

Australia Day

Australia Day seems to regularly bring rain in Lismore so I'm always relieved that our ceremony is indoors rather than exposed to the elements. This year's event was very well attended with family and friends of 37 nominees for community awards and very excited supporters of our new citizens.

Our Australia Day Ambassador had a very special connection to Lismore. Clyde Campbell is the grandson of Clyde Campbell who was Mayor of Lismore from 1956-1966. In 1963, Mayor Campbell signed the Sister City agreement with Yamato Takada, the first such agreement between Australia and Japan and one that remains strong and significant in its 52nd year. The younger Clyde Campbell lives in Sydney but retains strong family links to the region. In addition to being a successful businessman, Clyde is founder of Shake It Up Australia Foundation, linked with The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. At the ceremony, Clyde spoke about his own diagnosis five years ago and never giving up.

Awards

The recipients of Lismore's Australia Day Awards for 2015 are:
Citizen of the Year – Dr Austin Curtin;
Debra Rhodes Aboriginal Citizen of the Year – Rev Dorothy Harris-

Gordon;
Young Citizen of the Year – Jacob Botha;
Services in Community – Margaret Lord (Lismore Soup Kitchen);
Services in Community (Group) – U3A NR (learning for seniors);
Senior Sportsperson – Paul Leadbetter (hockey);
Junior Sportsperson – Samantha McKenna (swimming);
Sports Team – Lismore Storm U18 Women's Basketball team;
Sustainable Environment – Lorraine Vass (Friends of the Koala); and
Art/Cultural – Karen Traise and Ian Bowles (Lismore Symphony Orchestra).
Congratulations to all nominees and category winners. We are very proud of you.

New citizens

One of the special privileges for a Mayor is to confer Citizenship on people who have chosen to become Australians. I host several ceremonies in Chambers during the year but the Australia Day conferral is the largest and most public. This year was the largest in my seven years, with 33 new citizens rousingly welcomed. The new Aussies come from 15 nations of birth: India, Canada, Cambodia, UK, Philippines, South Korea, Zimbabwe, China, South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, New Zealand, Netherlands and United States. If you haven't heard the story of one family on ABC North Coast I encourage you to read it on-line.

I guarantee their story of journey from Rwanda will astound you and that you will feel very proud to have Sibomana, Emilienne and their girls living in our community.

First Council meeting

The first Council meeting of the year will be held on Tuesday February 10 at 6pm in the Goonellabah Chambers. There will be the usual variety of issues on the agenda including a report on Fit For the Future, the state government benchmark for all 152 NSW Councils that measures financial sustainability. Part of the report will also ask Councillors to consider a request from Kyogle Council to meet in a facilitated workshop to explore the pros and cons of amalgamation of our two councils.

I think it is fair to say that Lismore City Council is reluctant to pursue a merger with Kyogle but I will be urging my fellow Lismore Councillors to participate in a workshop so that when we formally decide on our position, we do so with as much information as possible so we can carefully articulate our rationale.

I am fortunate to have an excellent relationship with Mayor Danielle Mulholland and thank her for the opportunity to talk regularly and frankly about the issues we face. The current State government has clearly stated that there will be no forced amalgamations in this term but with an election looming at the end of March, all of us in local government suspect that position to change if the coalition is returned.

State election

Speaking of the election, we are already seeing a steady stream of Ministers, Members of Parliament and would-be elected representatives in our streets and in our media.

Within our own Council we now have two members, Deputy Mayor Isaac Smith (ALP) and Cr Gianpiero Battista (Christian Democratic Party) who are standing as candidates for election for the State seat of Lismore. Both of them will be conscious of the need to separate their electioneering from their roles as Councillors while continuing to fulfil their current elected roles with diligence.

Rev Fred Nile visited me in my office recently to discuss issues facing Lismore. The mayor of Ballina Cr David Wright joined us along with Rev Nile's wife, Silvana Nero who is a NSW electoral candidate for the Christian Democratic Party.

We discussed the lack of equity in funding for regional councils, local government reform and amalgamations, lack of public transport, unconventional gas mining, jobs, sales of electricity poles and wires, coastal erosion, the train and rail trail, refugees and our cultural diversity.

I was pleased to learn that Rev Nile does not support CSG or fracking. In this Parliament, Rev Nile holds an important position, having the balance of power in the upper house, so his views on unconventional gas mining are important. I showed him the road



by Cr Jenny Dowell

declarations in my office and told him about our 87% support for a gasfield free LGA.

Rev Nile's views on marriage, same sex relationships and his statements about 'being a man' (in the Sydney seige) were not discussed.

Tip Free Day

Four times each year Lismore Council offers a Tip Free Day at its Wyrallah Road facility, and the next one is Sunday February 15. All Lismore residents can take waste or recyclable materials to the facility at no charge, although no commercial quantities of chemicals and no asbestos or truck or tractor tyres. Up to 12 car tyres are allowed in a load. Simply take your sorted car-load or trailer load along with evidence of residency such as a rates notice or driver's licence between the hours of 9am and 4pm. This is also an opportunity to work with your neighbours to share a load.

Visit my own facebook page, email: Jenny.Dowell@lismore.nsw.gov.au or phone 6625-0403.



by Cr Simon Clough,
Lismore City Council

Simon says...

low of 3.0 cents. Metgasco seems to have turned its attention to the US and the 'grieve' (I kid you not) oilfield. Regardless of the Supreme Court decision on its license suspension Metgasco is out of the northern Rivers for the foreseeable future.

- AGL has had its operations suspended after dumping flow-back water illegally in the Hunter sewerage system and finally revealing that BTEX (banned in NSW) has been detected in its flow-back water. The EPA is investigating! It is quite possible that the BTEX is naturally occurring, but the last place you want this toxic mix is in your water with the very real chance that it will impact the water catchment for 75,000 people. So if you are wondering if there is anything left to do right now, there is still the Maules Creek mine in the Leard Forest to protect. Also the Planning and Assessment Commission has just approved the Shenhua (Chinese government conglomerate)

Watermark mine, adjacent to the Liverpool Plains. With this approval, Shenhua may well be able to swallow up eleven more properties, including productive black soils farms that should be feeding the nation.

There are so many appalling things wrong with this proposal that it's hard to know where to start. Water is of great concern: it will use at least 103 mega litres per year, dropping the vital water table by 10 metres in some places, it will greatly increase salinity and leave a void (hole) of 100ha.

Four years ago, the Government went to the last NSW election promising to protect farmland on the plains with no-go zones, which they failed to deliver. This mine should have been stopped at the first hurdle.

Wishing everyone a great February, and don't forget to contact me if you want any help with Lismore City Council.

Contact Simon: phone 0428-886-217, email: simonclough@internode.on.net

Vale Tom Uren

I found it deeply ironic that on the very day Tony Abbott revealed he had knighted Prince Philip that Tom Uren, former Deputy Prime Minister and legendary figure of the Labor left, died.

