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Letters to the editor

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

CSG compensation

After considerable angst, the Mergasco company has decided to put forward to its shareholders a deal that would compensate the company \$25 million for not exploring for coal seam gas in the contracted areas of the NSW North Coast.

The shareholders are saying that it's not enough, that the potential wealth for them under the ground is worth more. The politicians are asking to rescind the contract as there is so much protest about it. The protestors are jubilant that they won't have to worry about the environmental damage this industry would bring, and the media moves along to the next thing that draws attention.

What is confusing is how it came to be that such an environmentally devastating industry, which grew out of Dick Chaney's influence in the U.S.A's Bush administration, wormed its way to corrupt politicians and greedy businessmen in Australia, who put their moral values so low on the scale of what it means to be part of a planet suffering from global warming, that it could only be stopped by mass protest. In some Australian communities like Chinchilla, Queensland and Gloucester NSW, the danger warnings came too late, and the CSG companies locked on like cattle ticks on a baby.

Thanks to people like Sue Higginson from the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), Aidan Ricketts, the Lock the Gate Alliance, the Knitting Nannas and many more, this area is likely to be saved.

At Andy Frame's funeral (he was one of the pioneer protesters who wrestled Protestors Falls from the

Philloggers and established the Nightcap National Park), someone told the story of how, when the original organisers of the 1973 Aquarius Festival asked the local aboriginal elders for use of their land, the reply was that it was the first time consent had been granted, and because of this the country will preserve its environment. So thanks to all those who took time from their jobs and risked police harassment to force preservation of our water and lifestyle.

Maybe they could get together and sue the Mergasco shareholders for the inconvenience, or maybe they could claim the resources under the shareholders' homes and claim compensation when the potential wealth was blocked by protest.

PS. The EDO needs community funding to continue its good work.

Yagia Gentle,
Nimbin

Kyogle goes it alone

At the Kyogle council meeting on 18th November, a large contingent of concerned ratepayers attended to hear their representatives discuss amalgamation or to remain as a single entity.

All councillors were on time except for Ross Brown. When he did come in, he informed us that he had been talking to Thomas George. Murmurs of awe resonated silently around the chambers.

Various councillors spoke to the motion as put by the Mayor that we not join with Lismore or Casino. One old dear said she needed more time to think about it. Another councillor said let's stop "duck shoving" and get on with it. I had no idea that that sort of thing went on in our community.

Ross Brown started with his usual tactic of delay. He had received a paper that morning (6 hours ago) and needed time to read it. The general manager stated that it only took fifteen minutes to read it. Some heckling ensued from the rear of the room. Ross said, "Yeah yeah I've heard that a hundred times." I think that indicates that he needs to take note of the majority opinion.

Then Ross accused the Mayor of pushing him into a

corner. Danielle took strong exception to this and fired up quite well. Ross didn't push that line any further. With a bit more "duck shoving", the motion went to the vote. The result, as far as Kyogle council is concerned, we will not amalgamate. Yahoo!

Don Durrant,
Afterlee

Phone tower vote

On Tuesday 8th December at 6pm, the Lismore Council Councillors will be voting on the proposed Telstra mobile phone tower for High Street/Falls Road Nimbin. The Council meeting will be held at the Council Corporate Centre at 43 Oliver Avenue, Goonellabah.

I have been in personal communication with all of the councillors, and I get the distinct impression that a strong turn-out of local residents opposed to the tower will be influential.

I will speak in opposition to the tower, and have booked in to do so. Others can speak too, but between us we have only five minutes.

I will briefly reiterate the points we raised in the group submission that was lodged in October. To view this submission, (Robert Lonetree and 59 others) and all of the other relevant documents concerning this proposed development, visit the Lismore City Council website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/home.asp

Go to DA tracking, and under Application details, at 'DA number', insert 229/2015 then hit search. Then click on the green highlighted heading: '2 Falls Road Nimbin NSW 2480'. All documents will then be available to inspect.

Please also note that although the official date for submissions regarding this DA has expired, council is legally obliged to consider all submissions right up until they have voted on the issue and a decision has been made. Please lodge your objections to this DA before 8th December.

The councillors should also be lobbied individually. Their contact information is also on the LCC website.

Rob Lonetree,
Nimbin

Remembrance Day

Thanks go to all those who attended the Remembrance Day commemoration service at the Nimbin District Memorial. It was a short and respectful gathering in solemn remembrance.

Special thanks go to Lt Col Mat Brumley for the Commemorative Address, Pastor Jim Gallagher for his prayers and words, and, Bob Dooley for the PA, and thank you to the teachers and students of the Nimbin

Central School and Coffee Camp Public School for their continued attendance and support of our ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services.

Paul Le Bars,
Nimbin

Tall Poppy Syndrome

The 'Tall Poppy Syndrome' refers to the habit of criticising people we view as successful, and works something like this:

Lacking confidence about ourselves exposes us to emotional insecurity. These feelings intensify when confronted by people who have something we ourselves do not. This 'something' can involve any recognisable talent or achievement.

