

Thin blue line

I want to thank David Heilpern for his column (NGT 09/20 p.12). David's language is insightful and delightful. I'm very much looking forward to your promised future columns.

However, the metaphor invoked by the phrase "democracy shudders" fails to truly capture the utter despair, visceral anger, and permanent dark cynicism which many of us carry around inside our bodies every minute of every day of our 'democratic' lives.

I agree with you that the public lose faith quickly in a hypocritical justice system, but I would also point out that for some of us, that faith will never return, if it ever existed at all.

For me and many people, the 'thin blue line' is nothing more than a daily exercise in physical power; and the 'justice system' is just-a-system designed with nothing else in mind than to uphold the State's physical power.

For many of us, our entire experience of Australia's whole legal set-up is nothing but a perpetual extension of colonial and corporate oppression, suffocating us in every way imaginable.

It's fine and good to reference a well-publicised example of Police abuse at street level, but I want the reader to know this same hypocritical and corrupt behaviour is the very 'legal' apparatus that has been continually imposed onto our lives every day, and onto our continent for 200+ years.

From society's highest elites persecuting Julian Assange to death, via one of the oldest 'democratic' countries in the world; to "officer Plod" downtown, in one the youngest 'democratic' countries in the world, we are living in a very tenuous, if not lawless world.

Many officers of the State (Police) embody willingly if not willfully, the systemic racism which has filled our prisons disproportionately with First Nations people – a psychological and war-like process congruent with 'terra nullius'.

Conservative mainstream

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 Good Times.

media now openly describe "Police accountability in NSW" as "pathetic and disgraceful" (ABC's *Media Watch* 8/9/20).

WA Police Union (Harry Arnott) on Sat 19 Sep 2020, described a suspect (member of public) as an "animal" and "pig of a human" (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2519828438309321&extid=fnqQmhoqiahWwdgO>).

I'm absolutely furious about this ab/use of language/power and mainstream media use of it. This statement is a most current example of the corruption and double-standards which David and I are desperately trying to highlight. Much more than 'democracy' is at stake!

To the extent that it existed, democracy does not just shudder, but actually disappears, the moment the 'thin blue line' is crossed – and it's crossed every minute of every day. 'Democracy', whatever it might be, seems to exist despite us.

David, I'm so very glad to know you're now able to speak publicly, from the heart, on these matters. There's lots to say, and your insights are important.

Daniel John
Goonellabah

Rail Trail myths

In response to Lydia Kindred's article ('Rail myths and realities' NGT 9/20), some of Lydia's information recently published is incorrect. Please read the points below.

- Arcadis did not survey "most of the line" in the Byron Shire, due to inaccessibility;
- The Sourdough Group has not raised money



for the rail trail. Over \$75,000 was raised through crowdfunding – donations given by the local community;

- There has been no progress in bringing back the train for the 16 years that it has been closed, and the cost now (considering the decay of the infrastructure) would be even more prohibitive;
- The legislation change will state the following: "The authorisation of the rail infrastructure owner under subclause (1) in relation to the disposal of the land concerned is limited to the land being dedicated under the Crown lands legislation as a rail trail for recreational use."

- Agreed that the large bus services do not suit many people in our region. If the region was served by smaller, electric buses they would be able to pick up and drop off at a far wider array of destinations;
- The current route does not service the main transport route between Ballina and Lismore and Tweed Heads;
- The government will not fund the train coming back at this time;
- The corridor will be kept for the use of the general public, not just a few fit cyclists;
- There are no plans for the Elements train to run any further by the owner, and Byron Shire Council will not have the money needed to do so. The State Government will not fund this project;
- The Rail Trail Project came about because the train was stopped. If there were plans to reinstate the train, the rail trail group would not be pursuing this path;
- It is not practical to run the trail beside the tracks along most of the corridor, due to culverts, bridges, tunnels and drainage problems. It may be possible, but at huge extra expense that the government is unlikely to fund;
- The Rail Trail will not prevent the return of the train in the future if it is deemed necessary to do so. The corridor will still be available. It is more likely however, that a future rail

line will run along the coast and include Ballina;

- It is not the fault of the Sourdough Group or the Rail Trail Group that the train was stopped and has not returned.

Marie Lawton
Public liaison/treasurer
NRRT Assoc.

ABC funding

I am very concerned about the way our communities receive important news information.

The last 12 months or so have been extremely challenging for many Australians, particularly those people living in rural areas of the state.

Firstly the people in the northern part of NSW had to endure drought and record bushfires, and now the Covid-19 epidemic. I am witnessing depression in the community and a great deal of other social problems.

I believe the communities need a well-funded ABC to provide up-to-the-minute commentary on such important and potentially catastrophic events that have been happening around us.

That would be news updates that are not being provided by the commercial television and radio networks.

In my opinion, I saw a great deal of misinformation from the commercial media channels. Lives are likely to be put at risk.

Tony Batchelor
Lismore

Planetary warming

We all know it's the natural world that makes the oxygen be breathe. We all know, or we should, that the Amazon forest is one of Earth's great lungs – billions of plants and trees breathing in carbon dioxide and breathing out life giving oxygen.

The second great earth lung of this kind is the great northern Arctic forest – which acts like a giant air conditioning system regulating the Earth's climate.

We all know, or we should, that the Amazon forest is on fire. A huge swathe of Arctic Russia is changing rapidly as oil leaks, the climate warms and Siberia dries out. The great Arctic forest has

Notices

Position vacant

Cawongla Playhouse is seeking a Cert III qualified educator for a casual short term position 3 days a week in term 4. We are also seeking Cert III staff to join our relief list. You must have current working with children check, first aid and Cert III qualifications. Please email your CV to: cawonglaplayhouse.director@gmail.com

Room to let

Vacancy available in large 4-bedroom home in bushland setting just a 12-minute walk to the Nimbin Post Office. A third interesting and happy person is wanted, so there will be a spare room. Huge verandah and large garden area, some of it planted. Our possible house-mate would be working, studying or involved in community activities. A non-tobacco smoker is preferred. Very reasonable rent. Email your interest to: dougpinch@gmail.com and tell us about yourself.

