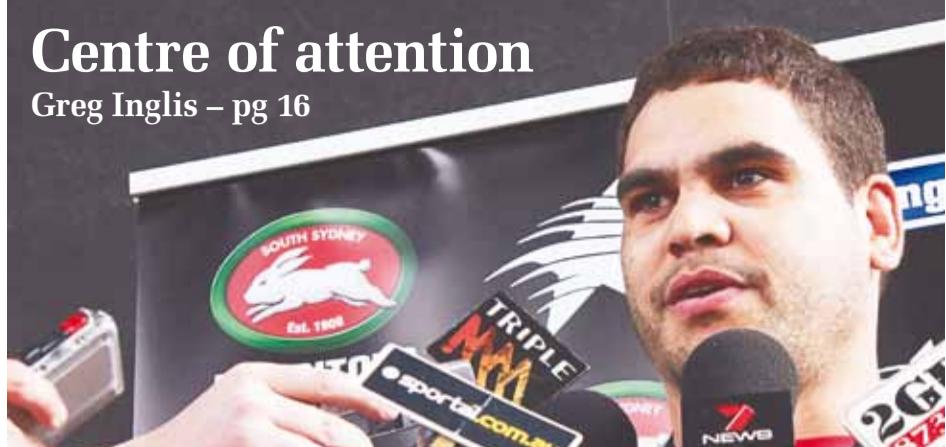




## Colour-in for a chance to win an iPod!

Kids' activity  
– pg 14



## Centre of attention

Greg Inglis – pg 16

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# the South Sydney Herald

NUMBER NINETY FEBRUARY '11 CIRCULATION 22,000 ALEXANDRIA BEACONSFIELD CHIPPENDALE DARLINGTON ERSKINEVILLE EVELEIGH GLEBE KINGS CROSS NEWTOWN REDFERN SURRY HILLS WATERLOO WOOLLOOMOOLOO ZETLAND

## ON TRACK TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE



Miriam Pepper with Newtown Climate Action members, Moira Williams, Lindsay Souter and Ingrid Dernee Photo: Ali Blogg

NICHOLAS MCCALLUM

**It's one thing to say that you support a cause. To follow through with the courage of your convictions, however, is another matter entirely. And to follow them through to the point of being arrested and facing hefty fines calls for either admiration or admonishment; depending on your point of view.**

When 77 protestors were arrested on December 5, 2010, for occupying the railway tracks that feed the Bayswater power station, near Muswellbrook in the Hunter Valley, it was declared an "un-Australian"

act by the Local Area Commander, Superintendent Des Organ.

But one of the arrested, Justin Whelan, dismissed the police officer's comments as "hyperbole" and an unwarranted involvement in the politics of the protest. "The police were under-prepared for the event," Mr Whelan said. "It was out of frustration that he made comments like that."

Mr Whelan, a member of the Paddington Uniting Church, was one of a number of protestors that took to the tracks, concerned at the lack of action from governments in tackling climate change. The tracks which were blockaded are the lifeline to Bayswater, Australia's single largest producer of

carbon pollution.

Mr Whelan believes that there is a need for more direct action and civil disobedience to ensure that Australian governments get the message. The NSW Government in particular has said that it wants to act on climate change, but they are actually expanding the state's coal-powered carbon output.

"People have become disillusioned with the government responses to climate change," Mr Whelan said.

In the wake of the floods that recently devastated Queensland, Dr Miriam Pepper of the South Sydney Uniting Church, who was also among those arrested, suggested that effects

*continued on page 2*

Sounds of dance  
were blowin' in  
the wind

PETER WHITEHEAD

If you woke in the early afternoon of New Year's Day with a rock-steady thumping in your head you were not the only one having your brain bounced in the suburbs west of Moore Park. An unseasonal breeze was blowing the drum and bass heavy sounds from Space Ibiza Festival across Surry Hills and Redfern to Darlington and Newtown.

Bill Sheridan has lived by the Redfern railyards for 20 years. When the sound hit at midday he thought it best to go out for a while. Returning at 4pm to find window frames still rattling he resolved to sort out the problem. Figuring the doof-doof racket was coming from The Block this bold old bloke headed up to recommend someone turn their speakers around. But The Block was quiet and so was Redfern Park as he pursued the sounds east.

"Where's that bloody din coming from?" Bill quizzed a police officer in the street.

Over at The Entertainment Quarter about 7,000 party people were soaking up a fine Sydney summer's day and shaking it to the sounds of our finest local DJs aided and abetted by some overseas stars of the stylus.

This second annual dance music party was the first for new management partnership Brett Smith and Paul Strange. They spent \$10,000+ on a "statement of environmental effects to accompany a development application for the temporary use of the show ring as part of a one-day music festival including the erection of temporary structures" to secure approval of application no: D/2010/1919 from the City of Sydney.

A sky-eyed Scot with an earthy burr, purrs pride in the event. The police praised the behaviour of patrons - sober and quiet, orderly as they dispersed at 10pm, many of them in the three buses supplied to shuttle revelers to an associated club in the city (as you do on a long weekend Saturday night).

An on-line review from INTHEMIX did note "the sound was superb for an outdoors event (if a little loud at times at the car

*continued on page 2*



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## Have You Heard? **THE FAST NEWS**

WITH TREVOR DAVIES

**Redfern area brand**

Geoff Turnbull of REDWatch reports: "Over the last 12 months work has been done by design company Frost to come up with a brand for the Redfern area. Roll Up Redfern, on which REDWatch is represented, has been overseeing this project with funding from the City of Sydney and the Redfern Waterloo Authority. The project has involved meetings with local people and a study of people in a 10km radius of Redfern to assess their perceptions of, and contact with, the Redfern area. This month will bring a presentation on how the Redfern brand was developed. There will also be tips on how local businesses and community organisations can use the new brand and businesses and community organisations will be encouraged to consider looking at how the new branding can be placed on their websites, leaflets, posters and other promotional material." We will have a report in our March issue on the presentation.

**Australia Post not very popular in Glebe and most of Sydney**

Australia Post is closing post offices, seemingly all over the place, including Turramurra, Woolahra and Glebe. A large demonstration in Glebe was addressed by Verity Firth, Tanya Plibersek, Clover Moore and a representative of the Chamber of Commerce. One consistent argument was that a closure of the post office will have a negative effect on the retail community in Glebe. I think Australia Post will lose this battle. Patricia Tells writes about the "Save the Post Office" campaign and takes us behind the scenes (page 6).

**Where have all the Labor supporters gone?**

Bill Parker from Victoria Street, Potts Point, asks where all the Labor supporters have gone? He was surprised when he saw an SMH poll online. The question was "How do you rate the new power sale as explained so far? The results were: Good 2%, Average 3% and a massive 95% of people described it as a dog of a deal. Bill asks, "Where all the Labor voters?" Should be an interesting election!

**Victoria Park Pool put out to tender. What next – Redfern Community Centre?**

Kelly Lane reports on the future of Victoria Park Pool (page 8). Council has decided to put the management out to tender. The reason given being that the Council has to subsidise the operation. Well, there are lots of things Councils have to subsidise. There is the Redfern Community Centre on The Block. Why not put its management out to tender? Former Glebe Youth Centre staffer, Darcy Byrne (now a Leichhardt Councillor) said to Fast News that the Pool has long

subsidised community groups and keeps prices low so that kids from places like Glebe and Redfern and Waterloo can learn to swim. Darcy believes that the community is always the loser when councils put management of their services out to tender. Shame Council!

**Housing NSW improving**

Seems to be some signs of improvement in Housing NSW – an area which could be seen as one of this State Government's worst performers. Things like the new housing in Elizabeth Street, the concierge services in Waterloo seem to be an improvement (though some people say there are problems). And finally it's good to hear that the longsuffering tenants in Joanna O'Dea Court in Camperdown are getting an upgrade. However, they can't help themselves. Fast News hears that the Department is ripping out the emergency buzzers in the elderly apartments in Matavai and Turanga. We are trying to get confirmation. I hope we are wrong.

