

Jewellery, paintings and more

Among the talented makers represented at Nimbin Artists Gallery are jewellery artists Altergather and Heather Bedell. Altergather is the culmination of years of collecting, crafting and collaborating, creating wearable art from salvaged and found treasures of the natural and human worlds. Working off-grid in a tiny solar-powered cabin, each one-of-a-kind piece is handcrafted using repurposed leather, ethically sourced scavenged bones, local stones, eco-friendly fabrics and hand-dyed details. With a commitment to slow making and sustainable materials, no two pieces are ever the same. Heather Bedell, based in Nimbin, is known for her serene paintings and exquisite handcrafted pewter and stone jewellery. Inspired by the Art Nouveau movement and artists including Gustav Klimt, Edgar Degas and Sydney Long, Heather moved to Nimbin to pursue her lifelong dream of creating art. She works across painting and handcrafted jewellery, bringing elegance and craftsmanship to both.



Pendants by Heather Bedell

Feature artist
During August, Linda Frylink Anderson presents her exhibition ‘Gathered from Life’. Linda’s work is an immediate response to what she sees. Experimenting with mark-making, scribbling and the interplay of line, colour and texture, she embraces the unexpected discoveries that emerge through



‘Wollumbin Beyond the Forest’ by Linda Frylink Anderson

intuitive practice. Working in acrylic, ink and watercolour, her unbound approach allows her to create wherever inspiration strikes. After a short period at the Canberra School of Art, Linda’s creative journey was shaped by travel, motherhood and teaching before she devoted herself fully to her art practice in Northern NSW. She has exhibited in Queensland, overseas,



Leather and bone/crystal pieces by Altergather

and more recently in community and regional galleries across northern New South Wales. This exhibition, created on Bundjalung Country, features views of Wollumbin and the surrounding bushland from her home, expressive life drawings, and a pique assiette mosaic mirror titled ‘Forest Treasures’. Nimbin Artists Gallery is open 10am-4pm every day at 49 Cullen Street, Nimbin. Phone 6689-1444. Web: www.nimbinartistsgallery.org

Fibre art galore at Blue Knob Hall Gallery

by Christine Wynyard

Despite heavy showers and rising creeks, we had a good turnout for the opening of ‘The Fibre Show – Beyond the Thread’ in July. Peter Walker quickly revised his set to perform solo when the other two musicians, Trevor and Denise White were hampered by the roadblock on the Murwillumbah Road; he went on to entertain us with his great music. Polly Stirling spoke beautifully of her and Sachiko Kotaka’s process in the early days, when they were exploring with wool and other materials to produce a lightweight felt. They coined the name Nuno Felt to be used as a generic term to describe this type of felting. The Solo Space is dedicated to Polly Stirling, Sachiko Kotaka and Sylvia Watt, who became the ‘Wild Turkey Feltmakers’. They curated the first Fibre Show at the gallery 20 years ago in 2006. This space also includes iconic pieces from artists (some on loan from private collections) who have exhibited over the years. The whole exhibition features many beautiful pieces, from an exquisite hand-stitched Candle Wick quilt by Leanne Openshaw, a ‘Melt the ICE’ protest hat

by Lynda Clark, to a hand-woven Skep (medieval beehive) by Nicole Raward. This exhibition acknowledges the three women who set us on a journey into felting, fibre and fashion. It showcases the versatility of fibre-based practices; from age-old techniques to modern interpretations. The exhibition will run until Saturday 5th September..

- **Blue Knob Writers Group** meet weekly at Kin Cafe on Sundays. For more info contact Alex 6689-7268 or Helen 0487-385-134.
- **Blue Knob Singers** meet on Thursdays from 4pm. Everyone is welcome. For more info call Peter 0458-487-865.
- **Saturday Sound Sessions** at Kin Cafe on the 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays of the month, 1-4pm.
- **Open Mic and Poetry** with the Future Elders Collective on the 3rd Sunday of the month from 1-4pm.
- **Woven Together** Sundays to 30th August, 11am-1pm. Come along with your crafts to tend, mend and extend.
- **Life Drawing** is held every 3rd Wednesday in the gallery, 5-7pm. All welcome. Cost is \$25. Blue Knob Hall Gallery & Kin Café is open Thurs, Fri, Sun 10am-3pm. Sat 9.30am-3pm. See more at: <https://blueknobgallery.com>



‘Celebrate the Tilt’ by Robin Moore



Skep (Medieval Beehive) by Nicole Raward
Below: ‘Melt the ICE’ by Lynda Clark



Ross Tamlin retrospective exhibition

The Roxy Gallery is proud to present ‘Made in Australia’, a retrospective exhibition celebrating more than three decades of work by acclaimed Kyogle-based artist Ross Tamlin. Running until 13th September, the exhibition brings together an extensive collection of paintings, offering visitors a rare opportunity to explore the evolution of one of the Northern Rivers’ most respected contemporary artists. Based in Kyogle since 2003, Ross Tamlin has quietly established an international reputation for his distinctive paintings, which blend surreal and super-real elements of Australian iconography, and his depictions of signage and weathered corrugated iron. Ross has completed more than 1000 paintings and held 18 previous solo exhibitions, with his work shown at international art fairs in New York, Sydney and London. He has received a number of prizes and awards, and is represented by galleries across North America, Europe and Asia. His work has also been acquired for private collections around the world, with over 600 of his paintings finding homes overseas.



