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Rainbow Walk questions answered

by Diana Roberts

The concept for walking paths around Nimbin was originally envisaged as a three-stage project in 2007. Stage one connected Cullen Street to Alternative Way and Cecil Street. The exact route for this stage was defined in 2013, after extensive consultations with the community and affected private landholders.

In 2018, due to concerns raised by landowners who purchased after 2013, the route was redrawn to follow a right of footway dedicated to Council.

In 2020, when grant funding became a possibility, Council requested that the community map out a small section of stage two, running along the drainage gully servicing the Aquarius village subdivision.

A recommended path was mapped out by Permaculture designer, Robyn Francis in consultation with Lismore Council and the landowner, and was subsequently incorporated into Stage One.

The Nimbin Community Centre's subsequent purchase of 11a Alternative Way, now known as Aquarius Park, opened up options to further refine the route.

Following protracted and unsuccessful negotiations with landowners to the east of Cullen Street, the section from the School of Arts to the Headers' field was



Diana Roberts cuts the ribbon to open the walking track

withdrawn from the project.

The funds available for this section were redirected to Aquarius Park, allowing for a second creek crossing and connecting the park itself with Peace Park and the adjoining recreational precinct.

In December 2023 a well-attended community picnic day was held. People were guided along the proposed route and their ideas were sent to the project manager for consideration.

The walk was never going to be stair-free, but extensive thought and planning went into making the walk through Aquarius Park wheelchair and stroller friendly and compliant with Australian Standards for

access and disability.

Gradients in this regard are important, providing the design team with challenges and requiring the removal of some trees.

Aquarius Park, which ends at the big dam is in community ownership, and its acquisition ensures 60% of the Rainbow Walk is wheelchair friendly. There is also a requirement to provide two disability car parks to serve the new toilet block and Aquarius Park.

The section beyond the dam will be owned and managed by Lismore Council. To make this section disability friendly was both beyond the available funding and environmentally

undesirable.

It would have required lengths of elevated walkways, given the topography, and the removal of extensive regeneration work. These things only become clear once comprehensive designs are worked up and costed.

A next stage will see the walk connect with the centre of the village and to the extension of Alternative Way when it is brought through to Cecil Street. The design work for this has been completed.

Further stages, as envisaged in the original concept plan, would see the walk extended up to High Street, out to the Nimbin Rocks and back to the village.

New responsibilities for local member



The Governor of NSW, Margaret Beazley AC KC, and the Honourable Janelle Saffin MP at the ministerial swearing-in ceremony at Government House.

In March, Premier Chris Minns announced the appointment of Lismore MP Janelle Saffin to the NSW Cabinet as the Minister for Recovery, the Minister for Small Business, and the Minister for the North Coast.

"Be assured that first and foremost, I will always be the Member for the Lismore electorate and will always advocate strongly for the Northern Rivers and Northern Tablelands," Ms Saffin said.

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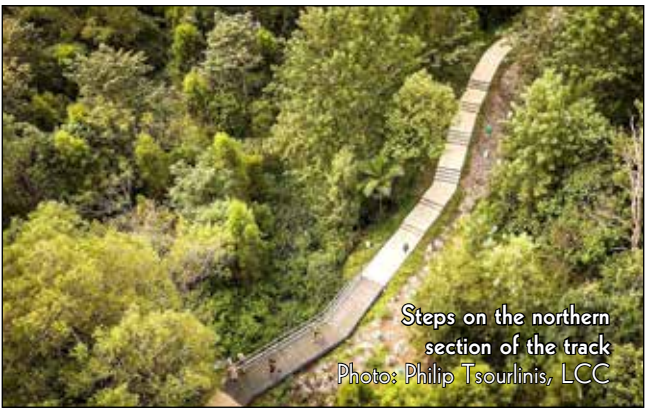
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Rainbow Walking Track opening in pictures



Interpretative signage
Photos: Sue Stock



Steps on the northern section of the track
Photo: Philip Tsourlinis, LCC



New plantings by the Landcare group



Walk planner Lois Kelly flanked by Gillian Kinnivan (L) and Teresa Biscoe (R)



Sculptor Donato Rosella and designer Ross Wallace

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Thank you for being prepared

by Janelle Saffin MP

Last month, when our region faced the threat of Cyclone Alfred looming off the coast, the preparedness at every level was incredible.

From the grassroots members of the community right through to our State and Federal leaders, elected local MPs and mayors, councils and their workers, there was a big focus on being ready and staying safe.

Firstly, I thank the community. People were prepared. Homes were prepped for high winds and potential flooding, and people had battery radios and torches. Some had generators ready.

Two-way radio networks were in place, and people listened to the warnings and evacuation orders. That was a tough call, but they listened and acted.

Businesses moved their stock and equipment. In packing up and unpacking, they bore the cost of lost days of business, and I thank them. I thank the truck drivers who worked hard to get supplies into towns with challenging weather. I also thank John Robertson and Foodbank, which sent thousands of packages.

The State Emergency Service was magnificent. I commend SES



Commissioner Michael Wassing and the local team, and acting Chief Superintendent Stuart Fisher, who flew in from Sydney to take the lead.

Premier Chris Minns and Emergency Services Minister Jihad Dib flew up on Wednesday 5th March, stayed on through the weekend and were hands-on in the preparation.

This was greatly appreciated by the community. People knew they were not alone facing this threat.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese came up. State and Federal ministers and shadow ministers for emergency services were on-site, including Senator Tony Sheldon, the Federal Special Envoy for Disaster Recovery.

I received regular briefings and updates from the SES, police and other combat agencies. My message to the community was to listen to their advice and be

prepared for a rare and unpredictable weather event in our region.