HEMP Annual General Meetings

Saturday 21st November at the Town Hall, 45 Cullen Street, Nimbin. 11am Nimbin HEMP Embassy; 12pm MardiGrass Organising Body; 2pm Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party; 3pm HEMP Party NSW. Nominations for executive committee positions must be received one week prior to the AGMs. Voting will be by open ordinary ballot. A short bio and CV will help determine the suitability of nominees.

Interested in cycling?

As the road season has started and inspired by watching the Tour, I'm looking for local riding buddies. Rides are loops of between 50 and 150 km at 20 to 25 kph starting from Nimbin. Email: juergens@jwsk.com.au if you'd like to join a small local peloton.

Free notices

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caught fire. Huge areas of permafrost are melting.

These conflagrations guarantee planetary warming to the level of catastrophe.

Evgeny Zinichev, Russia's emergencies minister, speaks of a critical situation unfolding in Siberia and across Russia's Far East. Permafrost melt and wildfires are having an impact not only across Siberia but around the world.

Siberia's forests act as an enormous carbon sink, storing millions of tonnes of climate-changing greenhouse gases. Wildfire is now releasing these gases. Siberia's thawing tundra will dramatically reshape the earth's entire ecosystems.

Thomas Smith, an environmental geographer, said: "Alarming is the right term." An understatement.

Michael Brooke
Kyogle

Byron Parklets proposal

Covid-19 social distancing restrictions are likely to be with us for quite some time yet and the effect on our local restaurant and hospitality industry is very significant because of the extra space required for each patron.

It's not OK for Byron Council to assume everything is OK.

There is much demand for outdoor dining around the shire with limited

space available within the existing verges and I believe this is some, albeit small, concession council can make to assist the community meet the current financial and social challenges.

Additional outdoor dining space within town centres can be achieved with the use of street parking spaces after 5pm daily.

A Parklet is a car space making a footpath extension that provides more space and amenities for people using the street. Usually Parklets are installed on parking zones and use several parks. Parklets typically extend out level from the footpath to the width of the adjacent parking space. Parklets can provide additional alfresco dining space for adjacent cafes and restaurants.

At the Byron Shire Council meeting, I moved a Notice of Motion requesting Council begin a trial to investigate the use of carparks on the street in the shire to be used for seating customers at adjacent restaurants in this time of Covid social distancing free of charge, to help them enhance our visitor experience and improve their financial bottom line to meet their current challenges.

This will also inform new policy in activating our town centres, streets and shared spaces.

Cr Alan Hunter
Byron Shire

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NEXT DEADLINE:
Wednesday 28th October

Email nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com or put stuff in our pigeonhole at the Nimbin Community Centre.

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.



Chamber Chat
by Diana Roberts, president

Let's share our community ethos with our visitors

Thanks to everyone who completed our survey following closure of the Visitor Information Centre – we got an excellent return rate.

Your many and varied suggestions to more effectively engage with visitors to Nimbin will be worked up by local business owners, employees and community members at a workshop on Thursday, 29th October 10am – 2pm at Nimbin School of Arts.

Anyone who is interested is invited to participate. We'll provide a beautiful Steph lunch as an incentive.

Due to Covid and catering requirements, and our desire for working groups that are not too big, you must let us know if you are interested by email to: chamber@nimbinaustralia.com.au

If you would like a copy of the final survey findings you can also email us.

Chamber Survey findings

Apart from exploring community thoughts on visitor information, the Chamber used the survey to get feedback from you

Nimbin Chamber of Commerce receives \$16,000 a year to support economic development. Do you support these initiatives?	Yes %	No %	Not sure %
Rainbow Road walking trail	74	3	23
Mural restoration	86	0	14
Cullen Street under awning and mural lighting	68	3	29
Sponsorship Nimbin Poetry World Cup	72	6	22
Sponsorship Nimbin Fashion Show	67	2	31
Sponsorship MardiGrass	68	6	26
Sponsorship Nimbin Roots Festival	53	17	30
Chamber website	54	5	41
Village entry signs restored	82	0	18
Nimbin Buy Local Campaign	75	2	23

on other things. We were delighted that most of the things we have delivered financial support to in recent years enjoy wide support by you.

Those least supported indicate we need to do more work or perhaps review our level of support.

While spending money on the Chamber's website was supported by 54% of respondents, 41% were unsure. In the next *GoodTimes* I'm going to talk about the website at length, as we've spent quite a bit of money to develop a new web presence.

The Chamber is keen for this site to become the locally-operated website for visitors to get information about Nimbin and we need our community to appreciate its value.

Rainbow Road walking trail

Despite its vexed history, it was great that the survey results indicated there is still a high level of support for the Rainbow Road walking trail. We are currently working up the route and costings for stage 2, which traverses the

gully alongside Alternative Way.

At the same time, two properties integral to stage 1 have come onto the market – 11a Alternative Way and 12 Cecil Street. Both these properties have legal rights of way crossing them that were established in favour of Lismore Council to provide pedestrian access from Cullen Street to Alternative Way.

Unfortunately, after the ROWs were established, the properties were bought by people who didn't support a walking track through part of their property. After being threatened with legal action and various other unpleasanties, a cash-strapped Council put stage 1 on hold and are now focussed on stage 2.

Hopefully the properties integral to stage 1 will be purchased by people excited by the idea of a community walking track, so that it can become reality one day. In the meantime, and lest that does not eventuate, we are exploring options for the community to raise the funds necessary to buy parts of both properties with a



view to developing parkland alongside the Rainbow Road walking trail.

This would be a wonderful legacy to leave future generations.

Nimbin Development Control Plan (DCP) up for review

The Nimbin DCP is about to be reviewed by Council, in consultation with the community. The Chamber and the Nimbin Advisory Group recently sent Council an expansive list of things we would like to see covered in the review.

Some of the issues we considered important include management of growth both within and outside of the village, traffic impact and management including footpaths and cycleways, environmental protection and enhancement, the need for affordable housing stock, heritage interpretation, preferred land uses, location of community parks and so much more.

Council are hoping to release a discussion paper shortly that will outline the scope of the review and explain the function of a

DCP. The review process presents an opportunity for community discussion around many issues that concern us and I hope lots of you will participate.