‘Rex’

“Ross has built an extraordinary international career while remaining firmly connected to Kyogle,” Kyogle Council Mayor, Cr Danielle Mulholland said. “We’re excited to offer the community a rare opportunity to hear his story and learn from his experience.” The exhibition takes inspiration from the export declarations.; “Every time I send a painting overseas, the export paperwork says ‘Made in Australia’. After years of sending



‘No War in Iraq, 2009’

work around the world from my studio in Kyogle, it seemed like the right title for this exhibition,” Ross explained. Visitors will experience a diverse selection of works that reflect Ross’s unique vision, technical skill and enduring fascination with the Australian landscape and culture. Some of the paintings featured have never been exhibited before. As part of the exhibition program, the Roxy Gallery is also planning a special ‘In Conversation with Ross Tamlin’ event, on Friday 28th August at 6pm. This relaxed Q&A session will provide artists and art enthusiasts with the



‘Mines, Go West’

opportunity to hear Ross discuss his career, advice on exhibiting internationally from regional Australia, and the lessons he has learned over three decades as a professional artist. Entry is free. Roxy Gallery is located upstairs, at 131 Summerland Way, Kyogle, and is open Wednesday to Saturday 10am–3pm and Sunday 10am–1pm For more information about Ross Tamlin and his work, visit: www.rosstamlin.com For information on the Roxy Gallery, visit: roxygallery.com.au

Celebrating 25 years of artistic growth



by Corinne Batt-Rawden

Some exhibitions celebrate a collection of artworks. Others celebrate something much deeper. A *Retrospective Journey* at Serpentine Gallery brings together an exhibition of the artists, technicians and teachers who shared a remarkable moment in time during the Fine Arts class of 2001 – Lismore TAFE. Twenty-five years later, they reunite to showcase their artistic work and also celebrate the friendships and mentorships which strengthened their identity as artists and informed their art practices. The class was extraordinary in its diversity. Students ranged from teenagers to elders, creating what many now describe as an “art family.” Many of the students have gone on to become accomplished professional artists, some remained lifelong friends, others stayed connected with their teachers as mentors. As one of the exhibiting artists, Michelle Jones, reflects: “My TAFE days were a really formative experience for me. Not only did we have some of the best teachers in the area, but we were such a close-knit class. “Everyone pulled together and supported one another and even though we have all gone in different directions both creatively and in our personal lives, it will be wonderful to reconnect.” Michelle will exhibit ‘The Wedding Veil’, a joyful self-portrait inspired by marrying her husband. “As a person living with a disability, my self-portraits explore body image, sexuality and the joy of life. The Wedding Veil is a light-filled celebration of one of the happiest moments of my life.” The exhibition also reveals how widely these artists’ practices have evolved over the past quarter century. Trinity Leonard’s oil painting ‘Genesis 2.0’ explores the intersection of humanity and artificial intelligence. “I wanted to visually experiment with the idea of a second creation. By layering a high-gloss, synthetic sheen over traditional soft oil flesh tones, the piece becomes a quiet observation on transhumanism and the future of human identity.” Carolyn Russell’s landscape ‘Freedom Instinct’ draws on the emotional connection between place and memory.



Above: ‘Wedding Veil’ by Michelle Jones
Left: ‘Freedom Instinct’ by Carolyn Russell
Below: ‘Genesis 2.0’ by Trinity Leonard

“It depicts a sea hawk’s view of the Byron coastline as one takes off from Coorabel Lookout. For me, that coastline holds many memories and is very special.” For Simon Falomir, the work is deeply connected to resilience and recovery following the 2022 Northern Rivers floods. His leadlight work ‘Mirror the River’ reflects the salvaging of his studio at Silver Cloud Studios after floodwaters devastated the space, capturing both loss and renewal. While the artworks span painting, glass, landscape, portraiture and contemporary themes, together they tell a much larger story: one of creativity, lifelong learning and the enduring impact that great teachers and a supportive artistic community can have. A *Retrospective Journey* is more than a reunion – it is a celebration of artistic lives shaped over twenty-five years, and a tribute to the teachers, friendships and shared experiences that continue to inspire them today. Exhibiting Artists: Trinity



Leonard, Michelle Jones, Steve Giese, René Bolten, Carolyn Russel, Tom Fitzgerald, Simon Falomir, Bob Lippet and Ian Pearson. Opening event: Friday 21st August, 5.30pm to 8pm at Serpentine Gallery, Lismore. On show until Saturday 5th September. **Sketch Club at Serpentine** Looking for a relaxed afternoon of drawing? Sketch Club meets the first Saturday of every month, 2pm to 4pm. Cost is \$10 for members and \$20 for guests. To find out more, visit: www.serpentinearts.org or follow on socials.