**The skipping girl of Darlington**

For many years, people walking to Carriage Works along Wilson Street have seen the iconic skipping girl on the battered old fence. Recently a few of the residents have been concerned about the state of the panels. Are we at risk of losing the skipping girl? Brenda, a local from Darlington, told Fast News: "I live in the Foundry, an old forge and once a boot factory in Darlington; now apartments. We love the area and particularly the restorations of the Carriage Works and now the Market area. I noticed some months ago the small metal plaque at the top of the steps/ramp leading up from the market floor. It urges people to keep the noise down and, more importantly to me, has a little etching of a skipping girl. For some time I have looked at the skipping girl paintings on the old fence panels on Wilson Street leading to the market building and have what I hope will prove a good idea (relatively cheap too). It will also keep a bit of local heritage and preserve the paintings which still bring a smile to people's faces as they pass. I have taken photos today of the fence panels and you will see that graffiti is finally starting to damage them; particularly the addition of black paint outlines and tags. My idea is to remove the undamaged paintings on their corrugated iron panels (they can be replaced by other panels as has already happened in several places along the fence). The panels don't need to be tarted up just attached to the INSIDE walls of the bays of the street side of the market building. I have a photo of the inside. The walls need no prior work as anything done would detract from the look of the wall and destroy the 'heritage appeal'. Surely a very cheap method of protecting the paintings and adding their appeal to a unique environment still within metres of their original position?" That sounds a reasonable idea.



The Skipping Girl Photo: Brenda



Local resident Bill Sheridan with the offending Fox Studios Photo: Supplied by Bill Sheridan

## Sounds of dance were blowin' in the wind

continued from page 1  
park [Coachbay] Stage".

Brett Smith, a volatile fellow, also managing a gardening business and burgeoning family, stresses the importance of keeping the community happy. He concedes the Coachbay Stage setup will be different next year.

Principal acoustic engineer, Dan Dang, with two decades' experience, cannot recall complaints so distant from the Entertainment Quarter. He points out the wind was very strong and lower frequency sounds travel most persistently.

Bill Sheridan was bemused that

Mr Dang took readings to the west of his apartment building rather than on his eastern balcony.

There were 15 complaints to the Entertainment Quarter's 24-hour hotline – a high number for the EQ which is eager to placate the citizens of Centennial Park and Paddington particularly. That was part of the problem: speakers were placed to send sound west.

Space Ibiza has a five-year contract. Brett Smith and Paul Strange have learnt a lesson. Next year they won't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.

SSH

## On track to tackle climate change

continued from page 1  
of a changing climate would once again be on the minds of many Australians. "With climate change we're likely to see more severe weather events," Ms Pepper said. "It's up to all of us to demand stronger action."

Fellow arrestee, Moira Williams, from Climate Action Newtown, holds the view that the actions taken in December were justified. "We need leadership on this issue because we aren't getting it from our politicians," she said. "I think it's really important to bring these issues to light." In spite of being in similar acts of civil disobedience "a couple of times" in the past, Ms Williams holds out hope that the maximum penalty will not be handed down.

Unfortunately for the protestors, the consequences of their actions may amount to fines of \$5,500 per person. Yet that has not diminished their sense of pride.

Ms Pepper, Mr Whelan and their fellow-charged have received assistance in both monetary terms and through prayer,

but stated their desire for Australian churches to make more noise about the planet's plight.

"I don't think there is [enough comment from Australia's Churches]," Ms Pepper said. "There are supportive statements in Christian churches coming together [and] it's important that the churches come together," she said, adding that the environment is very much a moral issue and should be given more attention.

"There's a strong biblical tradition that humans do not own the earth. It's not there for human exploitation, and we see the consequences with climate change," she said. "There are notions of responsibility and the integrity of creation, which we neglect to the detriment of ourselves and other species."

"The action was very empowering," Mr Whelan said. "It was a positive experience to be on the rails with other members of the community. Civil disobedience has a long and proud tradition. In almost every sense, social change doesn't occur unless there's civil disobedience."

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## THE YOUTH OF TODAY

# *Exodus Youth show the way*



Miles Merrill (Show Me The Way) with Exodus Youth graduates Tramis Whaanga, Eli Roberts and Lawrence Lucas, and Youth Worker Jamie Bridle. Photo: Andrew Collis

YOUTH OF TODAY IS A REGULAR ARTICLE  
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## JAMIE BRIDLE

The Exodus Youth Redfern school opened its doors to students on the first day of Term 2, 2010. In the time since, Anastasia [Kyriakidis], Rebecca [Budge] and myself have created study space that has won a NAIDOC award, received community commendations, and has had regular visits ... [from] a raft of local services and groups.

2010 was a foundation year for us and the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) within which we are housed.

We have worked with 30 students in our short year despite being more or less unknown at the beginning. Of those, a third could be said to be engaged in the program in a meaningful way.

The community thus far has been very supportive of the program ... There are many people we need to thank for their

time and effort over the year. Firstly, Andrew Lines and Amrita Hobbs for the Rite Journey. The difference this program has added to the Exodus program cannot be overstated ... The TAFE collaboration has been an extraordinary boon for the students ... [and] Show Me The Way [a film production project co-ordinated by Miles Merrill] was another core activity. Thanks to the team for their tireless effort. Many thanks to everyone at Belvoir Street Theatre

for their energy and commitment. Thanks also to Flowers by Mercedes, House Ed, and everyone else who has contributed ... Special, special thanks to Vicki Crees.

Well done to all the students who put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) in an effort to improve their education over the year. Congratulations to the seven students who were the first to graduate in Redfern – in just over two terms! A top effort, no two ways about it.



**Happy New Year to our friends and neighbours. As many of you will be aware, we are planning to build a world class business school on the redeveloped Abercrombie Precinct.**

The exact area covers approximately 1.92ha and is bordered by Darlington Lane to the north, Codrington Street to the east, Abercrombie Street to the south and Darlington Public School to the west.

It is zoned for University purposes, and currently used for a variety of things such as student accommodation, teaching and learning spaces, and special education.

After our first community consultation we received many constructive comments and feedback and have taken them into consideration before lodging the application with the Department of Planning.

We will advise you when the plans are on public display and encourage you to comment. Please see [www.sydney.edu.au/abercrombie\\_precinct](http://www.sydney.edu.au/abercrombie_precinct) for further information.

You may also like to know more about the Sports and Aquatic Centre Expansion Project, which will be displayed in the Services Building Foyer, 22 Codrington St, from Wednesday 12 January.

Again we welcome your feedback and will advise you when the plans are on public display. Please see [www.sydney.edu.au/facilities/projects/sac/expansion.shtml](http://www.sydney.edu.au/facilities/projects/sac/expansion.shtml) for further information.

**Michael Spence**  
**Vice-Chancellor**

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# Council accused of double fault

BRENDAN WONG

**RUSHCUTTER'S BAY:** Rory Miles' battle for the Rushcutters Bay Tennis Centre ended last year when the former manager walked away from the business he had run for 27 years and had fought long to continue. Despite winning the tender in September, Mr Miles refused to sign the contract. He said it was due to the "onerous" conditions and restrictions of the new tender, which had changed from a traditional Lease Agreement to a Service Provider's Agreement.

"I said to the Council we'd be the first tennis centre in Australia to be under this arrangement and they basically just kept lying to us," he said. "They said other councils had done it."

