

Justine quits over Coal Seam Gas

by Justine Elliot, MP

On 2nd February, I resigned my position as Parliamentary Secretary for Trade.

I made this decision because I want to continue the fight to stop Coal Seam Gas mining on the North Coast. This campaign conflicted with my obligations within the trade sector.

I'll always stand up for locals on the issues that are important to us: like calling for a moratorium on harmful CSG mining in our region.

In contrast, all National Party MPs and candidates on the North Coast support CSG mining.

It's time to draw a line in the sand on the important environmental issue of CSG mining.

We know the community's view. It is clear. Our community does not want CSG mining.

I call on the National Party state MPs to tell the O'Farrell government that



our community demands a moratorium on CSG.

The ball is totally in their court: the state government regulates and licenses coal-seam gas mining and they can stop it dead.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard, who reshuffled her Cabinet at the weekend following the resignation of two senior ministers, told the Echonetdaily that Ms Elliot had requested the change because she 'felt uncomfortable' over her electorate's campaign against CSG - Ed.

North Coast news briefs

by Justine Elliot, MP

Schoolkids bonus helping families meet back-to-school costs

Families on the North Coast are feeling the benefits of the first Schoolkids Bonus cash payment rolling out this year.

Worth \$410 for each child in primary school and \$820 a year for each high school student, it is paid in instalments - in January and July.

Four million dollars has been paid into the bank accounts of 8500 local families since payments began a fortnight ago.

That's \$4million available for families to spend at local businesses like book shops, shoe shops, sports shops, department stores, and stationery outlets on back-to-school items like school uniforms, shoes, school books and stationery.

Some local families who claim their Family Tax Benefit at the end of the financial year will receive their payment then.

A family with two children will receive \$15,000 in Schoolkids Bonus payments over the course of their kids' schooling - that will go a long way to helping parents make ends meet.

But this new financial support is at

risk. Tony Abbott and the Nationals will cut the Schoolkids Bonus - ripping \$15,000 from a family with two kids.

Families receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A, as well as young people in school receiving Youth Allowance, and others receiving certain income support or veterans' payments are eligible for the Schoolkids Bonus.

For the latest information about the Schoolkids Bonus and other family assistance measures, visit: www.australia.gov.au/schoolkidsbonus or like the Australian Families Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/FamiliesInAustralia

Helping the North Coast care for our land

The next round of Community Landcare Grants has now opened.

I encourage organisations and community groups on the North Coast who are committed to keeping Australia's productive land healthy, resilient and sustainable to apply. Grants are now available from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

These grants under the Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture stream will help groups on The North Coast continue to do their good work.

Community Landcare Grants encourage communities to work

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

together to encourage the uptake of sustainable land management practices and agricultural innovation. That will ensure our local agricultural sector remains productive and profitable for generations to come," said Justine.

The grants build on the success of the Community Action Grants from the first phase of Caring for our Country, which saw the Australian Government invest in more than 489 projects in NSW between 2008 and 2013.

The Community Landcare Grants offered support for organisations such as Landcare, professional farming systems or Indigenous groups.

We all benefit from the work these groups and their volunteers do.

I encourage groups on the North Coast involved in sustainable agriculture or natural resource management to apply for funding under the Community Landcare Grants.

Applications close at 5pm (AEDT) on 20th March 2013.

For more information on Community Landcare Grants, visit the Caring for our Country website at: www.nrm.gov.au or phone the information line on 1800-552-008.

Janelle's Page

Janelle Saffin MP

It is wonderful to be able to start the year with some positive news for our region, with the biggest investment in Southern Cross University in 20 years.

In January, on behalf of the Minister for Tertiary Education, Senator Chris Evans, I announced funding of around \$28-million for a new science and engineering precinct at Southern Cross University.

The Government's funding, under the Education Investment Fund, is part of a \$39-million project at

the university, which also includes construction of a new Learning Centre/library at the heart of the Lismore campus.

The facilities will pave the way for five new bachelor degree courses in Science, Engineering and Regional Planning. It means SCU will be able to offer more undergraduate student places in these regionally and nationally important areas of skills demand.

This is good for local families as it provides more options for young people wanting to study at tertiary level without having to

move away from the area and for those in work to combine work and study for professional development.

The project will create more than 120 direct and indirect jobs.

I like the double impact of investing dollars into our local economy and creating jobs now and opportunities for our younger generation into the future.

TV captioning services

Across the Northern Rivers region there are many deaf and hearing-impaired people who rely on captioning for their television broadcasts. I recently made a submission to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) calling for the best quality of television captioning to be used.

Captions need to be easy to read and comprehend and the best form of captioning is where there is a block of text in one to two sentence chunks that remains on screen for a fixed period.

The other form of captioning, using one word at a time on screen, is only acceptable for live broadcasts when the captions can't be prepared in advance.

Local advocate for the deaf



Janelle Saffin MP with chancellor of Southern Cross University, John Dowd AO QC, and Vice Chancellor Peter Lee unveiling plans for major development at the Lismore campus.

and hearing impaired, Michael Lockrey, has told me it is extremely disappointing to see so much TV content using the 'live' scrolling when they are clearly not 'live' programs.

This captioning is much more difficult to comprehend. Michael said that block captioning used to be the default method, and I agree that ACMA should bring back that standard.

This is a matter of social justice for deaf and hearing-impaired people in the community for whom captions are an essential part of their television service.

Member for Page
63 Molesworth Street
Lismore
Phone 1300 301 735

Thank you volunteers

The summer has again seen bushfires and floods in our region and I commend all the wonderful community volunteers, the SES and Rural Fire Service as well as all the good neighbours in our communities who do what they can to keep us safe, to clean up, and get things back to normal as quickly as possible.

