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Big Joint makes its point in Canberra

by Max Stone

The Big Joint has made it down to Canberra, escorted by Michael Balderstone, the Goddess (aka Gerald Taylor), Sam (HEMP Bar) Bernard, a hippy named Pumpkin and me. Nimbin Chamber of Commerce president Andrew Kavasilas (another '99 Big Joint to Sydney veteran) also joined us on the day.

Yes, we made it – we made it in time for the parade, we made it in time to take it to Canberra and we made it starting from scratch – live on the web. The plan was to build the Big Joint 'live to the web' during the MardiGrass as street performance art outside the Nimbin HEMP Bar/HEMP Embassy complex in full view of the security cameras, but this proved impractical. David Hallett allowed us to use the area between the Nimbin Hall and the Nimbin HEMP Bar/HEMP Embassy complex for the construction.

The reason for our visit is to point out to Mr Howard and Mr Costello the POTential revenue that would be raised by the HEMP revolution. We are not talking about a government tax on home-grown cannabis for personal use, we are talking about the revenue that will be generated by the hemp agri-business – fibre, fuel and food.

Hemp is stronger and requires far less fertilizer than cotton and having few insect predators capable of effectively attacking it, it needs little to no pesticide\$.
MardiGrass Court Support



Man in the middle. Oregano, damiana or coltsfoot?



Max Stone chats with a Federal policeman on the lawns of parliament house.

Pictures: Sam Bernard

As food, hempseed is right up there with the soya bean for nutrition and a lot more versatile. Containing 35% oil, the highest oil percentage of all seeds, hemp seed is ideal for bio diesel and when the sustainability of a bio diesel industry is compared to the unstable future of the oil business – case closed. Hemp based fuel could save Australia billions of dollars. Cannabis also has a growing reputation amongst cancer patients as a wonder drug, but its 'miracle cure' reputation is unverifiable and of course, the legal situation of cannabis has stifled research in this area for many years.

We left from the

This is the same crew who took the Big Joint down to Sydney in 1999, and floated the Big Joint onto Sydney Harbour in 2000. The last time a HEMP delegation went to Canberra and tried to meet with the Prime Minister, his name was Paul Keating. They didn't take a Big Joint with them and they didn't have a website to bear witness.

Rally outside Lismore Court House on 29th May at about noon and headed leisurely south. We arrived in Canberra well before 4.20pm Tuesday, and watched the sun come up at Lake George. We arrived as the sun was coming up, there was frost on the grass and it was cold, cold as Canberra can be, and whilst I may have never stood atop

Mount Everest, after this I sure know what it must feel like.

Taking control of the protest space outside the Big House is not as easy as you might think, after all the Big House is the Everest that all political demonstrators eventually have to climb. It's a wide open space designed to accommodate 30,000 or

more people and every day of the week there is a line of placard bearing protesters right across the front of the 'Authorised Assembly Area'. Not this day. Although other protesters were there, as soon as they saw the Big Joint they had little meetings amongst themselves and left.

Naturally we followed the guidelines, and brewed up tea, coffee and chai. It was a comfortable space for us to present our case. Compared to previous Big Joint Missions, this one was certainly the least physically demanding. This Big Joint was very easy to assemble, dismantle and transport compared to previous Big Joints and this Big Joint has

plenty of life left in it, expect to see it on the road a lot more. After it was set up it didn't take us long to discover that it made a perfect tent/headquarters and many happy hours were spent ensuring the Big Joint smelt right to our visitors and those walking past on the footpath.

Police told us that we were a totally different league to the 'average protester'. They said that heaps more photos were taken of the 'AAA' than usual and more 'real people' wandered by for a chat than for the 'average protest', and as far as they were concerned the Big Joint had lifted the bar as far as political demonstration was concerned.

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