

# Vigil for refugees

by Omega Breakspear

Amnesty International's Lismore Group have been holding vigils outside the Lismore office of Kevin Hogan, Federal Member for Page.

This is in response to the Australian Government's appalling attitude and response to the plight of refugees.

This month the conflict in Syria has been going on for five years. Despite the Turnbull Government's promise to offer sanctuary to 12,000 Syrian refugees, only a few dozen have been resettled here.

We are also calling for the closure of the Manus Island and Nauru detention centres. Whether asylum seekers' reasons are war, persecution



or economically related, these places are unsuitable and inhumane accommodation.

Come join us every Thursday between 5pm and 5.30pm in Molesworth

Street, Lismore to show your support for the human rights of refugees.

# DON'T FORGET NEPAL

by Helen Simpson

My presentation on 8<sup>th</sup> February on the rebuilding of Baruwa Village Central Nepal, epicentre of 2015 earthquake, was well attended and there are now quite a few people on board to help with continuing fundraising. Several people have expressed an interest in travelling over in September to help with this project.

I will be visiting there in April to organise building materials, liaise with the elders and women of the village and arrange accommodation for volunteers. Fuel is getting across the border from

India now, so materials will be able to be transported to the mountains.

My visits are self-funded and I have Nepali support for this.

Crowdfunding will be starting and continuing for the next few months, and a webpage constructed called 'Don't Forget Nepal'.

You can donate through the Nepal Relief Fund supported by Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Services at Summerland Credit Union BSB 728-728, Account No 22305643 (NRF).

Thanks to all those who have donated already. For further enquiries, my phone number is (02) 6689-1417.



# Trash, treasure and you

by Duuvy Jester

It has been said that what we make of our lives is what defines us as individuals. But I would like to put to you that it is what we throw out and disregard as trash that defines us as a collective on this planet.

What we throw out each week collectively is enough to make even BP executives blush coyly into their mugs of breakfast oil.

We look at trash such as tyres and bottles as resources rather than environmental burdens. It is one way to help ol' mother dirtship spin, with us all still surfing joyously upon her warm breast. The effort is to look at objects to find their structural capabilities, their environmental impact and their creative potential.

For example, lets look at the humble tyre. It is a round, dual density rubber building block that is steel belted. In the right conditions, it remains stable and you are only bound by your own creativity. Once you realise that, you can begin mind mapping its potential for different projects you have around the yard and house.

The Terraeden crew will be running



a weekend workshop on the 'Basics of Bioteecture' on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March. You will get hands-on skills in how to work with these materials and how you can apply the technique to small, medium and large scale projects. The workshop will be fully catered and there will be on-site camping. It is being facilitated by local Earthship builders and builders from the New

Mexico Earthship family.

This will be a great opportunity for anyone interested in working with tyres, making bottle walls from scratch and for those curious in adapting the techniques to whatever suits your situation.

For more info or to book a place on the workshop, either message 0491-128-964 or email: [info@terraeden.org](mailto:info@terraeden.org)



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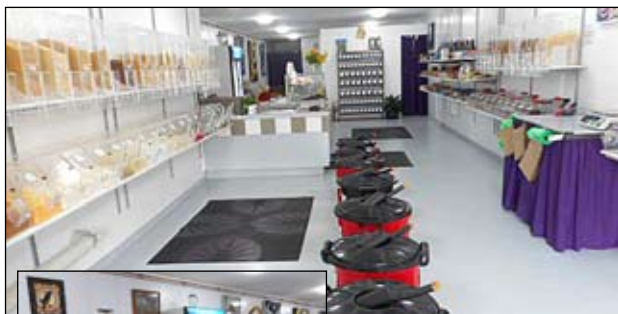
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# Protecting families from CSG

by Angie and Dean Draper

A new group has formed to support families who are impacted by living in gasfield areas.

The 'Protect our families from CSG Alliance' has established a camp near Chinchilla in Queensland, on a property owned by a family who are suffering the effects of living in a gasfield.

Members of the alliance travelled from the Northern Rivers to attend the Senate enquiry into the impacts of unconventional gas, which was held at Dalby.

The enquiry heard from several Queensland landholders, who raised their concerns about the negative ways the gas industry has affected their lives.

Helen Bender, John



Jenkyn, Nood and Narelle Nothdurft, and Dr Geryllyn McCarron were some of the speakers.

After hearing from the affected families, Senator Glen Lazarus said, 'It appears to be a type of genocide. People are getting sick and we are not treating them.'

The alliance camp is located on the property of

a Queensland farmer who has locked his gates to QGC after a long-running dispute with them.

He has been treated poorly by the company and no longer wishes to deal with them. The company's response is to threaten legal action.

11 children have been raised on the farm. Now they have 26 gas wells

within a 2km radius of their home. They have high point vents near their home which release methane and associated coal seam chemicals loudly to the air. The family has trouble sleeping because of the noise from nearby infrastructure. Flares light up the night sky.

The children are suffering typical gasfield symptoms of prolonged headaches and nosebleeds.

Northern Rivers protectors regularly travel to Queensland to support the people living there. If you would like to support the families, visit the camp and tour the QLD gasfields, contact: [Dean.wolfweb@gmail.com](mailto:Dean.wolfweb@gmail.com)

Look at and like the 'Protect our families from CSG Alliance' Facebook page.

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## Chamber of Commerce looks to implement sustainable energy plan

by Teresa (Biskit) Biscoe, President

The Nimbin Chamber of Commerce Inc. is investigating sustainable energy and would like to engage with more of our local businesses in working towards a healthy and sustainable economic future for our community.

As part of that engagement strategy, we are holding a General Members' Meeting, Wednesday 16th March at 6pm at Rainbow Power Company, Alternative Way, Nimbin.

Some members of the Chamber attended the Sustainability Forum organised by the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre and were very interested in the Energy Plan presented at the forum.

Rainbow Power Company participated strongly, and had significant input in the

development of this plan. We have asked R.P.C. to introduce the Energy Plan to local businesses as well, as part of this evening.

The meeting is an opportunity for the Chamber to introduce the new committee and to have a general discussion about the chamber's interests and plans and get feedback from local business, rather than a formal voting occasion.

Subjects to be discussed include the Special Business Rate Variation Levy Fund, Fire Recovery Funds, major impending developments, Parking, streetscape and beautification and presenting the Nimbin "Image".

The Chamber will be supplying a light supper and beverages for all attending, at the end of the evening.

All members are welcome and if you would like to join the chamber, there will be an opportunity at this event.

## Rainbow Cafe rebuild to include rental spaces

by Megan James

Money, money, money!

The Rainbow Rebuild group at Tuntable Co-op have spent the last 18 months working on a design for a new Rainbow Cafe that would hopefully please everyone... but we have now had to face some difficult decisions.

We need to borrow money to finance the rebuild and in order to repay that loan, we need to create sufficient useable rental spaces to bring in a realistic income.

As well, we are still committed to reinstating the essential and most-loved features of the old Rainbow Café, to preserving the heritage streetscape and complying with Council and building regulations – and to working with the museum site owners to establish a co-ordinated design.

Costing for our initial sketch design has come in at way over our budget. We now need to refine and simplify our design considerably.

At this point, all we can definitely say is that there will be a Rainbow cafe/restaurant; there will be a veranda and a garden at the rear of the café; there will be a party wall along our southern boundary with the museum site – and there will be other rentable spaces as well as the café.

These spaces will ideally be used as offices or studios for professionals, specialist services or local artisans.

Due to our current financial constraints, we unfortunately cannot guarantee the nature of the businesses that will use these spaces – but please let Jonathon, Karlin, Ren, Tully or myself know if you have any interest in using them as other than a purely retail outlet.

## Nimbin local comes home from WA – for a haircut

Cancer survivor Hayley Odewahn (pictured) is leading a fundraising drive for the Leukemia Foundation in Nimbin this month, flying in from her home in Perth to have her long locks shaved off.

Hayley was born and raised in Nimbin, where she worked at the newsagent as a teenager, completing her HSC at Richmond River High School, and still has many friends in the village.

"I am so excited to be coming home to be surrounded by all my family and friends to participate in Nimbin Hotel's World's Greatest Shave," she said.

Hayley's journey with cancer began when, at 19 she was diagnosed with blood cancer at Lismore Hospital. With no oncology unit locally, she moved to Brisbane for six months of intensive chemotherapy treatment of her Stage 4 Hodgkinson's Lymphoma, followed by 17 rounds of radiation treatment.

She was able to access the services of the Leukemia Foundation during her treat-



ment, and said, "The Foundation gave me and my family an easy to understand guide to understanding my cancer, and a guide to what services were available."

Now 25, Hayley is celebrating her five years in remission, a milestone she reached in February, with a big effort to support others with blood cancer.

"My cancer was made curable, thanks to research and developments made possible through organisations like the Leukemia Foundation, but in order to continue ground-breaking research and ongoing support to families like mine, they need our help," Hayley said.

Join Hayley on Saturday 12th March for Nimbin Hotel's World's Greatest Shave kicking off at 1pm. Full head shaves are not essential – people can colour or trim their hair, or shave their beard or mo. Colours are \$5, trims are \$15, shaves are \$10.

There will be a donation BBQ starting at 3pm. And the event will continue late into the night, with popular trio Khanage kicking off at 7pm.

All donations will go to the Leukemia Foundation.

"Please know your donations are being put to great use and your support is incredibly appreciated!" she said. "From my family to yours – thank you.

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# Fearless father faces indictment

The recent Federal legislative changes to medicinal cannabis will not be much help to one Queensland father, Adam Koessler, who faces criminal charges for treating his own daughter, Rumer, who suffers from neuroblastoma – a rare type of cancer that affects infants and young children – with cannabis oil.

