RUSTY'S

# BYRON GUIDE

## PEOPLE, POLITICS AND CULTURE

the human condition

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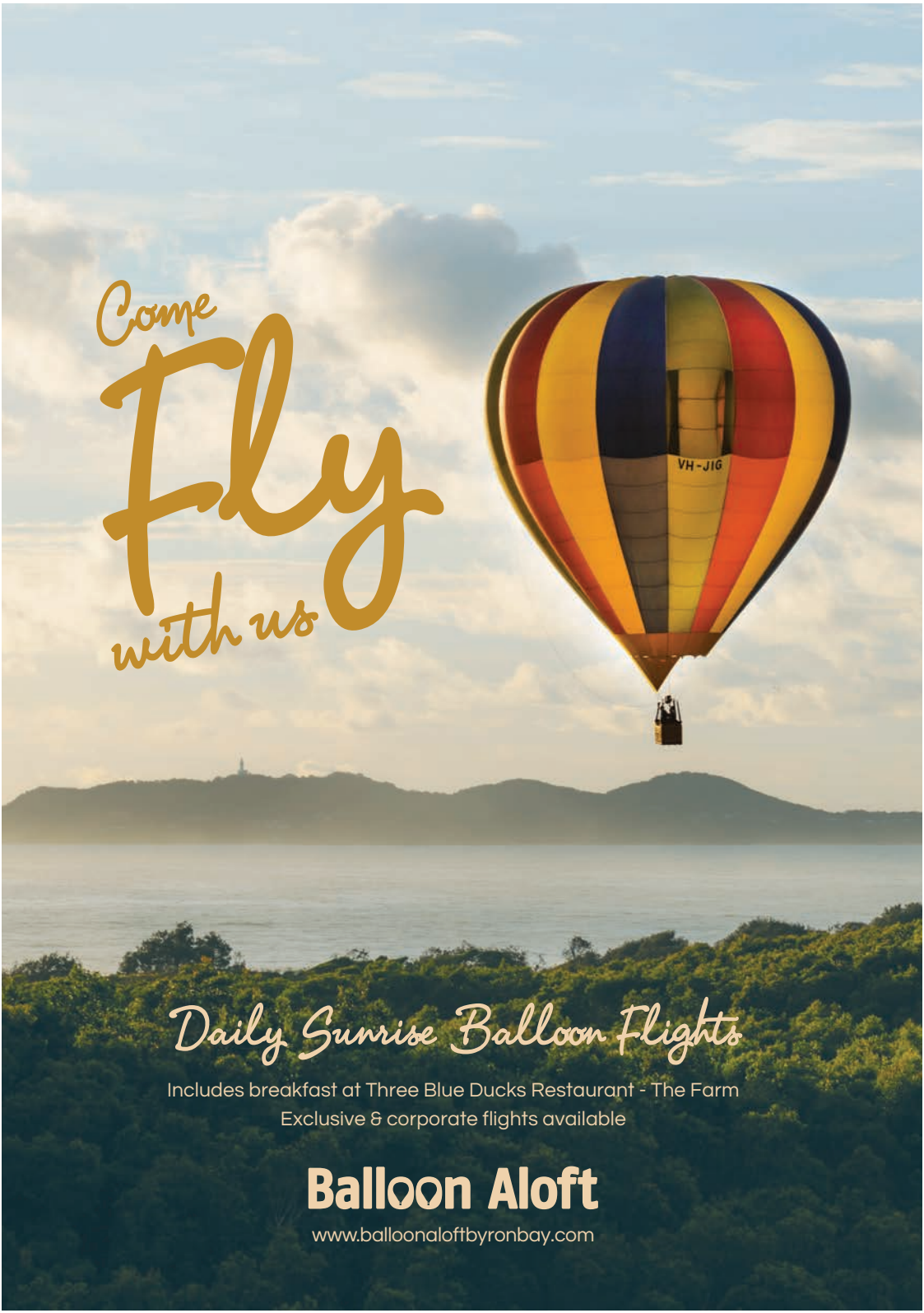
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It is equally true that we cannot consider body, mind, and spirit of the individual without also thinking about the environment in which he is functioning. The environment makes a lot of difference. It can be very favorable, and if it is, that suits our purposes. If it's too unfavorable, death will ensue. If it is too favorable, on the other hand, we are inclined to become vegetables and do nothing. It is necessary for our environment to have something in it which challenges the spirit and the mind, so that we function at our very best. Unless there is a reason for living, unless there is purpose in our life, we cannot possibly achieve high-level wellness.

**DR. HALBERT L. DUNN, MD, PHD**
HIGH LEVEL WELLNESS. PUBLISHED BY R.W. BEATTY LTD. VIRGINIA USA 1961

# Reading




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**m: 0428 847 390 / 0421 422 645**
**e: rustym@iinet.net.au**
**w: rustymillersurf.com**
**byron-bay-guide.com.au**


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*Photo: Tao Jones*

# The Human Condition

**TRICIA SHANTZ & RUSTY MILLER**

What a topsy turvy year 2021 turned out to be, right to the end, even though we all probably thought/hoped that it would be different following on from the Covid 2020 year. But Covid followed us. Australia was in lockdown to the rest of the world for the most part of two years. We were known as 'the hermit kingdom'.

Byron was a different town over the winter of 2021. There were no tourists/visitors, internationals, JobKeeper, or major films being made. It was actually quiet. Only residents were here. And, they were appreciating the pace. However, times were tough for small business, which is the majority of Byron businesses. There were a number of Sydney escapees, purportedly looking at 'real estate', who pushed us into lockdowns and the price of real estate and rentals were pushed skywards. Over the year we became the most expensive real estate in the country. We became more inequitable – in a place that has prided itself on being more egalitarian.

"We must find a way of integrating justice and fairness because why reach an enviable level of prosperity when all we achieve are "islands of abundance in the ocean of universal misery?" wrote Mexican poet Octavio Paz. The oceans of universal misery include the 400 women and children living in cars in Byron Shire, the young people who live in sub-standard housing struggling to pay the extortionate rent, the businesses paying increasing rent, older people on a fixed income trying to hang in to live here, where they may have lived for decades.

There's been a lot written about Byron. The proposed Netflix series Byron Baes caused a stir. It got long term residents up in arms that it wasn't representative of Byron, that it would cast Byron in a light that wasn't valid. Does any other place in the world navel gaze as much as Byron Shire residents and the Australian media about Byron? National media throw the name Byron into just about any story, whether it is relevant or not. It draws readers in. They love to love/hate the town, the name, the image.

Netflix Director of Content ANZ, Que Minh Luu, when asked by the interviewer, from the Bangalow Herald, in June 2021 about why she chose Byron Bay as a site to explore, Que says without hesitation: "People love Byron. They aspire to it. If a town could be an influencer, it would be Byron Bay. Growing up as a young Vietnamese Australian, Byron Bay represented to me a type of iconic, archetypical sense of what Australia and Australianness means. But my cultural heritage also makes me familiar with the pain of having my community misrepresented. If you peel the surface off that idealised Byron you find that things aren't all that perfect with increasing wealth disparity, a housing and accommodation crisis, and tensions between recent arrivals and long-term residents."

We respectively disagree that Byron Bay is archetypical of Australia. In fact it is the opposite. The newcomers that came to Byron in the '60s and '70s (mainly surfers and their hangers on) came to live a different life from that of the rest of Australia. They questioned

I don't think the human condition has changed all that much – we need someone to love, something to do and something to look forward to.
JUDI MCCROSSIN, AUSTRALIAN SCREENWRITER

*Photo: Tao Jones*

society, the Vietnam war and capitalism. They came to live a considered life, maybe even a Henry David Thoreau type life - not in the cabin in the woods but in the dairy bails on the old dairy farm in the rolling hills of northern NSW. In those days and into the '80s Byron was a more egalitarian town. It isn't now.

Of course, places change. Byron was always going to. Places that don't change are often the place more adventurous people escape from. Byron, its Indigenous language name, Cavanbah, has always been a meeting place, according to the local Indigenous people. Adjacent tribes/clans came to meet and eat. It has also always been a transient place, where people come and go, come and eat and go.

The task for all of us who have lived here for some time is to have conversations with new people moving in, as to what is important and relevant to the place. Our fabric builders are people who stay and work in our community, for community. Now, more than ever we need people to do this. The pandemic and its effects are ongoing, and will be longer than we probably all think, and it should be making everyone think: about fellow citizens, our society, the greater good for the greatest number, and how we live. Your conscious trail in life.

"Life's a cooperative project, and that applies whether we're talking about personal, professional, commercial or political life. The best outcomes depend on all the moving parts working in sync; all the competitors playing by the same rules; all the activity serving some higher purpose than mere self- interest. We are most likely to achieve that when we cooperate, which is a good reason for avoiding brutal, adversarial competition that will always have the effect of diminishing us." writes Hugh Mackay in his latest book.

One of the wonderful things to do in Byron Bay is to participate in the casual conversation, which can actually be the critical conversation. Those casual liaisons with people who you only see on that morning lighthouse walk, at coffee, or at a beach swim. They are as important as seeing your friends. While Byron experienced a four to five week Covid lockdown we were still able to undertake our daily rituals that are common to many residents. Simplicity is what Byron used to do well, but we're not so sure anymore that it can. However, we best keep working on it. Our way of life depends on it.

# Tarot Confidential

**MARGOT DUELL**

I'm sitting in a tiny room at a card table draped in green satin. Two decks of tarot cards are spread in deliberate configurations over the shiny table cloth. Across from me sits a well-dressed woman from Sydney, who has just told me that she has a powerful memory of having been abducted by aliens. She says that experiments were performed on her and that implants were installed into her body. She tells me that they are causing non-diagnosable illnesses and a constant background anxiety. I'm reading her tarot cards.

Strangers show up to see me for guidance, to tell me their story or in the hope that I will pull a rabbit out of the proverbial hat and tell them exactly how to proceed with their lives. Most come for universal human concerns: love, money, health, career, family matters. But not everybody's concerns are predictable and I've learned to accept each person and their story at face value.

I've never represented myself as a psychic but rather as an intuitive woman with a bit of life experience and wisdom to share. Reading cards for someone is necessarily a situation of great trust. For me, it's an honor to be invited into someone's intimate life and concerns, I'm there to listen, to try to make sense of confusion and to open up possibilities and options for them. I don't see myself as an oracle, but rather as a mirror reflecting the client's own deeper knowing back to them through the cards.

I've had famous clients, criminals, a psychic police chief (who said that she keeps her intuitive knowledge secret at work, but uses it all the time), SAS soldiers and corporate heavy weights. One of these was a high profile lawyer who would call me about important staff and career changes. There was a lot of pressure in that, but he said that he valued my input and that he merely added it to the other more rational ingredients of his decision making process. I have also sat with the lost, the bereft and the lonely, along with those just looking for some fun and a cool Byron 'experience.'

My motto has always been 'do no harm'- and don't lie. If I don't know what the outcome of something is likely to be, I tell the client so. There is enough mischief out there in the world of divination. Sometimes, I have had to deconstruct immobilizing predictions projected onto vulnerable clients by unscrupulous psychics. My approach is to try to offer wise counsel via the deeply human stories depicted through the tarot.

Over the past 20 years I've worked in Byron's premier healing centers, at private accommodations and retreats and also for 'weddings, parties and anything else.' I never really enjoyed those events where everyone was drunk and you were booked along with the jumping castle or the belly dancer, and I stopped doing them fairly quickly. My mission, like the venerable oracle of Delphi, has always been to encourage 'self-knowing.'

If you had told me 30 years ago that I would end up making my living as a Byron Bay Tarot Reader, I would have scoffed at the idea.

To learn who rules over you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticize. VOLTAIRE


Photo: Tao Jones

I viewed soothsaying as little more than mystical entertainment. It was a world of velvet tablecloths, crystals, creepy music and curious decks of cards. The practitioners often looked a little scary (or crazy) dressed in 'olde worlde' costumes befitting their status as self appointed oracles. It seemed that you had to look and act the part of the all seeing and all knowing.

At the same time, I'd always been fascinated by myth, magic, storytelling and the unseen. My great grandmother was a herbalist and clairvoyant in Czechoslovakia and I enjoyed the idea that perhaps I too might have some of that 'white witch' material in my DNA.

During the 1970's, like many of my generation, I dabbled in metaphysical books and a few tarot decks came my way, but it wasn't until the 1990s that I started studying and 'reading' cards for friends. Soon I began to comprehend the symbolic language of the tarot; which I see as a kind of esoteric shorthand for fundamental human experience.

In the 1970s we would spend weeks driving up to Byron from Melbourne, passing through many beautiful places, but nothing compared with the palpable effect of that first sighting of Mt. Warning. That rich land encompassed by the volcanic caldera, ran all the way down to little Wategos and back out through the ancient remnant forests of Gondwanaland. It had a unique 'energy' and we all felt it.

