Chewing over the cannabis bone again

Very pleased to read fast Buck’s (John Anderson’s) letter last week and to realise it was not alone in thinking the Four Corners program on marijuana was biased and dishonourable.

To me its most disturbing aspect was an endorsement of the fallacious reasoning employed by researchers which can only logically lead to bad science.

a) They don’t know the cause.

b) They have to show that similarities in brain structures of dope fi end and schizophrenia are a negative development – if they had the brains to see the obvious mediums, shams, geniuses and some artists, writers and politicians, they’d find similar patterns.

c) They have yet to prove the identified brain structures were a cause of anything else.

We have long thought that schizophrenia could be the result of inter-uterine trauma, birth trauma, a yet unidentifi ed genetic structure, or possibly even an allergy. Even prolonged extreme stress can cause problems, sometimes seem to be a cause.

It is facile and dishonest to blame marijuana as a cause of schizophrenia in our current state of knowledge.

My feeling after watching the program was that the federal government had fi nally come to realise how prevalent the taking of drugs has become in our country and decided that ‘something had to be done’ and the result is usual. It is nothing more.

And it is nothing more.

Remember the scientifi c ‘truce’ in the seventies that people who took acid would be genetically altered and produce children who would be deformed or retarded? Yet a good proportion of Byron children must fi t into this category. The program had about as much integrity as this old time piece of rubbish mongering.

Both major parties at both state and federal levels have painted themselves into a corner by conducting a ‘tough on drugs’ bidding campaign. It is now nearly impossible for them to adopt sensible policies. Hence the Four Corners program on cannabis.

David Gilet
Bayon Byron

One wonders what possi- ble motive John Anderson (!) of Coorabell could have in attributing irresponsible reporting to the ABC’s Four Corners program on the use of can- nabis (March 15).

Arguably the benchmark in Australian investigative broadcasting, Four Corners has won every award it deserves, enjoys well-earned respect.

What has anyone to fear when a program reports what many of us have observed, that the over-use of marijuana from an early age can lead to serious psychological and long-term harm? That Four Corners reported a body of scientifi c and anecdotal evidence supporting this is surely to its credit. My sug- gestion to John Anderson is to make his concerns known to Media Watch or perhaps more to his liking, the Australian Press Association.

Jill Keogh
Friends of ABC, Byron Bay

In response to J Anderson’s letter regarding the recent Four Corners anti-cannabis crap.

I too watched this Four Corners episode in the hope that some new information might be offered. The closest this episode came to any real information were some ex- tremely blurry images of the created images of the human brain, one dubiously more sinister than the other. Blatant propaganda.

What was also interesting (which J Anderson missed) was how at least two of the main case studies that they focused on also used amphet- amines. A point that was mentioned only brie fl y and then completely brushed over, as with any outstanding logic the program had to offer.

This ‘editorial’ had only one main (and sponsored) purpose in mind. That was to use the words ‘psychotic’ and ‘cannabis together in as many sentences as possible. And to create this emotional ‘scare’ storyally towards any parents’ worst and most obvious fear. We can expect that as a community we are being prepped to be ready to accept some new wave of draconian and utterly irrat- ional laws, as opposed to our own responsibility. This is in course with the general trend of the world these days, to further control and asphyxiate individual freedom and choice.

Hirtson/Oceangores
Ocean Shores

Backlash was partly right last week, there was harass- ment of Rusty Harris. It was the original sniffer dog assaults and that was harass- ment of our whole society. The ‘Harrism’ is Rusty’s lengthy response. I doubt they will harass him again.

Like many here I grow and smoke cannabis. Since this activity adversely affects nobody else, it’s nobody else’s business. Of course, for the sake of the orderly society civi lisation needs, we are all prepared to forego certain personal freedoms for the greater good. So is this for the greater good?

The drug laws make drugs expensive and therefore prime commodities for ag- gressive marketing. So much so that, in the 50 years these laws have been around, the illegal drugs industry has become the second largest industry in the world. According to the Secretary of the United Nations.

The success of the war on drugs overseas pretty much mirrors ours. Approximately 80% of our prison population is drug related and that population is overwhelmingly working class and one-third, female. Indeed the USA now imprison a larger per- centage of its population than Stalin at his worst. There are no major dealers in prison, certainly not the beneficiaries of 98% of the second largest industry on the planet. If you want to know who they are just look for super rich people promoting prohibition and, probably, investing in private prisons and armaments.

To enrich these people my vote is denied access to a wonder resource, hemp, our prisoners are crowded with the poor and, in addition, I am expected to forgo my right to grow and smoke a plant. That doesn’t sound like the greater good to me so I won’t.

The various responses to the sniffer dog invasion of Byron seem to have had a signifi cant effect. They have used the dogs elsewhere but they didn’t bring them back here. These drug laws have a hard time under the search- light of reason and the system can’t afford to give too many people a platform to voice that reason.

We must deal with the dilemma of drugs in our society but these laws create massive problems and solve none. Thank you, Rusty, and everyone else who stood up against this tyranny.

Robin Harrison
Coorabell

Despite the hype of enforcement agencies there is little opposition. Less than 2% of undecided drugs are seized. The largest busts, invariably infl ated, are only ever a percentage of that 2%.

The largest industry in the world, armaments, benefi ts hugely from this fake war on drugs. It’s their dream war, make a 98% loss like look a win and an endless war sends an endless stream of wealth into the coffers and to hell with the effects on society. They almost managed it in Vietnam and the war on terror seems like a good bet too.

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Robin Harrison
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Support IFAW

Since the devastating Boxing Day tsunami, the Interna- tional Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) has been on the ground caring for injured and displaced animals. Relief teams are currently working in India, Thailand and Sri Lanka, rescuing, feeding and sheltering abandoned live- stock, pets and some wild animals. Working in partner- ship with local groups, IFAW has been able to vaccinated thou- sand of stray dogs against rabies and other infectious diseases.

IFAW works to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals throughout the world, promoting policies that benefi t both people and animals. I believe that we need to remember the millions of the survivors of the tsunami and also consider the important roles they play as companions to humans. People who are reunited with their beloved pets will receive much- needed emotional support during a time of immense grief and loss. People will also be reassured if they know their livestock to depend on.

If you wish to support IFAW by making a donation please visit www.ifaw.org or phone 1800 004329.

Claire Vickery
Goongenerry

Not a fit person?

How ironic that we in the Tweed electorate recently got rid of the former National Party Minister for Childrens Services, Larry Anthony, on an anti-war platform only to fi nd him popping up on the board of the biggest corporate ABC child-care provider.

Larry Anthony’s enthusias- tic support for the Rudd government’s decision to invade Iraq (where 70% of the population is under 18 years of age) is his equally enthusiastic support for detaining children of asylum seekers in Deten- continued overleaf