

Council budget issues



by Cr Darlene Cook
Lismore City Council

Coming up at the May Council meeting will be the annual council budget for 2023/2024. This meeting can often be a contentious one with councillors trying to stretch the budget to include the many projects that residents ask us to support.

Decisions that need to be considered include whether to increase rates by the state set cap of 3.7% or to freeze them for the second year.

Last year council did not increase rates at all as a way to assist the residents and businesses affected by the flood disaster.

However, that decision, combined with higher than expected inflation causing large increases in the costs of goods and services, has impacted many of the programs and projects Council has on hand.

While I appreciate that many people are still experiencing hardship as a consequence of the floods and would prefer a rate freeze, I also understand that Council must continue to provide services to the community and needs the revenue to pay for those services. Council cannot afford to cover the costs of rising inflation out of our own reserves.

As the NSW Valuer General has re-valued all the land in the LGA recently, any increase of rates by the cap will impact ratepayers in different ways. In some areas land values have decreased in the recent valuation, and for those properties rates will also reduce. In other areas the land values have increased, and those ratepayers will notice the corresponding increase in their rates.

If you want to express your opinion on this matter, come along to the May Council meeting on Tuesday 9th May at 6pm at Council offices in Oliver Road, Goonellabah.

Artists wanted

Lismore City Council is calling for Expressions of Interest from local artists or a collaboration of artists that have a strong connection with Nimbin to develop and deliver artwork within the general theme of Nimbin's Community, Culture and Country for the Nimbin Rainbow Road Walking Track.

The artwork proposed for this project will be permanent and aims to complement the walking track, making it unique, inspiring, thought-provoking and attractive to the community and tourists alike.

Check out how to lodge an expression of interest before 5th May at this website: *Expression of Interest – Public Artwork for Nimbin Rainbow Road Your Say Lismore (nsw.gov.au)*

New website

The new Lismore City Council website is up and running. The website is built on the OpenCities platform, which is widely used by councils across Australia, ensuring a high standard of quality and reliability.

The new site makes transactions such as paying rates much easier, which will mean fewer calls to the contact centre and shorter wait times for phone assistance. This enhances overall customer experience and allows for faster resolution of inquiries.

The website has undergone testing by members of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group to ensure its accessibility to all members of our community. It has also been designed with a more intuitive layout and is much more user-friendly, making it easier for visitors to find the information they need.

Check out the new website at: <https://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/Home> and explore its new features and improvements.

Our staff are confident that it will greatly enhance the on-line experience for our community members and provide a more efficient means of communication between the Council and our residents.

And as always, I can be contacted by phone on either 6626-0154 or 0427-895-316, or via email: darlene.cook@lismore.nsw.gov.au



From the mayor's desk
by Steve Krieg
Lismore City Council

Council's new general manager Jon Gibbons and our Economy and Growth team visited Nimbin this week for a walking tour hosted by the Nimbin

New Economy and Growth team

Chamber of Commerce to better understand the needs of Nimbin and its community.

Nimbin is a unique and important part of our wider community, so it is great that our new general manager and staff are taking an active role in the work that needs to be done in the village.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Aquarius50 Festival that runs from 12th to 21st May.

And just in time for the celebrations, the Aquarian Archive website is back up and running. It contains digitised versions of artifacts

associated with the original Nimbin Aquarius Festival held in 1973.

It's an important collection of pieces from a significant time in our history.

Digitised and presented in association with Lismore City Council through the NSW Government Public Library Development grant, the Aquarian Archive is available free at: <https://aquarian.lismore.nsw.gov.au>

As most people know, Lismore City Council has been in a poor financial position for a while now, which was made even worse by the biggest natural disaster in Australia's

recorded history.

The good news is we now have a long-term 10-year financial plan that will help us get back to being financially sustainable.

It will require discipline on behalf of councillors and staff, but for the first time in a long time we have a way forward.

And lastly, please read the article in this issue of the *Nimbin GoodTimes* about the latest on the Rainbow Road Walking Track. (Page 13)

This is a great project and will be a much-needed tourism attraction for visitors, and I suspect will be also well used by locals.



Recognising our young achievers

It was fantastic to see over 300 people attend my Lismore School Leaders Event (pictured).

Naomi Moran was my guest speaker. As General Manager of the *Koori Mail* and as a significant community leader during Lismore's floods, Naomi gave an inspirational speech about her background and the importance of leadership.

Student leaders play an important role in the life of their school community

and it's important to recognise them and thank them.

I would like to thank the students, teachers, mums, dads, carers and grandparents who came along to the events and Naomi and Cate for telling their stories.

It was also wonderful this month to recognise a number of young local sporting champions excelling in their sports and representing our region at a state, national or international level.

On the same Page

by Kevin Hogan,
Federal Member for Page

Congratulations to: Mikayla Frey from Nimbin – Athletics, and Daniel Frey from Nimbin – Athletics.

Succeeding in sport doesn't just take talent and determination – parents also often have to put their hands in their pockets to get their children to competitions.

I'm very pleased to be able to help these families with \$550 grants through the Local Sporting Champions program.

The Local Sporting Champions program provides financial assistance for competitors aged 12-18 participating in state, national or international championships.

If you visit: www.sportaus.gov.au and go to Grants and Funding you can apply there.

Ballina Airport – is it too big for Ballina Council to manage?

The Ballina Council-owned airport was renamed Ballina

Byron Gateway Airport in 2005. The original terminal building was constructed almost 40 years ago and the passenger numbers have increased significantly over the last 10 years from about 200,000 to over 600,000.

With the continued growth comes necessary infrastructure upgrades. For those who periodically use Ballina airport, you would have noticed the multi-million dollar terminal and carpark upgrade that has only recently been completed. That new terminal, at times, is already too small to cater for the growing number of jets that arrive on a daily basis.

Jetstar and Virgin are the airport's main customers, with a number of smaller aircraft and private jets also trying to fit in around the big carriers.

There is no doubt that the airport has contributed significantly to the growth of Ballina and the region as a whole. I'm sure many people have moved to our area from both Melbourne and Sydney partly due to the convenience



by Cr Jeff Johnson
Ballina Council

that the airport offers them. With our amazing beaches and beautiful hinterland, I am forever blessed to live in our region.

With the airport's continuing growth, increased maintenance costs and on-going necessary upgrades the question has to be asked, is it time for Ballina Council to lease or sell this valuable asset?

At a recent Council meeting some of these projected upgrades/expenditure requirements were discussed.

Over the next 20 years the LUP (Land Use Plan) laid out the future works that could be required. The price tag was up to \$150 million. These costs include additional extensions

to the runway and taxi area (for planes), additional parking, expanded terminal, etc.

The scary thing is that the costs don't include the significant maintenance costs that the airport has. For example, the airport's 30-metre wide runway is in need of an overlay (bitumen top-up) that will extend its lifespan by up to 10 years. The last runway overlay occurred in 2013.

The cost of this alone is approximately \$20 million. Additional government grants are desperately needed to complete this work. One can only guess what the next overlay due in 10 years will cost.

The numbers are extraordinary and the Council basically relies on State and Federal Government grants to keep the airport afloat. Over the last 15 years that I've been on Council we have received approximately \$50 million in grants specifically related to the airport.

It's fair to ask, has the airport outgrown the Council's ability to fund its ongoing growth, or should it look to consolidate the existing infrastructure and increase the fees to the airlines

in order to reduce the future risk to ratepayers? Maybe putting a cap on the number of jets to reduce the need for the proposed future upgrades?