These briefings were shared with State and Federal MPs and local mayors across northern NSW and the North Coast who kept their local communities informed.

There are so many to thank. I thank the RFS, Fire and Rescue NSW, Marine Rescue NSW, VRA Rescue NSW, Surf Life Saving, paramedics and the Army.

I thank Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Healy and the 41st Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment, which is headquartered in Lismore, and I also recognise the support of Brigadier Jodie Lording, Commander of the 5th Brigade, Australian Army, who arrived with about 500 soldiers.

And thank you to all for the many acts of kindness such as food drops, people taking in friends and family, looking after pets, neighbours checking on and helping neighbours and all the other ways people looked after each other.

There will be lessons learned from this event, as there always are from disasters. But everyone commented that we have not seen this level of preparedness before.

So we now have a high bar to meet when we have other weather events.

I commend everyone's efforts.

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Busy and productive month at Aquarius Archives

by Franca Wolfe, Tess Schofield and Greg Bork

The Aquarius Archives Centre are delighted with generous donations of new blackout blinds for our headquarters, and a large monitor to display audiovisual collections at HQ and during exhibitions. Last month's shout out for a chest freezer is also bearing fruit. A big thank you for these very useful resources.

Our next big task is preparing a secure, light- and climate-controlled, dust-free storage space, as best we can.

We'll need decent lockable metal filing cabinets, large metal drawers suitable for storing posters flat such as architect plan or map drawers, and rack n stack (dexion) shelving. Any leads or tips are appreciated.

On 27th March we had a fantastic turn-out of 15 keen community members to our inaugural event, an 'archiving basics' workshop.

Tweed Regional Museum curator Erika Taylor and conservator Nadia McDougal shared their extraordinary, specialised expertise in the three-hour session, demonstrating the fundamentals of conservation, preservation and storage of archival materials, along with some tips about curation.

Erika made the point that while running workshops is usually not in the wheelhouse of her or Nadia, they recognise that the Aquarius Archives are of both national



and international significance.

Erika said that everyday items become precious museum objects to be treated with respect when they come into our care at the Aquarius Archives Centre.

Using examples including posters, papers and textiles, we learned how best to look after various objects and materials. Mitigating damage from mould, silverfish, cockroaches and rodents is of particular concern in our region.

We now have 15 people trained up with skills to handle and organise their own collections and others, while

also building the Aquarius Archives Centre's capacity to manage collections together.

Thank you to Erika, Nadia and everyone who attended. Practical archiving information resources provided at the workshop are now on our website at: aquariusarchives.org.au/collection/care

Coinciding with the Nimbin Art Fair from the 12th to the 27th of April, the Aquarius Archives Centre will be presenting our inaugural exhibition in the foyer of the Nimbin School of Arts Hall.

In a visitor comment book,

you will be invited to share your thoughts and register your expression of interest to later record your oral history.

The exhibition will be open daily from 10am to 4pm.

Planning and writing up necessary documents for a well-run archive continues. Our latest draft is our vision, values and actions document which you can find at: aquariusarchives.org.au/about/values

This document is about aligning our aims and objectives with the Aquarius and Nimbin community, so your feedback is welcome. We're here to carry relational values that broke free from the dominant paradigm since 1973 into a brighter future with you.

Aquarius Archives Centre is located at 81 Cullen Street in the Nimbin Community Centre. Please visit us on Wednesdays, 11am to 3pm.

Check our homepage at: aquariusarchives.org.au to confirm our opening hours for the subsequent Wednesday, subject to volunteer capacity.

The Aquarius Archive Working Group meets every fortnight to discuss our aims, objectives and progress. We look forward to caring for and sharing stories with you soon, on the centre's adventure of connectivity with the community.

The Aquarius Archives Centre gratefully acknowledges assistance from the Northern Rivers Community Foundation.

Old Aquarius film surfaces

by Michael Brooke

After 50 years, a never-seen-before video of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival has surfaced.

The video, filmed by Don Durrant of Afterlee, is eight and a half minutes long. It features mainly people dancing with little or nothing on. Don shot it on super 8 film, and it is silent.

After a few decades the film was converted to VHS tape, and another decade later it was converted to digital. With each conversion there was some loss of quality. It would be good if someone out there can digitise the



original super 8 film for a clearer copy.

Don said: "The Aquarius Festival changed my whole outlook on life. When I walked past the pub there was loud yelling and swearing but on the street

there were hundreds, thousands of visitors, aquarians smiling, laughing, just happy with being alive. Everyone friendly, just wanting happiness and enjoying each other's like-minded company.

"Of particular interest to me was the fellow who used to rope walk across the main street (Phillipe Petit), and the communal toilet which consisted of a large circle of hessian about five feet high with toilet seats spaced evenly around it on the inside."

If you were there, you might see your young self, happy and free. Check it out at: <https://youtu.be/yDrPgM8z3wo> It is called 'Scenes of the Original Aquarius Festival'.

Benny sculptures available

Benny Zable has been working on a life-size sculpture of his well-known protesting performance character at a foundry in Melbourne.

A number of 20cm desktop versions have been made, which will be sold to raise finance for making the life-size sculptures, to be installed at specific sites here and overseas.

The estimated price for each statuette is around \$500. Each one sold will be numbered and signed by Benny.

Contact Cameron McIndoe at the Statue Fundere Foundry: info@funderestudios.com.au

May all beings live in peace and harmony.



Book review
by Benny Zable

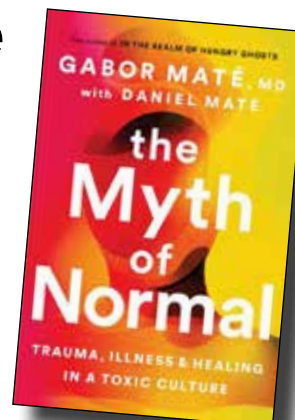
The Myth of Normal by Gabor and Daniel Maté is a book on illness, health and

healing in a toxic culture.

