

Reflect, rebuild Lismore

I hope everyone had a good Australia Day. One of the things I love about the day is our Australia Day Awards that recognise volunteers who quietly work away behind the scenes to make our community an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

Given the last 12 months, it wasn't surprising that we received a record number of nominations from the community.

I would like to congratulate our Citizen of the Year Sophia Watt who was recognised for the many hours she put in to co-ordinate the cooking and delivery of thousands of meals for our flood-affected community.

I would also like to thank all the other winners and nominees who have given so much over the past year.

Reflect, rebuild Lismore

This month is the one-year anniversary of the devastating February 2022 natural disaster. It

is certainly not a cause for celebration, but a time for all of us to reflect on what happened and also look to the future as we rebuild.

'Reflect, Rebuild Lismore' is a series of Council-run events to mark the anniversary.

There are lots of events planned, including Nimbin Gnar-Walls presented by Bowlzilla. It's four days of music, art and skating, which kicks off with a Welcome Party in Nimbin on Thursday, 2nd March.

The next day is the Under 18s skate competition at the Goonellabah Sports & Aquatic Centre before returning to Nimbin on Saturday, 4th March for the Open, Women and Masters competitions followed by an after party.

Nimbin Gnar-Walls wraps up on the Sunday with a Dreaming BBQ.

There are also lots of free events planned in Lismore, including the closure of the Block for a CBD Gathering that includes four street

stages of live music and a Community Concert at the Turf Club for those who live in the 2480 postcode.

The first event will be on the evening of Tuesday 28th February. The community are invited to come along to Mortimer Oval in Lismore for a Service of Reflection and Healing from 6pm, with a non-denominational service between 6.30pm and 7.30pm.

For details about all 'Reflect, Rebuild Lismore' events, go to: www.visitlismore.com.au

Roads

From mid-March, work is set to start on two landslips on Nimbin Road. Traffic control lights and single-lane traffic control will remain in place during the work, which is expected to take about six weeks, depending on weather and availability of materials.

The work will involve piling and the construction of a retaining wall to allow repair of the landslips, reconstruction of the pavement, reinstatement of road and guardrail barriers



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

along with installing signs, guideposts and line-marking.

Tuntable Creek Road also experienced significant damage during the February 2022 natural disaster. Eleven notable landslips have been logged with a major landslip closing the road north of the intersection with Rose Road. The temporary access is expected to open later this month.

Prior to Christmas, works commenced on a temporary solution to open the road under traffic-controlled conditions.

The temporary solution is subject to accelerated design



Tuntable Creek Road restoration included work performed by a 16-tonne hydraulic crawler mounted drill rig. This remote-operated machine is designed for safe access to undertake geotechnical restoration works, and is drilling around 8m into the embankment.

development with geotechnical investigations occurring at the same time as the construction works.

To date the following works have been completed:

- Clearing of site for detailed geological mapping;
- Drilling under geotechnical engineering supervision to determine failure mechanism and soil profile;
- Installation of piezometers and inclinometers to monitor movement and ground water levels;
- Construction of working platform below the slip;
- Installation of soil nailing

and shotcrete.

The works crew returned to the site last month to complete the next construction stages, which consisted of:

- Installing the remaining soil nails and shotcrete;
- Reconstructing pavement through the slip zone;
- Installing traffic control lights and open one lane.

To keep up-to-date with all natural-disaster related roadworks, go to the Maintaining Our Roads and Bridges tab on Council's Your Say website at: www.yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au

Don't get lost in detail, support the Voice

Just when I thought politics in our country were heading in the right direction with the defeat of Somo and his fossil fuel agenda, it feels like we are slipping backwards again.

I have to admit when I first heard about the proposed 'Voice to Parliament' I thought that it was a bit tokenistic and that what was needed was a Treaty.

The recent passing of Australia Day has really stoked the division in our community over what should be a really positive initiative by the Albanese Government. It's become clear to me that the Voice has to be the first step, not a Treaty.

There was tremendous goodwill and a feeling of optimism when the Prime Minister re-affirmed the government's commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart at the Gama Festival back in July last year.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart was unanimously endorsed at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention which was attended by over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Delegates from across the country.

In my opinion it's a very generous and humble request to the wider Australian community. Quite simply it called for enshrining a First Nations voice in the Australian Constitution.

It seeks to create a better Australia, a more united Australia that recognises the long and proud Aboriginal history on this vast continent.



by Cr Jeff Johnson
Ballina Council

For those arguing against this modest request from both the left and right of our political sphere I ask you to look at how and where this request has come.

To see this as an important next step in the quest for reconciliation; something that will move our country forward together by not only recognising the important place that First Nations people have in modern Australia, and also how we can all benefit by embracing and celebrating the rich culture, knowledge and opportunities that it presents, not only as part of the healing process, but as part of connecting to this great continent on a much deeper, even spiritual level.

It's a tragedy what happened in our past (which is certainly not unique to Australia; the knowledge that has been lost and the trauma that is ongoing for so many in our community.

To hear Aboriginal leaders from both the Greens and the Liberal National Party speaking out against the Voice is shattering.

The proposed referendum is simply about recognising First Nations people in

the Constitution and acknowledging that they should be consulted. If we as a country can't do that then how could we ever get to a Treaty like some are demanding happen now.

If those who are now organising for a No vote are successful and cause this referendum to fail, then that would be an absolute travesty. That simply can't happen.

The recent division from across the political spectrum is starting to remind me of the Republican referendum held over 20 years ago. That failed, and as a result we still have the British Monarch as our official head of state, despite my belief that the vast majority don't feel that the newly anointed King Charles III has any real say or role in our society or democracy. In the year 2023, how can a British monarch still officially be our Head of State?

Let's not make the same mistake again and push genuine reconciliation back by getting caught up in the detail or lack thereof in the forthcoming referendum.

The Republican referendum failed due to the symbolism getting lost in the detail. Those voices calling for more details in this forthcoming referendum I feel are just looking for ways to foster further division and confusion.

A Voice to parliament is the minimum, so let's make this an overwhelmingly positive result that will bring our society and the important place that First Nations culture will always have another step forward.

Our recovery journey

by Cr Adam Guise
Lismore City Council

Off the back of the rally outside the Reconstruction Corporation's offices just recently, it's worthwhile reflecting on where we are as a community and the journey ahead of us.

It goes without saying that we are still a community hurting and in trauma. Although superficially we have cleaned up our streets and rebuilt some semblance of normalcy in our lives and businesses, many are still struggling financially, physically and mentally with the devastating events of 2022.