The DCP hasn't been reviewed for a long time and it's essential it become a document that not only reflects community values and views, but gives greater clarity to Council when considering development applications.

Museum site redevelopment approved by Council

Thank you to all those who responded to the urgent plea I put out for indications of support (or otherwise) for the development application (DA) for the fire site that went before Lismore Council on 8th September.

I have no doubt this application would have been knocked back or had unacceptable conditions placed on it if so many of you had not responded at very short notice to indicate the depth of community support. These were not just likes or comments on social media; many of you took the effort to

write something considered. I sent your responses to all Councillors and they were acknowledged during the debate.

For the Councillors who voted against, the only arguments they could summon were pretty weak, focussed on fairness as regards car parking requirements with specific reference to The Cubes. This development had strong community opposition and, if it ever proceeds, is going to achieve its car parking shortfall by painting lines and building car parks on the grassy entrance to Nimbin Central School.

While it's great the museum site DA was approved, construction is still some way off as the developer has to meet numerous consent conditions.

To those of you who watched the Council meeting, many for the first time, and were appalled by the conduct of some Councillors, the level of animosity and the, at times, nonsensical debate, it's hard to know what to say.

I've watched a number of Council meetings this year and this one was not exceptional. As a community, we deserve much better than we've got, and my heart goes out to those Councillors putting in the hard yards and trying to work as a team.

So, when you get to vote for Councillors in September 2021, make sure it's an informed vote, as some are definitely better-equipped for the role and its incumbent responsibilities than others.

Nimbin Community Centre update

by Teresa Biscoe,
Co-ordinator

Extending the Rainbow

The Community Centre 'Truth & Beauty' (grounds beautification) committee has long held a vision of extending the rainbow painting on the Bottle Brush Studio as a stripe of colours from Bottlebrush along the bottom of the building along the front of Acacia, then side to Bark Hut and wrap it around the Mural wall and front of the Bark Hut.

This would tie the building together at the front and also draw people into the space.

Recently we reviewed plans and prioritised projects, and selected this as one of four projects to pursue over the next 12 months. Unfortunately, the Community Centre doesn't have the funds to contribute to the project, so we have decided to see if we can raise the funds from donations.

We have community volunteers who will help to paint the stripe, so we have no labour costs.

We have consulted with our maintenance co-ordinator Sam, who supervised the last two repainting projects



at Bottle Brush, and he has calculated that we will need approximately \$1500 for paints. If 15 individuals donated \$100 each, we would have enough to complete the project.

If anyone wishes to donate funds or volunteer to paint the rainbow, please contact the NCC on our email: ncci@nimbincommunity.org.au for volunteering details, or donate to Summerland Credit Union BSB 728728, Nimbin Community Centre account 22269886.

Co-ordinators' hours

Due to the financial impact of the Covid lockdown

and restrictions on the Community Centre, the office co-ordinators agreed to take one day of leave every week till the end of September. This has led to the office only being staffed for two days of every week during this period.

We are pleased to announce that as of 5th October, the NCC office will be staffed every Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 2.30pm.

The hours every day have been slightly reduced as some functions of the office will be managed remotely. We look forward to being more accessible for our tenants and the community.

Volunteering

The Community Centre welcomes volunteers to our organisation.

Volunteers form our committees and work on various projects for the centre including assisting in the maintenance of buildings and grounds, working on special events and art projects and assisting in the office.

We would not be able to do all the work we do without them.

If you have noticed how nice the gardens are looking or how clean the grounds look it has probably had the hand of a volunteer in there helping.

We are registered with Centrelink for volunteers and are happy to accept volunteers with work for the dole obligations.

Please contact our office if you are interested in becoming a volunteer and discuss what contribution you would like to make to our beautiful shared space.

We all have a gift or skill we can share and we are happy to work with you to find the right place or activity to channel your individual contribution.

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Water strategy failures

by Cate Faehrmann, Greens MP and water spokesperson

The Premier must take water off the Nats after an Auditor-General's report released last month examining the NSW Government's 'Support for regional town water infrastructure' is damning, and demonstrates a gross dereliction of duty by the Government to manage the state's precious water resources sustainably and equitably.

The report's key finding was that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has not effectively supported or overseen town water infrastructure planning in regional NSW since at least 2014. It has also lacked a strategic, evidence-based approach to target investments in town water infrastructure.

The only conclusion to be reached from this damning report is that the Water Minister isn't up to the task of ensuring this state's water resources are managed sustainably and equitably. It's now up to the Premier to act.

Twenty years ago, the *Water Management Act* made provision for a strategic water plan for NSW, which the government has failed to do. This is a gross dereliction of duty on the part of the Water Minister, particularly as we are talking about making sure that towns don't run out of water.

This Report shows that the National Party has failed regional communities. By not developing a water strategy to ensure we could survive the worst droughts, towns ran out of water and many others approached 'Day Zero'.

Now, the government's answer is new dams instead of developing a sustainable

water strategy based upon the best science.

The Report also found that funding through the Safe and Secure Water Program has not been allocated transparently or did not prioritise investing in town water risk. Further, around a third of projects with funds committed to local water utilities were done so without going through the Technical Review Panel process.

We live on the driest continent on earth and climate change means it's only going to get drier. It's clear that the experts knew the risks facing town water supplies and knew what needed to be done, so how can the Water Minister defend such incompetent management of our state's water?

Last summer countless regional towns were left facing day zero. I would call on the Premier to consider whether we will be prepared for the next drought if NSW is stuck with a Water Minister asleep at the wheel.

Joy, beauty and Council

Spring has well and truly sprung since I last wrote in the *GoodTimes*. The sun is shining, the days are longer, flowers are bursting everywhere and the bottlebrush trees are catching my eye everywhere I go.

The enduring constancy of nature moving through the seasons is keeping me anchored as the initial confusion of the Covid-19 pandemic has moved towards becoming routine and as we settle into the marathon that is this particular chapter of our lives. It's a reminder for me that joy and beauty are around every corner and, as is a continuing theme of my columns, just how blessed we are to live here in the Northern Rivers.

