

give peace a chance



Around 250 men bared all in Byron Bay at the weekend in an anti-war protest.

Males bare the other cheek for peace

It takes a brave soul to bare your body to the world.

But that is exactly what a group of local men did in Byron Bay at the weekend.

Protesting against Australian involvement in a war in Iraq, more than 250 men

took the personal into the political, baring all at the Red Devil rugby grounds on Sunday morning.

Using their bodies to spell out the words 'peace man', the men were watched by a media contingent which included heli-

copters and a cherry picker.

Visiting entertainers and seasoned nudists Puppetry of the Penis were also present at the protest, entertaining the masses with some eye-watering poses.

The all-male protest fol-

lows a similar action taken by local women at Federal this month, during which 750 naked women lay in a field to spell out 'no war'. Their protest was seized on by the international media, with images appearing world wide.

Locals hand back kits

Anti-war sentiment in the region continues to grow, with residents organising a Tweed Heads protest last week.

Joined by protesters from Lismore, Kingscliff and the Tweed, a group of around 20 Byron Bay and surrounding area residents joined a convoy of cars to pay a visit to Federal Youth Minister Larry Anthony's office.

Representing the wider group of 80 who travelled

to the Tweed, a group of four met with Mr Anthony for around 40 minutes to voice their views on a war.

Veteran of anti-Vietnam protests in Australia in the 1960s, Byron Bay resident Bob Cummings said he had been spurred to act by a desire not to see history repeated.

"We are a war mongering nation ... (and) there needs to be a plebiscite on this issue," he said. "This will make us a target for

Muslim countries."

Protest organiser and Byron Peace coalition spokesman Dean Jeffreys also called for participants to bring along copies of the Federal Government's anti-terrorism kit to dump at the minister's office.

"The kit does nothing except to spread fear and American attitudes," he said. "Australia has used it to spread fear about refugees."

Waving a flag for peace

was independent candidate for the State seat of Ballina Nick Faulkner.

He said it was important to keep protest action going.

To that end, weekly anti-war meetings will be held at the Byron Bay Community Centre from March 1.

"It will be a community forum and will help keep things happening in the area while also providing a support mechanism," he said.

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NO evidence of imminent threat by Iraq

NO law - pre-emptive strike against international law

NO consistency - United States armed Hussein

NO justice - other States have breached UN

NO peace - US has no long term plan for peace

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Greens against war

At a recent ordinary meeting of Byron Shire Council, deputy mayor Jan Barham tabled a petition of over 2,500 signatures asking council to write to local member Larry Anthony and Prime Minister John Howard to inform them of local opposition to war.

"The 2,500 signatures are a strong indication of the level of community opposition," she said.

Recently at a community meeting to discuss the war, The Greens candidate for Ballina, Jan Barham, responded to Don Page's statement of disagreement with the government's policy on going to war.

Mr Page stated that he did not agree with going to war without UN support.

"If the member for Ballina believes in this position it is important for the community to know if he has informed the Prime Minister and his party," Ms Barham said.

"Perhaps there are other members who disagree with the government position and a groundswell of opposition within government ranks may cause the Prime Minister to reconsider."

"The member for Ballina may be able to lead the way for a reconsideration of the ill fated decision to join the United States in the war against Iraq."

She said the Greens position anti-war.

There were many arguments against the war, she added.

For example, there was no evidence of an imminent threat, a pre-emptive strike was against international law, there was no consistency in the application of moral arguments as US itself holds the largest stock of weapons of mass destruction, the US should reinforce the United Nations not undermine it, other countries have breached resolutions eg Israel, Pakistan and Turkey, it will not lead to peace and threatens the lives of civilians and international stability.

She said The Greens believed a program for peace deserved consideration including: supporting the Iraq people in moving towards democracy and addressing their humanitarian and civilian infrastructure needs, a global commitment to bringing Saddam Hussein before the International Court of Justice, a commitment to conflict resolution, address the underlying inequality, poverty and injustice in the world.

"The Greens call on world leaders to have the courage to pursue a compassionate, reasonable, long term view," Ms Barham added.



Veteran of anti-Vietnam protests in Australia in the 1960s, Byron Bay resident Bob Cummings was spurred to act in a recent anti-war protest at the Tweed.

Wait for UN, but support troops: Dakin

NSW seat of Ballina Labor candidate Sue Dakin gives her view on a war against Iraq.

Like most Australians, I hope for a peaceful future, not only for myself, but also for my family.

As a nation we have willingly played our part in international peacekeeping

efforts, and during World War II defended our country from invasion. We honour those whose commitment to the armed services has protected us all.

Recently, federal opposition leader Simon Crean said:

"I don't think there should be a deportment of

troops to Iraq ahead of the United Nations determining it."

The United Nations has 191 member nations. Australia is now one of only three to have sent troops to the Gulf - and I do not believe this is right.

We must find a peaceful solution to the problems in

the Middle East, but that should come through UN processes.

Australia should not make any commitment to a war in Iraq without UN backing.

And even then - the UN must continue to work to find a peaceful solution to this crisis.