The three-year tender's requirements included a ban on alcohol and cigarettes, the introduction of uniform and name tags, and tennis coaches had to be accredited with Tennis Australia in order to teach. Additionally, the tennis centre was required to complete daily maintenance reports, seek approval of the contract manager for matters relating to the centre's operations, and they were to be regularly audited by Council.

Mr Miles said the conditions would dramatically change the way his business operated. "They want to turn around and they've never run a successful business in their life and they want to tell us how to run things. That doesn't make sense. We were very happy to do all of the community work because we put in programs for the homeless and for the disabled; we had that in our tender."

The contract also included a termination of convenience, which Mr Miles said was a major problem. "It means the Council can write to the service provider and terminate the contract at any time. How can you live under that?"

In December, Lord Mayor Clover



Local residents support Rory Miles Photo: Ali Blogg

Moore MP said his refusal to sign the contract was hurting the community. "We're spending \$8.3m of ratepayers' money upgrading Rushcutters Bay tennis courts into quality facilities for the whole community. Mr Miles' refusal to sign the management contract has meant City of Sydney has had to make temporary arrangements for bookings for the centre just to keep it open and operating."

According to Mr Miles, the Council only gave him a day's notice that they would be taking over the centre.

"The next day we had to get everything out to put in storage," he said. "Why didn't they just leave us there? They put the YMCA in there which meant I had to dismiss all of our staff. The problem I have with this Council – we've always had a good rapport with all the councils in the past – is that it bullies everybody."

At a Council meeting not long after, Lord Mayor Clover Moore used her deciding vote to pass a minute allowing the caretaker's cottage – formerly occupied by Mr Miles – to be demolished, and calling for another tender to be considered.

Mr Miles said the meeting was without any notification. "The public wasn't aware otherwise we would have filled up the Town Hall again."

Community members rallied at the

caretaker's cottage to protest against its demolition. Despite this, Council went ahead with its plans and defended its decision stating that the cottage contained no heritage value and the land was not for residential use.

Greens Councillor, Irene Doutney, said she was disappointed with Council's decision. "It could have been used for some other purpose," she said. "The cottage, in a way, became emblematic of the fight for Rory and was a symbol to the community." She added that she was sad Council could not come to an agreement with Mr Miles. "I think it just showed the tendency towards corporatisation in Council's thinking where everything is run the same."

While Mr Miles has been jobless since leaving Rushcutters Bay Tennis Centre, he has been offered a number of jobs but he said he would miss the community. "When you've been there 27 years, you know the community back to front," he said. "It just worked very well. It was a very good community down there."

"I got to thank everybody for the large amount of trouble. We had 140 letters in our last tender and some people have gone to a lot of trouble." He adds: "It's very difficult to walk up the street now without being stopped four or five times by the residents."

SSH



Remembering Stickybricks (2006) – the great event by Northcott residents Photo: Ali Blogg

# Northcott celebrates 50 years

CHARMAINE JONES

**SURRY HILLS:** The big brick building sitting atop the highest point of Surry Hills is the Northcott Public Housing estate, home to approximately 900 people. In celebration of 50 years of providing homes and shelter to many hundreds of people, the Surry Hills Public Tenants Association (SHPTA) held the Northcott 50th Anniversary on December 15.

While the John Northcott building was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1963, Northcott went "live" on December 15, 1960, 50 years ago. The first tenant moved into a lower-ground floor unit in the unimaginatively named "A Block" and she and her family watched as the 14-storey highrise was built up around them. The Northcott Public Housing

estate was built as part of the NSW Housing Commission's slum clearance program and to meet the housing needs of low-income earners.

That original tenant, Dolly Wilson, is still there today. She has lost a husband since and her children have moved on into the wide world, but she still happily resides in her original flat.

The 50th Anniversary was a celebration of the many people, like Dolly and her family, who have called the place home and also of the Northcott building itself, built truly to the standard of the day; solid, dependable and ready to stand another 50 years or more.

Dolly and Shirley Joyce, another original tenant, were the guests of honour at the event with 100 other attendees, including representatives of the NSW Minister for Housing, Clover Moore MP's office, and Housing NSW.

Guests were shown a history of the building and photos of many of the faces that have passed through its doors. Alison George, who is currently writing a book about Northcott and the land upon which it stands, presented the first chapter, which covers the very first peoples to live on the hill of sand, the Gadigal people. The book will be launched later in 2011.

There was live entertainment from Barbershop Quartet, the Swish Dudes and Jukebox, provided for the day by the Alexandria Bowling Club. It was filled with songs from the 60s era for tenants and guests to bop away the afternoon.

Housing NSW also came to the party, presenting SHPTA with a \$5,000 cheque to continue the work of the volunteer run community centre, which incidentally celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2009. The centre provides a place for this unique community to come together. SSH



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**Tanya Plibersek MP**  
**Member for Sydney**

## International Year of Volunteers + 10

2011 is the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, established by the United Nations to invigorate a global spirit of volunteerism.

In February I will help launch the International Year of Volunteers + 10, an opportunity to review and celebrate progress since 2001.

As the Federal Social Inclusion Minister, I will mark this milestone by delivering a National Volunteering Strategy later in the year. It will articulate a vision for volunteering in Australia and what Government can do to foster and support it.

The streak of volunteerism in the Australian character is a typically hands-on approach to social inclusion - active citizenship responding freely to community needs.

For me, 2011 will always recall the scenes of devastation from some of the worst floods in history, particularly in Queensland where three quarters of the state has now been declared a disaster zone.

The generosity of spirit toward flood affected communities from people across the country has reconfirmed the vital role that volunteers play in Australia today, especially when times are tough. From families offering a spare bed to those joining the mammoth clean-up task, over 62,000 volunteers have bolstered the emergency response and will continue to form the backbone of the recovery effort.

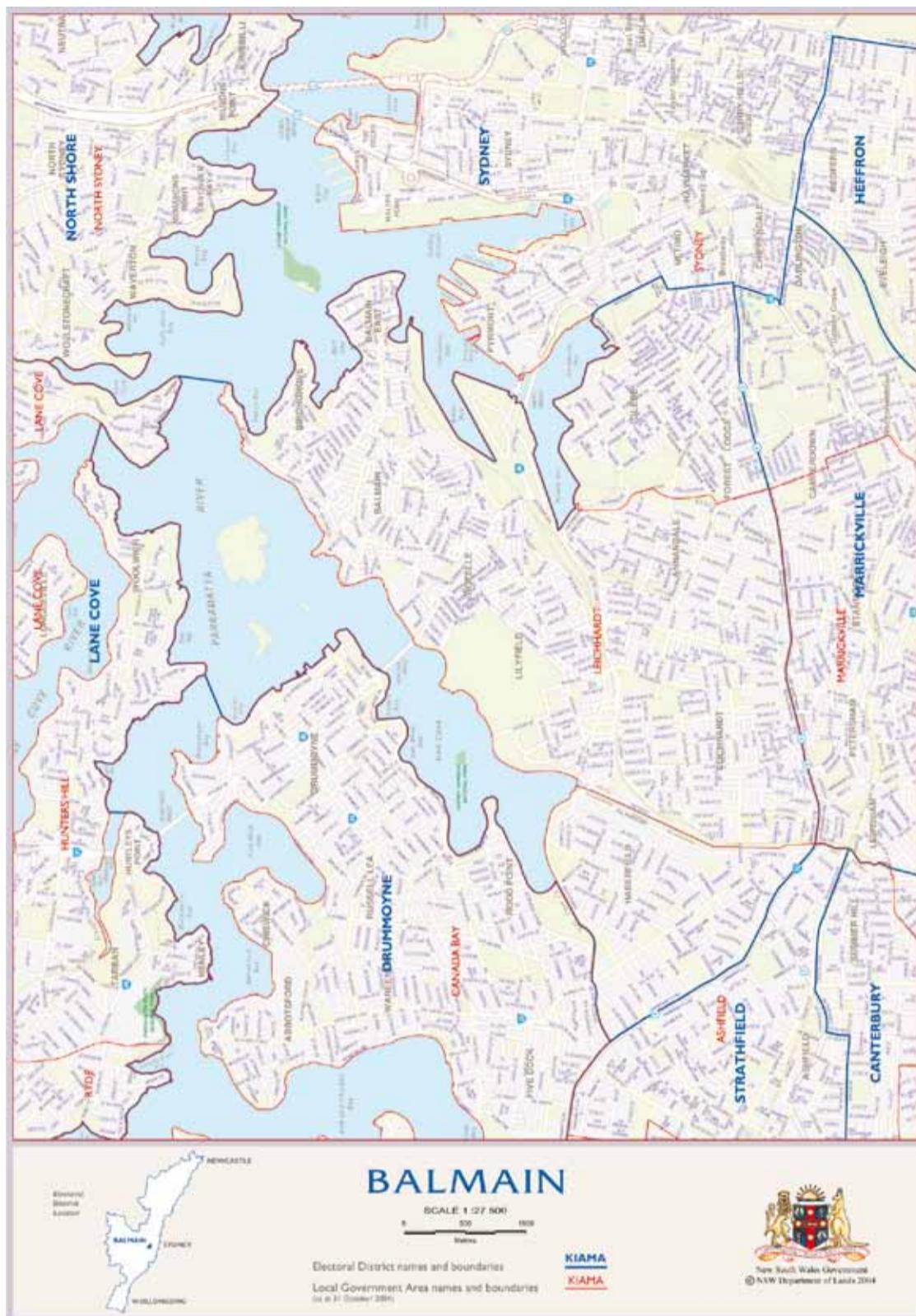
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## World-class education and social equity