When I finally came to live here over 20 years ago, Byron was already a magnet for healers, yogis, spiritual seekers and teachers. In the 1980s, Osho's Sannyasins brought therapies and money into town from all over the world. It became an internationally recognized place for transformational workshops and spiritual retreats.

People came to Byron for the beauty, the surf, the alternative culture and the 'vibe.' And part of that vibe was about healing. Byron was somewhere where you could nurture both body and soul.

When I moved here there were already a couple of well established healing centers (long before there was a 'wellness movement' or expensive curated spa experiences with spiritual add-ons.) These were shops that sold handmade soaps, incense, and books on metaphysical themes, along with body work, tarot and astrology.

So I positioned myself within the broad spectrum of Byron therapists. Most were excellent and full of integrity. These days the therapists are not as visible. High rents and changing demographics have scattered them further out into the Shire or into retreat centers and private practice. Despite this fragmentation, Byron is still seen as a place for personal transformation and the healers and 'change agents' (as a friend suggested I might want to rebrand myself), remain in demand.

I've never regretted answering the call of the 'High Priestess' and I've met some amazing people over the cards. I hope that I have offered helpful guidance and that I have done no harm.

If you're wondering what happened to the woman who was abducted by aliens? Well if I told you, I'd have to kill you. The answer, like all the other stories, is sealed in the vault.

*Margot Duell has been reading Tarot in Byron Bay for over 20 years. She is a writer, reader, walker, dancer and traveler who remains ever curious about culture and humanity.*


*Photo: Nelly Le Comte*

There can be no happiness if the things we believe in are different from the things we do.
**FREYA STARK, EXPLORER AND TRAVEL WRITER**

*Photo: Nelly Le Comte*

# Marlivale Farm

**FRANK & ANDREA BOYLE**

Marlivale Farm has been the home of the Boyle Family since the 1840s. At the beginning, the farm was supporting four to five families given the naturally fertile soil and natural farming methods at play. After five generations the cycle has come full circle with three generations living, working and being sustained by the farm. Contrary to this, the farm during the '70s and '80s, under the influence of industrial farming, was unable to support even two families. In fifty years much of the land was cleared for small crops and soil health was significantly degraded. To get to a stage where we can now support feeding not just ourselves, but the local community through weekly farmers' markets, local restaurants and small grocers, is a huge milestone.

The fourth generation (Frank and Andrea) on the farm brought many changes, stepping away from the conventional, monoculture farming of a dairy and into pecans, dryland rice, as well as intentional cattle grazing. Such farming is an ode to my great grandfather who farmed this way out of necessity. We farm with a holistic approach, implementing good environmental stewardship throughout. We work with nature, rather than against it and strive to understand the cycles of the environment to improve the land in which we live, work and grow.

To emulate the family's commitment to sustainability, much of the pecan processing infrastructure has been upcycled. The sheds and much of the machinery have been built from materials and components upcycled from other projects, allowing the business to grow organically, just as the pecan trees have. This also enabled the family to value-add significantly by being able to grow, pick and pack all on the same farm, and adding products such as pecan spread, rice cakes, and dreams of sake production into the future.

Throughout the years farming has been consistently a challenge to be a viable business, both in terms of sustainability and economically due to the value of the land versus what we can make off the land. However, the farm is worth more than the dollar value placed on it. To us, seeing it continue as a farm into future generations, and having the privilege of enabling young farmers is what drives us going forward and solidifies that what we are doing is worth so much more than money.

The Farmers' Markets in the Northern Rivers have been pivotal to the production of produce on the farm and make it possible to continue what we are doing. We started going to the Byron Farmers Market only a few months after it started in 2002, and when the farmers' market movement was just beginning in Australia. Over 20 years ago, this could have been considered 'radical' growing rice and pecans to sell at local markets - but it could also be said that it was being in the right place at the right time.

Our farming practices and mentality was ahead of the local food movement and with the right attitude, openness and dedication to

**We have a saying in Egypt: 'Your freedom stops when you start hurting others.'**
**JIHAD YASSINE, SLAM POET AND ASPIRING AUTHOR, PUNCHBOWL BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL**

*Marlivale Farm - 168 year old shed*

producing good local food the family business was able to grow. But beyond selling our products at the markets, it is also an important opportunity to connect and educate the local community on growing food in the area, and bucking the norm of conventional farming practices. The joy that we all get from the farmers' markets makes this way of life so much sweeter.

We have had a new round of excitement and enthusiasm with the return of the younger generation to our farm - our youngest daughter Sophie and her husband Mac have moved back to the farm. With the groundwork set, the farm has a bright future ahead of it to continue putting sustainable farming practices at the forefront. We will continue to live out the legacy of feeding our family to feeding the community.

*The Boyle's farm is on Boyle Road in Goolmangar. www.marlivalefarm.com.au*

# Food Security - in the Byron Shire and Beyond

**HELENA NORBERG-HODGE**

Our region's reputation for fresh local food, farmers' markets and permaculture farms represents much more than an 'instagrammable' tourist attraction. It's a step towards genuine food security, sustainability and collective wellbeing – towards the kind of world that more and more people across the globe are realising we need.

Far from a passing fad, local food systems represent genuine food security and are meaningful responses to the crises of our time – from climate change to biodiversity loss to community breakdown.

That's because such food systems embody and strengthen the bonds of interdependence between people and their communities, and between human societies and the natural world. They are also the cornerstones of human-scale, more accountable economic structures. Just as local shops are far more accountable to farmers and consumers than global supermarket chains can ever be, so the farmers themselves are invested in the long-term wellbeing of their land and of the people they feed.

This is more than just theory. If you've had the chance to visit the Byron Shire's farmers' markets, the difference is immediately apparent. People know each other's names and linger for conversations, forming friendships with those they rely on for their daily sustenance.

But in today's world, top-down government policies are moving us in the opposite direction – separating us further and further from the sources of our food by supporting global trade and large agribusiness at the expense of family farms and local markets. They have subsidised fossil fuels and the infrastructures for large-scale production and global trade. They have given regulatory freedom and tax-breaks to Big Agriculture and supermarket chains, while increasing taxes and red-tape on small producers and local shops. In short, our governments have created an economic playing field that is heavily tilted towards the largest and most globalised businesses. It's for that reason that food from the other side of the world regularly costs less than local food.

It's also why food miles have massively and needlessly increased. The US imports and exports almost 1.5 million tons of beef every year. In 2007, Britain and Australia exchanged 20 tons of bottled water with each other. Macadamia nuts grown in the Byron Shire are sent to China to be cracked open, before being sent back again to be sold in supermarkets here. And even though this region is a national leader in the movement to relocalise, I estimate that less than 15% of the food consumed here actually comes from the region.

In recent months we've seen just how vulnerable these global supply-chains are: a giant container ship stuck in the Suez Canal

You can cut down the flowers but you can't stop the spring. PABLO NERUDA

snarled ship traffic for weeks, while COVID has led to shortages of long-haul truckers, logjams at ports, and to the slaughtering of millions of factory farm animals in the US that were then left to rot. But these disruptions are just harbingers of things to come. The truth is, the global food system is alarmingly vulnerable to much bigger crises – crises that it itself is perpetuating.

As industrial agriculture decimates forests, soils and biodiversity, and as global trade keeps emissions on the rise, so the climate crisis escalates. It threatens droughts, floods, heat-waves and plagues that could wipe out entire harvests in the world's food bowls. At the same time, soil and water depletion in these areas is happening so fast that, if we continue along the current trajectory, we risk major food systems collapse in coming decades.

But even as the global food system undermines real food security worldwide, multinational agribusinesses have used their influence to co-opt the term – redefining 'food security' as a community's capacity to access the global market.

But these giant corporations are opposed by the largest peoples' movements on Earth – movements fighting for the rights of small farmers and local communities to prioritise genuine food security: production for their own needs first. The largest of these is La Via Campesina, an organisation that represents about 200 million small farmers worldwide.

I, like so many others, believe that people power can succeed in reclaiming our food systems, and thereby bring about a future of thriving ecologies, interdependent communities, and lower-impact cities that have relationships with adjacent rural areas. A future in which diverse communities meet the majority of their food needs through human-scale agricultural ecosystems connected to vibrant local markets.

Not only is this future more beautiful, it also makes rational sense. Studies have proven that smaller-scale, diversified farms produce much more food per unit of land, water and energy than any industrial monoculture ever can.

Such farms are structurally supported by local markets, which require a variety of different products and therefore incentivise diversified production. For example, one two-acre farm in Ewingsdale is home to over 100 food crops.

Diversity not only boosts abundance, it also means that farmers can rely on ecosystem processes – rather than synthetic chemicals – to manage pests and sustain fertility. In other words, local food systems can be truly ecological and regenerative.

Crucially, they are also able to be more responsive and adaptive. With the onset of COVID, local food producers and shops from Byron Bay to Tokyo, from rural India to Mexico City, were often able to increase output – sometimes by more than double – and develop systems for getting good-quality produce to their communities. Coupled with pop-up community-aid initiatives, they helped provide essential goods to the most vulnerable people.

By choosing diverse, locally adapted seeds and animal breeds, we can also boost resilience to climate instability. In one of India's driest regions, a local government supported farmers to transition away from growing water-intensive rice for export towards growing a wide range of local crops, including millets and pulses, using only organic inputs and rainfed irrigation. The farmers saw boosted yields and higher incomes, even in a year where the region saw 40% less rainfall than normal.

So how do we move further in a localising direction, in Byron and beyond?

Even as the corporate food system increases its stranglehold – now notably through buzzwords like 'regenerative,' 'net-zero', and so-called 'nature based solutions', the bottom-up movement for localisation is growing. As Local Futures spells out in our World Localisation Day campaign, people are working to strengthen community and local economies all over the world. In particular, the local food movement – including initiatives like farmers' markets, community cooperatives, community-supported agriculture schemes, permaculture projects, edible school gardens and more – has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years.

The flourishing of these initiatives is little short of a miracle. The worldwide local food movement has been swimming upstream in an economic system that continues to favour the big and the global in countless insidious ways. Now is the time to work together to call for strategic policy reforms, including:

- shifts in land-use regulations to allow the development of affordable housing for people who wish to contribute productively to the local food system. (For example, in the USA, the Montgomery County Council pushed through a re-zoning Master Plan to protect farmland and decentralised towns from commercial/urbanising pressures coming from nearby Washington D.C.),
- tax-breaks and rent-control for small businesses and shops that provide access to local food,
- a reduction in the regulatory red-tape that strangles small farms and businesses. (For example, in places like Ontario and Maine, governments have passed legislation to exempt cottage industries from strict health and safety regulations that were created for large-scale processing operations),
- new trade treaties to *re-regulate*, rather than deregulate, global corporations.

Our campaigning can begin at the local level, and trickle up to inform larger economic shifts. Policy changes can ensure that local food systems become cheaper and more accessible to the majority of the population, helping them grow and steadily replace the global food system.

In the long-run, a return to more localised food systems is inevitable. But whether this shift will happen because of environmental, financial or political upheavals – or through foresight and strategic localisation – is up to us.

*Helena Norberg-Hodge is director of Local Futures, author of Ancient Futures and of Local Is Our Future; and producer of The Economics of Happiness. She is the recipient of the Alternative Nobel prize and the Goi Peace Prize. She helped to start all the farmers' markets in the Byron Shire. www.localfutures.org*

*Photo: Nelly le Comte*

The currency of wellness is connection. DR. JOHN W. TRAVIS, MD

*Photo: Tao Jones*

# Game Sense and Musicianship

**SIMON GREAVES**

There are myriad ways to view a musical performance. As a listener, we can be transported to a special place in our thoughts, or the physical location we are in could somehow feel more magical. Music can inspire better physical performance or evoke strong emotion. As a musician/multi-instrumentalist I feel blessed to be able to readily access being 'in the groove', or be in a 'flow state' where time kind of stops and I'm in awe what my fingers are accomplishing.

As a producer, I'm kind of a coach, helping an artist accomplish their best performance for a song and achieve the realisation of their personal vision for an album. Merryn Jeann, a Mullum girl with a hit in Paris, describes our signature sound as Punk Disney and the Sydney Morning Herald said we're 'gossamer delicate' with a comparison to Nick Drake. James Cruikshank (Cruel Sea), sadly now departed, gave us our name 'Museagency' in a gushy post card from the Italian coast promoting the Hymn For Her album we co-produced.