Rumer was diagnosed on Christmas Eve, 2014. After only four days of treating Rumer with cannabis oil, Adam was arrested at the hospital by police. He now faces a possible 25 years of imprisonment on serious charges of 'possession of a dangerous drug' as well as 'aggravated supply of a dangerous drug to a minor' when the matter is heard in the Queensland Supreme Court later this month.

Bail conditions subsequently reduced Adam's contact with his sick child and mandated that all contact must be supervised at his expense. As a result of the charges Adam lost his job of 11 years as a teacher and his working with children card was revoked. He has been financially ruined over the 14 months it has taken for the legal process to bring the matter to trial, with little support from Legal Aid.

Adam has to travel between his home in Cairns and Brisbane for court ordered contact with his child and



for court attendances and relies on 'couch surfing' for his accommodation because of the financial toll of the legal proceedings. Adam was only just recently reunited with his daughter after six months of no contact whatsoever.

After her first dose of the cannabis oil there was a marked improvement in her condition. She went from being curled up in a ball and not eating to enjoying a hearty meal and asking to go and play in the park. She is now denied access to this remedy

While Rumer is attended by one of

the leading paediatric cancer surgeons in the Southern Hemisphere, she has only been given a 50/50 survival chance, her condition is not improving and the treatment options are running out.

"They have passed legislation that will eventually, but still at least six months away yet, allow for the legal but controlled (by the government) cultivation of cannabis for medical and research purposes. That's all they've done," a spokesperson for the father said.

"None of these changes will help Adam or Rumer. In fact, every part of the (legal) system conspires, basically, to harm these sick children."

"If the government was serious about helping people by embracing medicinal cannabis they would have adopted an amnesty model, and provided amnesty to all the people currently using, making or administering cannabis products and include them in the debate and research," she said.

"But no, what they are actually doing is enacting more severe penalties for people who do not comply with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) requirements."

The Fearless Father facebook page has 75k+ likes and you can support his legal campaign at <https://www.gofundme.com/5ph8bm6c>

## Losing Karl

by Dionne May

No-one got to say farewell to Karl.

I opened the Oasis Café as usual, expecting Karl to quietly appear with *The Australian* newspaper tucked under his arm, place his \$3 on the counter for his long black coffee and take his seat while he patiently waited for it.

Karl always chose a sunny seat and kept his head in his newspaper. To all intents and purposes he was just another old man in Nimbin. Always immaculately dressed with sometimes his braces or a bow tie to add some flair. We all knew he was a happily

married man, but he was rarely seen with his beautiful Wendy in town and usually kept to himself. Until... every now and then... out would pop the real Karl. Cheeky, witty and possessing a dry observation of the world around him that was both full of humour and compassion.

Pain, loss and separation can scar a man or make him great. Karl was truly great. Listening to pieces of the Karl puzzle at his wake at Djanbung Gardens last Wednesday, hearing of this unwanted, sickly Bavarian/Romanian Gypsy orphan's eventual pilgrimage to Australia, his life's dedication to the unjust, to Karl's philosophy and life choices that led this beautiful man to

his spiritual home of Nimbin.

His personally made T-shirt read "Karl... doesn't play well with other children." But he did. With a twinkle in his eye, childish spirit intact, every now and then Karl, Simonetta and I played like children with our friends at The Oasis. We deeply loved Karl and will treasure memories now of a great man gone. There is a saying that goes something like this... great people, like great diamonds are forged under the greatest of pressures, taking time to slowly reach the surface, where the gentle buffing by love reveals the purest of pure.

Farewell Karl Langheinrich. May your pure gypsy soul dance forever young and free in our hills and valleys.

# The power of video for your business

by Russell Lean

In days gone by, it was only big businesses that could afford a budget for a promotional video. They were expensive to get made and equally as expensive in the post production/editing phase. And let's face it, where was a video of old placed? In the only two places available – either on TV or at a cinema, and both of these forms of advertising were costly.

We are so fortunate that times have changed. Internet video can be made quickly, cheaply and have every bit of the impact of videos in the old TV/cinema paradigm. All you need today is a smart phone with an HD camera, a good stills camera with a video function, or a video camera, and you can produce a good quality video about you and your business.

If you have none of these, you can even use a webcam on a laptop and some free screen capture software (Skype will do – or YouTube as well) and you are off and running. YouTube is stuffed full of videos about 'How to make a video for my website' – In fact if you search that phrase in YouTube it returns 19,400,000 results, so there is plenty of free training just in that one place, with that one search term – easy.

A lot of people shy away from getting a video about their business done, because they think they need



a big budget production number to represent their business. I have seen some really low (and no) budget videos help grow businesses beyond the perception of the video's creator. It really reinforces the Internet marketing adage "High tech – low cheque".

So, what are the benefits of having a video of you and your business on your website/Facebook page etc? The benefits are numerous. Firstly, people will stay on your website for a longer time if the video is engaging, and that reduces "bounce rate" (people leaving your website quickly) and improves your website ranking in the search engines. Also people will be more likely to navigate to other pages after watching a video.

Secondly, people want to meet people – so if a potential customer has already seen your face and the faces of others in your business prior to visiting your

business, they will feel a connection already. This is reinforced by data from the big players in internet marketing – people will go to a business they feel connected to.

Thirdly, video is the best way to convey the "message" of your business. Visitors will digest more information quickly in a video than by reading reams of text. Fourthly, because there are so many good video sharing sites, video syndicated for free to places such as YouTube, Vimeo, Daily Motion, when seen on those platforms can drive a new stream of traffic to your website.

Lastly, video will help your business stand out from your competition and drastically increase the reach of your business to new potential website visitors and customers at your actual place of business.

There are many other benefits with video and the real crux of this is that if you have competition, and they don't have a video on their website, it is one easy way to out-compete them, out-rank them, and get the edge. Remember the four ways of the middle road of strategy that the head of Google in Australia told me to focus on? Mobile – local – video – social. It is an integral part of a well rounded, enduring online marketing strategy, and it works!

Phone Russell on 0468-382-600, or email him at [web2trafficstrategies@gmail.com](mailto:web2trafficstrategies@gmail.com)  
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# Why don't you try me tonight?



**Karl Langheinrich**

**Born: Hof, Germany, 23rd June 1948**  
**Died: near Uki, 6th February 2016**

Obituary by  
 Wendy Sarkissian

**K**arlheinz Langheinrich was born in 1948 in the small town of Hof in Bavaria near the East German border. It was not an auspicious start. Born prematurely, to a bewildered Romany Gypsy girl of 16, he was sickly and not expected to live – certainly not through the northern winter. Money was not gathered for the christening of this hopeless case. This scrawny, puny, tiny baby could not possibly make it.

But Karl made it through – and more.

His early years were spent in the care of an elderly great-aunt, who loved him fiercely and unconditionally, but lacked the wherewithal, monitoring skills or physical energy to manage a headstrong and rebellious young boy with – by this time – some serious emotional scars. His early childhood was spent stealing away from her humble attic accommodation (where they shared a narrow couch as a bed) and standing in the freezing weather in a short-sleeved shirt and gumboots, watching the football. Or just 'escaping'.

Karl always pitted himself against the elements – and/or the dominant paradigm.

At the time of his aunt's sudden death at 70, Karl, at seven, was unceremoniously abandoned by the rest of his mother's family, who refused to take him, as no social welfare benefits accompanied care of a relative.

It was post-war Germany; things were in chaos and times were very tough for a young boy. Sharp lessons in trust – or rather, not trusting – were forced on the young Karl.

Karl lived for the next seven years in a Lutheran orphanage on a farm. There, before too long, he became the 'union organiser', organising strikes against food quality and living conditions. Fearing more unfair treatment at the hands of so-called 'family', he hid in the barn every Sunday afternoon when potential foster parents arrived for

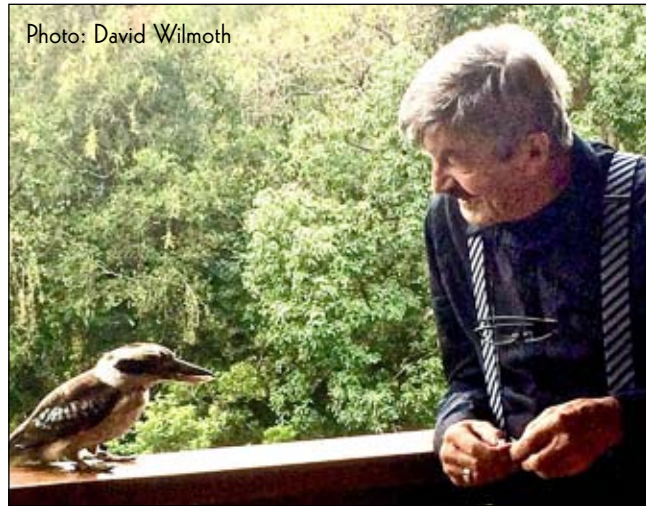


Photo: David Wilmoth

visits to view potential foster children.

He was one orphan who preferred the orphanage. In his view, he was safest in the orphanage – with the devil he knew – than with any other sort of devils he might not know and who might be even more duplicitous.

Early on, Karl learned to be deeply suspicious of people's intentions. Later he turned that suspicion into unionism and social and political activism.

Years later, Karl's mother, now in Perth with three children, managed to bring Karl to Australia. A so-called 'family reunion'. He was 17 and spoke not a word of English. Arriving by plane in Perth, he expected Australians to speak German to him and it was a rude shock they did not.

