completely involved in extended project work of

their own making. Children meet with staff throughout the day to discuss projects, ideas and outcomes, and staff meet with each other at the end of each day to record the progress each child is making and establishing. The parents and staff expect that the new preschool building will be ready in term two.

Nimbin Preschool were the fortunate recipients of a \$5,000 grant initiated by Thomas George MP, and administered by the Minister for Education in recognition of the support that the preschool gives to Indigenous children and families within the Nimbin community. The much-needed grant was used in late 2011 to purchase new literacy and numeracy resources, as well as additional equipment used in language and literacy exploration.

Nimbin Preschool is currently taking enrolments for 2012. There are several places available on each day of the week for children aged three to five years. Phone Diane or Kylie on 6689-1203.



by Simone Rutley

Children come to learning with their own unique style, as do their families. Theories of learning and education abound in an effort to accommodate these differences. In our area we are fortunate to have a variety of schools reflecting diverse beliefs. There are the Steiner schools Rainbow Ridge and Aotoma, several public primary schools, Nimbin Central and Tumble Falls Community School with its emphasis on environment.

Another option is to homeschool children. Those who choose this option make up an incredibly diverse group with equally diverse methods of homeschooling. I began our homeschooling journey being quite unstructured as suited our small children. Over time we have integrated book work with the children's interests. For example today as I write this article my six-year-old is beside me writing a story about cats and dogs. She is learning about full stops and capital letters. My 10-year-old son is making a wooden mobile using regular polygons. He will tag each one with their name and features including lines of symmetry. This is instead of doing a poster. (While I am struggling to put together a coherent article.) Later in the day they will practice their instruments, handwriting and read to me.

Our family began exclusively homeschooling. We now do a combination of schooling and homeschooling. The eldest two have chosen to go to high school full-time. This was a family decision. The younger children attend primary school part-time. This option is possible but is at the discretion of the school principal. Right now these arrangements are working for us but nothing is set in stone and may change as the children get older.

Homeschooling is neither a cheap nor easy option. There are significant challenges, some of which are parental confidence and burnout. Connecting with other homeschooling families is one means of minimising these challenges. Children having friends, or knowing other children who homeschool, helps them not to feel alienated or odd.

Support between families can be a lifesaver. A number of people have approached me recently wanting to meet local homeschoolers. I am organising a picnic for homeschoolers in the Nimbin area to meet each other, to be held on Tuesday, 27th March at 11.30am at Peace Park between the pool and skate park. If it is raining, we can meet at the community centre stage where the Nimbin Market is held. Everyone is welcome.



Since receiving the \$60,000 Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Grant last year, Tumble Falls Primary School have been very busy.

It's been a year since the first working bee, when they started clearing the site – up to today's progress, where most of the site is cleared and leveled, thanks largely to Jonathan Spain. The main steps to implement the infrastructure are also being taken, the very solid metal posts are in place, thanks to the German master builder Stefan, and the foundation work on the hexagonal outdoor classroom has been started.

The school is still in need of volunteers from the wider community to support the project. Everyone is invited to go along and to contribute, especially on Thursday, 8th March, when they are hoping to get as many helpful hands on board to continue the joined effort on the garden and kitchen site. A free lunch will be provided.

## Northern gasfields?

From page 1

Jenny Dowell also said the 2480 postcode had one of the highest take-ups of solar power in Australia. "CSG is distracting us from renewable energy. My personal view is that solar farms do not set neighbour against neighbour like CSG. I've never seen anything like it in my public life."

Greg MacNamara runs a 300-strong dairy at Goolmangar and is chairperson of the \$350 million a year dairy cooperative, Norco. He is concerned that any CSG operation needed to be proven safe prior to its commencement, not after. His members are very concerned about CSG's effects on water and soil. "Farmers should have the right to refuse drilling on their own land". He said farmers' concerns centred on possible contamination of water, and that this region is important to Australia's food security. NORCO recognises that this is about future generations too. We need the right protocols in place.

"Exposure to contaminated air may contribute significantly to the health problems of both people and animals living near gas drilling operations", Dr Marion Lloyd-Smith from the National Toxics Network said. A new scientific study shows animals, including livestock and domestic animals, are sensitive to the contaminants released into the environment by drilling and to the cumulative impacts of exposure over time, she said. In one case where cows had

access to streams running through gas fields, 17 cows and 4 calves died over a three-month period.