Anyone we perceive as more capable than ourselves can pose a threat, because their achievements are an 'in our face' reminder of what we are not (at least in our own mind).

Consequently, our fragile egos respond with criticism. Slagging off someone who is successful or more talented helps us to feel better. The tall poppy is cut down so it no longer threatens those poppies with a sense of inadequacy.

Rather than encouraging a generous spirit, emotional insecurity inclines us towards fear and cynicism. Yet instead of projecting our doubts, a better response might lie in the opposite direction. By owning our emotional reactions, we avoid being so threatened by them.

In preference to feeling intimidated by others, we can be strong enough to smile and know that whether short or tall, it is the content of our character that counts.

R J Poole
Lismore

Bold koala plan

Dr Steve Phillips was commissioned to direct the Tweed Coast Koala Habitat Study 2011 (TCKHS), which made recommendations to prevent localised koala extinction.

It states: "Revegetation work should focus primarily on "gap-filling" in large habitat blocks within and adjacent to mapped source populations" (p48). He has identified the Black Rocks sportsfield as an ideal location for tree planting in order to create a large habitat block because of its central location within the corridor for north-south and east-west koala movement.

TCKHS also states: "It will only be by effectively managing and recovering the remaining source populations that the whole will be preserved" (p62) ... "The primary focus of conservation and management efforts must be to maintain residency" (p60). We applaud

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the Koala Connections Project and volunteers (of whom I am one) for their koala tree planting efforts. However, there is no point in continuing to plant koala trees if there are no koalas left to take up residency.

At the Black Rocks sports field there is little focus on protecting the resident Black Rocks koala source population from hooning, unleashed dogs and other koala-impactive activities. Council recently approved a model aeroplane competition at this sportsfield, which is also used for very noisy petrol-powered model aeroplanes and paratroting. All in close proximity to koala habitat and the only naturally-occurring osprey nest on the Tweed Coast.

Our koalas are exposed to unacceptable levels of disturbance; they are dying from stress-related disease, bushfire, vehicle strike and dog attack. Their habitat is fragmented by roads. If the decline to extinction is to be reversed, Dr Phillips states: "An extraordinarily



bold and and recovery-oriented management plan is required" (2/12/2014).

Instead Council has resolved to impede koala recovery by replacing the existing koala protection gates at the sportsfield with a grid, allowing easy access night and day. Dogs are able to traverse grids (see YouTube) and a grid will not stop hooliganism or dogs that

are transported into the site by motor vehicle.

According to Dr Steve Phillips, the Black Rocks koalas need to be left alone to rest and recover to sustainable levels, not to be disturbed by human-related activities.

The resident Black Rocks koalas' primary food source is located in a thin strip sandwiched between the urban

footprint and the sports field, where there are inadequate buffers from impacts.

Let's give these koalas what the experts say they need to survive: a large safe undisturbed habitat block by revegetating the Black Rocks sports field.

Dave Norris, President, Threatened Species Conservation Society Inc Pottsville

Notices

For Sale

Chest freezers, large \$100, small \$50. Phone: 0448-334-327.

Wanted – Chef

Experience Chef required now for Phoenix Rising Café, Nimbin. Must be reliable, to work with minimum supervision. May lead to regular part-time employment. Please Phone David on 0418-824-598 or email: admin@phoenixrisingcafe.net

Wanted – Rental

Long-term rental accommodation wanted. 2-3 bedroom bush abode with facilities, bathtub, a decent kitchen, possible internet, with a garden to grow veggies and some storage options if possible, preferably in a 10km radius around Blue Knob/Lillian Rock. Lease runs out first week of January, so open for anything: a house, granny flat, converted shed or house share. Excellent references. Please call Joline on 0416-616-804.

Wanted – Filing cabinet

3 or 4 drawer filing cabinet sought for Tuntable Falls Community Preschool office. Free or not too expensive. Phone the preschool on 6689-1179 or call/message 0428-119-227 over the school holidays.

nbn installation disaster: still waiting

by Wendy Sarkissian

I soaked up the advertising for the nbn with great enthusiasm. I wanted what they were selling. Soon. Painlessly. I wanted to share in the expected 'exciting news' for small towns, rejoicing that 'access to fast broadband can provide a range of benefits for businesses such as improved opportunities to work from home.' That's me. I signed up.

Now, I'd say to my neighbours, 'Be afraid. Be very afraid.' Getting the nbn installed is not for young players. It's full of traps for rural people. It will really test your mettle to succeed without massive episodes of deep carpet sobbing. I've done the sobbing. Now I'd like to share my experiences so that others can be spared.

I think most people in Nimbin want the internet, whatever we're doing. I'm also worried about electromagnetic radiation and towers. And I have to run my business.