I could not help feeling how much more appropriate it would have been if Uren had been given such an honour. However I'm sure he would not have accepted it with all its imperialist trappings.

Tom Uren grew up during the Great Depression in Balmain, left school at 13 and was in WW2 by the age of 19. Tom was captured by the Japanese in East Timor and subsequently became a life-long supporter of that tiny country. Tom was a prisoner of war for three years initially in Changi then on the Thai-Burma railway and finally in Japan.

It was under the influence of the heroic Dr Weary Dunlop that Uren became convinced of the power of what he called 'collectivism'. The Australian POWs, officers and men shared everything in their camp while the British on the other side of the creek kept strict divisions between officers and men. Most Australians survived while many British troops did not. It was this experience that led Tom to join the ALP.

Tom Uren was one of the first of our leaders to take a defiant and active stand against the Vietnam War and Australia's role in it. I am eternally grateful for his courage in the face of a country that at the time saw him as a traitor not supporting the war.

I worked in Tom's department of Urban and Regional Development during the



Whitlam government for two years. I came to know him as an extraordinary human being. Tom was filled with pragmatic compassion and a strong sense of fairness. We can thank Tom for the Commonwealth Government's purchase of the Glebe Estate and Waterloo and many other

working class housing areas to protect them from gentrification or destruction. He also set up the Land Commissions to reduce the price of land in our major cities. I worked in the Area Improvement Program where we assisted Regional Organisations of Councils across Australia to fund vital grassroots projects that had been ignored for over 20 years of profoundly conservative government.

It was Tom's department that brought sewerage to Sydney's West and many other deprived areas. Tom had countless other achievements including setting up the Heritage Commission and in later years worked tirelessly for the preservation of Sydney harbour foreshores.

Above all it was Tom Uren's absolute humanity his ability to weep in public for those things that needed tears that I most admired about the man. Whether it was about his fellow prisoners of war at Changi or on the Burma railway, Weary Dunlop, the victims of nuclear war on Japan, the fate of the least privileged in our society or our beleaguered natural environment.

Thank you for an inspirational life so well lived Tom. You made a difference to a great many people and environments in so many ways. I am honoured to have known you just a little.

Number every square, put Nationals last

by Adam Guise
Greens candidate for Lismore

Happy 2015 and welcome to an election year. I hope you all had a restful break and are inspired to be part of an election campaign that could see the current National Party member replaced with a Green.

This election is a referendum on coal seam gas and our democracy. In the next eight weeks until election day on March 28, expect to be bombarded with government and major party funded propaganda. Full-page colour ads have dominated newspapers across the state and online promoting coal seam gas. The Government is calling it the 'Gas Plan'; however what this community really wants is a 'Gas Ban'.

We don't want our taxes being used as propaganda to sell us something we don't want, and we definitely don't want industrialised gas fields wrecking our land and polluting our water. But the Liberal-National government is intent on forcing it upon us.

You would expect our elected leaders to represent us, but instead they're doing the bidding of coal seam gas companies, and accepting political donations from mining companies and developers to fund their campaigns. We



Green Scene

need to take this opportunity to end this undemocratic situation and bring real representation back to politics.

For National voters who feel you can't abandon your party, I ask that you send a strong message to your party that you are dissatisfied with your lack of representation and vote Green.

The Abbott-led Liberal-National coalition at the federal level has cut so many services and programs that affect rural and regional areas like ours the most. The NSW government's plan to privatise TAFE, hospitals and electricity infrastructure will mean job

losses and higher prices for regional areas. Use this election to make your vote a protest vote against the National Party's misrepresentation of regional NSW. If a Greens member wins the seat of Lismore, then the major parties would be so intent on winning back the seat at the next election that Northern NSW could benefit economically for services such as hospitals and schools.

If you want to maintain our beautiful region and want to see it protected for tourism, agriculture and renewable energy, make your vote count this election. Number every square and put the Nationals last. It's the only option for a gasfield-free future. If you're not on the electoral roll or don't believe in voting, now is the time to change that.

Having the second highest vote in Lismore at the last State election, the Greens are in a real position to win this seat. But we need your help. We are up against the huge advertising budgets of the major parties and rely on the grassroots help of volunteers having conversations with people about what the Greens stand for. So please get in touch, because a job-rich, renewable energy future that protects our land and water is possible.

Let's start with our region by electing a Green to the seat of Lismore.

[facebook.com/adamguise.greens](https://www.facebook.com/adamguise.greens)

Labor's country caucus meets on North Coast

by Justine Elliot
MP for Richmond

As Chair of Labor's Country Caucus Committee it was a pleasure to recently host the group in Tweed Heads. It was a very productive meeting, discussing the issues that are important to people living in regional and rural Australia.

Labor has a strong history of representing the interests of regional Australia and we are committed to building upon this. This is in contrast to the National Party which has abandoned the people of regional Australia with their unfair cuts and cruel taxes.

I'm proud to be the Chair of Country Caucus and look forward to working with my parliamentary colleagues in taking up the fight to Tony Abbott and the Liberal National Party. As our spokesperson and Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs Joel Fitzgibbon recently said, the National Party is taking their communities for granted, and we want to offer every electorate a strong alternative.

Nationals cut hospital funding

Many locals are worried that our hospitals and health services on the North Coast are at breaking point. The fact is that local Nationals MPs and their Liberal National Government keep cutting funding from our health and hospitals.

The Nationals have slashed \$2.2 billion in program and operating costs from NSW Health and they've cut a further \$775 million from hospital staff budgets. NSW now has the longest elective surgery waiting list times. Families on the North Coast just can't afford any more of the National Party cuts to frontline services.

Unemployment increases

Alarming new statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that total unemployment in the Richmond Tweed region has increased in the past



Justine Elliot with Joel Fitzgibbon MP, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, inspecting local sugar cane farms near Murwillumbah

year.

In the 12 months up to December 2014, employment across the region has fallen from 109,600 to just 85,200. These job losses have rapidly escalated over this period with 24,400 more people unemployed.

National Party MPs should hang their heads in shame because this unemployment crisis has been caused by their government's harsh policy decisions. These figures show the real human cost of the National Party's mismanagement across the North Coast.

Seniors need more support

Providing quality care and health services for our ageing population is one of the most important challenges, yet Liberal National Governments at both state and federal levels are hurting local seniors with their severe funding cuts.

Seniors on the North Coast are telling me that the National Party cuts to health care, hospitals, aged care and dementia services are terrifying for them and their families.

In Government, Labor worked hard to make sure aged care was sustainable and fair. Labor's *Living Longer Living Better* Aged Care reforms included an investment of around \$270 million to

help tackle dementia.

In contrast, the Abbott Government has axed the Dementia and Severe Behaviours Supplement, has cut the \$652 million Aged Care Payroll Tax Supplement, and has slashed the \$1.1 billion Aged Care Workforce Supplement.

In June 2014, the Liberal National Government slashed the funding for the Dementia and Severe Behaviours Supplement (DSBS). This supplement provided additional financial assistance to approved providers in recognition of the additional costs of caring for people with dementia.