I'm not one to labour on trauma and hurt, but we can't deny that it is still palpable in our community, and people are still very much in limbo about what our individual and collective futures have in store.

Although a number of people have been ostensibly offered buybacks, a process must inevitably go through the paces before coming to fruition. Even then it may not be on the terms or price that people can accept in order to move elsewhere, particularly in the absence of affordable land being made available.

While some people have rebuilt, the anxiety of another possible flood on the horizon leaves them in no better place, except they can get on with their lives for now.

While some posit we must embrace uncertainty, not all of us humans are made for it, leading to anxiety and consternation. This is where governments have a role.

What we need from our government and leaders is



Photo: Chibo Mertineit

clear communication that everyone will be looked after. That no one will be left behind. That government will ensure a safety net to look after the most vulnerable and get them through these uncertain times. That is why we have government and a society: to foster a collective and united purpose and look after one another in our time of need.

In this regard we need to transform the usual way of doing things. No longer can we rely on the free market and a hands off government to deliver the equitable outcomes we need. Affordable land and housing is essential to our collective wellbeing and futures. Furthering the divide between the haves and have-nots will only exacerbate the growing resentment and palpable suffering of the significant numbers of people being disenfranchised by our current system.

In order to achieve this, we must be bold and have the political will to tax the millionaires and corporations who are not paying their fair share; to end the billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies that prop up a broken and destructive carbon economy; and to heal our community and country through

collective action of landscape regeneration and food production that prepares us for the challenges ahead.

Fossil fuels and the power structures that have come with it have only existed for a few hundred years. A blip in the space of time. First Nations people existed on this continent for tens of thousands of years in harmony with this landscape, in a sophisticated and complex culture of respect, love and connection to landscape. There is so much to learn from this and it shows that where there is the will, there is the way.

Election cycles come and go, and the treadmill of the political churn will continue to spill out inspirational leaders and arch villains. But regardless of those who fill these places, we fundamentally need a return to our landscape: a reconnection to our country, nature and each other who we share this planet with.

Uncertainty will inevitably force this upon us, so the sooner we can embrace our collective well-being, the better for people and planet.

As always, get in touch at: adamguise@gmail.com or phone 0478-684-497

From the forest frontline: a battleground in the Coalition's koala wars



Sue Higginson at the protest. Courtesy The Age

by Sue Higginson MLC

I am writing this from the frontline of the forest blockade at Yarratt State Forest near Taree. I feel like I am on the battlefields of the NSW Government's Koala Wars.

Two brave peaceful women are in tree-sits several hundred metres apart. The tree-sits are roped and cabled in such a way that makes the three machines below each tree-sit inoperable. It's a very crafty rigging job, it's a very precarious position for these two brave women to be in, they are mother and daughter.

It is still dark, people showed up, they are gathered all around. The logging has been stopped, the forest is standing and all of a sudden every minute counts more than it did before.

Yarratt State Forest is being logged and it shouldn't be. It is a public forest that is identified koala habitat and has known significant koala occupancy, indicating clusters of resident populations. It is the only State Forest in the Taree Management Area to have escaped the 2019 - 2020 catastrophic Black Summer bushfires.

After the fires the NSW Government's own independent expert forest advisory body, the Natural Resources Commission, advised in a report that logging in the Taree Management Area must be suspended for three years from the time of the fire because of "the risk of serious and irreversible harm to environmental values from the cumulative impact of fires and logging".

Instead of following the expert advice, the Government blatantly ignored the Natural Resources Commission and started logging in Yarratt State Forest. The Government actually buried the report, we only became aware of it because a courageous person acting in

the public interest leaked it.

Since the fires, the Coalition Government has logged half of the forest and now they are back to log the other half, right where the really good koala habitat is. Since the fires there have been 31 koala records in Yarratt. Yet in nearby Kiwarra State Forest the other State Forest in the Taree Management Area, that was severely burnt in the fires, there have only been five records of koalas.

I arrived at Yarratt before sunrise and was greeted by brave people who are putting everything on hold to stand up courageously for our forests. They know that when the Government's Forestry Corporation come across a koala in a tree they want to log, they just have to wait until it leaves and then they can cut that koala tree down.

The logging contractors arrive. This is often a tense moment. They tell us that we are making their workplace unsafe, as they stand in a clear-felled log dump, with their chainsaws, giant machines that rip trees from the forest, log loaders, skidders and logging trucks.

We tell them it is a public forest, it is the habitat of Australia's most iconic wild animal, which will be extinct in the wild by 2050 unless we stop destroying its habitat and that we have no machines or any other threatening instrument. That we are peaceful and have only our communications devices.

The Forestry Corporation arrives, and they call the police. The police arrive, they tell us that the Forestry Corporation has just locked up the whole of Yarratt State Forest and now everyone has to leave this public forest so that the contractors can get back to logging it, the koala and other



threatened species habitat and the trees that we need in the ground to draw down carbon. They tell us if we don't leave we will all be arrested.

It's unfathomable the Government is running its own protection racket, allowing the Forestry Corporation to trash our public native forests and destroy koala habitat against its own rules and advice. We witnessed the Liberals and the Nationals tear themselves apart over the koala wars in Parliament House and in the media, but now we are witnessing the koala wars on the frontlines, right here in our precious public native forests.

This is an absolute racket and it's an expensive one. Last year logging our public native forests cost NSW taxpayers \$9 million and \$28 million dollars over the past two years. We have a State election on 25th March, and in the weeks leading up to it the community-led campaigns to end logging our public native forests here in NSW are growing.

The selfless courage of the mother and daughter tree-sitters I witnessed today brought tears to my eyes. They are peaceful, intelligent, loving warriors on the right side of history. Now is the time to get involved.

Please get in touch here to know how: www.suehigginson.org

Building a better world for women and girls



Zonta Northern Rivers president Lyndall Smith presented Lismore MP Janelle Saffin with honorary membership of Zonta

by Janelle Saffin MP
State Member for Lismore

In January, the Zonta Club of Northern Rivers awarded me honorary membership in recognition of my battles for affordable housing, disaster relief, action on domestic violence and women's issues, and rights for all.

The tagline for Zonta International is 'building a better world for women and girls locally and globally' and it has been doing that for more than 100 years.

The Northern Rivers group was formed in 1996 and I was a member in the early days. I've seen for myself the positive difference Zonta Northern Rivers has made to local lives.

For example: In 1998 Zonta set up and furnished the first women's room at Lismore Courthouse, so women in domestic violence cases didn't have to wait in the same area as the perpetrator.

They extended this initiative to other Northern Rivers courthouses and it is now required that courthouses provide women's rooms.

