



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

Hi-Fibre, Lo-Gl and Gluten FREE

Firewheel
Tree Edition
February
2010

81 Cullen Street
Nimbin 2480
phone: 6689-1148
email: nimbin.
goodtimes@gmail.com

Rally Revisited

by Bob Dooley

Public consultation meetings held during the first week of February in Kyogle and Murwillumbah have revealed communities still deeply divided by the Repco Rally, and frustrated by lack of disclosure of the cost to taxpayers since the motor race through the Green Caldera last September.

The meetings were part of a review that must be conducted, with a report prepared for Parliament, under section 25 of the 2009 Motor Sports Act, the legislation the NSW Parliament passed to ensure the event went ahead.

CEO of the Homebush Motor Racing Authority, Bryan Hardman told the meeting that such legislation to over-ride local planning instruments was common with major sporting events. "Otherwise we'd never get anything on," he said.

Chairing the meetings, with the job of writing the final report, Mike Cahill said he was sensitive to severe disruptions in communities, and was looking at ways to mend those divisions.

Kyogle mayor Ross Brown told the meeting, "Now Council has approved the rally to continue, we are looking at ways to improve the functionality of the rally and maximise its benefits."

This prompted speakers from the floor to question the independence of the review process, intended to determine whether the rally is to be run again at all.

The review is assessing the event's impact on tourism, the environment, Aboriginal cultural heritage, public safety and the local community, and comments were made in each of these key areas.

Aboriginal cultural heritage was of



Githabul elder Roy Williams

greatest concern to senior Githabul elder Roy Williams, who feared that sacred sites on Capeen mountain and around Yabra state forest had been compromised. "These sites are central to our environment and our needs," he said.

Former Tweed Tourism manager James Mackenzie claimed the Repco Rally board had misrepresented indigenous interests to the NSW government, and contravened the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. "There was no cultural survey, and no agreement made with the elders," he said.

The effect on many in the Kyogle community appeared very positive, with Collins Creek resident Mr Creegan telling of neighbours gathering together at vantage points. "There were great social events all weekend. It really put Kyogle on the map," he said.

His sentiments were echoed by numerous others at the Kyogle meeting, with one farmer stating, "80% of residents are in favour of the rally,"

referring to a Kyogle Chamber of Commerce survey.

The findings of that survey were described as "flawed" by anti-rally activist Peter Lanyon, who argued that if people knew the true cost to taxpayers, they may have been less likely to endorse the weekend of fun. "There has always been a money argument put in favour of the rally, but we haven't been told the costs to local Councils or to the state government."

Kyogle Mayor Ross Brown refused to answer a direct question as to the costs incurred by Kyogle Council, but estimates were given of \$112,000 for Kyogle Council, \$120,000 for Tweed Council, and for the NSW government's Events NSW, \$6-8 million.

The meeting was told that financial considerations were outside of the terms of reference of the review, which made it difficult to discuss the key area of the impact on tourism. The rally was forecast to generate \$31.9 million in revenue for the region and over 100 new jobs, but on anecdotal evidence at least, it seems to have fallen far short.

As Cr Brown admitted, "We want to get more bang for our buck."

Others want no bang at all. Kyogle ratepayer Scott Sledge argued that with speed a major contributor to the state's rising road-toll, the rally was sending the wrong message for public safety: "We've got to address the culture of car-racing."

Written submissions can still be made to the review, up to Friday 19th February. Address these to Mike Cahill at mabc@imcanz.com.au or post to PO Box 159 St Leonards NSW 1590.

The report to Parliament is expected to be tabled during the autumn session.

North Coast hemp industry gets boost from recent rains



Recent stormy weather has been a bonus for the infant industrial hemp industry on the North Coast.

Industry spokesperson Klara Marosszeky (pictured) has just returned from an inspection tour of broadacre plantations around the region, and is delighted at the condition of the crops.

"I am growing hemp under license at four sites in the northern rivers area, and they're all doing very well," she said.

Klara is particularly pleased with her three hectare organic dryland farming crop in the Tatham district. "We planted it after the big rains just before Christmas, then there was no water for five weeks, with very high temperatures, and then it was struck by hailstorms - it just bounced back. It's a very hardy little plant," she said.

The immediate priority of the year-old Northern Rivers Hemp Association has been to develop a local seedbank for the commercial production of high yield fibre and seed, and two of Klara's four sites are being cultivated specifically for this purpose.

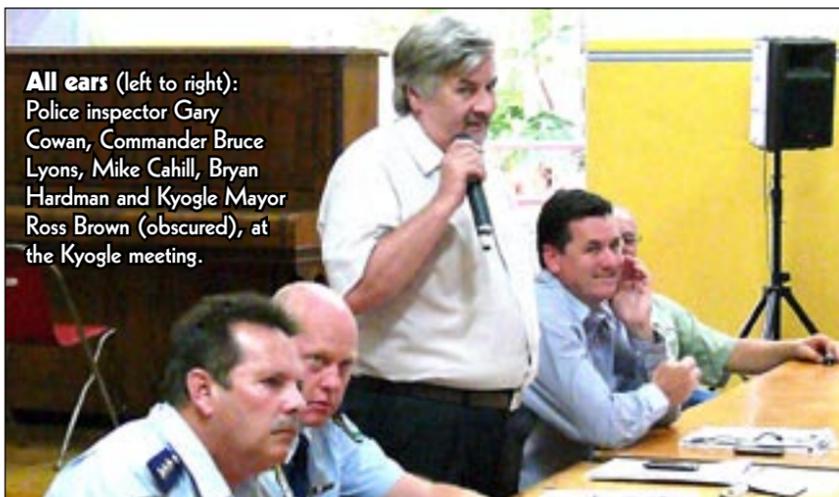
Seed currently costs around \$10 per kilo, and it is hoped that greater competition will result in a more reasonably priced seed supply.

"Part of the arrangement I have with the landowners includes a guarantee to buy the entire crop," she said, pointing out that the legislation is designed so that farmers can only grow if they have a buyer.

From the current plantings, Klara hopes to harvest enough fibre to complete the hemp masonry projects she has underway, including a two storey home in Billen Cliffs.

"If the demand isn't there, the rest will have to be sold as mulch," she said.

For further information on the developing regional hemp industry, check out www.northernrivershemp.org



All ears (left to right): Police inspector Gary Cowan, Commander Bruce Lyons, Mike Cahill, Bryan Hardman and Kyogle Mayor Ross Brown (obscured), at the Kyogle meeting.

Nimbin Lifestyle 6689 1305
real estate

www.nimbinrealestate.com.au

66 Cullen St.
Nimbin

After hours contact: Lis 0447 891 004, Peter 0428 890 373, Janet 0438 992 376, John 02 6628 2182