

NIMBIN COMMUNITY CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The Nimbin Community Centre (NCC) has had, like many community organisations across Australia, a challenging year full of both positive and negative events.

At the end of 2019 we completed a project with the Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Service to install an outside table and bench seating in front of the Bottle Brush Building. This is getting great use from the community and is being fully utilised. This year the service added an Indigenous Elders room next to the main entrance of the building. Once construction and approvals are completed this will become a space where local indigenous elders can have a space.

The Bush fire event in November 2019 that threatened homes and communities in the local LGA led to the Centre working with other community organisations to coordinate the flow of information and support to individuals affected by fire. This event showed the strength of local community to work together and support each other through challenging times.

In December 2019 we welcomed the Nimbin Branch of the CWA as new tenants to the Community Centre. They moved into the big space in the building behind the Market Stage. Our CWA Nimbin Branch proved themselves during the bushfire where they set up in the Nimbin Hall coordinating a constant supply of wonderful meals to support our firefighters on the front line. It is wonderful to be able to include and support another great community not for profit organisation, and we look forward to working with them and seeing the activities and community contribution that they will bring to the Centre.

In support of the amazing efforts of our Local Fire Brigades who worked around the clock during the bushfire to save homes and communities from devastation the NCC organised a New Year's Eve Community Celebration and Fundraiser. The event was held on the Tunttable Falls Community. It was well supported by local community and businesses and raised over \$25,000 for our local brigades.

Beloved and respected members of our community that we have lost over 2020, is our friend and family patriarch Johnny Bales and beloved elder and family matriarch Vivian Laurie. Johnny was an integral part of NimFM's Indigenous Broadcasting Program, a founding member of the Nimbin Aboriginal Cultural Centre and a respected member of the local indigenous community. He worked to encourage a strong relationship between indigenous community and rest of the village with his eternal message of "One Mob". Never afraid to speak his mind he was a truth teller who really cared about his village and the welfare of all who lived here and will be sorely missed.

Auntie Vivian's service at Saint Andrews in Lismore was deeply moving ceremony which combined traditional and European spirituality into a beautiful and appropriate send off for a pioneer and indigenous activist who fought for her people and country and had a very special love for the community of Nimbin because they "helped to save her forest". Part of the local Indigenous delegation that performed one of the very 1st "Welcome to Country" ceremonies at the 1973 Aquarius Festival, Vivian was an integral part of the Nimbin Community.

The arrival of the Pandemic and subsequent lockdown in March 2020 disrupted tenants and community, leaving many of our tenants struggling to pay their rent. We provided rental waivers to many tenants during this period and absorbed the loss of income. Fortunately, we had already begun the process of migrating the office online so our office staff were able to continue work.

The Centre applied for and received funding from the Northern Rivers Community Foundation Recovery and Resilience program to increase water storage on site. We have now installed a new

Rainwater tank to replace the old one on the Acacia Building and another rainwater tank behind Banksia House, home of the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre.

We also applied for and received funds from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Strengthening Rural Communities Fund to replace another section of our crumbling walkways which is an ongoing project for our maintenance manager.

The big issues we are grappling with of course are centred around Climate Chaos and what we can do to protect and serve the tenants and the Centre Infrastructure into the future. Energy use, waste disposal, water storage and use, drought proofing gardens, temperature control inside buildings and in the grounds etc. This will take consultation and planning we are currently identifying the issues and defining the scope. We will need some expert advice on the best way to move forward. Thank goodness the community via the Nimbin Sustainability Plan has already begun to identify and address some of these issues.

As recent events have shown, it will be communities and grass roots support working together, that have the understanding and political will to help themselves, that have any power to affect change and change outcomes.

The Centre looks forward to working with the community to do what we do best in this village, let's find our own solutions, work with each other to find the way forward to sustain and support our community.