They set up the Zonta Room at Lismore Base Hospital for women and families suffering from a stillbirth or late miscarriage, so they are not cared for in the maternity ward with mothers and babies.

They also created the Little Angels memorial garden at Lismore Crematorium. Zonta advocates and raises community awareness of gender-based violence locally and globally, and has a strong focus on housing for vulnerable women.

Older women are the fastest growing group facing homelessness in our society and before the floods Zonta was working alongside North Coast Community Housing to support older homeless women.

Then the floods hit and the crisis became worse.

"We swung into action immediately after the floods with paid phone vouchers, new manchester items, and personal items for delivery to NCCH to assist those in need. Our focus has always been to make their life a bit more comfortable with dignity," Zonta Northern Rivers secretary, Julie Burton said.

Zonta flood relief efforts are ongoing and include furnishing the emergency housing pods at Wollongbar and funding play equipment at Wardell pod village.

Their main fundraising event of the year is an Open Garden at 131 Platypus Drive Uralba, on Saturday and Sunday, 11th and 12th February.

Funds raised will support Zonta's work with older vulnerable homeless women and with flood-affected women and girls in our region.

Zonta welcomes new members. Women who would like to join their efforts to build a better world for women and girls can contact: northernrivers@zontadistrict22.org for information. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month in Alstonville.

When Zonta president Lyndall Smith presented me with honorary membership she said, "You are a powerhouse and great ally and we thank you very much for all that you do."

I would like to express my own thanks to Lyndall and the Zonta members.

It is amazing what a bunch of smart, committed Northern Rivers women can achieve together.

Labor/Greens cuts to health services



by Kevin Hogan,
Federal Member for Page

Under the previous Government, individuals could receive 20 Medicare-subsidised psychology sessions.

The Labor/Greens alliance have cut this back to 10. This is unacceptable, especially in our region.

I have been calling for them to reinstate this back to 20, but they haven't.

This is not OK. Governments need to act as if it is their family members who are going through this physical and emotional journey, and get the support we deserve.

Further, Labor/Greens do not care about the doctor shortages our regional communities are facing.

They have removed the rule which sends overseas trained doctors and new

Australian doctors to regional areas first.

Under Labor/Greens, this means new doctors will choose to work in metro areas, further ensuring regional communities suffer from longer wait times, and less quality GPs to choose from.

When the Coalition was in government, a policy was put in place (Distribution Priority Area Policy), which meant overseas trained doctors came to our region, as they had to work in rural and remote areas first.

Labor/Greens needs to bring the Distribution Priority Area Policy back as it was intended to help our regional communities.

Our health needs deserve better treatment and respect than this.

Series of events to reflect on floods

Belated happy new year to you all. I hope you had a joyful time over the holidays, perhaps catching up with friends and family; or getting away for a holiday break elsewhere.

I was away visiting family last month and missed the deadline for the January NGT. We rarely go away at Christmas, preferring to stay home and avoid the crowds who are also holidaying across the state.

But this year we decided to drive to Victoria and catch up with many relatives we haven't seen for quite a while due to the Covid restrictions.

It was a time of mixed emotions – joy at meeting a very new grandniece – and sadness as we farewelled an aged aunt.

Driving down south and seeing the devastation they have experienced from their recent floods brought back the memories of our disaster last February.

Like us, many people lost their homes or had them badly damaged by the flood waters. The roads were also impacted – making travel quite slow and hazardous in places and some lengthy detours were needed to



by Cr Darlene Cook
Lismore City Council

avoid washed out roads and bridges.

My heart and sympathies went out to the people of those towns and villages who, like ourselves, will take many months or years to recover from the natural disasters of 2022.

As we approach the first anniversary of the February 28 floods, we need to allow ourselves time and space to reflect on the impacts of that trauma; but also, to take some pride in what we have achieved in recovery and rebuilding our city, our villages, our homes, and our lives over the past 12 months.

There will be a series of events to commemorate the disaster, to reflect and

rebuild.

There have been calls for the heroes of the Lismore flood rescues – the Tinny Brigade – to be formally recognised. So there will be a Recognition of the Boaties Private Ceremony – a private BBQ and small ceremony to recognise the heroic actions and amazing rescues undertaken on 28th February 2022.

This will be an invitation-only event. If you, or someone you know, was a boatie, please provide your name, email and phone number to: council@lismore.nsw.gov.au

There will be a reflection and healing service for residents and the wider community to attend. The service will be run by the Lismore Fellowship of Churches. Support services will be located on-site at Mortimer Oval on Tuesday 28th February at 6pm.

There will be a well-being hub set up at the Quad to allow the community to talk, reflect and heal.

Several skate events have been scheduled for Nimbin and Lismore during March; as well, a 20/20 cricket match between the

community and retired cricketers led by Adam Gilchrist; and Opera in the Gardens at the Turf Club.

For full details of these events, please go to: www.visitlismore.com.au/reflect-rebuild-lismore/event-program/p/1457

Council resumes its regular monthly meetings from 14th February – take time to look at the business papers and if a matter of interest to you is scheduled, please take the time to come to the meeting and speak on it. Sharing your opinions is vital to enable Councillors to best represent you and your voice in our debates.

Another way you can let us know your thoughts is to respond to the many items placed on public consultations during the year: policies, strategies, parks redevelopment, the rail trail, business promotions.

We need your feedback to help us improve the services we provide to our community – check out: <https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au>

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

Women's healing circle gathering

by Roisin McSweeney

“Within myself is my unique essence, dying to be radiant and free.

This essence is my greatness and it is up to me to bring its magic out into the world – to dance with life from a place of curiosity, love and compassion, knowing my worth.

This greatness is often disempowered, hiding behind my story of hurts too heavy and frightening to acknowledge and break down on my own.

Sitting in the circle was an opportunity to be safely held, by the land and other women, to let the hurt unwind its tendrils from my being.

To feel myself again without the weight of my beliefs and judgments and instead with my love and power, a reminder of what I am capable of, how I want to feel moving through the world.”

◀ See more details at left.

Women have gathered in healing circles for as long as time.

These circles continue the ancient practice of gathering intentionally to explore our inner worlds to reflect, heal and remember who we are and to be held by each other.

Gathering Women offers a safe and nurturing space held by experienced elders Lea and Jacqueline, who have been sitting in and holding this space for over 20 years.

A Gathering Women event is being held on Ponyland in Nimbin, the land of the Widjabul Wia-bal from Thursday 9th March to Sunday 12th March.

For more details and to purchase tickets, please go to the Facebook Event Gathering Women Nimbin or find the link on the Nimbin Hookups fb page.

