



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

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Top cop gives Nimbin the thumbs-up

by Bob Dooley

It's not every day that a Deputy Commissioner of Police visits the Far North Coast, so it's not surprising that it would be stage managed as a media event.

For the affable Dave Owens, it was all in a day's work.

At his press conference in Lismore, he had been happy to respond to calls for more police by pointing out that the region has more than its entitlement of officers, and this was showing itself to be effective, with crime statistics "falling or stable in most categories".

He also expressed his concern at the carnage on the Pacific Highway, and promised more highway patrols, which was also widely reported.

Once finished, it was off to visit the Nimbin and Kyogle police stations, ending up in Coffs Harbour for the night, with a busy two-day itinerary that included Bellingen and Dorrigo on the way back to Sydney.

He arrived in Nimbin with a phalanx of inspectors from the Richmond command, including Commander Bruce Lyons, and explained, "I'm looking at stations up this way, talking to the officers to hear what their issues are, how things are going. It's a completely different kind of policing in a small country station."



Do you feel safe? Deputy Commissioner Dave Owens shares a lighter moment with a Nimbin local, who was surprised to see so many top brass in Nimbin.

"Besides," he said, "I've wanted to see what the country was like up here for a while."

Next was a photo opportunity in front of the station, all smiles, the local officers outnumbered by the top brass, then a seemingly impromptu suggestion from Dave Owens, "Are we going to have a look

at the village?" brought forth an amiable scramble for hats, and the eight officers started strolling down the street towards Rainbow Lane, much to the surprise of the al fresco diners on the footpath.

"Do you feel safe?" Mr Owens quipped.

After spending a good half-hour cruising the Museum, the pub, and past the old bank building, talking to people as he went, the Deputy Commissioner and his cheerful group of officers arrived back at the station in good time to get into the cars and head for Kyogle.

His impressions of Nimbin? "It's different, and as I was saying, totally different to policing in Lismore, only 30k down the road. It's amazing the numbers of people coming through, even today, a Tuesday."

"Everyone here seems to have their niche. Everyone was friendly and happy to speak to me. Hopefully, over the years it won't change, won't lose that vibe."

Dave Owens' visit to Nimbin was hosted by the new station Sergeant, Peter Bryant, who is now fully operational.

Equally keen to meet and greet, Sgt Bryant has taken the unusual step of circularising the district with personalised invitations to the Police Community BBQ, to be held at the police station on Thursday 8th April.



Educational. Local police provided a guided tour of parts of the Museum for the senior officers, pointing out areas of interest outside as well as inside the building.



Local environmentalists in coal blockade

Joining the second *Rising Tide* blockade of the coal port of Newcastle were 22 environmentalists who went down on a bus organised by the Nimbin Environment Centre.

They included anti-coal activists Robert Carroll, and Benny Zable (at right), who joined about 300 people, with lots of kayaks, lots of cops, but no coal ships. Success!

Enviro Centre News, page 17.



Skatepark gets go-ahead

Member for Richmond Justine Elliot and Minister for Infrastructure, Tony Albanese have announced that the Nimbin skatepark has been successful in the competitive process of gaining federal stimulus funding for "shovel-ready" projects, to the tune of \$449,000.

The funding, from the Regional and Local Infrastructure Fund, will be used to develop and build a concrete skatepark in Peace Park, with a process of community consultation at each stage of the development.

Mayor Jenny Dowell said, "It's the best news for Nimbin in a long time. I know the young skaters, their families and supporters and nearby residents will be eager to participate in the consultation process."

Friends of Nimbin Skatepark member Michael Balderstone said, "That is such fantastic and important news. We were all quite nervous... like most worries, all for nothing!"

Read Justine Elliot's column, page 10.

MardiGrass awaits DA

The MardiGrass Organising Body (MOB) is making a huge effort to try and please most of the people most of the time, and that includes our local authorities.

The Development Application has been advertised, opportunities for objections or supporting comments have closed, its been verbally approved, but MOB are still waiting for the authorities to officially respond.

The \$80,000 'protestival' is only a month away.

Check out the MardiGrass Update, page 13.

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