



NIMBIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Inc
ABN: 49 142 400 194

✉ PO Box 20433, Nimbin, NSW 2480

🌐 www.nimbinaustralia.com.au

@ chamber@nimbin.nsw.au

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Monday 7 November 2022, at Bush Theatre

Meeting commenced 1730hrs

Acknowledgment of Country

1. **MINUTE TAKER:** David Spain
2. **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dafydd Hyett [President], Peter Hughes [Treasurer], David Spain [Secretary], Caroline Todd. Tashanna Fuller, Diana Roberts Samantha Allen. **Apologies:** Theresa Biscoe [Vice President], Jodee Tichbourne, Kylie Cain.
Guest: John Walker, General Manager LCC
3. **CHAIRPERSON:** Dafydd Hyett.
4. **LCC ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURE**

Diana: Two budgets ago LCC funding for tourism was withdrawn so the VIC in Nimbin was discontinued and a lot of liaison skills & knowledge was lost. We then asked for LCC to appoint a Chamber-based tourism destination officer, to be based in Nimbin three days a week, to run alongside a new local VIC run by the Bush Theatre at no cost to Council, but instead LCC put Dr. Wil Polson on staff for 5 days pw employed through LCC but based in Nimbin. Wil was initially seen as part of LCC's Tourism & Events, but following a request from the Chamber to the former GM, Wil was moved into Economic Development under Tina. By this time Covid was biting, then floods struck. Now there is some recovery, we need to improve close liaison with LCC so that Wil is utilized with maximum effect.

Sammi: Economic conditions (especially tourist visits) are noticeably improving now Covid has receded and the weather is sunny & warm. We need to do all we can to improve the physical & cultural attractiveness of Nimbin and improve the tourist flow.

John: The Dept of Local Government has promised Council money to make structural changes improving economic & financial outcomes. Ramping up tourism is part of that under "Economy & Growth", so is proactive branding.

Action: John to chat with Tina Irish and Wil Polson to explore how Wil's role in the community and partnership with the Chamber can be strengthened to deliver more of the Chamber's desired outcomes – especially in the tourism arena. Attention to be given to ownership and management of the visitnimbin.com.au website (see comments below), active engagement in developing the events calendar, development of initiatives to increase visitor length of stay, support for the VIC and exploration of new accommodation options

5. AQUARIUS FESTIVAL:

Dafydd: The 1973 Festival has had extensive effects culturally, with many of its themes & ideas now becoming mainstream. A 50th Anniversary is being planned by a committee [“AQ50”] that meets once a week and includes original festival planners Johnny Allen and Graham Dunstan. Wil is not on the committee but would be an asset if encouraged by LCC to attend. Major funding (of a \$2m minimum) is being sought from RIAF [Regional Investment Activation Fund], a State investment fund, but equal co-contribution is sought and a 5-year economic plan must be adopted. If seeking RIAF funds, we would have to lodge an EOI by 14th November and this is a work in train. If successful council support will be required.

John: LCC has \$362,000 available for events over the financial year. Already \$15,000 has been put aside from Tina’s budget for Aquarius 50, but more support would come in kind. This sum is not necessarily the ceiling, especially if it promises to boost economic growth. As regards RIAF, the State government moves into caretaker mode in January, so no decisions are likely until March, which is rather late to fund an event in May.

6. VISIT NIMBIN WEBSITE:

Diana: LCC owns this site, which it had when it withdrew its VIC from Nimbin. LCC still controls this site, despite our requests that it be delivered to NCOC for management. All such sites are useless unless updated with vibrant material. NCOC has no problem with LCC retaining its Visit Nimbin site so long as it is properly maintained. At present Wil can upload material that we source (i.e. not find himself), so we recommend he be given more powers & discretions.

7. ACCOMMODATION:

Diana: In the wake of fire, floods & Covid, our two major backpackers closed permanently and the Showground caravan park have all closed on and off, so there are only a couple of small accommodation facilities still open. Possibly Airbnb would supply some solution. Increasing tourist promotion away from backpackers to families is a good commercial move. I did suggest that we could perhaps run a workshop to inform people about establishing AirBnBs with a view to encouraging their establishment but not at the expense of long term rental accommodation – it would need regulation such as in Noosa where you can only Airbnb for 6(?) weeks a year

John: Comments noted.

8. TOWN PLANNING & MASTERPLAN:

Diana: Our DCP has just been updated but it does not serve as a village master plan. The NAG used to receive notification of new DAs received by Council but this practise has ceased. The DA tracker is not always current or easy to use or access info. This practise ceased with the new council and GM but the NAG are keen to see it reactivated.

John: LCC agrees that a village Masterplan is necessary and funding will be set aside for it through the NRRC, which is working on funding. As regards the DAs, NCOC (being an independent incorporated group working on the economic development of Nimbin) is welcome to apply for provision of the list.

Action: NCOC to write to Council requesting the weekly DAs received list be sent to them.

9. PEACE PARK TOILET BLOCK

Diana: This facility is urgently needed to serve the park and Skate Park users and the Rainbow Road walking track. Janelle Saffin has identified that this project will be funded if her party is elected. Council needs to obtain a similar commitment from other candidates – especially the LNP.