Please do not hesitate to reach out for any support you might need to get yourself there.

V-Day: One Million Rising in Byron

According to the United Nations, one in every three women will be physically or sexually abused in her lifetime.

One Billion Rising is the biggest mass action to end violence against women and children in human history.

Every February, women and supporters rise in countries across the world to show our local communities and the world what one billion people looks like.

We rise through dance to express joy and community and celebrate the fact we have not been defeated by this increasing violence, and are determined to create a new kind of consciousness, one where violence will be resisted until it is unthinkable.

The 'V' stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.

In solidarity with women around the world, women, men and children will dance in defiance, for our 11th consecutive year, on V-Day, Tuesday 14th February, on Main Beach, Byron Bay. We will gather at 6.30am.

All are welcome. Wear red, make a sign, join the dance, be loud, be counted.

Vagina ConVersations

On Tuesday evening, 14th February, women will use spoken word, dance, song and comedy to share their experiences with Vagina ConVersations, a more contemporary evolution of the Vagina Monologues.



V-Day in Byron last year

After sell-out performances seven years running, and sponsored by the Byron Theatre, this informal, diverse collective of some of Byron Shire's powerful, creative women and non-binary people with vaginas, are presenting their pieces.

Some are personal or professional or political stories which inspire and educate; they empower and support. It's funny, sad, courageous, challenging and celebratory.

The show will be MC'd by Zenith Virago.

All proceeds will go to the Women's Resource Service, Byron Escape Fund, and the Tweed DVIRC Impact Fund,

to assist local women escaping intimate partner and family violence to pay for emergency accommodation, and keeping women and children safe.

Vagina ConVersations will show at the Byron Theatre, Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th February commencing at 7.30pm.

It will show at the Regent Theatre, Murwillumbah on Thursday 16th February, commencing at 7.15pm.

Tickets are available at the venues; \$40 / \$30 concession. (Byron tickets also include a Theatre booking fee.)

For more information go to: www.onebillionrising.org and www.vday.org or Facebook: V-Day Byron Bay.

An invitation to give yourself time and permission to step out of your busy world to sit in circle with other women during a four day women's retreat.

We are excited to share with you teachings and practices that unveil the deeply hidden and sometimes lost mysteries of the feminine.

In an intimate sharing space with no more than 15 participants. This circle will take place in Autumn for four days on beautiful land, where we will be welcomed, held and supported by the natural surrounds and each other.

For more details visit <https://events.humanitix.com/gathering-women-nimbin-autumn-retreat-2023>

Much love
Lea and Jacqueline
0448 840 030

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North Lismore Plateau development rejected

by Dot Moller

On Thursday 15th December, it took the Northern Regional Planning Panel (four panellists) less than half an hour to unanimously decline the Development Application 5.2021.221.1 for the northern section of the North Lismore Plateau, also known as the Sleeping Lizard.

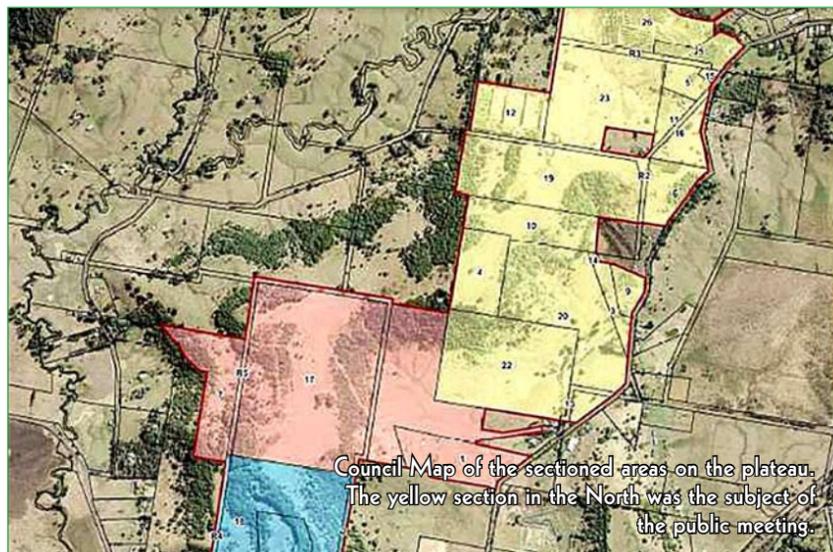
Their overall reason? "Not in the public interest."

Allura Parklands, as the northern section will be called, is so far, the biggest housing development ever on the North Coast, with 45 new roads, hundreds of homes, infrastructure, and parks. The Planning Panel was concerned that a development so large and complex was missing detail and was not sequentially planned at all.

Although there were only six speakers, plus the development company, Mackycorp, they were power-packed presentations with Ros Irwin front and centre. I was the last speaker and am very pleased that others dealt with the topic in more detail as mine was more big picture – climate change and Aboriginal heritage.

There was a Dunoon Road resident, representing other locals, who was concerned about the traffic and stormwater impact; a well-known community person who said that we already have 500 homes that need relocation with nowhere to go; also two Boerrie Creek residents who already have landslips and water gushing down onto them from the plateau. All speakers were against the development as it currently stands.

In 2012, Lismore Council's premise for developing the North Lismore Plateau was always based on the need for more housing. We badly needed affordable and flood-safe homes right back then – many years before February's



catastrophic floods. Council produced the 2012 Landowner Planning Map (see attached image). The planning was based on a predicted increase in population. The predicted increase didn't happen. Now, all we have is uncertainty.

The new Lismore Growth and Realignment Strategy represents a significant shift in re-imagining Lismore to facilitate potential growth and the relocation of homes and businesses to areas outside of anticipated future floods.

To sum up, Lismore Council's response to the DA in question, quoted from their Assessment Report is: "The likely impacts of the development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments and impact to aboriginal heritage are not acceptable in its current form. The application is not considered to be in the public interest and the application should be refused."

The DA was lodged with Council on 5th May 2021 and has been protracted due to the scale of the development. The process had been halted by requests for additional information and

differences of opinion around significant issues coupled with the changeover of applicant/developer (Riordan Pty Ltd handed over to Mackycorp) and changed assessing officer at Council.

By the end of 2022, there were still outstanding unresolved issues. The DA was passed to the State Government as it will cost over \$30 million.

Back to the public meeting, Mackycorp took a couple of minutes to respond to the panel's questions. They asked for six months to complete the DA and to be able to respond to the Council's requests.

Almost immediately following questions from the planning panel, Mackycorp threatened to go to the Land and Environment Court with this matter.