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Tina Fuller (B. AppSc - Optometry) At Nimbin Community Centre

From the Mayor's desk

by Jenny Dowell

Floods and severe weather

I hope all Nimbin residents are safe and well after the terrible storm and rain event that struck us over the Australia Day long weekend. The ferocity of the wind brought down trees and power lines across our Local Government Area.

As I write this, many residents remain without power, and some have limited water too. Council staff and volunteers from the SES and Rural Fire Service have worked tirelessly to remove trees and clear roads. Hopefully by the time *The GoodTimes* hits the streets, we'll be back to normal.

Fortunately, although there were many roads cut by flood waters, there appears to have been no major damage or loss of property, although crop losses are yet to be assessed.

The Federal and State governments have declared the region and our Council as Disaster Areas and we are therefore eligible for Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements assistance that will provide funding for repairs.

The assessment of the costs takes a considerable time and often involves complex engineering considerations,

so some incidents such as road slips may take a long time to be repaired.

Water

During and after the severe weather, it has been difficult for Council staff to access Mulgum Weir to ensure proper water treatment is occurring for Nimbin's rural water customers.

At the time of writing this, Council is still advising those households to boil water for drinking and food preparation to be on the safe side. Nimbin village water users get their water from the town water storage, so there is no need for them to boil water.

A new council year

Apart from dealing with the recent severe weather on their own properties, Councillors have all had a good break from the challenges of the chamber and are coming back in February refreshed for a new year.

In 2013 we will finalise our Community Strategic Plan (CSP) that is the outcome of the Imagine Lismore process we undertook with the community over the past 12 months.

The challenge will be to meet community wishes expectations while making significant budget cuts to

allow us to fund our serious infrastructure maintenance backlog.

In the several years ahead, Council will be saying 'No' to requests that are not embedded in our CSP.

Australia Day

Just as the rain started, we held a very successful Australia Day celebration at Goonellabah Sports and Aquatic Centre. This year there were 55 nominations for our Australia Day Awards, including seven for Nimbin people who have contributed to the community's well-being.

The nominees were: Tamaso Lonsdale, Neil Morrison, Eugenie Stephans, Leslie Howard, David Hallett, Pam Bourne and members of the Nimbin A&I Society. Well done to the people who took time to nominate these worthy contenders, and thank you to most of them for attending the ceremony.

Our Lismore Council Australia Day Award winners were:

- Environment – Friends of the Koala;
- Art/Cultural – Heather Sidney;
- Junior Sport – Mikaela Pieniacki;
- Senior Sport – Janelle Pitman;
- Sports Team – U16 Girls

- Lismore Storm basketball;
- Community Services Darcy Goodwin Award – Helen Hargreaves and Sue Lloyd;
- Community Services Team – Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter;
- Young Citizen – Jacob Fitzroy;
- Aboriginal Citizen – Thelma James; and
- Citizen – Len Johnston.

Congratulations all. Our Australia Day Ambassador this year was Benita Collings, well-known as a thirty year *Play School* presenter. Many children and the not-so-young among the 300 people present took the opportunity to have a photo taken with Big Ted.

In addition to the recognition of our wonderful community members, we welcomed 21 people from 14 different countries as new citizens of Australia. I always find the citizenship ceremony on Australia Day the most special of the five or six I perform each year. The joy on these new citizens' faces and the enthusiasm with which they are welcomed by the community is heart-warming.

CSG

During January, I have attended two more community gatherings where I have accepted more Road Declarations from residents who want their roads to be free of CSG.

The people of McLeans

Ridges, Wyrallah and Monaltrie have added 40 Declarations, to bring the total in my office to 301.

So far in Lismore, we have not seen the arrival of drilling rigs as we have witnessed at Glenugie (Clarence Valley) and Doubtful Creek (Kyogle), but I know many of you are fearful that the day will come.

On Thursday January 16, I visited Glenugie with the Byron mayor, Simon Richardson, and councillors Glenys Ritchie (Lismore) and Basil Cameron (Byron). We did so to see what an exploration site looks like and to support the protestors, some of whom are our residents.

I admire the solidarity and bravery of the ordinary people who live near those drilling sites and their many supporters who are putting their lives on hold to ensure Metgasco, the government and the general public, via the media, know that CSG is not welcome.

NOROC

By the time NGT is on the streets, NOROC will have met to consider a request from Lismore Council that it fund research by Southern Cross University into baseline groundwater data.

The request is for \$15,000 as soon as possible to match \$15,000 from SCU to start sample collection and



preliminary assessment in the next few months.

Additionally, NOROC will be asked to consider further \$30,000 per year for three years to match Australian Research Centre grants for continued testing.

Roadworks

Nimbin residents would have noticed survey works on the southern entrance to the village in readiness for major road repairs and the construction of a long-awaited footpath from High Street.

The works were due to be underway later this month, but the flood and storm have delayed the start by 2-3 weeks at this stage.

Contact Jenny via email Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au, phone 0402-651-394 or [Twitter@Mayorjrd](https://twitter.com/Mayorjrd)

Simon says...



by Simon Clough
Deputy Mayor, Lismore City Council

Councillors don't meet in January, so I thought I'd write about more general issues.

My thoughts are with all those locally who have lost so much in the recent extreme weather. There is a tendency to feel that everything is alright if the Lismore CBD levee is not over topped. This

thinking doesn't take into account the large number of farmers who have had their livelihoods damaged or destroyed and the countless people who have experienced damage and inconvenience.

Of course on a national scale our region seems to have been very fortunate in comparison to a city like Bundaberg.

Personally, Trish and I had a very stressful weekend watching the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) website trying to work out if we should pack up our CBD business (Traditional Medicinals). Fortunately we held back and the 7-30pm height predictions on Monday showed a significant drop in the expected flood level and we were able to decide against the 6-8 hour job for two of us of packing up the shop.