Museagency is the partnership of myself and Gyan, who is a naturally gifted singer/songwriter and artist with an international career. Together, this entity promotes our projects as, and with, musicians, as well as producing and recording other artists. I'm generally fulfilled as an accompanist, though I have fronted underground Byron bands, Blitz Kids and The Mood. I'm excited by most aspects of music production, and am a bit academic, having studied classical music from childhood, culminating in a music degree from Adelaide University. Recently, I've been inspired to give some form to my working methods in the pursuit of an Honours degree leading to a PhD at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

There have been many Byron personalities who have contributed to my musical toolbox. The first Byron notable in my musical ninja training is Richard (Ric) Light who ran the Jin Wu Koon dojo in the old Norco building on Jonson Street in the '80s. Richard was my first taste of serious fitness training and my imagination took form as I actualized some Kung Fu moves I'd romanticized from the TV series. I guess all of us are on 'the search' to have arrived in Byron, and this was my introduction to subtle energy focus and flow within the body. The reality of full contact sparring lead me to safer disciplines of yoga and dance, often at the same old Norco building, which almost feels like a character in my story itself. Something was planted there that has informed my daily practice ever since.

The fact that Richard, now a professor, has recently returned to the Bay as an internationally recognised sports coach, with 12 academic books and over 200 peer reviewed articles published, completes an amazing arc, as he advises me on my post grad studies. I love how he gives me a language to help describe my slightly punk concepts crossed with eastern ideas. He's a leader in the field of Game Sense (GS), an athlete-centred coaching approach to team sports. More recently he's revisited GS

All tyrannies rule through fraud and force. But once the fraud is exposed they must rely exclusively on force. GEORGE ORWELL

and drawn on Positive Psychology so it can be applied to activities beyond team sport.

Game Sense is the focus of my thinking and writing as I apply this positive, inquiry-based coaching method to my daily program, training for my own classical guitar and piano performances in 2022. GS gives design to the more haphazard concept of 'chunking', where a piece of music is learnt in small sections. GS helps me to invent scenarios where stellar performance and flow state is an expectation. I love the analogy my guitar teacher/supervisor Karin Schaupp gives to playing Bach well, ... Perfect Dive No Splash! It helps me frame music as a sport as I bend and develop my interpretation of Game Sense.

A huge musical influence was Margo Dods, who was my piano teacher and friend now departed. I was a founding committee member in the Byron Music Society of which she was Artistic Director, and she guided me to a deeper and deeper understanding of the subtle character and elation available in the keys. She helped rehabilitate David Helfgott and her ideas underpin a lot of the aspirations I have with my academic work, knowing that she was never published. She also co-ordinated the fundraising for the grand piano in the Byron Community Centre.

Wayne Mukrrnngll Armytage, a first nation friend, also now departed, used to run the Byron Literary Society at the Community Centre and our performances of Bach with his poetry reading still inform my ideas of Bach in situated performance.

A tip of the hat to Keven Oxford for discoveries in blues and prog-rock from my years doing sound at the Piggery/Arts Factory and Blues festival.

Performances planned for next year are:

Bach: D minor partita with reflections, arranged for guitar, yidaki (didge) and percussion.

I'm exploring an idea by Veronique Seret and Nick Wales to include reflections between the movements of this iconic work. Simon Mullumby (Didge Si) will join me on yidaki for the reflections and in the last movement, the Chaconne, we'll perform together. I've been practicing Bach with hip hop beats lately and it has sparked Karin's imagination enough to have

me consider adding percussion to the line up. I used to perform the Chaconne with Kavi from Electric Tipi in the 90's, which is another arc as Kavi was Simon's first yidaki teacher.

Rodrigo: Concerto arranged for guitar, string quartet and two flugel horns, with consideration of Miles Davis's jazz interpretation 'Sketches of Spain'.

While conceiving this work with Byron local, Prof. David King he stopped and said 'What are you doing Si? I've never played quite like that.' I believe I was applying the elements of super back beat slow hand feel that I picked up playing with James Cruikshank, to a classical setting. David has an international reputation as a classical trumpeter and conductor. Sonia Yorke-Pryce is advising on choreographic elements to the shows. She's appropriately for me, very qualified and celebrated in the area of Healthy Ageing In Dance.

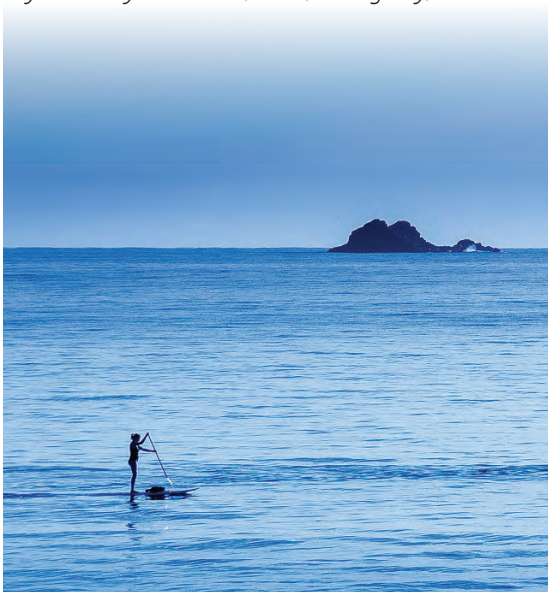
Punk Guide to The Orchestra: Concert with Chamber Orchestra and workshop.

My experience of Russian composer Mussorgsky involved the destruction of a Hammond B3 organ in the Emerson Lake & Palmer (ELP) movie, *Pictures At An Exhibition*, which I saw many times. Despite the abuse Jonny Rotten and The Sex Pistols initially heaped on ELP with their three semi trailers of music gear, Jonny and Keith Emerson eventually became friends with deep mutual respect. This is my in to Punk Guide to the Orchestra as I take an irreverent and hopefully entertaining tour of some gems in classical music and the use of orchestra in funk to metal to French pop.

How Led Zeppelin is related to Stravinsky isjust the tip of the iceberg and there'll be a workshop that explores the essential ingredients of what a virtuoso musician experiences in full flight. We'll design Game Sense scenarios where anybody can experience the feeling. Kinda like air guitar for real and extra fun with a two note funky bass line and a Wes Anderson movie soundtrack.

We'll do some episodes online for the Museagency Youtube channel as we build up to these and some Gyan shows, hopefully all at the Byron Theatre, in 2022. See you there.

*Simon Greaves BMus has been an underground performing musician in Byron since the Beach Hotel was the Surfside. He founded Museagency studios and for his diligence and generosity, was awarded keys to the Byron Theatre. www.museagency.com*



I am deeply interested in the sound of Country; if the land could sing, how might it sound?
MEGAN COPE, INDIGENOUS ARTIST, QUANDAMOOKA WOMAN NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND

*Photo: David Young*

# Kindness: A Cure for Loneliness?

**HUGH MACKAY**

*25 percent of Australian adults report feeling lonely most of the time...*

To understand the health hazards of loneliness and the healing power of kindness, we need only reflect on the nature of this species we all belong to. We humans are members of a social species which means, in essence, that we're hopeless in isolation. We need each other.

We need families, neighbourhoods, groups and communities of all kinds to nurture and sustain us and to give us the all-important sense of 'belonging' that is so fundamental to our mental and emotional health. Indeed, our very survival as a species depends on our ability to create and maintain social harmony.

Like all herd animals, we suffer when we are cut off from the herd. Yes, we all need solitude; we need time to ourselves for replenishing our resources for the demanding business of being a member of a social species. But too much isolation heightens the risk of loneliness, anxiety and depression – along with other health hazards like hypertension, inflammation, cognitive decline, disturbed sleep and vulnerability to addiction.

So it comes as no surprise to learn that neuroscientists have identified a 'co-operative centre' in the brain. As you would expect of a social species, we are genetically equipped to co-operate, to congregate, to share.

That means, in turn, that we are all equipped with an innate capacity for kindness, since kindness is the key ingredient in the creation of co-operative, harmonious communities. As the American bio-neurologist Donald Pfaff says, 'We are hardwired for the Golden Rule': our default position is to treat others the way we would like to be treated.

Kindness is the universal balm for troubled souls. It's not only the best way for non-lonely people to reach out to those at risk of loneliness; it's also the best way for the lonely to find a pathway back to connection and belonging. Kindness takes the focus off me, and puts it squarely on the needs of others, and that's a healthy way to live. Ancient wisdom has always said so, and contemporary psychology confirms it.

What is this thing called kindness? It's anything we do to show another person that we take them seriously. Because we are social creatures, that need to be taken seriously – to be recognised, acknowledged, included – is the deepest of all our social needs. And it's a need that can be met by something as simple as a smile or a greeting as you pass someone in the street, or an offer of a chat over a cup of coffee. At a deeper level, it is met whenever we listen attentively and empathically to someone, when we offer a sincere apology for having hurt or wronged someone, and when we forgive someone generously. All such behaviour conveys the unspoken message that 'I see you; I hear you; I accept you as you are.'

Kindness is perhaps the noblest and purest form of human love. All forms of human love – romantic, familial, companionate – are wonderful, but kindness is unique in that

**My mother nursed me with herbal remedies and I quickly realised that people didn't care for plants, but plants cared for people.**
**ABDERRAZAK BENCHAABANE, GARDEN DESIGNER, MUSEUM OWNER, PERFUMER**

it requires no feeling of affection, nor any emotional response to the other person. When we are being true to what Abraham Lincoln described as 'the better angels of our nature', we are capable of acting kindly towards people we don't like, people we could never agree with, and even people we don't know.

As Samuel Johnson wrote, 250 years ago: 'Kindness is in our power, even when fondness is not.' Isn't that a lovely thing to know about this species we belong to – that we all have the capacity for kindness towards anyone, including total strangers? (And isn't the kindness of strangers one of the loveliest things you've experienced?)

Our capacity for kindness is our most precious human asset, yet we don't always value it as we should. We may sometimes brush it aside in favour of more ego-driven impulses: unbridled ambition, for instance, or ruthless competitiveness or acquisitiveness, or rampant individualism. But when kindness prevails, we flourish!

If we are born to connect, to co-operate and to show kindness towards each other, then here's a remarkable thing about our society: the social trends that have been reshaping us over the past 30 or 40 years have been pushing us in the opposite direction. Far from becoming more socially cohesive, we have actually been becoming more socially fragmented. Far from becoming more conscious of our interdependence and interconnectedness, we have become more defiant about our sense of independence, our individual differences and our uniqueness.

*A quick reminder of some of those trends:*

- the fastest-growing household type is the single-person household, and our households are shrinking to the point where more than 25 percent of Australian households now contain only one person. Not all solo householders are lonely or socially isolated, of course, but the risk of increased social isolation is heightened by this trend;
- between 35 and 40 percent of contemporary marriages will end in divorce, with socially disruptive consequences for the couples, their families and social circles;
- the falling birthrate means the 'social lubricant' effect of kids in a neighbourhood is in shorter supply than ever: relative to total population, we are currently producing our smallest-ever generation of children (often preferring pets to children – there are currently 25 million humans and 28 million pets in Australia);
- we're more mobile than ever, moving house on

average once every six years, and more mobile in another sense, too: with almost universal car ownership, there's been a dramatic reduction in suburban footpath traffic that encourages incidental neighbourly encounters;

- we're busier than ever, having elevated busyness to the status of a social virtue – though busyness is the great enemy of social cohesion;
- the information technology revolution has had a paradoxical effect – making us more 'connected' than ever before, but also making it easier for us to stay apart, and to sacrifice too much face-to-face time in favour of screen time ('connected but lonely' is a phenomenon now observable in heavy users of social media).

Even that short list is enough to alert us to the cumulative effect of such trends: more fragmentation, less cohesion, more social isolation. And because we belong to a social species, these trends are producing the predictable effect: the rise of the Me Culture (exemplified in our current obsession with 'identity') and the three epidemics that inevitably follow the atomisation of a society: loneliness, anxiety, depression.

But COVID-19 has added a new twist to the story of our social evolution, by doing what crises and catastrophes always do. Whether it's a war, a bushfire, a flood, an economic depression or a pandemic, major disruptions to our way of life serve to remind us that we exist in a shimmering, vibrating web of interconnectedness. Our differences become irrelevant as we rediscover the importance of the neighbourhood. We tend to display more kindness and concern for others' needs; we become more alert to those at risk of social isolation; we acknowledge the need to make personal sacrifices for the common good. Yes, there's often a bit of fear and panic in the beginning, but those 'better angels' usually prevail.

The question is: has this disruption to our way of life been enough of a shock to act as a circuit-breaker, mitigating the effects of those anti-social trends, or perhaps even slowing them down? People who survived the Great Depression of the 1930s sometimes looked back and said, 'It was the making of us'. Not that they enjoyed the deprivation and hardship, the prolonged unemployment, or the anxiety about putting a meal on the table for their kids. No; they were talking about lessons so deeply absorbed that they never left them. Values clarified. Priorities re-ordered. A recognition of what really matters.

Through the pandemic, and especially through the lockdowns, we, too, have learned some lessons – about looking out for neighbours (especially the frail and elderly), about the hazards of social isolation, about the attractions of de-stressing and simplifying our life, and about the limitations of IT. Will those lessons stay with us? If we liked ourselves better when we were kinder and more respectful towards each other, why not stick with that as our way of being in the world; our default position; our daily practice?

