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# Now more than ever: non-violence and positive change

We are certainly facing challenging times. The growth of fascism in Europe, the US and Australia, fuelled by a concoction of traditional racism and uber nationalism combined with corporate greed is a potent cocktail for accelerating destructive forces.

There are no magic bullet answers. All around me I see people struggling to come to terms with the Trump presidency, but it's more than that, there's fascism arising throughout Europe and the English-speaking world, a violent and incendiary political disease that offers fantasies of a return to past golden eras but invariably produces war, pain and destruction and disables the very communities that look to it for salvation.

The biggest winners out of the US election are temporarily Vladimir Putin but in the long term it is China, whose own brand of totalitarianism may yet prove to at least have a more rational flavour than the West's. At least they still believe in science right?

Where do we go? Do we dust off our old socialist pamphlets, and start believing that just because socialism has a metanarrative (a totalising story about how the revolution will unfold) that it must offer us hope? Not really, certainly there's some useful policies on social equality and wealth redistribution in there, but politics as religion, and grasping for a single programmatic solution is not a useful way to intelligently engage with a complex and rapidly changing future.

Do we protest everything we don't like from the US election result to the declaration of the next pointless war? Maybe not. We often make the mistake of celebrating our worst moments when we choose to allow our opponents to set the agenda and protest the sites of their triumphs. Protest is best when it reflects an agenda set by the people, not merely a reaction to what we don't like.

Do we complacently shrug it all off and say, "Ah well, the pendulum will swing back" what pendulum exactly? Swing back to where and after what? That kind of magical thinking is not an empiric way to make positive change.

We can't control the future or even the present. We live in a very complex world in which multiple forces swirl around each other and produce outcomes that lay down a path for the future. Nothing that has happened was inevitable, and the future is not only uncertain it is inchoate and unformed. The best we can do is use our best information, our best thinking and our dedication to positive social change to turn the rubix cube over, together, and look for the places where we can nudge future change in positive directions.

There are opportunities literally everywhere to nudge the future, but there are some well learned lessons on what works best. Non-violence, combined with the building of egalitarian social movement structures have proved time and again to be the potent ways that ordinary people can exert powerful influence on the unfolding of history and address the political diseases



by Aidan Ricketts

of their time.

Non-violent mobilisations have been successful at abolishing 19<sup>th</sup> century slavery, kicking the British out of India, ending wars, toppling violent dictatorships as well as less mighty achievements such as saving our local old growth forests and keeping our region gasfield free. The outcome is never certain, but we have learned a lot over the years about the processes that work.

Almost inseparable from non-violence is the need to build our movement structures up in democratic egalitarian ways. Our non-government organisations, our trade unions, even some of our faith based groups provide critical institutional infrastructure that may be vital, especially if we are suddenly (even unexpectedly) successful in displacing destructive regimes.

The other important skill for building positive change is to have the humility to know that the outcomes are uncertain. So, build our movements on values rather than on outcomes. Values based movements work as powerful attractors of support and cooperation, and ultimately as (and if) they move to success generate good outcomes of

their own. Sitting in cafes arguing about how the world should look after we have won, is a fast path to disagreement, disunity and disintegration.

We need to look for positive solutions, not just political solutions but also social, agricultural technological ones. Experimentation in lifestyle and with forms of production is essential throughout history. Climate change is the big issue globally, despite the distraction offered by the current political chaos. This is the big issue we need to be innovating our lifestyles and production around.

I share with you all the confoundment of witnessing a horror unfolding: is this what Europe felt like in 1933? I share the bewilderment of being wrong-footed by the sudden catapult of corporate fascism, although we knew it was there, it seemed more steady and insidious before.

At times like these we may not have answers, but we can remember the processes that can restore functioning to a diseased political system. History is moving fast, Putin may be there for a while, Trump is likely to crash and burn, China is seemingly inexorable.

But what is also permanent is that throughout history we have faced tyrants, violence and war, racism and inequality, yet somehow we have always struggled and overcome eventually, enough for democracy, human rights and environmentalism to have become universalised in our language and aspirations.

There is no end point to history, we are busy making it every day.

## The Loon wakes

by Laurence Axtens

We of the community are to blame for the rise of the brain dead individualists of the right. We have been lazy and ineffectual, thoughtless and decadent; we have sat back and muttered defamations such as - speak to the hand, I'm not listening. Well we're effing listening now, aren't we?!

During this coming year I will outline how the pressing concerns of our people can be successfully addressed. I will here in the *Nimbin GoodTimes* outline all the necessary and revolutionary changes our society requires. I will give no quarter nor soften the blow on myself or any other vested interest. So starts the program.

Today I will solve the housing shortage so that the dream of home ownership may again be the birthright

of every Australian.

The problem is a simple one. We have a landlord culture. Property ownership has become an investment opportunity for the upper middle class, who get renters to buy their second, third and fourth house for them. It's abomination in the eyes of all egalitarians. It ends here.

Under the new system, individuals will be taxed progressively on their extra housing, 25% of the house's value per house annually. This will bring many houses back onto the market and house prices will fall dramatically, furthermore it will bring an end to housing speculation.

Renters will become buyers, as their rental monies become house payments. Rental accommodation for students will be absorbed by institutional ownership by Universities, student



collectives and regional councils. The wealthiest will just divest to their children, but this will also help address the home ownership issue. Sleepers wake!

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Kevin Hogan MP  
Member for Page

## On the same PAGE

Wonderful to see all the award nominees and recipients from our Australia Day Awards.

Congratulations to John Turnbull from Modanville who was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his services to secondary education, Alan Hoskins who also received an OAM for his services to the Uniting Church and Ian Grimwood who was recognised with the Australian Fire Service Medal.

I would also like to congratulate all the winners and nominees of Australia Day awards, including Barbara Boorman (Citizen of the Year), Caitlin Bargwanna (Young Citizen of the Year), Julie de Nardi (Individual Community Service), Anthony and Belinda Smith from Lismore Parkrun (Group Community Service), Belinda Smith (Senior Sportsperson) and Courtney Linton (Junior Sportsperson).

Also, Barry Fisher of the Lismore Kart Club (Sports Organisation) and John and Margaret Hildebrand (Sustainable Environment) and Julian Louis from NORPA (Arts/Culture).