The all-Australian household included his mother, her husband (not his father) and three young children – including his half-sister, Christa, who always dreamed of having an older brother.

Karl was a misfit, a tough nugget of a teenage boy, having spent ten years in an institution, with some recent time in a halfway house for teenagers.

In Germany, as a teenager, he undertook an apprenticeship in machine mechanical engineering. In Australia, odd jobs – from prospecting to mining to working on the railroad – were all he could find, until he did a welder/boilermaker apprenticeship in his thirties.

Wisely, Christa determined that Karl needed to be accepted and loved as her true brother – and she has done that without faltering, for fifty years. Her steadfast love for him did wonders to alleviate his natural suspiciousness.

Karl had the sort of life that makes for legends in Australia. He worked and lived in places we could only imagine, with hardship that defies description. He even tried to be a petty criminal but was not organised enough. He absconded from the Australian Army. And then escaped back to it when things got too hot in Kings Cross.

Karl was the Secretary of the Balga branch of the Labor Party in Western Australia

and deeply involved in union politics with the CFMEU, where he was a union organiser for metalworkers. His political career in Perth was cut short when he realised what a scumbag Brian Burke (the Member for Balga) was. He did, however, steadfastly champion union and labour views throughout his life and would occasionally and vociferously invoke "work-to-rule" provisions when too much housework was demanded of him.

Having spent a lifetime trying – and failing – to talk about philosophy with men in shipyards and railroad camps, Karl took university degrees in his mid-to-late forties: first with many high distinctions in philosophy, sociology and politics at Murdoch University, and later (not so happily, but still with all his unionism and gender politics alive) a degree in social work at Sydney University, where he was one of four men in a class of 106.

I believe (and I know he'd agree) that the wisest thing he ever did was marry me. When we married in 1994, Karl quipped that he was going to get this right. He got it right. He is my dearest Beloved. A treasure. My darling.

Karl was a modern-day miracle of resilience, suspiciousness, determination, stubbornness and perseverance. And, to make him all the more mysterious and contradictory, he was a consummate escape artist.

But he could not escape the muddy waters of the Tweed River where he quickly, gently and peacefully drowned, holding my hand, on 6<sup>th</sup> February.

Karl adored everything about Nimbin. Here he discovered more than his 'spiritual home'. He found the true essence of 'community' and he was so completely and deeply appreciative of every aspect of it. He was so proud to be part of the Nimbin community. I cannot imagine any place in Australia where he could have been happier. Which is why we lived here.

Karl lived to be 67; 66 years longer than anyone imagined. I had 23 of those years. It was a bumpy ride.

He asked, "Why don't you try me tonight?"  
 I did. I'm so glad I did.

# Remembering Ossie (Neville) Osborne

by Alison Downing

All Ossie's friends and colleagues from Macquarie University have fond memories of this unassuming, quiet, gentle and courteous man who passed away at Nimbin on 9th February.

Prior to joining the School of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University as glasshouse manager, Ossie had worked with semi-precious gemstones. In spite of his lack of formal training in botany and horticulture, he had an extensive knowledge of and passion for gardening, and impressed all at his interview with his integrity, determination and maturity.

Once established at Macquarie, Ossie studied horticulture at TAFE, a tough challenge for an older person in a classroom full of youngsters. Undeterred, he revelled in the opportunity to extend horticulture to science and, encouraged by scientists from Macquarie, in his final year undertook a challenging project to determine the most effective tissue culture technique for the micropropagation of waratahs (*Telopea speciosissima*).

Ossie enjoyed the many and varied research projects in which he was involved, such as fructose in Jerusalem artichokes; competition and survival amongst eucalypt seedlings; cold tolerance in *Nerium oleander* and *Hibiscus* species. However, glasshouse management also involved production of plants for classes, including maintenance of collections of rare and unusual species of ferns, conifers and cycads. He planted endless trays of broad beans required just as they germinated, rows of corn in field plots adjacent to the glasshouses, and pumpkins, always Queensland Blue, for the hairs on stems used to view cytoplasmic streaming under the microscope.

Biological Sciences at Macquarie is blessed not only with a green and leafy courtyard of interesting and unusual plants, but also extensive plantings surrounding the biology buildings. Ossie was involved in many of these projects, and planted what is now a magnificent row of *Eucalyptus deanei* – the Mountain Blue



Gum, on the northern side of the biology building complex, as well as the row of *Hibiscus* species and rainforest trees a little further to the east.

At that time, palaeontologists John Talent and Ruth Mawson were working hard to establish a garden in the Earth Sciences courtyard reflecting evolutionary times – with both Gondwanan (Southern Hemisphere) and

Laurasian (Northern Hemisphere) plants – and Ossie, together with other biology staff members, contributed substantially to that project.

More recently, botanists visited Ossie's property in Nimbin and discovered a number of particularly rare and unusual species of moss. A report on these discoveries was subsequently published in *Telopea*, the scientific journal of the National Herbarium of New South Wales in Sydney.

Emeritus Professor John Talent wrote: "We remember those occasional lunchtime barbecues organised over at the hothouses with Ossie present, and remember him with fondness as a wonderful, gentle soul with a droll humour."

I owe a personal debt to Ossie. I had an opportunity to do a Master's degree as a mature age student, and it took five and a half years to complete part-time. Ossie had wanted to retire, but deferred this until I had finished my degree. I would not have been able to do this without his continued support and encouragement.

At the end of last year, Ossie's beloved companion Gai phoned us to let us know that Ossie was not well. We flew to Ballina and spent a wonderful day with Gai and Ossie, sitting on the balcony of his house, looking across the valley to the magnificent Border Ranges to the north. It was a magical time.

Gai has been a wonderful friend to Ossie, who had well and truly settled in and become part of the community, his great pleasure to walk down to the village, drink coffee, read his newspaper and meet with his friends. We will miss him very much.

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# From the mayor's desk

by Cr Jenny Dowell  
Lismore City Council

## Council meeting

The first Council meeting of the year was relatively straightforward with the usual variety of everyday matters that involve council. One of the most significant reports to be presented to Council has passed remarkably under the radar. The review team examining all units of activity within Council has completed the examination of our Roads department with a no-holds-barred report on culture and work practices. Council unanimously adopted the recommendations to address the numerous areas of concern and will be carefully considering regular reports that we expect to reflect improved service delivery.

## Condolences

Sadly, at the February meeting, we marked the deaths of two past council employees, John Bancroft and Annette Olive and two long-time community volunteers Marie Mackney and Helen Wynd. We extend our condolences to their families and friends.

## Nimbin water supply

As residents of Nimbin will be aware, over the past few years Council has been planning for an

upgrade on the Nimbin water supply to improve water quality for rural residents along Gungas Road who access mains water. Various designs have been considered with a current budget of \$2.6 million. An external consultancy has revised the scope and costs including an increase in the diameter of the trunk main and a subsequent power supply upgrade almost doubling the costs. Council has also revised the scope adding a separate rising and gravity main among additional works. Council now has to decide whether to reduce the scope of works to remain on budget or increase the budget in line with the revised Council estimate. Consultation will occur in Nimbin in the coming months to outline possible changes to the scope of works or budgets for implementation and the likely ramifications for residents. A draft policy on rural connections in Nimbin will be considered at the March Council meeting for public exhibition.

## Traffic Committee

Council has endorsed a recommendation from the Traffic Advisory Committee to relocate the 50kph speed restriction sign approximately 100m south west of the current location on the approach to Nimbin from Lismore. Police had reported a history of accidents on the bend possibly exacerbated by a slippery surface from an accumulation of camphor leaf residue.

## NAG meeting

The first Nimbin Advisory Group meeting for the year was held on 11 February. The aforementioned water supply issue was discussed and it was recommended that the *GoodTimes* should be used to outline the options

before Council. Owing to the complexity of the matter, the NAG members supported the Councillors making the decision on the preferred action and informing the community of the reasons for the choice.

Also on the agenda was the Development Control Plan (DCP) for the village. A DCP sits within the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) to guide development in a particular area. Generally the NAG members regard the DCP as being still appropriate and urged Council to take greater heed of it. Areas that do require further consideration include building facades and the Cullen Street streetscape, carparking provisions and footpaths and cycleways.

## NAG Vacancy

Thanks to Rob Fisher for his three years membership of the NAG. We are very appreciative of Rob's participation and now look to recruiting for a new member. Expressions of Interests are via a form on the [lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://lismore.nsw.gov.au) website from 2 March for a period of six weeks.

## PCCC

The first Police Community Consultative Committee meeting was held on 4 February and as usual the discussion ranged widely from the incidence of crime to mental health challenges, community safety and points of contact when help is needed. Inspector Susie Johnston, chairing her second PCCC, has been instrumental in getting these meetings on a regular and more productive footing. Changes in duties mean that Inspector Johnston will no longer coordinate policing in the Nimbin area so Inspector Nicole Bruce who also attended

the meeting will take up that role and will resume the chair for future meetings.

## Blue Knob Gallery Ceramic Studio

I've been very fortunate to see the transformation of the Blue Knob Hall into a magnificent gallery, café and community market space. Part of the transformation has been the additions of the verandah, the Robin Moore felting and workshop studio and now the wonderful ceramic studio with its spaces honouring the contributions of Jeni Kendell, Paul Tait, Nimbin Artists Gallery and the late Chris Marchant. With little funding, the community has again demonstrated its 'do-it-yourself' attitude and skill to produce this magnificent studio with its workshop, kiln, library and display areas. Congratulations all!

