



by Michael Balderstone

Best MardiGrass ever! It's an in-joke but some people meant it, and it was a good one.

Many thanks to the entire Nimbin community for their tolerance and support. Tolerance because it is an invasion, and I call it support because we are probably the best drug-educated little community on the planet as most of us realise drug use is in reality a health issue, and we don't judge each other so much here anymore, as the stigma falls away.

Everyone who lives in Nimbin knows people who use cannabis regularly, and so you realise it's not turning us all into lunatics, murderers and rapists as was once believed. Those lies stuck hard, and not long ago. In Nimbin you might enjoy an odd beer with someone in the pub for years until one day you discover they use heroin or are on the method-one program.

It's all basically pain relief, mental and physical; people just trying to enjoy their day best they can. Who are we hurting?

This drug war over who controls pain relief is now 100-years old and the biggest business on the planet. Our government signed us up to it, yet it was not mentioned once in the election that I heard, by either Albo or Dutton.

Now that the one brought up by a single mum has had such a resounding victory, let's



Many new Ganja Faeries!  
Photo: Sue Higginson

see if he has the balls to do anything about the ever-increasing number of our people getting criminal records and filling the jails in record numbers. When will he realise these are the most traumatised people in our community his war is bullying.

Of course, everyone with a drug habit, like

me with pot, is doing it for a good reason. More often than not trauma, PTSD, we all have it in various doses. Weed is great for traumatic childhoods or maybe shocks much later in your life. Many veterans love cannabis; PTSD used to be called shell shock.

So, we come together once a year at MardiGrass, a gathering of criminals who aren't really criminals. A collection of stoners who love the plant which gives them such relief.

There were some great highlights over the weekend, a big thankyou especially to the many musicians. The Japanese drummers in front of the Embassy before the big Sunday rally and parade were terrific. Jeremy Buckingham (who I kept calling Jeremy Cameron) set up his 'Into the Weeds' podcast studio in the front of the Hemp Bar, thanks Big Bong. It looked like it belonged there.

We watched the tally room results from there, as well as the final minutes of his team the Pies losing to mine the Cats, after the siren. The Oasis was open again with great music all weekend, go Bart. NSW Legalise

Cannabis Senate candidate Miles Hunt endeared himself to everyone; we all felt good about him representing us.

The official photographer from the National Archives who came to record the Hemp Olympix had a mind-blowing time. I love the first timers at MardiGrass, it's not quite like any other festival, just like Nimbin is not quite normal either.

MardiGrass is a big job for many people, and it happens in three parts for me: before, during and after. A big thanks to Miss Guidance primarily who has been pulling the program together for months before Neil creates the Pot Papers with it.

Keith, Katie and Andrew sorted music applications and Samara and Kylie the stalls. Gaz and Sharla were painting before Jingles started building the stages.

Over the weekend, Steph sorted rubbish night and day, maximising recycling; Heidi managed Jungle Patrol; Caroline the Hall café; David Hallett the public address system; Louise and Gail the info desk at the Hall; the crew in the Hemp Embassy and Hemp Bar, and they all had teams of volunteers helping them.

Then there's the hardworking crews working on the stages all weekend, Sista, Wompy, Stu, Steve and Rohan, and at the Skatepark, Faolan, Moose and Ruben. Geoff on ticketing and Denise, Rachel and the Showgrounds crew for co-ordinating camping. The volunteers from across the globe who helped every day, some for weeks before like Gen and Kel.

And the sun, which somehow manages to be always shining on the Sunday rally!



Photo: Tamsyn