Now it's up to Mackycorp. Will they present a new nuanced DA which responds to the need for affordable homes and relocations for our flood-affected population? Will they take into account the significant Aboriginal heritage issues? Will they decide to take Lismore Council and our ratepayer funds to the courts?



Chamber Chat

by Daffyd Hyett, president

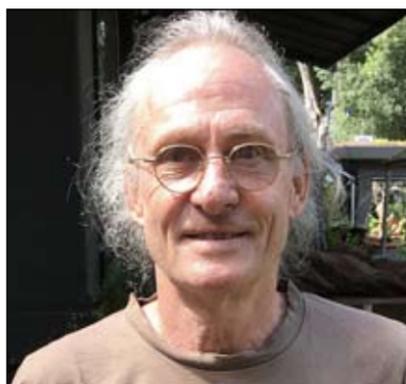
Home from holidays, back to school, recovering financially, physically and mentally from the silly season. Welcome back.

The weather was excellent apart from the odd cracker of a storm ripping through the village. We are in the subtropics and must expect such events at this time of year.

While trading was robust and visitor numbers were well up on the main street, lack of staffing was reported as an issue. This was a major concern for visitors who came to Nimbin expecting a wide range of choices particularly in the food and retail service area only to find many outlets closed during the Xmas and New Year's peak period.

A combination of penalty rates, casual staff taking time out during the holiday break, low profit margins due to inflation, a lesser number of international workers – who knows, but many doors were closed.

It's so common that many proprietors are now having to reassess their business models. Reduced trading days and opening hours, adjusted menu items, employee contracts, looking deep within deciding how to insulate from



staff shortages and the ravages of the modern economy.

The Lismore City Council failed to provide relief staffing for the Nimbin Visitor Information Centre at the Nimbin Bush Theatre as earlier promised, which left visitors somewhat in doubt as to what tracks, trails and tourist facilities were open and available during the holiday period. The Chamber will address this issue going into the future at the next committee meeting.

The new visitor welcome and directional signage has now been installed. A lot of positive comments have been reported, and action has been taken to fix the few items needing correction, thanks to those who took time to contact the Chamber.

We are now considering how to best use the existing hoop signs that have become redundant. Farmers Market advertising is the most favoured repurpose.

Fortunately, the roads both in and out of Nimbin have improved, even though we still have a long way to go and there is still danger for drivers dodging potholes.

The condition of the western car park behind the Cullen Street shops, including both entry and exit, is in desperate need of repair – this issue will be raised with Council at our next meeting.

Level 3 water restrictions have been removed by Rouse Water, however the boiled water alert remains on the Nimbin rural line.

The Lismore City Council interim GM John Walker has elected not to apply for a permanent term of office, having served the community before and after the 2022 regional floods. John Walker was the fifth General Manager at the council in five years, which is a matter of great concern.

The Nimbin Chamber of Commerce thanks Mr Walker for his efforts during one of the most difficult periods in the region's history. We wish John well in the future.

Nimbin Aquarius50 festival planning is well underway. The Chamber's planning subcommittee have engaged Dex Tallo as Festival Production Manager and Greg Bork as Festival Administrator.

For further information and updates please refer to the festival website: www.aquarius50.com.au

New members

The Chamber would like to welcome Stuart McConville of Pooh Solutions. Stuart is a long-term Nimbin resident and regular columnist and contributor to the *Nimbin GoodTimes*.

With our members' support we are working towards building a better, stronger and more vibrant future for our children and the community as a whole.

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FREEING ASSANGE

by John Jiggins

On New Year's Day 2023, John Lyons, the Global Affairs Editor of the ABC, made the extraordinary prediction that within the next two months Julian Assange would be released.

Lyons gave no further details, and the Albanese government has avoided repeated requests for confirmation of this remarkable claim, maintaining the mantra that these are matters that rely on careful negotiations between states, and need to be dealt with by "quiet diplomacy".

However, it is unlikely that a senior journalist for Australia's national broadcaster would make such a bold and courageous prediction unless it had been leaked to him by someone he regarded as a credible source close to the government.

Who might the leaker be? The obvious candidate is the Albanese government.

The problem with quiet diplomacy is that people can easily mistake it for no diplomacy, and call it such. The government needed to provide its critics evidence, feedback that it was pursuing the release of Assange, and the leak has more than achieved this.

Assange's family and supporters were clearly delighted with the prediction, though the more sceptical found it difficult to believe that the long persecution could be nearing its end.

Assange's father, John Shipton, cited Albanese's parliamentary reply to Kooyong Independent, Monique Ryan on 30th November, who asked if the government would intervene to bring Assange home.

Albanese's reply was: "Enough is enough. It is time for this matter to be brought to a conclusion."

John Shipton referenced this Albanese statement in his response:

"In politics, words are actions, so Prime Minister Albanese has increased the intensity of his statements and now is saying to bring

this matter to a close, which is putting his reputation and the Labor government's reputation and the heft of Australia in its relationship with the US to the test.

"If there is a sincere relationship between Australia and the US, then Julian will be home in two months."

No contradiction of the leak came from the US side; neither from the President, nor the CIA who had initiated the Espionage Act prosecution, nor any branch of the National Security state: the silence of these "lambs" was remarkable.

So what has changed on the US side? They would have been consulted about the leak, so presumably they are happy that it will provide a face-saving exit.

The US legal team won the judicial battle to extradite Assange, so they may wish to quit while they are winning, with the legal precedent established for extradition under the Espionage Act, rather than facing the possibility of a successful challenge from Assange's legal team.

After corraling and torturing Assange for 13 years, the US could easily agree with Albanese that 'enough is enough', and Assange (and journalists everywhere) had been taught a sufficiently chilling lesson.

By releasing Assange, the Biden administration could even pose as champions of journalism and defenders of the first amendment by dropping the Espionage Act charges against Assange as *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Der Spiegel* and *El Pais* (all WikiLeaks partners in publishing the material) have recently urged, because of the threat it poses to a free press and to all of them.

It also has the additional benefit of lavishing upon Anthony Albanese and his government an enormous public relations gift: the return of one slightly damaged Australian citizen named Julian Assange.

This year, Australia will witness an



Team Assange Byron Bay Photo: Roy Drew

unprecedented US charm offensive. In March, former president Obama will undertake a two-city tour of Australia.

In May, Biden himself will be in Sydney for the QUAD meeting to sign Australia up for the coming war with China. This will require purchasing massive quantities of extraordinarily expensive US hardware.

Streets filled with angry Assange supporters would not send the necessary message of Australian support for US global ambitions.