## Relay for Life

On April 2-3, Lismore and Villages Relay for Life will be held at Southern Cross University and everyone is welcome. The walk around the oval that raises money for the Cancer Council starts with a lap by survivors and carers at 3pm and continues throughout the night until about 9am on Sunday morning. During the event there are reflective times of remembering those who have died from cancer and times of fun and joyfulness. It's not necessary to walk all the time or to pitch a tent to stay overnight but however you join in, I guarantee you'll enjoy the community experience of this biennial event and make a difference by raising awareness and funds.

## Communications Tower

Council has been notified that NSW Health intends to install an emergency services

telecommunications tower at the Nimbin Multi-Purpose Health Centre in Cullen Street. Council has strongly encouraged the applicant to undertake consultation with community and offered to assist through a variety of means including to facilitate contact with local groups, to do a mail-out to property owners, to engage an independent facilitator and to seek advice from the NAG. Council also spelt out our guidelines and expectations for community consultation and although we are not the approval agency for state infrastructure and therefore we cannot require NSW Health and its agent to follow these guidelines, we certainly recommend that they do.

Unfortunately, the consultant engaged by NSW Health declined to follow most of Council's suggestions and the street address and the Lot number in the original advertisement and accompanying letters were incorrect. The consultant has subsequently re-advertised. Again unfortunately, the notification both times was in *The Northern Star* rather than the *GoodTimes*.

## Clean Up Australia Day

On March 6, I'll be cleaning up the area around Council chambers again with a group of community members including students, parents and staff from a local school who turn up on the day. It will be interesting to see if drink containers again make up the bulk of litter collected. By July next year, NSW will have a Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) where most drink containers will be redeemable for a cash rebate or similar. Lismore Council has provided a submission to the discussion paper and has suggested that our Council is best placed to administer the scheme locally.

As we await the government's decision on the CDS, I hope you can spare some time on March 6 to help clean up your little part of paradise.

# Electoral boundary shift sees Nimbin move back to Page

by Kevin Hogan

I am very excited about representing the communities of Nimbin and surrounding areas. This area has previously been in the Richmond electorate but will move into Page at the next election.

It makes sense that this region become part of Page because it brings together all of the Lismore Local Government area into the one electorate.

Like readers of the *Nimbin GoodTimes*, I live in a community (Clunes) outside of Lismore. I understand why people choose this lifestyle and the type of services that we need.

I have had numerous discussions with many people from Nimbin, including Michael Balderstone, about the legalisation and cultivation of cannabis for medicinal use.

I am very happy to report that following those conversations, last week



I spoke in Parliament in support of the Government's Narcotic Drug Amendment Bill.

The proposed legislation will allow the cultivation of legal medicinal cannabis crops in Australia under strict controls which strike the right balance between patient access, community protection and our international obligations.

I have heard numerous stories from members of our community with debilitating illnesses who want access to medicinal cannabis to help relieve their chronic pain and improve the quality of their lives.

Many roads in the Nimbin area are in very poor shape.

This year the Government has almost tripled the amount of funding it gave to Lismore City Council to fix our roads to \$2.52 million. Next year it will be slightly more, at \$2.91 million.

The decision about which roads to spend the money on is made by the council.

The Senate is holding an inquiry into Lyme-like illness in Australia.

If you, members of your family or friends have been affected by Lyme disease, or you suspect it may be, you are invited to make a submission to the inquiry.

Submissions can be made via: [www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Community\\_Affairs/Lyme-like\\_Illness](http://www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Lyme-like_Illness). Submissions close on March 31.

For information on Lyme disease symptoms, diagnoses, and treatment please go to: [www.lymedisease.org.au](http://www.lymedisease.org.au)

# The tale of Bathenstool

## Return of the Loon

by Laurence Axtens

Bathenstool is a small provincial city founded on the confluence of two sewerage outlets.

The township has been the homeland of The Farmers political party since time began, until a name change in the 1980s when the party became The Farmers and Miners Party (FnM). This of course created serious tensions between the miners and farmers as they fought for supremacy. Nowhere was this division more fiercely fought than in Bathenstool where the farmers controlled what was becoming more and more just The Miners party.

Over the years the central party had done all it could to silence the Bathenstoolers – at one stage they bluntly parachuted their blundering party leader into the township. The local farmers chased him out with pitchforks and he promptly lost the seat and his leadership of the party.

In recent times the FnM have tried a whole brace of strategies to keep the seat while mining the nation's farming land into toxic shock. The last stratagem required spending a massive \$100,000 on a campaign to elect a donkey. He's quite a handsome burro



with lovely nice blue eyes and most importantly, an inoffensive bray. So inoffensive that the Bathenstoolers elected him.

He's a good donkey, he always votes from the top down. And the party apparatchiks have designed all the legislation so the donkey has always voted exactly as the party dictated.

This has worked well, however now they have to get the donkey re-elected and they don't have all the

money they spent last election; that money will be needed to get their leader, a pit pony, over the line. The pony's been doing his best to deceive the farmers of his electorate of his farming credentials, but he is often ridden by mining magnate Jabba Mineheart, and this has damaged his back, and his cred.

Fortunately for the party, the Bathenstoolers love pork almost as much as they doubt the intellectual capacity of donkeys. As a consequence the river into Bathenstool is chocker full of barrels heavy with salted pork and the donkey has been there to join people for photos as they drag them all up the bank. Yum yum pigs bum, but will the farmers think a donkey an adequate representative? Time will tell.

# Why we need donations law reform

## Green Scene

by Senator Lee Rhiannon

If you want to know what companies fund the political parties running in this year's federal election you will have to wait until February 1 next year. This is just one way that information on political donations is hidden from public scrutiny.

February 1 is the one day of the year when you can see how millions of dollars from major industries – mining companies, property developers, big tobacco and the alcohol and gambling industries – are gifted to the major parties.

However, the disclosure rules are so arcane that we only get part of the picture when February 1 rolls around. No donations under \$12,800 have to be declared. This year it was reported that almost 40 per cent of the revenue that goes to the Liberal, National and Labor parties was under this amount and so was not declared.

On top of this some parties use secretive organisations called 'associated entities' to obscure the source of donations.

Many payments are not even categorised as 'donations', but as 'subscriptions'. On page 37 of Labor's disclosure register is a 'subscription' payment to the value of \$110,000 from Woodside Energy. There is a \$27,500 'subscription' from Santos, who is currently heading up a coal seam gas project near Narrabri.

This year we learnt that tobacco giant Philip Morris donated \$10,780 to the National Party. The property and construction industry gave about \$1.5 million to the major parties.

Our democracy is unhealthy. It



is sometimes hard to know where politics starts and business ends. The distinction is so blurred.

We see evidence of toxic political patronage in the tax breaks and subsidies given to mining companies and in the major parties' decisions to prioritise mining over local communities in Gloucester, the Liverpool Plains, Narrabri and Maules Creek.

We see evidence of it when we read about dozens of dodgy dealings between industries and politicians. Last year it was revealed that Clubs NSW, the most powerful gambling lobby in Australia, donated \$20,000 to Coalition government frontbencher Kevin Andrews, who led the charge on his party's winding back of anti-gambling measures.

And who could forget the hundreds of thousands of dollars that rolled in from the Packer family to the Liberal Party in the lead up to the approval for James Packer's Barangaroo casino in Sydney.

It is no wonder that public confidence and trust in the major parties and the political system is so eroded.

The Greens do not accept corporate donations or any donations which may give rise to a conflict of interest. In NSW, the Greens disclose all donations of \$1000 or more. We believe politicians should be representing the community and not vested interests, and we are committed to the principle of one-citizen one-vote.

I have a Donations Reform Bill before the Senate which would ban political donations from mining companies, big tobacco, the alcohol and gambling industries and from property developers. The Australian Greens have a bill to install a national ICAC. In NSW, the Greens also run the *Democracy4Sale* project, which has helped to shine the spotlight on the corporate bankrolling of political parties for over a decade.

Australia needs national uniform electoral funding laws. Millions of dollars will continue to influence political parties and candidates, and donations scandals will continue to dog the major parties, until substantial reforms are made.



## Education funding set to feature in federal election

by Janelle Saffin

If you elect me to represent you as the Federal Parliamentary Member for Page, I will work to ensure that every local school and local student that needs the most support, gets the most support.

I shall work to support the Gonski fair funding formula, that ensures every child is given for best educational opportunities and every teacher is supported so they can do what they do best teach. Australian Labor has committed to this plan and the National Party has declared it will not support it. I do not understand, why the Nationals won't support the Gonski fair funding formula, as it is about fairness, no more, no less.

It is the agreement that Australian Labor secured with the States, who fully support it. Tony Abbott and Warren Truss also declared support, giving a rock solid 2013 election promise. They then ran away from supporting schools, but they did not run away from allowing the mega corporations to continue paying no tax. Malcolm Turnbull and Barnaby Joyce have done the same. It is the abandonment of our children to the market forces approach to education. The Nationals just tag along with the Liberals and maintain a policy-free zone.

I have seen and experienced firsthand how education transforms lives. It did mine. It is beyond dispute that improving education is the key to opportunity, to innovation and to the future economic and social prosperity of our people, towns, regions, and nation.

Also indisputable is the fact that the biggest risk to our children's educational future is Malcolm Turnbull, and the Nationals' unfair cuts to schools, TAFE and universities.

Malcolm Turnbull's total embrace of Tony Abbott's agenda of unfair cuts and broken promises has shown up Malcolm Turnbull and The Nationals as a government without an agenda, unable to make decisions, unable to govern. They are a government



reduced to arguing with Senator Cory Bernadi about the Safe Schools programme and passing a law to allow our biggest billionaires to not have their tax declared as we do.