At a state level, National Party MPs and their Liberal National Government have sold out seniors and people with disabilities with their mass privatisation of home care services. A privatised system means that many important services like the Dementia Outreach Service could be cut which would be detrimental to seniors and their families.

Local seniors are also outraged at the National Party's cruel and savage pension cuts and their unfair doctor tax. These unfair funding cuts by the Liberal National Government at a state and federal level are devastating for local seniors and their families.

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On Saturday 31st January, an Australasian record-breaking giant pumpkin squashed the scales at the fourth annual Summerland Giant Pumpkin Competition at the Kyogle Showground.

Enthusiasts and serious growers gathered around the giants discussing best growing strategies, and children ate some of the giant watermelons. Gardening guru Phil Dudman announced the prizes for heaviest giant pumpkins and giant watermelons, as well as the most beautiful, ugliest and best carved pumpkins.

The winner of the day was Dale Oliver (above) with a stunning 743 kg pumpkin which he had grown at his farm in Newrybar. It turned out to be a new national and Australasian record.

The giant watermelon was won by Neil Armstrong with a 62.2 kg fruit. The junior pumpkin was won by Ethan Ryan with a pumpkin of 84.5kg.

Dale Oliver with his 669kg pumpkin (left) and new record pumpkin 743kg (right). In the background is a giant squash he grew, weighing 612k

Seniors party rocks

by Rose Cubis

The Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services celebrated their 2014 Christmas party in style at the Nimbin Bush Theatre, catered by Phoenix Rising Café. Our elders, from Nimbin, The Channon and Dunoon, gave lots of lovely feedback praising the venue and the food. Many thanks to Louise, David and their staff.



Nimbin businesses supported our raffle and we were humbled by their generosity. Many thanks to Armonica, OzKat, Nimbin Apothecary, the Contented Tummy, Rainbow Power Company, Sussukka Trading, NRMA, Nimbin Bakery, Nimbin Emporium, Charters Hardware, Newsagency, Nimbin Pharmacy, Nimbin Post Office, Capers on Cullen, the Dunoon Sports Club, Dunoon Shop, The Channon Tavern and The Channon General Store.

A wonderful array of entertainment had everyone singing along. Moppy and John opened the entertainment with their delightful songs, and the magical musical Val Mace presented Vocal Minority choir, Tamaso, Shabayah and Willamina. The Nimbin Men's Chorus gave a thrilling debut performance, and Greg Weidner followed with his fun, fabulous karaoke.

Thank you from the Nimbin Aged Care & Respite Services workers to all who help to make our annual event 'one of the best' Christmas parties.

NACRS is a social support service for all elders, for people with a disability and for all carers in our local communities. To find out more about our drop in centre, social groups, home visits, bus trips, general support and free internet, contact Rose Cubis and the workers at Bottlebrush Studio, Nimbin Community Centre, 6689-7393. Find us on Facebook as *Nimbin Aged Care & Respite Service*.

Nimbin Hospital Info

Child immunisation clinic

For 0-5 year olds. Held second Tuesday of every month. Next Clinic February 10th. For appointments phone 6620-7687 (Lismore Community Health)



Early childhood nurse

Every Tuesday. Phone 6620-7687 to make an appointment (through Lismore Community Centre).

Women's Health Nursing Service, rescheduled

Confidential Pap smears, breast checks, contraceptive advice, post natal checks, general health information. Next clinic, February 19th. For appointments phone 6688-1401.

Nimbin community nurses

Monday to Friday 0800hrs to 1630hrs. For assessments, wound care, referrals, advocacy. Provision of Palliative Care in the home. Provide and coordinate Aged Care Packages.

Free health checks

Now in front of the Neighbourhood Centre. We apologise for inability to run this for month of February. Will be back in March.

Free respiratory clinic

With Specialist Respiratory Nurse and a nurse practitioner. Second Thursday of each month. Next Clinic, February 12th. For appointment phone 6688-1401.

Free diabetic clinic

At Nimbin hospital. Every 3rd Thursday of the month. For appointment phone Leanne 6630-0488.

Nimbin NSP opening hours

Will be open on Mondays and Thursdays, 9.30am – 12pm. Arrangements can be made to see a health nurse through NSP.

Cannabis Clinic at Nimbin Hospital

Every Monday. Confidential counselling. Phone 1300 664 098.

Drug and alcohol counsellor/psychologist

Every Thursday. For appointment phone 6620-7634 or Mobile 0428-109-474.

New News

Wound Clinic. Run at Nimbin Community Health. Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 10am. Referrals will be from the emergency department of Nimbin Hospital.

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month in the hospital conference room at 10am. Next meeting: 13th February.



Kyogle Council notebook

Now that we've all enjoyed a well-deserved break over the holidays, it's full steam ahead for some new initiatives in 2015.

Councillors met on Monday 12th January to discuss the pros and cons of mergers, whether we're fit to stand alone, and the whole Fit for the Future process. We will come back to the community to talk to everyone about what this means for our Local Government Area and get feedback from you on what direction you would like to take.

Please be part of the process: write a letter, send an email, phone a Councillor, put in a submission, attend a Mayoral Outreach meeting – there are so many ways you can be part of the process.

The next Mayoral Outreach meeting will be held at Dyraba on Wednesday 11th February at the Dyraba Hall from 10am to noon. Please contact Janelle McLennan if you have issues you'd like us to know about, or if you'd just like to come along and say hello, I'd be very pleased to see you there. Phone and book a time with Janelle at Council on 6632-0214 so that you won't be kept waiting.

If you can also advise her of your issue and contact details (phone numbers, email, etc.)



this will help me to make some background enquiries, so that any information you receive is correct and up to date.

Based on the feedback from the community, Council has applied for a rate increase through IPART. The rate increase is 22% above the pegged rate limit over five years and we are awaiting a response. As soon as we know, you will know. The rate increase is tied into our Council's ability to be sustainable or 'Fit for the Future', so we appreciate your support and feedback.

The demographics of the Kyogle LGA are changing with some newcomers arriving but, much to my dismay, not staying. We are promoting the brand "Come for a day, stay for a lifetime" but in order to fulfil the promise inherent in this brand, we all need to be a bit tolerant of difference and new ideas.

If you move to a farming area, it's reasonable to expect that you'll have farming



by Cr Danielle Mulholland, Mayor of Kyogle

activities happening around you. If you live in the area, welcome newcomers with an open mind.

At present, our population projections are very modest and we need new people to keep our community vibrant and vital. Remember that, the next time you get the urge to tweak your neighbour's nose.

It is with reluctance that we have said goodbye to Executive Manager of Planning and Environment, Greg Meyers, who left Council on January 5. We wish him all the best in his new role at Armidale Council. Kyogle Council will be advertising his job in the near future.

Until next time, all the best.

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

Lay it on the line



Northern Rivers Rail Action Group (NRRAG) is seeking support for its action to help save our tracks from being removed by the rail lobby.