You are all inspirational people to others in our community and I thank you.

Welcome also to our 15 new citizens who came from Britain, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, India,

Pakistan, South Africa and Thailand.

I was at TAFE recently to welcome students and parents to 'Bright Sparks' – a three-day workshop for the next generation of innovators.

'Bright Sparks' is a science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics event that prepares students and school leavers for jobs of the future.

There was a great demonstration of how a yurt may be used to address affordable housing in our community and can be rotated to follow the sun to reduce energy costs and use solar power.

Congratulations to everyone involved in this world leading program.

My office was recently named Electorate Office of the Year by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. This is quite an achievement, given there are over 100 offices.

I would like to congratulate my office staff (pictured, above).

The annual award is determined by how well an office responds to enquires from members of the community.

It also recognises my second electorate office in Grafton which I pay for out of my salary.

It was back to school this week.

I would like to wish all students and teachers the best for the school year.

# From the mayor's desk

by Isaac Smith, Lismore City Council

A new Lismore City Council Green Army team has started work restoring koala habitat in The Channon, Nimbin and Terania Creek area.

Most people know what a Green Army is, but basically it's a hands-on environmental program that provides young people aged 17 to 24 with skills, training and experience in environmental management while helping to protect habitat for threatened species like koalas.

It is a 20-week program that contributes to delivery of the Biodiversity Management Strategy, which seeks to improve the natural environment in the Lismore LGA and also provide skills and pathways to employment for young people interested in environmental-based work.

For me it also raises the question often asked by many... should green army service be mandatory for all school leavers?

The idea gets floated a lot in private conversations and at the pub. We talk about if it could work and what it means to have any national service imposed on people. I personally am very supportive of the idea, though I haven't asked my kids who are just at that age.

When I think of the biodiversity and natural beauty of our region, not to mention the invasive weed species and need for landcare, I just don't see



much of a down side. Much like volunteering with the SES, jury duty or the Army reserves, it can be written into employment and study legislation that allowances are made and concessions given. The big up swing is that future generations will know more about our natural environment and how to care for it.

What we are really talking about is generational change. The ability of those in power to have a long-term vision that extends beyond grant cycles and natural disasters. So maybe like the Republican debate, it is one idea that is still brewing in the minds of Australians. Next time you see me at the Nimbin Hotel, let me know what you think. But to the one local (you know who you are!) maybe let me get out of the loo first!

We have two local matters coming to council this month with a report on the large lot residential subdivision at Blue Knob and a request for assistance from the Dunoon Sports Club. So please pass on any feedback to myself and other councillors so we understand your views.

We also have a motion on a signature tree for Lismore coming to our council meeting and it is generating a lot of discussion. Our local garden guru Phil Dudman put the idea forward that we adopt a local flame tree to colour Lismore red, and it is getting a lot of support. There is discussion about consulting more widely about other options, or allowing other areas to have a different signature tree.

I am personally a little torn about how much consultation to do. On one hand it is always good to have our ideas discussed and debated by as many locals as possible. On the other hand, a good idea can be killed by a committee. Do we keep it simple or go big, is always the question, and it varies depending on the project.

I hope everyone has had a safe start to 2017 and is enjoying the warm weather (tongue in cheek). I will see you all in Nimbin soon as councillors are coming out for the Chamber of Commerce meeting this month and the Nimbin Advisory Group is also coming together. Let me know what you're thinking.

## Build Your Future campaign promotes \$20,000 housing subsidies

In January, Lismore deputy mayor Gianpiero Battista and Federal Member for Page Kevin Hogan launched an extensive advertising campaign for the Build Your Future Lismore Housing Subsidy Scheme, promoting \$20,000 subsidies for people interested in building a home.

The \$20,000 Build Your Future subsidy is being advertised widely and the campaign includes display advertising on three city buses that will be driving on Lismore roads for the next eight weeks. There is also extensive radio, TV, print and social media marketing to encourage applications before the 30 March deadline.

"Build Your Future will enable up to 200 eligible intending homeowners who have had their applications approved to receive \$20,000 each to help them purchase land and build the home of their dreams," Lismore deputy mayor Gianpiero Battista explained.

"The \$20,000 subsidy is available for a wide range of families and individuals whose annual incomes do not exceed very reasonable limits. These upper income limits include \$88,000 for a single person, \$97,000 for a sole parent with two children and \$135,000 for a couple with three children, for example."

The subsidies are available for land lots at six new developments throughout Lismore and Goonellabah. The



developments include a wide range of housing types with an emphasis on sustainable design and affordability.

Federal Member for Page Kevin Hogan explained that the Build Your Future Lismore Housing Subsidy Scheme is part of the Federal Government's Building Better Regional Cities program and is designed to help low to moderate income earners achieve home ownership.

"The Federal Government is working towards easing housing affordability by

encouraging the release of more residential land. These subsidies are part of that, and are designed to help low to middle income earners into home ownership," he said.

The \$20,000 grants are available in the following land release areas:

- Airforce Road, East Lismore. Contact Warren Everingham on 0429 944 931.
- Altitude Eco Village, Casuarina Drive, Goonellabah. Contact Scott Wharton on 0488 910 587 or visit [www.altitudeecovillage.com.au](http://www.altitudeecovillage.com.au).

- Echo Glen, Invercauld Road, Goonellabah. Contact Stephen Day on 9186 4700.
- The North Lismore Plateau (The Winten Group), Dunoon Road. Contact Jim Punch on 0412 047 735.
- Valley View, Pineapple Road, Goonellabah. Contact Lucas Zorzo on 0437 040 969 or visit [www.valleyviewestate.com.au](http://www.valleyviewestate.com.au).
- Sanctuary Hill, Invercauld Road, East Lismore. Contact Warren Everingham on 0429 944 931.

The table below shows eligibility based on annual income:

Household type	Upper Income Limit \$
1 adult	88,000
2 adults	88,000
3 adults	100,000
4 adults	122,000
Sole parent with 1 child/student	88,000
Sole parent with 2 children	97,000
Sole parent with 3 children	116,000
Couple with 1 child	97,000
Couple with 2 children	116,000
Couple with 3 children	135,000

The scheme ends on 30th March 2017 so intending homeowners are encouraged to act promptly.

