

Drug Driving tests fail to justify costs

by Paul Gallagher Programme Coordinator, Community Advocate, Boroondara.

I have grave concerns about Victoria's so-called drug driving laws, the lack of real-time in-car data, and the lack of a spent convictions policy that protects all other Aussies, except those in S. A.

I have extensive experience in all areas and believe Victorians have been blatantly hood-winked. The media frenzy over the evils of cannabis has been a well orchestrated primer to convince Victorians we drive in the midst of crazed, law-unto-themselves killers. It's utter garbage, and 2007 sees the first human rights breaching drug and booze bus launch with unveiled threats that smokers are "gunna be got".

Video

An interesting independent "review" of the much criticised Drug Driving "simulator tests" - we drive cars, not massive arcade games - is available on YouTube at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfcRyruo91Y&eurl>>. I am not in favour of driving stoned, smoking cannabis nor encouraging such behaviour. Yet in my world of strict neuro-science and data-only conclusions, cannabis may be the best thing a driver can imbibe. This is clearly discussed in the video. The Brits don't suppress info like we and the USA do.

This excellent video shows a clear record of a cannabis smoker driving pre and post "spliff" complete with emergency spontaneous braking - the interviewer even gets in the car!!! <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfcRyruo91Y&eurl>> He clearly drives better the 2nd time. This supports the view that being 'stoned' makes a more cautious driver, being drunk a more risky driver. The driver reports same.

Global studies found this time and again. This - as reported by government investigators - is because smokers are aware they may be impaired and adjust to a more secure mode of behaving, drinkers, the opposite become disinhibited and "indestructible". Could cannabis be the answer to risky driving? Could it solve road rage? Is cannabis going to emerge as a drug that induces safe driving?

(My guess is the driver simply was not impaired very much nor a "better" driver post spliff. They don't raise that he - like anyone - did better once he'd familiarised himself with the course - his "straight" drive.)

Nonetheless, as Victorians head into the New Year with more rights abused, this is compelling viewing, in view of all the lies we've swallowed. How many kids will get a compromised career or lifestyle this year?

Issues

The key issue I have with simulator tests are:

- ♦ I can drive a number of vehicles safely. I drive and fly simulators and study limitation therein. I always crash simulators for reasons specific to the simulator experience, such as not being able to look around in true 3D, and colleagues concur similar experiences. Simulators have "cheat" controls to allow for the cross over of stimuli. Manuals clearly spell out that results when training will never equal actual experience. Yet we legislate from one environ straight to the other with no correction.

- ♦ Simulators demand that one processes a raft of novel information such that one convinces oneself, one is driving or flying. It doesn't work straight up. The "pause" button has a definite purpose - to adjust to a more life-like experience. All simulators have "cheat" actions to provide a realistic experience. Basic stuff - seeing over the dashboard - no go on a 2D screen. Looking around - means peripheral vision can't take in the front view. In real life we can, and do effortlessly as we drive..

- ♦ The human eye is a complex item and requires depth and a 3D environ. The brain creates an extended image of ones vehicle as part of ones body [motor neuro-sensory homunculus]- that's why we take time learning to park [in the exact same manner] in a new car. Bottom line? Simulators are very hard to use and take months to learn. We now know how cannabis effects users of simulators, and that's it.

- ♦ Actions are not spinal reflexes developed whilst driving or flying a real life article. The brain over-rides the spinal loop during the simulator experience, immediately voiding results, and this markedly alters response times. The perils of concluding volumes of data when only experienced in the mere forwards.

I argue the results are next to meaningless, reflect extreme biases, exist only for revenue raising whilst roads, railway crossings, poor cycling lanes, broken footpaths, loose surfaces, sharp turns, entrenched culture in road transport industry, etc continue to kill and maim. Furthermore Victoria has introduced these draconian laws onto a mirror-ball of conflicts and failed utterly to liaise with The Australian Drug Foundation with respect to Peer Education programmes.

Statistics

Cannabis remains detectable for up to 6 weeks post ingestion. This is the only factor for its supposed "prevalence" in road fatalities. The figures Victorians have been fed are not only meaningless, they are blatant misrepresentations of mortuary data. It includes individuals and passengers

[some too young to have a licence] who smoked 3-4 weeks prior to the accident. These figures reflect how common cannabis is. Nothing more.