Take a photo of yourself and friends lying on the disused rail line (Casino-Murwillumbah) and post it on Facebook (It is best to lie on a blanket to avoid any possible contamination).

NRRAG hopes to show the widespread support for bringing trains back to our region, and looks forward to seeing you, your friends and family 'laying it on the line'.

See: www.facebook.com/nrrag for more info.

Support needed for biodiversity

by Cr Vanessa Ekins

We all want native plants and animals to survive in our urban and rural landscapes. We can make it happen by sending Lismore Council an email submission to adopt and fund a Biodiversity Strategy.

A group of farmers, wildlife carers, agricultural associations, environmental groups and community members took two years to write a draft Biodiversity Strategy for Lismore. It needs your support to be adopted by Council. Write a brief email before 24 February.

The Biodiversity Strategy includes a levy (rate increase) of about 50 cents a week to fund important works on public and private land in rural and urban areas. A small price to pay for a long-term strategy for our plants and animals and local jobs. Projects include funding farmers to protect forest remnants, dealing with wild dogs and roadside weeds, planting koala food trees, creating habitat corridors and restoring riverbanks.

Lismore is rich in native plants and animals but poor in funding to restore habitat and prevent loss of species. In the last 20 years of community consultation, we said we prioritised the natural environment and yet we still have no strategy or ongoing funding. This can all change with your email support. Levies are



Baby Squirrel Glider
Photo: Bree Merriman

matched with funding from state and federal departments and can grow funds substantially, giving significant environmental benefits and local employment and jobs growth.

Email Council: council@lismore.nsw.gov.au before 24th February.

You can find the draft strategy here: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-YQL-17-02-73 and more info here: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/news/page.asp?p=DOC-RCP-35-28-01

You can sign the petition here: www.change.org/p/lismore-city-council-adopt-the-biodiversity-strategy-for-lismore

The consultation period closes on 24th February.

Plant of the Month

Wax jambu *Syzygium samarangense*

by Richard Burer

This month I was a bit stumped about which local native tree I could include for plant of the month, so let's get non-native and include this useful and attractive multicultural tropical fruit tree.

Syzygium samarangense is a medium sized tropical tree growing to 12m, evergreen with long, broad leaves and is native to the Malay peninsula and the Andaman/Nicobar islands of India. Known as wax jambu/wax apple/love apple, it is cultivated throughout tropical Asia including Indonesia, the Philippines, mainland India, Vietnam, Taiwan and Thailand, where its uses range from table fruit, salads to pickles and cooked/sauteed. The flowers also have medicinal properties. This fruit, whilst called an apple due to its resemblance and fresh crunch on the outside, has a flavourless white dry pulp inside, and some could consider this fruit quite dull!

On the Northern Rivers, this attractive tropical fruit grows well on fertile free-draining soils and needs to be frost-free. Highly prized in our garden over the years, the beautiful pink fruits are a number one kids garden-roaming treat. The tree produces an abundance of unique bell-shaped fruit, with the fruit getting sweeter, pinker and juicier by February, coinciding with other subtropical orchard treats including acerola cherry, grumichama, mango, star fruit, lychee and bananas.

The cultivars grown here on the Northern Rivers are seedless, with vegetative



reproduction only. I have never known these fruits to produce a viable seed, nor have I seen them growing beyond the orchard garden environment.



What's holding you back?

Rhiannon Rees (pictured) is a best selling author and an elite performance coach and it is her soul's journey to help people live the life of their dreams. It takes commitment, inner strength and a willingness to let go of the past, get out of your comfort zone and grow and move forward like you never thought possible.

Rhiannon will put you on the emotional treadmill, push you out of your comfort zone and your comfy slippers. If you are ready, she will give you the life skills and tools to change your life forever, with no turning back.

Rhiannon can open doors that you thought were locked forever, guide and support you step by step through into a reality you never thought possible – to live positively, with total gratitude for what



you have in your life and make your dream a reality.

To experience a small sample of the power of the work she does in person, she will be holding an open forum where you'll get a chance to do a 'one on one' fifteen minute session with her.

So, what's holding you back?

What's stopping you from

reaching for your dreams and achieving them, what ever that may be?

Due to popular demand, Rhiannon Rees will be doing this as a one-off event for our local community, this will be the only one in 2015.

Every person will get a free personally signed copy of her Number 1 best-seller book *How to Climb Mt Everest in Sandals*, valued at \$19.99.

The forum will be held Friday 6th February at Hanging Rock Hall, Williams Road, Barkersvale, 6-9pm, and will cost \$10 per person (at the door only).

To reserve tickets, text only your name/phone number and number of tickets to Laurelli on 0447-891-119. Tickets will only be held until 5.45pm on the night.

Be quick, there are limited seats available.

Minyumai Cultural Camp for men and jargums



by Darren McElroy, Community Support Worker, NACRS

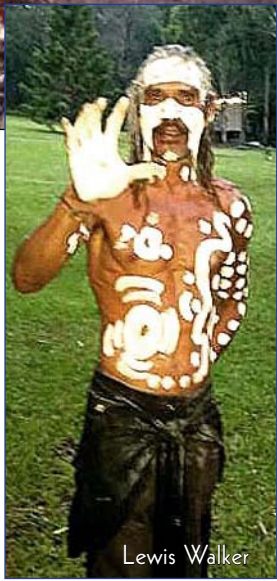
Our relaxing Men's Cultural Camp was held at Minyumai in late January, with support from Nimbin Community Centre and Nimbin Aged Care & Respite Services.

Minyumai is an Indigenous Protected Area situated within the Bundjalung National Park covering over 2,100 hectares of paperbark groves and scribbly gum, swamp mahogany and bloodwood forests, along with rare patches of lush rainforest.

Being a wet weekend, we headed out on the camp with spirits high. On arriving, we pulled into a freshly mown area with a large shelter and fire pit with enough firewood for three days, toilets and showers. There was also rainwater and a place to charge your phone!

Over the three days, we managed to entice twenty adult men and ten jargums. Among the adults, Lewis Walker painted up and shared stories around the fire, sending most of the jargums to sleep. The camp was very successful with the group taking in cricket, boomerang throwing and trips to the beach, with plenty of healthy food to make it a very relaxed experience.

Minyumai was handed back to the Bandjalang people in 1999 and has been managed by the Minyumai Land Holding Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of the Bandjalang people and declared an Indigenous Protected Area in 2011.



Lewis Walker

Echidna Dreaming

by Dionne May and Biko

The deep pulsing drones of two of the largest didgeridoos I have ever seen wrap and weave their mystical vibrations as the sun sets on the final evening of the Echidna Dreaming Festival held recently in Nimbin.

An ancient heartbeat enshrouds us all in its steady earthy rhythm. We are all gathered around the small fire in the middle of the showgrounds as gentle cooling breezes glance off the Nimbin Rocks and swirl giddy in the musical offering. It has been an inspiring weekend here in Nimbin at our local showgrounds.