Anyone keen to apply for the \$20,000 subsidy or to learn more about options for purchasing a vacant lot and building a new home should visit: [www.buildyourfuture.net.au](http://www.buildyourfuture.net.au) or phone Council on 1300-87-83-87.

# Postcard from Japan, part 3

by Bob Tissot

We've made it down to Kanazawa (three trains and two buses) and we're pretty damn excited because we've booked ourselves a room in a Ryoken (traveller's inn) somewhere in the "old city".

Now, anyone who has ever visited "old cities", cities with a thousand or more years of existence under their belts, will know that these areas are fascinating rabbit warrens of narrow twisting alleys, cul-de-sacs, hidden courtyards and secret passageways. And so it was in Kanazawa, but we were confident, my friends, because we'd carefully plotted our course on Google (two right, then left, under the arch, behind the wall, etc) and we marched bravely into the maze with brimming confidence.

Ha! I reckon it took no more than five minutes before we were hopelessly misplaced and just a little bit frazzled. So once again it was time to attempt to breach the language barrier and seek help. Found a taxi trying to extricate itself from an alley designed for nothing bigger than a rickshaw and showed the driver the address, craftily printed out in Japanese – we were learning. He pulled out the most dog-eared and worn

street directory I've ever seen and after maybe another five reckonings he knew where it was. No good him trying to explain, so he simply locked his cab in the middle of the "road" and trotted off with us in hot pursuit.

But once he was in lanes smaller than his cab he too got a little discombobulated until eventually he declared a particular building as the one. What a champion. I hope he found his cab again. We double checked with an old codger nearby who agreed with the cabbie and we checked in. Whew!

Great room in traditional style with complimentary green tea and kimonos. So, while we'd been looking for this room we'd noticed (couldn't really miss it) that the place was seething with people. "Awesome," we thought as we showered and donned our kimonos, "can't wait for evening," which was rapidly approaching. Well bugger me! When we stepped out to find a place to eat, the joint was deserted, or should I say it looked that way. There was literally not a soul to be seen anywhere. No lights, no cafes, nothing. Apparently we were holed up deep in the Geisha area and everything that goes on at night in the Geisha area goes on behind



discreet closed doors with tiny discreet Japanese signs on them. So we wandered lonely as a couple of clouds and finally scrounged some tucker about two kms away.

Next day was the Castle and world famous Kenroku-en Gardens (third best in Nippon). Got there at sparrow's fart to avoid the crowds, got in free just because I'm ancient myself, and checked out the sculptured, ancient botany. OK, now at this point I'm going to display my basic barbarian nature, I'm afraid. Sure it was picturesque in a

mossy and carefully crafted oriental way, but to my taste it was a tad sterile. It appears that the driving ethos behind it was to keep it as it had always been and so there were some poor old trees that under normal circumstances would have been mulch 100 years ago, held up with poles, their basically rotted trunks wound with steel straps to hold them together and a few sad but carefully pruned leaves poking out the top. Not sure what the soil gets to eat either, as mulch is verboten and every falling leaf is swept away by the hordes of

ground staff. Give me a bit of unkempt rainforest any day.

Back to Tokyo the next day and straight on to Nikko, a World Heritage site with a whole complex of various temples, shrines, tombs and treasures. And that was where we found the trees. Cedar trees planted back at the beginning of time itself. (Oh alright, at the beginning of the Edo period of Japanese history which started here and the original Shogun's gold-encrusted shrine and tomb are somewhere on the mountain). I mentioned in an earlier missive something

about all the big trees gone... I was wrong. These trees are huge beyond imagining. I guess our Big Scrub was like this once...

And suddenly it's our last day in Japan so we gird our loins and head off to do the "people" thing. It starts by getting into the subway system and jamming ourselves into a sardine can to get over to Shinjuku, an area of Tokyo girded for its Harajuku girls and Rockabilly boys, jam-packed streets, excessive neon and just about everything weird you've ever heard about Japan. We throw ourselves deep into the centre of this maelstrom of multi-coloured fairy floss, dripping chocolate crepes and strange, unidentifiable finger-food and just soak it up.

Night falls and the neon and massive, skyscraper-sized screens come to life. The crowds thicken (how is this possible?) We push in deeper. The streets are full of spruikers now, selling food, gambling, girls, anything you want. Finally sated, we squeeze into another sardine can and head for home.

Leaving tomorrow, but we're hoping to slip in a visit to the Meguro Parasitological Museum. Apparently they have some awesome exhibits, not to be missed. Sayonara.

## Surfing with history

by Warwick Fry

The tide was still fullish when Mari and I arrived at Punta Mango. We brushed off the dust of a 40-minute ride on the 'chicken bus'. Kristina and two enthusiastic Labradur surfer-dogs were there to greet us, our cabin ready, fan and shower water already running.

Our favourite little cove where the king waves roll, was a bit rocky for serious body surfing with a tide still covering the sandy bits. We decided to head down a few hundred yards from our \$10 dollar a night 'surfista/backpacker' rancho to the long beach instead. A couple of lonely looking \$100+ a night hotels perched on the overlook of the long beach – OK for the shore break and enough beach for a jog. We had it all to ourselves.

It was Mari who noticed the MS scratched into the boulder on the edge of the driveway down to the hotel beach frontage. MS is the signature of the Mara Salvatrucha 13, one of the earliest and most established of the Salvadoran gangs. Originating with Salvadoran deportees from Los Angeles in the late '90s they quickly grew into a network of extortion and terror which caused (and is still causing) an exodus of Salvadorans to the United States – more than the mass emigrations of the 1980s during the 12 year civil war. (Perhaps another case of 'collateral damage' coming home to roost). Similarly for the death toll.

Mari has good antennae for this sort of thing. We live in a barrio which is notorious for having been under Salvatrucha control, Mari for nearly ten years. Initially it took a lot of persuading to get our taxi driver to take us there, before he could be convinced that it was "mostly harmless". He did have to be advised to cut his lights after dark so that he would be recognised as 'local' and our corner store is still paying US\$25 renta a week to the MS. This is in spite of the fact that recently the police have taken to making regular 'sweeps' through our neighbourhood and evicted the families of known gang members from their houses – often under circumstances that in kinder moments I would describe as 'heavy handed'. A political response of mano duro (hard hand) to earlier attempts to negotiate and address the underlying problem of underpaid labour and unemployment.