New group exhibition in M|Arts Precinct

RAFT Gallery Murwillumbah is proud to announce its upcoming exhibition season, curated under the distinctive artistic vision of its director and acclaimed contemporary artist, Rohan Robinson. Known for its dedication to showcasing exceptional Indigenous and non-Indigenous contemporary art, the gallery’s latest iteration under Robinson’s guidance bridges deep cultural narratives with raw, striking aesthetics. This launch exhibition, titled ‘We are Not in it for the Money’, brings together 10 premier local and interstate artists, showcasing a vast geographic and cultural survey that spans from the Tiwi Islands to Tasmania. “Our goal at RAFT is to create a space where powerful stories and exceptional artistry collide,” said Rohan Robinson. “This next exhibition reflects a deep commitment to truth, texture and the raw energy of contemporary practice. By connecting voices from the far north to the deep south, we are inviting the community to engage with art that is not only visually arresting but deeply resonant.” The group exhibition ‘We are Not in it for the Money’ can



‘My Heart is in the Highlands’ by Rohan Robinson

be viewed at RAFT Gallery, M|Arts Precinct (Brisbane Street entry), Murwillumbah during August.

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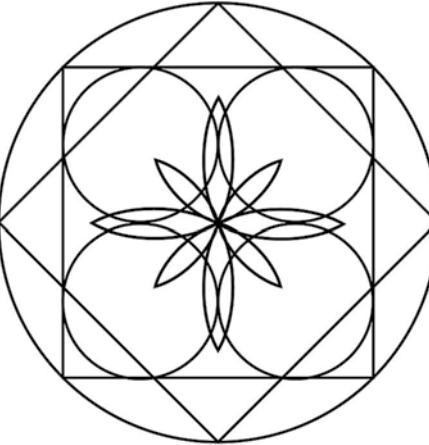
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Nimbin's Aquarius Archives marks first year



Photo: Peter Chaplin 1981

by Greg Bork

Aquarius Archives, a community initiative of the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc to preserve the history of the 1973 Nimbin Aquarius Festival and the region's counterculture movement, has closed out its first full financial year with a string of milestones, alongside a funding gap it is now working to close.

Over the past year, the Archives received Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status from the Australian Taxation Office, officially launched under a new logo designed by Franca Wolfe, and secured a temperature-controlled storage space in partnership with Rainbow Power Company.

A permanent exhibition was installed in the hallway of the Nimbin Community Centre, giving visitors and locals a first look at the collection.

Around half of an expected 100-plus boxes of the former 'Aquarian Archives' material has now been transferred from Lismore Library into the Foundation's care, with the remainder still to come.

The Archives also received original documents from festival organiser Johnny Allen's personal collection and historical

displays from the former Nimbin Visitors Information Centre. Volunteers have begun work on specific parts of the collection, including fashion and textiles, alternative energy and intentional communities.

A video presentation was recorded with the Northern Rivers Community Foundation, and the newly reformed Pan-Community Council was given access to its historical records. Recently, Aquarius Archives ran an oral history workshop with historian Jo Kijas and has since acquired dedicated recording equipment.

Volunteer Nuro recently recorded the Archives' first oral history interview, with pre-Aquarius Nimbin community member Verlie Troughton. Look out for her stories in the September *Nimbin GoodTimes*.

This work is carried almost entirely by volunteers – a core group of three to five people on site every Friday, supported by around 20 others who help more occasionally.

Funding

That volunteer effort now needs to be matched by secure funding. The Archives' establishing grant from the Northern Rivers Community Foundation ended in January 2026, and there is currently no funding

in place to cover our office workspace rent beyond 2026.

So how do other regional historical societies pay the rent? Largely, they don't. Brunswick Valley Historical Society's Mullumbimby Museum sits on land provided by the state government. Richmond River Historical Society occupied council-owned premises in Lismore rent-free for decades, until the building closed for repair after the 2022 floods.

Across the Nightcap Range, Tweed Shire Council consolidated three local historical societies into the award-winning Tweed Regional Museum. We're grateful for the collegial support of each of these organisations. Aquarius Archives has no comparable council backing to fall back on in Nimbin.