In early February I went along to a talk by Gabor Maté at the Wheeler Centre behind the Melbourne State Library. I came away with his book, *The Myth of Normal*.

Mental illness is chronic, and Dr Gabor Maté connects the dots between our personal suffering and the relentless pressures of modern life – showing that ill health is a natural reflection of our disconnection from our true selves.

Drawing on four decades of clinical experience and stories of people transforming their bodies and minds, Dr Maté offers a



hopeful pathway to healing.

This book has enlightened me to problems in my personal life. It has given me a roadmap forward.

I highly recommend you either get or borrow this book, or purchase an e-book version.

After 52 years, what do we need now?

by Jeni Kendell
and Megan James

The Aquarius Foundation and friends have decided to hold an anniversary event each year that honours and celebrates the radical spirit created at the 1973 Aquarius Festival.

The Aquarius Festival had the slogan 'You are the Festival', where people shared their skills, building domes and yurts, making food, providing health care, sharing music and dance and starting an inspired on-going community.

So much change flowed from the Festival – the town of Nimbin was "recycled" after going through real rural hardship; young people returned and wanted to share land. A group of young people calling themselves the 'Nimbin Karavan' toured Sydney and Melbourne in a bus spreading the word about buying shares in a 200-acre ex-dairy farm at Tuntabla Falls.

Shares were \$200 each and soon \$100,000 was raised to buy the land and Tuntabla Falls Co-ordination Co-operative was born as an experimental model of affordable housing, shared land ownership and sustainable community development.

In the 1980s, the PanCommunity collective was formed from members of the many different land sharing communities in the region that had been developed. PanCom worked to challenge the State and Local Govt legislation



around housing, and in 1983 the concept of Multiple Occupancies was enshrined in law.

Fifty years later the Tuntabla Falls co-op continues to thrive. Dharmananda has been successfully going for 52 years and the Multiple Occupancy creation continues to grow and change with all kinds of different communities which of course have their joys and problems, but continue to provide so many people with affordable homes, gardens and a deep experience of community living.

Because we have always been at the cutting edge of change in the Northern Rivers area, we decided that this first 'After 52 years what?' conversation day should be about community, land sharing, new housing solutions and what we have learned about living together.

Of course, now so much is different. Locally, we were rocked by the 2019 bushfire disasters and the 2022 flood and landslide catastrophe. Globally and nationally, we are all dealing with climate

change, unaffordable housing and homelessness, and there has been a consequent emergence of new and different models of housing and shared living.

Now is a great time to reclaim our power, to start working together and take action, using our shared experience of community living over the past 50 years and also taking on new relevant ideas.

'After 52 years what?' is to be a one-day 10am-5pm event held in the Nimbin Town Hall on Saturday 24th May. Everyone and anyone who is interested to gain and share ideas, knowledge and wisdom is welcome. There will be food also!

Carol Perry, co-founder of the 53-year old Dharmananda community at The Channon, has committed to attend, as have older and younger members of regional multiple occupancies. Carol is a dynamic mediator which is such a special quality and knowledge to solve problems that arise along the way.

We're also very fortunate

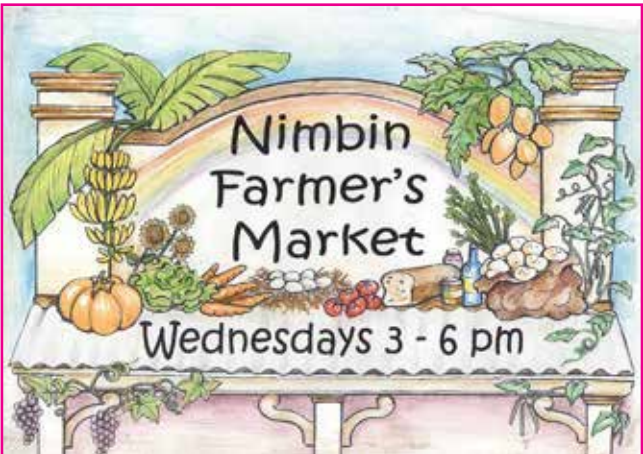
to have as a speaker Wendy Stone, Professor of Housing and Social Policy, Director of the AHURI Swinburne Research Centre which leads HHAUS, the Housing, Homelessness and Urban Studies Research Group at Swinburne. Wendy's current research is around generational and gendered housing precarity and well-being, innovative housing solutions and aspirations across generations, and citizen engagement through public policy.

A speaker has been invited from Common Equity NSW, whose mission is to lead and grow co-operative housing for the independence and well-being of people and communities. Also invited is Shane Sylvenspring from Planning Regenerative Communities which assists development of ecovillages, intentional communities and alternative land ownership models that foster regenerative practices. His skills are in town planning, project management, ecovillage design, community facilitation, community management and experience in DAs. Shane has successfully worked to establish the new community at Afterlee, west of Kyogle.

Come along and participate in what we expect to be a lively and stimulating discussion and please contact us if you are keen to be involved as a speaker: Meg 0429-009-594 or Jeni: paulandjeni144@gmail.com More details will be published in the May edition of NGT.



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Lismore housing opportunities wasted

As demolition orders continue to be issued for structurally-sound Big Scrub homes in Lismore, community advocates are calling for an urgent policy shift from the NSW Reconstruction Authority (NSW RA) to prioritise relocation over demolition – preserving valuable housing stock during both a climate crisis and housing emergency.

Perfectly sound homes face the wrecking ball

Recent engineering assessments confirm that many homes slated for demolition are structurally sound and suitable for relocation.