Which was one of the reasons we were here at Punta Mango. (Another reason was mental and physical preparation for my return trip to Australia with over 36 hours of flying/airport time). Peace, tranquillity, isolation, nothing but campesino farmlets and hard to find tourist spots, no police, no gangs (we were told), no 4am buses taking people to their underpaid work.

For Mari, the scratched-in MS initials was simply recognition of a somewhat disappointing reality. However Kristina, the manageress

of Rancho Mango reassured us that the pandillas were not a problem in the region. The small communities dotted along the 20 odd kilometres of pristine beaches were determined to keep the gangs away. She went on to describe what sounded very similar to Nimbin's 'Jungle Patrol' to deter any kind of gang presence.

For me the scratched initials signified a meeting point of two histories. I was checking out the beaches here to find out if the guerillas I had met here in 1988 had survived the civil war, along with historic memory. Many had. (In fact, as the *GoodTimes* goes to press I will be at a reunion party on the beach at the invitation of the veterans and ex-combatants). And former guerrilla combatants and some of their now adult family still went out on night patrols if gang activity was detected.

It was a moving experience to find the men and women combatants; and they weren't hard to find. Chatting with locals on the 'chicken bus' I found that they opened up to talk about the role they, or their parents or relatives played 'during the war', when I mentioned that I had visited the region in 1988 and met some of the combatants.

Way back then I had been picked up by a government army patrol, who were highly suspicious of a lone journalist in what they called 'a war zone'. Fortunately the local guerillas gave warning that a patrol was on the way and we had time to hide my camera. The soldiers hiked me along the beaches for



the next two days (there was no road then) to a community with a soccer field where they could land the helicopter to fly me out for questioning at the army headquarters. I returned a few months later to retrieve my camera which a campesino proudly returned to me, well wrapped in plastic where he had cached it under his wardrobe.

Word spread quickly that I was the foreigner that the army had 'kidnapped' during the war. Next day I had a visit from Carmelo, an ex-combatant of the BRAZ – the elite commando special forces of the FMLN guerrillas – with a plastic foot for a souvenir.

Much of the next day we spent traversing the dusty roads on an open bed ute. We visited the beach where I had been 'kidnapped' by the army and met the campesino who had buried my camera. In another community we found Brasila, the young guerrilla I photographed with a weapon almost as big as she was, now the proud mother of six sons and daughters.

Later Carmelo showed me the beaches where the arms and supplies were unloaded from the pangas ferrying them across the Gulf of Fonseca from Nicaragua. These were the main supplies for all three of the guerilla fronts in the country. "This is where the local recruits trained," he said, indicating a local beach-side rancho, "...that's where my father took some of the supplies up into the mountains by ox cart," he said, indicating a dirt track.

The locals are keen to demonstrate the key role they played in the war, with plans to build a small museum and a cultural centre on beachfront land donated by the mayor of the regional council. It is proposed as a project for 'The Rescue of Historic Memory'. Perhaps analogous to Nimbin's former hippy museum. With the area's inevitable attraction to surfers this would work in well with a concept recently floated by the government to promote 'political tourism' – already tried and proved in Nicaragua.

# 25th MardiGrass: Overgrow the Government... or keeping the pot boiling

by Michael Balderstone,  
Australian HEMP Party

We've started the weekly infamous MardiGrass meetings, Fridays from 5pm but really they begin at 4.20 in the HEMP Bar. Everyone's welcome and we're always keen for new ideas suggestions and feedback because we have a lot of trouble remembering what happened last year.

Every year seems to be the best MardiGrass ever, and we struggle to remember what to fix or how to improve so please feel free to remind us! Of course keep in mind that MardiGrass aims to change the law while enjoying ourselves. Which is fortunate seeing as little change has happened in the 25 years of effort. In fact, it's harder to score than ever in Nimbin now, which is bloody disgusting considering the public acceptance and current trials happening with medical weed.

Forty people are now banned from Nimbin in 'Operation Cuppa', charged with supplying cannabis, and no cases are to be heard until June. Not been very helpful to all the people who have been getting their organic medicine in Nimbin for decades. Exactly why we hold the MardiGrass.

Any musicians, speakers, comedians, performers and poets who would like to be in the program please get in touch soon. Especially if you are a local.

There are many ways to be involved in this 25th MardiGrass. We need volunteers in most areas, but especially in the two weeks immediately prior to the weekend which is May 5, 6 and 7 this year. There is a book in the Embassy where you can register your interest or email [head@hempembassy.net](mailto:head@hempembassy.net) or phone 6689-0326. Or come to a meeting Friday arvo.

We need Jungle Patrollers, fencers and builders, cooks and cleaners, artists and electricians and even joint rollers. And we need local knowledge amongst the backpacker volunteers or a lot of confusion can happen, especially with language translation. "Please take this down to the showground?" "Sure," he said and was last seen confidently striding past the petrol station towards Tuntable.

Talking of art, there are prizes for the best MardiGrass shop window displays and entries into the Pot Art exhibition can be dropped into the HEMP Bar from April Fools Day on.

We have a revamped website, and you can watch the program evolving at: [www.nimbinmardigrass.com](http://www.nimbinmardigrass.com) A crew from Alaska who were involved in their legalisation process are coming, as well as other speakers from California and Canada and Europe and around Oz. Cannabis law reform has managed to reach the top of the pile in the past year, and it finally feels like our little cannabis creek is becoming mainstream.

We had a fantastic Medican workshop in the hall in January where the full house heard some extraordinary healing stories. The anti-cancer properties in cannabis are proving themselves to be quite amazing time after time. Now I don't want to be too cynical but there's big money being made in treating cancer. Yet we know with diet changes alongside cannabis, there can be amazing results. Let your food be your medicine and medicine your food. Remember?

Yet the police are going harder than ever at pot supplies while big corporations are gearing up to supply chemists where you will get legal medicine after your doctor gives you a prescription. All by the end of this year! I heard it with



Happy visitors to  
MardiGrass 2016  
Photo: Mark Jago

my own ears at the Office of Drug Control's public meeting. WTF? And they wonder why we don't trust politicians. I'm sidetracking, but this is why we have the MardiGrass.

