



by Chibo Mertineit

Being in an El Nino phase, we had quite a bit of rain, over 1000mm in Terania Creek, just over the ridge from Nimbin, from the beginning of the year up to 30th April.

While it was already pretty wet, the forecasts were even talking of flash flooding.

That impacted on the numbers of volunteers, as well as attendees to our 32nd Nimbin MardiGrass Festival, but we prevailed and did it again.

The biggest reason for many not to come is the police roadblocks around Nimbin for the weekend, which have been set up for over two decades now.

As I was dropping off the MardiGrass program to petrol stations, pubs and other outlets, I realised that so many more were willing to take it, as well as talk about their family members or friends who are now having a new lease on life because of the prescribed cannabis they are taking.

There are now an estimated 1.2 million people using it, and while prescribed by their doctor, all the cancer patients, PTSD sufferers etc are stressing out about driving their kids to soccer because it might cost them their licence.

More and more people are speaking out against this unjust treatment with the saliva testing, because it doesn't prove impairment at all. Once you lose your license you most probably will lose your job, especially in rural areas with not enough public transport.

So it was no wonder that a lot of politicians came from the Legalise Cannabis Party and The Greens. So, was it because of their attendance at the MardiGrass again this year that the police practised a low-level approach for the first time in decades? No bored riot squad six-packs hanging around in the main street, no endless roadblocks all weekend.

So there were amazing talks and debates on the weekend in the hall as well as in the marquee, where John Shipton spoke about the latest development in the UK, where his son Julian Assange has been held for over five years in Belmarsh prison.

What shameful treatment of an endlessly-awarded journalist for bringing us the truth about war crimes, while David McBride is awaiting his sentencing in Canberra for his whistle-blowing on our military, the so-called Afghan files.

So we had the usual rituals, gathering at the hospital to highlight that cannabis is a God-given medicine, and then doing the 17 steps

over the road to the police station to assure them that we are peace-loving humans and we are fighting for them too.

Gilbert Laurie carried out the smoking ceremony at the opening on Friday, as well as for the parade on Sunday. Thank you so much Gilbert for all the years of your support, education and entertainment for us and our guests at MardiGrass.

The Hemp Olympix committee cancelled the Iron Growers Event to not risk injury to our athletes in the Sativa Stadium, the first time in the 29-year history of this event.

However, there were some amazing throws in the Bong Throw competition, although some participants forgot the yell and were disqualified. The Joint Rolling Competitions made the hall burst over two days.

The Kombi Konvoy developed a new approach in its 29th year by collecting information about each Kombi to be shared over the loudspeakers. I have never seen so many people on the main street of Nimbin for the 4.20 event and such a number of people shouting: "Peace for pot – pot for peace". This is one of the oldest slogans of the Hemp Embassy, but it seemed more appropriate than ever.

All over the weekend there was music everywhere, well organised with a lot of local bands. In the market area there were some newcomers like the Rising Tide stall, promoting the blockade of Newcastle coal export harbour, which they plan to do from 19th November.

They joined the parade as did the unstoppable Nimbin Environment Centre and Northern Rivers Friends of Palestine, who brought a strong and loud message of peace for Gaza led by local anti-war activist Benny Zable in his powerful black costume holding up a broken missile.

I see it as a sign of strength and understanding the bigger connections that the MardiGrass parade can host all kind of different groups relating to the reality as we experience life.

It was a very emotional and vocal parade, one of the best. A huge amount of Ganja Faeries danced all the way, and the big joint was bopping along too.

Another year where we enlightened more people about the importance of cannabis as a medicine, recreational substance and industrial product to replace the logging of our native forests and all oil-based plastics.

We are running out of time, politicians, and we need drastic change now on so many levels. It's time!

Legalisation: Now is the time

by Greens Senator David Shoebridge

I am sitting on the verandah outside Cones and Cream at Nimbin's MardiGrass and asking myself, "How close are we to making cannabis legal?"

MardiGrass is an especially good place to ask this question, because this cannabis-focused festival in Nimbin has been making the case for legal cannabis now for over three decades.

Starting at the end, the answer to the question is: "A whole lot closer than we were a year ago." There are a number of reasons why this is the case.

The first reason why we are closer to legalising cannabis is because it's already happening across the world. We have seen cannabis legalised now in half of the states in the US, all of Canada, Mexico, South Africa and Thailand, to name a just few jurisdictions.

In each of these countries weed is legal and the sky is still stubbornly holding up. More and more Australians are experiencing this freedom



in other countries, coming home and shaking their heads at how backward our laws are.

