

Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan



REPORT ON ACHIEVEMENTS

From 2009 to 2015

Report prepared November 2015



ART AND CULTURE – Progress So Far

Key Result/Vision: The community celebrates diversity and encourages participation and involvement through arts and culture.

Goal 1: Permanent visual art collection/s established (virtual)

- Aquarius on-line Archive launched in December 2015. See <http://198.245.55.237/ca/pawtucket/>

Goal 2: 2013 Year Long Arts and Culture Festival - 40th Anniversary of the Aquarius Festival

- Many community events occurred as part of the Aquarius 40th year Anniversary.
- Rainbow Dreaming book – produced and promoted.

Goal 3: Nimbin's public art is maintained and supported

- Nimbin murals sustainability plan was developed in 2012.
- Three murals were restored in 2013 (unfortunately one of these was Benny Zable's mural above Rainbow Cafe which was lost in the August 14 fires).

Other achievements relevant to this Key Focus Area but not identified in the SNCP as strategies:

1. Increased number of venues. There are now 13 separate venues where working musicians and performers can get a gig.

2. Regular Arts and Culture events held in Nimbin:

- Weave and Mend festival – October - Moksha
- Spring Arts Exhibition – Sept – School of Arts
- Autumn Arts Exhibition – April – School of Arts
- Blue Moon Ball and cabarets – School of Arts
- Women's Dinner – Nov (but changing to March) – NNIC
- Regular exhibitions at Blue Knob Gallery
- Poetry Nights – 1st Thursday every month
- Poetry World Cup – September – Gail Clark
- Open Learning Centre classes
- Mardi Grass – May – MOB
- Nimbin Country Show – September – A&I Society
- Nimbin Goes Queer – November
- Friday night drumming
- Open mike – Wednesdays - Bowlo
- Regular events at the Bush Factory
- Thursday night circus school for kids

- Tuntable Coop Circus groups for kids
- Barkers Vale Circus for kids
- Circus/Hoops group
Regular events at Hanging Rock Hall
- Regular events at Lillian Rock Hall
- Regular events at Billen Hall
- Other MO regular events
- Film Club – Nimbin Flix
- Book Club – Lisa Lucken
- Tap Bitches
- Nomad Bitches
- Flamenco group
- Salsa group
- Bushdances – Blue Knob Hall
- Pumpkin Festival – Blue Knob Farmers Market
- Fermentation Festival - Blue Knob Farmers Market





ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY – Progress so Far

Key Result/Vision: A clean environment, with high biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.

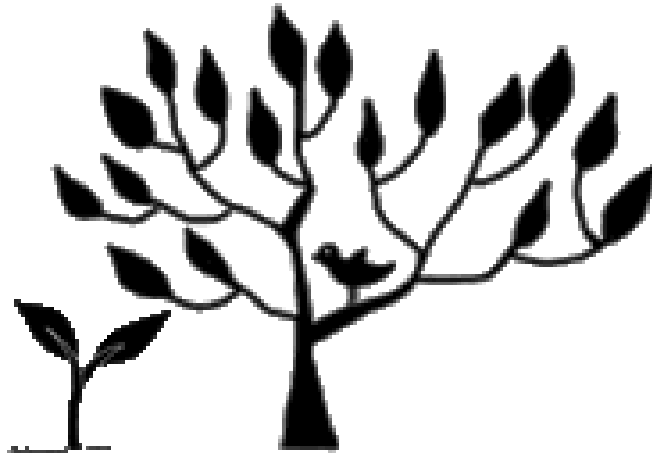
Goal 1: A thriving natural environment which is preserved and protected and its biodiversity fostered and rebuilt