Witnessing from afar the long-haul lockdown that family and friends have lived through in Melbourne as we continue to enjoy our daily

freedoms has been another affirmation of the benefits of regional living. I hope that any impacts that you are experiencing as a result of this pandemic are able to be eased slightly by the realisation that we really are in quite a protected situation in spite of the economic and financial challenges many of us are facing.

Since I last wrote, Lismore City Council has changed, with the resignation of Councillors Bennett and Battista. One of the impacts of Covid has been that Council elections were postponed for 12 months, meaning that our four-year term has been extended to five years. Cr Bennett had been planning for a while to leave the area at the end of the term, and Cr Battista chose not to continue for the extra year as well.

I wish both of them well in whatever comes next for them and acknowledge their service

to the community. The rest of us are still here for another year with the election now happening on 4th September 2021, and I look forward to continuing to work with the community for a bit longer.

In big news for Nimbin, the DA for the fire sites was finally approved at our last meeting. Thanks to everyone who put in submissions, contacted Councillors and advocated for the DA to be progressed. I acknowledge that it has been a process that has been a source of frustration for a number of people so it is good to see that it has finally been approved, and I am keen to see the heart of the village full of life and activity again.

Particular acknowledgement goes to the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce and the Nimbin Advisory Group who were both very active and strong advocates.

We have now seen the first



Word of the Bird
by Cr Elly Bird

total fire ban of the season for the Northern Rivers, and as we move into summer our memories of last year will surface, alongside the inevitable hot days. I hope that you have taken the opportunity over winter to prepare your homes and properties for bushfire season, and that you are able to support your neighbours and friends.

Take care, and don't forget to notice the beauty that is all around us as you go about your day.

Rail and trail — we can have both

by Abigail Boyd, Greens NSW MP

Our communities in the Northern Rivers deserve fast, reliable and frequent public transport services that get us where we need to go, when we need to get there. But the Nationals, in lockstep with the Labor party, have this week rammed a Bill through NSW Parliament that will see the Casino to Murwillumbah rail line ripped up.

Rail is the future. It's reliable. It's fast. It's efficient. It's resilient to catastrophic weather events in a way many other modes of transport are not; even being able to operate in the middle of flooding. It's a natural fit for the Northern Rivers, a region that has been chronically neglected in terms of transport infrastructure spending by successive governments of both political persuasions.

And we know that bringing trains back onto the tracks is more than possible, you just have to look at the success of the Byron Bay Solar Train to see what can happen when we bring our existing rail infrastructure together with cutting edge renewable technology. Furthermore, the recent Arcadia Study commissioned by

Byron Shire Council shows that if there is political will we can have trains back on the tracks servicing our towns in no time at all.

If done right, the revitalisation of the rail corridor, with both world class passenger services alongside a vibrant eco-friendly rail trail, would be a huge boon for the region.

The proponents of the Bill before Parliament will say anything to distract from the fact they're letting the community down, but we can, and should, have both.

Across the world there are so many success stories of rail trails alongside rail tracks that have protected the existing infrastructure and been huge draw cards for their communities — from Otago in New Zealand all the way to the nearly 40,000kms of rail and trail in the USA. It's been done before and it can easily be done here.

Which is why it's so incredibly disappointing to see the Nationals, backed by local Labor MP Janelle Saffin, pitting our community against one another on this issue.

And when given the chance last week in Parliament to open up the Bill for consultation with the local community,

with an inquiry that would give the entire region a say in the future of transport infrastructure in the Northern Rivers, they again teamed up to silence the voices of those who want to see passenger services return to the line. By shutting down The Greens' proposed inquiry into the legislation they have missed out on the opportunity to learn from community members and experts and to pave the way for a solution involving both rail and trail.

I, alongside Ballina Greens MP Tamara Smith, will continue to push for an inquiry into this Bill and to stop it being rushed through Parliament. We'll continue to push for amendments that will ensure the rail corridor is protected for future rail services, and that the land is kept in public hands, not handed over to private developers. Amendments that will close the clever loopholes that allow the government to tie itself up in private lease and licensing arrangements that will prevent the community from ever seeing trains on the track again.

The Northern Rivers could be home to world class passenger trains running frequently alongside a thriving, vibrant rail trail. The only thing stopping us is the political will to make it happen.

Saffin not convinced Dunoon Dam is best solution

by Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore

Rous County Council recently announced their preferred option for water security was to construct a new dam. They issued a Future Water Strategy 2060 paper on this and sought comment back from the local community, specifically on the Dunoon Dam component.

I want to share with readers my submission to Rous County Councillors and General Manager Phillip Rudd.

My position is informed by many conversations with interested groups and individuals, and by some excellent research on water efficiency which I commissioned from the Parliamentary Library, and my reading of the NSW Productivity Commission's Continuing the Productivity Conversation Green Paper.

What follows is my submission lodged on 9th September:

"Water security into the future for our communities, farms and the environment is of vital importance. Many locals from across the Lismore Electorate have raised the issue with me, so having a water plan for the future is crucial.

That being said, I am yet to be convinced that the 50GL Dunoon Dam is the best solution to efficiently and effectively ensure water security into the future. Numerous constituents have raised

with me concerns that this dam is potentially a missed opportunity to invest in sustainable water management, about the potential flooding of endangered rainforest and climate change implications. I share these concerns.

I understand that Rous County Council (RCC) is the supplier of water to the whole region and we need water supply to match population increases in each council area. In securing long term and fairly distributed water supply, the Dunoon Dam is not a clear frontrunner. Other options are available to RCC and must be considered.

Professor Stuart White, of the University of Technology Sydney Institute for Sustainable Futures, has detailed proposals that I believe have merit and are worthy of consideration. Professor White addresses key issues such as diverse supplies of water, how much people and businesses pay for water, climate change implications, the cost effectiveness of water security programs and investment in system wide efficiency.

He states that "a case has not been made" to build a new dam. Professor White is highly regarded for his work and identifies that there is scope for major improvements in water efficiency in the region.

I would like to see more work done on this and detailed costing of all the options.