The airport's main competitor is the Gold Coast Airport, which is only an hour's drive up the highway. To compare the two, the Gold Coast has approximately six million passengers per year and has recently undergone a \$500 million upgrade. The numbers are extraordinary.

Ballina Council will soon be considering a report that looks at the potential to either sell or lease the airport. I'm supportive of looking at this as it's obvious that without private investment or additional significant grant funding, Ballina Airport (ratepayers) won't be able to afford the future expenditure as outlined in the reports.

As a representative of our ratepayers (and a ratepayer myself) there are plenty of other community infrastructure projects that are a higher priority than diverting those millions of dollars into the airport or putting the Council's viability at risk due to excessive loan borrowings.



Celebrating the 50th Anniversary
of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival.
You are the Festival!

Rotarians help prevent falls to keep seniors out of hospital

by Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore

Last month was April Falls Month, but its theme of Better Balance for Fall Prevention applies year round for the many seniors in our local community. April Falls Month is an annual campaign to raise awareness about the impact of falls and to promote the latest best practice fall prevention strategies.

Among these strategies is Safety Lights for Seniors, a national falls prevention project driven by retired Goonellabah businessman Bob Barnes and the Rotary Club of Lismore West.

Bob says one thing you can do to reduce the likelihood of a fall is to get a simple LED night light and install them in a bedroom or several throughout the home.

I secured a \$35,000 grant from former NSW Minister for Communities and Justice, Mark Coure MP to develop the campaign's website: www.safetylightsforseniors.org.au

I congratulate the Rotary Clubs of Lismore West and Ballina Lifestyle Satellite for running successful April Falls Day information tables at Bunnings in Lismore and Ballina, supported by the health promotion team from Northern NSW Local Health District.

I also acknowledge the support of other Rotary clubs for Safety Lights for Seniors – Alstonville, Ballina-on-Richmond, Casino,



Janelle Saffin with Rotarian Bob Barnes at a Lismore Carboot Market late last year.

Lismore, Lismore Networking, Mt. Warning AM, Murwillumbah Central, Summerland Sunrise, and more broadly, Rotary District 9640.

A fall at home can have terrible consequences for elderly people, their families and the community. Every day, 364 older Australians are hospitalised due to a fall. Studies also show a 23% reduction in falls

with regular exercise. It's never too late to get active.

Head to the NSW Fall Prevention and Healthy Ageing Network website at: <https://fallsnetwork.neura.edu.au/aprilfalls> to find out more.

Autism acceptance on the rise
April was also World Autism Acceptance Month, and thanks to the tireless efforts of Micheal Lynch, this coincided with the establishment of a Northern Rivers Autism Association, of which he is its first president.

Micheal, who is on the autism spectrum, has been actively advocating for better opportunities for his fellow autistic community in our region.

During the recent State election campaign, Micheal secured my support for his proposal for a statewide NSW Autism Strategy.

I arranged a meeting for him with Kate Washington MP, then Shadow Minister and now Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion.

Micheal says: "I want to encourage all local industry leaders in the Northern Rivers to open their doors to a new generation of job seekers and to consider how they may be able to take on employees who are on the autism spectrum."

"This unemployment rate, among other things, leads to poorer economic and health outcomes for people on the spectrum and is

something that I am seeking to change and I invite all community members to support us," Micheal says.

Ministers' feet under their desks
NSW Premier Chris Minns during a priority visit to Lismore flagged that his first Cabinet Ministers would have their feet under their desks and getting departmental briefings the day after being sworn in.

I, together with my staff, will continue to make strong representations on behalf of constituents to Premier Minns, Deputy Premier Prue Car and all ministers.

For a full list of ministers go to: www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers

You may contact them directly via this email naming convention: office@minister.surname.minister.nsw.gov.au but please make sure you copy me in: lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au so that I am aware of your issues of concern.

Early in May, my electorate office is on the move from our temporary space of 12-14 Carrington Street back to our former address of 55 Carrington Street, on the corner of Conway and Carrington Streets, which has been refurbished since the February 2022 flood.

We thank everyone in advance for your understanding as we 'build back better' to provide services for the next four-year term of Parliament.

The politics of numbers

by Sue Higginson, NSW Greens

Numbers are incredibly important. They quantify, describe, calculate and define our reality. Following the 2023 NSW state election, the numbers offer us hope, pathways and opportunities, but they also define our problems, challenges and the work that must be done.

The dust has settled and the results of the state election are final. Far from the sweeping majority Labor Government that was expected on election night, we have a minority government that is relying on a record-size cross bench that is diverse and demanding.

In the Lower House, Labor will need two extra votes to pass legislation that isn't supported by the Coalition opposition. Those two votes can come from any of the 12 cross bench members, including our three phenomenal Greens women from the electorates of Ballina, Balmain and Newtown.

In the Upper House, things are precarious. The Greens have another four hard-working women with vision out of a crossbench of 12, five of which are from One Nation Party and the Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party.

Labor will need our help to pass any progressive legislation in the Upper House, and we will most likely only have one more vote than the Coalition and right wingers.

These numbers matter. The delicate balance between the notionally progressive and conservative political elements means that we have our work cut out for us, but also offers opportunities to forge ahead on important work that cares for country, community and the planet.

The six progressive crossbenchers in the Upper House are facing off against some very dangerous

and regressive people. The three One Nation members and the one Liberal Democrat MP are a challenge and threat to everything we hold dear; they are racist, coal and nuclear loving climate deniers that think personal freedoms should be put ahead of the living planet.

But the real work will be pushing the Labor minority Government to go further and faster and to take meaningful action to protect our collective home – this planet.

These tiny numbers that are spinning around the NSW Parliament pale in comparison to the numbers coming from climate scientists. These climate numbers are big, they are terrifying and they care not for how big or small election results might be. They are raw and describe our narrow pathway for action and for survival.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has now just completed its sixth reporting cycle. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres in his statement proclaimed, "Humanity is on thin ice, and that ice is melting fast."

The rapidly changing climate is an existential threat to every living thing on planet earth; fires, floods, droughts, extreme weather, ecosystem collapse, rising sea levels, mass migrations – it is everywhere and all at once.

International agreements between governments, lawsuits from teenagers against their governments, rolling natural disasters, and alarm bells ringing throughout the world but carbon dioxide is still rising – the fastest it ever has on this planet.

As global temperatures increase, millions of people are fleeing their homes to avoid the impacts of droughts and extreme storms. And these numbers are set to rise. The International Organisation on Migration estimates that up to 200 million people could be displaced by climate change by 2050.

Around 50% of all carbon emissions are emitted by the richest 10% of the world's population. Yet global warming is making climate change refugees of the world's poorest.

While the expected rate of species extinction is usually around five species a year, we're currently losing up to 10,000 times the normal rate – this means that dozens of species go extinct every single day. This loss of biodiversity reduces water quality and food security, and also results in a loss of natural pest control as predators like frogs and spiders become extinct.

Despite a solid election result for the climate independents, Labor has left their ambition for climate action at the door. They have committed to legislating the same targets as the former coalition government, comparatively strong targets, but still not enough to avert climate catastrophe.

Labor's climate number promises are net zero emissions by 2050 and a 50% reduction in carbon emissions on 2005 levels by 2030. This is simply not enough, and continues us on the pathway to climate oblivion. Labor's commitment also doesn't describe how we will achieve their lacklustre goals despite the fact they are powering on with coal and gas approvals.

But please, dear reader, have hope – I do. I recently joined an incredible collaboration of truly wonderful people at Climate Camp, a gathering of inspired, hopeful people, which was held a stone's throw from the world's largest coal port right here in NSW, in Newcastle.