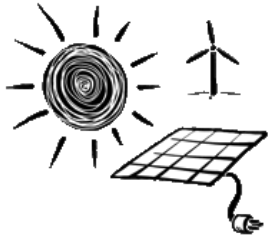
- Some baseline data was gathered in 2013 regarding local environmental health (fauna).
- Koala workshop in 2013.
- Great koala count in 2013.
- Community Survey 2013 – identified Richmond Birdwing Butterfly “hot spots” and possible Fleay’s Barred Frog (endangered) locations.
- Water Security survey conducted in 2015 by NNIC and Djanbung Gardens partnership.
- CSG PEL affecting Nimbin cancelled. Metgasco PELs buyback to be considered by shareholders by end of 2016. If they agree to the buyback then a gasfield-free Northern Rivers will have been achieved.
- Tuntable Creek Land Care Group meets monthly – has been regenerating Tuntable creek.
- Tuntable Farm – 500 Swamp Mahogany trees (koala food) planted – EnViTE.
- Garden Club – has carried out public garden works.
- Tuntable Falls School – currently creating an ethno-botanical garden.
- Nimbin Rox rehabilitation project – Nulingah Land Council.
- Mulgum Creek Land Care group – has been working on area between the gate and the dam.
- Djanbung Gardens permaculture activities.

Goal 2: A community that is well informed and educated about environmental issues

- The 'Our Pets Our Wildlife' workshop was held in Nimbin in 2014 (NNIC with ALEP).
- 'Living in Wildlife' series - factsheets developed by ALEP available at NNIC.
- Nimbin Edible Weeds tours held in 2012.
- Nimbin biodiversity featured at Nimbin Show Sustainability Alley 2015 – nest boxes, Richmond Birdwing Butterfly and weeds management. Top 5 Biodiversity Tips
- Expansion of Nimbin Environment Centre to Lismore and Casino in 2014.
- Some baseline data collected in 2013 to enable ongoing monitoring of environmental health.
- Regular articles in the Nimbin Good Times about weeds and other environmental topics (EC, Triny Roe).
- CSG local roads surveys conducted (Len Martin – Gas field-Free NR).

- Nightcap Action Group – accountability of NPWS.





ENERGY – Progress so Far

Key Result/Vision: A community which is self-reliant in our energy needs with a minimal ecological foot print and a model for other communities.

Goal 1: Increased local production, local storage and local distribution of renewable energy

- Solar Farm – 276,588 kWh generated to date = ca 249 tonnes of CO₂-e emissions offset.
- Energy efficiency – the solar farm hosts alone reduced their carbon emissions by 28.81 tonnes CO₂-e in the first 2 years.
- Biochar has been promoted at many events.
- Lismore City Council investigated the potential for micro-hydro power at Nimbin weir but not feasible.
- NNIC has worked in partnership in the development of community energy projects across the region and these will eventually lead to outcomes in Nimbin.
- Work is currently underway to develop a bio-gas model for Nimbin Valley Dairy.
- Level of interest for community investment in solar projects was assessed in 2013 as being worth pursuing.
- RPC has commenced discussions with Jarlanbah community re potential mini-grid project.

Regional Energy Projects which Nimbin is linked to:

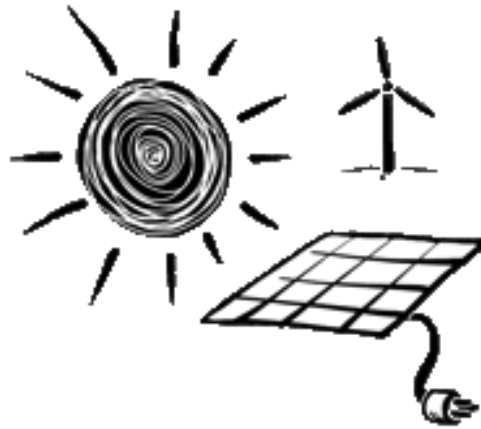
- Sustain Energy partnership (Sustain Northern Rivers)
- Z-Net town project
- Enova Energy
- NR Biohubs project
- Lismore Farming the Sun project
- North Coast Energy Forums
- Coalition for Community Energy (National Coalition)

Goal 2: Energy demands of the community are minimised

- The 2011 community sustainability survey indicated that Nimbin community members' electricity use remains well below the NSW and National averages.
- Sibley St Project – the project will demonstrate energy technologies and solutions and energy efficient building design. Site purchased in 2012 and loan paid off in January 2015.

