



Gratitude from Numulgi Nursery

Paula Vermunt

By the time you read this Numulgi Nursery's clearance sale will be well underway. Come down and grab a bargain on Smiths Creek Road before it all goes.

After 33 years since its inception, it's time to tell the story of Numulgi Nursery.

In my early 20's I was a passionate advocate for saving world rainforests, volunteering in Lismore and running a rainforest action group in Perth. I travelled to Borneo twice, staying with the Penan tribe.

I was young and determined, attempting to help keep tribal sovereignty over lands, while bulldozers carved away at the edges of their ancient forests.

Rallying people to take to the streets in protest and rowing out to graffiti a timber ship at 3am in Fremantle harbour were considered necessary, if slightly dangerous, activities.

Eventually depression at the lack of change engulfed me. I found myself back on the east coast without roots, going through a very dark time, feeling lost in a world that didn't seem to care.

A friend pushed me towards a work/training program and I reluctantly applied. We were shown basic propagation skills and rainforest seed collection and I lit up with excitement! This was my YES.

I vowed to grow hundreds of thousands of rainforest trees to reverse some of the damage. I can't underestimate how this changed my life, in fact, it may have saved my life.

I wasn't very good at it at the beginning, but an older nurseryman gave me tips and my backyard at Numulgi near Lismore soon became a full-scale nursery. I started selling at the Channon market and was thrilled to make \$300 on my first day!

I followed experienced seed collectors all over the region, bought all the books and studied and grew. For eight years I worked 4-5 markets a month, living literally off the seeds of the forests.

With life changes and children on the way the nursery moved to Mt Burrell, then Uki where it has been a street stall for 20 years, floods, Covid and all.

As this chapter of my life comes to an end I am grateful to my



Numulgi Nursery owner
Paula Vermunt

many wonderful customers who have supported me through child rearing, my psychotherapy /social work studies, and simply getting through the hard times when nursery sales kept the mortgage paid and shoes on our feet.

And to those who didn't pay for their plants, I offer you compassion for you have not yet learned that to rob another is to rob yourself. I hope you watered and mulched those plants well! I have often joked that leaving a wealth of stock on the street with an honesty box has been my little sociological experiment - what if we all trusted each other?

Continued page 7.

From the Editor

Welcome to Issue 146, as we celebrate 25 years of publication.

Quarter of a century on, this issue reinforces that our humble paper, our community and they land we inhabit is shaped by many hands. It asks us to act with intention, generosity and hope, as challenges remain and change continues to unfold around us every day.

Our cover story features Paula from Numulgi Nursery who expresses her gratitude as she turns over a new leaf after 33 years seeding change.

Heather explores the importance of survival of the kindest and how social connection keeps us sane.

RiverCare calls on community to care for waterways and Country through nature-based solutions that help protect local communities from flooding.

This idea of shifting from reaction to action is echoed in MP Janelle Saffin's powerful speech at a recent ALP conference calling for a move towards preparedness and away from recovery. In what she defines as a new normal, resilience and risk reduction are key.

Luke Naismith discusses our legacy, reminding us that community support can continue beyond our lifetime through our wills.

At the Little Gallery, artists celebrate birdsong and blooms, reconnecting us with the flora and fauna that brighten our landscape.

Nicky from Nixnibbles shows how passion can nourish the neighbourhood, while stargazer Paola offers reassurance that even in these crazy times, all is not lost.

Happy reading,

Andia

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UKIRA MEETINGS

UKIRA hosts community meetings on the first Tuesday of every second month in the Meeting Room of the Uki Hall (access from the rear). Meetings start at 7 pm. All residents of Uki and surrounding districts are invited to attend. Dates for 2026 public meetings: 7 April, 2 June, 4 August, 6 October, 1 December.

Letters To The Editor

Heritage hunt - Esmá Thompson

The Uki and South Arm Historical Society has been asked by several newcomers to our village about the age of their newly acquired residence. Some believed that they had purchased the oldest standing residence in the village.

The oldest documented home in the village was built in 1902 in Blacksmiths Lane. This home was demolished in 1987.

To try and discover which remaining home was the oldest, we began to research using our archives.

There were many buildings built in the village in 1910 including the house built for the Engineer of the old Butter Factory. Other early built houses are the house at the top of Mitchell Street and those built at 'Rotten Row'. The earliest date we have come across is a house in 'Rotten Row' dated 1906. For further enquiries please email uki.history@gmail.com or phone 0497 201 167.