Council staff have been fully engaged in the clean up and if you are aware of problems such as trees in a dangerous

state or damaged roads please call Council on 1300 878 387. Council has been granted 'natural disaster' status so there should be funds available from State and Federal governments to assist us. For issues that are hard to resolve, it's good to contact a Councillor. All our contact details are on the Council's website.

The extreme weather events of the past month, with its terrible bush fires and record breaking floods, have been predicted for a long time as we experience the growing impacts of climate change. Unlike the NSW Premier I don't believe that this is 'politically correct' nonsense. The scientific evidence is too strong. The local anecdotal evidence is also growing. The road into our community in the past has been washed away once every 10 years. In the last 10 years it has been washed away 5 times.

As usual I attended the

Australia Day celebrations on January 26. The range and depth of people committed to community service, environmental issues, sport and cultural pursuits was, as always, deeply inspiring. Nimbin was strongly represented. Our Lismore citizen of the year has 35 years of dedicated service to St Johns Ambulance, what an achievement!

Interestingly, one of my friends has just returned from working with communities affected by CSG mining in Queensland. She was particularly struck by one town that seemed superficially very busy with mining trucks and utes zipping about. However she found that over 30% of students had left the town school because their families could not afford the mining-inflated rents. The golf club had closed. The only businesses that were flourishing were the caravan

park, which had become a 'donga' camp for the 'fly in fly out' workers, and those businesses that were directly related to mining. Everything else was going under. Her analysis was rather than being a flourishing town, she was witnessing the end of any real community, courtesy of CSG and other mining interests.

With the weather finally clearing I may be able to get my pothole detector (push bike) out of the garage (we keep our cars on the street!). I'm really looking forward to doing some pothole dodging and hard riding.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous 2013.

The Caldera Dinning and Cigar Society

This new group is now taking applications of interest for membership.

A philosophical interest and demonstrable practical expertise in the arts of propagation, nurturing, growing and the preparation of the fine culinary is a prerequisite; interest in participatory fine dining is an imperative; an appreciation of the American herb is mandatory.

All initial applications to: thecalderadinningandcigarassoc@theplate.com

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MPs seek to strip E-zone protection from urban bushland

by Andy Baker
(Save North Coast Nature)

After successfully excising E2 and E3 zones from rural areas in Far North Coast LEPs, MPs Don Page and Thomas George are now moving swiftly to strip environmental protection from bushland in urban areas as well.

In a joint press release issued by the MPs last Thursday, they now claim E4 zones, as well as E2 and E3, are on the chopping block in Brad Hazzard's 'Northern Councils EZone Review'.

This is the first time our local members have revealed their intent to also destroy environmental protection for bushland in residential areas.

Minister Hazzard's announcement in September 2012 was that he would not endorse the use of E2 and E3 environmental zones on land that is clearly rural in Council local environmental plans (LEPs). At that

time there was no mention of also getting rid of E4 on urban residential land. It is outrageous that they chose to hide their intentions from the public until after submissions to the Byron LEP had closed and with only one day remaining for Tweed LEP submissions.

They appear bent on getting rid of environmental constraints everywhere so as to allow unfettered development irrespective of the cost. This clearly has nothing to do with farming, as with their suspicious claims against E2 and E3. E4 zones protect bushland in and around our towns and suburbs. This bushland has no real agricultural production value, but could generate huge profits from misguided residential developments. It seems almost certain that purely creating short-term jobs and profits at the expense of irreplaceable environmental assets motivates it. It's the same old story – economy first, environment last.

The MPs are also calling on Minister Hazzard to give landholders opposing E-zones a private audience with the review consultants, in what appears to be an attempt to subvert any chance of an independent merits-based review. The current process of making fundamental changes to our planning rules in secretive backroom deals and hinting at them by press releases has to stop.

Our local members have to come clean and let this community know the full scope and detail of the changes they are making to our planning system. The whole community deserves to be given a say and not kept in the dark.

Given that all residents have a stake in the outcomes of this gutting of local environmental controls, and a right to have a say on the outcomes of local environmental plans, we ask that an open and transparent process of public consultation be used to give everyone a fair say.

The Whitehaven Hoax

Will it split the anti-mining movement?

by Jessica Lowe

An editorial in *The Land* newspaper, 'Hoax makes headlines, but does it help?' (10th Jan 13), referring to the anti-mining hoax targeting the Whitehaven company committed by Jonathan Moylan, makes the valid point that Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining is certainly "...an issue on which farmers and green groups share a lot of common ground."

But it goes on to say: "If self-described environmentalists continue irrational and extreme actions, the common ground they share with farmers on this issue is likely to fast diminish".

Well, I'm a farmer, and I don't agree.

First, in a large group, there will always be those who behave in ways others dislike. However, they still share 'common ground' with the group. In this case, the large group includes everyone who is concerned about various aspects of the Australian mining industry. People react in a variety of ways when they are threatened. Our environment is 'common ground' for us all.

In this case, Whitehaven Coal is threatening our 'common ground'. If Whitehaven's proposed mine goes ahead, it will destroy "...half of the Leard State Forest, which contains more than 1500 hectares of Box Gum Woodland – listed as a critically endangered ecological community... and ... home to 34 threatened species..." (*The Land*, 10th Jan 13, p.8).

Second, let's examine these 'irrational and extreme actions'. Phil Laird and his family have farmed near the Leard State Forest for 160 years. He is a farmer who is directly threatened by Whitehaven's proposed mine. Speaking about Jonathan Moylan's actions, Mr Laird said, "My private view is that anything that brings attention to this issue is to be applauded."