Goal 3: Raise Community Awareness and Energy Literacy to high levels

- A regular presence has been established at the Nimbin Country Show through Sustainability Alley.
- Energy audit tools for community organisations and housing are available online (see link on NNIC website/facebook page).
- Information regularly provided to the community around 'green' Energy Retailers.
- Info regularly provided to community members re eg How to Read Your Power bill.
- Nimbin was represented at the inaugural Community Energy Congress in June 2014.
- NNIC has commenced research into a localised substation/minigrid.
- Bioenergy community consultations held in October 2015.
- Significant progress has been made on the Sibley St demonstration energy efficient building design project
 - The land has been purchased and extensive community consultations held.
 - Branding and marketing has been developed.
 - Funds secured for s shipping container for storage on site.
 - Stage 1 development application is underway.
 - Funds for Stage 1 have been applied for.





FOOD SECURITY – Progress so Far

Key Result/Vision: The community is autonomous and actively participates in ensuring an abundant, local and resilient food network for all.

Goal 1: At least 50% of food consumed locally is locally and sustainably grown/produced.

- The Farmers market has expanded and now there are 2 – the Blue Knob Farmers market (Saturdays) and the Nimbin Weekly FM (Wednesdays).
- The Nimbin Seed Exchange has held regular meetings.
- Nimbin show has been promoted through
 - Window shop display competition for local stores
 - Most sustainable in show exhibit category
 - Local Food Bytes Short Film Competition 2012 and 2013 - 2013 winner won the Byron Short Film competition.
- The grain mill use remains consistent e.g. 964kgs milled in 13-14, 915kgs milled in 14-15.
- Biochar – 35 tonnes of biochar made and put onto farms and gardens - Biochar project.org.
- 1500 hemp plants created for medicinal, building, fibre and seeds – Biochar project.org
- 30 acres of forest managed sustainably for biochar - Biochar project.org
- Nimbin natural Beekeepers – started in 2011 – now approx. 15,000kg honey being produced each year by around 140 members (between 250 and 300 hives).
- A Community Supported Agriculture project regarding hemp is under development. Links established between Nimbin and Ashford hemp growers and Hunter Valley growers.
- Goats – There has been at least a five-fold increase in beast numbers since 2009 from approximately 50 animals to 270 animals in 2015. Herd sizes vary from 5 (backyard flocks) to 200 animals (Nimbin Valley Dairy).
- Nimbin Valley Dairy expansions since 2012 – currently processes 15,000 L of goats milk, 5,000 L cows milk per week.
- A concept for a commercial kitchen has been included in the Sibley St project plan.
- There has been significant growth of Lourde's Butchers sustainable butchery via the Nimbin Farmers markets.
- Nimbin Food Coop will be an opportunity for local producers to expand their retail opportunities, to increase local food production and distribution.
- At least 20% increase in local food production and distribution since 2009.

Goal 2: We Grow Good Tucker - there is an emphasis on quality and nutritional value rather than quantity and/or price

- Seed exchange trading events have been occurring regularly

- Nimbin Organic Food Coop provides a new outlet for local food at cost-competitive price for members.
- Ongoing awareness raising has occurred.
- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen garden established at Tunttable Falls Primary School (winner of Most Sustainable In Show 2013).
- Bush Food Garden established at Nimbin Community Centre.

Goal 3: The Community is engaged in local groups which work together and which work cooperatively with all local food stakeholders inc farmers, schools etc. No-one is left out!

- Emporium supermarket development application has been finalised - there will be space for local food.
- Year of the Farmer 2012 – promoted via Nimbin’s Sexiest Farmer competition.
- A survey of local cafe's has been conducted.
- The new Nimbin Food Co-op involves partnerships between NNIC, Nimbin Regional Food and Fibre Hub, The Farmers Markets and Permaculture College Australia
- Strong relationships with Nimbin Show Society has developed around Food Security issues and Sustainability Alley.
- Food Equipment Library for members.