Remember, bodies on slabs don't talk. Just the manipulative policy makers who select so-called data.

Convictions

So, what's brought Victoria to a state of mandatory sentencing of young adults and mature smokers to a life of social rejection and employment curtailment? I stress, Victoria has no Spent Convictions policy. This is why the issue is so sensitive.

Furthermore, the very loose rules by which this highly sensitive information is handed to any employer with \$55 is virtually up to how the answering officer is feeling on the day. One conviction for drug driving will follow a Victorian from job to job, application to application, remain on file in every HR dept' of every company who asks for the little box to be ticked, and - when offered a job and told well, no sorry you're a crim'.

At present the only recourse is EO action. Well, that's easy. An individual with a drug conviction [cannabis no less - the new hard drug, the giver of psychosis {potential employee is thus obviously quite, quite mad}] unemployed, with no income, and no support is supposed to confidently take on every employer who abuses this loophole.

Like a ball and chain forever, this offensive cycle labels him/her an ex-con or druggie, and we all know they are bad evil things who will steal from any company silly enough to employ them. From a cold standpoint, it's an insurance risk, and sound business decisions are something I fully support. With a cannabis conviction, why employ in view of "the gateway theory"? All pot smokers go on to become psychotic junkies, as we know from 60 Minutes and Drug Free Australia.

It's a mess, an embarrassment for the second largest city in a progressive democracy.

No scope for the success of rehabilitation exists despite the success of the drug diversion programme. Yes, we must protect our community. But do we have to punish average people for life? Consider what we don't hear about cannabis, in the public arena. All we hear is it's very bad, and getting worse.

Nonsense! Drug driving is a red herring. Victoria needs to protect the vulnerable who may be ill, poor, fix the roads, educate via peer influence and withdraw these "laws" immediately.

For more, see The Australian Drug Blog <<http://www.drugblog.net/>> Also see the Drug Policy blog: <<http://blog.drugpolicy.org/>>

Marijuana: Magic or Madness?

Free Talk at Byron Bay

Jost Sauer, highly sought after drug therapist and successful author, is doing a free talk titled "Marijuana: Magic or Madness" at the Byron Bay Community and Cultural Centre Saturday 6th January, 10am - 12pm.

As an ex-addict, a drug and alcohol counsellor, a therapist with over 20 years experience and a lecturer of Traditional Chinese medicine, Jost is a credible authority, which is rare in the field. Able

to draw on both experiential and academic expertise, he offers unique insight into every aspect of the drug.

Marijuana is one of the most popular drugs on the planet. According to Jost this is because it allows people to connect to their inner world. This is the magical element of the drug. But, as long-term marijuana users know, this disappears with prolonged use and de-motivation, frustration, irritability, addiction, procrastination and psychosis can develop. This is what motivates people to give up or to move to harder drugs.

In most cases giving up doesn't work because the magic is missing from life and the desire to recapture

this drives many people to keep using the drug. An essential part of giving up or avoiding moving on to harder drugs is understanding how marijuana creates that magic and how to recapture that in other ways. Jost offers strategies for this.

Mainstream thinking about drugs and addiction is now 100 years old, and

Jost offers a revolutionary new perspective on getting high, getting off drugs and how to live after drugs. As a therapist he takes the revolutionary approach of looking at what drug-users got right and he

makes that the starting point for change.

A second edition of his groundbreaking book 'Higher and Higher: from drugs and destruction to health and happiness' has just been released by Allen and Unwin. Young readers have been inspired to give up drugs simply from reading this book and he has been commissioned by Allen and Unwin to write a second book on life after drugs.

Jost is well known in the area as a one-time resident of Nimbin and a frequent visitor. The lecture will be filmed for his new DVD on marijuana.

His clinical practice is based in Brisbane - website <www.jostsauer.com>



This coaster attracted much interest when it appeared on tables at Nimbin Hotel in December. The call went out to find that bloke with the white sunglasses, and put him behind bars once and for all.



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