This Buninj Boothrum (Echidna Dreaming) festival was organised by Lewis Walker and his team of dedicated volunteers to help facilitate a new beginning, a fresh dreaming in Australian Aboriginal and white cultures. Over the weekend, festival-goers were encouraged to participate in weaving or tie-dyeing, dancing and storytelling, and were entertained by fantastic musicians.

As the weekend progressed and we all camped together under the same open skies and unplugged ourselves from the outside world, I felt the dawning of hope.



With this simple sharing of time, food, music and knowledge little things can grow into big things. One by one, the stereotypes and discriminations must fall.

Aboriginal history is still alive, relevant and mostly unheard. How many horror stories could we bear to hear? Every Aboriginal Australian has been directly affected by cultural dissemination that continues to be brutal and unforgiving to this day. Aboriginal history and culture is as boundless as the great outback and as courageous and seemingly tenuous as the life that thrives in her unforgiving deserts. It is in the eyes of the people.

During the weekend, as I sat with Gemma and Karen as they shared stories and taught us the Gulf of Carpentaria Women's Dance, I witnessed their pride and grace. It is tentative, so much trust has



been broken, but there is hope. Hope for a new Dreaming.

Many blessings and gratitude must be extended to all the volunteers, all the cultural performers and artists, weaving sisters, stallholders, jargums workshops and events crew, we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you to the wonderful local mob, businesses and community members and organisations who supported this wonderful cultural event, particularly NimFM who hosted us, the A&I for their great grounds, Sue Harris from Nimbin Emporium, Sue Thatcher from Lismore Council, and Simonetta from the Oasis cafe, to name a few.

Unfortunately, probably due to the speed at which it was organised and the incredible heat-wave experienced that weekend, there were not enough entry tickets sold to

cover the cost of the event. Despite great support, the organising crew still owe about \$5000 all up for the event, and even though some people have been prepared to accept their losses, we would like to clear all the current outstanding costs.

We are asking if the community would support us to by donating to: Buninj Boothrum Account ID no: 100586521; BCU - BSB: 704-328; Account Number: 219267S3.2.

Despite the financial shortfall, we would love to have another Nookie Buninj Boothrum - Nimbin Echidna Dreaming Festival next year and support the upcoming Buninj Boothrum in Lismore with its very significant Buninj Boothrum Dreaming site. For co-ordination of cultural and spiritually significant events, contact Melon Events. email: events369@gmail.com

Nimbin Jazz, alive and well

Nimbin's Jazz lovers are in for a regular treat, with jazz sessions planned for the second Sunday of each month on the Riverside stage at Phoenix Rising Café at the old butter factory.

David Hyett, the proprietor of the Phoenix Rising Café and Bush Theatre, is committed to providing high quality music for his guests.

The setting alongside Mulgum Creek has undergone extensive beautification and provides

the perfect backdrop for a lazy Sunday afternoon jazz session.

Nimbin's very own Cruise Brothers (pictured), featuring Marcus Makin on keys, bassist Bob Dooley and Sam D'Aprile on sticks, are the trio who will take you for a ride down the highway 61 of Australian jazz.

According to David Hyett, Sunday afternoon jazz will feature an excellent quality programme traversing the whole spectre of jazz, with some of the region's best



players to be invited to play. Sunday afternoon jazz will be on 8th February. For details of the weekly music

programme, the Phoenix Rising website is: www.phoenixrisingcafe.net or phone David on 0418-824-598.

Valentine's Day
Sat 14th Feb 2015
from 5pm

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FUNdraiser

BBQ Only \$3 a game
DJ Fab
Funky Lights

Lover's Pack
Lucky Door Prize

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Sunday kirtan

A perfect setting for Sunday morning kirtan Indian devotional music is the Phoenix Rising Café in the old butter factory in Nimbin.

Join Layananda, Gerard and Ren in an explorative journey of Kirtan with the mystical sounds of chant, raga and Bhajans. Fall in love with the exotic sounds of the East that will introduce you to an eclectic kaleidoscope that will delight your senses and open the heart. This contemporary lens from India to the Middle East will facilitate healing, insight and altered patterns of the mind.

Scientifically speaking, music is purely wave motions of a particular wavelength within which confined particles vibrate and transfer energy. Scientists have recognised that all matter is composed of particles that vibrate at particular frequencies.

In this light, one can better understand the yogic effect of music, as it is the vibrations of specific sounds that have a resonant effect upon the chakras or subtle pranic centres, nadis of the subtle body. This effect of resonance occurs when the particular sound frequency coincides with the natural frequency of another body, causing it to vibrate.

This shows the interrelatedness of things and, on an even more subtle level, points to how all vibrations have an effect upon our consciousness.

Kirtan starts on Sundays at 10am and finishes at noon.



by Mel Williamson

The Bush Theatre is back in full (entertainment) swing, having hosted two fantastic gigs over January.

First up was Woodford folk festival and Nimbin fave Fantuzzi. Support act, Sunshine Coast funk/world/jazz outfit Hayden Hack Infusion were a mighty fine start to the night – a very impressive band – packing the theatre with dancing bodies, who danced on into the night when Fantuzzi came on – of course, how could you not dance to Fantuzzi?

Fantuzzi had a somewhat different feel than last time he appeared at the Bush Theatre, when he was backed up by South American musicians. This time he was backed by a more traditional (rock) band line-up – including hastily roped-in local reggae muso Dan Smith (Imandan) on drums. The percussionist from Hayden Hack Infusion also jumped up to fill out the sound – a sound that, like the support act, crossed many genres, but always with an infectious rhythm. A great start to the year for the newly invigorated Bush Theatre.

The second gig was a special one-off

gig of Dan Rumour and The Drift, supported by local acts Atunaha, and the Baby Durgas – the Durga Babies now in duo form of Tim Tonkin and Michael Turner. The Baby Durgas have a more stripped back, acoustic feel without losing any of what always makes them a delight to see. Their music veered from the (former) Durgas with some of Tim's back catalogue of songs being dusted off and refreshed for their new/old line-up – highly enjoyable.

Michael then stepped in to join Cruel Sea guitarist Dan Rumour as part of his band The Drift, along with Lismore local Nick Fisher on drums, and Melbourne's Nick Larkins

on Hammond organ and guitar. (Nick Larkins was also part of the Durga Babies in the early 2000's, and previously also part of Michael's previous hugely successful band Wild Pumpkins At Midnight.)

Nothing quite like a group of high-calibre musicians getting together, despite not having played together for many years, to get the (predominantly) chicks dancing and the dudes transfixed in adulation at the musicianship. The show was all instrumental, and all engaging, along with (Tim's) fantastic back projection of cool surf footage – and yes there was a Cruel Sea riff or two.

And in true rock star fashion, even though it was a Northern NSW mid-summer, humid, sweaty night, the band were all over-dressed for the occasion, keeping to a 'rock-cool' look rather than just cool (and they talk about women 'suffering' for their look...). A most excellent night – fantastic lights, music, dancing, and (weather and other) repartee – and all in our little village in one of the best little spots in town, night or day.