Complimentary as he was to the Albanese government, John Shipton's assessment of previous governments was scathing:

"In my view, the acquiescence to the persecution of Julian Assange by the United Kingdom, the Swedish Government and the United States by Australia over time became complicity," he said.

"They were complicit because they said nothing. And as we all know, Julian Assange is an Australian citizen."

John Shipton was critical of the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which also includes ASIS, and he was pleased their influence had been superseded by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in the hierarchy of administration in Canberra.



John Shipton

"I still am convinced it (the persecution) is institutional because it's been 13 years, five prime ministers, five governments, four foreign ministers, all having the same public and private approach towards Julian Assange," John Shipton said.

"It is institutional within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The institutional attitude to citizen Julian Assange has been similar to the Foreign Office, MI6, the FBI and the State Department in the United States.

"There's been no significant difference in any of these institutional organisations to Julian Assange and his persecution."

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Medican workshop this month

by Michael Balderstone

Nimbin's HEMP Embassy has lined up virtually all new speakers for a Medican to be held at the Bush Theatre beside Mulgum Creek on Saturday 25th February, starting at 10.30am NSW time.

Apart from the new Dean of Law at Southern Cross Uni, our old mate David Heilpern, all are fresh faces for Nimbin, and mostly from the now-booming legal medical cannabis industry.

Debbie Ranson is a cannabis nurse working in a Brisbane clinic, passionate about helping people access cannabis as a first-line medicine.

As is Dr Ben Jansen, the founder of Burleigh Heads Cannabis, Cannabis Doctors Australia and Canview. Ben is a Kiwi and he told me doctors over there are more



open to alternative healing practices because they can't get sued, but here, it's eyes down and straight along the Pharma path!

Des Harp is a member of the Professional Compounding Chemists of Australia who specialise in medication modification to suit your personal requirements. Very interesting and inspired cannabis healers all these three.

Rachel Payne is one of

two new Legalise Cannabis Members of Parliament in Victoria and we all look forward to hearing about her plans for bringing about change down South where they are in the exciting position to almost force Premier Dan to roll a joint!

And another special visitor, Marc Selan, will tell us about his last eight years running a Cannabis Club in Barcelona which sounds just like what we need here in Australia. Cannabis saved and continues to save his life after he suffered numerous adverse reactions to pharma medications for his ulcerative colitis.

He wants to share with us his unique insight into how a legal market for cannabis can work so effectively and easily.

Terrific food will be available at the venue and entry is by donation. For further info please email: head@hempembassy.net

Resilient Byron becomes Plan C

by Zach Rook

Ahead of the anniversary of the 2022 floods, Resilient Byron has announced a change of name to Plan C, with the tagline: 'Our Plan is the Community'.

This milestone is a major move for Plan C on its mission to further build disaster preparedness in the Northern Rivers region. The name change reflects the activities of the organisation over the past 12 months and our goals for the future.

Since its inception in 2019, a lot has changed in the Northern Rivers and we have too. Initially, our focus was on connecting and supporting communities in the Byron Shire.

But it soon became apparent that we needed to reach out across the whole region to have the level of impact necessary to really make a sustainable change.

As part of the announcement, Plan C is releasing another 170 free training places for any local resident to join the Northern Rivers Community Carers and Responders Network (CCR). Dates and all details are available at: <https://www.ccrnetwork.org>

This project aims to support greater crisis prevention, preparedness, response and recovery at the community level. It seeks to achieve this by



Training workshop

setting up a network of 300+ volunteer CCRs across the Ballina, Byron, Tweed, Kyogle, Lismore and Richmond Valley LGAs who form a trained, connected and empowered network of community leaders dedicated to improving community cohesion and disaster resilience.

CCRs learn about disaster resilience and community well-being, plus food, water, energy and housing security, and also receive free training in first aid and psychological first aid.

Jean Renouf, CEO of Plan C explains, "The change underlines our desire to ensure that our name reflects our renewed focus. We continue building resilience, but we focus equally on fostering community connections and regeneration.

"The 'C' refers to community, connection, caring, cohesion, and collaboration. 'And of course, the name also makes

a quirky reference to Plan B, which refers to an alternative strategy.

"We now invite anyone in the region to apply to become a community carer and responder (CCR)."

This news comes in the wake of many recent initiatives and accomplishments of the charity, including:

- Training 130 community carers and responders since the 2022 floods;
- Launching our peer-to-peer mentoring program to improve further community resilience and connection;
- Launching 'Facing Up', a series of symposium-style events to build emotional resilience to climate change in the Northern Rivers;
- Undertaking a scoping study to improve food security in the Northern Rivers;
- Taking an active role in the flood response and recovery;
- Supporting Covid-19 affected communities, and more.

Plan C is a not-for-profit charity founded by Dr Jean Renouf in 2019 to build the resilience and regenerative capacities of Northern Rivers communities in the face of future disasters and crises.

Dr Jean Renouf is an academic at Southern Cross University, and a former international aid worker with 15 years of experience working in war and disaster zones.

Learn more about Plan C at: www.planc.org.au

MardiGrass organisation proceeds apace

by Michael Balderstone, president
Nimbin HEMP Embassy

The MOB (MardiGrass Organising Body) meetings have started in the Hemp Bar every Friday from 4.20. MardiGrass 2023 will be held on the first weekend in May, the 5th, 6th and 7th.

The following weekend the ten-day 50 year anniversary and celebration of the Aquarius Festival begins with events being planned for themed days from May 12 to May 21.

Many MardiGrass speakers are already booked in, including the new Victorian Legalise Cannabis MP's Rachel Payne and David Ettershank, who will be joining their WA counterparts Dr Brian Walker and Sophia Moermond.

We may even have a NSW Legislative Council MP by then, with the State election in March.

I look forward to hearing what they hope to achieve, especially in Victoria where they hold the balance of power. The driving laws are an obvious urgent change to aim for but the sooner we are allowed to grow our own the better.

How infuriating we have to buy corporate cannabis most likely from Canada and with a prescription from a doctor. They've certainly cornered us. Plenty to protest about!

The Hemposium will be a full program again of course, with a Medican preview planned for the Bush Theatre in Nimbin on Saturday 25th February. This year MardiGrass has a special new mushroom speaker, Caine Barlow from Entheogenesis Australis, who will be holding workshops.

Otherwise all the usual favourite MardiGrass events are planned, like the Hemp Olympix joint rolling contests, bong throw and yell, and the growers iron person event.

The Great Green Cabaret on Friday evening and the Sunday Pot Poetry with David Hallett. Pot Art, the Kombi Konvoy with the 420 on Saturday, and the Big Rally on Sunday.