Looking ahead

There is good news on the grants front. Two Museums and Galleries NSW grants have been secured for the coming year. A Volunteer

Placement grant will give Greg insight into professional best practice at Museums of History NSW in Sydney in October.

We are also thrilled to share the news that we were successful on our second application for a Volunteer Museum grant, with funding secured for a strategic plan to be developed with Kate Gahan, a community-based historian with over 25 years' experience across regional NSW.

We look forward to working with the community to develop this plan, including a proposed Museum for Nimbin in the long term. Neither grant covers core operating costs.

In the year ahead, Aquarius Archives plans to test and launch its digital catalogue, opening the collection to wider community access, and continue working through its cataloguing backlog.

The Archives is calling on the community for continued donations of material, volunteer time and financial support to keep it running.

The Aquarius Archives office is open Fridays at the Community Centre, 81 Cullen Street, Nimbin. Website: aquariusarchives.org.au



Allsopp Park circa 1973

The policy that changed Australia's energy future

by Matthew Wittemeier

Twenty-five years ago, solar panels were still a novelty. Most Australians had never seen a battery system, wind farms were rare, and renewable energy supplied just 3.4% of our electricity.

Today, renewable energy provides around 43% of Australia's electricity, with some periods exceeding 50%. Rooftop solar has become so common that Australia now has one of the highest rates of household solar adoption in the world.

Much of that transformation can be traced back to a single policy: the Renewable Energy Target, or RET.

Introduced in 2001, the RET was designed to encourage investment in renewable energy by creating financial incentives for new projects and reducing the upfront cost of solar for households and businesses. At the time, its goal was modest. Few could have predicted the scale of change that would



follow.

Over the following decades, the policy helped support the growth of wind farms, large scale solar projects and millions of rooftop solar installations. Entire industries emerged around renewable energy, creating jobs, building expertise and driving down costs.

Perhaps the biggest shift has been cultural. Solar is no longer seen as an alternative technology. For many Australians, it is simply a normal part of owning a home or running a business. Batteries are now following a similar path, helping households store energy and

gain greater control over their electricity use.

The RET is scheduled to conclude in 2030, but its legacy is already clear. It helped transform renewable energy from a niche technology into a major part of Australia's electricity system.

For companies like Rainbow Power Company, which has been helping Australians harness renewable energy since 1987, the change has been remarkable to witness.

What was once considered a fringe technology is now helping power homes, businesses and communities across the country.

Nimbin farewells a stalwart

July Hales
4/4/1948 – 11/7/2026

by only daughter Ronnie,
from her graveside eulogy

Mum was born and raised in Belmore, Sydney, the middle of three sisters, Lynne and Robin, one year apart. She said she was always a bit of a loner at school, with only one or two good friends.

She finished school at 15, which was pretty standard back then. Her first job was at a bank and she got into her fashion stage, matching her high heels with her handbag. She got a motorbike and rode it hard and fast, drank scotch on the rocks, smoked cigarettes and sunbaked for hours. She also started working with dogs and continued working for kennels until moving to Nimbin.

At age 19 she went to Melbourne to be a strapper for racehorses, but then it was not easy for women in the industry, and she had to let it go. She got part-time work in bars and a few seasons doing housekeeping at the Snowies, where she learnt to ski.

In her early 30s, Mum went back to school to get her HSC so she could go to uni to study to be a vet. She got through one year of uni. She said, "I just could not study, no matter how hard I tried."

It was around this time Mum met Dad at a pub. He was an English merchant seaman 20 years her senior. After five years as a couple, Mum got pregnant, gave up drinking and smoking, and they got married by Ted Noffs at the Wayside Chapel.

In 1985, Mum was 37, I was born and we all lived in Ports Point. Mum and Dad had the opportunity to run a boarding kennels, and Mum worked herself to exhaustion over the next year and a bit to save a bit of money to make the move to Nimbin.

She knew she didn't want the city life for her kid; she wanted community.

Mum bought our block of land on Blue Springs community in 1988, and with Dad and the help of the community, they built our "temporary dwelling". In less than a year Dad was gone and it was just Mum and me, though Blue Springs had kids aplenty to play with.

Mum started me on outdoor adventures early, and took me to dances, gigs and festivals, all by hitch-hiking or public transport. She never drove, but got everywhere on time.

Mum started volunteering at the Environment Centre when I was three or four, then at the Nimbin Community School where I later spent most of my primary school while she was doing the books, making lunches and then being acting principal.

She made cakes for all sorts of fundraisers and the Blue Moon cabarets, did bookkeeping for Nim-FM, helped at the Museum café, the Timbara base camp, the chai tent in Canberra over Invasion Days, the Weave and Mend gatherings, joined the new Bushwalkers Club and the re-formed CWA and set up her tipi for various things.