The event marked the commencement of a movement, a civil resistance movement in defence of our beautiful precious planet, a safe climate and life as we know it.

This rising tide of activists understand the value of numbers, and more specifically human bodies



and their ability to take direct action against the political tragedy outlined above. One of the calls to action is to join together, to connect through signing up to the Climate Defence Pledge so we are 10,000+ people to action our hope in ways that are commensurate with the task before us.

The Climate Defence Pledge is a commitment to yourself, to be part of the movement in any way you choose, but you must sign up and be counted.

We must end coal and gas as soon as we can. We need to commit to this movement now more than ever because the stakes are so high. We know what we need to do in this "humanity's moment". It is not simply about working within the system, we need to resist because our political and economic system in its current free-fall is harming us all in its bloody pursuit of corporate profits from resource extraction, right here in our State.

This is our reality, these are our

challenges, and people are our only hope. I am an optimist, I believe that there is no challenge that cannot be overcome and I am sure of this because of the brave and tireless activists that I meet each and every day. This new Parliament is filled with potential and opportunities, I am pumped to take these chances and turn them into our reality.


Parliament will recommence on 9th May and I have not been able to keep my feet still since the numbers came in and the results were finalised. We have a species defining time before us and I am ready to work night and day, with you and every other person out there.

We can do this, and I hope you join with me in a vision for the future where life on this beautiful planet is afforded the opportunity to continue. I might be an optimist, but I'm not the only one.

I hope you'll join us, and I hope to see you on the frontlines!

Sign up to the Climate Defence Pledge at: www.risingtide.org.au

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Wrapt in Nimbin fashion spectacular

by Gillian Jones

Nimbin valley is a hotbed of creative thinking, living, making and being. From 1973 people from all walks of life were drawn to Nimbin to live the 'Aquarian' dream. This was often reflected in the clothes we wear, the architecture, the conversations we have and the lifestyle we led.

It was this lifestyle that inspired a group of four local fashion designers, Bobbin, Jeanette Murphy, Lucienne Manzart and Gill Jones to take up a lease in what is now known as the Bush Factory, from 1987 to 1990.

From there, the first Nimbin Fashion show was presented at the Nimbin Bush Factory in 1989.

From that beginning, fashion shows are regularly held in Nimbin, utilising a variety of clothing forms, creative choreography, dance groups, live music, and textures to create wearable art and unique fashion.

The Nimbin Fashion Show has been through many metamorphoses over time and still attracts a variety of local creative artists to exhibit clothing and designs each year to an expanding audience.

Our fashion shows are unmatched and proudly different to mainstream clothing shows using both trained and untrained creatives, using shapes and many different textiles, natural fibres, wearable art pieces and involve a variety of innovative people to craft items together.

Linda Jackson, Australian textile designer of world renown, was chosen as Australian Fashion Laureate in 2021, which is a lifetime achievement award. The documentary "Step into Paradise," showcasing Linda's and Jenny Kee's



Judy Who, Poppi, Gill Jones, Suzy Scamel, Bobbin, Front: Polly Stirling, Joan Thompson, Jo Cox. Photo is from 1990

work from the 1970s into the 2000s, is particularly Aquarian in its creative output. Linda's work is also housed in Sydney's Powerhouse Museum and is to be found in numerous galleries and museums.

She has also been a long time worker and supporter of Aboriginal creative groups out in the Australian desert. Linda will be mentoring this production and showcasing some of her fabulous collection. Linda was at the original Aquarius festival and is a regular visitor to the Northern Rivers. The Aquarian energy was a global phenomenon and by collaborating with Linda our Nimbin country creative met the Urban Sydney movement.

As part of the Aquarian anniversary celebrations we are planning a short Fashion Spectacular in the Bush Factory on Sunday 14th May at 7.30pm, and at Tuntabla Falls Community at 5.30pm on Saturday 20th May. Both will showcase past and current designers.

This fashion event is produced by Claire Larivee and Gill Jones, with support from Samara Burcher and Roger Foley.

We welcome you to join us in this creative experience, and would be grateful for any donations towards putting on Wrapt In Nimbin. Donations can be deposited in the Summerland Credit Union account BSB: 728-728; Acct: 22342667.

Psychedelic lightshow at Aquarius50

by Roger Foley-Fogg

The Ellis D Fogg Lightshow for Aquarius50 on 13th May, will cover the whole universe of human spiritual achievement that I am aware of, from Mico Sundari's Yogini Healing Mantra to Neil Pike's Pagan Love Cult.

This will be an expansion of my last show 'Staid Evening Shattered by Madness' at the National Art School Gallery, Darlinghurst in 2019.

A true 'Oneness' of life on Earth is the essential message of all great spiritual thinkers who have influenced me, from Zarathustra to Timothy Leary and Aldous Huxley, and their lessons to live a Good life... bearing in mind that while everything is, or may be preordained, you still have the power of your 'will' and that perhaps 'willpower' is the guiding force in our universe.

We do have the power to "make it better".

Just ask Sophia Fletcher and Dennis Aubrey, who will both be singing passionately for us.

My friend Neil Pike is an amazing positive force for Nimbin, just look up his numerous Youtube movies where he fearlessly fights for our, for your, rights. His band – he does not call it his band – Pagan Love Cult with Pix and Nina-Rae Saunders will be a major feature of our Aquarius50 Lightshow.



Karen Minami dancing in the Liquidelic Lightshow by Yao Mikami

I am also proud that Peter Lehrner's extraordinary Healing Voices Choir will also be a major feature. Moppy Chiring Chuden is a much-loved member of that choir.

I met Moppy then known as Moth, in Martin Sharp and Albie Thoms' Yellow House in 1971 where she was a member of the White Company. To my embarrassment I locked her out when the house closed, forcing her to climb over the roof to get her things.

Moppy busks in Lismore outside Henry's Bakery, so throw her a few dollars for a coffee and say 'hello'. She and Oshia Drury will be singing two songs by Nimbin original creators Peter Thin and Paul

Joseph. Oshia, on dulcimer, arranged the music for Paul's 'Angel' song.

Richard Neville was one of the editors of *Oz Magazine*, which hit Sydney Streets in 1963, and was promptly charged with obscenity. It is *Oz Magazine's* 60th Anniversary this year. Richard was a great Freedom Fighter for our Counter Culture and is in my Aquarius Festival movie sans vêtements.

Our mothers were bohemian friends and as a young boy Richard 'Rikky' was known for naughtiness... he inspired my naughtiness. Richard describes the Alternative Society, the Counter Culture in a two-minute film.

I will also show the short film at Johnny Allen's Aquarius Elders Dinner when I describe Richard Neville's importance, on Friday 29th.

I have said my shows are driven by Synchronicity and Serendipity and have nothing to do with top-down control by me. Just last week Australian Living National Treasure Linda Jackson, who brought the colours of the bush and desert into our lives, turned up out of the blue and reminded me that we worked together for her Opal Fashion Show in 1983, another Anniversary – our 40th! So we will reprise that beautiful Black Light Opal parade for you.

Talking fashion, thanks to Claire Larivée, Gill Jones and choreographer Marilyn Smith, we have also included a Wrapt In Nimbin grand fashion parade from eight local designers paraded by 25 models in the Bush Theatre garden.

Some folk say fashion is a waste of time and for wankers... but the healing power of looking and feeling good cannot be denied.

All this and more will be revealed at Mr Fogg's Healing Power Lightshow at the Bush Theatre, Saturday 13th May at 6pm.