Stoned Chess is planned to be on the Greenbank deck this year, with the Hemp farmers' talks and workshops on building

and balm-making moving to the Hemp Club's new premises opposite on Cullen Street.

Exciting that Ash Grunwald has confirmed he is singing on the Saturday night and other musicians and performers should get in touch now if they would like to play.

The MardiGrass Marijuana Music Awards are on again and The Laugh Mob are looking forward to coming up from Sydney for nightly shows as always. Register for the MMMA on the website... no songs longer than 4 minutes 20.

It's become apparent from the steady stream of visitors to the Hemp Embassy that the stigma around weed is melting away like the early morning fog in sunshine. Every second person has an aunt who's discovered pot and now she sleeps, or can walk again. I kid you not.

Weed can be awesome for arthritis, and the Tibetans call cannabis sleeping medicine. Every aspect of healing with cannabis will be discussed at the Hemposium over the weekend at four different venues. Please bring your experience and knowledge to share.

There is also a growers' circle planned for gardeners to swap tips.

We suggest getting organised early with a non-stoner driver to bring you to the weekend or join the Ubud and Doober drug-free drivers groups helping others to get here. Protesting the drug war is not all skittles!

As usual we are reliant on volunteers for this protest, and please think about how you might like to get involved. There is a form on the website or a book in the HEMP Embassy you can write your name down in. Or come to a Friday 420 meeting.

You can also buy a weekend pass now on the website if you want to support the protest. \$55 for a whole weekend pass, \$150 with three nights camping at our excellent Showgrounds.

Volunteers please tell us if you might like to stay on and help with the Aquarius 50th birthday celebrations as well.

For more information about Aquarius 50th check out: aquarius50.com.au but for MardiGrass it's all on: nimbinmardigrass.com

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Mothership discussion



by Doug Moffett

The Milky Way contains between 100 and 400 billion stars and at least that amount again in planets. Current astronomical estimation supports the existence of a further two trillion other galaxies.

Other astronomical estimates conclude there are 10,000 stars for every grain of sand on Earth,

with approximately one or two exoplanets circling each star.

Comparing the oldest known planet, 13 billion years, to the age of our Earth, 4.5 billion years, it can be seen that 65% of the universe cooled and formed into planets before our Earth did, by anything up to 8.5 billion years.

It would follow that the creation and evolution of life would occur as soon as conditions became suitable,

on any given planet.

I present two shows on Nim-FM 102.3 community radio, one on philosophy, *Think About It*, and the other, *ET Reality*.

I was a member of a UFO research organisation for 25 years and have been involved with investigations, seminar presentations, and was their media spokesperson for 20 years.

I have appeared on *Sunrise*, *The*

Project, *The Morning Show*, a BBC documentary, *Stargazing Live*, as well as national and international radio stations.

The UFO media climate is very different these days. Game-changing material has been released by US Defence. In spite of masses of information being released and their jaw-dropping implications, it is important to distinguish facts from logical speculation.

I will host a discussion on *ET Reality* on Saturday 18th February from 12.30pm to 2pm at the Bush Theatre, as a fundraiser for Nim-FM. Entry by donation.

Join me to discuss questions like "Are we alone in the universe?" Mathematical probability would indicate the contrary.

There have been five mass extinctions on Earth. During the Permian mass extinction, 225 million years ago, 96% of all marine life died. Yet, after each mass extinction, life refused to yield, such is its resilience and tenacity.

Life's determination to persist can be seen in places as inhospitable as the Antarctic to the Marianas Trench, let alone the subterranean oceans of distant moons, like Europa, Gannymede or Titan.

The universe is huge and getting around can be a challenge. 200 years ago, the fastest way from point A to point B was a horse. Now we can circumnavigate the globe in 24 hours, while sending a robotic

mission to Mars.

We must be mindful of the head start most sentient beings have in relation to their relative technology, while not losing sight of the exponential J-curve of technology and the mind-blowing acceleration we are already experiencing.

While it is necessary to know the cosmological facts regarding the possibility of visitations to our planet by extra-terrestrial, inter-dimensional or time travelling species, it also requires logical speculation, which, ideally, nestles comfortably with the known facts.

An important aspect of understanding this complex and mysterious phenomena is the balance between current scientific knowledge and the imagination to wonder about such things that are not yet fully understood.

It is not speculation to say that millions of people all across the world, from all walks of life, have reported encounters with UFOs, ETs and associated phenomena.

These people include astronauts, cosmonauts, high ranking military personnel, police, pilots, astronomers and even former presidents of America. In many cases there is overwhelming evidence, not just expert testimony but radar, photos, and videos.

Please join me at the Bush Theatre to learn more about ETs and discuss these issues and others. Your voices and thoughts are most welcome.



Tuneful originals

The Nimbin music scene has lots going for it, with many singers, songwriters, improvisers and jammers on almost every conceivable instrument living there.

One such is Nina (above right), who wows the crowd at the Open Mic nights at Nimbin Bowlo with her original songs.

Another songwriter who impressed everyone was Jake

(above left), who was drawn to the event while passing through Nimbin with his friends.

Well-known local performer Brommers (below, centre) has a catalogue of great self-penned songs that he has performed around the region, from going solo at farmers markets to leading this six-piece at a Mountaintop garden party.

The February Open Mic at Nimbin Bowlo will be on Wednesday 8th from 6.30pm.

Great bistro from 5-8pm, and drinks at club prices.

Keep up-to-date on facebook by liking: *Nimbin Bowlo Open Mic*.

The page is curated by Mel Williamson, who also takes the great pics on it, like those above. Thanks Mel.



Photo: Bob Dooley

New play explores tumultuous Sydney scene



Cast and crew of *Hungry Ghosts* at first read-through

Lismore Theatre Company is preparing for its first show of 2023, the premiere of James May's first full-length play, *Hungry Ghosts*.

The play exposes the heart and soul of the gritty side of life on the fringe of Sydney in the lead-up to the 2000 Olympics. It exposes the addictions and obsessions that torture the lives of these often misunderstood people.

James, who is now a Northern Rivers resident, lived in the Darlinghurst Kings Cross area in Sydney in the 1990s.

He said, "*Hungry Ghosts* was inspired by the colourful characters I met. As a young queer person, it was a wild place to be. It was lively and fun but risky and dangerous. I was thrilled with Sydney but found it ruthless and raw. Drugs, villains and HIV/AIDS were a constant threat.

"The title, *Hungry Ghosts* was coined from my own drug experience. In the 1990s, Sydney was changing quickly. I wanted to capture this tumultuous time in the play."

Director Junia Wulf has selected her cast and rehearsals began in mid-January.