Phil Laird and Mal Peters are two farmers who appear to be part of a large group who have realised that the time for being worried about whether one is being tainted by associating with 'extremists' is over. The time for action has arrived.

The most effective action would be to halt all NEW mining projects, while we have a national debate, followed by a referendum on mining. Over 86% of residents (including a large proportion of farmers) voted against CSG mining in its current form in the Lismore Council poll: what would the rest of the country say, if they were given a chance to speak? Perhaps then people like Jonathan Moylan wouldn't have to put themselves on the line for us.

Let's turn our attention away from individuals ("are they really farmers? ... are they extremists?"), to the real question, which is: "How do Australians want mining to be carried out in Australia?"

Jiggi catchment grant

Jiggi Catchment Landcare Group Inc, has been successful with its application to the NSW Environmental Trust for funding to undertake bush regeneration work over six years to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

What makes this project different is that it is using wildlife corridors to connect Landcare groups who have a shared vision of restoring natural vegetation on their properties.

As the north coast of NSW has developed, the natural environment has become increasingly fragmented, as a result there has been a significant decline in many species.

Fragmentation of landscapes reduces species' and ecosystems' capacity to adapt to altered climatic conditions.

The Jiggi group has combined with two other Landcare groups and two school Landcare groups to ensure the project objectives are met. The consortium consists of Mulvena Road Landcare, Nimbin Rocks Cooperative Landcare, Goolmangar School and Jiggi School Landcare groups and Jiggi Catchment Landcare.

Vanessa Ekins, Lismore City Council Greens councillor, launched the project at Jiggi in December. Vanessa said, "As a long-time member of Landcare I appreciate the exhilaration felt by landcare recipients, knowing they can achieve the

previously unachievable."

Seven properties in three valleys will be included; all are linked by mapped wildlife corridors. This partnership ensures the NSW Environmental Trust objectives; to encourage and support restoration and rehabilitation projects, are met.

The project will engage professional bush regenerators working alongside landcare members to protect and enhance high conservation value vegetation through weed control and planting.

These sites link key habitat for threatened species and form regional corridors for threatened species including koala, squirrel gliders and rose-crowned fruit dove, to name a few.

The project will provide financial assistance to land managers to conserve and enhance respective remnant vegetation, opening and strengthening species migration pathways whilst ensuring a vigorous genetic base and continuous migration corridors in times of threat.

Environmental weeds including lantana are degrading native plant communities and limiting regeneration. The capacity of land care group members to manage environmental weeds on their sites will be strengthened through training in restoration techniques and working alongside professional bush regenerators.

Forest licence breaches

Conservation groups have condemned Forests NSW and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) following the release of details of hundreds of breaches of forestry licences and codes.

During the 2011-2012 financial year, the EPA found that Forests NSW had breached its licences and relevant codes 634 times at the 39 sites the authority inspected.

"Given that the EPA only investigated 39 areas last year, this is an average of 16 breaches in each logging operation, of which there are hundreds every year," Nature Conservation Council CEO Pepe Clarke said.

"It is very disturbing that despite the high number of breaches the EPA issued only 17 warning letters and 10 infringement notices. This culture of non-compliance won't stop until real and meaningful penalties for non-compliance are applied."

Forestry regulations and licence conditions are designed to protect threatened native species and fish habitat in the state's native forests. They also protect streams and catchments from excessive run-off and siltation that results from forestry operations.

Specifically, breaches include:

- Failure to mark up exclusion zone boundaries and habitat features;
- Failure to complete koala surveys;
- Failure to observe outcrop exclusion zones;
- Failure to retain recruitment and habitat trees;
- Logging within stream exclusion zones; and
- Piling of debris around habitat trees.

North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) spokesperson Dailan Pugh said while the number of offences detected was very high, it was only the tip of the iceberg.

"We have been identifying and reporting breaches by Forests NSW for decades and the organisation and its environmental performance has not improved," Mr Pugh said.

"Until there are meaningful deterrents, Forests NSW will go on routinely

damaging the environment.

"People caught speeding 45km/h above the limit in a school zone are fined \$2,296, but when Forests NSW is caught repeatedly breaching licence conditions aimed at reducing impacts on streams or threatened species over 90 per cent of the time they get away scot-free. For their worst offences they get a \$300 slap on the wrist."

Mr Pugh said the EPA's lax record on enforcement was putting threatened species at risk.

"NEFA had reported numerous breaches in Doubleduke State Forest, between Maclean and Evans Head," he said.

"The EPA simply refused to investigate most of these, including logging and roading within what ought to have been an exclusion zone for an endangered plant, logging and roading within a wetland, and failing to identify and protect Yellow-bellied Glider feed trees."

South East Forest Rescue spokesperson Lisa Stone said the State Government must give the EPA adequate resources to monitor forestry operations more closely and increase penalties.

"The amount of audits conducted annually by the EPA only covers 3 to 4 per cent of total logging operations," said Ms Stone. "On the South Coast compliance has not improved and logging intensity has increased. SEFR has not seen a logging compartment that does not contain breaches."

Mr Clarke said: "If the government is not prepared to enforce its own regulations then it should get out of the way and let the public do the job for it. Citizens are currently not permitted to take action in relation to forestry operations to ensure environmental laws are enforced, as they are in many other areas of environmental law."

"The government should amend the Forestry Act 2012(NSW) to allow third parties to remedy breaches resulting from unlawful forestry operations and increase the maximum fine to \$1.1 million in line with similar environmental offences."



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Aquarius fundraiser

Nimbin Aquarius Foundation will present Gumaroy Newman (pictured) with traditional touring dance company Yidaki Yulugi for a night of dance and story-telling at Nimbin Town Hall on Tuesday 26th February.