In the spirit of Aquarius, tickets are FREE, but you must apply by email to: david@nimbinbushtheatre.com

Community Centre News



by Nimbin Community Centre Management Committee

Aboriginal Cultural Centre re-opening

Over the last couple of years we have been working with the Aboriginal Cultural Centre to make improvements to the space with a view to offering a professional gallery space for indigenous artists and a more welcoming front entrance for visitors.

These initiatives have been funded by a Creative Koori grant from Create NSW. We have had a few delays – the disruption of the pandemic and 2022 flood disaster – but have finally completed the project.

We are inviting you to the grand reopening of the Aboriginal Cultural Centre on Friday 5th May at 3pm.

Our vice president

Darren Maxwell migrated from the US in 2016 to join his father in the area and now lives in Barkers Vale with his partner, Mark.

He works with local builder and well-known community member Charlie Cohen and joined our committee in 2018 to get to know the Nimbin community.

“This has been a great way to not only get to know what’s happening but also contribute in a meaningful way to my chosen community,” Darren said.



Darren Maxwell

He is interested in event planning and management and was a driving force in organising the highly successful, 2019 New Year’s fire brigade fundraiser at the Tuntale Falls Community Hall following the bushfires.

The future for Nimbin Community Centre

The management committee finds itself at a crossroads where they are coming to terms with the great changes we are dealing with as a community.

Older committee members are moving on while social, economic and climate pressures are presenting considerable challenges on a not for profit organisation such as ours.

The Management Committee desires to continue to develop the Nimbin Community Centre into a vibrant community hub where not only great services, like those offered by many of our current tenants, but other community activities and events can occur.

We also want to attract the younger generation of the village community to celebrate, take ownership of and participate in the unique legacy of community-owned

and operated spaces. As part of this process we have undertaken a complete review of our business model, a process supported by the federal government’s Entrepreneur Program.

We are at the stage where we are implementing significant changes to how we run as an organisation – the first major changes in 25 years – with a view to reducing the rent burden on our tenants while creating more effectively funded management of our infrastructure, which includes nine very aged buildings.

Change can be challenging and we are still refining our ideas. Hopefully we will be able to update you with more specifics next month.

Volunteers and engagement

Volunteers, both at the committee level and as workers for the Community Centre are a vital part of how we operate and develop our Centre.

Nimbin Community Centre welcomes newcomers who have settled in our beautiful village and would love to invite you to engage with us. If you have time and/or any skills, you would like to offer, we would love to hear from you.

Joining as a volunteer is great way to get know the community and share your skills enthusiasm and talent.

If you are interest you can contact us via our website: www.nimbincommunity.org.au or email: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au or call 02) 6689-0000.

Our centre staff will be happy to speak to you about what you have to offer and how you can help.

Rainbow Road will soon be a reality

by Wil Polson

The long-held dream of a Nimbin Rainbow Road Walking Track is fast becoming a reality.

Since Federal and State government funding of \$2.5 million was announced for the track in 2021, Lismore City Council has received the initial design and has been working with the local steering group to ensure the track reflects the unique character of the village and its community.

Council is now focusing on three key elements of the 1.1km track: park furniture, artwork and wayfinding.

Park furniture, including shade shelters, seats, picnic settings, water bubblers, bollards, and bins, will have a chunky timber and stone theme wherever possible, matching the existing structure within Allsopp Park, a unique and symbolic building in the Nimbin landscape.

Expressions of interest

Council has also recently announced an Expression of Interest to create artwork to be displayed along the



track, with experienced and budding Nimbin artists asked to upload their concept proposals.

The artwork will incorporate three important aspects of Nimbin: the village’s diverse and close-knit community, cultural aspects of the area and its landscape.

Way-finding signs will also be strategically located throughout the track to orientate users, highlight points of interest and tell local stories.

The concept designs are in progress and will have a unique Nimbin feel.

Some planning matters, including obtaining development consent, still need to be resolved before construction of the track can start.

The current expectation is to start building in August-September, with the aim to finish construction by December.

The community can keep up to date with progress of the track by going to Council’s Your Say website at: <https://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au> where you can also submit an Expression of Interest for artwork.

Chamber Chat

by David Hyett, President

April has been a busy and productive month for the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce.

We have been working closely with Lismore City Council and the Chamber is pleased to report that Council has resumed responsibility for the ‘Visit Nimbin’ website and the ‘Popular Events’ calendar.

We believe this change will lead to a more effective promotion of our town’s unique attractions and events. Anyone in the community staging events is encouraged to utilise the ‘Visit Nimbin’ events calendar to maximise exposure for their events.

We are pleased to report that Council has been meeting with Chamber members in the following week after every Chamber meeting. This close collaboration between the Council and the Chamber is essential in building a relationship that engenders the best possible outcomes for our community.

Chamber Exec arranged a walk around the Nimbin village with the new General Manager of the Council, Jon Gibbons, to increase his familiarity with Nimbin. A focus was on the provision of upgrades and maintenance of Council’s amenities.

Chamber is confident that this and future engagements will lead to more effective communication and collaboration between the Council and the Nimbin community.

The hoop signs on each side of the village have been removed due to their poor condition and graffiti. These will be replaced with new ‘Welcome to Nimbin’ signs over the coming weeks. These hoop signs may also be utilised for the Aquarius Festival prior to being replaced permanently.

The month of May is going to be a busy time for the village with two major events occurring. MardiGrass is from Friday 5th to Sunday 7th May – an annual protest against prohibition of marijuana and a celebration of the advances made in the field of medical marijuana.

Aquarius50 celebrations commence Friday 12th May, finishing 10 days later on Sunday 21st. An excellent program of events



honouring the traditional custodians of the land, and the original Aquarius festival’s impact on society in the Northern Rivers while taking a look into future possibilities in keeping with the festival’s roots.

Organised and curated by a small band of energetic volunteers, the event will be a hotbed of ideas, forums, group discussions and entertainment. Nimbin will again take centre stage for all the right reasons, as much of the content will be beamed out to the world.

The Chamber has secured funding from Council to repeat last year’s huge success and well-supported ‘Illuminate Nimbin’ event. More information about this exciting event will be provided in next month’s Chamber Chat.

We are proud to announce that the Chamber’s membership base reached 70 members this month with the addition of three new businesses, the highest number of members in the history of the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce!

We are grateful for the on-going support of our members, and we encourage everyone to get involved in Chamber events and activities.

It has been an absolute pleasure working with the new executive committee who are a very diverse representation of Nimbin’s businesses. Their innovation and energy has revitalised the Chamber, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead.

As always, the Chamber encourages feedback and suggestions to help us better serve our community. Thank you for your continued support as we work towards building a better, stronger and more vibrant future for our children and the community as a whole.

www.nimbinaustralia.com

Aquarius Elders Dinner

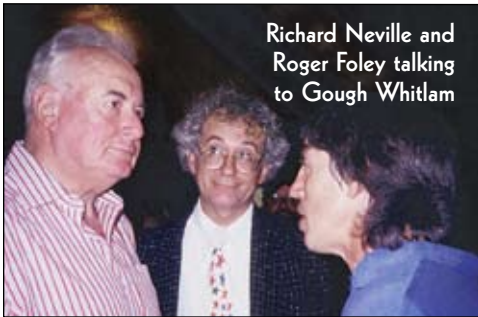
A catered dinner is being held as part of the Aquarius50 anniversary to honour the Elders no longer with us.