The Nationals we know, even if seemingly nice fellas, always say one thing and do another, as apart from anything else, they are led by the Liberals. They are not decision makers in their own right. Our current Federal Member Mr. Hogan has been as silent on this as he has on the cuts to pensioners, to Medicare, to Health, making women pay for Pap smears, gutting of TAFE, the \$100,000 degrees for country kids who get to Uni, and their mooted 15% GST rise....

I believe every Australian child should have the same chance of succeeding at school and in life, as any other kid across our country – no matter their background, no matter where they live, and no matter what type of school they go to.

The Gonski fair funding formula is a planned investment in our children, our grandchildren and the nature of our society. It is a planned investment that will reap the rewards of a better and secure future for our children and grandchildren. It is a planned investment that will see every child in every school funded on the basis of need. This will directly assist many schools and students living in Page.

That's why I'm asking for your support and together we can ensure that every school and student that needs the most support, can get the most support.

Janelle Saffin, Federal Labor candidate for Page: [jasaffin@nor.com.au](mailto:jasaffin@nor.com.au) or phone 0418-664-001.

## Simon says...

What wonderful weather we have been experiencing! Great for cycling, gardening, canoeing and lazing around.

Lismore City Council's submission for an increase in rates to cover the costs of the Biodiversity Management Strategy (BMS) was submitted to the Independent Pricing And Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a decision earlier this month.

Currently the Council spends less than .5% of its budget on the environment. The Northern Rivers of which Lismore City Council is a key part supports over 40% of the State's threatened species, including around 70% of threatened frogs, 75% of threatened mammals and 40% of threatened plants. Without the BMS which can only be implemented with the rate variation all these species are at further risk.

You can read the Council's application to IPART at: [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp\\_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-QYH-24-18-80](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-QYH-24-18-80)

And the Biodiversity Management Strategy at: [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/file](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/file).

[asp?g=RES-DZI-70-64-35](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?g=RES-DZI-70-64-35)

The rate rise would be based on the NSW Valuer General's land values, with the average urban resident paying \$25.43 per year; the average rural resident paying \$31.68 per year; and the average farmland resident paying \$50.63 per year. Note that the average farmland cost is higher due to higher average land values. It should also be noted that rural areas will receive 70% of the annual funding.

It would be great if you wish to make a submission to IPART in support of the BMS. You need to feature:

- The BMS is in response to the Imagine Lismore process which showed a strong community desire for Lismore Council to be an environmental leader.
- The need for the BMS considering the low expenditure on the environment and the relatively modest cost of the rate increase.
- Over 60% of those surveyed by Hunter Research believed that the rate increase was affordable.

There are three ways submissions can be made to IPART:



by Cr Simon Clough,  
Deputy Mayor LCC

- Online – When public submissions open, on 15 February 2016, there will be a link at the following address enabling online submissions: [www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local\\_Govt/Special\\_Variations\\_and\\_Minimum\\_Rates/Applications\\_Determinations](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local_Govt/Special_Variations_and_Minimum_Rates/Applications_Determinations)
- Email – [localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au)
- Post – Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, PO Box K35, Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

In other exciting news, Council will be shortly calling tenders for the multi-million dollar renovation of C block (opposite the library) and the creation of the central landscaped piazza. This project promises to inject more life into the

“heart of the Northern Rivers”.

Some of you may have noticed media coverage of the internal review of our road services. You can read it at: [lismore.nsw.gov.au/infocouncil2/Open/2016/02/OC\\_09022016\\_AGN\\_AT.htm](http://lismore.nsw.gov.au/infocouncil2/Open/2016/02/OC_09022016_AGN_AT.htm) at p12

It's a warts and all analysis of our road services, which is much more revealing and hard hitting than any of Council's expensive external reviews. All staff are to be congratulated on this document which I'm sure will provide an excellent basis for the future direction of the road services team.

Council's Civic Pride Team (formally Parks and Gardens) are also to be congratulated with a huge increase in area mown, parks maintained and a major drop in customer complaints. Changes have also included weekly mowing of our busiest parks over the summer peak, installation of dog waste resources and the closing of parks at dark rather than 6pm as previously. Hopefully you will notice an improvement in all our parks and roundabouts etc. next time you are in Lismore.

Don't hesitate to contact me on Council matters on 0428-886-217 or at: [simonclough@internode.on.net](mailto:simonclough@internode.on.net)

## 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.

### Do unto others

I believe the world returns to us in kind.

If we are hateful or violent towards others then, eventually, these acts will rebound upon us. Likewise, if we are loving and generous of spirit, then we increase our chances of receiving love and kindness in return.

Call it karma or common sense – in either event, it's not rocket science!

Being generous is no guarantee that if we give to someone they will give back (life is seldom that simple), but rather if we are giving by nature, then our generosity will return in diverse and unexpected ways.

For this reason, a sincere give cannot be made with the anticipation of getting something in return. To be truly bountiful, we must let go of all expectation and allow others to return our kindness according to their own will.

Anything else is a favour with strings attached.

Generosity is about what we contribute as opposed to what we take or get. It is our capacity to reach beyond ourselves and create a cycle of benevolence.

This win-win approach can be the basis of all our dealings.

R J Poole  
Lismore

### Dancers of the sun

After reading Anastasia Guise's 'Permaculture Principles' article, 'The dancers of the sun' (NGT January 16), my first reaction was, how sad – both for her and the innocent sentient being whose throat either she, or her butcher friend slit.

Maybe it is true that not all of us have a consciousness after all.

Personally, I have always found that when that little voice that urges one to take the enlightened path is ignored, we simply harden our own humanness and eventually exterminate the most beautiful and innocent part of our own nature, ending up by deceiving our own self in order to seek absolution and self justification.

Vegans have actually thrived for over 5000 years

– the Aryan tribes around Gilgit, Hunza, Kargil and Leh (Himalaya), being beautiful examples of an unbroken vegan culture where music, dance, wearing flowers in one's hair and the belief in prophecies and dreams, continues today.

Even the *Scientific American* clearly states that "Human ancestors were nearly all vegetarians" (by Rob Dunn on 23rd July, 2012), with the human gut basically unchanged from our ancient primate ancestors – fellow vegan/vegetarian sentient species.

Personally, I do not know of a single vegan who sits around a campfire in romantic adulation of brown-skinned or Inuit uninterrupted cultural practices of slaughtering other sentient beings for food.

But then, maybe my vegan friends and myself are simply more in tune with our own bodies and innate nature, refusing to be part of the 'meat industry' in its egotistical species-ist categorisation deeming the human animal greater than all other forms of sentient life.

Azan Mann  
Wadeville

### Pollie Waffle

After waiting almost eight years, Simon Clough speaks out against some of Lismore City Council's more famous financial bungles (NGT February 16, p.6).

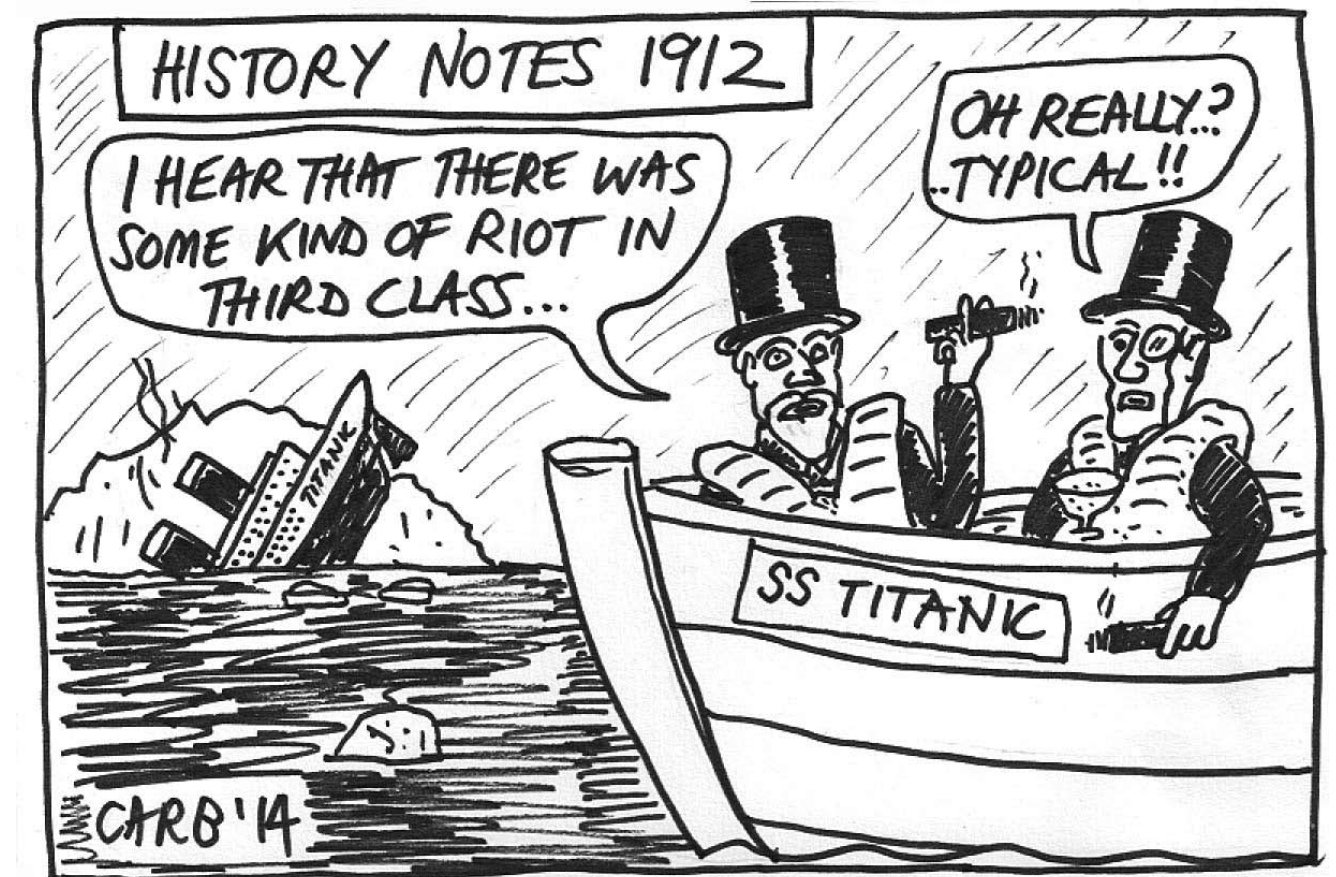
In the next issue, could he discuss Council's \$5M Woodlark Street trophy project and the \$3000 collection of twisted scrap metal that adorns it.