John: LCC agrees the facility is needed, and the cost would be about \$380,000. The original low budget design has been reconfigured to better meet needs into the future. Funding by State grant is needed, and is expected, to enable this. John agreed to raise this funding issue with the LNP candidate and pass on contact details to us.

10. ROADWORKS:

Diana: Road repairs are badly needed due to the floods. The intersection at Bush Theatre into the new Redcoates development is badly designed and has confusing markings; it should have come off Crofton Road.

John: LCC is doing standard local works; the roads program will require some \$100m over at least 5 years. \$651m is required for LCC assets alone (with 100+ buildings damaged), and \$10bn is required to rectify private assets; there are some 250,000 insurance claims. It is a concern that the federal Northern Rivers Reconstruction Commission [NRRC] is being centralised to service the whole state, which necessitates its move from Lismore. There will be no flood mitigation works in foreseeable future; a CSIRO report is awaited before any flood mitigation work will proceed as recommendations from this report could impact on reconstruction initiatives.

The biggest issue is landslips. Big landslips are being rectified by contractors financed by NRCC; this has collected the data and is prioritizing. The geotechnical analysis & engineering solutions are complex, especially along Tumble Creek Road which has suffered a massive, deep slip (which appears to have had a prior history) and, if an engineering solution can be managed, will likely require permanent earth movement sensors & traffic lights to limit traffic flows and halt them if there are signs of instability.

Action: John agreed that the intersection to Redcoates Estate will be revisited by engineering staff

11. COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

Dafydd: The Nimbin community comes together in times of crisis (like floods & fires), but it is a volunteer community with few resources. LCC was absent during the floods & landslips; how can it assist local resilience & action by regular, constant advance support? The disaster & resilience requirements from Federal Government take time to manifest. Under the previous General Manager, LCC appointed a permanent Liaison officer (Kath Parry) to receive & channel all Nimbin information. She did a great job receiving concerns, advice & requests, acknowledging them and channelling them to relevant LCC officers. Could such a Liaison officer such as Wil Polson be reappointed?

John: NRCC is receiving a lot of funding but is slow in decision making. LCC is not structured around community development; funding for disaster recovery management and resilience is coming from the State and Feds. Nimbin is feeding into and benefitting from this and developing strategies to be better prepared. He will look at Wil for the requested liaison role, after consulting with Tina Irish

12. COMMUNITY OWNED ASSETS:

Diana: These are a major feature of Nimbin, which owns the former school site (from which Peace Park was given) that now houses the community centre which comprises 9 separate buildings, the B+B building, the Headers sport field, the Tennis courts, the Town Hall (that was historically built by the citizens) and, via the A&I Society, the showground. All of this saves council from massive capital & maintenance outlays. "Bellevue Park" is a vacant block next to the Showground, owned by LCC but under lease to the A&I society, whose constitution used to give its assets to Sydney A&I on windup, which would not be appropriate locally.

John: Agreed that community ownership of such public infrastructure in Nimbin does lower LCC financial obligations and is worthy of support. He had not appreciated that Council owned Bellevue Park and was not aware the A&I had expressed interest in its acquisition. Currently they only lease the land. John agreed to look at the feasibility of Bellevue Park as a temporary home for a pod village.

13. ILLUMINATE NIMBIN FESTIVAL:

Diana: This was held in midwinter on June 24, funded by \$2000 from the Chamber and \$15000 from LCC (itself using a post-flood Resilience grant). It was a child-focussed event that was very successful. This event should be repeated annually. It has been incorporated into plans for Aquarius 50 in 2023 but the community would like to see it as an annual event.

14. RAINBOW WALKING TRACK:

John: Detailed design for this track is expected by December, with works in the new year and, weather permitting, finalization by Aquarius 50th.

15. VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE:

Diana: A couple of months ago the Chamber provided Council with a detailed report identifying issues of concern throughout the village. The footpaths are in bad shape and uneven. They had a cheap surface treatment 20+ years ago and are not within the proposed grant improving access from western carpark up the B+B easement or the wayfinding project generally

Tash: Why is that village water has bad turbidity since the flood?

16. VILLAGE ENTRANCES:

Dafydd: NCOC has no resources to maintain the entrances, only volunteer effort. The Welcome to Nimbin “Hoop” signs will be removed (leaving the hoops) and replaced with new signs, in liaison with LCC, using a Bushfire Resilience grant. As regards mowing grass at the entrances, there is a local organization “Jungle Patrol”, which only has two employees, paid by LCC and reporting to Clifford, who clean the streets but are already stressed by their duties and can’t stretch to the entrances. If there was a bit of extra work added, such as maintaining the entrances, parks & gardens and the cemetery, a third employee could be engaged within Jungle Patrol, preferably someone based in Nimbin.