*Candidate Profile: Verity Firth (ALP)*

A belief in equality, access to world-class education and social justice is the driving force behind Verity Firth's engagement with politics. This is evident in the causes that she champions and the outcomes that she has delivered for those living in her local area and across the state of NSW.

Since being elected as the Member for Balmain in 2007, Verity has worked tirelessly to represent the interests and aspirations of local residents and to improve NSW through her Ministerial roles.

She loves the vibrancy and diversity of the Inner West. She moved to Glebe as a child and continues to live there with her husband Matthew and their daughter April. "It is rare to find a group of people as active and engaged as those in the Inner West," said Verity. "It says a lot about the compassion and conviction of our neighbours that they genuinely care about local issues such as heritage, and 'bigger picture' issues like the treatment of refugees. It has been a pleasure to represent the seat of Balmain and it would be a privilege to carry on in that capacity."

Verity's proudest achievements in Government are those that result in



Verity Firth Photo: Supplied

a society that is more free and just. She credits extending the school leaving age and increased funding for disadvantaged schools as among her

proudest achievements. "Education is the great equaliser in an often unequal world," she said. "It is the job of all Labor governments to make sure

## DECISION DAY APPROACHES

The State Election is close. Elected in 1995, March 26 could see the end of the State Labor Government and, if the polls are correct, the Labor members for Balmain and Marrickville may be looking for new jobs.

In our last issue the SSH brought you a profile of the Greens Candidate for the State seat of Sydney.

In this issue, we bring you a profile of the current Member for Balmain and the Greens Candidate for Balmain.

Next issue will include a profile on the Greens Candidate for Heffron. We will also have an interview with the Premier and Opposition Leader, as well as the sitting Member for Marrickville and her Greens opponent.



Jamie Parker Photo: Supplied

## Community development, no corporate donations

*Candidate Profile: Jamie Parker (Greens)*

**Greens Candidate, Jamie Parker,** is an experienced advocate for the local community with a strong track record of improving the environment, promoting social justice and ensuring only appropriate development. He has been a consistent advocate for residents and their concerns.

His parents migrated to Australia in the late 1960s and the family quickly established a connection with Balmain, with his father taking up work as a fitter in the Balmain ship yards.

Jamie has served the community as a Councillor from Balmain on Leichhardt Council for over 10 years and is currently in his third year as Mayor. He has played an active (and successful) role in a range of campaigns such as the efforts to save Callan Park from development, to extend

the light rail and save Sydney Ferries from privatisation. During his term as Mayor, Leichhardt Council has combined record spending on infrastructure with responsible financial management.

Jamie is a firm believer in a people-friendly planning approach to development in Sydney, as opposed to the developer-driven agenda of the current government. In order to clean up NSW politics, he has also advocated an end to developer and corporate donations to political parties.

Before being elected as Mayor, Jamie owned a small business developing products for pharmacies and health food stores. He holds a Masters degree in economics. He is involved in several community organisations and is the co-coordinator of the Burma Campaign Group which seeks to promote democracy and freedom in Burma.

of these classes in legislation – protecting them for the parents and children that had campaigned for so many years.

Even as a well-respected local Member and Minister, there's little doubt that Verity will face an uphill battle in the March election, given the unpopularity of the current government. When asked about it, Verity said, "To be honest, my focus between now and the election is the same as it has been for the last four years: to listen to the community and advocate on their behalf for more equal, fair and just society."

# Locals post a protest

PATRICIA TELLIS

**GLEBE:** "Glebe Post Office is the centre of our community. I come here daily to either pick up my mail, parcels or do my banking. To me, the post office is an integral part of our community. It's such a shame that Australia Post is planning to shut this branch down without consulting the residents", says Jenny McNaughton, who has lived in Glebe for more than 33 years.

Ms McNaughton is not alone in her protest. Sofi Lidgren, shop owner, Glebe Point Road, and President of the Glebe Chamber of Commerce, echoes a similar sentiment. Ms Lidgren set up her store in Glebe four years ago and is concerned that the closure of the post office will have a huge commercial impact.

"In this tough economic climate, the closure of the post office will drive residents and shoppers away from the bustling Glebe Point Road strip into the Broadway shopping mall. The bottom-line of cafés, restaurants and small retailers who thrive on this flowing traffic will be the first to be affected by the post office closure," Ms Lidgren said.

Australia Post's decision to close down the Glebe Post Office is not the first or the last. It has also announced the closure of Turramurra, Woollahra and 24 branches across Australia, citing significant decline in customer numbers as well as the rising cost of operating the business.

In an official statement, Lanie Harris, National Media Manager, Australia Post said: "As an organisation that receives no tax payer funding we have a responsibility



Protesting outside the Glebe Post Office Photo: Andrew Collis

to remain financially self-sustainable so that Australians in cities, town and rural areas have access to postal services."

Residents of Glebe disagree with Ms Harris. They have decided to fight Australia Post's decision by setting up the Post Office Glebe Action group (POGA) which is a coalition of local groups in Glebe, including the Glebe Society, the Glebe Chamber of Commerce and Glebe Community Group.

What irks residents most about Australia Post's decision is that it was made without consulting the local community. "We were not offered the courtesy of being informed about the closure. It was only when a few post box

holders received a notice announcing the decision to shut the Glebe branch but retaining their post boxes did we learn about the closure," says Jan Wilson, co-ordinator of POGA and resident of Glebe for the past 20 years. "This post office has been in existence since 1805 and is an integral part of our community."

According to Australia Post, running individual post offices at a loss for lengthy periods jeopardises the sustainability of the whole network. There are more than 1,200 post offices in NSW alone. Harris is suggesting residents use any of the four alternative post offices located within a 1.3km radius of the Glebe Post Office including Sydney University, Broadway,

Camperdown and Pyrmont.

What Australia Post has not taken into consideration is that a majority of the Glebe residents who use the post office either belong to the nearby retirement village or are pensioners who do not have a credit card and do all their banking through the post office. For these residents, walking or travelling the 1.3km to get to the post office is not a viable option.