Our nbn (and Telstra) installation experience was an unmitigated disaster. Months into the process, we still do not have stable internet, as I write in late November. Both companies have brilliant 'case managers' and even 'consumer gateway access advisors' available 24/7 to help resolve catastrophes after they happen. They hire out-of-work actors with deep, reassuring voices.

In an attempt to be helpful, I'll spare you the details of how the impatient young nbn installer drilled four holes into a precious eco-designed insulated and ventilated vermin-proof west-facing wall (and then lied that he did). Or how he abandoned us with no service after installing the utility

'box' in a non-compliant location.

Weeks later, patient nbn installer Alan (blessedly greying at the temples) arrived, quickly diagnosed the errors and relocated the nbn box where we originally wanted it. He explained that basic greed underpinned the incredibly rushed behaviour of the young installer: more jobs per day equal more pay.

Alan's visit had taken hours of negotiation. He fixed the nbn errors. But Telstra never arrived to connect the box to the router, despite many confirmed and reconfirmed appointments. In the meantime – you guessed it – Telstra disconnected our broadband. (Another trap for young players.) So then we had nothing!

But enough about me.

Here's what you need to do. First, write everything down. Keep copies. Second, keep nbn to their protocols. I found them on the Web and they are excellent. That's how I worked out that behind my office door was a non-compliant location. The nbn *Installation Day: Quick Reference Guide for Installers* is excellent. The young gun ignored all of it. Had he followed it, we'd have been fine.

Here is what the nbn installers are supposed to do:

1. Explain what they are here to do;
2. Show the equipment;
3. Ask the resident if they have a medical and/or security alarm;
4. Identify and document agreed equipment installation location;
5. Explain what will take place and how long it will take; and
6. Review and educate us on the *End User Guide* and leave a copy.

Beware of the 'rural' traps here. The whole nbn system is designed for small urban apartments. The nbn advice says, 'If connecting a wireless router to your NBN equipment, consider the distance

and location of your devices.' That means that, as in our case, in a long house, you will not receive a good signal if you locate the router too far from the computers. But nobody told us and that's what happened to us. So now we have to rely on Ethernet cable.

Third, rely on the nbn installation published guidelines to select a location that fits these criteria:

- where fibre can be safely and efficiently run from the utility box, without special access work (new conduits);
- on the inside surface of an exterior wall or a wall easily accessible for cabling;
- near a dedicated power source;
- a safe location away from hazards where it may be knocked and damaged;
- in a cool, dry, ventilated area (clearance of 100mm on all sides) away from direct sunlight; and
- accessible for troubleshooting and port access.

Fourth, be aware that the low-budget Telstra 'self-install' option is not really rural-friendly for sprawling, high-set houses. When you open the cardboard box they send you, the Ethernet cables won't be long enough and you will be racing off to Dick Smith for longer ones. (Note: these cables are tricky to join; you need a special tool.) Fifth, don't sign anything until you've tested all your computers. And sixth (from a Canadian-born, consumer-rights gal), complain. Then you'll get a deep-voiced, sympathetic and reassuring 'gateway' chap who will fix things and even (if you're really crabby like me) arrange compensation.

Despite the rhetoric, the nbn and internet providers are not engaged in a 'team effort'. The right hand and the left hand... don't get me started!

Postscript on 24th November

Well, it's gone to hell in a basket. We may never have internet at this rate.

Despite the advice of the Telstra 'Customer First Champion' that we'd have the Telstra Platinum Service (the absolute top level) installed today, nobody told the installer that we had a long house. Or that he's at the end of a months-long complaint process.

He came with no equipment or cables and tried to encourage me to go exclusively with wireless. He also advised that the Platinum service gives you one cable connected to one computer. That's all. (I wonder what the Bronze service gives you?)

But I have read that it's wise to have Ethernet cable for better service, and I refused. So he's gone to consult with another case

manager, who has gone to lunch. In Hobart.

However, I have learned from him that there's such a thing as a "WiFi Extender" available from Officeworks for \$70 up. So if your house is long and nbn installs the utility box in the wrong (not central) place, you can just buy more expensive equipment if you can't get a wireless signal from one part of the house to another.

Or, as the installer suggested, the nbn should have originally put the box in the middle of the house in the first place. Duh! Didn't I already go there?

Buyer beware hardly cuts it for this debacle. Please, dear neighbours, be very careful. Or you will have nothing better than what we had before -- and you will definitely pay for it.

Remembering Lewis Parter

6-2-1961 – 25-9-2015

In memory of Lewis Parter, a.k.a. Kookaburra (Gargan), I would like to take the time to honour his memory.

We all knew Lewis as the storyteller; the yarns we all had with him, the person one would go to just to see his big, beautiful smile, or to hear him laugh, which he did quite often.

I recall countless afternoons sitting on Mother Earth, listening to his stories, laughing at his jokes, his vibrant energy all around.

As we all know, Lewis was a proud Aboriginal man who lived and breathed his culture and shared his knowledge with others.

