



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

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HEMP CROPS FACE MORE HURDLES

by Andrew Kavasilas

There's been a lot of talk lately about the use of medical cannabis in Australia, and "progress" in relation to its availability.

The *Narcotics Act* has been amended, and various cannabinoids have been re-scheduled. State governments appear to be on board, with the medical profession wanting products to be developed and clinically trialled before they can be prescribed.

I've attended several meetings with Australia's new Office of Drug Control (ODC) and our brand new drug tsar Bill Turner. Over the past few months the ODC has invited hundred of Australian companies, stakeholders and interested parties to formal gatherings to explain the changes. This in itself is unprecedented when you consider that no other government in the world has willingly encouraged such get-togethers.

Tellingly, the ODC made it clear from the start, "Most of you will be disappointed."

During these meetings, it became very clear there wasn't much hope for anyone in the room.

I think the easiest way to explain the situation is to imagine you wanted to grow opium poppies for medical purposes, which is legal.

First you'll need to get a contract to grow it for a company (foreign) which has a lawful source of seeds (as prescribed by UN drug conventions) and proprietary products, clinically trialled, approved, and made from the said lawful source.

For over 60 years, Monsanto has owned the only lawful source of high THC cannabis.

Bayer owns Monsanto now. Bayer is also behind the worldwide pediatric epilepsy trial based in the US, seeking FDA approval.

A few governments have bent laws to allow some medical cannabis use, or were forced to.

The Australian government has said several times they will not legitimise any high THC cannabis, but will consider foreign companies importing material to work towards clinical trials.

"We find ourselves in this situation because there are no legal cannabis products in the world," Bill Turner said a few weeks ago.

Which also means the Special Access Scheme is useless, still.

We're in the same boat as every other country, no prescription medical cannabis products until "lawful" cannabis is materialised and full clinical trials are conducted.

But we'll see and hear all sorts of shenanigans by governments as they say what they can to get those pesky sick people off their back.

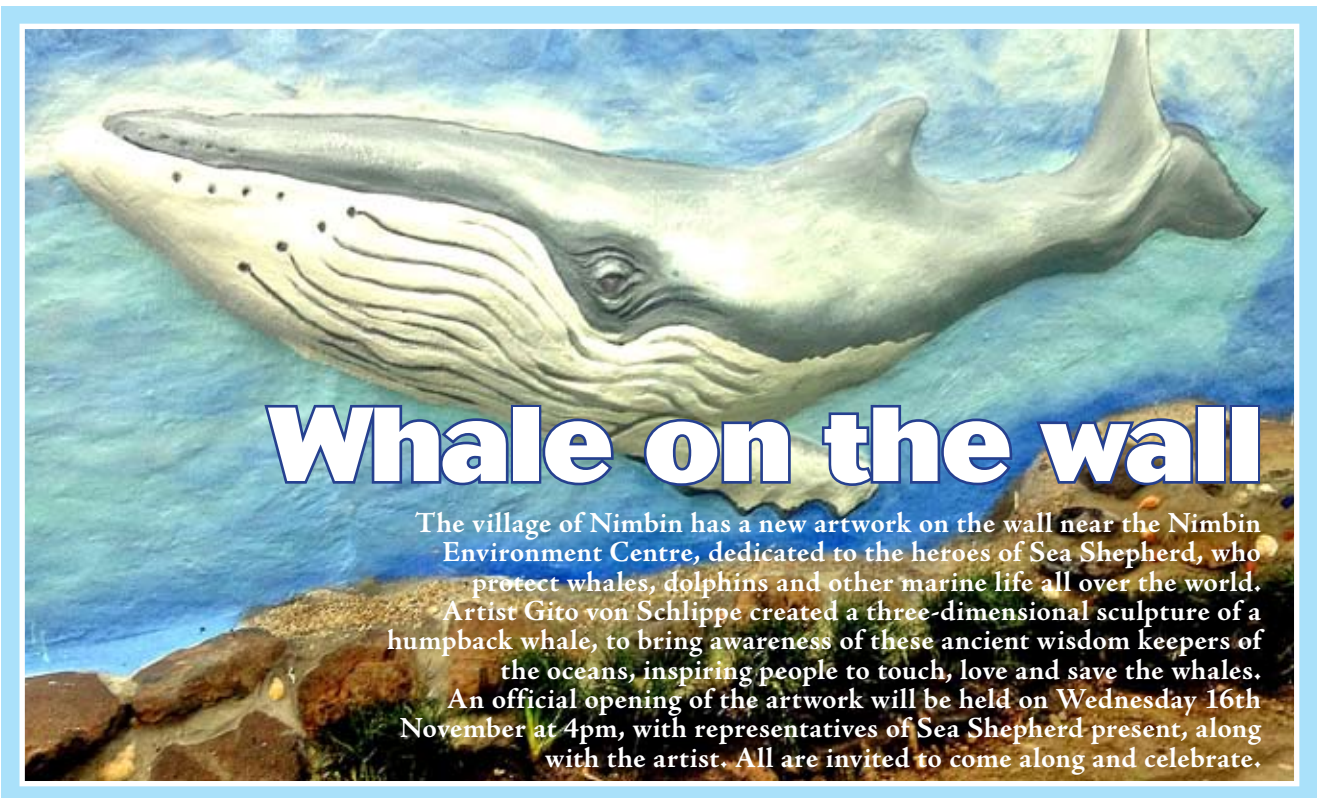
Perhaps it's time to go back and lobby government for interim measures which could be utilised during the next 10, 15, 20 years or until sufficient cannabinotherapies have passed the regulatory hurdles and become prescription medications.

These measures would address the needs and concerns of 100,000 or more Australians who use cannabis everyday for medical purposes.

Fight on we must.



The Mulloway plantation



Whale on the wall

The village of Nimbin has a new artwork on the wall near the Nimbin Environment Centre, dedicated to the heroes of Sea Shepherd, who protect whales, dolphins and other marine life all over the world. Artist Gito von Schlippe created a three-dimensional sculpture of a humpback whale, to bring awareness of these ancient wisdom keepers of the oceans, inspiring people to touch, love and save the whales. An official opening of the artwork will be held on Wednesday 16th November at 4pm, with representatives of Sea Shepherd present, along with the artist. All are invited to come along and celebrate.

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