"With the on-going redevelopment of the Glebe area, in the coming 10 years, Glebe will be home to 8,500 additional residents. Has there been some thought put into how the government plans to cater to this increased demand?" asks Bob Armstrong, former President of the Glebe

Society and resident for the past 35 years.

Supporting the Glebe residents are some of Sydney's political bigwigs including: Tanya Plibersek, MP, Federal Member for Sydney, Verity Firth, MP, NSW Member for Balmain and Clover Moore, MP and Lord Mayor of Sydney. They have joined POGA to protest the closure and lobby on behalf of the residents.

So far, POGA has collected over 4,000 signatures. In the next few days, members of POGA are expected to meet with senior Australia Post officials and Stephen Conroy, Minister for Communications, to determine if the Glebe Post Office stays or closes down after 205 years in existence.

SSH

# Higher prices for privatised pool?

KELLY LANE

**CAMPERDOWN:** City of Sydney Council's decision to outsource the management of Victoria Park Pool has left residents and community groups concerned prices will rise under a private operator.

There are five pools within the City of Sydney and four of those are currently managed externally. Tenders will be called this year for the management of all the Council's aquatic centres including Victoria Park Pool.

A City of Sydney spokesperson said outsourcing the pool would lead to increased patronage, improved programming, better economies of scale in management and better financial return for ratepayers.

But Labor Councillor Meredith Burgmann said running a pool should be a core service of local councils. "You can have much more control over the ways in which community needs are met if you are running it yourself," Cr Burgmann said. "The whole point about outsourcing is that the company that runs it has to make a profit. So already you're charging members of the public more than you would be if the council was running it itself."

The SSH surveyed the price of entry to the pools operating in the City of Sydney. Victoria Park Pool, in Camperdown,

charges \$5 per adult and \$3.20 per concession. All other pools charge between \$5.60 and \$6.20 per adult and \$4.20 and \$4.60 per concession.

Peter Kelly, the United Services Union Organiser for the City of Sydney, consulted with the Council prior to the decision in November last year and requested a report be prepared detailing how the operations of all pools could be brought back in-house. "Councils are there to provide a service to the community and recreational facilities are one such service that they should be providing to the community," Mr Kelly said.

A report produced by the Division of Local Government found that in the 2008/09 financial year, the City of Sydney's net recreation and leisure expenses per capita were about half those of nearby councils Leichhardt, Botany Bay and North Sydney.

"So they're not spending as much on their community yet they're making twice as much as the other councils," Mr Kelly said.

Shane Brown, the Director of South Sydney Youth Services, said public pools should be a place for people and funded by local councils. "It's my belief, as a member of the pool, that the price of admission will rise dramatically if it's privatised," Mr Brown said. "The concessions that are currently available to the disadvantaged communities in the



Victoria Park Pool Photo: Ali Blagg

area, particularly in the Redfern Waterloo area, will go by the wayside and there will be no cheap access for children and young people."

Mr Brown is also a member of the now inactive community group Friends of Victoria Park Pool, which formed at the time of the amalgamation of the City of Sydney and South Sydney Councils, to ensure the pool remained in council hands. He said a group meeting will be called to discuss the decision and interested councillors may be invited.

Glebe Youth Service Coordinator, Keiran Kevans, said a price rise could exclude some of the young people the service works with. "Obviously they ... come from very low-income families so it may not take much of a price rise to make it difficult for particularly some larger families that may have five or seven children in them, to be able to afford to send their kids to the pool," Mr Kevans said.

"While I understand City of Sydney's motivation for wanting to outsource the

management of the pool, the concern is always for organisations like ours that are concerned with social justice, that it will result in higher prices that will exclude some of the city's most disadvantaged citizens."

A City of Sydney spokesperson said the Council will work with the new operator and community groups to ensure appropriate concessions continue.

Fees and charges are set by the Council each year and not the management company.

SSH



Desley Haas and her grandson Jermal feel strongly about underutilised parking space Photo: Ali Blogg

## Parking residents' concerns

WINNIE CHOO

**ALEXANDRIA:** Residents are frustrated with the parking congestion in their streets. Locals must compete for parking with workers from the Australian Technology Park (ATP) everyday.

Mr Geoffrey Turnbull, spokesperson for the resident action group, REDWatch, says that the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA), which owns the ATP, has not handled residents' concerns very well because the "ATP did not adequately look at and communicate with residents" about the ATP side of the parking problem.

Ms Desley Haas, an Alexandria resident for 15 years, says, "I look at [the parking] everyday when I walk out of that door. Two years later, I still feel angry, as I did the first time I saw it. Some of us are worn out trying to argue about it."

While parking is available at the

ATP, workers are taking advantage of the free parking in Alexandria, leaving locals to search for parking further away from their homes. They say it has become worse since Channel 7, Pacific Magazines and Global Television moved in last January.

The RWA organised a community meeting last August to present a draft parking plan and asked for public submissions. It also commissioned a parking study on adjacent streets to find suitable parking strategies for the City of Sydney Council's consideration.

The independent study, released last November, concluded that permit parking is the "best measure available to address resident's concerns".

It also showed that while there are 2,500 employees who work at the ATP, there are only 1,180 car spaces provided. ATP management provide subsidised parking for tenants for \$150 per month for outdoor parking and \$280 per month for secure underground parking.

A RWA spokesperson says that the

study has been forwarded to the City of Sydney Council for its consideration and implementation.

A spokesperson from the City of Sydney says: "We will be looking closely at the recommendations and will consult with residents on any proposed changes to improve resident parking in the area."

But residents say permit parking will not solve the problem.

Ms Haas says, "There are a number of us in the street who, for ecological reasons, don't have cars and will not get a permit."

Many submissions regarding the draft parking plan state that if a permit parking system were to be introduced provisions should be made for visitor parking permits.

The study also noted a number of submissions stated that the ATP should do more to encourage onsite parking or public transport use, rather than rely on restricting parking on surrounding streets.

"The guts of the matter is ... the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the ATP have created the problem, they're not managing the problem and they've unloaded the problem back on to us," says Ms Haas.

Mr Turnbull says: "There's been an acceleration of tensions between the community and the Technology Park with threats being made against residents, threats being made against people who work at the Technology Park and that is not a good thing to have happen ... There needs to be a full and frank discussion between the community at the ATP. The last meeting raised the issues but there was never a follow up meeting ... it was simply in terms of we've done the parking study and it's the City of Sydney's problem and it has nothing to do with us anymore."

The ATP is a Part 3A project and decisions regarding the development are made by the NSW Department of Planning. The Part 3A law allows developers to directly apply to the department rather than having to apply to local council and go through the development application process. **SSH**

## Equal pay for community workers

KATE WILLIAMSON

The substantial wage gap in the community services sector between not-for-profit and government positions has now gained recognition by Australian Governments, with changes expected to award conditions. This will mean that people working in occupations including social work, disabilities, aged care and welfare are expected to gain comparable rates of pay with equivalent positions in the public sector.

After a Queensland case awarded pay increases of 18-37 per cent to community services workers in 2009, the Australian Services Union (ASU) lodged an equal remuneration case under the federal Fair Work Act. This case, which is currently being heard, had triggered rallies.

The ASU was originally concerned that the Federal Government was backtracking, however, the union is now confident that there is support for the case and the associated funding implications. Jack Carnegie of the NSW office of the ASU recalls when the SACS award was first introduced some 10 years ago. "Once we got the award, slowly both the federal and state came round and provided the funding," he said.

Important to the case is highlighting the cultural devaluations that have existed to deny pay equity to a predominantly female work force. Mr Carnegie said: "We are arguing that had this type of work traditionally been done by men, it probably would have



Newtown Neighbourhood Centre staff, students and volunteers Photo: Ali Blogg

been paid better." Research presented in the Queensland case explained how care work has often been associated with women's mothering skills which are likely to be seen as natural and go unnoticed. It is care provided out of love, not money.