While he's at it, could he please tell us how many housing lots this current Council has approved, and is hoping to approve, and how many millions of dollars of development fees have been discounted for the ratepayers to pick up, or will we have to wait another eight years?

Don't forget the 3700 lot development near Lismore Showground that Council staff recommended against because of existing traffic bottlenecks and lack of infrastructure. Our elected representatives chose instead to fast-track this development, and Mayor Dowell now calls it the "long-awaited" new suburb for Lismore.

I have seen people waiting in their cars at nearly every roundabout every day already, waiting for the return of the traffic lights, or waiting for a parking spot, all the while belching exhaust fumes into the atmosphere while our elected hypocrites pat themselves on the back for their environmental initiatives.

Many are waiting for a job in a high unemployment region, and waiting to compete for the few jobs with the



thousands of new families moving in, waiting to have their homes repossessed because they are already having difficulties paying their bills.

Surely we would be better represented by citizen-initiated referenda, where we could make our own decisions instead of by developer and business lobbyists behind closed doors and in extraordinary meetings in the Christmas break.

Get the politicians out of Council. Give democracy back to the people.

G. Rosenswantz  
Nimbin

### C'mon Kev

Dear Kevin Hogan,

I appeal to you to keep in mind the words of Jesus when your party considers asylum seekers, who are also usually refugees, who try to travel to Australia.

When Jesus talked about the Judgement (Matthew 25, 34-46) he talks amongst others of the stranger. Jesus expects those who follow him to welcome the stranger, those who seek refuge. Jesus himself was a child refugee in Egypt along with his parents. The Coptic church recognises the special places where the Holy Family travelled in Egypt.

When Jesus talked about children he welcomes them (Mark 10, 13-16) and he speaks of how important it is that we do not harm them (Matthew 18, 1-14) for those who are child-like in humility are the greatest in the kingdom.

Our policies toward 'boat people' are harming those same 'boat people', including children. It is not the 'people smugglers' who are being imprisoned on Nauru and Manus. The present policies are not the answer.

True cooperation with Indonesia, Malaysia,

Vietnam and Sri Lanka to help in processing asylum seekers is necessary. Asylum seekers do not threaten Australia's security.

Nauru is a tiny island almost on the equator with very limited fresh water. It has a population the size of Casino (around 10,000). It is thousands of kilometres from any large city in the midst of the Pacific Ocean. It is only a deranged mind which could consider creating a detention centre there. Our major political parties need to accept the wrongness of the offshore detention on Manus, Nauru and Christmas Islands. And create a humane system of processing asylum seekers on shore and in detention for no more than a month.

Children and their families do not need guards, nor do men on Manus, but can be processed quickly in the community. Australia has created resettlement schemes in the past from which it has benefitted.

There are enough of your constituents in Page, who are committed to resettling people from Manus and Nauru, in this wonderful part of the world. The new members of our community could be involved in helping Page become a leader in renewable energy.

Please Kevin, represent those of us who welcome refugees.

Ruth Haig  
Kyogle

### The Greens on drugs

It takes courage to have difficult conversations about drug use, but we must because the current approach is failing people and putting lives at risk. The Greens stand with the health professionals, legal experts and families impacted by drug use, who are calling for

a new approach.

Let's be clear, the Greens are not advocating for the legalisation of ice. We are advocating for a change of approach to drug use – one that is backed up by the evidence and one that actually works.

The Greens have been hosting roundtables around the country with experts from law enforcement, academics and social workers about drug use in our communities. From them, it's clear that the current law and order approach is not working. We owe it to them to find new ways of tackling this critical issue.

The Greens believe we must put harm minimisation at the front and centre of any approach to drug use. Australia used to be a world leader in harm minimisation until politicians lost the courage to take action based on evidence.

We are in the process of consulting with the community, police, law enforcement and doctors to discuss what a new approach to drug use could look like in Australia.

One model that is consistently raised is Portugal's approach. In Portugal, drug dealers are prosecuted but individual users are dealt with through the health system instead of put in jail – and the millions of dollars spent locking up small time users can be spent on

actually getting people the treatment they need.

We believe that drug dealers should be prosecuted but we think it's better to treat individual users through the health system rather than a criminal one.

Australia has one of the highest rates of illicit drug use in the world, despite our no tolerance policy. The current approach is clearly not working.

We have got young people overdosing and dying, because they're taking substances of unknown quality and purity. There are measures we can put in place to help keep these kids safe.

We have a situation where people who are addicted and need medical help are being arrested or locked up in jail, instead of being given the treatment they need. Right now, that treatment is not always available – we need to be prioritising helping people get well rather than simply locking them up.

Carol Vernon  
Greens candidate for  
Copper

### Karl's Oasis

Thank you to all the people who didn't come to Karl's memorial gathering at the Oasis Cafe. It just would have made Karl grumpy anyway. He didn't like false people.

The Oasis was my oasis as well as Karl's since the

## About us

Editor Bob Dooley  
Assistant Editor Sue Stock  
Layout Andy Gough, Bob Dooley, Peter Chaplin  
Photographers Sue Stock, Peter Chaplin.  
Distribution Peter, Coralie, Andrew, Sue, Bob, Phil, Rob and Lisa, Dominique, Aengus, Soul Kindle (Bellingen)

Bookkeeper Martha Paitson  
Web [www.nimbingoodtimes.com](http://www.nimbingoodtimes.com)  
And find us on Facebook  
NGT is auspiced by Nimbin Community School Co-op Ltd., 81 Cullen Street, Nimbin  
NEXT DEADLINE:  
Wednesday 30th March  
Email [nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com](mailto:nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com) or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Rainbow died. Other good people from the middle of town found their new oasis at Simonetta's. What an amazing woman. She's gone through more than most could deal with in this town.

But she and her staff keep the Oasis open with smiles on their faces and love in their hearts. It's the only place Karl could sit every morning in peace and have a coffee, a joint and read the paper.

R.I.P. Karl and long live The Oasis of Nimbin.

Ant  
Nimbin

### Lessons from Lake Michigan

I emailed you an article that you were considering printing concerning The Great Lakes of North America and the world's rivers.

Thought you might like to know California and many other areas are suffering from a drought while the powers that be have decided to pump Lake Michigan. Not for public use, but for Nestlé so they can continue to make money!

We are now not just calling this the Anthropocene Age but we are witnessing the Sixth Extinction. We are losing our amphibians at an alarming rate (we have lost

a third) and the remaining species are seriously under threat.

Bernadine Schwartz  
Nimbin

### Negative liberties

Aidan Ricketts writes a thought provoking piece in the February issue of *NGT*.

At the heart of his prohibition piece is the erosion of civil liberties. Mr Ricketts contrasts Mill's "harm principle" against the actions of the State in our personal choices and liberties.

"What someone does in their own home is nobody else's business if it does not harm anyone else. In political and legal theory, this is known as negative liberty and the 'harm principle'. These principles have underpinned our legal and political system for hundreds of years." (Cathy Sherry: UNSW School of Law)

Mill's 'harm principle', a political and legal theory that has underpinned our legal system for hundreds of years, is not a theory the Parliament subscribes to.

The 'representative' Parliament is more of the position found in *R v Wacker* where it was said, "The criminal law has as its function the protection of citizens and gives effect to the

State's duty to try those who have deprived citizens of their right to life, limb or property" and it goes on to say, "further the criminal law will not hesitate to act to prevent serious injury or death even when the person subject to such injury or death may have consented to or willingly accepted the risk of actual injury or death".

The State will not hesitate to act to protect us from injury or death, not only at the hands of others but also from ourselves.

Miss Sherry's comment, although applicable to cannabis related issues, was not made in relation to cannabis use, prohibition or drug testing. The comment relates to NSW strata title (land law) and the authority owners living with strata title have to create by-laws.

Miss Sherry, justifiably, has issue with the way normal people erode their own civil liberties by enacting prohibitive by-laws that affect what their neighbour can and cannot do in their own home.

The erosion of personal liberties is something some people naturally do to each other when empowered to do so. Should we complain when the Parliament does it?

Stephen Jones  
Larnook

## Senate voting reform causes a flurry



by Aidan Ricketts

The current impassioned debate about senate voting reform is a good debate to have. Voting systems certainly do affect the outcomes of elections and the complexion of future parliaments, but not always in easily predictable ways.