The Bush Theatre is back, so keep your eyes peeled for forthcoming gigs, and remember the Phoenix Rising Cafe has live music outdoors over summer on Saturday and Sunday afternoons noon to 4pm – great food, great space, great music, what more could you ask for?



Sarah Stando



Dan Rumour and the Drift

The Fine Jazz Organizers (FJO) are Pietro Fine (Hammond), Azo Bell (guitar), Louis Burdett (drums) and featuring Martha Baartz (saxophone).

Pietro plays his digital Hammond organ setup, complete with two keyboard manuals and a pedalboard, and for this gig he'll be playing through a real Leslie cabinet with its rotating speakers. Martha Baartz, well-known for her energy and spirited, melodic and soulful playing and composing is guesting on sax.

Azo Bell is a master musician, both a virtuoso and highly imaginative improviser, who never fails to surprise and delight with his ever-changing ideas.

Louis Burdett is one of the most enigmatic and controversial performers working in Australia today. He has existed outside of the mainstream art/music scene for most of his professional career, which is to not to say that his influence has been small.

As well as their own original compositions, FJO will play jazz standards and rearrangements of songs from the pop charts. Martha, Azo and Pietro alternate on leading the instrumentals or turning out a finely-honed trio head.

Catch them on Sunday 1st March, 3pm-6pm at Lismore City Bowling Club, \$15/\$10 members.



Pietro Fine

Roots duo Method will be launching their new album with a string of shows along the east coast this February. Method are Bill Jacobi and Frank Corby, both established musicians with impressive track records. The partnership between Jacobi's masterful guitar work and Corby's passionate and lyrical drumming has created musical magic on this, their fourth CD offering, *Tales from the New Frontier*.

With a tip of the hat to the social commentary of early Dylan and the salty realism of Woody Guthrie, this is a raw and unmistakably Australian sound. An air of the defiant larrikin pervades this Method release, conjuring a musical marriage somewhere between Americana Swamp and the Celts. Where these branches meet in the musical family tree, Method sit comfortably reinterpreting these roots through the dust bowls and vast skies of the great southern land.

Method can take their music from a whisper to a growl to a roar. Like a hillbilly White Stripes, Method don't need a full band to have a crowd dancing on the tables.

Between them, these two world class musicians have played



Method

with the cream of Australia's folk, blues and rock fraternity: Shane Howard, Neil Murray, the Bondi Cigars, Warumpi Band, Goanna, Ganga Jang, The Stiff Gins and many more.

You can catch Method live at The Beach Hotel in Byron on 26th February, at the Sheoak Shack in Fingal Head on the 28th, and at the Sphinx Rock Café on Sunday 1st March from 1pm.

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February Gigs

Saturday 7th	Brommers
Sunday 8th	Cruise Brothers
Saturday 14th	Lou Bradley
Sunday 15th	Freowin Harper
Saturday 21st	Sarah Stando
Sunday 22nd	Dinkum Bohos
Saturday 28th	Reubin Barkley
Sunday 1st Mar	Rueben Garcia

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Sunday Gig Guide

February 2pm start

8th Ben Wilson
An award winning singer songwriter based in the Northern Rivers, his sound incorporates both old and contemporary folk and alt-country styles.

15th Andy Burke
Andy is an original singer/songwriter multi-instrumentalist from the heart of the west coast of Ireland.

22nd Thrillbilly Stomp
Being accordion and mandolin based, Thrillbilly Stomp have been greatly influenced by music in which these instruments are prominent such as Celtic, Cajun, Zydeco and Bluegrass.

March 1st Method
Swampy, acoustic guitar and drum kit driven rock and roots.

Nimbin Hotel & Backpackers
53 Cullen Street, Nimbin. Ph: 6689-1246

February Gigs

Friday 6th	7.30pm	Claire Taylor Band
Saturday 7th	6.30pm	Kobyas
Sunday 8th	5pm	Disco Puppets
Thursday 12th	6.30pm	The Vultures
Friday 13th	7.30pm	Bluesville Station
Saturday 14th	6.30pm	Beaten Bodies
Sunday 15th	5pm	Ryan Giles
Thursday 19th	6.30pm	Scott Mariott
Friday 20th	7.30pm	Diana Anaid
Saturday 21st	6.30pm	TBA
Sunday 22nd	5pm	Kellie Knight
Thursday 26th	6.30pm	Surf Report
Friday 27th	7.30pm	Sabotage
Saturday 28th	6.30pm	Richie Williams
Sunday 22nd	5pm	Mr Troy

All Gigs are Free of Charge

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From the wings of the Nimbin Hall, I look around at the subdued crowd. The hall is full to capacity and most faces aren't from Nimbin.

Despite short notice and limited advertising, it is painfully obvious that sick people and their families and carers across Australia have been waiting quietly, desperately for access to medical cannabis.

The *Lismore Echo's* front-page story 'Healers Not Dealers' reported on just a trickle of individual cases, with irrefutable evidence that cannabis is a powerful medicine. A trickle that is threatening to become an avalanche of evidence as sick and dying people begin to sweep aside decades of propaganda and challenge our government's ignorant and harmful laws that govern the very existence of this plant in Australia. As more and more evidence bubbles to the surface of mainstream



Medical Cannabis has its day

media regarding the healing properties of cannabis, is it any wonder that people want to finally know more?

One speaker, Bruce, a member of the Medical Cannabis Users Association, which was founded by Gail Hester, in an effort to show the government how people really feel about their medicine, said, "Their membership had swelled from zero to four thousand in around six months."

His information regarding cannabis strain fingerprint identification, being undertaken in the first-ever analytical cannabis laboratory in Australia, was inspiring. This information explains how different oils are used for specific applications and how it is now available.

The forum was indeed rich with local and guest speakers engaging a breadth of knowledge that was exciting to hear freely and publicly discussed. Talks

ranging from beneficial applications of homeopathic doses for pets to complex scientific explanations of cellular structures to the making of medical tinctures, all embraced with unusually quiet solemnity in the Nimbin hall.

With government medical trials years away in reality, concerns from the audience featured most predominately were the risk of legal persecution in accessing this medicine and the sheer

quantity of raw material necessary for production. But if the collective optimism on the day could have been harnessed, it felt like it might have moved mountains.

And maybe it just will, with regular monthly forums to be held in the hall due to overwhelming demand. With tasty and nutritious hemp food delights on offer at the hall café, served and hosted by proud Nimbin HEMP activists (pictured, left), it

is both an informative and uplifting event in cannabis history in Australia.

The next forum starts at 11am on Saturday 7th February, with a special guest speaker Dr Andrew Katelaris from Sydney. Catering will be provided by the famous ganja faeries as a fundraiser for their MardiGras float in Sydney next month.

For more information contact the HEMP Embassy on 6689-0326.

Hemp seed foods rejected... again

Police concerns continue to impose the ban on the consumption of hemp seed foods in Australia. Food Standards of Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) have repeatedly approved an application to allow consumption of Australian grown hemp seed.