Water security is in all of our interests. It is vital to the future of our economy, environment



Janelle at the opening of the 2020 Nimbin Spring Arts Exhibition

and communities. Such a large investment in something so important requires due diligence and all options need to be considered. I would ask that these can be done before a definitive timeframe is put around the consultation with the community.

I look forward to working together to ensure water security for our region into the future."

'Border Bubble' breakthrough

After weeks of strategic and respectful advocacy, I welcomed the Queensland

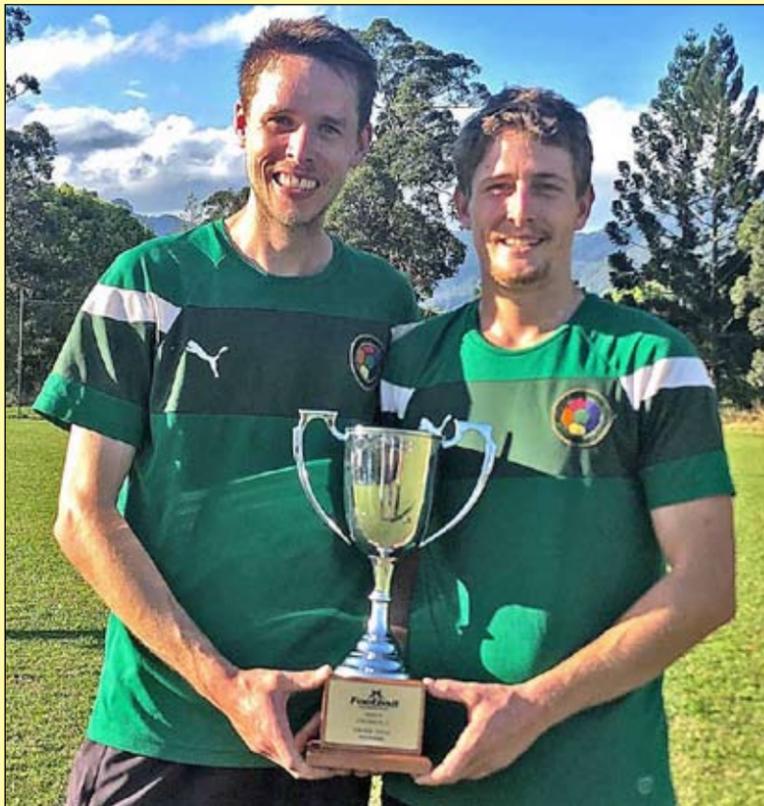
Government's announcement it would expand its 'Border Bubble' to include the additional Local Government Areas of Lismore City, Byron Shire, Ballina Shire, Richmond Valley and Glenn Innes Shire from 1st October. (Visit my website: <https://janellesaffin.com.au> for a link to the latest QLD Border Restriction Direction No. 15).

This relaxation of border restrictions will be a positive for Nimbin, which, after Sydney and Byron Bay, is one of the State's most popular tourist destinations, and will make it easier for local residents to cross into Queensland for specialist medical treatment and on compassionate grounds.

However, local businesses are still hurting economically from the border closure – some losing up to \$10,500 a week in revenue – so I am calling on the NSW Government to urgently provide a rescue package for all small businesses in Northern NSW to help us climb out of Covid-19, as they did in the southern border of NSW where they closed the border with Victoria.

I am also asking the NSW Government to expand its network of Special Activation Precincts to the Northern Rivers region, home to many cutting-edge entrepreneurs in its stated range of industries, including renewable energy, tourism, agribusiness, freight and logistics, advanced manufacturing and defence.

On the same Page



by Kevin Hogan MP, Member for Page

Go Nimbin Headers!

Congratulations to Nimbin Headers on winning the FFNC Division One Grand Final. It is a fantastic win for the community.

Well done to Lewis King, Ruben Mack and the whole team. Also to Quinlan Cox and Beau Grabovsky who scored the winning goals.

QLD Border Bubble expanded

The QLD State Government has extended the border bubble. From Thursday 1 October, 41 new postcodes have been added.

Lismore City Council area, which includes Nimbin, has now been included. This means we can visit family, friends and go to appointments in Queensland.

The northern border bubble line will be removed, allowing free travel anywhere in QLD. Residents will still need to apply for a border pass. Visit this link to apply and find out more information: <https://www.qld.gov.au/border-pass>

The Channon

Great to announce funding recently to replace Town Road Bridge at The Channon. It is currently a 4 span, 40m long single lane timber bridge over Terania Creek. It will be replaced by a prefabricated concrete bridge.

I secured \$594,100 towards this important project, which will make it safer for everyone.

Lismore Council matters at hand

Terrific news that the "border bubble" has been extended to include Lismore, Byron, Ballina, Richmond Valley and Glen Innes Council areas. One positive effect will be the return of Kyogle shoppers and suppliers back to Nimbin.

This was an issue raised to me by the Nimbin Advisory Group last month, noting that the loss of these customers and suppliers was adding to Nimbin business' economic difficulties. Hopefully that issue is now resolved

September Council meeting

The DA for the former museum site in Cullen Street was approved by Council at its September meeting with the proviso that in lieu of the required car parking spaces, the developer will undertake works in the western car park to the value of \$20,000.

This work, which may include additional lighting, shade trees, and hand rails on the steep sections of the pedestrian walkway or line marking, will be consulted with the Nimbin Advisory Group and Chamber of Commerce prior to works commencing.

Also at the September meeting the election of a new deputy mayor for the next 12 months was held. It is an unwritten convention that the role of deputy be rotated among councillors to enable as many councillors to gain that experience of chairing meetings, representing the mayor at functions, and speaking with the media on council matters.

The successful councillor elected was Neil Marks. Many of you will already know him from his career as a 2LM breakfast announcer and commentator/caller at the Lismore Speedway and other sporting and charity events.

Do contact him with your concerns at: neil.marks@lismore.nsw.gov.au



by Cr Darlene Cook, Lismore City Council

Police community consultation

Following the Nimbin PCCC meeting last month, I was asked to have some works done in the village: I can report that the Nimbin CCTV connectivity works are almost completed which should fix the previous issues with poor video feed.