He certainly passed his culture and knowledge on to me, and I live and breathe his beautiful culture. Thank you Lewis.

Lewis had a musical talent that was unique and very special. His music has touched countless souls around the world. I was honoured to watch him perform around the schools of Australia, and was touched deeply by his voice, his words and his music.

One never got tired of listening to Lewis sing and play guitar, didgeridoo, harmonica, bass or cello.

As I write this, I can see Lewis at the Oasis Café strumming a tune, making people smile and being happy. One will never forget, of course, the Kookaburra laugh.

Well, my Lewis, fly high, laugh hard Gargan. Love you always.

Karen Parter, Dorrroughby

Farmers markets set to lose business

Even though the new Prime Minister may not make as many gaffes as Tony Abbott did, and former Treasurer Joe 'poor people don't drive' Hockey has resigned, the discriminatory social security policies of the Liberal-National government continue.

Trials for cashless welfare cards have been given the go ahead on the combined vote of the Liberal-National party and the Labor party.

Under this scheme people on cashless welfare cards will receive only 20 percent of their income in cash in their bank accounts, while the other 80 percent will be put on a cashless card. This means 80 per cent of one's income is mandated, and can only be spent on bills and rent, and only at places that accept these cards – like big supermarkets. Only 20% is left for cash spending.

This plan will make life tougher for many. People living outside our cities will be particularly hard hit. Not only will these cashless welfare cards severely restrict their users' ability to buy goods including fresh, local produce at their own discretion, they will also impact on local businesses which trade only in cash. Local farmers markets, small food and fruit shops, and many other strip shopping businesses will lose out.

There is no evidence that cashless welfare



Green Scene

by Lee Rhiannon,
Greens NSW Senator

cards reduce disadvantage, but plenty of evidence to suggest that compulsory income management schemes have negative impacts on communities. Drug and alcohol dependency experts have criticised the program for being one-dimensional and simplistic. The Greens have voiced major concerns about the legislation, rushed through the Senate in October. We view it as being punitive and paternalistic.

Without Labor's support for the cashless welfare card, this bad policy would have not been passed by the parliament. The Greens will continue to push for income support schemes that are helpful and not harmful for communities.

During Anti-Poverty Week last month, Greens Senator Rachel Siewert called for an urgently needed increase to Newstart allowances of at least \$50 per week, and for adjustments to be made to other types of payments to more accurately reflect the high costs of living. The Greens believe that current welfare allowances are far too low.

We have also called for the development of a national anti-poverty plan. It is the responsibility of governments to ensure that all Australians are cared for. In a rich country like Australia it is time a guaranteed minimum income was introduced.

Kyogle Council notebook



by Cr Danielle Mulholland,
Mayor of Kyogle

Since my last column, a number of things have come to pass.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our new General Manager, David Tuxford. David has an extensive background in local government, and is proving to be a valued and experienced leader of our Council.

I've been puttering around the LGA as usual and attended a Rural Women's Day at Old Bonalbo. It was a great opportunity for rural women to get together, share some stories and be informed by some great local presenters. As per usual, the morning tea spread was

fabulous and it was only with difficulty that I dragged Councillor Reardon away from it!

A tip of the hat goes out to Malcolm Wallis, our Economic Development Officer for pulling together the agri-business seminar. Kyogle Council is taking the lead in co-ordinating these workshops to inform and educate the agricultural sector about potential opportunities available in relation to product demand, market selection, collaboration and resources available to farmers and landowners.

The NOROC annual general meeting and ordinary meeting were held on 6th November, and I am pleased to announce that Jenny Dowell was re-elected as President and I was re-elected as Deputy President. I look forward to working with Jenny and my other Northern Rivers colleagues over the next year, especially with the Joint Organisation proposal on the table.

During the ordinary meeting, we had a presentation from Lisa Braid from Department of Premier

and Cabinet regarding the Premier's new priorities and a discussion on State Planning priorities.

The NOROC Mayors travelled to Sydney on 12th November to speak with a raft of Ministers about various issues.

The actual local races at Tabulam this year had to be cancelled, but the event itself went ahead and was a great success. Congratulations to the organisers for another well-run day and we all look forward to next year.

'Women Light the Way' was a candlelight vigil, remembering the 72 victims who lost their lives to domestic violence and reinforcing that violence against women, indeed, violence against anyone is not acceptable under any circumstances.

Council has resolved that we will stand alone as a Council and not identify a merger partner under the Fit for the Future process.

Stay tuned for further updates.

Kyogle Council: 6632-0214.
Danielle.Mulholland@kyogle.nsw.gov.au

From the mayor's desk



by Cr Jenny Dowell

authorised the General Manager to negotiate with affected property owners and report back to Council.

Fit for the Future

Readers will know that all Councils in NSW excluding those in the far west, were required to submit a one-page on-line response with preferences to the suggested stand-alone or merger options by 18 November. Although Lismore City Council was deemed Fit for the Future, our neighbour Kyogle was not. Both Lismore and Kyogle have decided to lodge stand-alone options only. We may know our fate before the New Year.