Australian health ministers (the forum) met in New Zealand last week and again voted to reject the FSANZ approval notice. On this occasion though, reasons for objections were gathered from unsubstantiated comments made by police to state government submissions.

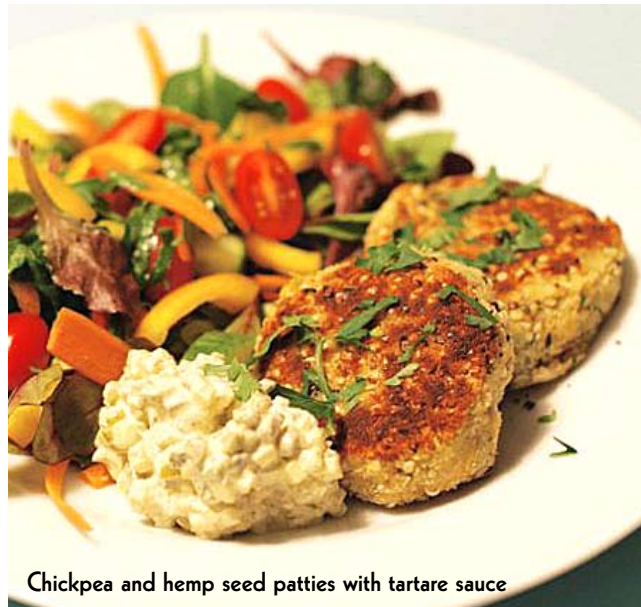
FSANZ have repeatedly approved applications to allow consumption of Australian-grown hemp seed.

NSW licensed hemp grower and HEMP Party secretary Andrew Kavasilas said, "It's become increasingly obvious that Australian police have acted administratively to override food and health officials and maintain this Australia-only ban. While the rest of the world allow hemp seed foods, Australian police continue to argue that if hemp foods are approved, it may interfere with saliva drug testing."

Mr Kavasilas added, "NSW Premiers Department, FSANZ and a Tasmanian parliamentary inquiry thoroughly investigated police concerns, finding that police could not substantiate their comments.

"It was also found that Australia is the only country to use random roadside saliva testing. Reports have concluded the devices are unreliable and could not be recommended. It was also discovered that confirmatory analysis techniques used by Australian police are below Australian standards."

For thousands of years people have consumed hemp seeds and used cannabis for medical purposes. During the 1930's, United Nations drug laws were agreed to with specific articles



Chickpea and hemp seed patties with tartare sauce

exempting the use of cannabis for seed, fibre, medical and scientific purposes.

"It's about time there was some kind of judicial inquiry on these cannabis issues. Citizens needs to know what sort of obstructions are holding up progress, or if there is administrative corruption," Mr Kavasilas said.

"If police are prepared to go to such extraordinary lengths to block hemp foods and good nutrition, we certainly don't want police input or comments which could very well stifle rational debate on the use of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes."

The hemp seed food ban has only been hurting Australian farmers, who are specifically prohibited from allowing locally produced grain to enter the food supply, whereas hemp seed importers and retailers have been advised by authorities that no action or investigation will be conducted against them until a decision is reached.

Medical cannabis trials 'of little use'

University of Melbourne expert Professor David Penington has used a journal article in the current issue of the *Medical Journal of Australia* to argue that the upcoming New South Wales-led clinical trial of medical cannabis, backed by the Commonwealth government, will be of little use, and that the use of cannabis for pain relief and treatment should be determined through an informed discussion between doctors and their patients.

"The clinical trial proposed, if successful, presumes that cannabis would then be approved and regulated as a pharmaceutical substance," wrote Professor Penington, a former National Health and Medical Research Council member and longtime advocate for medicinal cannabis.

"Cannabis can never be a pharmaceutical agent in the usual sense for medical prescription, as it contains a variety of components of variable potency and actions, depending on its origin, preparation and route of administration.

"Consequently, cannabis has variable effects in individuals. It will not be possible to determine universally safe dosage of cannabis for individuals based on a clinical trial."

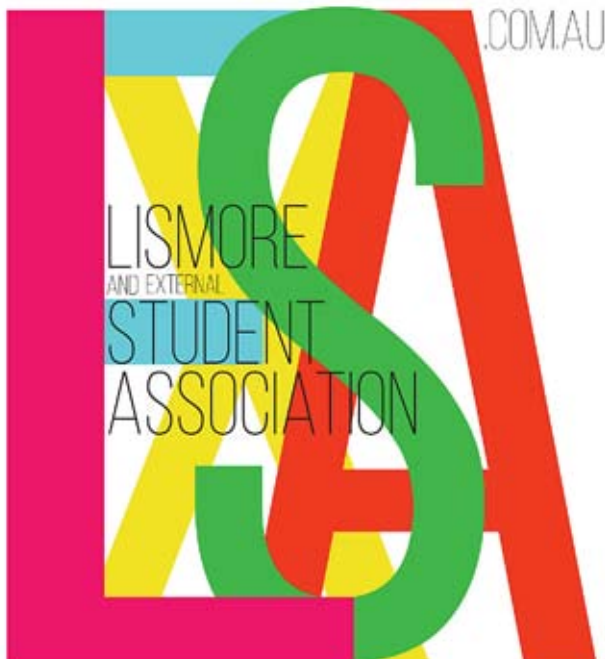
Professor Penington argues there is no "rational basis for the view that weakening prohibition to permit use for medical conditions would lead to a surge in general use", and states there is no evidence to suggest cannabis causes schizophrenia or is highly addictive, calling for approved users to be allowed to grow up to ten plants for personal use.

ACT Greens Minister for Justice Shane Rattenbury welcomed the comments and said clinical trials in Australia were unnecessary. "I remain concerned that trials will be a way of deferring action," he told the *Canberra Times*.

Mr Rattenbury introduced legislation to the ACT Legislative Assembly that would allow terminally and chronically ill Canberrans to grow marijuana and use the drug to alleviate their pain and symptoms.

Public submissions to the ACT inquiry close 13th Feb.

In November, Greens Senator Richard Di Natale introduced a cross-party bill into the federal Parliament that would make medicinal cannabis available nationally.



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STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

Under politix

Of course, all political parties are automatically infiltrated when they get to a certain size. However, a party of Nimbin druggies who want to change the law, get everyone stoned and bring down the economy, well, half their membership might be stooges. Informers, reporters, simple information gatherers and watchers, as well as full-time undacuvus.

"When it comes to mind-altering substances, we like to be close to the action," is almost a motto within the Force, as you may have noticed.

Parties have been destroyed before by simply taking them over, or by making their registration fail repeatedly until they give up. Or by simply getting a few thousand votes thrown in the bin, like we saw in WA last year.

So I was sent to Newcastle to make sure the largely incoherent and dazed-in-awe-and-wonder hippies retained control of their pot party and it didn't get into the hands of the

professional suits.