- Graeme Dunstan honours Paul Joseph
 - Johnny Allen honours Vernon Treweek
 - Graeme and Johnny honour Graham Cathcart and Brisbane’s Harpo
 - Tom Zubrycki honours Col James
 - John Shipton honours Bill Lucas
 - Roger Foley honours Richard Neville
 - Rhoda Roberts honours Aunty Viv
 - Greg Bork honours Tony Barry
 - Harry Freeman honours John Geake
 - Mira, aka Carol Elliott honours Tansen, aka Norman Stannard
 - Mick Glasheen honours Bush Video’s Jonny Lewis, Ariel, Tom Barber and Fat Jack.
- Graeme Dunstan and Johnny Allen will tell their Nimbin Stories, and Benny Zable will pay tribute to Katie Cawcutt, along with perspectives on the Aquarius Festival by Sara Crowe, Ray Tauss, John Jeffrey and Samir Tooma.

Don’t miss this very special remembrance of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival. Book now, as capacity is limited. Three course dinner, BYO alcohol. Friday 19th May, 7.30-10pm at the Nimbin Hall, Tickets \$30 plus booking fee. Bookings essential at: www.eventbrite.com.au/e/aquarius-elders-dinner-for-aquarius-50-festival-tickets-618369047467?aff=ebdssbdestsearch



Aunty Viv



Richard Neville and Roger Foley talking to Gough Whitlam

Why I helped stop a loaded coal train

by Jasmine Stuart

Last Sunday I was one of 51 people arrested for stopping a coal train into the world's biggest coal port at Newcastle. We were supported by over 100 people cheering from the other side of the fence, including my 96-year-old grandfather. I've never felt more empowered to address the climate crisis. All my life I've been passionate about environmental causes. I attended the school strikes, voted Green, became a vegetarian, rode my bike and dedicated my studies to renewable energy engineering. All the while hearing increasingly dire climate warnings, and pretending that we're doing enough. But temperature and disaster records are broken every year. Floods in Pakistan and China, heatwaves in India, droughts

in Europe and East Asia, tropical storms in Asia and America, bushfires in Australia and the US are causing billions in damage and displacing millions of people. I realised that our current response is simply not good enough. The IPCC and the world's leading scientists recently delivered a "final warning" for humanity. All pathways to avoid catastrophic impacts involve the immediate end of coal and gas expansions. I don't know how we can truly understand these facts and still believe that my actions are more radical than those that continue to expand fossil fuels. Prioritising profit over the survival of humanity is one of the most radical actions I can imagine. We currently have a choice between temporary disruption now, or worse disruption in the future, forever. I'm in my final year of renewable energy engineering



and I understand we can't stop burning all fossil fuels today. But Australia has 116 'new' fossil fuel projects in the pipeline. When we know we are in crisis, when we've been repeatedly told that our house is burning, we keep adding fuel to the fire.

I'm scared and I don't know what else to do. What choice is left, but civil disobedience? Many say it's not the right way to advocate for change, but so many rights we take for granted now were won through similar nonviolent movements (civil rights,

women's suffrage, the 40-hour work week) and in their time were criticised as radical and not the "right" way to protest. We now look back to these people as those on the right side of history, and I know my actions will be viewed the same way in the

future. When we stand together, I believe we create transformational change, to build a more just and sustainable future. Last week I was arrested with Rising Tide, but this is not an isolated tactic. Rising Tide is seeking 10,000 people to commit to join peaceful disruptions at the world's biggest coal port. We encourage people to take the Climate Defence Pledge at: risingtide.org.au/pledge Rising Tide also invites you to join a peaceful blockade of the coal port on November 25th and 26th. This will be an unprecedented scale of civil disobedience in defence of our climate. Ambitious, because it must be. We know many thousands of people care, this is our time to come together, before it is too late. *Jasmine Stuart is a 22 year old, fourth year renewable energy engineering student.*

IPCC's missing military emissions

by Bobbi Allan

The latest IPCC Report was published in March. As we know, emissions are still too high and the warnings more dire than ever. Most of us do not know that the IPCC omitted from its latest report the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions coming from the world's biggest industrial emitters – the Military-War Industries of the world and their supply chains. Why? Because the IPCC scientists can't get the data. Why? Because carbon emissions stemming from military activity have largely been a mystery since 1997 when the US successfully lobbied to have them excluded from the Kyoto Protocols. That blanket exclusion ended with the 2015 Paris Accords, which made military emissions reports voluntary. Only a few countries now submit this data and even countries that do report, such as Canada, often mix them in with civilian activities and keep covert operations out. As one IPCC author said, "We cannot cut what we don't know." In the current IPCC Report's Summary for Policy Makers, two NGOs, the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), and the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), highlighted the absence of military emissions, proposing that they be addressed in the next report. Ukraine successfully supported the inclusion of a reference to the missing data as a footnote. Ukraine has also developed



a new methodology for counting military emissions as they happen. As you would, when much of your country's precious soils and ecosystems are continuously shelled, left toxic and lethally seeded with landmines. Using this new methodology, researchers estimated that the total emissions of only the first seven months of Russia's invasion totalled 100 MTCO₂e (Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent). This equals the total emissions of The Netherlands for the same period. Despite hidden or fuzzy data, it is clear that the world's militaries now produce at least 5.5% of global emissions. If the world's militaries were a country, this would mean they have the fourth largest national carbon footprint in the world – greater than that of Russia! This now links to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international treaty stemming from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Its decision-making body is the Conference of the 197 Parties (COP). It is responsible for keeping international efforts to address climate change on track. Its most recent annual meeting was COP 27 in

Egypt in late 2022. COP 26 in Glasgow in 2021, with over 40,000 registered participants, saw the launch of The Military Emissions Gap Project, an initiative of the Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS) with Leicester and Durham Universities. In Egypt last year, The Military Emissions Gap Project became a 'formal side event' for the first time. A second event 'No War, No Warming: Demilitarization and Climate Justice' included a stall in the Blue Zone of the Conference, broadening the focus of these urgent conversations. At COP28 in Dubai this December it is certain that these conversations will be louder and more urgent. Australia, supported by the Pacific Islands Forum, has now announced its bid to host COP 31 in 2026, for the first time. The next three years provide an excellent opportunity to hold Australian politicians accountable for better emissions targets. And an opportunity to shine a much-needed light on Australia's military emissions along with our significant involvement in the arms manufacturing and trading. Nuclear submarines are but the tip of the iceberg.

ANZAC DAY GRATITUDE

by Paul Le Bars

Now that I've passed on my obligations for the ANZAC Day/ Remembrance Day & Memorial Gardens, I want to take this opportunity to thank the community, Lismore Sub-Branch RSL, Lismore City Council Parks & Gardens, DVA, Nimbin Bowling Club and Local Small Businesses for their support of the Nimbin District Memorial ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day Services and on-going maintenance of the surrounding gardens over the years. I began my involvement with the organising of memorial services after the passing of my son Joshua (who drowned saving two lives) two days before ANZAC Day 2006 (after losing my eldest, Marcel in February 2002). In 2007 I was passed the baton and the Australian Flag by the previous organiser, the late Kevin Soward, and I have regarded this as a privilege and an honour to be of service to the community. Though my time in the Army was short (13 months), I had 'some limited notions' of procedure, given that my father (a Vietnam Veteran) and grandparents all had a military background, I really need to give huge thanks to those who have supported and assisted with tradition and protocols for the march services. Thanks to all of those who have attended and marched in the commemorations including our local schools, sporting and not-for-profit community organisations. The support has grown appreciably over the years, with the ANZAC Day Dawn Service being introduced for the first time on the centenary of the 1915 landings at Gallipoli. Originally intended to be a one-off, the service, it is now a well-attended event on the calendar. Special thanks to Rev Jim Gallagher and Rev Grant Andrews, Piper James Alexander, Bugler Petria, and all the flag bearers. Also the help I've received from Farren, Bob Dooley and brother Marc. I have now passed the baton for commemorations on to Matt Brumley and hope he receives as generous support as I have over the years. In 2008 the cracked marble nameplates on the Memorial were restored and the monument painted with anti-fungals. (It was covered in black mould and bird droppings.) In 2011 the installation of garden beds and



