



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

Community focused and FREE

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Police target Nimbin tourist attractions as... **Hemp Bar closes its doors**

There was an even larger crowd than usual for the Hemp Bar's daily 4.20pm observance, for those jailed for cannabis offences, on the last Friday in August. The celebrations, or commiserations, were to mark the final day of trading of the popular kiosk, and the wake-like atmosphere was enhanced by trays of savouries and cakes, with complimentary coffees. "It's been eight years of activism," said Hemp Bar co-operator Max Stone, relating how the idea grew out of the Sydney Drug Summit in 1999. "We've achieved what we wanted to. We've shown that the cannabis cafe model works." The agreed eviction followed correspondence

between the Crown Solicitor and the building's owners, Nimbin Community School, regarding the provisions of the Restricted Premises Act (1943). Hemp Bar barista Sam Bernard was philosophical. "To tell the truth, it's a relief," he said. "We're tired." But he had no regrets. "We've made so many friends, from all around the world," he said. The Hemp Bar's closure follows police actions against Happy High Herbs and The Happy Coach busline in the same month, raising concerns that police are targeting the town's tourism industry.

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End of an era. Hemp Bar cannabis legalisation activists happy to call it a day (above); landlord Judy Hales ceremonially evicts Sam Bernard (right). So long guys, and thanks for all the coffee.

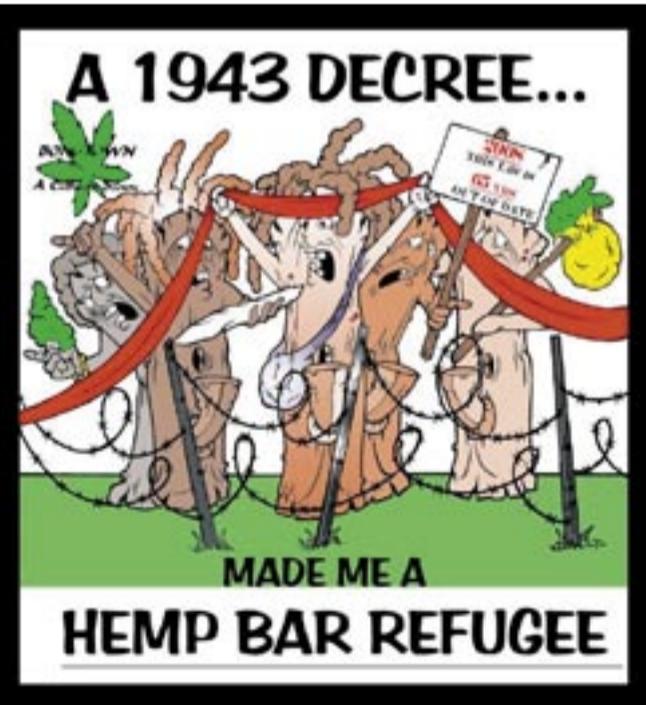


Artists rally to save Museum

In the wake of the closure of the Hemp Bar, members of Nimbin's artistic community have rallied to oppose the eviction of the Nimbin Museum. Owners of both premises have been informed of police intentions to have the properties declared Restricted Premises, using evidence gained in the April raids on both buildings. Museum curator Michael Balderstone said, "We all want to fix the ugly dealing scene in Nimbin, but not at the expense of our best attractions. Closing the Museum will do little to stop any drug dealing but have a major impact on tourism." The Museum won a major North Coast Tourism Award some years back, and has an international reputation for its extraordinary art, murals and sculptures. Elspeth Jones, almost a resident artist at the Museum said, "The Museum is a gathering place for the community. Every day we welcome many people to

the Museum, both visitors and locals. Our youth, young children with ever extending families and their elders share tables, pots of tea and good conversation with people from all over the world. It is really a place for cultural exchange, education and for breaking down barriers. "The permanent closure of the Museum would create a huge gap in village life, scattering and diluting the alternative and indigenous culture here even further. We would be cutting off our nose to spite our face, creating a dull "Everytown" where tourists eat and leave, none the wiser." Benny Zable, long time resident and activist artist of Nimbin, said, "I wish to give my support to creative actions to stop the police from closing down the Nimbin Museum. "It is a clash of cultures. There's a living history of aboriginal/alternative creations around the Nimbin Museum: a unique example of a kinder, caring

world. This is a major turning point to Nimbin's alternative Aquarius history." Michael Balderstone has offered to close the Museum for a month to see what difference it makes to drug dealing in the village. "In the month we are closed I ask that artists be allowed to work inside to restore some of the damage done to exhibits and paintings by the young, disrespectful, angry and paranoid youth who risk jail daily in Nimbin, and we have to deal with on a daily basis. "We have never stopped policing the dealing and extremely difficult behaviour associated with it, in and around the Museum. I understand the police are just trying to do their job, but I believe they will be throwing the baby out with the bathwater in this case. "And it is not addressing the issue of the dealers who will remain everywhere else in town." The Museum is expecting to be given one month's notice in the near future.



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