If we dream of a world that's kinder, more compassionate, more respectful, more co-operative, less violent, less cynical and more harmonious – a world where loneliness, anxiety and depression are no longer found in epidemic proportions – there's only one way to make the change: we must each start living as if it's already that kind of world. If enough of us live like that, that's the kind of world it will become. (Article first appeared on *Ending Loneliness Together* website.)

*Hugh Mackay is a social psychologist and researcher, and the author of 22 books including his latest, The Kindness Revolution, published by Allen & Unwin.*

The time is always right to do what is right. MARTIN LUTHER KING

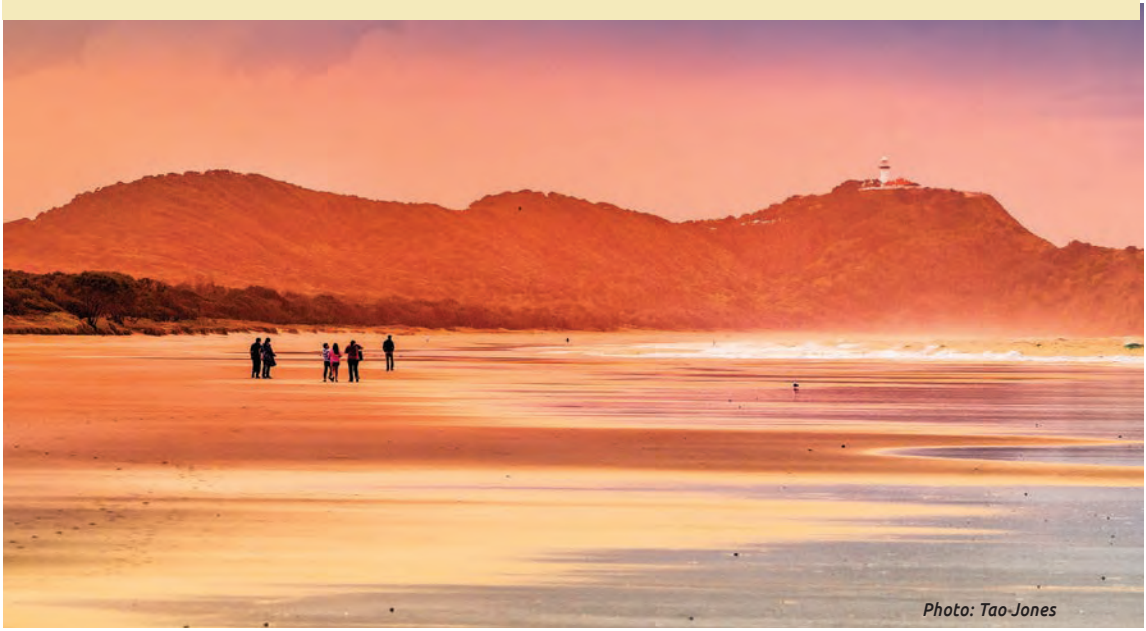


*Photo: Tao Jones*

# China and the Human Condition

**COLLEEN RYAN**

When Lucy and Frank arrived at the Gold Coast Airport on a sunny Sunday afternoon, well before the days of Coronavirus, it was the first time they had set foot outside of China. On our way home to Byron Bay we decided to call into the Beach Hotel where singer Lisa Hunt was pumping out the old Supremes song, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough", to a heaving crowd of local fans.

"I've never seen so many foreigners," said Frank, obviously shocked.

'White bread Byron' had zero Asian faces in the audience – a concept that Frank had never even considered before.

Frank is no slouch. He has a PhD in nano technology. His wife Lucy was a university lecturer in English literature in China before we convinced her to join us at the Australian Financial Review bureau in Shanghai as a translator, researcher and general fixer. We worked with Lucy for six years. She was brilliant. Lucy and Frank and her extended family became our 'China family'. Now we were repaying their kindness with a Byron holiday. They loved Byron Bay and still do. And we were stunned that the sophisticated couple we knew in Shanghai viewed Byron through such a guileless cultural lens.

A highlight of their trip was a visit to Nimbin. The Nimbin museum was still open – before the tragic fire that destroyed its exhibition, including a history of the Aquarius Festival, a hodge podge of political protest banners, and an array of objects outlining the Peace and Love philosophy of North Coast Hippiedom. Frank and Lucy were transfixed. They spent two solid hours in this small museum while we waited in the next door coffee bar, having exhausted our curiosity in about 20 minutes. For the hour-long drive home they marvelled at their introduction to the Hippie world. "We were always taught that Hippies were the dregs of western society," they said. The fact that the alternative subculture of northern NSW preached peace and love and embraced Buddhism and I Ching was just extraordinary to them. They were also blown away by the political protest banners – you could never get away with that in China was the response. There was a long discussion about whether it would be safe to allow such freedom of expression in a country of 1.4 billion people. They thought not. But they returned to Shanghai with a much clearer idea of the Australian way of life.

It has occurred to me recently, as anti-China rhetoric began to pepper daily conversations with otherwise laid back Byronites, that our cultural lens could also do with a good shakeup. So many of us demonise the Chinese people simply because they are appalled by the policies of the current leader Xi Jinping. I don't recall the entire American race being so bitterly attacked when Donald Trump was the President.

One of my fantasies is to take these anti-China warriors to meet some of the people I met when I was living in China.

I would take them to Zhengzhou in Henan province to meet the gynaecologist Dr. Gao Yaojie. She is 93 now. In her 70s and 80s she championed the cause of AIDs victims who had

The things you hold on to - hold on to you. SURF RESEARCH WAXMATE LABEL IN THE '60S


*Photo: Tao Jones*

become ill thanks to a government-sponsored, blood donation scam. She exposed the AIDs villages, hidden by the local government officials. She helped the AIDs orphans. When I visited her apartment it was crowded with donated clothing she personally distributed to the stricken. Her work has been recognised by the United Nations. She has suffered house arrest and years of official harassment. But it did not deter her. She always greeted visitors with a big smile and her passion for her cause was quite simply uplifting.

I would also take them to meet Mr Huo, the environmental activist who exposed the cancer towns on the edges of the Mao-era canals, where a large percentage of the population suffered stomach cancers caused by the horrific pollution of waterways and groundwater in central China.

If he still lived in China, I would take them to Beijing to meet Ai Wei Wei one of China's most talented artists. He was so incensed by the hundreds of children killed in the Sichuan earthquake, thanks to the shoddily built schools approved by corrupt government officials, that he launched a project to attach a name and an identity to every dead child. To expose the horror of the crime. He did this at his own expense hiring a team of young researchers to work at his studio tracking down the history of these hundreds of dead children.

And I would have loved them to be a fly on the wall at an event I attended to celebrate an anniversary of Australia's recognition of China. There were about 300 or so Chinese in the room – every one of them had been educated at an Australian university. The oldest was in his 60s. There were Gough Whitlam jokes told, mimicking the booming voice of the former PM, and so many in the room were howling with laughter. The Chinese have a keen sense of humour – and they get Australian jokes.

Even our fart humour.

We, in Australia, have such a one-dimensional view of China. We are horrified by the thundering criticism of Australia in the newspaper, The Global Times. What we don't realise is that their Global Times is the equivalent of our Sky After Dark. Few take it seriously. While I am also shocked at the authoritarian stance of Xi Jinping, I feel genuine sympathy for the hundreds of millions of Chinese who had embraced international travel, had become adept at foreign languages, had taken so naturally to an entrepreneurial culture and had been enthusiastic about the 40 years of relative economic freedom that had followed Deng Xiaoping's reforms. I feel the same way for the women of Afghanistan who have had 20 years of freedom and access to education taken from them.

But the Chinese don't get much sympathy from Australians. Instead they are demonised. And, by some, despised. Our government is partly to blame. Culture follows leadership. And our leaders seem to have a knack for demonising others – for domestic political gain. We don't have to follow.

*Colleen Ryan lives in Byron Bay and has been associated with the Byron community for the past 25 years. She is a former Editor of the Australian Financial Review and a former foreign correspondent with postings in Washington and Shanghai.*

I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found was really going in.
**JOHN MUIR, WILDERNESS AUTHOR AND CONSERVATIONIST**

*Photo: David Young*

# The Surfer Biome Project

**DR. CLIFF KAPONO**

We met Cliff Kapono when we sat beside him at the Save the Waves fundraiser and awards night in San Francisco in 2018. Cliff was receiving the Wave Saver Athlete of the Year award for being a professional surfer, chemist and journalist. Born in Hawaii his life involves equal parts science as it does surf. In addition to writing he has produced award-winning films that discuss Indigenous activism, ocean conservation, global food security and virtual reality.

Sitting beside him that evening he told us about his Surfer Biome Project, which he'd begun in 2016. His project was exploring and examining the chemicals and bacteria commonly found on surfers in different parts of the world. He was studying how the microbiome on a surfer's skin interacts with marine ecosystems.

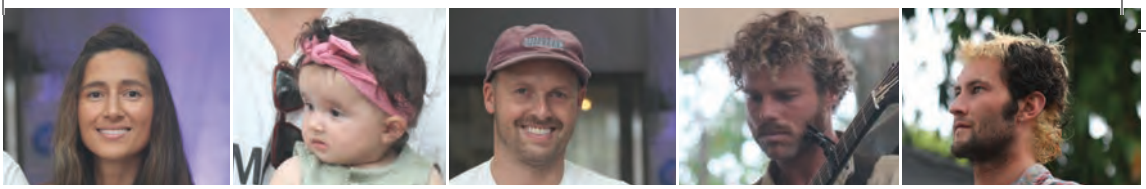
Since then he has become Professor Cliff Kapono, receiving his Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry from the Global Institute of Health at the University of California at San Diego with his dissertation on the Surfer Biome Project.

Cliff was awarded a research grant from the university which supported his final two years of study and an international surf trip where he was able to establish a new citizen science programme. His data acquisition was a little bit unconventional to that of other university chemistry research projects. He would arrive in a new place in the world, surf for a week, get to know some of the local surfers, build up their trust and then ask them if they would be willing to participate in the Surfer Biome Project. Samples were taken from the faces, hands, ears, belly button and feet of participants, who were then asked to provide a faecal sample. Not exactly your average question asked of fellow surfers. Each surfer also answered questions about the bathing products and sunscreen they used and details of any medicines they were taking.

The mapping of the microbial communities within each sample was to better understand the correlation between our environments and the microbes inside people (surfers). He looked at the bacteria that's inside the guts and on the skin of surfers to test his theory that long-term exposure to the ocean can change surfers at a molecular level.

Once back in the lab Cliff used mass spectrometry on the samples to identify chemical profiles for each surfer and classify the compounds present due to their choice of bathing products, pollutants in the ocean and the types of bacteria living in, and on, each person. Cliff could compare fragmentation patterns to visualise similarities between the molecules and microbes in his samples and identify the classes of substances present. His research showed that the microbiomes of surfers from all around the world are more molecularly similar to each other than to the microbiomes of non-surfers.

Cliff's early understanding was that at a basic, molecular level, the ocean was changing surfers. Specifically, the tiny microbes that live on the skin of many surfers is also shared by sharks, otters and sea urchins – all animals that surfers share the ocean with. It confirms what his native Hawaiian culture has long believed: that humans



**In the bible and other ancient texts, every important place is a garden. Where would you rather live? Where would you want to be?**
**DAVID HOCKNEY, ARTIST**

and nature are intertwined, and that both can change each other. He says that microbes "give us really empirical evidence" that people and nature are connected, Kapono said.

Cliff hopes that his research will show that the chemicals we encounter while surfing in the ocean can't just be washed off at the public shower following a session, but that they actually change the chemistry within surfers – as good a reason as any to better watch over the pollution of our oceans and waterways.

"My work always comes back to the ocean… You can tell how much time a person spends in sea water by their bacteria. For future research, I'd be interested to know if those ocean bacteria produce metabolites or neurotransmitters that affect health. Surfing might turn out to be good for you in ways we don't yet understand."

"The surfer biome project is a way to share that we humans are connected to nature on a molecular level. Having travelled across the world and shared time with many different societies, there is a considerably large number of individuals who feel that nature is tangential to their everyday lives. Providing evidence that our molecular composition is affected by the environments we frequent is a great way for people to form a more personal connection to the natural world. The Surfer Biome Project demonstrated that the ocean connects us on a molecular level even if we are on opposite parts of the globe." (www.parley.tv/updates/the-network-cliff-kapono)

On a general level, Cliff studies what happens to our bodies when we spend time outside, biologically and emotionally connecting to nature. In this time of coronavirus and peoples' obsessions with bacteria Cliff's research is particularly timely. Some microbes work against their human host and sometimes they work to assist it. Microbes have now been seen to be so important that many scientists consider the human gut – where most bacteria reside – akin to a second brain. Bacterial research is a growing area of both scientific inquiry and consumer marketing. It's kind of reassuring to know that surfers around the world are joined together through their bacteria.

Dr. Cliff Kapono currently works with the MEGA Lab based in Hilo, Hawai'I on coral reef health.