Neil, Paul and Mandie looking after the garden. Photo: Sue Stock

fence was done by the LCC Public Works. Both upgrades were funded through the DVA 'Saluting Their Service' Grants. Since starting these gardens I've had the support of donations from Bunnings, The Seedling House Lismore and Nimbin Building Supplies, as well as community and private donations of seedling and plants. Thanks to those who have helped tend the gardens over this time including Darvey, Letitia and especially Gai Reid who has helped from the start. Thanks to the Parkies and general community who have kept an eye over the gardens and kept vandals at bay. Many thanks to Neil, Mandie and co for taking over the future maintenance and upkeep of the memorial site. It is looking wonderful and full of colour. Early in 2012 the Seat of Remembrance was installed, built by Adrian Williamson and funded through community donations and dedicated by then LCC Cr Simon Clough in March. Thanks to all who helped in the selling of commemorative poppies, badges and during this time. We have raised well over \$10,000 for local veterans and their families since 2007. Last but not least a big thanks have to go to Bob and Sue at the Nimbin GoodTimes for their support over these years. I am forever grateful. Personally it's been a journey of history, respect, inclusion and understanding, only made better with the generous and respectful support of this most wonderful community. Thank you. "Lest We Forget"

To bee or not to be

by Scott O’Keeffe, ecologist

Bees are part of the insect order, Hymenoptera, which includes wasps, ants, and sawflies.

There are about 16,000 known species of bees worldwide. Bees feed exclusively on nectar and pollen. Unsurprisingly then, they are found on all landmasses where flowering plants occur. Each needs the other – they are ecologically bound.

Most bee species are solitary; only about 10% are social species that live in colonies.

Australia has about 1600 species of bees (and counting), most are solitary species that do not form social colonies. Australian solitary bees include carpenter bees, resin bees, cuckoo bees and others.

You might be familiar with the local blue-banded bees that visit flowers in the bush as well as parks and gardens.

This article focuses on social bees because keeping native bees is now very popular. An increasing number of people have native beehives and the outbreak of destructive Varroa mites in honeybees may have important implications for native bees and their keepers.

Australian plants and native bees have coevolved over eons such that native bees are essential components of ecosystems. Hundreds of species of quintessential Australian plants that structure our ecosystems depend upon complex relationships with native bees.

Three of the largest plant families are especially dependent upon native

bees: *Myrtaceae* (myrtles including paperbarks, eucalypts, callistemons, lily-pillies, etc.), *Proteaceae* (banksias, grevilleas and others), and *Fabaceae* (acacias and thousands of other legumes).

The loss of native bees could result in a cascade of impacts that can affect more than just the immediate recipients of bee pollination services. Ecosystems that cover large parts of Australia might be adversely affected. This is what happens when ‘keystone species’ in ecosystems are disrupted.

Only eleven species in two genera of Australian bees, are social species. These are *Tetragonula*, that are found only in warmer parts of Australia and prefer humid coastal areas, and *Austrophlebia*, which are found in drier inland areas.

Although honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) are not native to Australia, they are a keystone species in Australian agricultural ecosystems. However, they have impacts on native plants and ecosystems, not all of which are fully understood. The severity of any impacts probably depends upon local circumstances, but honeybees certainly disrupt the natural pollination of many native plant species.

Since they were imported to Australia in 1822, the number of honeybee hives has increased exponentially. Australia now has more than 530,000 commercially operated hives and at least 35,000 ‘hobby hives’. These support 65% of Australian agricultural production.

Honeybees from both constructed hives and feral colonies can also aggressively compete with native

bees for resources such as flowers and tree hollows. The hollows might otherwise be occupied by native social bees or other fauna such as possums, gliders, and cavity nesting birds. With older trees and tree hollows becoming scarce, the later impact is serious.

There is also a biosecurity crisis affecting honeybees that could seriously reduce their numbers, disrupt food production and affect native bees.

Until recently, Australia was the only continent unaffected by the varroa mite, which can obliterate entire honeybee hives. So serious is this pest, that its detection requires the destruction of affected hives in areas where there are outbreaks. Fortunately, native bees seem to be unaffected by varroa mites.

Intensive surveillance of honeybee hives is needed to contain outbreaks. This is practical with managed hives, but it is much harder to detect and destroy reservoirs of the mites in feral honeybee colonies scattered across the landscape.

There are currently varroa mite outbreaks in the Sydney, Newcastle, Coffs Harbour and Narrabri regions. Biosecurity authorities are trying to contain and eliminate the outbreak. This involves surveillance of managed and ‘sentinel’ hives.

Honeybee hives in areas under surveillance cannot be moved and hives outside these areas can only be moved with permits. Infested hives are destroyed and a scheme exists to compensate for loss.

Bait stations containing an attractant and the insecticide Fipronil are being used to eliminate



The common Australian social bee, *Tetragonula*. Photo: Jean and Fred Hort

feral honeybee colonies. Bait stations are designed to exclude native insects and other fauna, and monitored.

There is no guarantee that the varroa mite program will succeed. As a rule, feral animal eradication programs are rarely completely successful. It is likely that this will be a costly, ongoing management program, as it is in other countries where the varroa mite is now endemic.

Honeybees have other problems too: the exotic small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) is another serious predator of honeybees. Native social bees do not seem to be adversely affected by this exotic pest either, and are known to remove or kill these beetles when they threaten hives. Some native bee species can entomb the pests in cerumen.

Whether by mites or baiting, the elimination of feral honeybee hives could significantly benefit native bees and other fauna.

As well as servicing native plants, social and solitary native bees are capable pollinators of exotic plants, including various food crops such as mangos, macadamias, watermelons, and lychees. Blue-banded bees are particularly effective, and will enter

greenhouses to pollinate vegetables, especially tomatoes.

Social native bees are such effective crop pollinators that commercial pollination services for orchards and field crops using *Tetragonula* bees have already sprung up.

Whether you are growing food for yourself or revegetating the landscape with native plants, incorporating some native bee hives or encouraging their natural development will improve your results. If you use honey, you will potentially have a source of a unique product.

As much as native bee apiculture is a pleasant pastime, it may soon also be an economic necessity. The current biosecurity crisis demonstrates how much human and natural ecosystems are intertwined.

The biosecurity crisis with honeybees has focused my attention on my native hives, and when spring arrives, I will be watching carefully to see how active they are in my new vegetable patches.

If you keep or encourage any species of bee, the current situation with the varroa mite program should be of interest. See <https://tinyurl/vmbee> to stay informed.

The importance of flying foxes

Did you know that Australia’s flying-foxes (native bats) are incredible pollen and seed spreaders who can travel 100km in one night?

And, that without these bats spreading pollen and seeds we would face a future with no native forests and no habitat for all the animals that live in them, including koalas?

These are some of the Bat Facts rolling out in coming months as part of Byron Shire Council’s new ‘No Bat No Me’ project, made possible thanks to funding from WIRES National Grants Program.

As part of the program, Byron Shire Council’s Biodiversity Project Officer, Claudia Caliarì, is visiting classrooms and streets across the Byron Shire to set the record straight.

“I’ll be out talking to schools, markets and community groups with the aim of building our collective



Flying foxes spread pollen. Photo: Kate Friebe

awareness of the essential role of Australian flying-foxes in protecting our precious ecosystems and biodiversity,” Claudia Caliarì said.