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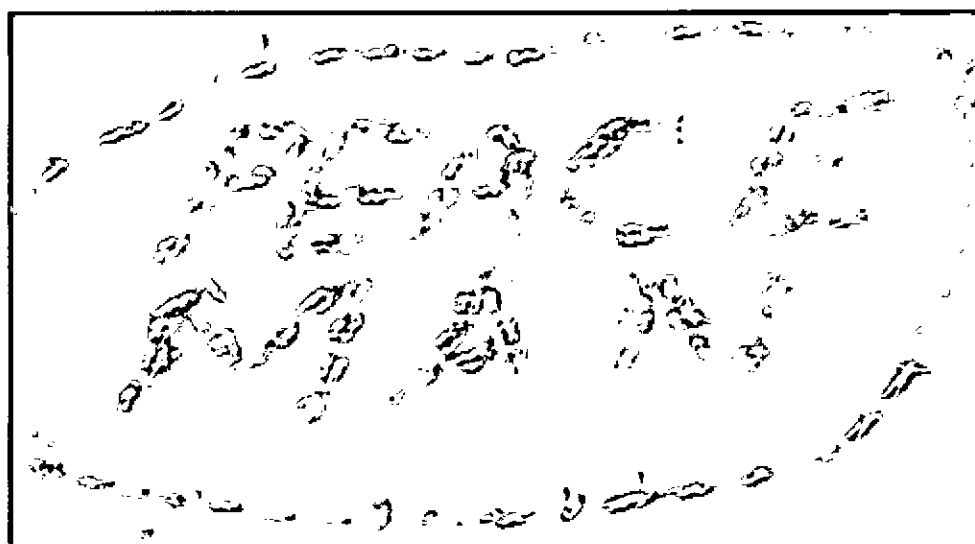
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Local News

Peace is more than skin deep for local protesters



Echo photographer Jeff 'Give Peas A Chance' Dawson almost wore his tripod to the bone keeping track of all the peace protests taking place in Byron Shire over the last week. He managed to catch up with, top left, about 250 men at the Red Devils ground on Sunday morning emulating their clothes-free sisters from the week before; above, Byron Bay High students and staff protesting outside the school grounds last Wednesday; left, Byron Bay High students Donovan Miller, Kahn Peoples, Kim Chappel, So-nior Lamb, Ryan Kovac, and Candice Briggs, assisted by the creative arts department poster competition on the theme of 'My Feelings about War' (Oski's art store in Byron Bay has offered \$100 worth of art supplies to the winning poster artist); and lower left, film makers at the Australian International Documentary Conference, which passed a resolution opposed to war on Iraq, and also 'We challenge the international media to hold the freedom of information as their greatest responsibility in the lead up to and in coverage of any possible conflict.'

A 'Council of Peace' planned for Byron Shire

A Council of Peace is being formed in Byron Shire. 'The public concern regarding the continuing slide towards Australia's participation in war on Iraq and the growing threat of a series of wars under the banner of War on Terrorism, is to be responded to through the formation of an ongoing Council of Peace,' say organisers.

'This will provide the opportunity for the community to gather regularly to hear proposals for action, develop an ongoing strategy and

plans for responding positively to these threats. Peace, like war, must be carefully planned and these plans vigorously executed and implemented. Local actions with global impact will be the focus.'

The Council will begin on Saturday March 1 at 3pm at the Byron Bay Community Centre. All those interested are invited and asked to bring their proposals, a note pad and pen and their good spirits. Contact people for the Council are Dudley Leggett

6685 3719, Dean Jefferys 6684 0254, and Maxine Caron 6685 8410.

Church opposed

The Far North Coast Presbytery of the Uniting Church at a recent meeting held in Ballina passed a resolution opposing the decision by the Australian government to deploy military personnel and equipment to Iraq without further United Nations approval.

The Presbytery is a meeting of representatives from

congregations stretching from Grafton in the south to Kingscliff in the north.

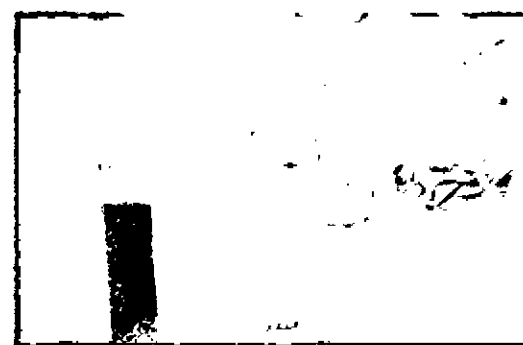
A spokesperson for the Presbytery said the resolution could be added to those issued by other Christian leaders and organisations. 'We are calling on the Prime Minister to reconsider and reverse his precipitate decision to align Australia with the so called "coalition of the willing" while the issues surrounding Iraq and the matter of weapons of mass destruction are still being debated by the UN.'

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Nudity is appalling

I was appalled by the number of women of Byron Bay going

naked to show their 'peace' protest about the talk of war against Iraq.

How ignorant are they? Don't they realise that it is because of the culture of the West?

The Iraqis don't like our culture, neither do I, but I wouldn't bomb places because of it.

Our culture is decadent and growing more so very rapidly. Boundaries are being pushed.

What message are these naked women sending to Islam?

Ailsa Wilkinson,
Stanthorpe.