We went to Canberra for the last day of parliament last year and we're going back for the first day this year, 7th February. Just trying to keep the issue on the agenda, talking to politicians and waving the Giant Tincture Bottle around. Meanwhile

it looks like Pauline Hanson has grabbed the bong and is running with it ahead of everyone else. We hope others will step forward soon. There is a bus leaving from the HEMP Embassy, and if you are interested see Max Stone in the HEMP Bar.

Remember if you want to help in any way at Nimbin's 25th MardiGrass, phone 6689-0326, email or come to a Friday meeting.

## Medical cannabis – current state of play

by Michael Balderstone

Medical cannabis is currently being discussed all over the country in high places and behind very closed doors. Not only by stoners, but by people in suits who are popping out some weird ideas.

For instance, Queensland doctors have been warned not to prescribe "the strongest forms" (THC) of cannabis to anyone under 25 years old. They also warned that doctors will bear full responsibility for medical cannabis they prescribe and emphasised that medical cannabis products are untested and their safety and efficacy are unknown. Trying hard to scare doctors away or what?

There's no training in cannabis organised for doctors that we know of, and while they are technically now able to prescribe medicinal cannabis, there are no systems in place other than to expensively order from overseas, filling out complicated forms to appease various departments. The plan is to have it available in Australian chemists by the end of the year. States get to decide who qualifies, but no doubt it will be very narrow gates all round, and the majority of cannabis users will not be in the picture at all. So what will happen to us?

Well, Nimbin is under attack more than ever these days, which is a bit hard to swallow. As the swelling of support grows for medical cannabis with various people and organisations asking for an amnesty, we find over-enthusiastic policing is all over our street almost every day, rather than any sign of, "Sorry hippies, you were right after all. We should have listened to you on a lot of things in fact." (Just dreaming for a moment!) Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull dismissed the idea quickly, saying an amnesty was an irresponsible idea.

Most doctors have quite likely never heard of the endocannabinoid system and, as Dr David Caldicott said in a recent interview, "Most GPs and doctors have been told that cannabis is terribly naughty, and this is part of the problem." Caldicott is also involved with Greenlight Support, a new initiative from Barry Lambert, the man who gave \$34 million to UNSW for research after seeing the extraordinary results from cannabis on his epileptic granddaughter.

Medical users are encouraged to send in



Nimbin Medican Workshop on 21st January

their stories to the Greenlight website, and further campaigns are lined up after full page adverts in the Sunday Fairfax papers recently. Interestingly, the ads were lined up for the Murdoch papers but at the last minute they hiked the price up and forced them to pull out.

In the Greenlight campaign, Lucy Haslam and Barry Lambert, together with Epilepsy Action Australia, again asked Prime Minister Turnbull for an amnesty on compassionate suppliers. Rumours now abound how his wife Lucy Turnbull, who was known to enjoy a toke in her youth, is a director in a company lined up to supply the good medicine.

Supply remains the biggest hurdle for everyone, and we'll present some options to parliamentarians when we go down for the first sitting day, 7th February, to join the MCAU-led protest 'Enough is Enough'. I've always liked a grassroots employment model where all the long-term unemployed stoners suddenly can get a job that makes sense to them, and the experienced growers can have boutique brands.

We estimate there's at least a hundred thousand jobs waiting to happen in that type of regulated cannabis industry in Australia. Maybe limit licences to supply no more than a hundred kilos, a cottage industry. If you make the limit in plant numbers, people grow fertilised monsters and medicine must be organic.

We all agree alcohol and tobacco are far

more dangerous than weed, and how do we regulate those industries? Anyone can grow their own tabac or brew their own grog but you need a licence to sell it. Why not with cannabis?

Politically, Pauline Hanson has picked up the cause and is running with it. I now hear she is talking at the May Hemp Expo in Sydney. Hopefully some other cross-benchers will join her in getting some attention on the issue. She's a smart opportunist and the Greens have missed what should be their ball game, social justice. Pauline has grabbed the bong and bolted with it now, and we all wonder who will join her!

Meanwhile President Trump has taken down all the info on his drugs policy website and there's plenty of speculation as to what he has in mind. Whatever it is it could change tomorrow anyway.

The Medican Workshop in January was probably the best we've held. You can see all the talks on the Hemposium youtube channel.

The Nimbin Hall is booked out at Easter, so the next Workshop will be held at the old butter factory, now Nimbin's Bush Theatre alongside the Phoenix Rising Cafe and Bringabong, just north of the village and over the creek, on 15th April, Easter Saturday, from 11am until 4.20pm. It's a terrific venue.

We hope to promote the event on the coast and maybe get some visitors from down south who are in the area for Easter and the Bluesfest.



## Hemp Farming Open Day

by Wayne Wadsworth

On Friday 17th February from 10am to 4pm, Health Farms International will be having an open day to promote Hemp Farming for Growing Renewable Economies, at 87/89 Cecil Street Nimbin. Follow the balloons.

The event aims to educate and promote industrial, medical and food products grown from hemp and other useful plants.

The bast, hurd, leaves, flowers, seeds and roots of the hemp plant all have very high value uses for industrial, medical and food products.

Health Farms International has developed an aqua-hemp system (pictured) for growing hemp from fish poo. The system also produces herbs, and is self-fertilising, and is well worth seeing in operation.

You will also see a surprising range of consumer products made from hemp, supporting the proposition that if it's mined and made from fossil fuels, it can be grown by farmers and made from hemp.

With the aid of solar, wind, biomass and pyrolysis, humans can actually reverse greenhouse, simply by using hemp and bamboo for most of their consumer goods.

Clever humans can turn their consumer products into green energy and stable carbon for sustainable farming when they buy their next fashionable hemp consumer item. This way, the more people consume, the quicker we reverse greenhouse.

Find out more at the Open Day, or visit: [www.healthfarmsinternational.com](http://www.healthfarmsinternational.com)

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# Cancer collaboration wins Tamworth award

The Tamworth Country Music Festival in January has again recognised the best in Australian country music with Golden Guitars.

Starting in 1973, these are the nation's longest-running music awards.

Grafton local and Bunjalung man, Troy Cassar-Daley took out the Album of the Year award for the second year in a row. He was also inducted into the Australasian Country Music Roll of Renown as an artist who had captured "the hearts of Australians with his wonderful, engaging personality".