The Johns Lyne Group report for a Union Street property explicitly states: "The property is NOT structurally compromised..." and "...does NOT require demolition."

This finding was further confirmed by Matrix Thornton, Consulting Engineers who certified the property as "safe to be re-occupied."

Despite these professional assessments, the NSW RA continues to push forward with demolition plans rather than implementing relocation solutions.

"I was surprised to hear the house was structurally unsound, because prior assessments from the RA stated it was stable," said the previous homeowner of the Union Street property.

"I was reassured that the house would be made available for others to utilise, which was reassuring at the time. I

didn't want it to go to waste."

The demolition in August 2024 of 13 Wotherspoon Street – a historically significant building that once housed the Rainforest Information Centre – demonstrates NSW RA's concerning approach.

The property owner had been given a 12-month timeframe to relocate the building, yet the NSW RA demolished it two months before this deadline expired, without adequate notification.

Cost-effective housing solutions ignored

Community advocate, Chels Hood Withey, founder of House You, has calculated that relocating all 800 buyback properties would cost approximately \$80 million (at \$100,000 per home) – a fraction of the funds already allocated to the recovery program – while preserving much-needed housing stock for a region still struggling with accommodation shortages three years after the devastating 2022 floods.

"The NSW RA continues to waste resources on buybacks and demolitions when the focus should be on resilient measures for the 10,500 homes damaged in the 2022 flood," said Chels Hood Withey.

"In three years, how can the NSW RA only have granted resilient works for 16 houses when 6000 applied out of the thousands of affected homes in need of an immediate raise or retrofit?

"In the face of both climate change impacts and a homelessness epidemic, why demolish when we could relocate existing housing stock?" she said.

Urgent calls for policy change

Community members are calling for:

1. An immediate halt to demolitions of structurally sound homes
2. Prioritisation of relocation over demolition for all suitable buyback properties
3. Transparent consultation with homeowners and the broader community to relocation initiatives
4. Redirection of funds from demolition to relocation initiatives

"There is still a lot of work to do in Australia to address economic disparity and deliver secure housing to people who are least able to access it on their own," the previous Union Street homeowner added.

"There could be government subsidies for relocation, more safe land release etc, but the easiest option (demolition) seems to be the default, unless community applies pressure and raises expectations."

So far NSW RA has spent \$57 million on staff salaries, including 38 directors averaging \$250,000 pa salaries and 10 executive directors averaging \$350,000 pa.

Antoinette O'Brien, a Lismore flood-affected resident said, "It is unconscionable that high-wage staff sign eviction notices to vulnerable community members who have nowhere else to go."



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In your neighbourhood...

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre News

Well that's it March! We have all had enough of you and your pesky ways, and you are at risk of being cancelled...

Reasons to cancel March

1. Covid struck in March 2020;
2. The big floods and landslides happened in March 2022;
3. Ex-cyclone Alfred hit in March 2025;
4. Nimbin Women's Dinner couldn't happen in March 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2025 because of all of the above;
5. Putin was elected in March - 25 years ago; and
6. Scrapping March would mean a shorter period between the Christmas and Easter holidays and fewer working days in the year. Yippee!

Ex-cyclone impacts

Even though the impacts were less than originally predicted, many people across the region

were still affected by yet another flooding event and more damage to their homes and property.

Fortunately, the damage in Nimbin was minimal, but it was still an exhausting event for most of us and traumatic and triggering for many.

NNIC acknowledges the impacts, and anyone in our catchment area needing support can make an appointment with our Community Workers. It is clear that we need to add cyclones into our personal and community disaster planning and investigate addressing some gaps that emerged in this recent event. Watch this space.

In the meantime, follow the links below to find some guidance on tropical cyclone preparation from Qld and WA:

www.disaster.qld.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0034/339298/QFES-Tropical-Cyclone-Preparedness-Guide.pdf
www.dfes.wa.gov.au/hazard-information/cyclone/prepare

Community Calendar

A strategy under the Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan for many years, it has finally come to fruition! Community members can use the on-line Community Calendar to share Nimbin events and dates in a centralised place.

Community members, organisations and businesses are encouraged to add their own events to the Calendar so we can all be informed and enjoy what's on in Nimbin. This will also help organisers to plan events and avoid date clashes.

The Nimbin Village web app is 100% local, free to use and add your calendar events, business profile and marketplace listings, and can be accessed at: www.nimbinvillage.au on your phone or PC.

If you are interested in volunteering to help moderate the site, contact: nimbinvillage@gmail.com

The Community Calendar was made possible by funds from NNIC's Build CommUnity Project, funded by the Northern Rivers Community Foundation (NRCF), and developed by Nimbin locals and tech whizzes Wick and Rain.

Nimbin Women's Dinner

Thanks to everyone who supported and bought tix in this sold out event set for 6th March which we were forced to cancel on short notice due to the approaching cyclone.

But never fear, we will be back next year (subject to the behaviour of March - see above) with another great line-up and yummy food.

Raffle



Win a really good OZ RV-5 tent worth \$1699. Lots of

other good prizes up for grabs. Tix available at NNIC: \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

It will be drawn on 27th April in honour of the anniversary of the birthday of Coretta Scott King.

Raffle proceeds will go towards some of our Women's Dinner gig up-front costs.

Struggling with drugs?

Need a bit of help to get back on top of things? The Nimbin AOD Hub is located at NNIC five days a week, and offers a range of supports including to family members, with a harm reduction focus.

No referrals necessary. You can drop into/call NNIC on 6689-1692 and see Nicole on our front desk for an appointment. Or call/email the Buttery: phone: (02) 6687-1111 or email: intake@buttery.org.au

Advisory Group disbanded

It was disappointing to see the majority of councillors vote to disband (Crs Waters, Guise, Dalton-Earls, Knight-Smith against) this important conduit between Council and the community which has been so effective for the past 14 years.

