

Nimbin celebrates spring planting

by Michael Balderstone, President, MardiGrass Organising Body

Nimbin's 30th annual MardiGrass, a cannabis law reform protest on the first weekend in May, was postponed this year because of the floods. It's now on over the weekend of 16th to 18th September.

It's usually a harvest festival, but a lot of the harvest was flooded this year, so a Spring planting ceremony seems appropriate.

This is an important protest weekend. The drug war just plods on relentlessly even though most everyone agrees drug use is a health issue. How are we going to stop it? How do we initiate the changes we all know are really inevitable?

The two core issues we are protesting about, is to be allowed to grow our own medicine instead of having to buy it expensively from big corporations via a doctor, and the drug driving rules must change to an impairment test.

It's appalling that medical cannabis users are losing their licences just for having a tiny old residue of cannabis in their saliva which is not affecting their driving ability at all.



We need the police to support us in lobbying to reintroduce sobriety tests instead, like other countries are using. These laws are already in place for them to use, I believe.

Drug free drivers are much sought after around Nimbin at MardiGrass time and quite a large community network is pulling together this year to help each other out.

The answer to a lot of problems is community, and it's something

Nimbin is good at.

There is a packed program of protestival activities including movies, a photo exhibition and Yarndi Yarns to share old memories of past MardiGrasses, as well as all the usual favourite events in Plantem Park, Sativa Stadium and Indica Arena.

Major highlights include the Great Green Cabaret on Friday evening, the Kombi Konvoy and Hemp Olympix on Saturday and Big Protest Rally Sunday. Pot Art and Pot Poetry is on again as well as a new event, the MMMA, MardiGrass Marijuana Music Awards.

The Hemp Olympix now famous events, the Bong Throw and Yell, Iron Person Event and Joint Rolling competitions will be monitored this year by Belgium officials, after world records were broken last year

but drug testing was not completed beforehand in the appropriate way, so the records were not accepted.

The Hemposium is a packed program of speakers on all things cannabis related spread over four stages on both days; an extraordinary collection of Aussie weed experts. There is a lot to talk about.

Michael Pettersson, the young ACT Labor politician who initiated the laws that allow Canberrians to grow two plants and who is now trying to decriminalise personal amounts of all drugs there, is coming to MardiGrass for the first time. As is solicitor Bernie Bradley, the Legalise Cannabis candidate who gave Pauline a run for her money in Qld in the recent Federal election.

The full program is at: nimbinmardigrass.com

Volunteers have begun arriving to set up the event. Volunteers can register on the website as can DFD's, drug free drivers, who can be part of the UBud or Duber networks. Or you can register at the HEMP Embassy in Nimbin or on Facebook at: mardi-grass-rideshare