*Compiled and written by Tricia Shantz*

# In Praise of Soul Surfers and their Ten Commandments

**RICHARD EVERIST**

Once upon a time, long, long ago, Soul Surfers carved their flowing lines across uncrowded Byron waves. Soul Surfer was not a term these pioneers used to describe themselves. They were just surfers.

Some of them can still be seen styling at The Pass and Wategos, but the nature of Byron's Surfer Tribe has completely changed. The Soul Surfers' beliefs and their code of behaviour has always been under threat, now it's on life support.

The Surfer Tribe began to trickle in to Byron Bay in the 1960s, while the Hippie Tribe arrived in the 1970s. There was quite a lot of overlap between the two. You didn't have to be a Soul Surfer to be a a Surfer, and you didn't have to be a Surfer to be Hippie, but most Soul Surfers were at least part Hippie.

Both tribes rebelled against the 'rat race', the stultifying rules of their parents, war-mongering governments, and capitalism. The Byron locals saw little wrong with any of these things. Theirs was a working-class town based around a dairy factory at the southern end of Jonson St and an abattoir at Belongil that pumped blood directly into the ocean.

In 1966, Timothy Leary, a famous American psychologist and social commentator who promoted the use of psychedelic drugs, exhorted young people to "turn on, tune in, drop out." Soul Surfers and Hippies did just that. (This motto was, of course, long ago diluted for everyday use in Byron. It became "cheer up, slow down and chill out".)

The Hippie Tribe's highest priority was to live as peacefully and simply as possible. There seemed to be an infinite supply of fertile land that was perfect for communes, organic vegetables and herbs (like marijuana). Plus there were some cool markets where you could make some cash.

The Surfer Tribe's highest priority and single-minded addiction was to riding waves. There seemed to be an infinite supply. Plus there was plenty of 'herb' and some cool communes where you could crash.

Both the Soul Surfers and the Hippies saw themselves as revolutionaries and they believed the revolution would be won by peaceful protests, playing musical instruments, smoking dope, taking LSD, making love not war, and surfing. Their revolutionary status was confirmed by the paranoid reactions of their parents, the Byron locals, and the NSW police force.

Although Timothy Leary was not a surfer himself, he saw the Surfer Tribe as the highpoint in human evolution. He saw tube riding as the perfect metaphor for a superior, liberated state of mind. Leary said, "Surfers tend to be non-violent people. They tend to be rather poetic, fun-loving, good people. I define myself as an evolutionary surfer because

It's perfectly logical to me that surfing is the spiritual aesthetic style of the liberated self. DR TIMOTHY LEARY

surfers have taught me the way you relate to the basic energies and develop their individual sense of freedom, self-definition, style, beauty and control."

Leary was actually describing Soul Surfers: Surfers with just a little bit of Hippie. Surfers who surf for the sheer pleasure of surfing. Surfers who scorn commercialisation. Surfers who celebrate being a part of the magic and the majesty of the ocean. Surfers who dance with waves rather than shred them. Surfers who are happy to chat to strangers in the line-up. Surfers who peacefully observe surf etiquette.

Of course the Surfer Tribe was never wholly insulated from the rest of society. The reality was that Surfers (initially, mostly men) were just as likely to come from the macho world of the rugby club and the Great Northern Hotel as they were to come from a converted banana shed in the hills where Thai buddha sticks were more common than schooners of Tooheys New.

Unfortunately, it quickly became clear the supply of waves in Byron was not infinite after all. The pressure of crowds led to an upsurge of localism and violence. An ugly 'Locals Only' sign was painted on the rocks above The Pass in 1973, and there were fights on the water and on the beach.

Somehow, Soul Surfers and other good souls walked the growing aggression back. Things were never again perfect but, somehow, despite the crowds, most people walking up The Pass boat ramp after a surf had a smile on their faces. The key was following the rules.

Fast forward to Byron today.

The Aboriginal flag graces the rocks above The Pass. Indigenous peoples are, after all, the only real locals in Australia. But then a new sign appears at the Broken Head boat ramp telling a particular nationality to go home. Rules are ignored. There is dangerous chaos in the water, even ugly fights.

The old Soul Surfers are either spinning in their graves or buying another board/weapon that is a foot longer and 5 kg heavier. There is also a new generation of free spirits dancing with the waves: a new generation of Soul Surfers. Overall, however, their numbers are small. Somehow, if everyone is going to walk up the Pass boat ramp with smiles on their faces the entire Surfer Tribe must be convinced to follow the 10 Soul Surfer Commandments:

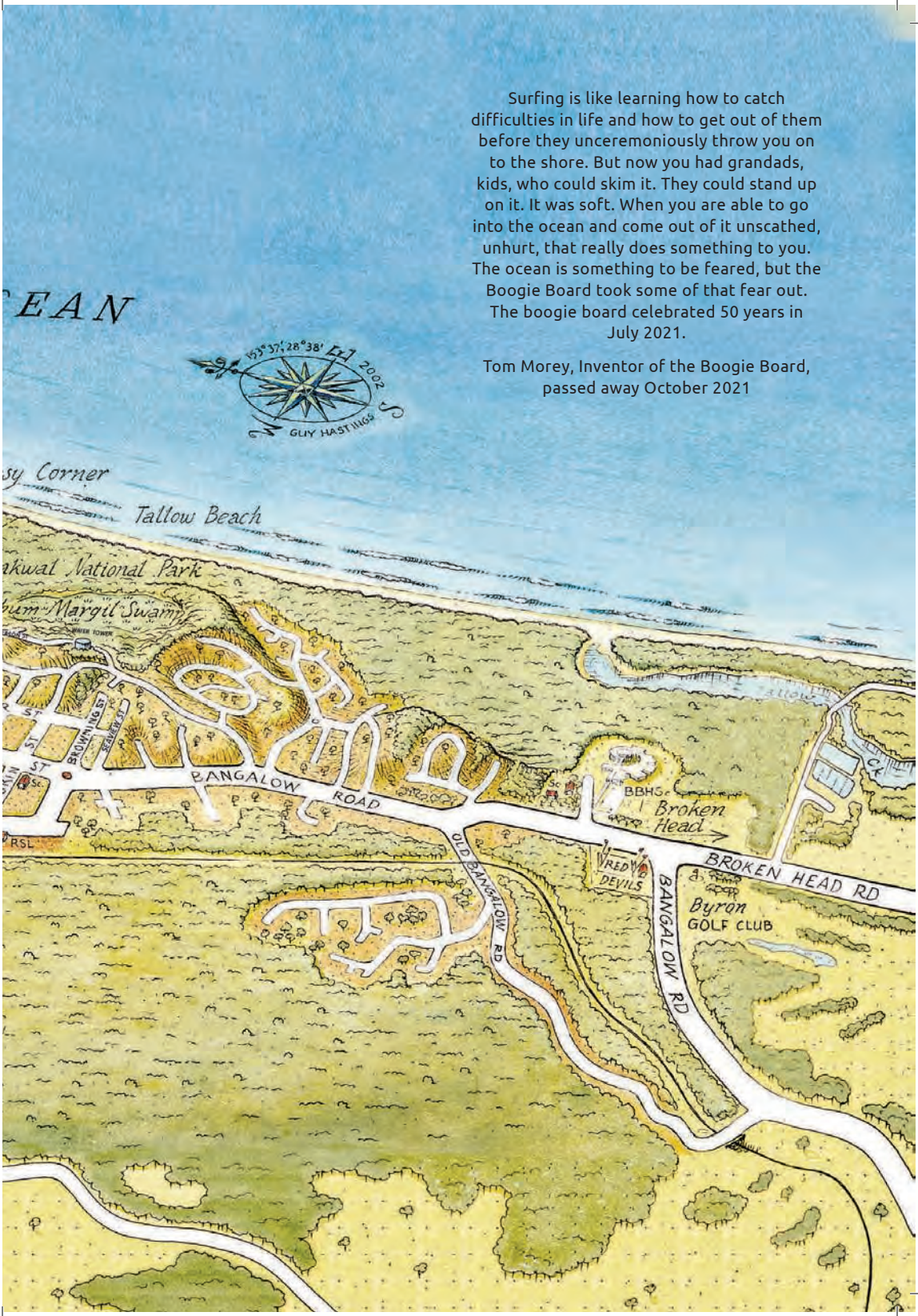
- Break the rules, but not in the surf, or the car park
- Give a little respect to locals (and especially Soul Surfers)
- Do not paddle out through the ride zone
- Give respect to the best surfers in the water (They're the ones with the biggest smiles, and they're probably Soul Surfers.)
- Do not catch the wave if there is someone already on the wave
- Feel free to say 'nice wave', or 'sorry' if you accidentally get in the way
- Do not talk loudly and endlessly
- Do not snake (if you don't know what snake means, ask google or a Soul Surfer)
- Wear a leg rope
- Turn on, tune in and drop out (but if you won't do that at least cheer up, slow down and chill out).

*Richard Everist was a guidebook publisher and writer, then a travel company owner who, after losing his way for 40 years, returned to Byron with a vague plan to tune in, turn on, surf, and write.*

# BYRON BAY

## Australia's most easterly point


Guy Hastings hand drawn maps
www.guyhastings.com




Surfing is like learning how to catch difficulties in life and how to get out of them before they unceremoniously throw you on to the shore. But now you had grandads, kids, who could skim it. They could stand up on it. It was soft. When you are able to go into the ocean and come out of it unscathed, unhurt, that really does something to you. The ocean is something to be feared, but the Boogie Board took some of that fear out. The boogie board celebrated 50 years in July 2021.

Tom Morey, Inventor of the Boogie Board, passed away October 2021

# Sand

**ANNA MINNS**

As a kid growing up in Cronulla I have fond memories of the Kurnell sandhills. My brother would meet his mates there to sandboard down the dunes, an old boyfriend would exercise there with his soccer team running up the hills until they felt sick with exhaustion, and they were an imposing sight from the Cronulla beaches. My Aunty Maryan remembers taking a floorboard from home when my grandparents were building a verandah, coating it in Thompson's wax and using it to ski down the sandhills in the 1950's.

The sand dunes were formed 15,000 years ago, and they held much significance to the First Nations people the Gweagal people of the Tharawal nation. Growing up in the 1980s I would have seen the last of their days. Sand mining from Kurnell began in the 1930s to supply Sydney's building market, and from then until the 1990s over 170 million tonnes of sand were removed. What is left now is a few remaining small dunes, and some deep pits filled with water and demolition waste.

The view north from Cronulla beach now is a defunct oil refinery, once hidden by the sand dunes, and the state government has spent the last 40 years rehabilitating and protecting the remaining dunes and land between Cronulla and the Kurnell peninsula from erosion and major weather events.

This is a regrettable tale for many reasons, but sadly the removal of sand and the environmental havoc that this then causes is one that is being repeated more widely around the world as it is facing a sand crisis.

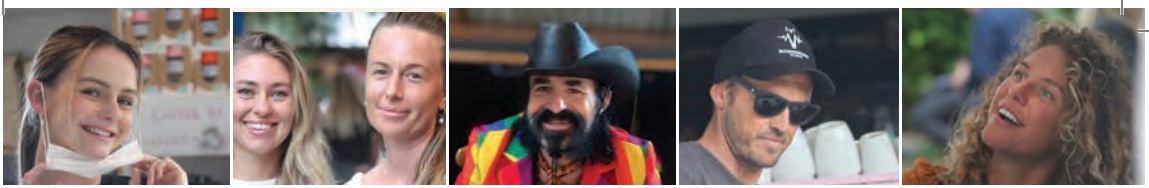
When we think of sand, we think of endless deserts - a resource that is limitless. The reality is that sand is a fossil resource that has been formed over eons. And we are removing sand faster from our environments than it can be replaced.

The reason is we have an insatiable appetite for sand to feed the construction industry as we continue to urbanise. The sand needed to make concrete, asphalt and glass is beach or river sand that is coarse and binds well, not desert sand that has been whipped around by the wind to become too fine and smooth.

Sand is the second most extracted natural resource in the world (after water) and half of the global demand is from China. Incredibly China consumed more sand in the three years 2011-2013 than America used in the whole 20th Century. Demand has doubled in the last ten years, and it is expected to double again in the next 40 years.

Sand is also used to make glass, electronics, solar panels and a huge amount is also dumped into the sea to reclaim land. The Maldives and Kiribati have used it to protect their islands from rising sea levels. Ironically as sea levels rise, we will need more of it.

As the price of sand increases, so have the efforts to extract it. We're running out of what is easily available, and extraction is becoming harder and more damaging to local environments and communities. In Kurnell the trucks that daily carried sand away from the sandhills did so legally (while making those with the leases to do so incredibly wealthy). But now about three



**There's no such thing as doing nothing. Doing nothing is still a choice. A choice to stand aside and let it happen.**
**SMALL ACTS OF DEFIANCE, AUTHOR, MICHELLE WRIGHT**

fifths of sand that is mined and traded is illegally extracted, to become the world's third biggest crime. In India a "sand mafia" has emerged, and there are thieves in Morocco, the Caribbean, Vietnam and Cambodia.