The second reason is because the medicinal cannabis market has now been operating for years, has proven incredibly successful and its reach is growing.

As hundreds of thousands of Australians get legal medicinal cannabis and experience its positive health impacts, they tell their friends and family.

When that's happening so quickly, then legalising recreational cannabis for adult use is fast looking like

the obvious next step.

Finally, we now have a clear green print that shows how we can legislate in one go to legalise cannabis across the country.

The Greens' Legalising Cannabis Bill 2023 was presented to Parliament in August 2023 and has received hundreds of supportive submissions demanding Parliament pass the Bill.

I presented the Legalising Cannabis Bill to the Senate to map out the clearest pathway to make cannabis legal.

It shows how the Federal Parliament can create a single legal cannabis market across the country that is not dominated by multinational pharmaceutical, alcohol and tobacco companies, and that creates thousands of new sustainable green jobs.

Not only that, but when the Commonwealth parliament finally makes cannabis legal, that will also turn off all the State and Territory laws that criminalise cannabis across the country.

If, like me, you are keen to stop 60-80,000 people being ground through the criminal justice system every year for the "crime" of possessing a small amount of cannabis and you want the freedom to be able to have a legal cannabis brownie rather than a beer on a Friday night, then this is how we do it.

We come together, in our millions, and we demand change and call on every Federal politician to get behind the Greens Legalising Cannabis Bill when it comes on for a vote later this year.

Because now is the time, the best time yet by far, to seize the momentum and just legalise it.

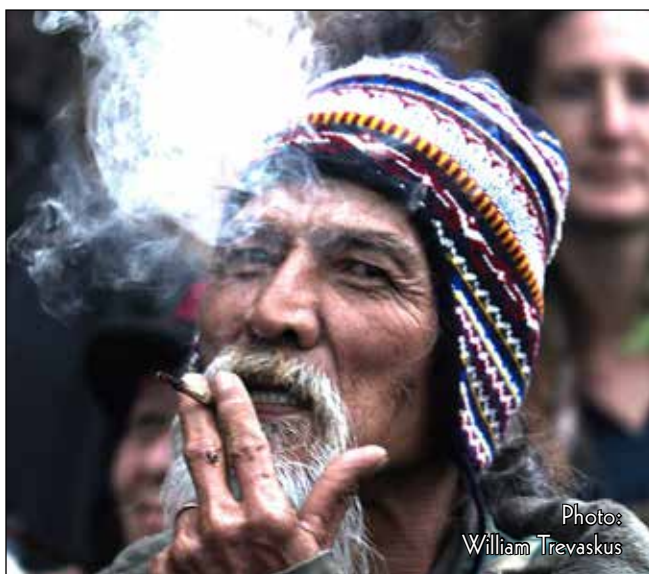
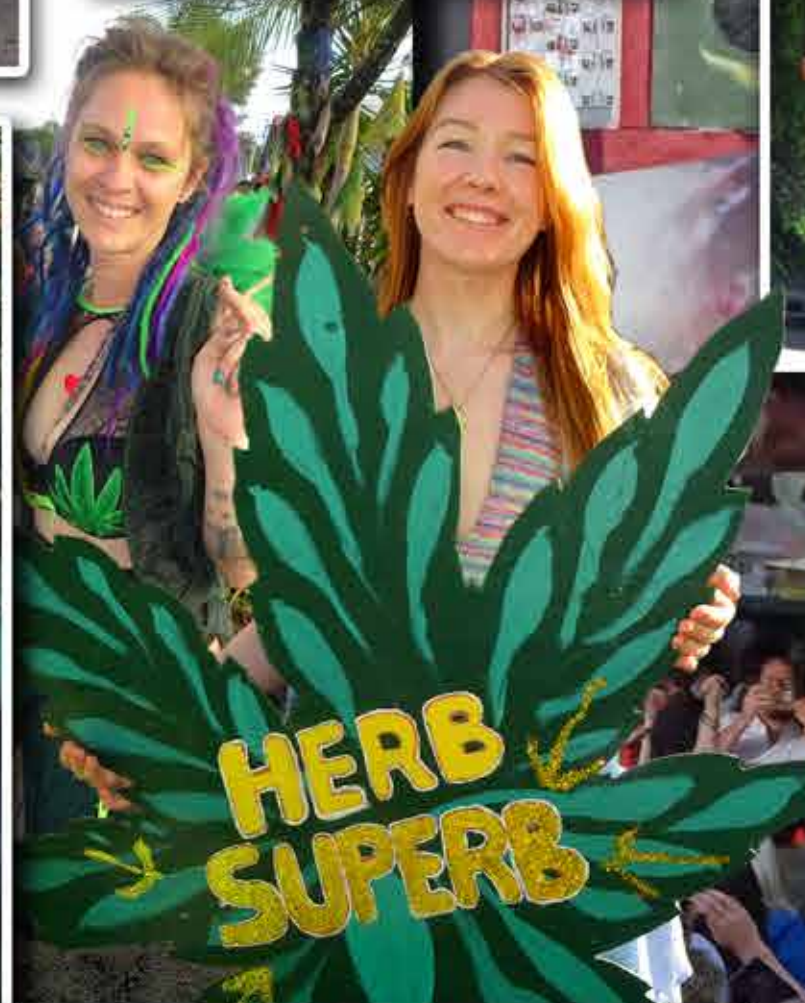