This is a cultural stigma that has attached to some professionals who have undergone extensive professional training to be able to deliver critical services. "You have people with tertiary qualifications working 38 hours a week, working face-to-face with people who for all sorts of reasons have emotional problems or are very vulnerable. They are only earning \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year, while someone in the public service is earning \$70,000 or \$80,000

a year doing basically the same work," said Mr Carnegie.

Lisa Burns of the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre fights to prove the value of the work provided by the centre. "I don't understand why we who work in the community sector are considered second class citizens when we provide comparable services," Ms Burns said. She is proud of statistics that show how nominal funding invested in services at the centre was used to place homeless people in accommodation, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in potential costs to governments for emergency and crisis accommodation.

An outcome to equal pay case before Fair Work Australia is expected by April this year.

ADVERTISEMENT



# Kristina Keneally MP

MEMBER  
FOR HEFFRON

## Heffron Community Building Partnership Grants Announced

Local organisations will share in \$500,000 in Grants from the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership Grants program.

In October, I sent local residents a survey asking for their views on which projects should be funded. Nearly 1000 residents responded.

I am proud to announce that the following Heffron Community Organisations have been awarded grants by the Community Building Partnership program for 2010:

- \$80,000 for Mascot Juniors Rugby League Football Club to renovate facilities at Mascot Oval
- \$78,668 for South Sydney Youth Services to renovate their building for a community arts centre in Redfern
- \$50,000 for the Fact Tree Youth Services to create an office space in Waterloo
- \$42,680 for the St George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Redfern to renovate the men's bathroom in the parish hall
- \$41,166 for the South East Neighbourhood Centre to build a new porch, install soft-fall material under play equipment, paint walls and purchase a dishwasher
- \$35,000 for SDN Children's Services to build a new community meeting space in Redfern
- \$26,000 for the City of Botany Bay Council to install boundary fencing at Bridget Tight Reserve and Eastlakes Reserve
- \$20,000 for the Alexandria Rovers Junior Rugby League Football Club to upgrade the electricity system to their canteen and the mobile public announcement system at Erskineville Oval
- \$16,465 for the Deli Women and Children's Centre to upgrade community centre facilities
- \$13,631 for the South East Neighbourhood Centre to install air conditioning and undertake repainting and painting at Beaconsfield
- \$13,465 for the Exodus Foundation to install air-conditioning at its Youth Centre in Redfern
- \$13,000 for Scouts Australia to replace the roof, recoat the floors and paint the interior of Alexandria Scout Hall
- \$9,982 for St Stephen's Anglican Church to upgrade its hall and kitchen in Eastlakes
- \$2,990 for St Martin's Anglican Church in Kensington for an electrical upgrade

Congratulations to all successful organisations and thank you to everyone who responded to my survey.

**Kristina Keneally MP**

Member for Heffron

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# Juveniles guilty until proven innocent?

JOSEPH CORREY

Fifty percent of the teenagers in juvenile detention are on remand, meaning they are gaoled without having been found guilty of an offence prior to the finalisation of their matter in Court. This statistic is the consequence of onerous bail conditions and amendments to the Bail Act that erode the presumption of innocence for an accused in favour of an assumption of perpetual guilt. It follows that young people who are innocent, as well as those who are guilty of offences but unlikely to receive custodial sentences, are being gaoled unnecessarily.

The punitive approach to bail is reflected in the onerous conditions attached to it. Bail conditions – such as curfews, non-association provisions and geographical exclusions – suggest it is no longer an instrument to ensure young people appear at Court, but rather is a tool to modify their behaviour.

Bail conditions criminalise normal teenage conduct, holding teenagers with behavioural problems to a much stricter standard than their peers. They are set up to fail in regard to abiding by their bail. Thus, while your son gets a slap on the wrist for coming home late or spending time with a bad influence or attending a party without your permission, a teenager on bail can be gaoled for the same deed.

Also problematic are bail conditions

that require teenagers to report to police stations on particular days because, if a teenager fails to report, a warrant is issued for their arrest. Young people will often go on the run if they fail to report once, to avoid being taken into custody, which results in them not attending places that are known to police, namely their home or school.

Breaching a bail condition is not in itself an offence, but when young people breach bail they are brought before the court for a reconsideration of bail and indeed their bail may be revoked.

While policing of bail conditions has increased the number of young people remanded, amendments to the *Bail Act* have increased the length of the time that teenagers spend on remand. The State Government has removed the presumption in favour of bail for a young person who commits a crime while on bail, regardless of the triviality of the second offence. For example, a teenager I knew spent three weeks on remand because he stole two magazines from a newsagency while on bail.

It should be noted that only 34 per cent of young people gaoled for breaching bail committed a further offence, 66 per cent were imprisoned for breaching bail conditions, most commonly their curfew.

The State Government has also amended the *Bail Act* to limit to one the number of bail applications a young person can make unless new

facts are presented to the Court. This legislative change not only precludes remanded teenagers from making subsequent bail applications but also discourages legal practitioners from applying for bail the first time a teenager is brought before the Court because they may not get a second shot when they are better prepared. Hence, young people can spend considerable time on remand before their initial bail application is made.

The State Government refuses to amend the *Bail Act* to preserve the presumption of innocence and keep teenagers out of gaol. Why? Perhaps it is government policy. A key outcome of the Government's policy towards bail, according to Attorney General John Hatzistergos, is that "bail and parole violators are more readily brought to account by authorities before offences are committed". Based on that quote, it would seem Mr Hatzistergos is either a clairvoyant or the State Government has adopted a policy of guilty until proven innocent when it comes to our kids.

**SSH will host a forum on Saturday, March 19, from 2pm at the South Sydney Uniting Church to facilitate a community consensus on the issues of juvenile justice. Who Speaks For This Child? Speakers will include Joseph Correy (lawyer), Tim Gray (musician) and George Dieter (author of *Creating Criminals Without Even Trying*, 2010). Julie McCrossin (journalist and facilitator) will MC the forum. Full details next month.**



On Survival Day (January 26) friends of the SSH enjoyed a balmy evening on the Harbour with our hosts, The Tribal Warrior Association. Cultural Officer, Terry Olsen, shared traditional Aboriginal dances and stories, "painting up" several enthusiastic passengers and initiating lively/deadly dance activity. Thanks to Terry and all at The Tribal Warrior, and thanks to friends and supporters for good wishes and generosity. Photo: Andrew Collis

# A helping hand in the first step to independence

NICHOLAS MCCALLUM

**I**t is safe to say that no man who voted at the dawn of the twentieth century for six British colonies in the South Pacific to become one nation would be alive today. Such a magnanimous yet simple history-making act, the creation of a nation, is a rare and cherished occurrence. While not many Australians would likely be given such opportunity again, it would be an honour to help others in a similar situation.

This is exactly the sentiment of Sascha Nanlohy, a student of Sydney University, who has sacrificed his time and effort to help members of Sydney's Sudanese refugee community in voting for the creation of their own independent nation. "I think that we can do a few small things and, if we can help out, then it's totally worthwhile," said the 21-year-old student.

Late in 2010, Sascha created an advocacy group with an aim of stemming aggression and acts of genocide in Africa. No small task, A Billion Little Stones, as the organisation is called, has grand aims but started with the simplest of acts, like helping the Southern Sudan Task Force by driving Southern Sudanese from railway stations to the voting centre.

"My philosophy is that, if you don't aim high, you won't achieve and we might not achieve all that we set out to do", he said in the presence of many jubilant Sudanese on an overcast but sticky Saturday morning. It was the last day of voting and over 90 per cent of the votes had already been cast. "But if we make really ambitious goals and we achieve something then it is a lot better than setting really small goals and basic goals and not getting anywhere."