Thanks to Gwen Trimble for attending the public forum and speaking against the motion to disband the NAG, and to Cr Virginia Waters for raising the point that the decision was being made prior to the Imagine Lismore Strategic Plan community consultations even being held.

The NAG has been replaced with a new Villages Advisory Group which will include two reps from Nimbin, meet in Council Chambers, and somehow try to cover the issues of all the villages in a two-hour meeting.

Appointments will be by councillors (rather than staff as it has been in the past) according to an expression of interest process yet to be determined.

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Early childhood nurse

Every Tuesday. Baby checks, weighs, post-natal support. For appointments, phone 6630-0400.

Women's health nurse services

Third Thursday of the month, next is 17th April. Phone 6688-1400 for an appointment.

Wound clinic

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8am. For self-referral, phone 6688-1433. Referrals also from Nimbin Hospital and GP clinic.

Drug and alcohol counselling services available

For an appointment, please contact 6620-7600. A trained professional will ask you a few confidential questions and will provide you with an appointment time.

Nurse practitioner clinic

Diabetes clinics: Third Thursday of the month, next is 17th April.

Community Registered Nurse

Monday to Friday, 8am-4.30pm. Assessments, wound care, referrals, advocacy, provision of palliative care in the home, medication support. Phone 6688-1433 - leave a message, will return call swiftly.

Nimbin NSP

Needle and syringe program open Monday to Thursday. Arrangements can be made to see a community Registered Nurse.

Health advice line

Phone 1800-022-222 if you have a health issue. 24-hour, seven days a week, free service. A Registered Nurse will assess whether you need to go to an Emergency Department.

Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month, 9.30am in the conference room of the Nimbin MPS. New members always welcome.



More than just a market...

by Gail Wallace

It's your precious Saturday morning. The sun is already beaming (or promising to).

You could fire up the coffee pot or boil the kettle, but an urge arises to step out and enjoy that sacred weekend ritual in more ambient surroundings. An infusion of fresh air. A change of scenery beckons.

Well the Blue Knob Cafe and Gallery awaits you...

Only five minutes from Nimbin, it offers a charming spot to 'meet the mates' while savouring a fresh, slow coffee with your cake, toastie or famous pancakes. All amid the vibrancy of our blue-hued mountain range.

Soak up the vibe. Take your own time. All day breakfasts are on the menu.

Here you can also browse through the Gallery's latest exhibition, wander around the unique artistic creations from the many talented artists of this region and check out the pottery studio.

But wait... there's more! On the first Saturday of the month, up springs a truly 'country' little Flea Market.

Out come an array of colourful stalls displaying bric-a-brac, books, pre-loved



clothes, jewellery, fresh produce, plants, trinkets and treasures, including locally made crafts (ideal gifts), chutneys, jams and health drinks made from native fruits.

On special offer are the talents of Virginia, our in-house jewellery repairer, as well as Sally's famous Rocky Road and endless odds, sods,

bibs and bobs. You never know what to expect...

All this is accompanied by the jolly, joyful strains of our locally-grown musicians, in plentiful supply.

So "pack up the babies and grab the old ladies" and join in the camaraderie and fun.

Can you think of a nicer way to spend your Saturday morning?

Country Women's Association Nimbin Branch

by Sage Bryant, publicity officer

Our International Women's Day gathering, held annually in March, was unfortunately cancelled this year due to cyclone Alfred's unexpected visit. However, we'll be back bigger and better next year!

Some of our members teamed up with CWA Lismore Evening Branch for the annual branch cookery and handicraft competition. Four of our members entered both sections, with all four member's entries making it through to group level.

If any of our items win at group level competition, they will then go to the state level competition.

Introducing Toasty Day

Due to the popularity of our \$5 lunches, we're introducing an extra Open Door Day on each Wednesday following the Sunday community markets.

We'll be serving \$5 toasties, along with our usual healthy drinks and sweet treats.

Meet our members

Each month we'll hear from one of our members about their CWA journey.

What is your name: Linda.

Where do you live: I've lived at the Channon for 38 years.

When did you join the Nimbin CWA: August 2024.

Why did you decide to join: I live alone and wanted to make new connections with women of my age.

I also wanted to express the compassion and empathy I was feeling towards others. Becoming a member represented a new way of being me.

I have jumped right into the community engagement activities offered by the wonderful, open-hearted women of the Nimbin branch.

What do you enjoy most about your membership: Being a member of this dynamic, accepting group within the



Nimbin village. I love serving lunches at open days, sorting out the donations of clothing and bric-a-brac for the op-shop, and handing out dry clothes and bedding for those in desperate need.

I trust that my compassion, empathy and friendliness can mean a lot to other people, and that I matter to the group.

What do you look forward to: Continue having fun with my companions. The Nimbin CWA has been a treasure trove of experiences, and I am a proud member.

Dates to remember

• **Open days:** 10am-3pm, 2nd and 3rd Wednesday of the month, pop in for lunch and a chat.

• **Op shop days:** 10am-3pm, 1st and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

• **Community market days:** 9.30am-3pm, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month.

• **Street stall:** 10am-12noon, most Saturdays, outside the newsagents.

• **Branch meeting:** 5pm, 2nd Monday of the month, new members are always welcome. Our location is Figtree House, 81 Cullen St, Nimbin (next to the firehouse via Sibley St)

For all general enquiries please phone: 0461-412-831 or email: secretary.cwa.nimbin@gmail.com

New owner. New name. New direction.

Loris Bianco (pictured) says exciting things are happening at Nimbin's only accounting practice, now renamed Northern Rivers Taxation and Business Services.