NAG

It was good to welcome new members, Gwen Trimble and Sabina Brady to the Nimbin Advisory Group at our 5 November meeting. Items discussed included the repair and painting of the Allsopp Park mural, the Nimbin marketing campaign, the Cubes development and the role of the NAG. Please see the separate report on Page 2 in this edition.

December meeting 1

At the last ordinary Council meeting of 2015 on 8 December, we will be debating the Cubes development in Cullen Street. The proposal involves 32 rooms of tourist and visitor accommodation, a manager's residence, on-site parking, landscaping, tree removal and associated works via a Voluntary Planning agreement.

On Tuesday 1 December, Councillors will have the opportunity to visit to familiarise ourselves with the site and the proposed development.

Also on 1 December, we will

visit 2 Falls Road, the site for a proposed Telstra mobile phone base station. That development application will also be determined at the 8 December meeting.

December meeting 2

Council is holding an Extraordinary meeting on the evening of 15 December. At the meeting we will consider submissions to the public exhibition of the Planning Proposal to consider amending the Lismore Local Environmental Plan 2012 to rezone land at North Lismore Plateau and decide whether to proceed with the LEP amendment.

I understand that the owners are ready to lodge development applications so that work can finally start on the first stages of the largest housing development Lismore has seen in many, many decades.

Metgasco

After I had submitted my November piece, we heard the good news that Metgasco's board of directors and the State government had agreed to a \$25 million price for the buy-back of Metgasco's three Northern Rivers Petroleum Exploration Licences.

We now await the decision of the company's shareholders who meet on 16 December to consider the board's unanimous recommendation to accept this offer. Our community's celebrations can only truly take place after that decision is made, but the champagne is on ice.

Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan

The energy and passion in the Nimbin Hall on Sunday 22

November for the review of the Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan was fantastic. Well done to the 60 participants who reviewed the previous plan to make sure it meets the needs of the community.

The nine table discussion on Arts and Culture, Housing and the Built Environment, Environment Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Economic Development Jobs and Skills, Social and Political, Transport, Health and Wellbeing, Energy and Food Security were lively, and a fine example of participatory democracy. Thanks and congratulations to Nat Meyer who did a great job as organiser and facilitator.

Police Community Consultative Committee

I'm delighted to hear that police have affirmed their commitment to attend and chair future PCCC meetings, which will be held at the police station.

These bi-monthly meetings give community representatives an opportunity to hear about recent crime statistics, to raise concerns and to see how we can all work together to resolve issues.

Special thanks to Inspector Susie Johnston for her commitment to the PCCC and the Nimbin community. The next meeting is 3 December, 2.30pm. The first meeting for 2016 will be held on 4 February.

Crime Prevention meeting

Nimbin locals will be aware that there has been a spike in break-ins and stealing in the past couple of months. I've seen a list of about 25 properties that have been robbed, but unfortunately most have not been reported to police. It is really



important to report any crime so that the true incidence rate is known to police and they can task officers to investigate. It appears that some people don't report if they have no insurance or if very little was taken, but whatever the reason, please report any incidents as soon as possible.

To address community concerns and to share ways of keeping your property safe, residents are invited to a community meeting on Thursday 10 December at 6pm in the hall. Inspector Susie Johnston will be in attendance and I will be facilitating the discussion.

Australia Day nominations

Nominations close for Lismore's Australia Day Awards on 23 December. The process requires you to complete a two page form available on the Council website: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au or you can call me and I will post you one. There are 10 categories, and I am sure there are many worthy nominees in your community.

Christmas greetings

And finally Merry Christmas and Festive Seasons Greetings to all. Thank you to Bob, Sue and all contributors to *Nimbin GoodTimes* for another magnificent year. You all demonstrate every month that a true community newspaper has an important role in connecting us with both the big issues and the small personal ones. May *NGT* continue to thrive in 2016 and for many years to come.

Why do the Nationals support the Liberals' 15% GST hike?

by Janelle Saffin

I am very disappointed to see that the Nationals are supporting a 15% GST, because it will push up the price of everything.

A 15% GST will cost people in Nimbin, and all our local areas, dearly. Dearly every time you buy groceries, visit the doctor, buy the children new school books, uniforms or pay the school fees.

A 15% GST on everything, being considered by Prime Minister Turnbull and Deputy Prime Minister Truss, will make fresh food, health care and education, more costly. An average family will pay an extra \$6,200 in GST.

I am strongly opposed to their plan to raise the GST because it will hurt the very families who least can afford it. I am deeply disappointed that they refuse to go after big multinationals to make them pay their fair share of tax or close generous superannuation tax concessions for the wealthy, but want to slug the low and middle income earners with a 15 per cent GST.

With the GST the more income you have, the less you pay.

It sees the lowest income earners paying over 20% of their income in GST, compared to the highest income households only paying 9% of their incomes. It just isn't fair.