Newcomer Travis Collins won Male Artist of the Year, while Sara Storer won Female Artist of the Year and Bush Ballad of the Year, bringing her Golden Guitar tally to 21.

But the standout award this year was for Vocal Collaboration of the Year, which went to Catherine Britt with Kasey Chambers, Beccy Cole, Lyn Bowtell, Josh Pyke, Wes Carr and Wendy Matthews for the track 'FU Cancer'.

Beccy Cole wrote the song with the help of Lyn Bowtell, for cancer survivor Catherine Britt, who has been inspirational as she fights cancer with a positive attitude and supportive family and friends.

Beccy Cole said, "Beautiful Catherine asked me to write a song called 'FU Cancer', after I gifted her a pillow with the same statement. I wrote it on the plane to Tamworth and Lyn Bowtell came over to put a cherry on top!"

After confirming that she had been



Cancer survivor Catherine Britt  
 Below: Troy Cassar-Daley with wife Laurel Edwards Photo courtesy ABC News

diagnosed with stage 2A breast cancer in 2015, the ARIA-nominated artist, who won Best Female Artist at Tamworth last year, has undergone chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

"I now see a light at the end of the tunnel, and am excited to celebrate with music and good friends," Catherine said.

She said she had not experienced any negative feedback on the song's title. "Cancer is abrasive and it's rude and abrupt ... there is nothing nice about it, so why write a song that is polite?"

The irreverent song contains lines like: "My bald head is looking like one half of Beccy Cole's breast".

"(Cancer) is such a serious thing, but it can't all be serious," Catherine said.

"Saying 'FU Cancer' is the perfect way to respond to this disease. It's brave, in your face and strong, just like all those



that have fought cancer and all of those that will in the future."

Watch a live performance of the song at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=13ZUevnUQIQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13ZUevnUQIQ)

14th Annual **NIMBIN WOMEN'S DINNER**  
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- Lauren Randall
- Simone Éclair
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- Ting Lim

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 Doors Open: 6.30pm SHOW Starts: 8pm

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**3**

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In fact more than 70% of people in Australia aged between 12 and 17 years have NEVER tried drugs or had a full drink of alcohol. Drinking and drugging when you are young can lead to serious health problems later in life. If you are under 18, avoid them and LET YOUR BRAIN GROW!

Brought to you by Nimbin Community Drug Action Team (Nimbin CDAT)  
 c/- NNIC P.O. Box 20168, Nimbin NSW 2480. [www.nnic.org.au](http://www.nnic.org.au)



Amongst the awe-inspiring scenery of the Himalayan mountain range, Director Jennifer Peedom set out to uncover tension in the 2014 Everest climbing season from the Sherpas' point of view, and instead captured a tragedy when an avalanche struck, killing 16 Sherpas.

*Sherpa* tells the story of how the Sherpas tired of being disrespected by clients, poorly served by their government and



working in dangerous conditions, so they went on strike. Peedom filmed as the commercial climbing industry struggled to comprehend a new narrative: their faithful aides had suddenly, publicly realised their power.

Smart, genuine, thoughtful filmmaking. Well deserving of its accredited and awarded status.

*Sherpa* will be screening on Saturday 11th February, 7pm at Birth and Beyond, Nimbin. Members free, non-members \$10.

## NIMBIN BUSH THEATRE MOVIES



Friday & Saturday  
17th & 18th February, 8pm  
**Over the Fence  
Comedy Film Festival**  
(2017, rated M) \$15

In 2017, the 19th edition of Over the Fence, the curators proudly present short comedy films from around the world which take on quirky conundrums with an excellent sense of comedic observation. Over The Fence Comedy Film Festival is the longest running touring comedy film festival in Australia and is returning to The Nimbin Bush Theatre on Friday Feb 17 and Saturday Feb 18. Last year the venue was packed out for this hilarious selection of top notch comedic films, so this year the festival will be running over two nights.

Over The Fence seeks excellence in curating and presenting comedy films that can change the way we view the world, celebrating new and independent filmmakers, their comic masterpieces and their excellent sense of humour. This is a film festival that is a dedicated to championing independent and new filmmakers. With films from all over the world including *La Dernier Coup*, *Think Twice*, *The United Guys Network*, *The Board*, *Not Sophie's Choice*, *Notorious Corn*, *Suck it Boss* and *Flushed*. *Flushed* was created by Australian Director Richard Eames who said, "I'm honoured to be a part of one of Australia's longest running film festivals and one which has built a strong reputation for screening some of the best short comedy from around the world."

A great aspect of Over The Fence is the opportunity for the films to be showcased to a much wider audience as the festival travels around the country, something that is quite unique to Over The Fence. Festival highlights include *Not Sophie's Choice* from the UK, directed by Matt Holt and starring Catherine Tate and Alex MacQueen, which looks at the child's mind and the question "But why Mummy?" This is a film festival which will get you laughing and is not too be missed!



Friday 24th February, 8pm  
**Mahana**  
(2016, rated M) \$10

*Mahana* is a 2016 New Zealand drama written and directed by Lee Tamahori based on the novel *Bulibasha: King Of The Gypsies* by Whale Rider author Witi Ihimaera. (It was released as *The Patriarch* outside New Zealand.) Set in an spectacular part of New Zealand's pastoral regions. *Mahana* tells the story of two Maori families, the Mahanas and the Poatas, who are bitter rivals.

*Mahana* saw director Lee Tamahori making his first film on local soil since a very different family tale: 1994's award winning *Once Were Warriors*. Temuera Morrison stars as a 60s era farming patriarch who makes it clear his family should have absolutely nothing to do with rival family the Poatas.

Then romance enters the picture, and son Simeon sets out to find out how the feud first started. Starring Temuera Morrison and Nancy Brunning the powerhouse Māori cast includes Jim Moriarty.

Temuera Morrison plays Tamihana Mahana, a proud farmer and father, a gruff grandfather and an authoritarian who would do anything for his family. *Mahana* debuted at the 2016 Berlin Film Festival, before its NZ release.



Friday 3rd March, 8pm  
**This is Spinal Tap**  
(1984, rated M) \$10

*This is Spinal Tap* is a 1984 American rock music mockumentary written, scored by, and starring Rob Reiner, Christopher Guest, Michael McKean and Harry Shearer. The film portrays the fictional British heavy metal band Spinal Tap.