CONTRIBUTION DEADLINES 2026

ISSUE 147 (June-July)	Friday 15 May
ISSUE 148 (Aug-Sept)	Friday 17 July
ISSUE 149 (Oct-Nov)	Friday 18 September
ISSUE 150 (Dec-Jan 27)	Friday 13 November

Share your ideas, inspirations, events and hopes for all things Uki.

Contact Uki News: theukinews@hotmail.com

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Contact Isabelle Oude-Egberink on 0452 118 973.



Social connection keeps us sane

Heather McClelland

Did you know that Homo Sapiens survived a climatic event that wiped out four or five other human species 42,000 years ago?

In the last five years archaeologists have found evidence that our species was the only species to survive that event because we'd mastered the art of living in mutually co-operative groups.

Well-known social researcher and commentator, Hugh Mackay, began his talk with these facts at a full house at The Regent Cinema recently.

He suggested that in Australia we've been threatening our social connections: shrinking our households; breaking up marriages; lowering birthrates; elevating 'busyness' to a social virtue; embracing more and more mobility; even working from home may have losses and thoughtlessly embracing the internet definitely threatens.

Politicians think of society as merely 'an economy' and voters 'consumers'. Taxes in contrast, could be seen as a contribution for the betterment and health of our communal life.

When we become socially disconnected, Hugh says, we make ourselves vulnerable to extremism, fueling totalitarianism.

We need different generations and a diversity of views to push up against. Reliance on social media tends to promote echo chambers narrowing and skewing the scope of what we take in. Social connection keeps us sane.



comfortable with madness!

Mackay defined kindness as: "Anything you do to show others you take them seriously".

Eye contact is essential and on screen this is doubtful.

Our deepest need is to have a sense of belonging and for our future, 'survival of the kindest' would be a better slogan.

Kindness has nothing to do with emotion, it can apply to relationships with those with whom we disagree.

Despite the present madness he's perhaps a naive optimist when he expresses hope.



We can all get involved in building better connections in our village, especially with those who are different from us. We can work at relating, person to person and area by area. We do it so well in times of emergency.



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Slow the flow

Matt Bloor



Uki RiverCare volunteers gathered at Platypus Park in February to recover seedlings and saplings from the summer weed growth. It was a big job cutting, pulling and removing smothering weeds to uncover sensitive native trees.

We also opened up some tracks through the park, challenging our brush-cutting skills in the rampant exotic grass groves.

Keeping these tracks open will be a big job for a few years until the canopy grows to provide shade and cover.

We had a local bush regenerator join our last working bee to identify weeds and demonstrate methods to manage them. Todd McIntosh, who has been contracted by Council to help manage Platypus Park, showed RiverCare volunteers how to use a tree popper to pull out woody saplings like camphor laurel and giant devils fig. Todd also discussed strategies to minimise herbicide use in ecological restoration projects.

Our aim is to rewild this small part of the Tweed River and help slow the flow of flood water by restoring dense native vegetation in the flood zone.

Caring for our creeks and rivers using nature-based solutions will help protect our community from the worst impacts of flooding.

On the other hand, degraded, cleared or heavily grazed riverbanks allow for bigger flood peaks and result in more bank erosion and property damage.

Take a walk through Platypus Park sometime to see what we're up to. Ten years on from the community planting that transformed a bare gully line to a diverse forest, we're seeing the natural recovery progress really develop.

Uki RiverCare meets on the 4th Sunday of each month in the carpark opposite Meadow Place at 8am. Working bees run for around two hours before sharing some morning tea afterwards.

Get involved if you're into working to restore country with a bunch of wonderful volunteers.

Uki RiverCare is part of Council's Nature Care program. For more information visit [Volunteering | Tweed Shire Council](#) or contact naturecare@tweed.nsw.gov.au.



Local bush regenerator Todd McIntosh shows volunteers how to spot it, pop it and protect the bush.

News from the Member for Lismore

Janelle Saffin MP

Speech by Janelle Saffin MP to the NSW ALP Country Conference (edited for length)

I am a Lismore local, and like everyone in my community, I know floods and bushfires. We've lived with them for generations. We understood the risks, knew how to prepare, how to respond, how to recover – or so we thought.



The 2019–2020 bushfires changed that.

The 2022 floods changed it again, utterly and forever. They rocked us to our core.

Janelle Saffin speaking on disaster preparedness at NSW Labor Country Conference in February.

Lives were lost, communities were broken open, and with the floods, there was no early warning.

Three thousand SES calls went unanswered or were not patched through.

There were few rescue boats. Instead, it was locals – the Tinny Army – who became heroes and saved thousands.

Government was not ready. NSW had no plan and no clear pathway for recovery, let alone how to respond to thousands of displaced, traumatised people.