Gumaroy is a leading Indigenous cultural presenter, educator, entertainer, MC, traditional song-man, didgeridoo master and award-winning poet. The night will be filled with traditional dance, language, poetry and story-telling, including by Nimbin story-tellers.

Doors will open at 5pm, with a children's dance and language workshop from 5-7.30pm. Entry for children under 13 is free.

The main show will start at

8.30pm with a welcome back to country by Bundjalung elders, and will include performances by Matt James, Tribal Groove and Azadoota, with local DJs playing throughout the night. There will be CD give-aways, and yummy food, drinks and treats will be available.

This is a family-friendly event that is drug and alcohol free, and promises to be a unique, memorable night.

Nimbin's choir, vocal minority

2012 was a very good year for the choir, with a number of new singers joining. Some were away for the carol night at Nimbin Central School in December, but a core group (pictured) performed in



three-part harmony to an appreciative audience.

The internet displays a huge amount of information about group singing, specifically where voices are singing in harmony. Here is an excerpt from one survey:

"A large majority of respondents agreed they had benefited socially (87%) and emotionally (75%), with 58% agreeing they had benefited in some physical way, and 49% spiritually. A content analysis of written comments revealed common themes: meeting new people, feeling more positive, increased control over breathing, feeling more alert and feeling spiritually uplifted.

With respect to health benefits, 84% of participants gave answers, the main themes of which related to improved lung function and breathing, improved mood and stress reduction."

Bear this in mind as the new school term starts, and see if you would like to come along. The choir meets in the Nimbin Central School library during term time, on Tuesdays, 5 - 6.30pm, at a cost of \$5 per session.

Newcomers, whether experienced or new to choral singing, are welcome to start any time.

Contact Val Mace on 6689-1700, or just come along.

Welcome to Country



Part of the crowd at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre

Nimbin Aquarius Foundation began celebrating the Nimbin Aquarius 40th anniversary year with a Nimbin Bundjalung Elders 'Welcome to Country' event at the Nimbin Aboriginal Arts and Culture Centre on Thursday, 17th January.

Colourful flags and rainbow decorations created a warm and welcoming vibe. A diverse group of folk representing all ages and aspects of the Nimbin community gathered and were warmly welcomed by Uncle Cecil Roberts. He voiced his support for the Aquarius ideals, and expressed what a wonderful community Nimbin is. He also paid tribute to the ongoing friendship between the Bundjalung people and the new settlers over the past 40 years.

Uncle Cecil then introduced Paul Joseph, the Aquarius songman and one of the original Nimbin Aquarius Festival planners. Paul told the story of how a couple of South African refugees/anti-apartheid activists and Bar and Mahier Stone had the job to invite the Aboriginal communities to the Aquarius Festival, as the organisers were white and had no idea how to approach them. This was the first time in Australian history that Aboriginal people were invited to a non-

aboriginal event/festival.

Paul mentioned that over the years since then, a tradition has evolved of acknowledging that we are on Aboriginal land at any significant event, including in Parliament House, Canberra. He then went on to sing his song that pays homage to Nimbin dreaming: 'The Giant Lies Dreaming.'

Uncle Cecil then introduced Katie Cawcutt, who told us that we have spent the past 40 years working hard at recycling Nimbin, and now is the time to enjoy it. She said, "We don't have to pack up the tents and go home." She told us that many events will be happening throughout 2013 for the Aquarius Anniversary year. Katie then sang a song: 'We're all Part of a Family'.

A fine feast was prepared by the mob, and happily shared by all. A travelling clowning group ran activities for the children throughout the day. Later in the day, Steve Didge sang and danced with friends and shared traditional songs.

You can visit us online at www.aquarius2013.nimbin.nsw.au

Events planning is still happening on Tuesdays in the Comskool Room at the Nimbin Community Centre between 2pm and 5pm. Feel welcome to come in and get involved.

Kirtan Camp

Following on from the success of his last Northern NSW visit, Chakradhyan from Chant Yoga Melbourne, is returning to the region to teach and lead kirtan at "Kirtan Camp" - Sat 23rd to Tues 26th February - the first one of its type in Australia, and a warm-up event to the Byron Spirit Festival in March.

The camp caters to beginner and advanced levels, or for those who simply have an interest in kirtan. The teaching material covers the basics of kirtan and music, including playing and learning about your harmonium, singing skills and Indian scales.

For the more advanced: timing and energy in kirtan; accompanying musicians; creating Bhav (feeling); group and teacher feedback. These will be combined with other practices, nightly kirtan and relaxation time to enhance your experience.



Chakradhyan will be joined by local teachers invited to teach Master classes. Tahir Qawwal, Indian Classical and Pakistani Qawwali musician will teach the traditional musical basis for music from the Indian subcontinent and raga and vocal techniques.

He will also lead a traditional Sufi kirtan with his partner Bhairavi Devi.

Layananda Grady, yoga teacher and kirtanist, will teach vocal toning, raga and chant and chakra balancing through Nada Yoga.

Lucky Wonders to rock the Sphinx



Fresh from touring their acclaimed new album *Lay Down My Arms* through Europe and Western Australia, indie folksters, The Lucky Wonders are getting set for their first venture to New Zealand. On Sunday 24th February, The Luckies bring their uplifting show to Sphinx Rock Cafe.

sphinx rock café

3220 Kyogle Rd, Mt Burrell NSW 2484 P (02) 6679 7118 www.sphinxrockcafe.com

Sunday Gig Guide

February 2pm start

10th Andy Jans Brown

Blending grooves with a pop sense of catchy melodies.

17th Method

Bill Jacobi and Frank Corby play roots, folk and rock.

24th Lucky Wonders

Byron Bay based folk, Indie and pop with fantastic vibes.