The removal of sand is causing coastal erosion, greater exposure to extreme weather events (that are also becoming more common) and it threatens biodiversity by removing sand from riverbeds where fish live and spawn. It also threatens fishing communities and our water and food security.

We have organized our economy and culture in a linear way to take, make and throw away. That is to take resources from our environment, make them into products, and when they come to the end of their life to throw them away. While we are running out of natural resources we are creating an unprecedented amount of waste that is clogging up our landfills and oceans.

Sand is one – very big and scary – example of how our linear economic model is not sustainable, and we must reconsider the resources we use and how they are sourced.

Our best guide is nature itself. Nature is a perfect and regenerative system where there is no waste and everything supports and nourishes everything else.

This is not a radical idea, and indeed many governments around the world and all governments in Australia, have embraced this idea of a 'circular economy'. In a circular economy everything is designed in a way that closely mimics nature and waste is designed out.

Products are designed to last, to keep them being used, and old products and materials are

*Sand mining Tallow Beach circa 1973. Photo: Rusty Miller*

collected and used as the materials for new products. Resources continue to be utilised in a continuous loop.

To reduce our reliance on virgin sand architects are finding ways to use cement materials less, by using concrete bricks with hollow cores, or other materials like timber. Scientists are also experimenting with alternatives to cement, and researchers at the Imperial College of London recently developed a new innovation that binds together desert sand, that is as strong as concrete but has half the carbon footprint. It can also be reused and remolded to have many lifecycles. Asphalt, concrete and glass can also be recycled, and this needs to be encouraged and incentivized.

By designing out waste, a circular economy makes the most out of materials and resources. Innovators and entrepreneurs doing the hard work of coming up with different solutions and business models that don't waste nature's valuable resources. Transitioning to a circular economy is going to be led by these entrepreneurs that find a better way to do things, than relying on the same supply chains and same wasteful way things have always been done, and that also learn from nature to discover ways to regenerate our environment and communities.

It is too late to recover the sandhills from Kurnell and Aunty Maryan's floorboard ski is no longer in use, but I am hopeful that there is enough ingenuity and imagination to deliver a new and regenerative circular way of doing things.

*Anna Minns is the co-founder of Boomerang Labs, Australia's first circular economy Accelerator, helping circular startups grow and commercialise. She also established TerraCycle in Australia and New Zealand. www.boomeranglabs.org.au*

*Photo: Rusty Miller*


Human beings don't have a place to go
but to other human beings.

BEHROUZ BOOCHANI, IRANIAN REFUGEE, JOURNALIST

# The Journal of Controversial Ideas

**PETER SINGER**

There was a time when in democratic countries the threat to freedom of expression, and to academic freedom in particular, came primarily from the right. The free speech cause célèbre of the early twentieth century United States featured Scott Nearing, a left-leaning economist at the University of Pennsylvania who was dismissed because his activism for social justice did not sit well with the bankers and corporate leaders on the university's board of trustees.

Fifty years later, in the McCarthy era, many people were blacklisted or dismissed because of their support for leftist ideas. When I came to Princeton in 1999, Steve Forbes (who was then campaigning for the Republican nomination for president) called for my appointment to be rescinded because he objected to my critique of the traditional doctrine of the sanctity of human life.

Today, however, most of the opposition to freedom of thought and discussion comes from the left. One exemplary instance occurred in 2017, when Rebecca Tuvel published "In Defense of Transracialism" in Hypatia, a journal of feminist philosophy. Tuvel's article asked why people who strongly support the right to choose one's gender deny a similar right to choose one's race. Over 800 people, mostly academics, signed a letter demanding that Hypatia retract the article. There were also calls for Tuvel, then a young female academic without tenure, to be dismissed.

Shannon Winnubst, a feminist philosopher and member of the collective that wrote the letter, has explained that she did so because of her knowledge "of the damage this kind of scholarship does to marginalized groups, especially black and trans scholars." Winnubst does not attempt to refute Tuvel's argument, but only to show that it may be damaging to some – although without specifying the nature and severity of the damage.

It would be difficult to imagine a clearer contrast with John Stuart Mill's classic defense of freedom of thought and discussion in *On Liberty*. Mill considers the objection that allowing free speech will cause offense. But "there is no parity," he responds, "between the feeling of a person for his own opinion, and the feeling of another who is offended at his holding it; no more than between the desire of a thief to take a purse, and the desire of the right owner to keep it."

Whether we accept or reject the parallel Mill draws, it is at least not obvious that the fact that a view may offend some people is a sufficient reason for suppressing it. Taking that seriously would drastically narrow the scope for freedom of expression on a wide range of ethical, political, and religious questions.

In response to such developments, I have, together with two colleagues, Francesca Minerva and Jeff McMahan, founded the Journal of Controversial Ideas. It is specifically designed to provide a forum in which authors can, if they wish, use a pseudonym to avoid running the risk of receiving personal abuse, including death threats, or of irrevocably harming their careers. At the same time, it is a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary academic journal. Submissions must pass an initial check that excludes articles

Reading is the most effective antidote to bigotry. CRAIG SILVEY, AUSTRALIAN AUTHOR

that an editor judges have no chance of receiving favorable recommendations from reviewers. Those that are not summarily rejected are sent for review to experts on the article's topic.

Reviewers then consider whether a submission is discussing a controversial idea, and if it is, they then consider the strength of the evidence, or the rigor of the argument, for that idea. Only submissions that make a well-argued case for their conclusions will be accepted. Other criteria for publication are that articles should not be polemical in character and must criticize only ideas and arguments, rather than the people who are the sources of those ideas and arguments.

All of this, apart from the special focus on controversial ideas, is true of most academic journals. What is distinctive about the Journal of Controversial Ideas, however, is authors' option of using a pseudonym, thus protecting them from the various forms of intimidation that they may otherwise fear if they advocate controversial ideas. If, at a later date, they want to be acknowledged as the authors of their articles, their identities can be confirmed. Three of the ten articles in the first issue were published under a pseudonym.

Another important aspect of the journal is that anyone with an internet connection can read it, free and without paid advertising. The editors have pledged not to bow to public pressure to retract an article, unless it is subsequently shown to contain false data or to involve plagiarism. Because the journal is online only, the editors are not beholden to any institution or publisher. We have received financial support from a wide range of donors who share our concerns about restrictions on free speech, so we are not reliant on the favor of any particular donor or group of donors.

The journal published its first issue early in 2021, and welcomes submissions from anyone with ideas to express, whether an academic or not. To view the issue we have published, just go to journalofcontroversialideas.org – and if you would like to support us, there is a tab for doing that too.

*Peter Singer is professor of bioethics at Princeton University. He is the winner of 2021 Berggruen Prize. His books include Animal Liberation, Practical Ethics, The Life You Can Save, and Writings on an Ethical Life. He is the founder of the charity The Life You Can Save. thelifeyoucansave.org.au*

# Psychedelic Psychiatry's Brave New World

**PROFESSOR DAVID NUTT**

Covid throughout the world, and even here in Byron Shire, has resulted in an epidemic of anxiety and stress in people. This is on top of the already pervasiveness of these 20th century ailments. While the north coast is well known for its recreational use of substances it is time to look at some of these in a medicinal way.

After a legally mandated, decades-long global arrest of research on psychedelic drugs, investigation of psychedelics in the context of psychiatric disorders is yielding exciting results. Outcomes of neuroscience and clinical research into 5-Hydroxytryptamine 2A (5-HT2A) receptor agonists, such as psilocybin, show promise for addressing a range of serious disorders, including depression and addiction.

Why the Psychedelic Revolution in Psychiatry?

Research leading to the discovery of new pharmacological treatments for psychiatric disorders has been painfully slow. With a few exceptions, including the use of orexin antagonists for insomnia, current medicines are derivatives of drugs discovered in the 1950s through serendipity and refined through pharmacological modifications. For these reasons, most major pharmaceutical companies have retreated from researching brain targets, threatening to halt a progression in research knowledge and possibly inducing the same sort of dark age that antibiotic research has found itself in.

One way out is to revisit drugs that were once used but fell out of use because of political machinations, especially the war on drugs. Cannabis was the first to be resurrected and the glutamate receptor antagonist anaesthetic ketamine has recently been shown to have antidepressant properties, leading to the enantiomer esketamine becoming licensed in the USA and Europe and, most recently, in Australia. Now, serotonergic psychedelics, particularly psilocybin (the active compound in ''magic mushrooms'') are being resurrected as potential treatments for a range of different psychiatric disorders. These drugs include LSD, ayahuasca (a drink that contains dimethyltryptamine [DMT] and a monoamine oxidase inhibitor that prevents its breakdown in the gut), as well as 5-MeO-DMT (from the Sonora toad) and mescaline (from the peyote and San Pedro cacti). In the 1950s and 1960s, LSD was widely researched and was considered to achieve major breakthrough treatments by many psychiatrists. At the same time, psilocybin was an experimental medicine supplied by Sandoz as ''Indocybin''. However, once LSD became used recreationally by young people, it was banned and most other psychedelics were sucked into the legislation; research on their potential therapeutic efficacy ground to a halt.

In the past decade, research on these compounds has been re-established by a few groups around the world, culminating in new centers for psychedelic research at Imperial College London and Johns Hopkins University.

**The great thing is to last and get your work done and see and hear and learn and understand. ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

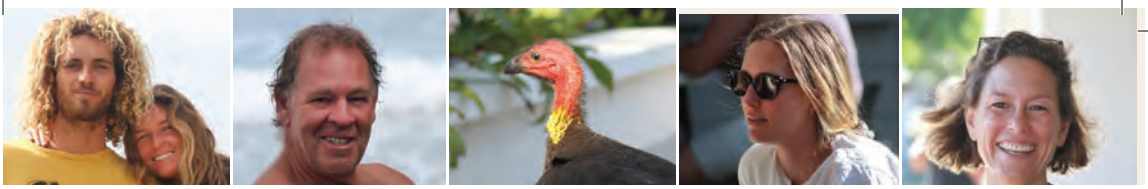
Because psilocybin is a Schedule 1 controlled drug, meaning that it has been defined as having high potential for abuse with limited therapeutic utility, it took several years of battling with regulators and ethics committees to gain permission to do clinical research with it, but the struggle was worth it. Its effects on patients suffering from depression were remarkable, e.g., two experiences with psilocybin improved depression scores for weeks, and in some people, for years, positioning it as one of the most powerful therapeutics for treatment-resistant depression. There have also been three placebo-controlled trials of psilocybin for anxiety and depression related to end-of-life diagnoses. Based on this body of positive findings, a number of companies have been set up to take psilocybin to the clinic, funding multicenter studies of psilocybin in depression. In parallel, a double-blind trial of psilocybin versus the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) escitalopram in depression has just been completed with encouraging outcome. There have also been studies showing efficacy in alcoholism and tobacco dependence and similar studies in anorexia, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and chronic pain.

This might seem a strange and disparate set of disorders for a single medicine to work in, and this speaks to the innovative nature of psychedelic therapy. In most studies, the psychedelic is given just once (though in a few studies, twice or three times over a period of weeks) as part of an ongoing psychotherapy course, in complete contrast to currently available medications, which are given at least daily, often with little therapeutic support. We suggest one way of looking at the difference between them is that current medicines suppress symptoms in a similar way that insulin suppresses hyperglycemia in diabetes.

Standard antidepressants protect against the stressors that lead to and perpetuate depression, but don't directly access and remedy underlying biopsychosocial causes. In contrast, psychedelic therapy harnesses a therapeutic window opened up by the brain via the effects of the drugs to facilitate insight and emotional release and, with psychotherapeutic support, a subsequent healthy revision of outlook and lifestyle.

Arguably, all of the conditions in which psychedelics have been shown to work share the common feature of being internalizing disorders. In depression, patients continually ruminate about their failings, reiterate thoughts of guilt, and engage in self-critical inner narratives. In addictions, the object of addiction takes on the role of negative thinking in depression, driving behaviour that is specific, narrow, and rigid; addicts ruminate on relief afforded by the object, how to get it, how to pay for it, etc. The rationale for using psychedelics in OCD and anorexia is consistent given that there is rumination on intrusive thoughts, e.g., about contamination or calorie mismanagement. Psychedelics likely work by dysregulating activity in systems and circuits that encode these habits of thought and behaviour, allowing them to recalibrate as the acute effects of the drugs subside. Despite this potential for efficacy across a range of disorders and the initial promising results, many questions remain.