"I'm so excited to be directing my first show with LTC," Junia said. "Having been on stage in *Neighbourhood Watch*, this is a wonderful opportunity to work with a cast of five actors to bring James May's play to life with the assistance of the highly experienced Sharon Brodie as producer."

Lily, played by Krystal Winter is sweet and is doing her best to improve her life. By contrast, Elyse Dallinger plays Shayne, a deeply troubled bad egg.

Crystal Amber is Aunt Ruby, the mother to all who wants desperately to reconnect with her own family, and Sarah-Jane Loxton plays Crazy Horse, a little eccentric who oozes with love.

As the only male in the cast, John McPherson plays Lester, the landlord, a seedy character living in the shadow of his mother.

Hungry Ghosts will run over two weekends at Rochdale Theatre Goonellabah, on April 28, 29, 30 and May 5, 6, 7 with matinees as well as evening performances.

Tickets will soon be available on-line at: www.lismoretheatrecompany.org.au (\$25/\$20) Group bookings of 10 or more can be made by contacting: jennydowell@hotmail.com or 0402-651-394. Warning: this play is suitable for 18+. It contains adult themes, drug use and coarse language.

On Saturday 11th February, 10-11.30am there is a thank-you high tea for front of house volunteers, and anyone interested in becoming a volunteer is also invited to attend. Please register by contacting Jenny Dowell (details above) or via the post on our Facebook page.

Live storytelling is coming to Nimbin

by Luca Barbieri

Nimbin Storytellers is a new regular community event starting up in Nimbin. We hope to bring people together and grow our community with true personal stories that embrace the quirks of being human and reveal the moments that, in some big or small way, has shaped who we are today.

2023 Season: 'Community'

This season we have selected a series of themes to inspire stories of community and the things that bring us together.

Themes are open to creative interpretation, and it's always great to hear the amazing variety of stories at each event.

- 'You have to start somewhere', Saturday 11th February. Stories about the chance encounters and events that set life onto new or unexpected paths.
- 'Life lines', Saturday 1st April. Stories about lending a hand, pulling together, and saving grace.
- 'Belonging', Saturday 3rd June. Stories about kinship, acceptance, and finding a place to call home.
- 'Nourished', Saturday 5th August. Stories about the acts, rituals, kind gestures, and meals that nourish our being.



- 'Elsewhere', Saturday 7th October. Stories about travels, journeys, and how the grass looks greener on the other side.
- 'Returns', Saturday 2nd December. Stories about tracing your steps, bouncing back, coming full circle, and returning home.

How does personal, nonfiction storytelling work?

The concept is quite simple. It is people, like you and I, telling stories from our life to other kindred folks.

- There are only a few ground rules:
1. Each storyteller has 5 to 10 minutes to tell their story.
 2. Stories are told, not read. Therefore, we strongly encourage that no notes are used on stage.
 3. The story must be true and yours to

tell. You must feature as one of the main characters and be significantly involved in the story's narrative.

4. Stories must be on theme.

Story group talks

We meet once a month over coffee to run through our story ideas and give each other constructive feedback. It's a bit like a writer's group but with a focus on live storytelling.

This is a great, collaborative opportunity to help tease out your story, or to prepare for an event.

Join us if you have a story that you want to try out and get feedback on from a friendly, supportive group of local storytellers. No experience required; all are welcome.

We believe that everyone has lived a life full of stories worth telling. Our events showcase stories from people from all walks of life, so anyone who would like to give it a go is welcome to participate at a storytelling event. You don't have to be a professional performer to tell a story, most of us aren't. We simply treasure the magic that happens when stories are shared, and we would love to hear yours!

Contact us for details on when and where we meet: www.nimbinstorytellers.com or: nimbinstorytellers@gmail.com

Book now for the Blue Moon



Scarlett Ruffles

by David Hallett

Nimbin School of Arts first Blue Moon Cabaret for 2023 will be held on Saturday 25th March, with catering by Barefoot Affair.

A wonderful program still being finalised but will feature the fantastic act The B's Knees and a variety of performers in comedy, song and dance, acrobats, poetry and top musicians.

Bookings and table reservations are essential for these sell-out cabarets. Tickets will be available in early February at Perceptio Bookshop, phone 6689-1766. The cabarets are essential fundraisers for the School of Arts... and a great night out!

Big laughs at Summer Comedy Gala



The Comedy Commune is bringing big laughs at Summer Comedy Gala On Friday, 10th February at 7.30pm, the Star Court Theatre Lismore will host the Comedy Commune Summer Gala.

The show will feature the nationally-acclaimed headline comedians along with support from three of Australia's fastest rising young stars.



The show will be dual-headlined by Chris Radburn (pictured, above left) (*The Footy Show, Last Comic Standing*) and the musical improvisation of award-winning Jenny Wynter (pictured, centre); two of Australia's most sought-after acts.

With support by Harry Jun (ABC-TV), Bec Melrose (*Gruen, The Weekly*) and emerging local Duvvy



Jester, the show will be in the hilarious hands of cult favourite MC, Sean Woodland (pictured, right) (Sydney Comedy Festival).

The event promises to be an hysterical night of entertainment at one Lismore's favourite live performance venues.

The Comedy Commune is a comedy promoter based in the Northern Rivers that aims to encourage and

nurture the art of stand-up comedy in the region. For the past four years it has been creating and promoting comedy events small and large, helping to grow the local scene while offering audiences the opportunity to see nationally touring artists.

To purchase tickets visit: www.thecomedycommune.com.au or for further information contact: matty@thecomedycommune.com.au

The Country Witches Association



Comedian Mandy Nolan and musician Aine Tyrrell are an unlikely collaboration. Aine doesn't do jokes. Mandy doesn't sing. But together they share a stage and magic happens.

"We wanted to create a live show with the spirit of the CWA but have it filled with outrage and disruption," Mandy said. "Aine is compassionate, gifted and a real trouble-maker. She is all about speaking truth to power. It's in her blood."

The Country Witches Association is a meeting. They have an anthem, a Queen, a salute. They even have an agenda – which the audience sets. Brilliantly wicked. Wickedly brilliant. It's community, chaos and comedy.

"Our everyday disruptions are how we change the narrative," Aine said.

Mandy Nolan couldn't agree more. "People leave our shows feeling part of something, because it's not just us. It's about them."

The Country Witches Association raise the roof at the Star Court Theatre in Lismore on Saturday 11th February.



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

- Open Mic night, Wednesday 8th Feb, 6pm
- Trivia night, Saturday 18th Feb, 6pm
- Social Bowls, Sundays 10am, all welcome