Formerly known as Nimbin Tax and Accounting, the new name reflects the practice's new direction under its new ownership, the wider region it now services and the wider range of services the practice now offers.

Loris is the new owner – a chartered accountant and registered tax agent with more than 25 years experience in accounting and finance across international, medium and small businesses. Upon taking ownership of the practice at the end of last year, Loris also undertook major renovations of the office, providing a more modern look and feel.

A small practice focusing on a personalised and professional level of service, Northern Rivers Taxation and Business Services can provide you, either as an individual or a small to medium sized business, with the following services:

- Tax returns for individuals, sole traders, companies, partnership and trusts;
- Bookkeeping and BAS preparation;
- Taxation compliance and advisory;
- Virtual CFO/Financial Controller services;



- Accounting software implementation;
- Cash flow projections and budgets;
- Process improvement analysis;
- Strategic planning services.

They offer flexible communication modes to suit your needs, including meetings via zoom, in person, in our office or at yours.

Northern Rivers Taxation and Business Services look forward to being your accounting practice of choice wherever you are across the Northern Rivers region.

Call their office on (02) 6689-0470 or email: enquiries@nrtbs.com.au to enquire how they can help you. More information is available on their website at: <http://katem112.sg-host.com>

Rainbow Power Company rallies for mental health

This April, the team at Rainbow Power Company (RPC) is making a bold statement – one mullet at a time.

As part of Black Dog Institute's 'Mullets for Mental Health', participating staff members are growing, styling and proudly sporting mullets to raise awareness and much-needed funds for mental health research and support.

But this isn't just about haircuts. For many on the RPC team, this cause is deeply personal. With a significant number of staff – including CEO Zach Rook – having been directly affected by suicide and mental health struggles, the team is determined to make a real impact.

To amplify their efforts, Rainbow Power Company has pledged to match every dollar raised up to a maximum amount of \$5000, doubling the funds going towards mental health initiatives.

A personal mission for the team

Mental health challenges are widespread, and suicide continues to be a devastating reality across Australia. Regional and



Adam Phibbs sporting his mullet for mental health

rural communities, like those around Nimbin and the Northern Rivers, often face even greater barriers to accessing mental health support.

"Mental health is something that has touched nearly every single person in our company – myself included. We've lost colleagues, friends and loved ones to suicide, and we know the impact it has on families and communities," says RPC CEO, Zach Rook.

"That's why we're not just growing mullets, we're putting our money where our mouths are. For every dollar our community donates, Rainbow Power Company will match it. We want to

see these funds go towards research and support that can save lives."

Aiming for the leaderboard

With their commitment to raising awareness and funds, RPC is aiming to make it onto the fundraising leaderboard for Mullets for Mental Health.

"We want to go big with this," said Zach. "If we can get our community behind us, we can make a real difference – and maybe even claim a top spot on the leaderboard while we're at it!"

Join the RPC team or donate today

Whether you want to grow your own mullet, donate or help spread the word, RPC is calling on the local community to get involved.

"Join our team, donate, or just cheer us on – it all helps. Mental health matters, and together we can show that no-one has to face it alone."

Every dollar counts – and thanks to RPC's donation match, it counts twice!

Donate or sign up here: mullettsformentalhealth.org.au/fundraisers/rainbowpowercompany

The fundraiser continues until 30th April.



NIMBIN'S SUSTAINABLE LIVING HUB

7 Sibley Street

Open 10.30am – 2pm Wed to Sat

Regular Workshops: Gold coin donation

• **Wed 9th, Spinners and weavers**

• **Sat 12th: Using a scythe** – Traditional grass/hay cutting without fuel. \$35, places limited, bookings essential.

• **Tues 15th: Knitting and crochet**

• **Wed 16th, 2pm: Nimbin Water Collective**

• **Sun 20th: Artisans market** – Join the celebration of Nimbin's creatives on the

Easter long weekend. Local handmade traditional crafts – spinning, knitting, weaving, felting, shoemaking and more.

• **Wed 23rd: 10.30am Crafters** – bring a project or start something new.

• **Community Tools Library:** Every Wed and Sat 10.30-2pm for home repairs, garden tools, food and craft equipment. Join at NNIC Mon-Fri.

• **Basketballs & pump available:** \$5 deposit.

April What's On!

For bookings, email: sibley@nnic.org.au or text 0475-135-764

NGT welcomes letters and other contributions received by email or post prior to deadline. Letters longer than 300 words may be edited for length, and articles for accuracy. Please include your full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Opinions expressed remain those of the author, and are not necessarily those of Nimbin GoodTimes.

Pine Street

The mayor's nonsense column (NGT March 25) can't go unmentioned.

My overwhelming sense is that he didn't read any of the opinion pieces in the February edition – if he did he needs some remedial work on his comprehension.

Indeed, he just took it as a chance to practise his deceitful argumentation techniques.

He uses so many of them: false equivalencies, cherry picking, appeal to pity, straw man, but most egregious is his attacks on individuals instead of staying on topic – this is called ad hominem.

This is particularly foul as he uses it to vilify the internationals itinerants living at Pine Street, who make up about half the occupants.

At no stage does he answer a single statement made by Aidan Ricketts or myself who are both neighbours of Pine Street, and in Aidan's case one of the tinny heroes of the '22 catastrophe.

As I pointed out constantly in my February column, the kids at Pine Street have been a great help to us.

Dangerous streets are safe, houses that had tree seedlings growing in their gutters are cleaned and being maintained, and finally we have some on-the-ground help with the recovery.

What I'd say to Steve is he needs to put up or shut up – we need lands to move our houses to and we needed it a year ago.

How about you just do your job and stop distracting and deflecting from your and the state government's



profound failure to deal with this on-going emergency.