With a new acceptance of the weed sweeping the land, Canberra is sweating on keeping the issue unda the carpet. The health budget is an ever-exploding budget nightmare and the GPs and global Pharmas, are gouging every dollar they can while the harvest lasts. We all know the writing's on the wall, and the Abbot style can't last much longer.

The hippies usually meet on their back verandah where smoking is obligatory. I love their Friday 4.20 meetings, where only the strong immune systems survive, as all germs are spread evenly as the joints endlessly circle. Knowing this, the suits called the meeting in a healing centre with smoking strictly forbidden. There was genuine panic in the eyes of some stoners when they walked in and realised the trap. It's hard enough for some of the ferals to be under a roof, much less locked in by walls. Windows



were struggled open and the fresh air spaces jammed with bodies hanging over the street awning like yachties keeping their boat upright.

The suits dragged out the formalities as long as they could, all the while counting unda their breath, waiting for the voter numbers to dwindle. One feral actually fell right out the window trying to inhale on the sly, and others were in and out the door so often that counting the vote was looking like being a lottery. Three disappeared altogether when they heard there was a protest boat looking for volunteers to tackle the gas fracking happening off the coast.

Finally the cakes kicked in about halfway through, and the hippies powered on at that point. After all, it is their favorite vegie, and flower power is their home ground, while

the suits looked confused and increasingly anxious. The longer they delayed, the more the pendulum swung and the hippies returned triumphant to the Bin with the prize, ensuring another year of smoke-filled meetings where brilliant ideas run in circles and then get forgotten, which is just how the government likes it.

The Boss made phone calls to every Station along the highway to Newcastle telling the Force to stay away from the battered little car carrying the all important bearded ones from the Bin who had to save the party from the suits. They didn't need to know why. It was the same in '99 when the stoners' unlicensed and unregistered smoke-filled 1964 Commer bus hit the wall in Coffs to prevent a ten car pile up when the brakes failed. They didn't even do a licence check.

In other gossip, the Boss's wife went to the medical weed talk in the Bin which has them not talking to each other. She told him it was a knitting day but drove to the hippie village with three of her CWA friends. They all make lamingtons together every Friday, and now the recipe might alter, it seems. The Boss is torn in half like most of the Force on the issue; they know they've lost but they ain't letting go, yet.

The FBI says it can't find hackers to hire because they all smoke pot [Motherboard]

The government would pretty much have to let government hackers get stoned – because who's going to quit the habit just to work for the FBI? "I have to hire a great workforce to compete with those cyber criminals and some of those kids want to smoke weed on the way to the interview," Comey said, clearly not pandering to stereotypes. The reason for the FBI's unorthodox approach is that Congress has told the agency it needs to hire 2,000 more people this year, and many of those new recruits are going to fight computer-related crime.

Jamaica poised to relax cannabis laws [Guardian]

The bill would establish a cannabis licensing authority to deal with the regulations needed to cultivate, sell and distribute the herb for medical, scientific and therapeutic purposes. It would make possession of 2 ounces (56g) or less an offence that would not result in a criminal record. Cultivation of five or fewer plants on any premises would be permitted. Rastafarians, who use marijuana as a sacrament, could also legally use it for religious purposes for the first time in Jamaica, where the spiritual movement was founded in the 1930s.

World's biggest cannabis museum opens in Barcelona [ArtNet News]

Ben Dronkers, founder of Amsterdam's Hash Museum, purchased an impressive palace in



Barcelona's Gothic quarter which had fallen into severe disrepair. He spent the next ten years renovating the historical building and working towards realizing his dream. The institution will house more than 65,000 objects.

Marijuana's surprising effects on athletic performance [Business Insider Australia]

It turns out marijuana might actually help some people perform better at certain sports. This may sound crazy. After all, we're all familiar with the image of the couch-locked Cheetos-covered stoner. Yet there are people who say that training while high has helped them unlock new performance gains.

Major health study: long-time pot smokers face little damage to their lungs [AlterNet]

The inhalation of one marijuana cigarette per day over a 20-year period is not associated with adverse changes in lung health, according to data published online ahead of print in the journal *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*. Authors further reported that marijuana smoke exposure may even be associated with some protective

HEMP HEADLINES

lung effects among long-term smokers of tobacco. Investigators acknowledged, "...the pattern of marijuana's effects seems to be distinctly different when compared to that of tobacco use."

Likely cause of addiction has been discovered, and it is not what you think [Huffington Post]

A new book *Chasing The Scream – The First And Last Days of the War on Drugs* argues that human beings have a deep need to bond and form connections. It's how we get our satisfaction. If we can't connect with each other, we will connect with anything we can find. So the opposite of addiction is not sobriety. It is human connection and it is disconnection that drives addiction. Human beings are bonding animals. We need to connect and love. The wisest sentence of the twentieth century was EM Forster's – only connect. But we have created an environment and a culture that cut us off from connection, or offer only the parody of it offered by the internet. The rise of addiction is a symptom of a deeper sickness in the way we live – constantly directing our gaze towards the next shiny object we should buy, rather than the human beings all around us. The writer George Monbiot has called this "the age of loneliness." We have created human societies where it is easier for people to become cut off from all human connections than ever before.

The US is growing so much weed now, they're burning down their crops in Mexico [Business Insider Australia]

Tuesday night at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, a source with knowledge of security issues along the United States-Mexico border shared this interesting tidbit: The supply of marijuana grown in the United States has become so abundant and cheap that in the regions of northern Mexico, where it used to be grown, farmers have taken to burning their crops. It is no longer profitable for these Mexican farmers to grow, reap, and transport weed across the border. They have decided there is more money in burning down their crops and planting opium poppies instead. (We'd describe the source of this information more, but the World Economic Forum is held under something called "The Chatham House Rule," wherein reporters are able to share information they have heard here but are not allowed to describe its source.)

Shocking effect of medical marijuana laws on opioid deaths [High Times]

A study of internal medicine by UPenn researchers has found a startlingly clear correlation between states with medical marijuana laws and the lowering of opioid death rates. In simple

terms, states with medical marijuana laws had a 24.8% lower mean annual opioid overdose mortality rate than states without medical marijuana laws. The sad part? "Approximately 60 percent of all deaths resulting from opioid analgesic overdoses occur in patients who have legitimate prescriptions," Dr. Marcus A. Bachhuber explained.

GW Pharma's cannabis drug fails in cancer pain study, shares fall [Reuters]

An experimental cannabis drug failed to alleviate pain in cancer patients as hoped in a clinical study, sending shares in its British maker GW Pharmaceuticals as much as 21 percent lower on Thursday.

Drugs Unlimited: The web revolution that's changing how the world gets high [Book Depository]

The very first thing ever bought or sold on the Internet was marijuana, when Stanford and MIT students used ARPANET to cut a deal in the early '70s. Today, you can order any conceivable pill or powder with the click of a mouse. In 'Drugs Unlimited', Mike Power tells the tale of drugs in the Internet Age, in which users have outmanoeuvred law enforcement, breached international borders, and created a massive worldwide black market.

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