There is great current interest from both neuroscience and clinical perspectives in understanding how psychedelics remedy psychiatry disorders. Knowing ''the answer'' would not only help reassure sceptics that psychedelics are more than just a powerful placebo but would also help maximize their therapeutic benefit—particularly in directing interventional processes to maintain wellness. This is the prime need right now because, despite the impressive immediate effects of psilocybin on depression, about half of patients relapse within six months. Why, this is presently unknown, but it supports the idea that, in some people, depression can become



Truth is slow... (but) it does finally have power. **RICHARD FLANAGAN. AUSTRALIAN WRITER**

a persistent, intractable, problem that might influence thinking processes forever. In others, it might be a defence against a traumatic event or loss that psychedelics uncover and help the patient process and move on from. More work is needed to test our assumption that the most severe presentations might require more than just a single dose treatment.

The resurrection of research into the neuroscience and therapeutic application of psychedelics represents one of the most important initiatives in psychiatry and brain science in recent decades. It rectifies decades of global research paralysis that emerged as collateral damage from the war on drugs and that has become one of the worst examples of censorship of human research in the history of science. The past ten years have seen the first green shoots of recovery with a number of teams across several continents beginning human neuroimaging and clinical trials that have delivered remarkable insights into brain function and instigated an exciting new approach to the treatment of a range of psychiatric disorders. What is now needed is a combined, multi-level, multidisciplinary program of research into the mechanisms underpinning these findings.

An extract from the article "Psychedelic Psychiatry's Brave New World" that first appeared in the journal *Cell*, April 2, 2020.

*David Nutt is Professor of Neuropsychopharmacology, Imperial College, London. Internationally-respected researcher and widely-quoted opinion leader in Psychopharmacology and also drug harm in society and is a visitor to the Northern Rivers.*

# The Power of Australia's Indigenous Land Management Programmes

**JUSTIN PUNCH**

Byron Bay sits at the most easterly point of our vast continent. Lush, breathtakingly picturesque, with the perfect surf break, and the iconic mountain backdrop of Wollumbin, the Cloud Catcher.

Much further to the West, at the intersection of two monumental issues for Australia – the management of our vast, unique and increasingly threatened environment on the one hand, and the hopes and futures of Indigenous Australians on the other – a revolution is underway. Indigenous ranger groups are managing increasingly large areas of the Australian continent for conservation, and generating significant environmental, social and cultural benefits in the process. Empowered communities are managing landscapes for fire, controlling feral animals and weeds, running complex species monitoring programmes over huge areas, protecting language and culture, building unique bi-cultural schools to educate the next generation of custodians, and abating enormous volumes of carbon emissions in the process. It is a bipartisan success story of global significance in terms of public policy, Indigenous aspiration and environmental outcomes. The requirement for governments, corporations and philanthropists to lean in and support the next stage of development of this work is essential.

It is not widely known that Indigenous people own or occupy approximately a quarter of the world's habitable land surface, nor that this area contains a staggering 80% of the earth's remaining biodiversity, including the majority of its remaining intact landscapes. With cultures and knowledge systems derived from millennia of living intimately with their ecosystems, Indigenous people are the best placed to be the custodians of this environment. In many ways Indigenous custodians are the world's last line of defence in the global biodiversity crisis. Indigenous land management also presents significant opportunities in the fight against climate change with emissions avoidance and carbon sequestration benefits from forest protection, restoration and management.

In Australia the situation is the same, if not even more so. Over 50% of the Australian continent is under some form of Indigenous title. These areas are home to the majority of our remaining biodiversity and comprise most areas of our landscape that have not been considerably altered since European colonisation. Significant portions of these areas are actively managed by Indigenous rangers. Indigenous Protected Areas, where Traditional Owners formally commit to manage their lands for conservation, in accordance with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) standards, now cover an area of over 740,000 square kilometres, or over 10% of Australia's continental land mass, and comprise half of Australia's National Reserve System.

Indigenous ranger groups are executing their environmental goals in these areas

So simple is it when you know just how to put the best words in the best order to achieve beauty. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, WRITER

with a "two toolbox" approach, utilising a powerful combination of western science and customary ecological knowledge. In doing so they have achieved remarkable landscape-scale conservation outcomes - managing vast landscapes for fire, controlling feral animals and invasive weeds, and protecting endangered species. The results are best practice in terms of Australian large-scale conservation outcomes – highly impactful and, from personal observation, extremely cost-effective.

Evidence compiled by Social Ventures Australia shows that remote Indigenous communities with ranger programmes enjoy better economic, health and education outcomes, lower rates of interaction with the criminal justice system, have more role models, higher skills levels, strengthened language and culture, increased pride, self-esteem and wellbeing.

The Karrkad Kanjdji Trust, a philanthropic organisation working alongside Indigenous land management groups in Arnhem Land, is developing a framework for how the pieces of Indigenous land management work fit together and can be best supported. Through years of listening carefully to the communities with which it works, it has defined a model that works across six "pillars" of activity: fire management, including landscape-scale carbon abatement; species conservation, including wide-scale monitoring and the control of feral animals and weeds; education of the current as well as the next generation of custodians; preservation of cultural heritage, including language, ceremony and current and

ancient art; employment of Indigenous women rangers; and community sustainability for remote ranger bases.

These pillars are interconnected and self-reinforcing. For example, the reintroduction of traditional "cool burn" fire management regimes across Arnhem Land after many decades of depopulation-driven absence has helped reverse small animal species decline and protected critically endangered vegetation systems such as the Anbinik (Allosyncarpia ternata). In addition, the avoidance of wildfires and the deployment of customary "cool burn" regimes results in significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that earn significant carbon credit revenues. This new source of income supports an array of other ranger work as well as providing the infrastructure for the remote homelands where these activities are based.

Women's ranger programmes have strengthened communities and have provided employment and expertise into species monitoring and cultural heritage work in particular. Large-scale animal monitoring has identified pockets of critically endangered species such as the djabbo (Northern quoll) which has informed fire management in these areas. Fully employed, purposeful ranger communities have provided peaceful, stable environments in which children can learn, allowing the successful development of extraordinary bilingual and bicultural remote schools supporting the teaching of western and Aboriginal knowledge systems and educating the next generation of rangers. The existence of these schools has allowed rangers with young families to remain on Country, employed and deeply connected to their ancestral homes.

These pillars operating holistically support Indigenous conservation in a way that is practical, relevant, respectful, and highly impactful.

Indigenous land management remains, however, a complex and multi-faceted task. It is true in Australia, as it is globally, that Indigenous people face significant wealth, education, and life expectancy disparities compared to non-Indigenous people. Outside of their deep well of cultural and environmental knowledge, the resources they have at their disposal for the size of the conservation task they face is often modest or non-existent.

The Australian government's Indigenous Ranger Program is the primary current funding source for most Indigenous ranger work. Currently, $746 million is allocated to 80 Indigenous ranger organisations for the seven-year period to 2028. While that is a considerable sum, the area being managed is similarly huge, and at less than $1.50 per hectare per annum it really just provides a starting point for resourcing the work that needs to be done. In the tropical savannas of northern Australia carbon revenues are becoming an increasingly important part of the funding picture, as is philanthropy in certain areas. But much more is required to fulfil the need.

I am perhaps an unlikely author to be telling this story. Sydney-based, with a background in business, I was introduced to the work via the opportunity to support the establishment of a remote school. But the more I got involved, the more of the picture I came to understand. The phrase "Country needs people, and people need Country" captures the interconnectedness of the challenge across both environmental and Indigenous perspectives. Byron has been doing this through the formation of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) that created the Arakwal National Park, the first of its kind in Australia between the government and the

In times of crisis, we must all decide again and again whom we love. FRANK O'HARA, AMERICAN POET

Bundjalung People of Byron Bay (Arakwal) and the Arakwal National Park Joint Management Committee. Enabling Indigenous land owners and managers to retain what remains intact is one of the world's great conservation priorities. Our challenge, in response, is to step up to support this profoundly important work in whatever way we can.

*Justin Punch is the Chair of the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust, Chair of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and a co-founder of Assembly Climate Capital. www.kkt.org.au*

*Photo: David Young*

# Neverland

*American and Australian surfers in Byron Bay in the '60s and '70s*

**TRICIA SHANTZ**

In the 1960s Byron Bay was a very small town of a few thousand people. It wasn't big enough to have its own detectives so the detectives based in Lismore covered it. During the week it was a quiet town, with busy weekends. "We weren't worried about who was coming into town, except maybe what they were doing in town," according to one of the policemen from that time. A new era began for Byron. The surfers set the agenda for what Byron was to become, changing it from a productive, industrial, working-class town into a culturally rich town. They were small in numbers but their influence was immense. They questioned the Vietnam War, the political situation, and societal norms generally.

Surfers had worked out that there was a different way to live. In Byron/Lennox they found paradise: waves, climate, atmosphere, food, housing, and living. The surfers attracted non-surfers including: wealthy, Sydney trust funders, actors/actresses, musicians and prominent criminals. Byron Bay wasn't really the quiet place it seemed to be or, looking back, people think it was.

The American surfers, mostly Californian, arrived in Byron Bay as early as 1959 with Bob Cooper, but really descended in the mid to late 1960s and early '70s with the arrival of Derek Beckner, George Greenough, Bob Newland, Garth Murphy, Bill Engler, Rusty Miller, Roy Meisel, Peter Green, Michael Cundith, Bill Conner and others. Some came to visit. Some stayed for the rest of their lives, others spent a decade or so and then returned to California. Some, such as Phil Edwards, American surfing hero, came through in 1961 for one day with Bruce Brown while filming *Surfing Hollow Days* (1962). The local surfers saw him surfing at their home break. It was life-changing for them and history-making for the town. Sixty years later the local surfers still remember seeing him. They were watching. Guys like eleven year old Donny Campbell, the Keever brothers, John and Jimmy, and maybe Bugs Wright. They just happened to be there when they saw Phil and Cooper surfing at Wategos Beach and The Pass. Phil was considered by accolade, to be the best surfer in the world.

Australian, Bill Bennet opened the first surf shop in Byron Bay, *Bay Area*, in 1967, and by '68 it was gone. Ken Adler, moved *San Juan Surfboards* from Ballina to Byron when Bennett's closed. According to Australian, Dick Hoole, who was the first employee at the Byron San Juan, " Now this was a very special time in surfing because, as I said, there was no real industry apart from us, and people were surfing because it was simply the best thing that they could find to do with their time. More surfers were moving into Byron and things slowly started building. American surfing champion Rusty Miller, along with Garth Murphy, and Mike Doyle, moved into town and began making their own surf wax. Nat Young moved up and bought a farm. All these people were

Our real economy is the living world. DAMON GAMEAU, FILMMAKER, ACTIVIST

coming together in Byron Bay." (McMillan, J. Blue Yonder, pp 91-92).

A young, 17 year old American, Bob Newland, started glassing boards at San Juan in the summer of 1968. He later started the third surf shop, Bare Nature (where Spell and the Gypsy Collective store is now), co-owning it with fellow Americans, Roy and Diana Meisel, who came to Byron Bay in 1971. Bob went on to create the first leg ropes and board covers in a business called Surf Aids, that still exists today.

More American surfers arrived in Byron, starting businesses to support themselves. Derek Beckner, with his Hawaiian girlfriend, Franny, opened the *Rib Cage* (where *Fresh* is now) around 1972. It was a café and then an amusement centre, with an adjacent ice cream shop called, *Sweet Thing*. Earl and Maggi Cochran started the *Wholemeal Café* on Lawson St. (in the Balcony building) around 1973. Maggi's brother, Kenny Pier and wife Libby, from Guam, helped in the café until South African Nigel Perrow invited Kenny to make *Arrow Surfboards* with him in the Byron Industrial estate, after their other business *The Surf Fin Company* (made in the old cow bails on the Hayters farm at the top of Hayters Hill overlooking the Bay) finished.

Concurrent to the surf films, newspapers and magazines being made, the music scene arrived with Dan Doeppel, a surfer from LA. He bought the old NORCO Piggery on Skinners Shoot in 1974 and turned it into the Arts Factory, which introduced international bands to Byron Bay and was the genesis of the iconic music festival, Bluesfest. He came over on a boat in 1967 (coincidentally with Bob Newland) with his surfing/music mates, including Jim Stephens, in a band called *Nutwood Rug* to avoid the draft.

In those years surfers were outcasts; often scorned on by some local workers, not necessarily understood by the local police. Lester Brien, Byron's first surfing solicitor, arrived from Sydney in the early '70s. He also started the first nightclub, *Dinty's*, on Jonson St. (where *Main St Burger Bar* is). Because he was a surfer he represented all the surfers for all their business including any drug allegations, as well as organising property purchases.

While there is much nostalgia today that the surfers who came to Byron Bay in the '70s had it so great, the reality is that the town was a working class town. If it wasn't for the American and Australian surfers Byron Bay may still be a small, industrial town, rather than the cultural destination it has become.

It was created by the counterculture of its day. American Bill Engler said in 1975 “By the late ‘70s, surfers worldwide had found my paradise, so I headed back to the States.” For him, Byron was finished. For others, it was just beginning.