"The CSG industry uses and produces highly toxic substances. Many CSG chemicals have never been assessed for their health impacts and we know from independent sampling, the industry's activities result in the release to water of toxic compounds like benzene and heavy metals," she said. "Over two hundred air pollutants can be released from gas flaring including carcinogens such as benzopyrene, arsenic and chromium. Farm residents in Chinchilla QLD have already reported noxious air emissions from a neighbouring gas production, complaining of burning eyes and respiratory problems. They won't sign confidentiality agreements in exchange for an air conditioner. This is just not on," Lloyd-Smith said.

Amelia Telford from Trinity College spoke for youth and said, "I am standing up for the future of the generation that will have to deal with this. We need to be the change we want to see in the world."

Around 240 people signed up to be kept informed and to offer support to protect the Northern Rivers from CSG. The first meeting of the Lock the Gate Alliance Northern Rivers will be held Thursday 8 March –from 6.30pm at Lismore Workers Club. Enquiries can be directed to Wanda 0427-302-725 or emailed to Simon: chances-are@bigpond.com

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## Play date for Harmony Day

Nimbin Childcare and Family Centre is celebrating in the spirit of Harmony Day with a play date in the backyard. Bring your family and friends and come along to be a part of the fun occasion.

You are welcome to join the staff in dressing-up in

shades of orange! There will be fun activities for the children and a delightful display of talent by parents and staff.

The celebration will kick off from 10am, all welcome. For further info contact Gail on 6689-0423 or Min, 6689-0412.

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# Blue Knob Farmer's Market workshops

♦ Saturday 10th March, 10am – Solutions for organic vegetable gardeners.

A team of experienced gardeners from Brisbane Organic Growers will talk about producing their favourite vegetables. A chance to talk over problems or questions you have about growing vegetables organically, composting and organic pest control.

Sat 17 March 10am – Farm production of bio-gas, with Paul Wilson.

Biogas is typically made from animal manures and kitchen or green waste. Biogas can be used for cooking, heating water and lighting. Basically waste material is piled into a 'digester' and gas is drawn off and used as needed. On a dairy it provides an obvious answer to what to do with all the cow manure.

Paul, from Nimbin Valley Dairy, has recently returned from a tour of China and Germany studying the use of biogas. China has around 30 million households that generate their energy from biogas.

Paul's talk, including photos of biogas facilities, will take us through China and Germany and include his practical insights into the feasibility and pros and cons of generating biogas on a working farm.



A domestic fibreglass biogas unit at the factory in Chengdu, China. When installed only the top 300mm is visible above the ground. These units are designed to operate using the toilet, green and kitchen waste of a family of 3 or 4 plus a few pigs, goats and maybe a cow. They generate enough gas each day for the cooking and lighting needs of one family, although Chinese mostly don't use gas ovens, just burners and hotplates. The main limiting factor is the daily volume of substrate available, not the size of the digester. Photo: Paul Wilson

♦ Sat 24th March 10am

– Growing Avocados Organically, with Bill West.

Avocados can be challenging to grow organically. Bill's talk will cover soil care, pests and diseases – with a focus on the organic control of *phytophthora*, a soil fungus that is a leading cause of damage to avocados. Bill will also discuss harvesting, cover crops and fertilizing.

♦ Sat 31st March 10am – Biochar and making it easily, Dolph Cooke

Learn to easily recognise, make and apply your own free biochar using materials lying around your house or

farm. The workshop will also feature; a demonstration of Dolph's own biochar stove, a free DVD made by biochar expert Geoff Moxham plus plenty of discussion. Dolph is the founder of Biochar Project in Kunghur.

If you'd like to hear about seminars and events at the Blue Knob Farmers Market, send an email to Jim at [uloborid8@gmail.com](mailto:uloborid8@gmail.com) The market runs Saturdays, rain, hail or shine, 9am to 12.30pm, corner of Blue Knob & Lillian Rock Roads, 8km from Nimbin in the grounds of the Blue Knob Gallery.