Photo: William Trevaskus

MandiGrass

2024



Photos by Chibo Mertineit, Garry Mimlich, Greg Soward, William Trevaskus, Sue Stock and Bob Dooley. Layout by Neil Pike.

RDT: Gross disregard of civil rights

by Simon Cohen

On Friday 3rd May 2024, I believe I was sexually assaulted by the authority of Chris Minns and his NSW Government's metaphorical phallus. It was conducted by a man with a smile on his face and a gun on his hip.

The glint in his eye suggested that he was enjoying himself. To that, yes, he was having a good enough day he replied when asked. You could mistake this man as innocent, even handsome.

Yet what was to eventuate left such an assumption doubtable if not untenable; and furthermore, me feeling violated and further disillusioned as to the morality of this evidently fascist web of prohibition.

Fascism can be seen taking hold when good people justify foul acts at the excuse of just doing their job; a mantra that was repeated over and over again that day as I had merrily gone on my way to work.

You see, it was this henchman, a constable, and his equally fascist comrades who flagged me down to be statutorily assaulted. First, we went through the civil niceties of where you live

and so on, then he wanted to know if I had been drinking, yet disbelieving, checked for himself. To which I do consent, I do not mind a test that correlates with actual harms. And no, I was not over the limit at 9.30 in the morning.

But he was not done with me, he wanted more personal gratuity at the expense of my freedom to resist. He was merry, taking an hour of the life of my wife and me that could never be given back to us.

You are now being given a drug test, I was told. You must hold this and penetrate your person until I am satisfied, stated the constable. Requesting I repetitively put his blue stick in and out of my mouth until which time he was satisfied.

I was clear and concise, stating that I do not consent to you penetrating my person for your personal gratuity, but that I would comply under duress. The actual reality of resisting was not an option, I was under duress.

This constable threatened to take away my livelihood, my ability to provide for my family, put food on my kids' table, or the very roof over their heads. Even further, the



The Kombi Konvoy was not immune from so-called random drug and alcohol testing, despite receiving police approval for the procession. Photo: Sarah Younger

reality this constable exposed me to challenged the state of my own mental health.

So here we are on the side of the road, this constable wanting me to put Chris Minns' stick inside my body. The constable could not tell me what chemicals were on it. What had he exposed me to? I still don't know. I know I could taste it the good part

of an hour later, even after rinsing my mouth out with water repeatedly.

Some time passed, then the constable came back to the car stating that I had tested positive to illicit drugs. I replied something like, "This can't be right" as the mortification could be seen setting in on the face of my wife. This was traumatising,

it could never be taken back, it had happened.

I was now under arrest, the constable told me, I had to go to Chris Minns' bus where they proceeded to stand around me watching me en masse with guns on each hip, to have another object penetrate my person for their further gratuity, until pleased enough.

It was not unlike a gang rape scenario where onlookers don't intercede; but instead demonstrating a reckless indifference to such an act of fascism.

This statutory assault is taking place en masse, in a democratic country, targeting those brave enough to resist the lunacy of this constable's puppet masters' delusion that drugs are bad. That mere presence was the paternal grounds for destroying lives without impairment, without a harm caused.

This test was allowed on the premise of saving lives, to which no causal link can be seen statistically correlated with road fatalities, since prior to implementation.

It used a test stick that was deemed unfit for application in the field by the largest drug driving report conducted in Europe prior to adoption by

Australian governments. The test had been determined inconsistent, its accuracy compromised.