The bindii problem in Allsopp Park will be treated before the summer, as will inspections of the park tables and benches and any that are deemed to be unsafe will be removed. A replacement program will be prioritised in the current budget.

Staff are also investigating the costs and options associated with providing a filtered water drinking and filling station to be located at the blister before summer.

Rural tourism survey

Council is seeking community feedback on rural tourism uses and the growing demand for these activities in Primary Production zoned areas of the LGA (where the uses are currently prohibited).

The 'rural tourism survey' is aimed at gauging community views about where rural tourism uses (such as weddings, yoga studios, distilleries etc) may be appropriate (if at all), the types of controls Council should consider if it decides to amend the LEP

and DCP and how likely people are to support any development application for such a use in their area.

The survey is now live, and will be open until 16th November, at: <https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/rural-tourism>

Climate resilience

Coming up at the 13th October meeting of Council will be a recently drafted Climate Resilience Policy.

Council acknowledges that we are likely to be substantially affected by climate impacts, particularly more intense and less frequent rain events, floods, bushfires, droughts, heatwaves, sea level rise and by the subsequent impacts on human systems and ecosystem health and wellbeing.

We recognise that the changes in our environment will pose challenges to us, as a council and to our community now and in the future. Recent events including the drought, the 2017 floods, last summer's bushfires and now Covid-19 have impacted the community's capacity to adapt.

Council acknowledges its key role in building climate change resilience, promoting mitigation actions and enabling communities, ecological systems and economic systems to adapt and thrive within a changing climate.

To assist the community to withstand the cumulative impacts of changes to the climate, this policy's principle objective is to build climate resilience. Resilience enables the community to better adapt, reorganise and evolve, leaving it better prepared for future climate change impacts

So this is the first step. If adopted at the October meeting, then the policy will be placed on public exhibition for your input and feedback.

I can be contacted on 0427-895-316 or email: darlene.cook@lismore.nsw.gov.au

Why don't we have pill testing in NSW?

By November 2019, the Berejiklian government had a simmering problem with pill testing. Kids were dying at festivals.

Pesky experts and representative professional bodies like the AMA had taken a radical proposal on the fringes and made it mainstream. The leftists from the ACT government in Canberra had actually trialled it at a festival. Shock, horror – testing worked and saved lives. Parents of the deceased were begging the Premier to listen to the experts.

And to make things worse, Deputy State Coroner Harriet Grahame had conducted a wide-ranging and detailed series of inquests into festival deaths and had come to the conclusion that the evidence in favour of drug checking was compelling. She recommended pill testing be funded and implemented. She recommended that sniffer dogs be removed.

Her brilliant 150-page findings make riveting and compulsory reading for anyone interested in drug law reform and harm reduction in Australia. The police had their say, and the independent judicial officer had rejected their views.

In the face of the unimpeachable Coroner findings, the ALP had shifted ground, not quite a backflip, but supporting at least a trial.

On top of that, the government's hand-picked Ice Inquiry Commissioner, Professor Dan Howard QC was showing every sign of finding the same way. He had sought that the government extend the terms of reference of his Inquiry to include pill testing, and they readily agreed – not expecting any trouble from that quarter until it was too late.

And OMG did he disappoint the government with his 1200-page report – pill testing got a big “yes”, with mobile vans to go from festival to festival. Sniffer dogs – no. Decriminalisation of possession charges for all drugs – yes.

So, what should the Police Commissioner do in these circumstances? Nothing. He had his say in the Inquests and Inquiry and made submissions that were soundly rejected on the evidence. He could provide confidential advice to the government if asked. He probably did. His professional association or union could speak up if they wished. They did too. Or if he wanted to enter the political fray, he could quit his job and write

a column for Rupert Murdoch and Co.

Our system of government relies on respectful silence from the administrative and judicial arms. This is especially crucial for the Police Commissioner – he is not just another pawn to be wheeled out for the government to score points on the opposition, or to bring the status and power of his office to bear on public policy.

His role is to ensure that the laws made by parliament, like them or lump them, are enforced. That's what the oath of office requires. He should never take sides, because if he speaks out the government may be left in the absurd position of making a police boss apply laws he publicly opposes. In the words of Sir Humphrey, for a politician, that scenario would be “brave”.

I know personally that those limitations on public office can be frustrating. I did not take part in a rally, or sign a petition or speak to the media on politically sensitive issues for 21 years. I did not respond to Ray Hadley or the *Daily Telegraph* and just let bad policy go through to the keeper. And it was hard! I missed 21 MardiGrasses, which left a hole in my heart.

When you take a position like a

judge or a public servant you do forfeit some rights to “enter the fray”. Or to enter Nimbin in early May.

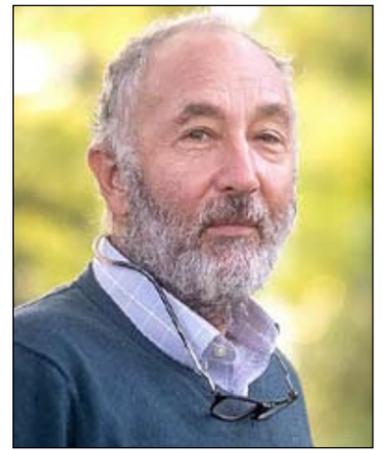
These rules apply especially to the Police Commissioner where the opposition and the government have different views on an issue like pill testing. A police commissioner should never back one political party over another on any policy areas.

What did the Police Commissioner do? Did he button his lip and bow to the umpire's decision? No – he issued a press release on 12th November 2019 bringing all the weight of the entire police force to bear. It begins:

“The New South Wales Police Force does not support pill testing. I'm gravely concerned about the message that pill testing sends to young people about the consumption of illegal substances.”

Mr Commissioner, if you want to be a public player in setting drugs policy, then resign and stand for parliament. If you want to be a Coroner, apply for the job. What a sore loser on the inquest front. How could the government change now, even if there was an appetite?

And so, if we have another festival season this summer, there will



by David Heilpern

be more deaths of young people from accidental overdosing and poisoning. The suppliers will be able to sell utter crap to party animals without fear of damaging their own market share, or being traced back.

