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Good vibes at MardiGrass26

by Michael Balderstone

There was a good vibe at MardiGrass everyone agreed, but what does that mean? People were smiling, there were no altercations, or very few, people were happy, and even the police agreed it was a "good vibe". The vibe of thousands of people getting high together, that's what it was.

And there's less and less alcohol at MardiGrass, I notice. Certainly nothing like in the old days when the streets were littered with broken glass, and often blood, the next morning. We've had a no glass policy for decades now and recycling happens well these days at MardiGrass.

Aside from the smiling vibe, there were some good talks over the weekend and I wish I'd remembered to make sure Ethan Nadelmann was there at the end of the Sunday Rally to speak to everyone, as he was a rare visitor; a major player in getting drug law reform moving in America and not just for weed either. I hope some locals shared their best with him.

It was good that an MP from the Labor Party came, Stephen



Lawrence, the first in a decade I think. He's been a big supporter of Jeremy Buckingham's efforts to get the saliva testing rules changed for mediweed. I expect the NSW Labor Party will announce the new legislation very soon, as the premier has been promising for months.

If you have a prescription it will help, but I suspect they will still want to do some sort of impairment test. They already have a sobriety test on their books they could use, but like so many things these days we like a machine to do it for us.

Is that just to avoid responsibility?

To avoid getting sued? No other country on earth tests drivers for drugs like we do, just for the presence not impairment.

I just got busted for the second time and the very happy with himself motor bike cop agreed I didn't look impaired ("or I'd take you for another test", blood I guess) but he was also happy to say impairment has nothing to do with it. That's the drug war, he believes in it.

It was good for me hearing the various politicians talking at MardiGrass about how difficult it was to get any change or even get

heard on our main issues like home-grown and driving. As far as most people are concerned, it's legal now, just go talk to your doctor. And the police – NSW has the highest concentration of anywhere on Earth I heard – still have the last say on any law changes.

The legal weed is half the street price and even though it's irradiated and mostly hydro, it does the job for an increasing amount of people. That alone is changing Nimbin without mentioning the many new houses being built and the absence of police, who are way down on

numbers. Who wants to fight a dangerous unwinnable drug war?

Someone said at MardiGrass we have to wait for the older generation of cops to go then the next will see drugs as a health issue more. I think I heard the same 30 years ago.

For better or worse, Nimbin's 34-year effort at getting prohibition questioned is not all in vain even though we still can't grow our own legally. The doctors and chemists scuppered that dream by taking over the dealing, enough so that I think we should probably change our name to the Cannabis Party and drop the Legalise word.

I also think we need to find a new way of doing politics where the people get a say. The Swiss get to vote on a lot of issues which is easy now we all have mobile phones, or as Ethan said, we need something like the Ballot Initiative which is how the pot laws changed in various American States.

That would need constitutional change, so maybe we have to settle for a Citizens Assembly or Jury to start, but something has to change in the antiquated and outdated political system we have, or Pauline will be PM.

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