The Nationals Federal Member for Page, Mr. Hogan, either supports the



Janelle Saffin addresses people at the Kyogle Senior Citizens Centre
Photo: Pampussycat Bourne

15 per cent GST, or cannot stand up to Canberra for our community. His brochure that he sent to all, says "Stuff Canberra".

As a local Federal Member you not only have to "Stuff Canberra" but stand up to Canberra to "Get Stuff from Canberra". That takes ticker and experience, no matter who is in power-Liberal/National Coalition or Australian Labor. It is standing up to Canberra for our community that matters. That is what I do, stand up for us, by speaking up and speaking out.

Australian Labor is also strongly opposed to the 15% GST for all the reasons I am.

I want the last word to go to respected economic commentator Ross Gittins, who has a lot to say on this current

discussion. (See the link: www.smb.com.au/business/the-economy/how-to-fix-everything-cut-my-tax-20151114-gkz1np.html#ixzz3sWza34lv)

"The motives of the Business Council and other business lobby groups are transparent: their high income-earners want to pay less tax, so are happy to see other people pay more. To them, this is the attraction of using an increase in the goods and services tax to pay for cuts in income taxes. The better-off (such as me) benefit because their higher rate of saving limits how much more GST they pay. They benefit even further if the cut in income tax is shaped in a way that favours high income earners."

Janelle Saffin, Federal Labor Candidate for Page: jasaffin@nor.com.au or 0418-664-001.



Environmental Zone Review

by Cr Basil Cameron,
Byron Shire Council

After a considerable period sitting with the Minister, the state government has released its review of Environmental or 'E' zones in Northern Rivers' Local Environmental Plans.

The key take-out is that the definitions and use of E zones have been narrowed and a 'primary use' test is to be applied where both environmental conservation and agricultural uses exist on properties.

Environmental values may still be the primary use, however the new definitions for E zones relate only to particular vegetation communities and exclude an assessment of the context of such vegetation.

The specifics of the new arrangements have yet to be announced, and it is concerning that environmental assessment appears less robust than prior to the review.

It will however be possible for landowners to nominate environmental management and conservation as the primary use.

It is hoped that the easing of some restrictions on agricultural uses can be used by landowners to generate income from local food production to finance environmental enhancement on private property.

Simon says..

I think the Northern Rivers is collectively holding its breath until after the Metgasco AGM on December 16th. At that meeting the shareholders will vote to either accept or reject the NSW government offer of \$25M which the Metgasco board has unanimously accepted.

The government proposal would see the company surrender the remaining petroleum exploration licences on the Northern Rivers and rehabilitate its existing wells.

I have little doubt that the shareholders will in the end back the board and accept the offer. I was quite surprised to read in the Metgasco pro case to shareholders the following comments "there is a strong and vocal anti-gas lobby in the area which has been increasingly effective in influencing local councils."

So after nearly four years of intense activity by Gasfield Free Northern Rivers and Lock the Gate Metgasco is finally beginning to acknowledge that the community has had a role in stopping their activities. I'd take that as a massive

compliment!

At its October meeting Council passed a recommendation to go ahead with the 'Farming the Sun' project. This will mean that two companies limited by guarantee, will be established that will lend the Council \$360,000 to establish nearly 200kW of solar panels at the East Lismore Sewerage Treatment Works and the Goonellabah Sports and Aquatic Centre. Because of a reduction in the cost of the project, Council will have an unexpected 75kW for smaller projects for the same price.

I am excited by this project as it's a significant part of Council's Renewable Energy Master Plan (REMP) goal of being 100% reliant on renewables by 2023, but it is also the first Council/community of its type in Australia. I'm also pleased to see the opportunity for community involvement, which will increase the skills and capacity of our community to undertake these innovative projects.

It is hoped that "Farming the Sun" will be seeking community funds in



by Cr Simon Clough,
Lismore City Council

December or early in the New Year. So watch out for your opportunity to contribute to these amazing projects.

I had the chance to promote all of Council's greenhouse gas reduction activities at a National Climate Leader's Summit in Sydney this month. Lismore and Byron were the only two regional councils represented.

Apart from the REMP, Council has one of the most extensive recycling programs in the country. Lismore's greenhouse gas emissions from "waste" amount to about 1% of total emissions; most Councils have about 25% of their emissions from waste. Lismore has reduced its electricity usage by 22% over the last five years despite a

significant level of growth in income and activities.

Council has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 1,000 tonnes and electricity usage by moving to more energy efficient street lights. Council also strongly challenged Transgrid's proposal to import coal fired electricity from Queensland via a high voltage transmission line from Dumaresq to Lismore at a cost of \$175M.

The proposal was based on very shonky demand figures and was finally dropped. Of course Council's long term opposition to Metgasco has also contributed to greenhouse gas reduction in the area.