Directed by Reiner, the movie has a satirical but good natured look at the musical pretensions of heavy metal bands, as well as the tendencies of rock documentaries of the time to create mighty god-like visions of rockstars. (Such as *The Song Remains the Same* about Led Zepplin.)

Reiner and the three main actors are credited as the writers of the movie because they ad libbed much of the dialogue. The three main members of Spinal Tap – David St Hubbins, Derek Smalls and Nigel Tufnel are played by actors McKean, Shearer, and Guest, respectively.

The three actors play their musical instruments and speak with mock English accents throughout the movie. Reiner appears as Marty Di Bergi, the maker of the documentary. The film boasts a huge range of comedic cameos from Anjelica Huston, Fran Drescher, Billy Crystal and many more.

When the film was first released in the 80s many punters did not immediately identify it as a spoof.

As the film progresses, the ridiculous unbridled egos of the band plus the sycophantic management and music industry folks that surround them it becomes increasingly evident that this is not just a spoof about heavy metal bands, it is also a sharp and critical expose of the pretentious music industry machinations of the time.

If you haven't seen this film, or even if you have, The Nimbin Bush Theatre is the perfect setting for this hard rocking hilarious experience. Get ready to laugh, and rock!

Book online for all films: <http://nimbinbushtheatre.com/events>

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**FRI 10 FEB 'LONDON KLEZMER QUARTET' 8PM**  
KLEZMER & CABARET (SUPPORT BAND: 'OUT OF RANGE') \$20




**SAT 11 FEB LIVE DANCE MUSIC 8PM**  
FOLK ROCK WILD BEATS 'KANGAROO MOON' & 'WILD MARMALADE' \$20 (\$25 @ DOOR)




**FRI 17 FEB 'OVER THE FENCE' 2017 8PM**  
**SAT 18 FEB SHORT FILM FESTIVAL (REPEAT SCREEN SAT) \$15**




**FRI 24 FEB MOVIE NIGHT 8PM**  
NZ FILM 'MAHANA' (THE PATRIARCH) M \$10




**FRI 3 MARCH MOVIE NIGHT 8PM**  
CLASSIC FILM 'THIS IS SPINAL TAP' M \$10




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## BUSH THEATRE DOUBLE BILL.

The Nimbin Bush Theatre is excited to announce the return of Wild Marmalade (*above left*) to the theatre, this time co-headlining with drum digeridoo legends Kangaroo Moon.

Kangaroo Moon (*above right*) were ground-breakers in the early 1990's, touring their brand of trancey dancey music around the world, and they haven't stopped since. Between playing Glastonbury, Womad, and a thousand other festivals around the world, Kangaroo Moon have established themselves as one of the most influential psychedelic ethno dance bands in the world. Like Shooglenifty they are high energy, folky, worldly and can transform a dance floor into a joyous and explosive place. They have influenced many current world dance

bands around the world today.

Wild Marmalade acknowledge Kangaroo Moon as the prime influence behind their formation. "This is a rare opportunity to experience two very unique projects that have come out of the North Coast of Australia and had a massive impact on the international music scene," Si Mullumby of Wild Marmalade said. Between them both bands can be credited with basically creating a new genre of music that has gone onto being one of the highlights of any international festival.

Wild Marmalade, formed in 2001, have made huge inroads on the international festival scene, and are feted as innovative, contemporary and uniquely Australian. Last year they played the main stage of the Boon

festival in Portugal, (the biggest electro festival in Europe), as well as playing the MGM Grand in Las Vegas with Circe du Soleil. Their blend of world beats, digeridoo and ethno sounds results in a wildly hypnotic and joyful dance music.

In short this is a world standard double bill that is unmissable, to have two such bands on one night will be an incredible experience for any music and dance lover.

Doors open 8pm, Saturday Feb 11 2017, tickets are \$20 online or \$25 at the door. The Phoenix Rising Cafe will be open for tasty locally sourced meals, award winning coffees and sweet treats. BYO permitted.

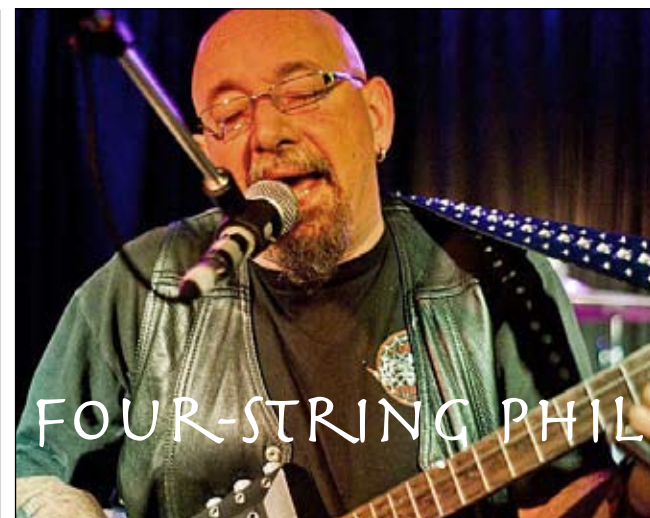
Booking ahead recommended at: <http://www.nimbinbushtheatre.com/events>

## Latin dance Tuesdays



If you love to dance and would like to know how to Salsa and Cha Cha Cha, join Leyla and Rob at the Nimbin Bush Theatre on Tuesdays. Classes start Tuesday 7th February.

Three separate classes are being offered: 5.45pm Salsa basics (\$10); 6.30pm Cha Cha Cha (\$10); 7.15pm Salsa moves - intermediate (\$15). Phone 0418-370-098 for more information.



"In my late teenage years I took a shine to the drums, and for many years it was my instrument of choice.

"Then six years ago I picked up a guitar and thought now this is for me, but I just couldn't get the sound I had in my head out with those six strings, so I took two off, belted out some sounds and haven't looked back.

"My music is really different: rock, blues, slide, cigar box guitar, even touch of techno. My sound, I call it Stomp Rock. I'm loud, I have a 20-litre bucket for a stomp drum, and my songs are all original.

"I keep it simple, write about things I like, and sure enough someone is always tapping their feet at my gigs."