Goal 4: The community is well educated about food security issues such as seasonal food, sub-tropical diets and crops, and food miles

- Sustainability Alley aims to increase this awareness.
- Best Shop Display competition 2015 – Nimbin Food Coop Display featured food miles.

Goal 5: The community has overcome inappropriate regulatory barriers.

- Legal barriers regarding on farm animal slaughter, herd sharing and un-pastured milk appear to be unsurmountable at this time. NNIC has investigated Herd Share models and obtained legal advice from EDO (Environmental Defenders Office) – The advice is that Australian and NSW legislation effectively prohibits Herd Share models which involve on-farm slaughtering.
- Work is continuing on the legal barriers relating to hemp grown for fibre (licenses available) and food (i.e.-seeds – the barriers remain significant).





HEALTH AND WELLBEING – Progress so Far

Key Result/Vision: Inclusion - Interaction - Integration

Goal 1: Resident inclusion in and utilisation of health and welfare facilities and resources is maximised

- A list of local complimentary health practitioners is now available via the NNIC website.
- The Nimbin Rainbow Living Health Expo was held in 2012.
- Funding secured by NNIC to support the NIS mental health nurse practitioner (mental health/alcohol & other drugs).
- Inaugural Nimbin Day of the Dead held in November 2015 – info about wills/power of attorney, palliative care options, grief and loss, dealing with the loss of a pet, launching of the Nimbin Book of the Dead and next of kin/best contact register for transient or isolated people.
- Nimbin's potable water supply currently being upgraded.
- Palliative care/hospice house established at Tuntable Falls Coop.

Goal 2: There is a high level of interaction and participation by community members in community life

- Sporting outcomes
 - Rescuing of Nimbin Tennis Courts - transfer ownership to Nimbin Headers
 - Old skate park is to be recreated into "energy park" as part of the 7 Sibley St project - multi-use community activities – focus on interactive kinetic equipment in the long term – general community use in the short term - resurfacing completed on half the site and new basketball hoop installed.
 - Potential acquisition of Bellevue Park by Nimbin Show Society under negotiation with Council – potential indoor sports facility.
 - Annual Fun Run organised by Discover Fitness.
 - Weekly swimming lessons for kids – Mr Everingham.
- Nimbin pool - Much work has been undertaken and more to come - New seats installed. New bubbler installed.
- Annual Nimbin Pool Olympics – Australia Day each year – Friends of Nimbin Swimming Pool.
- Local services have been promoted by NNIC via website, face book page, Hook Ups and Nimbin Good Times.
- 2013 Community survey – 60% (of 227) regularly volunteer in the community at an average of 8 hours/wk.
- 2013 Community survey – 31% said they socialised on a daily basis, 53% on a weekly basis, only 4% said they rarely socialise.

- 2013 Community survey – only 4% said they had not attended any community events in the prior 6 months, with 62% attending between 1 and 5 events and 34% attending more than 5.

Goal 3: A local integrated health and wellbeing model

- New MOU executed between NNIC, Nimbin Health Welfare Association and Multitask re Mulgum House community independent living units
- Repairs to the bookshelves at Birth and Beyond were completed in 2011.
- Birth and Beyond was reinvigorated between 2010 and 2013, but now has ceased to be active.
- Birth and Beyond building secured by Nimbin Community Centre in 2014. This building houses the Environment centre, the Apothecary and various therapeutic services by independent practitioners.
- Establishment of the Healing Collective (located on Community Centre site).
- Establishment of Nimbin Death and Beyond group.
- Medical Cannabis trial approved by NSW and Federal Governments in 2015.
- Regular Medical Cannabis Symposiums held by Nimbin Hemp Embassy during 2015. Attendances – ranging between 100-300 per event.





HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT – Progress so Far

Key Result/Vision: There are safe, affordable and environmentally sustainable and varied housing choices for all ages, linked by appropriate transport corridors and serviced by facilities and enterprises that support the ethos of Nimbin and surrounds.