# LISMORE CITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Public notices, updates and information for the Nimbin Community

## SURVEY INVESTIGATES EXPANSION OF SMOKE-FREE AREAS POLICY

Lismore City Council is investigating community views on the proposed expansion of its Smoke-Free Areas Policy through a community survey. The review specifically investigates whether the community would like to include Council owned or managed playing fields, sporting grounds and sporting facilities; events run or sponsored by Council; and the Lismore CBD block, as designated smoke-free areas.

Currently the designated smoke-free areas in the Lismore local government area include children's playground equipment in public spaces; the Memorial Baths; Council places of work; community bus shelters; and most recently outdoor dining areas. The aim of Council's current Smoke-Free Areas Policy is to improve community health and public amenity; raise community awareness about issues associated with smoking; and provide community leadership in taking measures to protect the health and social wellbeing of the community.

To complete the survey online visit Council's website at [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au) select 'Have Your Say' and follow the links. Alternatively, hard copies of the survey are available at the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre or the Visitor Information Centre. Completed surveys can be posted to PO Box 23A, Lismore, NSW 2480.

The survey period will continue until 4.30pm on Monday 12 March.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A BUDGET SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL?

Council's draft 2012/13 Operational Plan, Council's principal budget document, is currently under development and the community is invited to make submissions. All submissions received will be considered by Council.

A Public Submission Form, which sets out the budget submission requirements, is available either online or as a hard copy.

### • Electronic Submission

On Council's website [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au) and select the "Have Your Say" page.

### • Hard Copy

Public Submission Forms are available at the Visitor Information Centre in Nimbin.

All submissions must be received by close of business Thursday, 5 April 2012 and enquires can be made to John Hartley or Amanda Gibson, phone: 1300 87 83 87.

## KNOWING NOW WHAT YOU WISH YOU KNEW THEN: POSTCARD PROJECT

Do you ever wish you could go back and tell your 16-year-old self a few words of wisdom? The Lismore City Council Postcard Project is inviting community members over 50 to put their experience to paper by creating a postcard that captures just what they would say to their younger selves if they had the chance. The entries will feature in a Pop-Up Exhibition which will be launched at 10.00am on Monday, March 19 at 56 Magellan Street, Lismore. The exhibition will run until March 23.

Lismore City Council Social Planner, Christine Minkov, said the project is about connecting younger people with older people through the sharing of personal reflections. "I love this project because it builds such a beautiful bridge between the curiosity and changeability of youth and the often more-settled acceptance that can come with older age."

A collection of entry examples already submitted:

- "Life will lead you in amazing directions if you believe in yourself and keep your mind open to opportunities"
- "Trust yourself"
- "Never give up on anyone"
- "Do what you love and be prepared to accept criticism"

The Postcard Project is a Seniors Week and Youth Week initiative. People wanting to join in the project can pick up a postcard at the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre or the Visitor Information Centre.

Completed postcards can be returned to the Postcard Project, PO Box 23A, Lismore, NSW, 2480 by Friday, March 16. For more information, contact Christine Minkov via email: [council@lismore.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@lismore.nsw.gov.au) or phone: 1300 87 83 87.

## CALLING ALL YOUNG SONGWRITERS

The third annual Lismore Young Songwriters Competition is now open to all Northern Rivers young people aged between 12 and 25 with a finals event to be held during Youth Week on Friday April 20 at the Star Court Theatre in Lismore. There are four categories in the Lismore Young Songwriters Competition: Pop/Rock, Folk/Country, Hip Hop/R&B and Electronica. All entries must be original material. There will be a runner up and finalist in each category.

The competition closing date is midnight Sunday, March 31. Full competition entry details and Terms and Conditions are available for download from Council's website [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au) Alternatively, hard copies are available at the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre, the Visitor Information Centre or Nimbin Central School.

For the latest information about the competition you can 'like' Lismore Young Songwriters Competition on Facebook or contact Council's Youth and Community Development Officer, Lizette Twisleton, phone: 1300 87 83 87.

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 CBD City Office 55 Magellan Street, LISMORE 2480  
 Phone 1300 87 83 87  
 Fax (02) 6625 0400  
 Website [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au)  
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