“I also invite everyone to participate in this project by answering some questions on Council’s website to help us understand our community perceptions and what you know about flying-foxes,” she said.

Ms Caliarì acknowledges

that bats can be noisy and smelly, but “the reality is that we need to protect, not persecute, our hard-working flying-foxes because it is their role to safeguard our forests and protect all our native animals,” she said.

The ‘No Bat No Me’ project examines a future without bats with habitat clearing being the number one threat for bat species, and, as we face the challenges of climate change,

this also includes us.

“Understanding the facts about bats, their role, why they live so close to our urban centres, and how we need to do more to live in harmony with them is part of the information I am taking out to Byron Shire schools, markets and the streets,” she said.

Schools and community groups can contact Council education officers: ccaliari@byron.nsw.gov.au to organise a presentation. Some spaces are still left for July.

Local plant nurseries are also invited to get involved with the project and should get in contact with Claudia. Nurseries can play a huge role in wildlife protection, helping people learn what plants to grow to feed our native animals.

For more information go to Council’s website: www.byron.nsw.gov.au/batfacts

Fill in the survey at: www.byron.nsw.gov.au/batfacts

Plant of the month



Cannabis sp.

The cannabis plant has, since antiquity, had a myriad of uses – for strong fibre, nutritious food, effective medicine, psychoactive recreation and rituals – throughout many cultures including the West until the mid-20th century.

As prohibition has been gradually relaxed this century, there has been productive research and development into cross-breeding and cloning of useful strains, and the manufacture of medicines, balms and industrial products such as building materials and fossil-free plastics.

All parts of the cannabis plant can be used to enhance our lives: seeds, stalks, leaves and flower heads.

Yet still in most states of Australia it is an offence to possess any part of the plant without authorisation, high THC or not. Perhaps we may see the seeds of change.



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Happy and safe MardiGrass and Aquarius50



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The paradox of prohibition

Not content to merely stand with her congregation outside drinking establishments praying for the victims of the demon drink, Carrie Nation from Kentucky (pictured), stormed over 30 taverns throughout the United States with her hatchet, smashing every bottle, mirror or bar stool she could get her blade on.



Revenge of the Loon

by Laurie Axtens

Granny Hatchet as she became known, was easily the most notorious ‘Temperance’ campaigner that spawned the 14-year long alcohol prohibition experiment in the States.

Indeed, the women’s movement played an instrumental part in both the prohibition and anti-prohibition movements; bookending that period of repression.

Women effectively campaigned about the violence inflicted on women by their drunkard male partners and then just as effectively argued that prohibition had promoted violent stand-over merchants into super wealthy crime bosses; whose horrific violence had come to fill the streets of Chicago with Tommy gun fire.

Sadly for America and all of us within that country’s sphere of influence, the time of the 18th Amendment, outlawing the manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors, had done its damage. It had formed rock-solid connections between crime gangs and the parties of government; while simultaneously empowering governments instrumentalities to surveil and imprison – notably racial minorities – at ever-increasing rates.

It’s tragic paradox: their campaign to eliminate alcohol-fuelled violence had instead installed a new class of mega-wealthy, mega-violent black marketeers and bank-rolled a culture of violence and injustice.

It’s a salient lesson, the more we crush our darkness the stronger it becomes. We need to illuminate these areas of life, not drive them underground.

Just like bacon, salted fish and sugar-laden soft drinks, alcohol is a carcinogen, but banning or placing preposterously large taxation on these items will only build a black market business model and corrupt our society.

Education and individual choice is the only way ahead and by demanding for honesty in its advertising. We have successfully reduced the harm of smoking by restricting and placing warnings on its advertisement and by taxing proportionately to its harm; this is a working model.

But just like smoking, alcohol and meat are part of human culture; a culture that stretches back into prehistory. Thinking we will just abandon them with a flick of a switch or a single revelatory thought is extremely dangerous nonsense.



A moment

by S Sorrensen

My mother is dying. She recognises me when I visit; her eyes light up as I approach the bed to which she has been confined for three months. In these moments she is beautiful, despite the fear that haunts those eyes, despite the blue-bruised skin that tears when a bandage is removed, despite a frailty that cannot tolerate the weight of a blanket, so her blanket is draped above her over metal arches.

We always kiss – three times on the lips – in greeting. By the third kiss, her eyes moisten and her little body jerks with sobs.

The sun is rising behind a horizon-squatting cloud haloed red and gold. The ocean reaches out to me, cold to the touch, clutching at my ankles, holding on for a moment and then letting go, my feet sinking a little further into the sand.

My mother cannot hear me, despite the new hearing aids, so I don’t speak. When she says ‘I love you,’ I mouth ‘I love you’ back to her. It’s all we have now.



A white-bellied sea eagle rides the southerly, its wings barely moving. A seagull squawks. Another noise rides the wind: a 4WD is speeding up the beach towards me.

She does love me, my mother. The love has grown so strong it transcends the many differences we are, transcends the history of argument and separation. Love is all that’s left of her, except for the fear.

Her personality has dissolved in the turbulence of her end times. Her history is now just fragments of memory defiantly clinging to her, echoing the tenacity that was a hallmark of her way in life. Now, there is only love holding its arms out to me. She is cold to the touch, but her embrace is warm.

I hate cars on the beach. What? Not enough roads? Why do these people think the way to enjoy the beach is to race over it in noisy, pippi-crushing machines? Take off your bloody shoes and wriggle your toes into the sand, man. Feel the ocean tug at your legs, listen to the wind and bird chatter. The beach, like you, is not forever. Don’t you get it? Don’t you feel it?

I am enveloped by her love. It fills the room like primordial plasma. I am swimming in it. Almost drowning. But love creates love. And I love her back. More than ever, perhaps, because she is disappearing, bit by bit, and will be gone. We both know it.

The sun peeks above the

cloud, extending exploratory arms of light into a blueing sky. A rainbow arcs down to the dune. The 4WD is quite near now, its motor splitting the dawn symphony like a sonic axe. Suddenly, the 4WD veers to its left, churning through the sand and crabs, and bouncing over the dune where native grasses tussle the imported bitou. The engine noise mutes quickly. Soon, the only trace is a whiff of diesel and deep wounds to the dune. The sun, free from its cloud, touches my face, holds me, draws me to it.

My mother is dying. Knowing this, she and I, our love is more sad, more pure, more intense. I hold her hand and stroke the thin skin of her wrist. Knowing that life is transient elevates love and connects us all in our ephemerality.

Everyday, species are disappearing, forests are burning, the great ice sheets are melting, the ocean becomes barren. Life is ebbing on this planet, bit by bit. She is blue-bruised and failing, but this morning she is beautiful, welcoming me with her salty kisses and holding me in her warm embrace.

Thread

by Neil Plim, Blue Knob Writers Group

A well-known narcissistic, egocentric, autocratic political leader, remonstrated his displeasure in the indictment of 34 felony accounts by Manhattan Grand Jury and the district attorney’s office.

After addressing the faithful rusted on make America great again devotees, their egotistical self-loving leader espoused vehemently his pathway to greatness. Which was underpinned by his absolute unquestionable integrity and superiority.

The repetitious slogan echoed through the halls of the Florida mansion.