Crucial education, law enforcement and harm reduction opportunities will be missed. There will be sniffer dogs and strip searches of children. There will be ambulances and morgues and empty seats at Christmas lunches. There will be funerals with limited numbers and life-long regret.

Thank you, Mr Commissioner.

David Heilpern was a magistrate in NSW for 21 years, and has now returned to private practice.

Where's the sense in burning forests for power?

Biomass Action Group and Bellingen community members joined together on Friday 18th September to challenge Cape Byron Power (CBP) and its claim of “never burning native forest residues.”

In NSW, licenses for burning biomass are jointly signed by environment minister Matt Kean and deputy premier John Barilaro.

CBP was created in part by a former business development manager from UK energy generator Drax Power. Two projects in Condong and Broadwater burn sugar cane waste, although this is not the only feedstock.

Trucks laden with molasses, hoppers filled with native forest salvage logs, burnt pine logs, and woodchips have created huge mountains of wood behind locked gates. This is all burnt in the furnaces of Broadwater mill to generate electricity.

“CBP claims to be “a leader in responsible and sustainable biomass power generation,” said Shaunti Kiehl, an environmental scientist and spokesperson for Biomass Action Group (BAG). “How can any company that burns native forests be sustainable, given climate change and the bushfires?”

BAG and Bellingen Shire

community members were positioned outside CBP's chipping facility at Broadwater and counted four trucks an hour, including a large red truck from Tarkeeth forest. This had previously been verified leaving the Tarkeeth forest in the morning.

“Rifle Range Road was bustling with trucks full of all types of wood. This activity seems totally unregulated, as does the definition of ‘waste,’” said Caroline Joseph of the Bellingen Environment Centre.

The Bellingen community discovered the commencement of the bioenergy experiment at Tarkeeth through breaking news on 2-TripleB community radio station. Many people challenge claims that Tarkeeth is a plantation.

“Tarkeeth is a 60-years old recovering native forest sitting on steep slopes of fragile soils between the Bellingen and the Kalang Rivers, where the fresh water meets the salt water,” Ms Joseph said. “It is vital habitat, especially for koalas after the bushfires.”

“Part of the process of creating so-called ‘forest residues’ includes taking whole tree roots from the ground. These are chipped on site and trucked hundreds of kilometres to be burned. Where's the carbon logic of that?”



Combined clearfelling and biomass extraction site – Tarkeeth State Forest



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AVOs and family law



Legal Writes

by John Adams

It's Friday. A barrister mate calls me into chambers.

He's got the brief from the cops in an AVO matter and wants me to draft and file a defence statement.

The timetable says by next Wednesday. "He's a good bloke," he tells me. "Needs a hand. Charge him two or three hundred, yeah?"

Can't be that hard, I think, nothing like a 10-page family law affidavit; just a couple of pages. The one we're responding to is about 600 words.

Client arrives next day, with closely typed notes, at least 2,500 words. I let him talk. Of course, it's not just about her proving, on the balance of probabilities, whether the mother of his kids is scared of him, or that such fear is reasonable.

It's about the kids, siloed nuclear weapons in a cold war that's been going on for years. Kids not spending time with him, communication problematic. He's sure it's parental alienation syndrome.'

Interview over, he leaves and emails me more paperwork; the final parenting orders, two 40-page family reports, etc. The ex, on his instructions, seems to have clearly breached the orders.

I draft the statement in



quiet moments on Monday and Tuesday, then it's Wednesday. The affidavit in a family law contravention case I'd hoped to complete before a two-hour on-line seminar on family law property division at 3pm, is postponed. Again.

The client runs a business, so I drive to his place with, I imagine, plenty of time to polish the statement, witness his signature, get to the local court registry on re-opening at 2pm, to have it stamped and served on the cops, and be home half an hour before the seminar. Sure.

These cases often start off, soon after separation, with some sort of bad behaviour resulting in a charge and/or AVO. Then the family law stuff begins; with parenting courses and family counselling and mediation, then mentions, directions hearings, and, if the parties last that long, a trial and Final Orders. Followed with, as here, AVO skirmishes. The war goes on.

The family law stuff isn't relevant to the matter at hand, but I check it out, just in case. The orders don't

work. It'd be nice if they could go back and get the judge to fix them, but *Rice v Asplund*, decided in the early days of the Family Court of Australia, says it's not that easy. Final Orders, in parenting cases, are just that: final.

I was in a trial once where the other side tried to overturn such orders, and spent a lot of money trying to get over the *Rice v Asplund* threshold. They didn't have a hope.

But to the matter at hand. By the time the statement's completed, checked, signed and witnessed, it's 2.45pm. Ten minutes later I'm at the court. A sign on the locked door tells me to get my mobile out. I argue, telephonically, with a woman inside. She says I'm not allowed in; must file on-line. Covid. I say it'll be too late then. Makes no difference. I give up and go next door, persuade the police to accept an unsealed copy, miss half the seminar.

But it's not all bad. I've got a new case. If she's found to have breached the orders, beyond reasonable doubt, and without reasonable excuse, we can ask for the other side to pay my fees.

And under section 70NBA of the *Family Law Act 1975*, even if no contravention is proved, the judge can vary the orders. Forget *Rice v Asplund*. The allegation, it seems, is enough.

Nabawan Daga!

by Aniko Papp

Who would have thought that my university degree in law would end up with me cooking on a hot stove in a tin shed before an audience of indigenous women, ranging from teenagers to grannies?

Providing education about legal issues, such as family violence or child protection, was one of my roles when out on remote indigenous communities in the NT. Trying to get an audience though was always challenging. Presenting a wordy Powerpoint presentation in English or preaching at people was never going to work.

It became evident that if the education was coupled with a feed, then there was more chance of interested participants. Eventually, this turned into me presenting a cooking class. Demonstrating how to cook a healthy meal became my legal education tool. If we made heaps of extra food for the ladies to take home to their families, then they were even more likely to come along.

Vegetarian pasta was my first dish, with me dicing carrots, chopping up cauliflower and beans to my audience perched on plastic chairs around a trestle table. I invited a teenage girl up to help me with the preparation, and watched her chase a carrot around with a huge knife without holding it down. I didn't want fingers in the meal, so asked her aunt to demonstrate how to chop a vegetable without chopping off bodily parts.