Goal 1: A range of safe, affordable, sustainable housing options are available for rent, low income land owners and the elderly.

- New Lismore City Council by Laws have come into effect regarding secondary dwellings. DA/s94 costs are significantly reduced to promote the development of more affordable housing, for a 2 year period.
- MO Register – a list has been compiled and the MOs contacted asking for current contacts for email list etc.
- Sustainable House Day 2014 and 15: 2014 Ultimate Green Granny Flat Design comp and 2015 Universal, Adaptable Housing for Life design comp.
- New MOs retained in the Lismore LEP. New MOs are now under threat outside of Lismore and Tweed Shires.
- Some MOs have developed lower cost rehousing options – example Tuntable Falls Coop.
- Some of the existing MOs have expanded their housing capacity.
- MOU developed and executed in 2015 between NNIC, Nimbin Health and Welfare Association and Multitask in relation to the 3 community independent living units at Mulgum House.

Goal 2: There is a well-developed and connected knowledge and skills base for housing and the built environment.

- The Sibley St project will act as a repository of knowledge about sustainable building, and has been involved in Sustainable House days and other activities promoting affordable and sustainable housing.
- The Sibley St community building will incorporate education and training to increase community building skills .
- Sibley St will also act as a sustainable Living Centre demonstration site to showcase local achievements, provide information on sustainable building and regulations.- (e.g. BasIX)
- HEMP masonry workshops held in 2014.
- Building with bamboo workshops held in 2013.
- Bioteecture group has constructed several 'Earthships' structures and held workshops.

- Ongoing support and information provided to householders by RPC re PV Solar installations.
- Composting toilets expertise in the community.
- Water recycling and grey water management expertise in the community.
- Djanbung Gardens courses and workshops – e.g. in 2015: Introduction to the World of Masonry, Appropriate Technology and Natural Building, The Craft of Masonry floors and paving, The Art of Rock walling and stone masonry.
- Nimbin Garden Club activities.

Goal 3: Buildings and their surrounds are sensitive to and provide a "liveable" environment, including both passive and active recreational opportunities

- The Nimbin Walking Track project is awaiting funding. Project is design-ready.
- Nimbin Garden Club activities
- Djanbung Gardens activities.
- Old skate park remedial work commenced. Basketball hoop installed.
- Nimbin Showgrounds now opened up for camping, dog walking, exercising horses and community events. New shed, toilet block and kitchen area installed. Capacity of show grounds for use for community events including the annual show significantly enhanced.

Goal 4: Bushfire and village disaster risks are addressed

- Reserve Roads – no longer a viable strategy due to divestment of reserve roads by the NSW Government.
- Village fire and disaster risk management plan – no coherent plan has been developed.
- Following the Nimbin Fires of August 2014, numerous local businesses have reviewed and upgraded their insurances, and addressed fire hazards around their premises.
- New buildings must adhere to the new Building Code fire regulations – issues of additional expense and conflict with e.g natural airflow/light optimisation.
- There are 2.5 active local bushfire brigades, which have been regularly called upon to fight fires. Membership is an ongoing issue.





LOCAL JOBS AND SKILLS – Progress so Far

Key Result/Vision: A sustainable community that allows and enables people to achieve their employment and skills aspirations and generates environmentally sustainable and innovative jobs and industry.

Goal 1: Establish a strong tourism industry that showcases the community's cultural diversity and sustainability achievements

- Tourism = Sibley St Project, Walking Track Project, Living Museum projects. FUNDING needed to progress all 3.
- Walking Track design and costings completed.
- Sibley St project site purchased and loan paid off. Stage One Designs and costings completed. Master Concept Plan developed and discussed. Total staged development indicative costings completed.
- Nimbin Visitors Centre has won the NSW Tourism Award for the past two years.
- Nimbin Rox YHA won Best Hostel in 2013 and 2014.
- Expansion of the Nimbin Show to include a focus on Sustainable Agriculture and other sustainability practices via the Sustainability Alley.
- Aquarius 40th anniversary was well promoted and well attended. Generated a lot of positive media about Nimbin and subsequent tourism.