For what will become the world's newest nation, the goals – and the costs of reaching them – have been high indeed. In its 55-year history, Sudan has seldom known peace. The Muslim Arabic north has oppressively dominated the mostly Christian and animist south.

"I myself have been part of the struggle since 1983 and I lost my comrades and my men", said Chol Abedengo, PR Officer for the task force who reflected on the 2.5 million southern Sudanese not able to carry their stone across the line of secession. "Today, it will come together with voting, not gun fighting, and that is very exciting. Two-and-a-half



Simon Winya (young leader in the Southern Sudanese community in Sydney and Sydney Uni student), Amy Iheakanwa (President of the African Society at Sydney Uni) and Sascha Nanlohy Photo: Andrew Collis

million [people] died and the result will mark that those who died, they died for a cause and we will honour them with the prize of separation."

The Second Civil War ended in 2005 with the announcement of the referendum for independence that was held over one week in the middle of January. It was a landslide in favour of independence. The result will be formally acknowledged on February 14, though the formal separation of Africa's largest nation will not take place until July.

"We've been waiting for 55 years, so six months is not that big a wait," said Task Force Chairman Gabriel Machar. "During this time we will be celebrating. Six months will go quickly,

like six days," he exclaimed proudly.

As the roots of the new nation take hold, Sascha will continue to voice the need for Australia to take an interest in Southern Sudan. "I think Australia and Africa are very similar, geographically, and the values of Southern Sudan which is about secularism and democracy and human rights is the same as Australia," he said, adding that other nations around the world will eagerly take an interest in the oil-rich soon-to-be nation.

"It's a bit like Australia, it has amazing natural resources," Sascha Nanlohy said, "It just needs a bit of a push."

Members of the Sudanese diaspora see Australia as a shining example

of what they hope their nation will become. General Secretary of the Task Force in NSW, James Likambo, suggested that, for a people weary of war, peace and democracy were the only way forward. "We have to understand each other, like Australia, which is a multicultural society, we should be as well," he said. "We want to do everything ... through elections and in a democratic and amicable way," he stated.

Just like Australia, Southern Sudan will be a nation created with a vote. While Sascha did not cast a ballot of his own, he took great pride in his small efforts in a history-making event. "I think this is a moment in history," he said joyously. "[In]

Sudanese history, in African history, in world history, and I'm completely honoured to be a part of it."

It was a grand first step for Sacha and his fledgling organisation, *A Billion Little Stones*, whose mission statement declares, "If we get more people to help, one by one, we will move those billion little stones. Together we can move that immovable mountain."

Although he brushes off his effort as mere "simple act", there is a strong will that will eventually, hopefully, lead to a preponderance of stones being moved.

"It's not a big thing but it means something to these people."

Being there at the birth of a nation, and all with the simple act of offering some people a lift.

SSH

## Alcohol-fueled violence – whose responsibility?

JONATHAN BOGAIS

**C**ommon arguments from the mouths of those who want extended drinking hours is that young people must be able to enjoy themselves freely and that the opponents of this freedom are out of touch with modern realities.

There are mounting concerns relating to alcohol-fuelled violence taking place across the city. Long time residents in Kings Cross have seen violence escalating over the last five years after an increase in venues operating in the area, and its gaining popularity for young people.

It all sounds uncannily familiar to Sydney residents. Government responses to NSW's "shocking" rise in binge-drinking and alcoholism

have ranged from the non-existent to the ineffectual. The City of Sydney's new development plans that were to take effect last November were proposed as a way to encourage venue management to act more responsibly. Instead, it provoked a scare campaign launched by those who seek to benefit most from the escalation of alcohol consumption – the publicans. After pressure by the Australian Hotels Association, Planning Minister, Tony Kelly, vetoed the new regulations saying that it created too much uncertainty. In making this decision, he ignored much of the material gathered by Council from concerned doctors and nurses who are on the receiving end of emergency admissions.

The campaign supported by the AHA relied heavily on postings made on the "nannastate" website. According to the

AHA, more than 2,000 people were in support of extended hours.

At the same time, a well-known Sydney radio broadcaster described Sydney Lord Mayor, Clover Moore, as an "old witch" using his breakfast show to launch a virulent attack against her, and challenged her right to tell young people how to run their lives.

That media personalities use the airways to challenge politicians is a testimony to freedom of the press, a right we all support; but when the personality in question is in blatant conflict of interest for also owning financial interests in one of the drinking establishments criticised by the Lord Mayor, it makes a mockery of this fundamental right. How can a radio broadcaster with a financial interest in a drinking establishment use his program targeting mostly a

young audience to sell his message endorsing alcohol consumption? How can a minister with a duty of care for the community, especially young people, fall under the pressure of an organisation created to protect the interests of hoteliers?

Rev. Herbert is the Executive Director of UnitingCare ACT, which has been faced with the social consequences of drug and alcohol. He told the SSH that he sees another social crisis in the making with the rapidly increasing alcohol consumption in the streets by young people. He said: "Binge-drinking is a bigger social problem than illicit drug-taking. Hotel owners who profit from the sale of alcohol should have more responsibility, not just in their hotels but also in the street beside where they are. I don't think the rest of the community should be responsible

for the problems created by those who own the hotels."

It is a situation mirrored in the NSW Government, where a minister can so easily bend to the pressure of a large lobby group. Ironically, it was the same minister, Tony Kelly MP, who criticised Eric Roozenaald MP, Minister for Ports & Waterways, for his role in granting jetty leases to wealthy waterfront property owners, an issue that attracted much controversy late last year.

Where are the watchdog organisations that should investigate the breaches of ethical responsibilities by government ministers and media personalities?

Are mates more important than the community? As a change of government is looming, it is time for the new comers to adopt a fresh approach to political and social accountability. **SSH**



## EDITORIAL

SSH

**O**n Survival Day (Australia Day) our friends at the Tribal Warrior hosted an Indigenous harbour cruise and fundraiser for the SSH. Cultural Officer Terry Olsen was the consummate tour guide, sharing traditional Aboriginal stories and dances (no mean feat dancing on a rocking boat!). Guests on board

were from various cultural backgrounds and several chose to be "painted up" by Terry. Much dancing ensued. In the wake of another Australia Day - this year understandably focused on victims of floods in Queensland and Victoria - what a joy to reflect on a genuine cultural exchange. Guests of The Tribal Warrior, most of them first-time guests, experienced first-hand the graciousness, strength and resilience of Indigenous culture. They experienced something of Survival Day.

And they had fun. Again, we are inundated with talk about the "Aussie spirit" and proposals for a new national flag. Again, there is a preponderance of "white battler" iconography. When Second Peoples can stand honestly in reconciliation with First Peoples in our country - there will be no mature nationhood without that happening - a spirit of unity will enable deeper talk about a republic, and we'll have little trouble deciding on a design for our new flag.

SSH

## COMMENT

## Why vote Greens in 2011?

IRENE DOUTNEY

**I**n March this year we will face another State election in which our choices will be between a failed Labor Government and a vague Liberal Opposition, neither of which give voters any cause for hope of real change from a corrupt and selfish political system.

The Kenealy Government has made some appalling decisions in the last month, and throughout its time in power, from granting permission for a private hotel in the harbour at Barangaroo to shutting down Parliament to avoid scrutiny of the sell-off of our electricity assets. Their use and abuse of Part 3A of the Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (a law they enacted with support from the Liberal party) has been legendary and allowed many unpopular developments to proceed against community wishes.

This is a government that supports the highly controversial coal seam gas exploration in St Peters and in our farmland.

The Labor team that will face this election is full of unknowns after mass resignations by members of the current State Government. It offers a party in chaos with an abysmal track record.