Laurence Axtens
Lismore

More on Pine Street

It overjoys us all to see these beautiful people peacefully occupying my family home and caring for the land it stands on.

To know someone is enjoying the shade and fruit of the trees I planted with grandfather as a child is all I could have hoped for when he accepted a buy-back.

North Lismore has and always will be home to me, whether I physically live there or not. It is a melting pot of culture, in the best way possible, and has shaped who I am today. I wouldn't change that for anything.

My earliest and dearest memories are of my childhood on Lake and Pine Street. Some of those memories are of the floods.

The North Lismore community has always lived alongside the floods, whether it is "safe" or not. We know the realities better than anyone. The buy-backs weren't mandatory, people have chosen to stay and people have chosen to come. They have done so knowing the risks.

The squatters are being advised by longtime locals who have weathered many a flood, rescued countless people in 2022 and are able to predict the flood peaks

better than the BOM.

People have always lived here and will always continue to do so. It is our home and where else are we expected to go in the housing crisis? Is the threat of another great flood scary? Yes. Likely? Yes. But being one step off homelessness is just as daunting. As is the threat of demolition.

We are all living on stolen Aboriginal land. As a country, Australia is based on the premise of squatting. To not just object but to be violent and intimidating to a community peacefully occupying homes that the government has failed to relocate, when we are all essentially squatters, is absurd to me.

When they threaten to demolish our beautiful timber homes, they are not just threatening the houses themselves but a century of history, our communities identity, our home and our spirit.

You may threaten our spirit but it will not be crushed. We won't stay silent.

Hands off North Lismore.
Gwynne Willing
Modanville

A genocidal project

The humanitarian catastrophe being inflicted on the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank exposes the appalling moral depravity and medieval brutality of the Zionist regime and its Western accomplices.

Genocide is not a single act, it is a process that could not happen without the political support and material assistance provided by Western settler states with their own history of genocide.

The Zionist-occupied media constantly portrays Israel as defending itself from terrorism, but according to international law affirmed by multiple UN Security Council resolutions and rulings of the International Court of

Justice, Israel is illegally occupying Palestinian lands and the Palestinians have the legal right to defend themselves from the occupying forces.

The Israeli narrative is a monstrous lie that deliberately misrepresents Israel's determination to exterminate the Palestinian people and steal all of Palestine.

In response to Israel's genocidal narrative, it is incumbent on humane commentators to uncover and expose the history of the Zionist movement, its project in Palestine and the true nature of the Zionist regime.

John Scrivener
Main Arm

Wasting Earth's resources

I was watching the latest edition of 'How the Universe Works', a free-to-air TV programme that includes the search for alternative planets for us to live on when Earth's Sun runs out of oomph in the far distant future.

I love the journey of my education into all the stars and planets that these brilliant people take me to.

It saddens them and me to see the waste of Earth's resources on arguments over who owns what.

As one of these scientists said wistfully, "Perhaps somewhere in the universe there is a species that cares enough about their own planet not to destroy their own home."

Anne Sutherland
Robina

Eddie Trailblazer bows out

Fast Eddie, née Eric Fischer, died peacefully at home with friends on 19th March, after a short battle with a recurrent bladder cancer issue. He was 76.

A long-term Blue Mountains National Park ranger with an Environmental Science degree, Eddie was better known as a professional drummer, and played in Reg Lindsay's touring band for over a decade.

His rise to infamy began in the satirical band The Trailblazers with frontman Bobby Green, which repeatedly scandalised Tamworth Country Music festivals, and recorded two albums at the 2TM studios.

He was fond of saying, "I've been almost famous 20 times," and it could well have been true. He had played with most Sydney-based rock bands as a fill-in drummer, and was never short of a revealing story about various band members.

He idolised Charlie Watts, often quoting him, and made six trips to New Orleans for the Jazz and Heritage Festivals, meeting several of his favourite players. While there, he recorded two albums at Sun Studios, Memphis singing his original songs.

Back in the Blue Mountains, he played Led Zeppelin covers in the ukulele band Led Ukes,



and made three albums with Ghost Train, an original indie rock outfit, before moving north to Corindi, which became his permanent home, complete with a stage and 'EdFest' jam sessions.

During this time, he ran market stalls selling vinyl records from his extensive collection, and became the regular drummer and occasional singer in the house band at the Open Mic night at Nimbin Bowlo, demonstrating his ease with various musical styles.

When asked about his three-hour trip to get to the unpaid gigs, he would simply say, "This is therapy for me."

In accordance with his wishes, his body was cremated in a private ceremony in Coffs Harbour, prior to his ashes being sent to a niche at Rookwood Cemetery Sydney, alongside those of his parents.

Rock on Eddie.
– Bob Dooley

Notices

Accommodation wanted

Mature aged lady with pet rooster seeks to purchase cabin / van under \$130,000 in region. Must sell own home first. Naturalist into herbalism, poetry, alternative hobbies. Contact Janet by text only on 0410-858-395.

Sustainable Living Workshop

Learn simple skills to live a sustainable lifestyle that benefits the family, the community and the environment Thursday 10th April, 11am to 1pm at Fairy Hill Hall near Casino. Enquires: jenjones660@gmail.com

Annual General Meeting

Nimbin Community School Co-op Ltd will hold its postponed AGM on Wednesday 21st May in the Community School Green Room at Nimbin Community Centre. Membership can be renewed on the day.

About us

Managing editor Bob Dooley
Assistant editor Sue Stock
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The Nimbin GoodTimes acknowledges the Bundjalung people, the traditional owners of the land and waters on which we work and live, and pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.