Goal 2: Nimbin is re-established and recognised as a leading Sustainable Community

- Nimbin is now recognised as a leading sustainable community, as demonstrated by NNIC winning the Green Globe Awards in 2013 and being a finalist in Sustainable Community Award category in the NSW Regional Community Awards in 2014.
- NNIC is also the Lead Agency for the NR Biohubs project, reflecting the acknowledgment of Nimbin's high energy literacy and willingness to be innovative.

Goal 3: Sustainable local knowledge based industries are operating

- Nimbin Valley Dairy – local cheese-making in bioregional and organic conditions.
- NNIC Hemp Masonry Labour Hire project – providing personnel skilled in mixing and handling hemp masonry products to building project.

Goal 4: Local training capacity and capabilities have been established and developed

- Djanbung Gardens – PAC and SIT students.
- Rainbow Power Co – traineeships – 3 plus one apprenticeship since 2009.
- Earthship Workshops.
- Hemp Masonry Workshops held.
- Weekly Talks held at the Blue Knob Farmers Markets.

Goal 5: Investment sources to foster local employment are identified and targeted

- Solar Farm income is used to employ a Community Development Worker at NNIC.

Goal 6: Alternative transaction processes are developed and promoted

- Nimbin LETS got back up and running for a short time in 2012 and 2013 but has not been ongoing. This needs a new champion.

Goal 7: The local supply chain is enhanced

- Local food supply chain between growers-retailers-customers enhanced via: Nimbin Farmers markets, Nimbin Food Coop.
- Nimbin Emporium – increased stocking of local produce in particular meat products.
- Most cafes in Nimbin source local produce, one of them almost exclusively.
- Locally made sustainable products sold at the Green Bank - estimated 40%.
- Locally made products sold at the monthly Nimbin Markets – 100% locally produced.

Goal 8: Raise telecommunications to current Australian standards

- The NBN fixed wireless is now available in Nimbin. We note that community views are mixed about the technologies involved. We lobbied for fibre at least to the village but were unsuccessful.
- New Telstra mobile phone tower for High Street – the DA has been lodged with Council. Again, we note that community views on this are mixed.





SOCIAL AND POLITICAL – Progress so Far

Key Result/Vision: A community that is autonomous, mutually inclusive and respectful of all life.

Goal 1: Establish a community council which empowers the residents of Nimbin to exercise control over the community outcomes.

- Nimbin Advisory Group (NAG) has ensured/promoted community consultations around
 - Nimbin potable water supply
 - NBN in Nimbin
 - Nimbin waste and the Waste Transfer Station
 - Lots of issues regarding roads –especially Cecil St and Thorburn St
 - Traffic management on Sibley St near skate park
 - Tennis Club
 - Nimbin Pool
 - Village signage
 - Nimbin Public Toilets – Graffiti Paint job – thanks to Zac Price
 - Nimbin Physical Activities Centre – develop and implement new model of operation
 - And lots more.

- The Woodstock Village model was researched for board of management template for Nimbin BUT it does not easily translate into the local government model.
- NOTE: potential merger between Lismore City Council and Kyogle Council will make our LGA even bigger and Nimbin a smaller part of it.
- Plus it is possible that Nimbin will be moved back into the Page electorate (Federal) and out of Richmond.
- Lismore City Council held annual Community Meeting in Nimbin in November each year – until 2015 –scrapped in favour of community panels (ie NAG).
- Lismore City Council – Imagine Lismore process – randomly selected community panels – good process.
- Lismore City Council - Community Reference Panels.
- Local Development Applications – submission were made by community members in relation to e.g. Shopping Centre, NBN Towers, Telstra Tower, Police Communications Tower, The Cubes Motel. Some of these resulted in changes being made or plans amended, and the Police Communications Tower was removed altogether. The Cubes DA is still under consideration by Council.