A test to which I was exposed, as the secondary test in the bus was deemed negative. I was free to drive away. No apology, no recompense for the hour of lost earnings it took for this fascist state assault to take place, on the busiest weekend of the year. No apology, no recompense to my wife.

I was left thinking, this man could no longer be considered innocent, let alone handsome.

This man had metaphorically gang raped me with his colleagues. While this may be conceived as an overly dramatic analogy, how can degree be qualified when an analogous comparison can be made?

The greater evil is being used by the NSW Government for the lesser harm. Henchmen are paid to not stand against injustice; instead perpetuate evil and the rise of fascism, as far as I am concerned.

The like has been seen before, so can we learn from the past and call out the roadside drug testing for what it is, statutory assault.

Hemp Olympix: The Age of Bongshido

by Alan Glover and S Sorrensen

MardiGrass Sunday, 5th May, 2024 will go down in Hemp Olympix history as the dawning of a new age: the Age of Bongshido.

Young Japanese sportsman, AJ (full name unknown), stepped up to the Throw Line in Sativa Stadium having to beat the day's best of 33 metres. He threw, but AJ was disqualified for failing to yell as he threw. This event, one of the three official Hemp Olympix sporting events, is descriptively called Bong Throw and Yell. Obviously 'Yell' was lost in translation.

Despite the disqualification of AJ's throw, the capacity crowd roared its appreciation of the huge distance covered. But all was not lost for AJ.

After consulting The Rules and Etiquette for the Games of the Hemp Olympix, Hemp Olympix Officials, Alan Glover and S Sorrensen, decided to allow the athlete a second throw (*Bong Throw & Yell*, Section 17, Clause 5b).

The six-strong Japanese Hemp Olympix team was jubilant, as was the crowd. AJ's sporting enthusiasm and his obvious joy in participating in a Hemp Olympix had already endeared him to the spectators.

Lining up for his second throw, AJ emptied his mind while a teammate applied shiatsu to his throwing shoulder. Then with a short run-up and a long windmilling throw action, he chucked.

And this time he yelled: "Drug law reform by the NSW government is essential for human rights!" – in Japanese of course.

The bong flew high through the air (46% relative humidity, 3 knot south-easter, patchy cloud), all eyes upon it.

The crowd gasped as the bong not only surpassed the day's best throw of



New world record holder in the Bong Throw and Yell Hemp Olympix sport, AJ from Japan (far right) celebrates his amazing achievement, with Hemp Olympix Officials, Alan Glover and S Sorrensen (left), Hashy Smashy, Women's Bong Throw and Yell champion, and Fiona, over 50s Bong Throw and Yell champion

33.3 metres, not only passed the world record mark of 40.4 metres (Johannes Groenevelt, Amsterdam Games, 2016), but escaped the stadium, landing on the stage roof and sliding into the neighbouring paddock. OMG!

The crowd went wild. It rose as one, arms raised in sporting bliss. AJ's entourage cried tears of joy. Alan Glover dropped to his knees in wonderment. (S Sorrensen has a bad knee.)

AJ was motionless, stunned by his achievement.

Three Hemp Olympix officials measured, deliberated, and then Alan Glover announced, "That was a throw of forty-five meteeerrrrzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!"

A new world record! The stadium erupted. AJ's teammates clumped around their champion, cheering and instagramming.

The awesome reality hit AJ. He broke into a smile that beamed across continents. The smile of a winner.

And thus, the Age of Bongshido was born.



Above: Collection point in the Western carpark. Inset: Bagged refundables

by Stephanie Seckold

Monday 6/5/24. Materials now collected, separated, sorted. Not sure of numbers yet, but certainly at least a couple of thousand people.

Landfill: possibly 40-50% less than last year. We have 1 x 3/4 skip landfill.

Recyclables: 7 full (sorted) bins in skip – that is, crushed cans or those without barcodes that can't be refundable.

Refundable recycling: sorted, separated, bagged up waiting to be taken to Lismore. Maybe 65% of all recyclables.

Compostable waste: taken to farm for proper (year-long) composting, treated with activated EM1 (available at 7 Sibley Street) to be used for next year's agroforestry workshop.

Many thanks to Moss Kilby, Melissa, Kat, Wan, Johnny One-Tree and the many random punters who offered to drag bins up the hill, saving this old lady occasionally.

All volunteers for next year will be most welcome.



The MardiGrass Organising Body would like to thank the Nimbin community for dealing with the various inconveniences encountered during the three days, and also thanks to all who attended. Free the weed!