March

3rd Rachel by the Stream

Rachel by the Stream elevates her audience into a state of celebration for life, love and the power of music, using a loop pedal.

NIMBIN BOWLO



25 Sibley Street
Phone 6689-1250

What's On in February?

- **Sunday 10th** - Ballina Rabbit Trappers club visit
- **Saturday 16th** - Mullumbimby Old Boys
- **Sunday 17th** - Cobaki Cobbers club visit
- **Open Mic Night** - Wednesdays 13th & 27th, from 7pm
- **Raffles** - Fridays at 7.30pm
- **Trivia Quiz** - Saturdays at 7pm



CHINESE RESTAURANT



- Lunch & dinner Tues - Sun
- Friday Banquets
- Take-Aways
- Phone 6689-1473

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Nimbin Hotel & Backpackers

53 Cullen Street, Nimbin. Ph: 6689-1246



February Gigs

Thursday 7th	6.30pm	Ian Rowe
Friday 8th	7.30pm	The Hoochers
Saturday 9th	6pm	Paul Vedant
Sunday 10th	5pm	Les Karski
Thursday 14th	6.30pm	Surf Report
Friday 15th	7.30pm	Kellie and The Daze
Saturday 16th	5pm	Keogh
Sunday 17th	5pm	TBA
Thursday 21st	6.30pm	Richie Williams
Friday 22nd	7.30pm	Split Chickens
Saturday 23rd	6pm	Radioutkast
Sunday 24th	4pm	Guy Kachel
Thursday 28th	6pm	Kellie (on her own)
MARCH		
Friday 1st	7.30pm	Dr Baz and The Bluestarz
Saturday 2nd	6pm	Hi Life Wedding
Sunday 3rd	5pm	Stephen Brandon

All Gigs are Free of Charge

Hummingbird Bistro

Bistro Specials: Mon \$10 pasta;
Thurs \$10 steak 250g



Blue Knob Farmers Market news

Two anti-CSG protesters (Cath and Nettie) unloading some food donations from Blue Knob Farmer's Market.
Photo by Marie Cameron

by Jim Arachne

Last year the market at the Nimbin Show where our paddock-to-plate café (with a menu of only local ingredients sourced from local growers and producers) returned \$3,000 to the local economy – proving that you can “Think Global, Eat Local”. The market also ran a Speakers' Tent with back-to-back seminars on sustainability and self-sufficiency with around 250 enthusiastic people attending.

Another special event, earlier in the year, was the combination Market's 2nd Birthday plus our first ever Pumpkin Festival and a fundraising Bush Dance for the Blue Knob Gallery – a unique and highly successful event!

February's Free Talks

Saturday 9th, 10am

– Anti-CSG Update, Philippe Dupuy

Philippe, President of the Nimbin Environment Centre, will give an update on Metgasco's current activities and local people's actions and strategies to ultimately drive them out of the area.

The Blue Knob Market also has a collection site for food donations supporting anti-CSG protests at the Backyarders Stall.

Saturday 16th, 10am

– Wild Dog Control, Neil Hing and Wendy Gibney

Wild dogs cause big problems for farmers and animal owners. Over a three-year period in the Northern Rivers several years ago wild dogs killed 5,807 head of livestock.

Locally many people report domestic dogs, poultry and other livestock being killed or attacked and

people being threatened.

Wendy, the Wild Dog Project Officer with NOROC will give a brief overview of the problem of wild and roaming domestic dogs. Neil is a Ranger with the Livestock Health and Pest Authority and will be talking about direct wild dog control – shooting, trapping and baiting.

Saturday 23rd, 10am – Soil Testing, Stuart McConville

Simple home tests and an inexpensive pH test kit can tell us many useful things about our soil. Stuart will show us some hands-on soil testing by taking soil samples from around the Market site to determine basics such as; structure, texture, clay content, soil profiles, pH etc. Get down and dirty with your soil!

Stuart owns and runs a small pecan and garlic farm, while also running a consultancy business Pooh Solutions, designing on-site composting toilets, water re-use, and disposal systems. Read his regular column on page 17.

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

The market runs Saturdays, rain, hail or shine, 8:30am to ~12noon, corner of Blue Knob & Lillian Rock Rds., 8km from Nimbin in the grounds of the Blue Knob Gallery.



Nimbin natural beekeepers

by James Creagh



The warm dry summer this year has provided near-perfect conditions for the bees. We have never harvested so much honey. The hives have been thriving and there has been much less swarming compared to past years.

The rainy season has started with one of the wildest storms we have had here – we had many trees down and three bee boxes were blown over. It was a real mess re-assembling them in the wind and rain. So far they seem to be doing fine. The wet weather will slow down the bees. With the high humidity we have this time of the year, we have to be vigilant with the small hive beetle, as this is when they are most active and can wipe out a hive very quickly.

World news

It was reported in *The Guardian* 16/1/13 that the world's most widely used insecticide has for the first time been officially labeled an 'unacceptable' danger to bees feeding on flowering crops. Environmental campaigners say the conclusion, by Europe's leading food safety authority, sounds the death knell for the insect nerve agent.

This new generation of insecticide, known as 'neonicotinoids' is relatively new but is packaged with different names with the active ingredient being: Acetamiprid, Clothianidin, Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid, Nitenpyram, Thiacloprid or Thiamethoxam. They are available from Lismore at hardware shops and gardening/farming suppliers.

If you feel you do need to use these insecticides, do so with minimal impact by spraying in late afternoon when there is little or no wind.

See: www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/jan/16/insecticide-unacceptable-danger-bees

Asian bees

There was another Asian bee scare in Townsville in mid-January. A hive was discovered in a shipping container on a vessel that arrived from Port Moresby, PNG. DAFF says the swarm was not carrying the destructive varroa mite, which has wiped out bee populations around the world, but is not currently present in Australia. "We don't want them to spread very quickly because they will be a problem in the first instance to the environment, where they will compete with native insects for food sources and nesting sites."

