



THE NIMBIN GROUNDS

Street-legal and FREE

Cannabis Edition

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Calls for policing summit



In the wake of what has been hailed 'the biggest and best MardiGrass Parade ever', Michael Balderstone, spokesperson for the Nimbin Hemp Embassy, has called for a Nimbin policing Summit.

"I want politicians to be there, local government, state and federal. I want senior NSW police and the NSW Police Association to be there. I want health officers to be there and growers and dealers and tourism operators too," he said.

"The Nimbin Mardi Grass has been a huge success in spite of armed police patrols and their Drug / Terror War crowd interdictions," he said.

Over 30 police supplemented Richmond LAC patrol numbers, including police from the

public order and riot squad, Operation Support Group, mounted police and licencing squad.

Despite the heavy police presence, the weekend crowd, estimated at 15,000, was generally complimentary on the professionalism and friendliness of the officers, often seen posing for photos with revellers.

"In tourism terms, it has been successful both in terms of tourist dollars to local businesses and community organisations, and also in terms of Nimbin getting an excellent reputation as a tourist destination," Michael Balderstone said.

For the first time, the Nimbin Showgrounds provided camping for an estimated 1500 young

people, many of them young international travellers.

"These are young people voting with their feet for cannabis law reform, and to put an end to Drug / Terror War policing,"

"In the afterglow of a successful Mardi Grass and the fading glow of Rudd's 2020 Summit, it is very timely to hold a 2008 Policing Summit."

For his part, Superintendent Bruce Lyons said police would continue to have a major presence in the village. "Our aim is to get rid of the drug culture in Nimbin," he said.

Police arrested some 85 people on cannabis charges, cautioning 'about half'.

The cost of the massive police presence has been estimated at over \$100,000.

MardiGrass sponsor rolls up with skatepark funding

One of the major sponsors of MardiGrass, Canna plant growth products, has made a surprise offer to help fund the completion of the ill-fated Nimbin skatepark.

The Friends of Nimbin Skatepark (FONS) held a stall on the Saturday of MardiGrass, to launch its fundraising project (see report, page10).

A principal of Canna spoke to FONS members at the stall, and later made an offer of sponsorship, up to \$50,000, though with a number of conditions.

FONS co-ordinator Elowyn Paitson said, "We at the FONS are absolutely thrilled to receive this offer from Canna. We have always expected that we would require sponsorship at this level to get the park happening, and that we would have to really chase it.

To have this offer come to us so soon is fantastic. Thank you Canna for your support.

"The conditions on the offer mean that we need Lismore City

Council to set a benchmark for sound reduction. They maintain that there is no set decibel level that will be satisfactory, but that it is entirely subjective and in the hands of nearby residents.

"We now need Council to set a decibel limit that will be deemed acceptable. Without this we cannot secure the funding that we need, nor does it make sense to continue construction if we don't have a benchmark to work to.

"We ask any people in the community who support the skatepark to write to council, tell them of your support, and ask them to set a benchmark for sound mitigation so that we can secure the funding that has been offered and continue with construction."

A further condition is understood to be that Canna's funding will be matched by a further \$50,000 from other sources.

It appears that Lismore Council is unlikely to allocate the funds to the skatepark in its 2008-9 Budget, and



while the Nimbin Hemp Embassy has agreed to support the skatepark from any surplus produced by MardiGrass, it looks as if the FONS will need to continue seeking funding for some time yet.

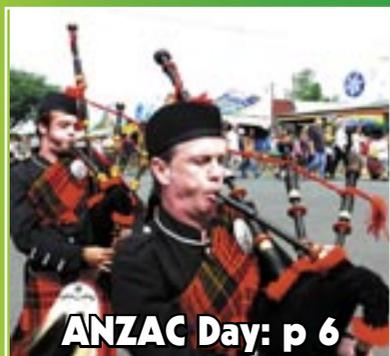
Supporters can help by buying an 'Open Nimbin SK8Park' T-shirt, available through the website nimbinskatepark.com.au or by phoning Duncan on 0427-889-815.

Street Talk (left to right): Marcus Mantschiff (NCC), Romany Pike (FONS), and Gerard Dwyer (NimCoC) discuss the future of the Skate Park with Lismore Councillor Jenny Dowell.

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