Four-string Phil will be playing at the Nimbin Hotel on Friday 3rd February. Watch for more of his gigs in the region.



Local musos are flocking to the Nimbin Bowlo Open Mike nights, held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, for the chance to play in unusual combos - plus the courtesy bus is running, a buffet dinner is served, and drinks are at club prices. Next Open Mike nights are 8th and 22nd February, from 7pm. Come along and put your name on the board!

# Waitangi Day celebration

The Nimbin Bush Theatre will be having a special Waitangi Day celebration on Saturday Feb 4 from 12pm until 10pm.

Waitangi Day (named after Waitangi where the Treaty of Waitangi was first signed) commemorates a significant day in the history of New Zealand.

It is observed as a public holiday each year on 6 February to celebrate the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document.

The Treaty of Waitangi was first signed on 6 February 1840, at Waitangi by representatives acting on behalf of the British Crown and initially, more than 40 Māori chiefs. During the next seven months,



copies of the treaty were carried around the country to give other chiefs the opportunity to sign. The Treaty made New Zealand a part of the British Empire and guaranteed the Māori People's rights to their land. This was the first

such Treaty signed with indigenous peoples by the British and was due in large part to Māori resistance to heavy handed British colonisation.

The Nimbin Bush Theatre will offer a range of Māori cultural experiences,

including Poi making, music and stories, coming together in a traditional Hangi feast, suitable for non vegetarians and vegetarians alike.

Other specific Kiwi treats may also be on offer, such as marshmallow fish, for any expats missing such delicacies.

The cinema will show a selection of New Zealand films, including the smash hit for all the family, *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, starting at 4pm, and *Mahana* starting at 8pm.

The Phoenix Rising Cafe will be open, serving a range of delicious meals, cold drinks and award winning coffee. All in the gorgeous gardens by the magical Mulgum Creek.

All ages. Entry by donation.

# London Klezmer Quartet

Much-loved international klezmer ensemble, the London Klezmer Quartet return to the Northern Rivers in February with their latest album, ready to share with old and new fans alike.

The London Klezmer Quartet was formed in 2009 by four London-based klezmerim with a shared interest in the traditional playing style. The group is Ilana Cravitz (violin), Susi Evans (clarinet), Carol Isaacs (accordion) – all direct from the UK – and Aussie, Indra Buraczewska (double bass and vocals).

Klezmer is a musical tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe. Played by professional musicians called klezmerim, the genre originally consisted largely of dance tunes and instrumental display pieces for weddings and other celebrations. It is high energy music, full of passion and demands virtuosity of musical technique.

The London Klezmer Quartet's fourth album, *To the Tavern*, takes their evocation of the celebratory and soulful klezmer music to a whole new level. The recording, which they will recreate live in performance for the tour, is a dawn-to-dawn story about a klezmer band's arrival in a small town.

With a wealth of traditional-style compositions by the band, the adventure weaves fabulous instrumentals with the irresistibly sonorous vocals of Indra Buraczewska, who features in traditional laments, a Warsaw Yiddish theatre hit with a hint of jazz, 'Goodbye New York', and even a song about beetroot soup!



The Quartet will perform at the Lismore City Bowling Club at 7.30pm on Wednesday 8th February, and will also present a workshop earlier that evening (5pm-6.15pm) at the same venue, for any instrumentalists who are keen to learn some klezmer tunes.

Entry to either event will cost \$20/\$15, with a special package deal of \$35/\$25 for attendance at both events. More info about the Quartet and both 8th February events can be found on the Orkeztar Lismore's facebook page

(OrkLiz).

The Quartet will also perform a concert and dance the following Friday night, 10th February at 8pm at the Nimbin Bush Theatre with support from local gypsy cabaret outfit 'Out of Range'. Entry \$20. The Phoenix Rising Cafe will be open from 6.30pm with a range of delicious locally sourced meals, drinks and sweet treats. BYO is permitted.

Book online to reserve your ticket at: <http://nimbinbushtheatre.com/events>

# Duck for the Hall at Whian Whian

Galapagos Duck, renowned Aussie jazz band, returns to Whian Whian Hall for a special afternoon concert on 12th February.

These virtuosos are a must-see for all ages.

Wood-fired pizza will be available from noon, with the performance starting at 2pm and running until 4pm.

Coffee and cake will be available at interval, with funds supporting the Hall. BYO alcohol if desired.

Tickets are \$20, concession \$15. Cash at door only. Call 0417-119-142 for more information or visit: [www.galapagosduck.net](http://www.galapagosduck.net) and Whian Whian Hall facebook page.

Whian Whian Hall is located at 414 Whian Whian Road, Whian Whian (via Lismore).



**sphinx rock café**  
3220 Kyogle Rd, Mt Burrell NSW 2484 P (02) 6679 7118 [www.sphinxrockcafe.com](http://www.sphinxrockcafe.com)

**Sunday Gig Guide**

**February 1pm start**

**5th Kellie Knight**  
Accessible lyrics, well-crafted pop hooks and a potent blend of whiskey-smoke jazz subtlety and full-power soul vocals.

**12th Kim Banffy**  
Kim's songs attract an audience that appreciates meaningful lyrics and interesting melodies.

**19th Matt Stillert**  
Matt's original sound features thundering riffs, wailing vocals, high energy crescendos and an unorthodox guitar style.

**26th Elena B Williams**  
Samoan Australian singer-songwriter who brings alive a sound that has the strength of her culture.

**March 2nd Murray Kyle**  
Passionate storytelling that honours our connection as humanity.

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

**February Gigs**

Friday 3rd	7pm	4 String Phil
Saturday 4th	7pm	Bassix
Sunday 5th	5pm	David Barbara
Thursday 9th	7pm	Adam Brown
Friday 10th	7pm	Rhyece Oneill
Saturday 11th	7pm	Adam Hole Band
Sunday 12th	5pm	Brommers
Thursday 16th	7pm	Q
Friday 17th	7pm	Romaniacs
Saturday 18th	7pm	Steve Dornington
Sunday 19th	5pm	Richie Williams
Thursday 23rd	7pm	Surf Report
Friday 24th	7pm	Dirty River Duo
Saturday 25th	7pm	Drift
Sunday 26th	5pm	Slim Pickens

All Gigs are Free of Charge

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