

NIMBIN MARDIGRASS

Statement

HON SOPHIA MOERMOND (South West) [6.24 pm]: Over the break I travelled quite a bit. I travelled to Nimbin to the MardiGrass. That was quite exciting—a definite highlight for me. It was the third time I have been there. The MardiGrass started as an annual event in 1993—a peaceful protest against the prohibition of cannabis. This was in response to quite a lot of harassment of people who were smoking or using cannabis, including rough treatment and random street searches. This event has grown quite big. There are now many events that happen there. There were many noted speakers, and people who specialise in law, drug-driving laws and the legalisation and medicinal use of cannabis all get to speak there.

There are also other events going on that are quite exciting. There is the joint-rolling competition with oregano, which is quite fun to watch. Some people have amazing skills there; I do not!

Hon Wilson Tucker interjected.

Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND: It was definitely oregano!

Then there is a bong-throwing competition, which is quite interesting to watch as well. This year Wilfred the dog took part in that, but he did not win.

Anyway, it was an exciting event. This was the first time that there were five MPs present. There was the WA contingent, two members from Victoria and one from New South Wales. This year, it was interesting that there was not a huge police presence. When I went last year, there were a lot of police there, and it was quite intimidating at times. This year that was not the case. Last year, too, there was a lot of testing of people going in and out of Nimbin. Hon Dr Brian Walker was tested last year. I drove in and out this year and I was not tested.

Several members interjected.

Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND: He was negative, by the way, just so members know!

Hon Wilson Tucker interjected.

Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND: Yes!

If I had been tested this year, I would have been negative as well! I know, very boring, but nonetheless!

I think that meant that there was greater acceptance by the local police of people there in the festivities. The only police interaction I saw was related to alcohol, and I thought that was quite fascinating. I think all of this means that people are clearly communicating their desire to see cannabis legalised, for discrimination against users to be stopped, for it to be made more easily accessible, for money to stop being wasted on policing, to take advantage of the economic benefits legalisation would bring, for cannabis growing at home and for use to be regulated overall for fairness and safeguarding.