This is an edited extract from the book Neverland: American and Australian surfers in Byron in the ‘60s and ‘70s by Tricia Shantz, to be released in March 2022. Contact the author for pre-ordering copies.


*Surf heroes American Mickey Dora & Australian Russell Hughes - the Jesse James & Ned Kelly of the surf world. On the right is Ted Spencer. Jonson St, Byron Bay. Circa 1973: Photo: Rusty Miller*

Labor

# On your side and here to help.

## Please get in touch if I can be of assistance to you or your family.

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justine.elliot.mp@aph.gov.au
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ON YOUR SIDE

Justine Elliot MP

YOUR LOCAL MP

Authorised J Elliot, ALP,
107 Minjungbal Drive Tweed Heads South

# Getting Elected is Easier Than You Think

**PETER BREEN**

If you've ever thought about getting a seat in parliament, then the path ahead is quite straightforward. I'm talking about representation as an independent or minor party candidate and not a prospective major party MP. In fact, 2022 could be your big year if the political pundits are right, and the next federal election favours minor parties and independents rather than Labor or the Liberal National Coalition.

A local independent with a good record of community service and something to offer all sides of politics is likely to do well against major party candidates. Bear in mind, however, that being a local politician is hard work – 49 per cent of the voters may resent you winning a seat on the green leather. You may prefer an upper house seat where you get to sit on red leather, and nobody really knows who you represent.

What you need to do to get elected to an upper house seat is find a preference whisperer – somebody who will help you funnel preferences from other minor party and independent candidates. First up, you need a good name for your party, although recent changes to the electoral laws mean you can no longer use the words 'Liberal' or 'Labor' in your party name. So forget about 'Liberal Democratic Party' or 'Progressive Labor Party'.

You'll also need 1,500 members of your party to register for a federal election (or 750 members to contest the state election). The next thing you need for a Senate seat in 2022 is to nominate candidates for the Senate in each of the six states. Now you have the attention of the preference whisperer who happens to know five other parties like yours wanting to do 'state sacrifice' in New South Wales in return for your top preferences in each of their states.

Let's say your party is called the Climate Coalition Party. You want to win a Senate seat in New South Wales and you're willing to do a deal with other minor parties in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. All those parties will give you their first or second preference in New South Wales and you will give them the Climate Coalition Party first or second preference in each of their respective states. If the preference gods smile on you, the Climate Coalition Party will be in the running for the sixth and last Senate seat in New South Wales with the benefit of 'state sacrifice' preferences from those five parties based in the other states.

When the preference count gets down to about half a dozen parties competing for the last Senate seat, you'll need a boost from the residue preferences of one or more major parties to get you ahead of the minor party pack. The two major parties will happily preference you if you're willing to field Climate Coalition Party candidates in marginal lower house seats against their opponents. So you might run a candidate in the notional federal seat of Far North Coast and preference the Labor Party in return for Labor preferences in the Senate. With good management and a bit of luck, Labor preferences favouring the Climate

Pressure is a privilege. BILLIE JEAN KING

Coalition Party will get you ahead of that other COALITION PARTY – the one that still has the COAL in it despite a recent commitment to net zero emissions by 2050 leading up to COP26 in Glasgow.

If you think this is all rather fanciful and theoretical, think again. This so-called 'state sacrifice' between minor parties is exactly how Steve Fielding was elected to the Senate in 2004 for the state of Victoria as the representative of the Family First Party on 2 per cent of the primary vote (the quota for a Senate seat is 14.3 per cent of the vote). It's exactly how John Madigan for the Democratic Labour Party replaced Fielding in 2010. And it's how the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party drove Ricky Muir to Canberra in 2013 on a miniscule primary vote of 0.5 per cent.

At a state level in Western Australia and Victoria, 'state sacrifice' is called 'district sacrifice' as upper house seats in those states are allocated according to districts based loosely on population centres. Independent and minor party preference deals yielded a staggering nine seats in the 2018 Victorian state election. In Western Australia in 2021, Wilson Tucker of the Daylight Savings Party was elected to the upper house on just 98 primary votes with the benefit of minor party preferences.

Of course, you may think that the shenanigans that go on between independents and minor parties over preferences is highly irregular, improper and unacceptable. The major parties agree with you, and they would like nothing better than to eliminate preference voting and replace it with first-past-the-post voting. Elections would then be a two-horse race and one-third of electors would be disenfranchised.

It's worth bearing in mind that Senate crossbenchers collectively receive about one-third of the Senate vote across the country, so in theory, they should be entitled to about one-third of the seats in the Senate. Needless to say, getting them all on the one page to swap preferences is not so easy, but if enough of them co-operate with each other, getting elected is easier than you think.

*Peter Breen is a north coast media and defamation lawyer, and the author of several books including the best-selling The Book of Letters published by Allen & Unwin. He is the author (with Glenn Druery) of The Preference Whisperer to be published by Michael Wilkinson Publishing in early 2022. Peter was elected to the Legislative Council of the New South Wales Parliament in 1999 on one per cent of the primary vote and the preference votes of 21 minor parties and independents.*

# In the Embrace of the Caldera

**NELL SCHOFIELD**

I'm wrapped in the embrace of the caldera, the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere. Here, deep time seems to pulsate with twenty-three million years of erosion from the volcanic plug of Wollumbin or 'Cloud-Catcher', known to white fellas as Mount Warning.From my bedroom I can see its peak, the first on the Australian mainland to be touched by the rising sun at the Autumn and Spring equinoxes. Mount Chincogan, a minor lava plug from that same prehistoric eruption, looms large in front of me as I write.

I've landed in a seriously powerful spot and I don't quite know myself. With a new house in an estate that sometimes reminds me of 'The Truman Show', and a much more functional second-hand car than the trusty bomb I've been driving for decades, I feel reborn. And to top it all off, I've inherited my first ever dog/god, Gingi Baru, an eleven year-old Cavalier King Charles spaniel who's just cost me a fortune in dental fees and I don't begrudge her a cent. I've joined the ranks of the HOWDys (Home Owners With Dogs) and I'm in some fresh kind of fresh Mullumbimby heaven.

But I can't help wondering if I am part of Byron's increasingly obvious problem? As many locals will tell you, the entire Shire is a victim of its own success as an alternative lifestyle choice for city escapees like me. Property prices are at a premium in this highly desirable location and a housing emergency is in full swing. So how does one turn this dilemma around and make a positive contribution?

Former US Vice President Al Gore, with whom I trained as a Climate Leader, says that you have to heal yourself before you can help others, and there was a fair bit of that to do when I first arrived pre-Covid. My wild bush retreat near Mudgee, that I had owned with friends for over three decades, had just been incinerated in a waterfall of fire. Arriving, as I did, in the middle of a Northern Rivers deluge, literally quenched my scorched soul. And while horrendous for many, the dreaded virus was the perfect excuse to slow down and work out the next steps.

Living up on Midgen Flat Heights, I got to surf Broken Head regularly without crowds of tourists. Dodging dolphins torpedoing through the waves and gannets plunging into the sea became a favourite pastime. Asanas practiced by the sacred ti-tree lake and swims in it's fresh tannin waters were equally rejuvenating. And watching fluorescent pink sunrises and cosmic lunar eclipses made me feel like a tiny speck of a spectator on planet Earth - one in 2 billion yet somehow unique. I was exploring a whole new side of myself and totally tripping out on it. As our mate Rusty says; "Byron Shire is a place where individuals come to not just meet people but to meet themselves".

So, who am I? It was the question at the heart of my first Satori retreat at one of Byron's original meditation centres. Set high on the ridge off Old Bangalow Road, Sangsurya (a Sanskrit word which means "a place where the sun reaches everybody") hosted a group of fifteen of us perfect strangers for six days in a rigid structure

You can't reason someone out of a position they didn't reason themselves into to begin with. ANONYMOUS

# LOCAL MARKET DATES

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*byronmarkets.com.au*

4TH SUNDAY: BANGALOW
*bangalowmarket.com.au*

3RD SATURDAY: MULLUMBIMBY
*mullummarkets.com.au*

EVERY SATURDAY EVE: BYRON TWILIGHT
*byroncentre.com.au* (SUMMER ONLY)

TUESDAYS: NEW BRIGHTON
*newbrightonfarmersmarket.org.au*

THURSDAYS: BYRON BAY
*byronfarmersmarket.com.au*

FRIDAYS: MULLUMBIMBY
*mullumfarmersmarket.org.au*

SATURDAYS: BANGALOW
*byronfarmersmarket.com.au*

designed to lead us to enlightenment, if only for a flash.

At the end of it all, I had the not so extraordinary revelation that I was the sum total of my long life's experience. But the real discovery was that I wanted to stay in the region and needed my own home rather than the old surfboard shaping garage that I had been renting for the previous year. It took another six months of crowded house inspections and depressing auctions where prices soared above the reserves, but I eventually found it - a nest in a cul-de-sac in Mullum. As my dear old friend, who just so happens to live around the corner, tells me; "It's so you!".

Me? Turns out I 'm now a person who, after living in rather dysfunctional homes all my life, finds herself in an architect-designed, solar-powered house, inspired by its functionality. With no renos to contend with I can get involved with my new community but it takes a little while to work out where one fits in. Localism is a thing here. Like most places in this country, your right to take up space is judged by the length of time you've been in residence. I still feel so fresh that I'm finding it hard to identify as anything but a colonising settler.

I started helping out with community events like the annual fundraiser for the Domestic Violence Escape Fund for the Women's Resource Service; acting in a pilot for a locally-made TV series; and co-curating TEDxByronBay2021. I also started hosting a weekly show on the local radio station BayFM. But as much as these kinds of gigs support the community, they give so much more back to me.

I am blessed. I now have a network of fabulous friends and a fixed address. So many people here do not. You see them camping in the sand dunes around Brunswick Heads and sleeping in their cars on the streets. Drawn by the promise of a place that will welcome them in all their diversity, they are unable to find somewhere to rent, let alone purchase. It's a shit storm. The Women's Village Collective was established to help some of these families settle and I also support it, in the first instance by donating funds from an exhibition of archival film stills from the cult surf movie I featured in 40 years ago.

Who am I? I am that person immortalised in the character Debbie from the film 'Puberty Blues' who shocked the boys by taking to the waves and smashing the outdated rule that "Girl's Can't Surf". When I paddle out at The Pass these days, I rejoice in all the girls and women ripping it up or at least giving it a crack. I'm just stoked to be able to jump up on my board and feel the thrill of drawing a line on one of these legendary waves.

Not long after I landed here, I noticed that I was actually being stalked by rainbows, the sacred geometry caused by sunlight beaming through drizzle at exactly 42 degrees to fracture into the seven colours of the spectrum. The regularity of these marvellous manifestations is quite bedazzling, but If you allow their colour therapy to work its magic, it's not long before you recover from any anxiety or stress.

They say that people are called here to get healed, here in the Green Triangle. I certainly feel fabulous and even Gingi Baru has got a second wind now that her ten rotten teeth have been removed. Maybe soon we will be able to accommodate all those homeless people too. Wheels are afoot to make it happen. After years of the growing housing crisis, of lockdowns and unlockdowns, of tensions between the vaxxed and the unvaxxed, it seems we could all do with a good dose of healing in the caldera's embrace.

*Nell Schofield presents Road Trip on BayFM (among other things).*

*Photo: Tao Jones*

TAMARASMITH.ORG.AU

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# TAMARA SMITH MP

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**Epic Shotz:** www.epicshotz.com.au - Page 57

**Sharky's Tattoo.**
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www.sharkys.tv - Page 51

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## ATTRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES/TRAVEL /TOURS

**Balloon Aloft / at The Farm**
www.balloonaloftbyronbay.com - Page 3

**Byron Visitors Centre:** Behind the bus stop
www.visitbyronbay.com 6680 8558

**Byron Writers Festival 2022**
2/58 Centennial Cct.
www.byronwritersfestival.com - Page 43

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Bayshore Drive. Byron Industial Estate
www.cookie.com.au - Page 11

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www.mainstreetburgerbar.com.au - Page 26

**No Bones**
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www.roadhousebyronbay - Page 17

**Sparrow Coffee**
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100 Centennial Cct Arts & Ind Estate. 6685 5173.
www.stoneandwood.com.au - Page 67

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11 Ewingsdale Road at The Farm. 6684 7940
www.thebreadsocial.com.au - Page 2

**The Hut**
www.thehutbyronbay.com.au - Page 12

**The Italian**
2 Bay St adjoining Beach Hotel. 6680 7055
www.theitalianbyronbay.com - Page 15

**Three Blue Ducks**
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insta: byronbaygems - Page 33

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6685 5877 www.photomagic.com.au - Page 41

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## MEDIA

**Bay FM Community Radio**
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www.bayfm.org

**Byron Shire Echo**
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**Rusty's Byron Guide magazine**
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**Northern Rivers Community Foundation**
0499 862 886. info@ncrf.org.au www.nrcf.org.au

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