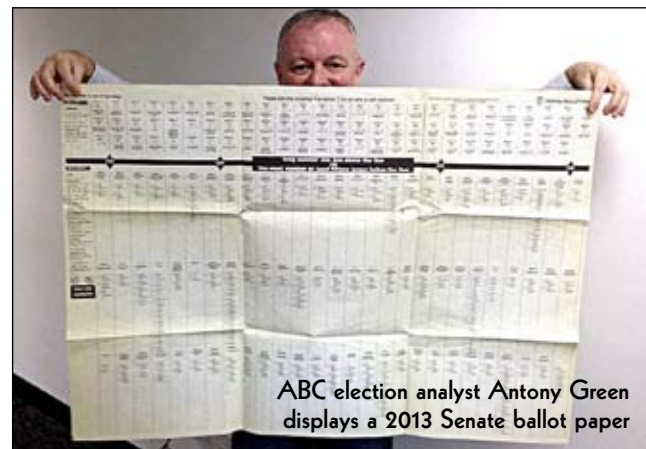
A lot of the heat in the argument over senate voting reform is being generated by political players who see short term advantage for themselves in the status quo but that is the last place we should look for guidance. Independent commentators such as Antony Green (ABC) and Ben Rau (The Tally Room) provide much more reliable analysis and if you are interested you should look them up online.

Speculating about which parties will benefit most from reform is not only highly unreliable, it is really asking the wrong question. The questions we should be asking ourselves are questions of principle.

To evaluate the current system as against the proposed reforms we need to ask two questions. First, which system gives voters better control over where their preferences are allocated? Second, which system is most likely to lead to an outcome where Senators get elected as near as possible to the proportions of votes that they attract?

When we ask these two questions we quickly see how the current system is broken. The Senate attracts a huge number of candidates, (110 last time), so many that for the vast majority of voters it is simply not viable to number every box below the line. The result is that most people choose to vote for a party above the line. Under the present system you can only vote for one party above the line and when you do, you lose all control of where that party directs their Senate preferences.

It is fundamentally abhorrent to me that individual voter's preferences are being controlled by party officials, and traded as between them in dodgy pre-election deals. The current system has encouraged the registration of fly-by-night micro-parties that exist only for the purpose of gaming the



ABC election analyst Antony Green displays a 2013 Senate ballot paper

preferences.

There are some genuine micro-parties, and you can pick these ones, like the Pirate Party, because their preference flows actually reflect their stated values.

Sadly, many others simply register to grab an attractive sounding party name so they can play games with voter's preferences. An investigation by *Crikey* in 2013 discovered a whole range of micro-parties running for the Senate were actually run by a small group of people who controlled a preference swapping scheme that ran across numerous pop-up parties. Worse still, many parties that voters would expect to be on the left of politics passed preferences to the likes of Pauline Hanson, Australia First and Shooters and Fishers.

The system is badly broken, it is being gamed and it is punishing genuine smaller parties who would rather do politics more honestly.

The proposed reforms would hand control over preferences back to voters by allowing you (not the faceless party officials) to allocate your preferences to parties and groups in your order of preference by numbering 1-6 above the line. That's the first principle dealt with: the voter should control their own preferences.

Now to proportionality. Eliminating preference gaming will of itself lead to a more proportional outcome. Parties will need to compete openly for their share of the primary vote and for the preferences of voters. Candidates are elected by attaining what is known as a 'quota' which is a share of primary (number 1 votes) and preferences needed to secure one out of six seats per state, a quota is about one seventh of the total available votes (14.3%) (In a double dissolution twice as many senators are elected so a quota is half as big 7.7%). The reforms will end the current madness where a candidate can be elected with less than one half of a percent of the vote due to preference gaming.

So on arguments of principle the proposed reforms pass the two-fold

test. I'm not saying they are perfect, but reform is difficult and we need to fix the worst abuses first.

The remaining clamour in social media has been largely speculation about who might benefit most under a reformed system, whether a double dissolution election might follow Senate reform and whether the government is proposing to push workplace reforms.

With all due respect, a decision about our voting system should be made on principle, not on who thinks they will gain or lose the most or on speculation about the next election. These are all important issues but they should not cloud voting reform.

As to the argument that the reforms will make it impossible for new minor parties to emerge, that is just not true. The NSW Upper House currently uses much the same system as is being proposed federally and that has not stopped cross benchers having the balance of power between the major parties, and it did not stop the newly emerging Animal Justice Party from securing a seat in the last state election. Genuine new parties that have a real constituency will have to do what all established parties have done in history, and that is work hard, build their base and grow their votes. In fact, genuine minor parties will be better off if the bogus preference scamming outfits fall away because then it would be a smaller race between genuine candidates, and they will not be dragged into a murky world of preference scams.

There are many useful reforms needed to make our voting system fairer, the lower house system is far more punishing of minor parties than the Senate system ever has been, but before we can have a sensible debate we need to put aside our partisan interests and engage in a principled debate.

I will be glad to see the business model of the preference scammers put to rest so we can get on with building more genuine politics.

## Notices

### Free notices

Just keep it brief and interesting, and get it to us by deadline.

### Cleaning position

Local cleaners are invited to apply for a cleaning position at the Nimbin Community Centre Inc. Position is for 4.5 hours per week @ \$23.13 per hour, with hours allocated to the Community Centre and Birth & Beyond Building. Must have cleaning experience and be able to provide two references. Don't need to have an ABN to apply. This position is covered by Workers Compensation. Applications close 17th March 2016. For further information and position description, please contact the Coordinator on 6689-0000 or email: [ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au](mailto:ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au)

### Dance studio for hire

Are you thinking of running a class or workshop? Do you need a meeting space? The Nimbin Community Centre Dance Studio is available for hire at \$11 per hour or \$33 per day, with a \$20 key deposit. The Studio has fantastic natural light, a mirror wall, chairs and tables, and music player. Contact the Coordinator on 6689-0000 or email: [ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au](mailto:ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au) for more details.

### Autumn Bush Dance

Saturday 5th March from 6pm at Kyogle Memorial Hall with the Ragged Blossom Bush Band. Kyogle Group Against Gas fundraiser for the Pilliga. \$10 adults, children \$5/free. Meals and refreshments for sale.

### Buddhist mindfulness meditation and reflections

Sunday 6th March, 9.15am-12.30pm

at Kuan Yin Meditation Centre, Lismore. Suitable for both beginners and experienced practitioners. Jitindriya (aka Loraine Keats) is a psychotherapist and meditation teacher who has practised mindfulness for 30 years, 17 as a Buddhist nun. Cost: \$5 basic facility fee plus 'dana' (donation) for the teacher. Please email Sonya for details and to register, on: [sonyanourse@hotmail.com](mailto:sonyanourse@hotmail.com)

### Salsa lessons

Locals can join LaSalsa for workshops in Salsa on 9th March at the Town Hall and the Birthing Centre on 23rd March. All welcome. LaSalsa are very excited to be performing at the Blue Moon Cabaret on 19th March. For more info, contact Leyla on 0429-053-088.

### Nimbin Flix

Movies will now be on the second Saturday of the month to stop the timing clashes that arise about 4-5 times a year (namely Blue Moon Cabaret and Christmas/Easter). So next movie night is 12th March at Birth and Beyond, 7pm doors open for a 7.30pm start. Food and drink available to buy (cheap). Any questions, try Facebook (Nimbin Flix), email: [nimbinflix@gmail.com](mailto:nimbinflix@gmail.com) or call on 0466-654-772. Memberships at the moment are half-price at \$25.

### Where to from Paris?

On Thursday 24th March at 7pm, the Regent Cinema, Murwillumbah is hosting a seminar with eminent speakers on the climate change topic, "Where to from Paris?" with Dr Brendan Mackey, head of the Griffith University Climate Change Centre who was a speaker at the Paris conference; Dr Caroline Sullivan environmental economist and Oxford University Senior Research Fellow; Dr Richard Hil, Honorary Associate at the University of Sydney's Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies and founder of the Ngarra Institute. Tickets \$15.



## RENTAL ACCOMMODATION WANTED

If anybody has a converted shed, cabin or cottage on their land they'd consider renting to us urgently, we'd appreciate it greatly.



We need to stop for at least 12 months because my partner is quite unwell.

We've been travelling around the caldera caring for farms and their animals for almost 4 years now, so we have amazing references.

If there is anything at all available, please contact me on 0411-288-809, or email me: [robinstein@gmail.com](mailto:robinstein@gmail.com)

With many thanks, Robin Stein

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- Stock food, horse & cattle food, lucerne, pet food & bones

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# In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

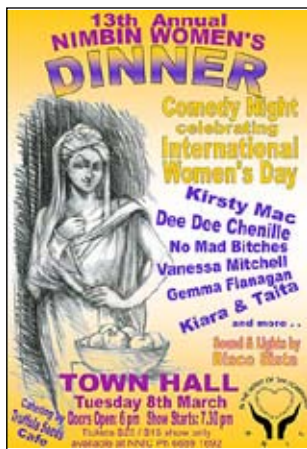
[www.nnic.org.au](http://www.nnic.org.au)



### RIP Karl Langheinrich

The NNIC team is very sad at the loss of long-time volunteer and friend of us all, Karl Langheinrich, who died tragically in a car accident on 6th February. Our sympathy and condolences to his family and friends, and especially to his beloved partner Wendy. We will miss him. Many heartfelt thanks to the friends and family of Karl who donated to Sibley Street in his memory.