See www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201301/s3669232.htm

Local hives

There are two feral hives in Nimbin that we are planning to move: One under the verandah at the pub and the other in an old fig tree next to the stage at the Nimbin Community Centre. There have been reports of stings from both hives, so we'll try and retrieve as many as we can and seal up the hives. Not always an easy or successful endeavour, but better than having them sprayed.

If you see any swarms, please contact Bayleigh from the Nimbin Natural Beekeepers group ASAP. A swarm is a cluster of bees that will settle until a suitable home is found. They usually land in trees, shrubs or on fences. Phone Bayleigh on 0413 976 342.

Top bar hive

Top bar hives (pictured) were designed for Third World countries, and are a more natural way of keeping bees. They are easily constructed and with little cost, since the frames are only a strip of wood. I have been experimenting with them here at Tutti Fruitti Farm and have learnt much about how to keep bees, using this type of box.

They are a very simple system with their pros and cons. They do allow the bees to construct their honeycomb in a more natural way. The boxes need a bit more maintenance, especially watching that the comb doesn't attach to the inside of the box so you can't remove the frame. One of the big disadvantages is that the honeycomb can't be re-used, it is crushed in the harvesting. Nevertheless it is a fun way to keep bees that I'd like to share in a workshop some this year for anyone interested.

Phone Tower for Nimbin

Last December Brigit Richards from Brisbane gave a talk at Birth and Beyond about the dangers of electromagnetic pollution. This was an opportunity to hear of the health risks involved in living in the range of mobile phone emissions. The dangers of these emissions also apply to bees, as has been experienced in other parts of the world. The wave of mobile technology seems unstoppable, but it is hoped the health risks are part of any decision when the placement of the tower is considered.

Mullumbees

I ran a third and final 'Introduction to Beekeeping' workshop late last year at Mullumbimbees Natural Beekeeping Group will soon begin regular meetings and start getting boxes and hives together. We set up a young hive in the gardens, which will provide an opportunity for the community to learn about caring for a hive.



Donations

Anyone with bee equipment, eg. smokers, extractors, melters, who would like to donate it to the Nimbin Natural Beekeepers group, please contact us. We can pick up.

Bee space

Anyone interested in keeping bees but may not have the space to do it let us know. Helena, at helenaherendi@yahoo.de and Dolph at dolph@biocharproject.org are offering space on their land. If you are interested in hosting bees on your land let us know.

Monthly meetings

Monthly meetings of the Nimbin Natural Beekeepers Group began on 3rd February and are held on the first Sunday of the month. The meetings are an opportunity to get together and share info about keeping bees and to support new beekeepers get started using more natural ways if keeping bees. For more info contact: jamescreagh@hotmail.com

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Hemp party needs funds

Announcing the September election date, Julia Gillard has launched operation "join the fight" which couldn't be more opposite to what the HEMP Party is campaigning on. "We're all about ending the war," said President Michael Balderstone.

The Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party, registered and running in the Federal election on 14th September, reckons

it will be a dark horse in the field, if it can raise the cash to run candidates.

Michael said, "We've got over 2,000 members and plenty of enthusiasm, but little cash. Everyone's keen following the law changes in the US, but we need \$2,000 in each State to run candidates.

"No matter what, we are determined to get the issue on the agenda and will be touring NSW

with the Big Joint in the pre-election campaigning.

"People are tired of being hurt and tired of watching their family and friends get hurt by the 'war on drugs'. Especially the war on cannabis use, a plant that never killed anyone.

Its medical properties are beyond question now, and it is appalling that people are persecuted while we await 'scientific proof' of the plant's efficacy.

"The HEMP Party will call on all federal political parties to outline their stance regarding medicinal

and recreational cannabis use in Australia.

"There is an urgent need. Every Monday morning, in courthouses across Australia, thousands of otherwise blameless and hard-working citizens face criminal charges for using cannabis.

"These people will be labelled as criminals, will be fined or imprisoned; all for something that the majority of Aussies believe should carry no penalty at all. Yet still our politicians remain silent.

This is simply not good enough.

"Most of America has changed its mind. In a growing number of other countries around the world the law has changed: but in our country the debate has stagnated entirely. Why?"

"Hopefully the current NSW Senate enquiry into medical cannabis will get the ball rolling before the election and we urge everyone to make a submission before the closing date of 15th February."

You can join or donate at: www.australianhempparty.com

Drumming unda homeless

by Undacuva

The Friday night drumming outside a well known tourist attraction has had such an impact in the log books I've been ordered to find out why. Everything shows up in the stats, eventually, and anything that keeps a crowded street peaceful and incident free finds its way to the top of the pile. I have to admit I rarely miss a drumming night so the work is not really work, as usual.

"What's their secret, Bethany?" The Boss is genuinely puzzled and for once I'm lost for words. Count the homeless, monitor CSG protestors, keep an eye on the river of weed, now tell them why drumming keeps the peace. I need a raise!

There are no exact answers of course which drives the stat dept crazy, but keeps us all in a job. Everything and everybody must be labelled. Everyone and everything has a box, a category, a department, a file, and a label. Nothing is left loose. Even uncertainties are in a file called uncertainties.

I stabbed at it. "They love the hypnotic mystical state Boss. The drumming creates an altered state if you ride the beats to euphoria." He stared at me for way too long. "Write that in your report", was all he said. "Now what about the homeless numbers?"

I tried to explain the count turned into a nightmare. "Disasters are heaven for the homeless Boss. Free food and fresh blankets, people appeared from everywhere. Anyway, is a feral CSG protestor refusing dole payments and sleeping in a tent homeless?" The Boss couldn't answer, and neither could I. I gave him the recordings I'd made around the campfires down the creek and in the park.