Bookkeeper Lyndal Gray
Web www.nimbingoodtimes.com
And find us on Facebook

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NEXT DEADLINE:
Monday 5th May

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Lismore, its time to talk about bullying culture

At first bullies seem to be avoidable to all but their first range of targets. But if they go unchallenged, the range of targets keeps expanding.

The fascism we are seeing around the world is bully culture on a global scale. The dynamics remain the same. At first there is a target group that can't easily defend itself. Refugees, migrants, ethnic minorities, the unemployed or the homeless. But left unchallenged the thirst for new targets is unquenchable and bloodshed always follows.

I grew up in Bjelke Petersen's Qld. A 1980s version of fascism. Elections were rigged and protests were banned, but there were always the scapegoats. At first it was Indigenous people, hippies, gays and drug users, but by the late 1980's even the Uniting Church were denounced as 'communists' for their humanitarian works.

In the famous quote by Pastor Martin Niemoller reflecting upon the Nazi holocaust:

*First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist
Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me*

Bullying and fascism are a psychopathology, not a coherent political ideology. The psychological dynamics that drive it manifest in the collective psyche, but they originate within the minds of individuals. Seemingly decent loving people in their day-to-day lives can be enlisted en masse to support the gravest of crimes against humanity against a de-humanised other.

In essence, bullying and fascism are the outward projection of inner feelings like fear, self-loathing and powerlessness. The human condition is such that none of us are free of these three deep painful sensations; they have been with us collectively and individually throughout time. But what shifts from time to time is



by Aidan Ricketts

what we do with them.

There are three main ways that individuals try to avoid these frightening sensations of the shadow realm inside of us.

Some of us just feel them in their raw state. These are often the tortured artists, the drug addicted, the mentally ill, and sometimes simultaneously our wisest and greatest healers and teachers.

Many of us innately sense the fear, self-loathing and powerlessness within our psyche and develop a pro-social character strategy to remind ourselves constantly that we are good people. It's a hopeful kind of overlay. We do good things in the world, help others, support equality, fairness and compassion in the world.

These are the do-gooders: the Christians who actually enact the messages of the new testament, the socialists, the woke, the charity workers, the champions of human rights. While it is still a character strategy of sorts, it is pro-social in outcome and helps build a fair society.

The main drawback is many of these people end up burning out from outpouring and a neglect of their own well-being in the face of so much injustice in the world. Nonetheless, it is the middle path that harms least.

The third and darkest character strategy for dealing with fear, self-loathing and powerlessness is outward projection onto a constructed 'deficient other'.

In this state of being, the inner collective wound is too painful and frightening to contemplate, and so relief is found in projecting all of the feelings onto those that can be perceived as lower, as less than human, or threatening in some way.

Sadly for humanity, this character strategy works

for many individuals, but the social consequences are disastrous. Witchburning, massacres, pogroms, genocides at the mass level or simply more bullying, hate, othering, aggression and violence at the village level.

Now most of us probably have a combination of all three at play, I'm not playing saints and sinners here, but what matters is which one becomes outwardly dominant.

Populist fascist leaders are usually charismatic narcissists and psychopaths with sufficient cognitive insight to know exactly how to weaponise the population's angst, and a valueless psychopathy that enables them to adopt a no-holds-barred approach to politics. Globally these are the Hitlers, Trumps, Pol Pots and Stalins of this world, but at the school and village level, these are our local bullies.

Social media has amplified the means available for the dark arts of bullying. Through its in-built algorithms that reward conflict and outrage, and because it keeps people disembodied, it fosters the dog-whistling of communities into collective frenzies of other-hating.

It allows the dark inner pathology of the hater to become a virus, inviting the population at large to trade in their own suffering, for a collective orgy of hate against a constructed deficient other.

Youth crime, refugees, migrants, dole bludgers, drug users, ethnic minorities and, you guessed it, squatters and the homeless. Social media has fostered the emergence of 'unwellness influencers' who act as transmission points for the virus of hate and othering in a community.

Lismore has had a big problem with on-line bullying culture for several years now. I don't need to name them; firstly that only feeds their algorithm and secondly, if the cap fits, wear it. Funnily enough, they also love to claim victim status when they are named.

In Lismore's experience, first they came for our wonderful compassionate women leaders, but we didn't do enough to stand up. Emboldened by our silence,

it has continued unabated. It is complex: engaging with them feeds their algorithm, and individuals who stand up to them get publicly named, photographed and attacked. No different to schoolyard bullying.

That is one of the sad things about bullying: sometimes you are so afraid the bullies will turn on you that you shamefully join in or silently assent out of fear of becoming the next target. Joining the bullies out of fear is the tipping point society must avoid at all costs.

The human psyche is malleable. The 2022 flood brought out the best in all of us. The Lismore Free State was a place of mud, tears, loss and grief, but it was also a place of love, neighbourliness and mutual aid. In a disaster it seems we can pull together and fulfill our highest human potential of love and service to one another, but in other times our individual and collective burdens weigh upon our souls and can become the plaything of collective hate. Lismore (and the Northern Rivers), we are better than this. In our collective suffering in the three years since the great flood, so many have suffered for so long that it really has become hard to look up.

We may have trusted government and been let down, we may have sought to rebuild and run out of funds, we may have taken a buy-out and been unable to afford a home in Uplandia, we may have been renters, rendered homeless.

Most recently we have seen a hyperbolic campaign against a few squatters sharing pumpkin soup with the homeless in a quiet cul de sac in north Lismore in abandoned homes. It was never a great civilisational threat as the haters would have you believe, it was something we could have just accepted as a temporary and largely rational response to homelessness.


Regardless of your opinion to which you are entitled, it was never acceptable to engage in the on-line hate campaigns that led to the actual political violence that we saw.

We are better than this. Switch off the bullies, and definitely keep an eye on the bully within.

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