In March this year, I got a motion up which committed Council to divest from any financial organisation that invested in fossil fuels, provided there were approved investments of equal return. This was only the second divestment from fossil fuel policy by a local council in NSW.

As in so many important issues, the community and local government are way ahead of State and Federal governments.
simonclough@internode.on.net

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In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

www.nnic.org.au



The NNIC team wishes everyone a safe and relaxing holiday period and we look forward to working with you all in 2016. NNIC AGM was held on Wednesday 18th November and the Management Committee welcomes our new committee member Rindi to the fold. (We hope that by the time you read this, Metgasco shareholders have accepted the PEL buyback offer AND Enova has reached its target).

NNIC Xmas Close dates
NNIC will be closing on Friday 18th December and re-opening on Monday 4th January to give our staff and volunteers a well earned break.

The Centrelink Agency only will be open on Monday 21st, Tuesday 22nd, Wed 23rd and Thursday 24th. There will be no other NNIC services available during this period.

Centrelink will be closed from Friday 25th December until Friday 1st January and re-opening on Monday 4th January (closed on Christmas Day, New Year's Day, 1st January).

We apologise for any inconvenience during our closure period. You can do your Centrelink business on line as usual while we are closed.

Annual Community Xmas Lunch

Town Hall on Friday 18th December
As usual the Soup Kitchen will close over Xmas and will resume when the weather is good again for soup.

The final big soup kitchen event for 2015 is of course the Annual Community Xmas Lunch at the Town Hall. Doors open at 12 midday. Santa at 1.30pm. Everyone, young and old is most WELCOME! This is a free community event brought to you by NNIC.

Thanks a million to everyone who donated to the Soup Kitchen and towards our Xmas hampers for needy families. Donations of non-perishable food for our Xmas Hampers can be dropped off at NNIC.

Donations of good quality toys in good condition (preferably new) for Santa to give to the kids at the Town Hall Xmas party are also needed. Again, drop them into NNIC.



Mayor Jenny Dowell (far right) in one of the Sustainable Community Planning Workshop groups. Photo: Guy Stewart

Sustainable Nimbin Community Planning (SNCP) Workshop

Town Hall Sunday 22nd November. Thanks so much to the 70 or so folks who came along on the day for your energy and generosity of spirit. Some excellent strategies came out of the workshop.

The resulting revised Plan is currently being collated and a draft version will be circulated as widely around the community as possible for input from anyone who could not make it on the day. Community members will be able add strategies into the Plan only if you can nominate a driver of that strategy (with their agreement) and any community partners.

Thanks to everyone who made it happen, especially the nine group facilitators (Diana, Gill, Lois, Jorja, Paul, Lisa, Phoebe, Teena and Triny), Chris for the iced teas, Barefoot Affairs for the food, Guy for the tech stuff and Fran and Micaela for general set up and help with the door.

Day of the Dead

Nimbin's Inaugural Day of the Dead was held on Sunday 29th November.

There was information on grief and loss, wills and power of attorney, funeral insurance and other options, coping with losing a pet and the NNIC Next of Kin/ Best Friend/Chosen Contact register.

The Book of the Dead was launched

and there was a shrine for the animals, including pets and wildlife. Thanks to the Nimbin Death and Beyond Group.

December Mental Health Tip - Young Carers

Are you aged 25 years or younger? Do you help to care for a family member or friend with mental wellbeing issues? Then the new Who Cares? App could be for you!

You can watch, listen to and read the stories of real young carers from across NSW aged 8 to 25. You can share stories with friends, family and the community via social media platforms including Tumblr, Facebook and twitter. If you are a parent or professional, learn how you can help to support a young carer. You can download the app here:

Who Cares? on iTunes: <https://appsto.re/i6SV5xM>

Who Cares? on Google Play: <https://goo.gl/dhKQYU>

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC) is run by locals for locals and our job is to support people in need and the community in general to achieve their aspirations. Everyone is welcome at NNIC. If we can't help we probably know who can.

You can also find lots of useful local and other info on our website.
www.facebook.com/pages/Nimbin-Neighbourhood-and-Information-Centre

Nimbin Hospital Information

There will be no Nimbin Community Health and Allied Health Services (physio, early childhood, NSP and womens health services) from Monday 21st December until Monday 4th January.

Immunisation clinic

For 0-5 year olds, held the second Tuesday of every month. Next clinic: Tuesday 8th December. For appointments: 6620-7687 (Lismore Community Health)

Early childhood nurse

Every Tuesday. For appointments, phone 6620-7687 (Lismore Community Health Centre).

Women's Health Nurse Services

Third Thursday of the month for breast checks, pap smears, contraceptive advice and general health information. For appointments ring 6689-1400 and ask for Viola.

Nimbin community nurses

Monday to Friday 8am - 4.30pm. Assessments, wound care, palliative care, referrals, advocacy and coordinate aged care packages. Phone 6689-1288

Free health checks

In front of the Neighbourhood Centre, every second Friday, 11.30am 1.30pm, run by a Nurse Practitioner and a Registered Nurse. Cardiac, Diabetic and Stroke risk assessments, weight, blood pressure, oxygen sats, BSL, Cholesterol levels. Referrals to appropriate Health Professional, if required.