And for over 30 years, she co-ordinated the



Community School. But with all of that, she made all the time I would need for me.

By 2007 I had met D and we were running a guesthouse in the Blue Mountains, and before I knew it, I was married and having babies.

Those 10 years at the guesthouse were tough for me, but Mum was there every school holidays, at our busiest time. She helped anywhere and everywhere she could, and we still went bushwalking all through the Blue Mountains.

In 2017 D and I moved to Rylstone. I had a van, I had school holidays free, and Mum had cash. The kids got the best Nanna, and over the years we travelled, camped, bushwalked, swam, kayaked, snorkelled and danced.

Our last adventures were in April this year. Then Mum got sick. She insisted on making it to her last MardiGrass, but afterwards she had to come back home with us.

After a doctor's visit in the Blue Mountains, we did a small bushwalk, and that night she got sick again. We got a diagnosis of a fast-growing brain tumour. It was too late to operate.

Mum accepted all of this. Mostly she was the calm and pragmatic person she always was, grateful for the life that she's had.

At the very end, Mum was able to access voluntary assisted dying. This is what she had wanted, to have her autonomy.

The last thing Mum had on her mind was that she wanted all the community to keep going. And most of all, she wanted everyone to keep singing and dancing.



nimbiningoodtimes.com



The Uki Atelier, that the new owner, Ilona Harker (pictured), has dubbed: 'The trickle-up revolution' has opened in the Uki Butter Factory

Ilona says, "Trickle-down economics are BS; we need community care to spread like micellium."

The Uki Atelier works by sharing the space with the community, so people can use the workshop space to create and sell within the shop. With a lot of help from her friends, Ilona has built a dedicated community workshop space for creatives to use during business hours.

Previously Ilona was a performer and created her own costumes, but she left the touring life to focus on her health and to build a business with a focus on community creativity, especially platforming artists with disabilities.

Ilona's work includes her Save Wallum block prints that she taught dedicated campaigners to print to help



raise tens of thousands of their cause.

The workshop space has sewing machines and overlockers for anyone who is proficient, in exchange for a gold coin fee to cover maintenance; and a large table for working on creations. The workshop provides a 100-year old book press for printmakers, and a small kitchenette.

In late August, Ilona will start life drawing and 'Stitch and Bitch' (mend

and befriend) on Thursday nights in The Uki Atelier, and more workshops such as crocheting and a 'Death Café' and games nights, such as Dungeons and Dragons.

Ilona already sells works from artists with disabilities who she works with, alongside her own block print designs on archival paper. If you're keen to get in on the fun, Ilona also runs block print workshops.

The space has curated a dedicated community closet where locals can bring their fabulous vintage gems to sell.

The whole shop feels like a lush fantasy world, and Ilona says she feels lucky to be part of the amazing creative community that is Magical Uki.

For more info, follow The Uki Atelier on social media.

The Uki Atelier is open from Thursday to Sunday, 10am-4pm. It's available for hire at \$20 per hour for locals; it's free for not-for-profits.

Contact Ilona Harker at: ilonaharker.com

Best new films come to Lismore

Following the highest-selling Film Festival in its history, Sydney Film Festival is taking highlights from its 2026 program to Lismore Cinemas from 3rd to 6th September.

The Travelling Film Festival returns to the newly refurbished cinema for the first time since it re-opened after the devastating floods.

This epic celebration of cinema features the year's most acclaimed films from around the world, including acclaimed films direct from Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Sydney Film Festivals.

"Why should Sydney have all the fun? These films help whip up a palpable celebration of cinema when they screened at SFF in June, and we can't wait to keep that feeling going and bring them to audiences all over NSW," said TFF Manager Beatrix Brady,

"The breadth of stories being screened is an extraordinary opportunity for audiences to take a step into another world – worlds that are illuminating, inspiring, challenging, hilarious, entertaining, and at times all of those things at once.

"We all remember those movies that left an impact long after we left the cinema – this is a whole program of those experiences."

The Opening Night film is the must-see hit Aussie made documentary *Whistle* which follows all the quirks, egos and soaring notes of the World Whistling Championships.

TFF audiences will see some of the biggest films of the year including the 2026 Palme d'Or winner at Cannes *Fjord* starring Oscar nominees Renate Reinsve and Sebastian Stan.



Another recent Cannes winner in the line-up is the Camera d'Or winner *Ben'Imana* – the deeply moving drama from Rwanda.

Audiences can watch award-winning films from all corners of the globe: the witty and illuminating rom-com *No Good Men* from Afghanistan, and the moving yet sparkling Korean smash hit, *The World of Love*.

And from Europe, the beautiful tribute to the natural world *Silent Friend* starring Tony Leung Chiu-wai from Hungarian filmmaker Ildikó Enyedi.