There is not a thread of evidence, of paying \$130,000 hush money for sexual exploits, that could undermine my credibility. (Fake news)

There is not a thread of evidence, in falsifying 34 business documents. (Fake news)

There is not a thread of evidence, that I unlawfully tried to overturn the 2020 election defeat in the state of Georgia. (Fake news)

There is not a thread of evidence, of any involvement in the White House riotous invasion on 6th Jan 2021, nor the cover up to overturn the 2020 election results. (Fake news)

There is not a thread of evidence, that I removed classified documents after leaving office. (Fake news)

There is not a thread of evidence, of evoking the unrest and obstructing official proceedings, or conspiracy to defraud the United States. (Fake news)

Trust and believe in me my dedicated devotees, we will make America great again. I will guarantee you all, they won’t TRUMP me.



by Vanessa Pelly

Websters Creek Catchment Landcare and Nimbin Environment Centre are hosting a community information and tree planting day at Nimbin on 15th May.

The Local Land Services have funded riparian restoration works for Calico creek just north of Nimbin.

There was significant erosion and creek bank damage from the February 2022 floods and the Landcare group and local contractors have been doing bush regeneration and restoration.

If you are keen to be involved in tree planting and to learn about flood mitigation works along our waterways, this is an opportunity to learn from qualified bush

regenerators.

There will be opportunities to ask questions and observe regeneration works and erosion control at a site a few kilometres from Nimbin village.

The community is encouraged to come along and get your hands dirty, walk the creek, plant a few trees, network with like-minded people, learn plant and weed identification and partake in a free morning tea.

When: Monday 15th May, 9am
Where: 163 Blue Knob Road.

Second gate before the lights on Nardi straight (there will be a red flag at the gate).

Bring: a hat, water, good footwear, gloves.

Register your interest: Vanessapelly@westnet.com.au

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What is your Aquarius-inspired story?

by Rene Norwee

Many of us have a story of how the original 1973 Aquarius festival and its lasting legacy has moved us, affected us, or influenced us.

The 50th anniversary of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival welcomes people to come together, contribute and celebrate the spirit of Aquarius. As part of this celebration we invite people to come and share their stories of how the original festival, and the changes it sparked, changed or influenced their lives.

Storytelling is a uniquely human trait. It exists across cultures and time, bringing people together and helping them make sense of the world. We are the stories we tell ourselves, and communities are built and strengthened by the stories we share.

So, to pay tribute to the enduring spirit of Aquarius, and the people and events that left their mark on the Rainbow Region, Nimbin Aquarius Festival and Nimbin Storytellers are hosting an oral storytelling workshop and a storytelling event to bring the community together to hear and tell personal stories inspired by the Spirit of Aquarius.

Oral Storytelling / Life Story Writing Workshop

Tell your stories well – a practical three-hour workshop in creative non-fiction



Graeme Gibson

Whether you have a specific story in mind, or if you are coming with a blank slate, this workshop is for anyone who has ever wanted to learn how to tell their stories well.

This workshop has a focus on oral storytelling but will also support all areas of interest, including memoir, family history, personal essay, travel diary, local history and feature article.

A range of exercises and discussions progressively build upon each other. Getting started can be the hardest part but it doesn't have to be, especially when the right side of the brain comes into play.

The writer's voice, finding an opening hook and sensory language get attention. Turning facts into a compelling story is at the heart of the workshop which explores the writer's maxim: 'Show, Don't Tell'.

Workshop participants are encouraged to tell an Aquarius inspired story at the storytelling event, although it is not a prerequisite for doing the workshop and we welcome everyone who is interested to join in.

Workshop presenter, Graeme Gibson draws on his background in adult learning, and has presented writing workshops since 2007. He has contributed to a number of short story collections and had essays and feature articles published.

He has self-published 'Beyond Fear and Loathing: Local politics at work,' and a memoir, 'In Life There is Luck: A memoir of an ordinary life with reflections on memoir writing.' The memoir is supported by 'A Pocket Guide to Memoir Writing.'

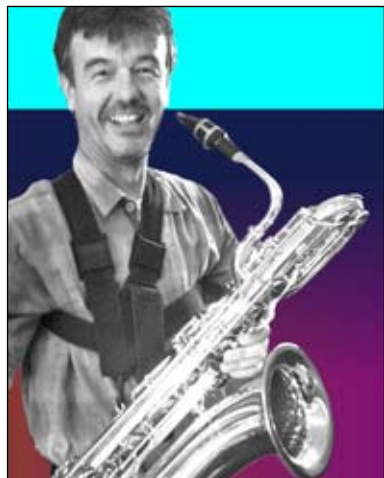
When: Tuesday, 16th May, 10am-1pm
Where: The Bowlo, 25 Sibley Street, Nimbin, \$15 per person

Bring: Writing materials and lunch.
Morning tea provided. Email: nimbinstorytellers@gmail.com to book.

Aquarius Storytelling Event

Come along for an enjoyable evening of personal true stories inspired by the Spirit of Aquarius. Friday, 19th May, 5.30-7.30pm, at the Bowlo, 25 Sibley Street, Nimbin, free entry.

Email: nimbinstorytellers@gmail.com if you'd like to tell your Spirit of Aquarius story.



HOT JAZZ IN LISMORE

Lismore Jazz Club will present the progressive jazz five-piece, Devil's Advocate as their feature band for May.

The band consists of well-known local players: Kyle Watson, piano; Beat Gisler, bass; Pete Wilkins, drums; Azo Bell, guitar and Julius Hofstetter (pictured left), saxophones.

They will be supported by the emerging youth band Plywood, (pictured, right) who are very accomplished.

The gig is on Sunday 7th May, 2-5pm at Lismore City Bowls Club, off Molesworth Street. Entry is \$15 non-members, \$10 members. Membership is \$20 pa.



Don't miss Hungry Ghosts

by Jenny Dowell

With live theatre still on its knees in Lismore following last year's devastating flood, Lismore Theatre Company's intimate Rochdale Theatre remains the only venue in Lismore that has continued to stage live productions.

Hungry Ghosts opened on 28th April as the first show of 2023 to full houses and will hold its final three shows on the weekend 5th-7th May.

This original play by local, James May is directed by Junia Wulf in her first stage production. Junia has a background in film production but appeared on stage in LTC's *Neighbourhood Watch* at the Rochdale Theatre in 2021.

Hungry Ghosts is set in Sydney in 2000 where rents were rising and those on the fringe were not experiencing the glow of the coming Olympics.

The four main characters in the show are women with past experiences of loss,



Cast and crew photo by Richard Johnson

abuse and family alienation. They are damaged souls who turn to drugs and crime while yearning for human connection.

The name of the play, *Hungry Ghosts* references the Buddhist, Tibetan and traditional Chinese religions that believe after death, souls driven by intense and destructive deeds or emotions

are living in limbo until reincarnation.

Actors with speaking roles in the show are Elyse Dallinger (Shayne) Krystle Winter (Lily), Sarah Jane Loxton (Crazy Horse), Crystal Amber Bok (Aunt Ruby), John McPherson (Lester) and Kylie Fuad (Max).

The performances this weekend are Friday 5th May

and Saturday 6th May at 7.30pm and the final show is on Sunday 7th May at 2pm.

The play is suitable for adults and mature teens aged 16+. It features coarse language, adult themes and simulated violence and drug use.

Bookings can be made at: www.trybooking.com/CGBBS (\$25/\$20)

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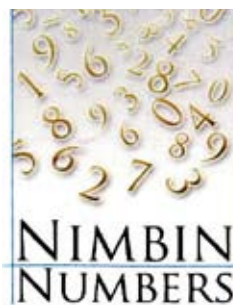
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Club opening hours:
Wed-Sat 2.30pm to close, Sun 8.30am to 4pm
Sibley's Bistro open Wed-Sat 5 to 8pm, 6689-1473

- Open Mic night, Wednesday 10th May, 6pm
- Trivia night, Saturday 20th May, 6pm
- Social Bowls, Sundays 10am, all welcome