We were even told Resilience NSW was a 9 - 5 agency. February 28th was a night of horror, and its impact still lingers in our streets, conversations, and silences.

Fast forward to 2026, we began the year with fires, floods, drought and heatwaves – hotter than anything we have experienced.

These events are no longer exceptional. This is our new normal. And with it comes an obligation to step up our efforts to build a safer, more secure society.

Preparation costs money, but over time, saves far more money than it spends. Recovery without planning is vastly more expensive economically, socially and emotionally. For decades, about 97 per cent of disaster funding has gone to recovery, and just 3 per cent to preparedness.

We are starting to shift that, but the trajectory is unsustainable.

NSW disaster recovery spending has risen from \$154 million in 2019 to around \$9.9 billion today, trending toward \$14 billion.

We need serious investment in preparedness and the money has to come from somewhere. After the 2011 Queensland floods, a national levy raised \$1.8 billion in one year.

The 2022 floods should have been our moment for real change, but progress was slow.

Now we have the NSW Reconstruction Authority, still young but rapidly evolving to meet its purpose.

Federally, the establishment of NEMA and the Disaster Ready Fund are major steps forward – but structures alone are not enough.

I am often told “Janelle, I don't believe in climate change.”

Sometimes this is said while we are knee deep in mud, or looking at burnt paddocks or in front of destroyed homes and businesses.

I say, belief systems are not the issue. I deal in facts. Temperatures are higher, oceans warmer, extreme events more frequent and destructive. Lives and livelihoods are being lost.

The choice is stark.

We can continue to pay more and more for recovery, or we can invest now in preparedness, resilience and risk reduction.

This is our new normal. How we respond will define us.



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Is your will up-to-date?

Luke Naismith

It's Wills Week in April in NSW; a time for people with assets like property or superannuation to check that their will is current and to consider what happens to their estate after they depart this earthly life.

We are blessed to live in a wonderful part of the world with a great community. Many of us give our time in a variety of ways for the local community while we are alive and maybe we can continue to do a little bit more when we have gone.

While nearly all of us will rightly have our children as the main beneficiaries in our will, allocating a small component of your estate to a community venture is another way of "giving back" and to help our Uki community grow. A little can go a long way!

There are many worthwhile groups or activities that could make use of these contributions.

UKIRA who own the Buttery and put on the monthly Bazaar, RUKI who help us to be stronger and more resilient in disasters, our local sporting clubs, historical society, Mt Warning Preschool, youth groups and even more nearby in Murwillumbah like Tweed Palliative Support who fund the Wedgetail Hospice.

A small allocation can go a long way. Speak with your lawyer about creating or updating your will and to ensure the appropriate wording.



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Gratitude from Numulgi Nursery Cont'd

Paula Vermunt

Thank you Barry for excavations, Ross, Paul and Marcos for building and problem solving, all the helpers in the seedling shed, and everyone who left seed, plants, cuttings, pots and nursery equipment at the nursery gate.

Thankyou to my kids Oscar, Ruby and Nathan for patience with childhood car trips interrupted by seed collecting adventures.

Letting go of the nursery is hard... as I love it.

I love seed collecting, growing, having insightful roadside chats with customers and the satisfaction of forests existing on private land that came from the tiny seeds collected... And the change offers excitement too, more time for my own garden, travel, music, art, my growing psychotherapy practice and the people I love.

Look out for Raph from Rowlands Creek who is already adept at growing very cool indoor plants and now exploring natives and fruit trees. Please support him in his endeavours as you have so generously supported me. In deepest gratitude,

Paula.



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As the birds sing - Jenny Sayer

The backing track for all Jenny's artworks is the sounds of birds. They are sometimes visible but mostly she has her head down engrossed in what she's making.

Birds don't feature in all her work, but their vocal contribution is always there - "when I'm kayaking, walking or just sitting by the river or at the gallery - they are constant and wonderful. I'm sure they add to the whimsical growth of every piece," Jenny says.



Jenny Sayer pays homage to bird song this April.

"Here is the physical world and it doesn't care for our questions and problems; it simply continues coming into being and breaking down again. It is endlessly complex, without judgement, nourishing to the heart and soul."

As the birds sing will be on from 1-30 April.

Join Jenny and the other gallery artists to celebrate this exhibition on Friday the 10th of April at 6pm, where drinks and nibbles will be served. All are welcome.

Jenny's work involves the movement and changes of nature, "it keeps me connected, grounded and able to evolve".

This exhibition will focus on her glass mosaic work.