Australian stories and filmmaking talent will also be on show, including the quirky time loop comedy *Yesterday Island* filmed in Tasmania, and a range of Aussie made short films will also accompany select screenings.

Tickets are already on sale and selling fast for a packed weekend of brilliant cinema.

With a Flexipass or a full Subscription, patrons can watch the whole program and save up to 30%!

For tickets go to: <https://www.sff.org.au/tff/program/lismore>

Avian flu season

by Scott O’Keeffe, Ecologist

H5N1, a deadly pathogen that affects birds, has arrived in Australia. Also known as the avian influenza virus, H5N1 poses a serious risk to Australian wild birds and domestic fowl.

The virus spreads rapidly. Contact me if you want a detailed timeline of the spread of H5N1. It has been detected in more than 400 bird species. Some mammal species are also affected, particularly aquatic mammals such as seals and whales. Humans can also be infected, but this is very rare.

We can’t possibly know how many wild birds have died worldwide. The only credible mortality figure we have is for poultry. Between 2005 and 2024 it is estimated that H5N1 killed approximately 633 million poultry birds. Not all bird species are at high risk. Although there is no way to estimate the sum of wild bird deaths, we know that mortality rates for some infected wild bird populations are extremely high.

For example, the European population of Northern Gannets makes up more than three quarters the entire global gannet population. A small number of colonies support a very large proportion of the whole northern gannet population. Recently, at Bass Rock, the world’s largest colony, occupied nest-sites fell by at least 71% with breeding success down roughly 66% from the long-term average.

Species in some taxonomic groups and with particular ecological characteristics are at greater risk of infection. At greatest risk are gregarious waterbirds because their flocking behaviour increases the risk of disease transmission. Some gregarious species, particularly oceanic birds, have very high transmission rates because they nest in large densely inhabited colonies. These species are not only at greatest risk but are primary vectors of infection. This is because gregarious water birds, especially pelagic species, travel long distances. Infected individuals may carry the virus with them to distant new locations.

Species of gannets, terns, gulls, skuas, kittiwakes, cormorants, pelicans and petrels are in this category. Some of



Gregarious birds like Little Pied Cormorants are at risk from H5N1

these, such as petrels and skuas, have an even higher risk of infection since they scavenge at dead animal carcasses, particularly those of aquatic mammals.

Large numbers of aquatic mammals have been dying from H5N1 infections. On subantarctic Heard Island, 13,000 baby southern elephant seals died from H5N1 during the 2025-26 summer. Petrels and skuas have been infected when feeding on the infected carcasses of mammals that have died from H5N1.

Other gregarious species associated with water, such as ducks, geese and shorebirds, are at risk through within group transmission and mixing with other species in their preferred habitats. Many of these species also travel long distances.

Australia is the last continent to which the virus has spread. This is an emerging ecological crisis. Based on what we know from the trajectory of infections in the rest of the world, we can expect species from at risk taxa to be adversely affected in Australia as well. There is already evidence of this.

The first detection of H5N1 in Australia was in a Brown Skua in West Australia at Cape LeGrand National Park. As of 23rd July 2026, there have been 17 confirmed cases of H5N1 in Australia; all in wild sea birds. Ten in Western Australia, five in South Australia and two in New South Wales.

There are annual long-distance migrations of birds to Australia from areas where H5N1 already occurs. This includes southern oceans and southern Asia. We also have large internal

migrations of birds that are potential routes for transmission of H5N1. Preventing further spread of the infection seems unlikely, but slowing it might be of use. We certainly need to know where infections occur as they can provide valuable information.

There is no cure for H5N1 in wild birds. However, there are some small indications of resistance to the infection. Studies of several seabird species affected by H5N1 show that some individuals that survive infections develop antibodies to the virus. The study also showed that the antibodies are present in at least some healthy birds as well.

Another study found that differences in survival rates between adults and chicks in several species of terns and gulls suggest that immunity may be acquired. A study from the UK showed that population level immunity in gulls and terns may be increasing. But in these examples, we don’t know whether any of the observed ‘immunity’ is a stable trait or just a transient phenomenon.

The situation looks grim, but there are things that we can do. We can be observant. This is potentially the greatest contribution that individual citizens can make. Because so little is known about the disease and how we might respond effectively, even simple information is extremely valuable.

Report any observations of potentially infected birds, most likely dead birds, to the appropriate authority. See this link for the correct reporting procedure: <https://birdlife.org.au/avian-influenza-and-h5-bird-flu-frequently-asked-questions/>

- The information you need to provide is:
- Location (address and/or GPS co-ordinates if possible);
 - Date and time of the sighting, including when signs of disease were first noticed;
 - The estimated number of sick or dead animals and other animals at the site;
 - Notes of any clinical signs that sick animals are showing, and
 - Contact details of any observers.
- Do not touch any bird, live or dead, that may be infected. Although transmission of the disease to humans is rare, it is still risky to handle any potentially infected live animal or carcass.