John: Will talk to Clifford regarding the possibility of a permanent council parks and gardens person/team located in Nimbin

17. WESTERN CARPARK, LONG TERM PLANNING:

Diana: There are shocking potholes at entry of the Western carpark that have not yet been fixed

John: Future parking requirements are being addressed in the draft developer contributions plan. Everyone is under pressure over potholes but he will get the entry fixed.

18. PHONE CONNECTIVITY

Carolione: The Telstra service is unreliable, but surrendering it means loss of landlines. Skymesh works to avoid black spots but is expensive. Request for LCC to lobby for delivery of better services – critical to the disaster response as evidenced during the bushfires in 2019 and the flood in 2022

1904 hrs: Dafydd thanked John for his attendance, responsive clarity and helpful remarks. John promised to talk to Wil and deliver our remarks to Tina.

1915 hrs: Domestic Agenda

AQUARIUS FESTIVAL:

Diana said that Kitty appears to have been mistaken in advising NCOC that it could not get a grant, but she (Diana) then had to go to Europe so this initiative lapsed. An AQ50 committee formed, which included NAFI [Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc.] and was strengthened by Johnny Allen (as a prestigious original organiser) reinvigorating belief that a grant could be obtained. Dafydd & Carolione are on AQ50 representing the Chamber. A business advisor named Stuart McPhee, funded by AusIndustry Entrepreneurs' Programme as a Strengthening Business facilitator, is to be approached to see if he can assist the Chamber to develop leverage in the economic development area from Aquarius 50 and beyond.

Dafydd advised that AQ50 envisages multiple independently-managed venues (rather than a central festival) showcasing or emphasising physical & cultural achievements over the past 50 years. AQ50 has listed 140 ideas and is combing them into eight categories as themes for talks & symposiums that will be broadcast to the world. There are plans for adjacent areas (eg Kyogle, Tenterfield) holding parallel events. NCOC is needed to "auspice" this process, as it is incorporated and has good reputation, to supply an ABN & insurance, and to contribute \$10k as foreshadowed. An Aquarius 50th event would bring a lot of business and cultural attention to the locality. "Auspicing" will require maintaining responsibility for general overview, attention to detail required for event delivery & grant conditions, and sourcing funds e.g. by a Go Fund Me campaign.

David said that the original festival in May 1973, occurring at a time of youth rebellion & Flower Power during conscription for the Vietnam war, had been a catalyst for resettlement of economically-depressed Rainbow Region and the purchase of a large property at Tumble Falls for an intentional "tribal" community without internal cadastral boundaries. Since then, much had been achieved across the entire Region in terms of exploring & implementing aspirational local self-management, permaculture, sustainable technology and in arts 'n crafts. Although this achievement is only maybe a quarter of what is desirable, at least it is unique globally and of promising value to an increasingly chaotic world. So we must try to take this tide at the flood, as no-one else will, and maybe bring the original festival to some sort of flowering. However, if NCOC is to "auspice" as proposed, we have limited personnel (all with own families & businesses) and will need very much to rely on the integrity & competence of AQ50 in organising events & delivery, locating funding and delivering us prompt reliable briefings.

Peter said he would be able to administer or overview the accounting, so long as all Quickbooks data entry was made, account authorizations are in place & work smoothly, and accounts are paid by others. **Sammi** said she could attend to accounts payment; data will have to be entered by some volunteer or funded from an administration element in a grant. Emails to NCOC should be channelled (by using different addressee handles) into a range of boxes so as to assist sorting & attention and Nicole will help with this job.

Dafydd/ Carolione	That NCOC acknowledges the significance of an Aquarius 50 th event in 2023 to Nimbin and the region	Carried
	That NCOC auspice the EOI for the State RIAF [Regional Investment Activation Fund] grant and requests that the application encompasses funding required to support the Chamber's role in such an auspice eg. financial management, event management, provision of insurance	
	That NCOC confirm a minimum \$10,000 commitment to AQ50 and the application of this funding be determined by the AQ50 organising committee in consultation with NCOC	
	That NCOC will support and manage funds being raised outside of the RIAF application to support AQ50	
	That responsibility for event planning, and for the management and distribution of funds raised, be given to the AQ50 organising committee <u>provided that</u> (i) its committee members personally undertake to attend to these responsibilities in a thorough & bona fide way; (ii) it appoints a convenor and a secretary with email & telephone details as the sole authoritative points of contact; it promptly (iii) emails NCOC copies of its minutes, (iv) supplies full responsive answers to NCOC's questions; (v) supplies details of proposed contracts & invoices; and (vi) generally gives regular updates on progress.	

...6...

ARMSIGNS:

Diana advised that Armsigns have completed fabrication of the many signs we designed & commissioned under the terms of the BCRRF Bushfire resilience grant. They will be delivering signs-before the end of the month and should be paid then, but there is a lapse in supply of grant funds between finishing a step and getting the funds. The Chamber needs to ensure funds are available to bridge this gap. Diana agreed to show Armsigns the terms of the BCRRF grant, or quarterly returns (if required), and to negotiate them invoicing on longer terms (say 30 or 60 days) to enable release of the funds. She will also talk to Dogwhistle in respect of its invoice (about \$20k) for website work & photography.

End 2020hrs

--- DWS