Hanging out with the homeless means hanging out with plenty of blackfellas, and



Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

as it turns out, laughing a lot. They're not really homeless as they share like family and someone will have a roof. If one's broke, everyone is broke. Me too quickly then, and despite a lot of pressure to drink grog, my endless stash of 'number one yarndi' saved me and kept everyone entertained. "How is it the people with nothing can laugh so much?" asks the Boss who spends hours listening to these tapes, which are full of psychobabble and prophecies, confessions and courtship. You name it, we discuss it in the melting pot of street life.

"They live in another world", says the fascinated Boss. "It's not easy this system for a lot of people", I mumble, in role. "Many of them had a mind altering trip, or a life shattering experience, and could never return to their old ways. Often a tragedy and nothing made sense anymore for them".

In one month I met doctors and lawyers, housewives and hopeless teens, loners and the lonely, but mostly seekers of truth one way or another.

The Boss listens again and again to them laughing about whitefella ways. "They die of loneliness with a neighbour a few metres away over the fence they never even met". Another roar of drunken laughter. It infuriates him as much as fascinates him.

"If you have nothing to look after or lose you have a lot of free time, eh Bethany?" He wasn't really asking a question, staring at me again, for a long time, with a clenched jaw and furrowed brow.

Who is more the fool, the fool or the idiot who speaks to him, I wondered, from somewhere.

I ended up guessing 115 homeless around the Bin on average throughout the year. You laugh, but that includes couch surfers (55%) and car sleepers (another 25%). Cars can't be included as homes, insisted the stat people who couldn't get their head around the idea. They're the lucky ones I thought. The Bin is so popular, the real estate told me they had hundreds on a waiting list for a roof over their head.

New date set for Mulloways court case

The long-awaited hearing against Tony Bower and his Mullaway Medical Cannabis operation, set down for 29th January in Kempsey, had to be postponed due to the floods, disappointing supporters of medical cannabis who had planned a convoy to support their dispensary in court.

A new date for the trial, widely seen as a test case, has been set for April 23.

Mr Bower has been supplying free cannabis tincture to several hundred patients, most suffering from cancer, for several years now, and has approval from the TGA and the cognisance and oversight of NSW Health. He was charged with growing about 200 plants.

He said, "I'm keen to get the case over with, and move forward towards regulated medical cannabis."

HEMP HEADLINES

Israel: Studying Marijuana and its loftier purpose

[NY Times]

Among the rows of plants growing at a government-approved medical marijuana farm in the Galilee hills in northern Israel, one strain is said to have the strongest psychoactive effect of any cannabis in the world. Another, rich in anti-inflammatory properties, will not get you high at all. Marijuana is illegal in Israel, but farms like this one, at a secret location near the city of Safed, are at the cutting edge of the debate on the legality, benefits and risks of medicinal cannabis. Its staff members wear white lab coats, its growing facilities are fitted with state-of-the-art equipment for controlling light and humidity, and its grounds are protected by security cameras and guards. But in addition to the high-tech atmosphere, there is a spiritual one. The plantation, Israel's largest and most established medical marijuana farm – and now a thriving commercial enterprise – is imbued with a higher sense of purpose, reflected by the aura of Safed, an age-old center of Jewish mysticism, as well as by its name, Tikkun Olam, a reference to the Jewish concept of repairing or healing the world.

Pot smokers might not turn into dopes after all

[Nature]

Cannabis rots your brain – or does it? Last year, a paper published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) suggested that people who used cannabis heavily as teenagers saw their IQs fall by middle age. But a study published today – also in PNAS – says that factors unrelated to cannabis use are to blame for the effect.

German medical marijuana patients allowed to grow their own

[tokeofthetown.com]

A court in Germany has ruled that seriously ill patients may grow their own cannabis for medicinal uses. Under the ruling, severely ill Germans – for whom no other therapies are available or effective, but who may receive a medical benefit from cannabis – may be allowed to grow medical marijuana at home.

Decriminalise drugs, inquiry by UK cross-party peers says

[BBC News]

The possession and use of all illegal drugs should be decriminalised, a cross-party group of peers has said. The least harmful



A medical marijuana farm in Israel, blending the high-tech and the spiritual. Photo: NY Times

should be regulated and sold in licensed shops, with labels detailing risks, the group concluded. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Drug Policy Reform (APPG) said criminal sanctions did not combat drug addiction, and only marginalised users. Additionally, a report from the British Medical Association is calling for drug addiction to be treated like any other illness.

High Times' Cannabis Cup to be held in U.S. for first time

[dailycaller.com]

High Times is taking its Cannabis Cup competition for recreational marijuana to Denver April 20-21, the first time the event has been held in the United States. For the past 25 years, it's taken place in pot-friendly Amsterdam, where coffee shop owners and seed manufacturers compete for the title of Best Bud in The Netherlands. But Colorado is now more liberal about marijuana than even Amsterdam – where it's illegal to grow pot in the Netherlands, it's a constitutional right in Colorado. With the passage of Amendment 64 in November 2012, adults 21 and older can possess up to an ounce of pot, grow a limited number of plants and smoke weed with virtual impunity, as long as it's in private.

North Korea smokes weed every day

[vice.com]

North Korea, the most tight-lipped, conservative, and controlling country in the world is also a weed-smoker's paradise. Despite the government's deadly serious stance on the use and distribution of hard drugs like crystal meth (which has a notorious legacy in the country), marijuana is reportedly not considered a drug. As a result, it's the discerning North Korean gentleman's roll-up of choice, suggesting that, for weed smokers at least, North Korea might just be paradise after all.

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