Find more complete information at Birdlife Australia. <https://birdlife.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/FAQ-July-2026-H5-Bird-Flu-BirdLife-Australia.pdf>



by Georgina Jones

The Nimbin Rocks Co-operative, adjacent private landowner Jeff Imeson, along with Richmond Landcare Inc, have been working to restore biodiversity and catchment health across the Nimbin area of the Goolmangar Creek catchment.

The grant recipients successfully secured funding through the North Coast Regional Landcare Network’s Caring for Catchments program to address key environmental issues including creek bank erosion, invasive weeds, habitat degradation and declining water quality.

The project is restoring riparian vegetation, improving wildlife connectivity, reducing grazing impacts and enhancing the long-term health and resilience of the catchment.

Since the projects began in early 2025, the participants have collectively planted over 18,000 trees and regenerated more than 40km of Goolmangar Creek bank.

These efforts are also improving habitat for a range of threatened species, including Fragrant Myrtle, Scrub Turpentine, Thorny Pea, threatened owl species and local koala populations.

The project has brought together an impressive range of community participants, including permaculture educator Robin Francis at Djanbung Gardens, Ngulingah ranger co-ordinator Murray Roberts, Nimbin Central School teachers and students and participants in the Pacific Farmer-to-Farmer Regenerative Stewardship Training Program from Pacific island nations.

This collaboration has helped create a genuine intercultural knowledge exchange, combining ecological restoration with the sharing of traditional and regenerative land management practices.

Beyond the on-ground environmental outcomes, the project has strengthened community capacity by engaging volunteers, landholders, schools and international visitors in practical conservation activities.

Community planting events have provided opportunities for participants to learn restoration techniques, share knowledge and build lasting connections while contributing to the protection of the region’s unique biodiversity.

These achievements demonstrate the power of community-led collaboration. Landholders and volunteers are restoring the health of the Goolmangar Creek catchment while creating a lasting legacy for future generations.

Walks Programme

**Sunday 9th August
Rocky Creek Dam and The Big Scrub**

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498
Grade: 3-4. On tracks but as usual some can be uneven and slippery, exposed tree roots. Good walking shoes/boots needed as well as water and lunch. A nice after walk get together at the picnic area.
Meet: at Rocky Creek Dam picnic Area at 9am. We will be walking through The Big Scrub in the Nightcap National Park.

**Sunday 23rd August
Fingal Head Lighthouse, Dreamtime Beach and more**

Leader: Helena Hodson 0403-144-236
Grade: 2-3. Good walking shoes/boots needed as well as water and lunch. A couple of refreshment spots for a rest, coffee or maybe lunch.
Meet: TBA. Ring Helena to register and get meeting spot details, 9am start. We will be walking through some lovely coastal rainforest and the pristine sands of Dreamtime Beach. The headland has some unique rock formations and of course the lighthouse. A bonus will be whales heading south.



Bare-footed Judy



Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Peter Brooker

We shouldn’t be surprised that rain has once again caused the cancellation of yet another garden club meeting. Why shouldn’t we be surprised? It’s because the gods have conspired to test our resolve.

We also live in the Rainbow Region and it is the Rainbow Serpent of Aboriginal mythology that brings rain, water and fertility. It is believed the Rainbow Serpent created the world as we know it, forming rivers, lakes and valleys.

If we also accept that Freyr, the Norse god of fair weather, harvests and yet again fertility, was slain at the battle of Ragnarok by the flaming sword of the fire jotunn Surtr, largely because he was unarmed due to his wife, the jotunn Geror, insisting he give up his sword before she marry him, and that Thor also died in the battle after slaying the Serpent Jormungandre by crushing its head but succumbing to its poisonous breath nine paces later, we could expect little else but rain.

Even John Gilbert is depressed at our



temporary misfortune as he says in his poem ‘Rain’:

“Suddenly this defeat. This rain. The blues gone grey And the browns gone grey And yellow A terrible amber. I have been easy with trees Too long. Too familiar with mountains. Joy has been a habit. Now Suddenly This rain.”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow joins our disappointment but accepts what will be with his sombre refrain, “The Rainy Day”:

“Be still, sad heart! And cease repining; Behind the clouds is the sun still shining; Thy fate is the common fate of all, into each life some rain must fall, some days must be dark and dreary.”

Amid all this, we must temper our resentment because if the Rain Bull of Zulu legend, a massive beast whose wide horns dictate when clouds will weep, refuses to lower its horns, a drought will strike.

If that should happen, we will be calling upon Tlaloc, the great rain and water god of Aztec mythology and imploring him to call the rain-making spirits Tlaloque and asking them for rain.