Her aunt admonished her. "This is how you do it. You should be cooking by now. I was at your age." Bored teenage shrugs, yet she quietly kept at it and stopped using the blade like a machete. "So, where's the meat?"

"This is vegetarian pasta." Dumbfounded looks all around. "No meat?"

"Do you really have to put in so many carrots?" The saving grace was lots of grated cheese on the pasta which was served. And a promise that next time, yes, there would be meat.

Yet another hot morning in a remote township found me stirring a large cast iron pot on a gas hotplate. Hungarian Goulash I announced. "What's that?" I was asked, which led me to a brief talk about a strange land far away.

The women perked up when I mentioned that my parents were born there. "Ah, so that it your country?" I admitted it was and the ladies laughed as I taught them how



to pronounce goulash properly. "Gooyash ladies... Gooyarsh."

Their interest certainly perked up when I brought out slabs of fresh meat sourced from a local butcher in Katherine. "I am making Kangaroo goulash." A room of beaming faces looked up at me. I am certain it was the prospect of meat rather than the prospect of a Hungarian dish that created those smiles.

I had a stash of genuine Hungarian paprika with me which I passed around. The ladies sniffed the bright red powder deeply and delighted in the smell as I stirred a generous heap into diced onions. I laughed as I told them, "If you want to make your kids want to eat, just fry up onions and they will always ask, what is cooking?"

As I added vegetables to the stew as this was, after all, a healthy eating class, an old lady sidled up to me saying, "Not so many beans. Don't spoil it." The scent of Hungarian Goulash wafted around the shed and out into the dirt road outside.

While the stew bubbled away, I chatted about the topic, what to do if welfare come knocking. Many sad nods all around as we talked about children being removed, with each woman each having her own family story.

"Nabawan Daga" was the judgement pronounced as I doled out the hearty stew. In Kriol it means, "a great feed." I was appalled to find tomato sauce liberally applied to many a plate, complete with a big sprinkling of salt. Then came the containers for their children. I noticed that many women only ate a small portion, leaving the major part for their families.

When I left the NT, the last of my paprika stash was bequeathed to one of my fellow workers, who assured me that her relatives back on her country would be sharing it. I have it on good authority from my indigenous co-worker that Hungarian Goulash was now being cooked in camp ovens all around her country in the Barkley Downs.

Unda Corona in the capital

I'm sure I told you one of the attractions of staying in Canberra was to be able to grow four big plants in the backyard. This of course has turned into me having to be undacuva for Scomo on just what is happening with weed in the backyards of his tiny mountain empire. And as it turns out, plenty, though I won't be putting it all in my report.

Not being allowed to grow inside has turned it into a ripper's delight. Young stoners cruise the backlanes "bud spotting" as they call it. More often it's plant spotting which they then keep an eye on waiting for the buds to arrive before the rip. Like most things, the timing is critical. Wait as long as possible for the buds to ripen and get max stickiness then pluck before the owner does, or a rival ripper. There could be as many as half a dozen rippers waiting for the bud to form, so invariably plants are taken way before they're ready.

I put all that in my Weed Report to Scomo because growing indoors is critical and we don't want any more man-eating dogs in backyards thank you. He agreed with that and was horrified when I told him the fashion of having killer dogs as pets has been fuelled by people protecting their plants. His uncle had once been savagely attacked by a pair of dogs and suddenly he now decided

to blame it on stoners. I didn't mean that to happen.

What I didn't put in my report but am telling you is that already there are organised gangs knocking on every door in the ACT offering to do people's gardening for them while they grow four plants. Or straight up paying them cash per plant, or a percentage of the profit. Or sharing half the crop which has been surprisingly popular. People want to try the devil's weed now they're allowed to. So sure, you grow me the plants and leave me half sounds pretty good.

I didn't need to put it in my report because half the staff in the Big House have had someone knock on their door, or leave a note unda it. Or even phone calls asking if you need help gardening, or, "Would you like help growing your first crop of cannabis medicine?" And a lot of people are saying yes.

The other big news is the chaos of the CCR, the Covid Counting Room. It's something like the tally room on election night but this election has been going on for nine months. The number of tests, the positives, the tracking, the deaths, the

STREET SHUFFLE

Journal of the North Coast's longest serving covert

endless numbers from different states, then suburbs, then even streets sometimes, chasing clusters. The numbers in quarantine and where. The queues of stranded Aussies trying to get home and where they are. Screens flashing changes day and night as global as well as local numbers endlessly trail on through the nights like stars in the sky turning as the earth rotates.

Clearly here on this island we are grazing in the top paddock and there is little to worry about compared to others. Then suddenly some research says we are missing nine out of every ten Corona cases and the numbers people go into panic. Any criticism or questioning of their numbers is seen as an attack on the very government itself.

I meanwhile have been wandering around the long wide corridors of power wearing my infused mask. Potato boys are trading terpenes and it's like inhaling super lemon haze ever so slightly with every breath. Extraordinary.

But no less extraordinary is their gossip about Buddhists not getting Corona. Of course this story started in the Greens office,

where else in the Big House would there be any Buddhists? The story quickly morphed into Covid-19 is a Religious Virus. RV. Corona is RV was the word. Well, when Scomo heard this he fell for it hook, line and sinker.

He bolted to the computer to look at Buddhist countries and sure enough, one after another he looked at had minimal deaths. Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar...he scrolled up and down freaking himself out at the numbers. I was there watching. He worked himself into a lather going over the figures and comparing them to others. Hardly anyone has died in Buddhist countries. He discovered his enemy the ABC had even done a story on it. The Christian and Moslem strongholds in fact were the hardest hit by Covid, he realised.

Then someone started talking about the four horseman and he was gone. His eyes were out on stalks and his cheeks bulging. This someone was not just anyone. It was an extremely senior church elder I was told, from his very own Hillsong, where thousands now believe Scomo is 'The One.'

That sort of babble, tongues and all, took over his office then, and not for the first time. And seriously, I think to myself, did any other country ever have a leader who thought they were the messiah? My mind was flooded with names in no time.