



2023 President's Report

2023 presented itself as a year of significant change for the Nimbin Community Centre.

We reviewed our lease and rental structures, changed the way we do business, bid farewell to much valued staff, and welcomed some fantastic new people into the NCCI fold. Change is often met with resistance, and we've had to navigate these changes with the hope that our community will see the long-term value in what we have implemented.

A recent article in the Guardian Australia outlined that between 2006 - 2019 there was a 10% decrease in community and civic participation across the country. Encouraging active participation from young people in our community has been, and continues to be, one of our biggest challenges. Increased costs of living, unstable housing and varying economic strains have all added to the complexity of asking young families to find time to volunteer for an onerous albeit rewarding job.

Despite these challenges, we have attracted some fantastic new committee members, many of whom were born and raised here, each of whom are committed to raising their own children in our community. They are enthusiastic about the future of the Centre and see the potential and possibilities it provides for our community. We are extremely grateful to have them onboard.

We have still achieved some fantastic outcomes for Nimbin Community Centre, and the broader community:

- Based on advice of a NSW state government business advisor, we restructured how we do business. This resulted in the creation of several new roles at the Centre, and the loss of others. This was a difficult decision recognising that we have had wonderful and dedicated staff for many years.
- We hired a Property Manager to take on maintenance, gardens, tenant engagement. A multifaceted role that Andre has taken to exceptionally well, showing much dedication and care for the centre. Thank you, Andre.
- Based on recommendations from a business IT specialist we streamlined our management practices and leaned further into the digital world. We have employed the Aether Agency (Rain and Wick) to act as the Centre's Digital Communications Managers and help identify ways to streamline our digital communications practices. They have been doing a fantastic job and are a joy to work with.
- We have moved out of the office in Acacia and consolidated into a shared space with Jungle Patrol. This has freed up our previous office space to generate additional rental income for the Centre. It has also presented synergistic opportunities for us to collaborate with another community organisation.

- We undertook a complete rental review based on future maintenance needs, CPI increases and other rising costs. This process resulted in the formation of a tenants' collective, facilitated by the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre, and a subsequent two meetings between the collective and NCCI. From these meetings we agreed to 5 principals to determine rental increases into the future:

Principle 1: Community need must be considered and made a prime consideration, as a part of the categorisation for determining both future rental increases, and lease durations.

Principle 2: Annual rent increases shall not exceed 110% (CPI+10%).

Principle 3: The lease durations need to be variable, to accommodate community need, fiscal shocks, and funding turbulence.

Principle 4: Develop a 'whole of community' based approach for supporting the NCCI to sustainably husband, maintain, and grow the community owned asset portfolio for current community members and future generations.

Principle 5(Interim supplementary): Identify historically low rent tenants, and develop a 3-year planned, sustainable, and negotiated trajectory to bring them to a level parity commensurate with these principles.

- Outcomes of the meetings with tenants highlighted the already identified need to diversify income streams. They also encouraged an influx of renewed interest in the Community Centre, resulting in a substantial number of new memberships which we always appreciate.
- We engaged a landscape architect to begin drafting plans for a grounds revamp. Once we receive the draft plans there will be scope for input and consultation from NCCI members and tenants.
- We migrated our website from a backend attached to Lismore City Council to a Wix platform, allowing for more flexibility around casual hire bookings, event calendars and membership applications and payments.
- We worked with Lismore City Council to complete the disability access ramp from Cullen Street into Aged Care (we're still waiting on the signage to be updated).
- We hosted a community open day for Rainbow Road Walking Track which had a fantastic turnout and resulted in some great ideas to be included along the track. Council have called for tenders for the construction of the track and are currently assessing them.
- The Nimbin Wayfinding Project is scheduled for construction at on 27 November. This will see a formal pedestrian link established between Birth and Beyond and the Bakery with stairs leading into the Western Carpark. NCCI transferred the laneway to LCC as we saw the benefit of the enhanced pedestrian movability for the village.
- We received a grant of \$21,000 from the Community Building Partnerships fund to replace the southern wall of Birth and Beyond. We also contributed funds to complete what was a significant infrastructure project for NCCI. Thank you to Sam, Darren, Andre and all involved for doing a great job on the project.
- Several of the rooms in the Acacia building received some cosmetic upgrades such as sanded floors and fresh coats of paint. This resulted in much interest for the advertised spaces.
- The Wiabal Revitalise grant saw the Sibley St entrance to the Cultural Centre revamped, and the Chamber paid for Burri's mural to be restored.

- We auspiced numerous grants including the Nimbin Rocks for Teens event and NAIDOC activities.
- We are still waiting on the outcomes of several grant applications which, if successful, will cover restumping Birth and Beyond and repaving the front of the Neighbourhood Centre.
- We received \$29,000 from Council S94 funds to restore a major section of the undercover walkway on the Community Centre grounds. We only have one tiny section left until you can traverse the entire grounds under cover.
- The Lilly Pilly building was repaired and painted.
- CCTV was installed through grant funds after our first major theft where all of our tools and equipment were stolen (covered by insurance).
- We installed air conditioning into the casual hire spaces which has increased their usage and made them more appealing for a variety of uses.
- We received funds to conduct an energy audit to assess how we can make savings into the future. Unfortunately, the smart meter was incorrectly installed so we don't have clear results yet.
- We agreed to allow the Early Learning Centre to expand their outdoor play area, recognising the valuable service they provide for the community.
- A piano was donated and installed on the market stage, bringing music, and life, into the grounds.

As you can see, it has been a busy year for NCCI. Our small team of dedicated volunteers and staff have shown tremendous commitment to ensuring that our Centre remains a viable and welcoming space for all members of our community now, and into the future.

Thank you to our tenants – those who've left and the new tenants we've welcomed over the year – your contributions make the Centre what it is, and we are extremely proud to represent such a diverse and valued group of businesses and community organisations.

It is with a heavy heart that we bid farewell to Biko, Robyn, Sam and Helen from the Community Centre staff and extend our deepest gratitude and thanks for everything that they have contributed to the Centre for so many years. Your passion and dedication have given the Centre its heart and your care for community is an inspiration. Thank you.

There comes a time in every community organisation where the baton needs to be passed and new life welcomed. It is no big ask as many of our own existing committee members have dedicated years of their lives to community building. Each care deeply for Nimbin and have contributed to character, spirit and life of our village. You've kept it magic despite all the implications of late-stage capitalism and are a testament to the Aquarius vision. The incoming executive committee holds the upmost respect for you after seeing all that is involved in keeping this ship afloat, and we take tremendous comfort knowing that you are all just a phone call away and are happy to help.

While each of our outgoing committee members have contributed significantly to the Centre, it would be amiss of me to not give special mention to Diana. Your work and dedication to the Community Centre has been tireless, inspiring, and fundamental in shaping the fabric of this community. Your contribution extends beyond what could possibly be listed in this report but rest assured, your legacy will be remembered, and your work ethic aspired to (no promises though). On behalf of both the Nimbin Community Centre and the broader Nimbin Community, we thank you for all that you have done in a voluntary capacity for our village. We love you and we appreciate you.

Lastly, thank you to our members and all those who found the time to be here tonight to reflect on the past year and celebrate our achievements. Our future depends on engagement and support from our community, and we appreciate your trust in managing and maintaining such an important asset for our village.

Thank you.

Wil Polson
President