### Nimbin Women's Dinner – celebrating International Women's Day



Tuesday 8th March. Tix \$25 dinner plus show / \$15 show only, available at NNIC and at the door on the night. Comedy Special at Nimbin Town Hall – doors open at 6pm. Show starts at 7.30pm. Featuring Kirsty Mac all the way from Sydney, Dee Dee Chenille – Lismore's first burlesque exchange student from Whakatane, New Zealand, – Vanessa Larry Mitchell and Gemma Flanagan on their way to the Raw Comedy heats, plus local talent No Mad Bitches, Kiara, Taita and Triny Roe. Sound and lights by Disco Sista. Catering by Truffula Seeds cafe. You can reserve your tix or a whole table at

NNIC. Come along and celebrate with the women of Nimbin! (Women only).

### Nimbin CDAT (Community Drug Action Team)

The report on the Community Drug Survey is now available on our website (follow the link on our home page). Nimbin CDAT will pursue a number of strategies identified from the survey findings, starting with an info session for meth users and their friends and family who are looking for ideas about getting help and giving support to users (see the flyer in this edition of NGT), as well as info about *How Do I Know I May Have a Drug Problem?*

### Crystal meth workshop

In partnership with the North Coast Primary Health Network, at Birth and Beyond on Tuesday 15th March, 1pm-4pm. This session is in response to community concerns expressed in the CDAT survey about crystal meth (aka 'ice') use and is designed for users and friends and families of users looking for ways to give and obtain help and support. Please RSVP – see the flyer at right for more info.

### Art in the Park

Come along and join Gilbert Laurie and friends and make some art every Friday at Allsopp Park. You can bring your own materials or else use whatever we can provide. Everyone welcome.

### Are you struggling to make ends meet?

Household bills getting on top of you? We may be able to help with material aid ranging from nappies, sanitary products, food

supplies, assistance with phone and electricity bills and unpaid fines. To find out if you are eligible for assistance, make an appointment with one of our Community Workers for advice.

### 7 Sibley Street STAGE ONE

Donate Now! We have commenced the Stage One (moving and renovating the old house) fundraising campaign. We need \$70,000. If you or anyone you know can donate, donations can be made via NNIC 10am-4pm weekdays or via our bank account as follows:

BSB: 728-728, Summerland Credit Union; Account: 2230437, NNIC – Sibley St Fundraising account; three-letter code (if required): NIM

Be sure to give your name

in the reference so we can acknowledge our donation – unless you prefer anonymity or course.

All donations will be used specifically for Stage One (and not for ongoing costs such as rates, insurances etc).

The challenge is on folks... send your fundraising ideas to us, or even better go forth and fundraise for us!

*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. For appointments call 6689-1692 or just drop in between 10am and 4pm weekdays.*

### Information about Methamphetamine for Individuals, Friends and Families

Collaborative Community Conversations

Afternoon tea provided  
No cost

On the day you will be able to ask frontline workers about services available and how to get or give support and help

**Find out about:**

- What is crystal methamphetamine
- How crystal methamphetamine works, how it affects the brain and the body
- Why people might use crystal methamphetamine
- Treatment and support options for people using crystal methamphetamine
- How to support someone using crystal methamphetamine
- How to get family and community support

**When:** Tuesday 15th March 2016  
**Time:** 1:00–4:00pm  
**Where:** Birth & Beyond, 54 Cullen Street, Nimbin

To RSVP please call (02) 6627 3300 or email [nr@ncphn.org.au](mailto:nr@ncphn.org.au) (please let us know if transport is required)

## Nimbin Hospital Information



### Child immunisation clinic

For 0-5 year olds. Held second Tuesday of every month. Next clinic 8th March. For appointments phone 6620-7687 (Lismore Community Health Centre).

### Early childhood nurse

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

### Women's health nurse services

Third Thursday of the month, next clinic 17th March. Confidential service, pap smears breast checks, contraceptive advice post natal checks, general health information. Phone 6688-2401 to make an appointment.

### Nimbin community nurses

Monday to Friday, 8am to 4.30pm. For assessments, wound care, referrals, advocacy, provision of palliative care in the home and coordination of Aged Care packages. Phone 6689-1288.

### Nimbin NSP

Opening hours Monday 9.15am-12pm; Tues, Wed & Thurs 9.15am-12.30pm.

### 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.

### Free diabetic clinic

Every 3rd Thursday of the month. Phone 6630-0488 for appointment.

### Free respiratory clinic

With specialist respiratory nurse and a nurse practitioner, 2nd Friday of every month next clinic 11th March at Nimbin Hospital. Phone 6688-1401.

### Free health checks

In front of the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre 1st and 3rd Friday of the month next Check on the 4th march, 16. Run by Nurse Practitioner and Registered

Nurse. Cardiac, diabetic and stroke risk assessments, weight. Blood pressure, oxygen sats, blood sugar levels, and cholesterol levels. Referral to appropriate health professionals as required.

### 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 department at your local MPS.

Read more information about this service at: [www.healthdirect.org.au](http://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 March.



# Stay active, stay connected in Seniors Week program

by Jenny Martin

As we age, staying independent and active in our communities enhances our quality of life and has a significant impact on how long we remain in our own homes.

With this in mind, the staff and volunteers at Nimbin Aged Care & Respite Services (NACRS) are excited to offer a two week program of free activities, *Stay Active, Stay Connected*, in addition to our usual social support activities. The program has been developed for all people over 65 and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders aged 50+, their carers and anyone aged 50+ experiencing housing stress.

These are *taster* classes – try something out for free that you're interested in and if it suits, sign up for further classes (fees will then apply). *Stay Active, Stay Connected* includes: art, exercise and tai chi classes, a music and mindfulness workshop, computer sessions for getting online and setting up email or skype, and device-advice sessions. The classes are designed for all abilities and to help people stay active and connected within our communities. All taster classes are followed by a complimentary morning or afternoon tea.



In addition, we are very pleased to offer the *Essential Future Planning Seminar*, presented by Karin Ness from the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre (see program for details). As Karin says, future planning is relevant to *all of us*, not just our elders – we can all benefit from understanding the legal realities of preparing for the possibility of losing the capacity to make decisions for ourselves. Karin will be discussing *Wills, Power of Attorney, Guardianship and Advance Care Directives*. This seminar is open to all and we encourage everyone, including community, health and welfare workers, to attend – please book your place in advance for seating and catering purposes.

All the *Stay Active, Stay Connected* activities are based in Nimbin, delivered by local providers and available to people living throughout our local region. Rest assured

that each activity has been modified to suit all abilities, and in the exercise and tai chi classes, a seated option is available.

Have a look at the program (below) and if there are activities that take your fancy, please don't hesitate to ring, email or pop in to NACRS at Bottlebrush Studio to book. Please feel free to ask if there's any further info you require. Places are limited and booking is essential.

The *Stay Active, Stay Connected* program will be launched at midday on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April at Allsopp Park, with Welcome to Country, free BBQ and entertainment, plus Nimbin's fantastic community nurses offering free health checks for everyone.

Come along and meet the NACRS staff and volunteers; find out what's on offer Monday to Friday at the NACRS social centre in the heart of Nimbin Village, and at Koonorigan, The Channon and throughout the local region.

To book your place on any of the *Stay Active, Stay Connected* activities, please contact Jenny Martin: 6689-1709, [jenny@nacrs.com.au](mailto:jenny@nacrs.com.au) or drop in to NACRS at Bottlebrush Studio (rainbow-painted building) at Nimbin Community Centre.

Buy any two shows & save 20%

**NAZEEM HUSSAIN**  
Sat 19 March

**HANNAH GADSBY**  
Fri 18 March

**LOL LISMORE LAUGHS**

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[norpa.org.au](http://norpa.org.au) or 1300 066 772

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**20th YEAR OF PUBLICATION**  
The paper we read around here.

## Stay Active Stay Connected 2016

**NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL**  
Community Partner

A choice of **FREE** taster classes and a Future Planning Seminar designed for all people aged 65+, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders aged 50+, all carers and anyone experiencing housing stress aged 50+

### Program Launch

**Welcome to Country & BBQ**  
Friday 1st April  
Allsops Park, Nimbin  
12 midday onwards  
FREE - ALL WELCOME

### Booking

is required for all classes. Places are limited and class locations vary. Seated options available at all exercise classes. Taster sessions are free and include **complimentary refreshments** after.

### Activate 50+

a gentle exercise class suitable for all abilities  
**Mon 4th or Mon 11th April**  
10.15-11.15am

### Tai Chi

for stability, balance, flexibility and relaxation  
**Tues 5th or Tues 12th April**  
10.30-11.30am

### Exploring Art

using a variety of materials and techniques  
**Friday 8th April,**  
10am-12 mid-day

### Music & Mindfulness

for relaxation & well-being  
**Weds 13th April**  
10am-12 mid-day

### Get Online

with our expert Internet & Device Tutors. Use one of our computers or bring your own device. Call to book, dates TBA:

### Set up an email account

we can help you set up and use your own free email account

### Skype School

set up your own skype address and practice calling on skype - a video link to people around the world

### Device Advice

a session to help you get the most out of your phone, tablet or laptop

### Free Seminar

### Essential Future Planning

**Open to all, relevant to all** in the event of losing the capacity to make your own decisions. Karin Ness from the Northern Rivers Community Legal Service will talk about:

**Wills**  
**Power of Attorney**  
**Guardianship**  
**Advance Care Directives**  
**11am, Thursday 7th April**  
**at Birth & Beyond**

**To book: 6689 1709**

**email: [jenny@nacrs.com.au](mailto:jenny@nacrs.com.au)**

or drop-in to NACRS at Bottlebrush Studio (rainbow building at Nimbin Community Centre)

Stay Active Stay Connected 2016 is a Nimbin Aged Care & Respite Services initiative supported by Nimbin Health & Welfare Association Inc and funded by NSW Family & Community Services