As writer and avid walker Patti Miller observes:

Bloom - Mark Treacy

Little Gallery's May exhibition is Bloom by Mark Treacy.

For this feature wall Mark has created striking vessels that will cradle the vibrant geometry of flowers.

"The bold lines and forms provide a rigid structure that contrasts the fragile and curvaceous", he explains.

"Each piece interacts with the various wild elements and dynamic palette to celebrate its natural seduction and beauty".

Bloom opens Friday 8 May at 6pm. Join gallery members for drinks and nibbles.



Form & fragility in may's feature wall: Bloom



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APRIL Buttery Bazaar

Sunday 19 APRIL

Rogue Elements

Northern Rivers singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Bill Jacobi, acclaimed blues drummer and singer Nick Churkin and bassist and singer Robbie Renfrew, Rogue Elements bring their folk/roots stylings to the Uki Markets stage this April.



ROGUE ELEMENTS ABOVE

Lead by master fiddler, multi-instrumentalist and old-time aficionado Gareth Byaaland, the session has been going for more than a decade, with a new residency at the Mt Warning Hotel in Uki.

MAY Buttery Bazaar

Sunday 17 MAY

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SPHINX ROCK STRING BAND



FINN WHEATLEY



NixNibbles: From passion to plate

Nicky Morrison

My name is Nicky and one year ago I opened Nixnibbles next to Uki Supermarket and Happy Herbs.



I come from a family of business people and have run and helped start many businesses. I have waited 13 years to get my own home-style, cooked food outlet.

I love to express creativity through my meals and beverages. My particular passion is around enhancing flavour fusion and palette. I love to create herbal, spice and ingredient combinations to liven things up.

Through Nixnibbles I'm striving to offer delicious, affordable food that is cooked with love and made using top-quality, healthy ingredients.

Nixnibbles offers quality products and attention to detail at a reasonable cost, treating customers with respect.

I love making people feel good and live healthily. It is a great honour to do this with food, which I have a profound respect, gratitude and love for.

At Nixnibbles I don't use microwaves, seed oils or margarine and only use stainless steel appliances cookware and utensils. My chips are hand cut and fried in cold-pressed rice bran oil, flavours are from produce, spice and herb blends.

Meals can be made on request, such as curries, Indian, Asian and fusions, pastas, salads, burger deconstructs, all-day breakfasts, options for both vegetarian and omnivore and gluten-free diets.

Working alone can be challenging, but nearly every customer says the food is worth the extra time.

I'd like to thank all the local shop staff and their support and kindness, as well as the loyal local Uki customers. Pop by for lunch soon. Check my [facebook page](#) for opening days and times, which can vary.



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ASTROLOGY

Where from here?

Paola Emma

Observing the recent horrific escalation of conflicts around the world it is easy to conclude that the Saturn-Neptune's Aries conjunction is exacerbating an already volatile situation.

Act before thinking or planning ahead, foolhardiness, inability to feel empathy for others etc, are all negative attributes of an unevolved Aries.

This is right, at least in the short term, particularly in April and May, when Mars, god of war, will also transit Aries. But the long-term astrological indicators tell a more hopeful story.

It is important to remind ourselves of the need to revisit history and astrological knowledge before buying into the Armageddon narrative that has been manufactured to justify another war, disrupting diplomatic, civil relationships among individuals and nations.

It is a fascinating phenomenon that so often human beings, when faced with a major crisis, see it as a sign of 'the end of days'. We can look back at so many times when similar prophecies became popular only to be eventually negated by events.

The ones who tell us to prepare for Armageddon must have a crystal ball I don't have.

The few months ahead don't look astrologically catastrophic to me, while the next big thing, the ingress of Uranus in Gemini, on April 26, could spell very serious problems for the US as it has done many times before: the War of Independence, the Civil War, and War-World-II.

One of the most disruptive ongoing effects of the Saturn-Neptune's conjunction is the belief that there is no hope left for humanity, other than total annihilation and returning to a mythical earthly paradise that never really was.

This fatalism is also shown in the notion that all forms of governments are corrupt; a fascist government seems comparable to others that, if imperfectly, are trying to introduce positive reforms.



Participating in the democratic process, like voting and protesting, appears useless because a superior cabal of Illuminati holds the reins from an impregnable, super-human place of power.

Here, we see the eroding effect of Neptune's super charged imagination over Saturn's reality function. What we look upon as unacceptable norms in other countries were our own norms in very recent times.

We need to trust that tolerance and the slow process of education will always bring positive results; but there are no winners in war.

<https://livingmoonastrology.wordpress.com> has more astrological insights.



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