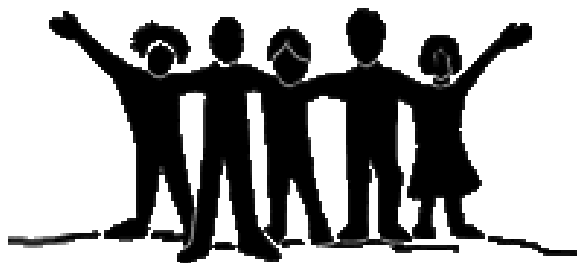
- NNIC made submissions to LCC in relation to the proposed closure of the Nimbin Waste Transfer Station and the LEP in relation to MOs and sustainable development.

Goal 2: Establish an agreed Community Charter of ethics and behavioural standards based on respect

- Many local Nimbin residents participated in non-violent communication workshops held at the Doubtful Creek and Bentley blockades.
- Positive impact upon the village and local youth culture as a result of the Nimbin Skate Park has been significant. This is demonstrated by the respect shown towards the skate park vicinity and one another by the people who utilise the area for recreational activities. There is an excellent family-friendly atmosphere and a well maintained park (thanks to Neil, FONS, the skater crew and their parents).
- Footpath Trading issues were examined by LCC but insufficient resources to police it.
- Smoking now banned in all cafes and buildings and their vicinities (pursuant to legislation and Council By Laws).
- Plans are underway to address increasing rates of theft and break-ins over the past 18months – a community meeting has been called in December 2015.

Goal 3: Identify community leadership skills and strengths

- Nimbin is represented on the Lismore Leaders Group by Diana Roberts.
- NNIC is currently consulting with local young people about the 7 Sibley St project and is seeking Young Project Ambassadors.





TRANSPORT – Progress so Far

Key Result/Vision: A carbon neutral transport system which promotes social inclusiveness by integrating vehicles powered by renewable fuels, cycling and horse riding, and which utilises trails including the gazetted roads network.

Goal 1: Maximise the efficiency of existing transport options

- Local bus route map has been completed.
- Information about all bus timetables relevant to Nimbin have been collected and are located on the NNIC website.
- Car-pooling occurs via Nimbin 'Hook Up's
- NNIC followed up with Lismore City Council regarding implementing road weight limits (re limiting use of Blue Knob Rd by large trucks) however this is within state jurisdiction, not local council jurisdiction.
- NNIC participated in regional consultations with NSW Transport and one of the outcomes of these workshops was the expansion of the Trip Planner app to the Northern Rivers. You can use this app to type in your starting point and destination and it will work out your bus route/s for you (see <http://www.transportnsw.info/>)

Goal 2: The community has access to sustainable transport options

- Nimbin Bus Extension trial was completed in 2012 and many of the additional bus runs have been continued by Wallers Bus Company (between Lismore and Nimbin)
- NNIC continues to explore EV transport options and projects.
- Possibility of the Solar Farm being reconfigured once the FIT ends to power eg EVs?

Goal 3: The transport needs of the community are reduced and road conditions improved

- NNIC continues to lobby for services to come to Nimbin to reduce transport needs of locals. E.g. Legal Aid.
- Road conditions – volunteer management of local roads project – this was considered by Council in 2013 but rejected due to untenable public liability and other risks.
- Nimbin Organic Food Co-op model moving towards increased stocking of local products.
- RoadArt – decoratively marking potholes and road hazards near you- helping to make our roads safer (and adding to the love).

Goal 4: The community has access to a range of non-vehicular transport/movement corridors between housing and services

- Reserve roads - Divestment of reserve roads by NSW Trade and Investment (formerly Lands) - major setback to this strategy as the roads are all being sold off to adjoining landowners.

- Also CSG and concerns re access to properties.
- Loss of Hutchinsons Rd - ALFA and NNIC fought to save it but we were not successful.
- Restore rail network - NNIC and many Nimbinites have lobbied for the reinstatement of the rail and have also been involved in the Rail Trail consultations. So far neither has yielded any funding and both projects are mired in controversy. In the meantime the railway infrastructure throughout the region continues to be eroded, bridges demolished etc.