And so we have that age old problem

that whatever the weather, if it persists, we will complain even though we are pluviophiles at heart. On that note it might be wise to think upon the poem, you guessed it, called ‘Rain’ by Carol Ann Duffy, where she says:

“I planted a rose, burnt orange, the colour of flame, gave it the last of the water, gave it your name. It flared back at the sun in a perfect rhyme. Then the rain came, like stammered kisses at first on the back of my neck. I unfurled my fist for the rain to caress with its lips. I turned up my face, and water flooded my mouth, baptised my head, and the rain clouds gathered like midnight overhead, and the rain came down like a lover comes to a bed.”

Now, with those memories stirring, we must remember the sun is still shining above the clouds. Sol’s chariot is still being pursued by the wolf Skoll as she sparks sunshine. Skoll has not swallowed the sun, nor his brother wolf Hati Hroovinnisson swallowed the moon.

So on Saturday 15th August we will gather at the home of Greg and Linley at 15 Hillside Drive, just off Tareeda Way, to enjoy a sunny day and a garden. Bring a cup a chair, something to share and... we’ll see you all there at 2pm.

Healthy boundaries with horses

by Suzy Maloney, Happy Horses Bitless

In recent years, there has been a welcome shift in the horse world toward listening to horses. More people are learning to recognise signs of stress, discomfort, fear and confusion, and are questioning traditional approaches that ignored what horses were trying to communicate.

This change is important. Horses have voices, even if they don’t speak our language. They constantly communicate through their body language, behaviour and emotional responses. When we learn to listen, we can build safer, more trusting and more compassionate relationships.

But there is another side to the conversation that is discussed less often: listening to a horse does not mean abandoning healthy boundaries.

Some people who move away from dominance-based training struggle with this balance. Having spent years hearing phrases like “Make them respect you” or “Show them who’s boss,” it’s easy to swing to the opposite extreme. This results in a reluctance to ask anything of the horse for fear of being unfair. It may seem that setting limits somehow contradicts kindness.

In reality, healthy boundaries are an essential part of every good relationship. The easiest way to understand this is to think about children. Good parents listen to their children. They take their feelings seriously. They try to understand why a child is upset, frightened, or frustrated. But listening does not mean allowing the child to do whatever they want.

If a child refuses to wear a seatbelt, runs into traffic, or hits another child, we don’t simply accept the behaviour. We acknowledge the feelings behind it while maintaining clear and consistent boundaries. Healthy relationships with horses work in much the same way.

If a horse barges through us, crowds our space, or drags us toward grass, it is worth considering why. They may be excited, anxious, distracted, or simply following habits that have been reinforced over time. Understanding the cause helps us respond thoughtfully.

At the same time, our own safety matters. It is perfectly reasonable and necessary to maintain a boundary around personal space. We can do so without anger, punishment or intimidation. Calm, clear, consistent communication is all that



is needed.

Healthy boundaries are not about control. They are about creating clarity, this is a key point. Horses love things to be clear and appreciate predictable boundaries and outcomes. Just as children often feel safer when expectations are clear, horses may feel more confident when they understand the rules of a relationship. They know what to expect from us, and they know what we expect from them.

Problems can arise when boundaries are inconsistent. One day we allow a horse to push into our space; the next day we become frustrated and react strongly. One day we permit grass-snatching; the next day we try to prevent it. Inconsistency creates confusion, and confusion can lead to tension for both horse and human.

Compassion and boundaries are not opposites. They work best together. Listening to horses means paying attention to what they are telling us. It means being curious rather than judgemental. It means recognising fear, discomfort, pain and emotional needs.

It means adapting our approach when something isn’t working. Boundaries help create safety, trust and mutual understanding. They allow both horse and human to have needs that matter.

The goal is not obedience at all costs, nor is it allowing the horse to dictate every interaction. Instead, it is a partnership where both individuals are heard. When we combine empathy with clear boundaries, we create relationships built on respect rather than control.

We stop asking, “How do I make my horse do this?” and instead ask, “How can we work through this together?”

That balance, listening deeply while maintaining healthy boundaries with horses, may be one of the most valuable skills we can develop as horse people.

Michelle Berkon and Mussa Hijazi

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Michelle Berkon is a former Israeli, converted for social justice, environmental sustainability, and animal rights. As a Jewish Australian and member of Jews Against the Occupation, she has become active in the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. Part of that work includes the time between the Israel lobby, the far right, and the war industry, and its potential influence on Australian democracy.

Australian born Mussa Hijazi returned to Palestine as a child where he witnessed the First Palestinian Intifada. He returned to Australia in his late 20s, studied law and is now practising as a commercial lawyer and partner of High Court Counsel Lawyers in Canberra. In the last two years he has attended more than 100 pro-Palestine rallies and campaigned for governments to not live with Israel.

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