Free respiratory clinic

With Specialist Respiratory Nurse and a nurse Practitioner. Second Thursday of the month. Next clinic: 10th December. For appointment phone 6688-1401.

Free diabetic clinic

Every third Thursday of the month. Next clinic: 17th December. For appointment, phone Leanne Boothe 6630-0488.

Cannabis clinic

Confidential counselling, every Monday. Phone 1300-664-098.

Drug and alcohol counsellor/psychologist

Every Thursday, Phone 6620-7634 or mobile 0428-109-474.



Nimbin NSP

Open Mondays to Thursdays, 9-30am - 12pm. Arrangements can be made to see a Community Health Nurse through NSP.

Health Advice Line

Phone 1800-022-222 if you have a health issue. It's a 24-hour, 7 days a week free service. A Registered Nurse will speak to you and assess whether or not you need to go to the Emergency Dept. at your local MPS.

Read more information about this service at: www.healthdirect.org.au

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month in the hospital conference room at 10am. Next meeting: 11th December.



Nimbin Mystic Festival 2016

Bring in the New Year with the Nimbin Altruistic and Lovingly Mystical Festival to be held on January 2-3-4 at Nimbin Town Hall. The Festival is organised by Jazmin Theadora, Nimbin's famous Clairvoyant Tarot Reader and Giselle Geiger, psychic reader and counsellor.

Jazmin (pictured) has been a psychic/tarot reader since 1968. It is Jazmin's greatest joy to bring insight, inner security, direction, and peace of mind to her clients, in a calm and direct manner.

Jazmin has travelled the world and has had many experiences on her spiritual journey. In the past 10 years, Jazmin has become a recognised and consistently needed psychic medium at all major psychic events in Australia.

The Nimbin Mystic Festival is bound to be an uplifting, creative and insightful affair not to be missed. Jazmin herself will be available for readings along with other prominent and professional clairvoyant tarot and oracle readers, psychic mediums and healers.

Ian Cameron, Australia's renowned Master Palmist, and his wife Joanne will be offering their much in demand services, along with Monica Ward, psychic clairvoyant medium; Amanda Holden, reader; Sandy McCosker, psychic medium; Giselle Geiger, psychic reader and counsellor; and Ross Perry, scientific dowsing for health, and more.

To keep you entranced, there will be spellbinding belly dancing and coffee, cakes and vegetarian food available. Art will be on sale from Nimbin Tattoo artists whose art works are hot and wanted, along with



beautiful creations from Sofan Chan of The Art of Happiness.

You will find crystals to entice you, jewellery to adorn you, aura photography and all things magical, mystical and healing. We look forward to seeing you there. Sun in Capricorn and moon in Libra. Gold coin donation. Nimbin abounds with the energy of Aquarius.

Stay active and independent



Melbourne Cup Day at Bottlebrush Studio: Glorious hats, bookies organising sweeps, live racing, delicious food, winners all round and lots of fun

Nimbin Aged Care & Respite Services offer all elders, people with a disability and all carers in our local communities opportunities to remain active and independent.

December and January Activities

- NACRS Christmas Lunch: Wednesday 9th December at The Channon Tavern, advance booking essential.
- Nimbin Social Groups: First social group for 2016 Tuesday 12th January and Wednesday 13th January, 9.30am-1pm at Bottlebrush Studio, Nimbin.
- Next Bus Outing: Tuesday 12th January; morning tea Stokers Siding, lunch at Cabarita Pub, bookings essential.

- Channon Social Group: Thursday 22nd January 2016, 11.30am-2pm, phone for info of next venue.
- Koonorigan Social Group: Monday 25th January, 11.30am-3pm, Bring-a-plate lunch at Koonorigan Hall
- Craft Group: 7th December at Bottlebrush Studio
- Home visits for all carers and cared for, phone to discuss.
- Drop-In at Bottlebrush Studio, Nimbin, Monday-Friday 10am-2pm.

We are closed from Friday 18th December to Thursday 7th January. Phone 6689-1709 for more information.

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New Years Eve

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Rob Cass

Saturday 5th Dec, 6-9pm

Bob Oort

Friday 11th Dec, 6-9pm

Mish Songsmith

Wednesday 16th Dec, 7-11pm

Open Mic Night

Friday 18th Dec, 6-9pm

Sarah Stando

Saturday 19th Dec, 6-9pm

Doug & Biskit

Friday 25th Dec **CLOSED**

Saturday 26th Dec, 6-9pm

Dave Barbara

Thursday 31st Dec, 8pm-12am

NYE: Joey's Rockin' Band

Friday 1st Jan, 6-9pm

Cruise Bros Duo

Saturday 2nd Jan, 6-9pm

Brommers