The O'Farrell Opposition has made a lot of hot-air promises but beneath it all is a party dedicated to supporting big business and the neoliberal system. In reality it offers no substantial reforms to how government operates. Mr O'Farrell's pronouncements change from day to day according to what will make a good headline and have no real substance or coherent plan.

There is one party, however, which does offer change and far-reaching reform - the Greens. The Greens are fast becoming a force to be reckoned with in the face of failure by the major parties and in many seats the Greens are

overtaking them as the main opposition.

Unlike the two major parties the Greens are not beholden to the big end of town and have a strict donation policy that keeps them free of interference by those with vested interests. The Greens have fought tirelessly to oppose the use of Part 3A to force overdevelopment on communities and vandalise our precious natural environments.

The Greens are becoming a major force through their commitment to supporting community campaigns against greedy developers and outrageous government decisions. When communities across NSW have concerns it is the Greens they approach for help, knowing that the major parties are too concerned with their own grasp on power to fight for the rights of residents and ordinary voters.

For those who care about their communities, the environment and social justice there is no great question about why to vote Green - there is no alternative.

SSH

## COMMENT

## Cutting off our nose to spite our face

MATTHEW GILLILAND

**L**et's not mince words: I'm as over this Government as much as the next person. I'm a "true believer" - a diehard adherent of equality, of fairness at work and in the home, of the power of the community. I believe that government can make the lives of ordinary people - you and me - better. I'm Labor, through and through.

My Government, and my party, have embarrassed me. On as many issues as you can name, the past four years have been a shallow, faithless exercise in the self-aggrandisement of countless apparatchiks and back-room heavies at the expense of good policy. Instead

of focussing on fixing problems, on making real investments in our state, State Labor's sole objective has been to just make it through.

I'm not proud of my party - not at all. The issue with my despondence is the cost may be too great. Even at the last election, my friends re-engineered our campaign slogan, "Heading in the right direction", into something substantially more accurate: "Heading in the wrong direction - just slower than the Liberals."

I think this holds true today. I'm not going to paint you a detailed scare campaign about core Tory ideology - that you are worth as much as your bank account. I also don't believe many people genuinely believe Barry O'Farrell will make a better Premier, or that the

Liberals will be better for NSW.

People just assume that they can't be worse than Labor.

Really?

Consider the question: are you truly prepared to give the conservatives an unlimited mandate? No policies for which they can be held accountable. Everything they do in government will be legitimate. *Everything*.

Consider the alternative: voting Green. I sympathise with the Greens on many levels, and understand the temptation to vote for them, but I can't condone it. Apart from the fact that they are not in the slightest way practical - a somewhat necessary quality in a Government whose entire responsibility is to provide services and infrastructure - a vote for

## FAITH

## Facing the floods

DOROTHY MCRAE-MCMAHON

A week or so after the floods in Queensland had been at their worst, the Uniting Churches up there sent those of us in the south the following prayers:

## WE CRY OUT TO GOD

God of all creation, hear our prayer. From the eye of the storm we call to you.

Our hearts are weary and we are weary and we are frightened. O God of creative power, we call out to you as creation groans around us.

## THE LAMENT

As rivers roar to life, claiming all in their pathway, we cry out to you for help. Are you listening to us, God?

O God of calm waters, we cry out to you as we walk through the floodwaters.

As water stakes its ownership on our towns, sitting, waiting, insidiously mocking our possessions: Are you walking with us God?

O God, who walked the earth, we weep for those among us who have lost everything.

As they try to reclaim their lives, broken and demolished in spirit, exhausted and overwhelmed: Are you weeping with us God?

O God, of wisdom and justice, we struggle to understand the force of nature.

Do you have the answers God?

Do you have the energy?

Do you have the resilience?

We need you God.

We need you ...

Where are you God?

## THE ASSURANCE

God says "I am with you always ... in the people who care, the emergency services,

The people who risk their lives to help strangers, in neighbours helping each other, in dry, safe places to stay in the tough work of cleaning up.

God, we see water everywhere, but we see your presence too ... We see you everywhere.

Thanks be to you, O God.

Of course, as when there have been bushfires, droughts, earthquakes and cyclones anywhere, we are all justified in crying out to our God, alongside others who weep and protest. There are always a few fundamentalists who see such disasters as some sort of punishment - often scapegoating a group with whom they disagree as the wicked sinners who drew the wrath of God upon others. One would have to ask what sort of God would punish so many people for the supposed sins of a minority? If you were a loving parent, would you do that to your children?

The reality is that none of us can ever really know how to interpret such calamities. Some of us would believe that the universe is set free by its Maker, just as we are, and that, even if the earth has a different sort of consciousness than that of human beings, it feels and reacts as it chooses. In all of history, there have been natural events which

destroy people and places. Are they more extreme now? Maybe. Perhaps the way we treat the environment is bringing its own response upon us.

Quite apart from the questions which lie in all our hearts as we look upon the suffering and struggling around us, there are ethical issues which have appeared in our responses to this challenge.

As soon as the dimensions of the floods in Queensland became apparent, let alone those in Victoria and Tasmania, there were numbers of letters to editors of daily papers which suggested that this was the time to cease all international aid and look after ourselves. The "land of the fair go" became, or maybe always was for some, the only place that deserved support.

This view of life and the world has, of course, long been enhanced by media coverage which gives headlines about international disasters for a day or two and then moves on. How many people have seen information about the continuing earthquake shocks in Christchurch, New Zealand - which continue to this day? Who knows what is still happening to the victims of the terrible floods in Pakistan? Which of us realised at all that there were destructive floods in Sri Lanka, until well after they began, and how many of us have donated to relief funds for the people affected by floods in Brazil?

Could it be that tragedies, here and around the world, can affect us in varying ways? The events may make us close ranks and turn all our lives inwards. No-one else deserves our attention or support, because we come first and may need to store up resources for ourselves in case we need them in the future. Our concept of human community is strictly localised. In some ways this response is understandable - family comes first, as they say, and because we can see close at hand the suffering and need involved, our hearts are moved to respond in ways which we may not otherwise have done.

However, could there be a grander dream of human life than that? What if our hope is to be part of the creation of a world that is truly global in its life together? We assume these days, with international economic connections, more and more travel across the globe and all sorts of public and personal media resources, that human life crosses all sorts of previously held boundaries and limitations. Maybe there always should have been a sense of human community across the planet, but now we know that we could achieve that if we choose, complex and difficult though that may be.

What if the floods here so moved and concerned us that we recognised, in new ways, what happens to others when they go through such disasters? When we hear of a cyclone, a fire or a flood somewhere else, could our hearts be touched in a new way, because we have seen close at hand what that might mean? We could even realise that such a disaster has happened in a country which has far fewer resources than we do with which to respond and care for its people and thus needs extra support from others.

It is indeed a dream, but as a person of faith, I believe that dreams are possible. I also believe that we are called to live in just and compassionate community across the whole world, and that as we're prepared to do that, we glimpse heaven on earth.

for change. The next four years will be regeneration, regardless of the election's outcome.

When you go to vote, make sure you're comfortable with your answer to this question: Are you sure your vote won't cut off your nose to spite your face?

SSH

# Cat Power

## Bare & bluesy

SARAH KELLY

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE  
JANUARY 30TH 2011

Much has been made of Chan Marshall (otherwise known as Cat Power) and her battle with alcoholism and subsequent odd behaviour on stage. She is known for abruptly stopping songs midway through, for leaving the stage in tears, or for playing desperately long sets. Cat Power is also known for possessing an astonishing voice. She seems at times to bare her soul and impart raw emotion to her listeners. She is a fragile and very charming performer, though calling her a "performer" might be a bit of a misnomer: she often comes across a very goofy kid who loves her audience as much as they love her.

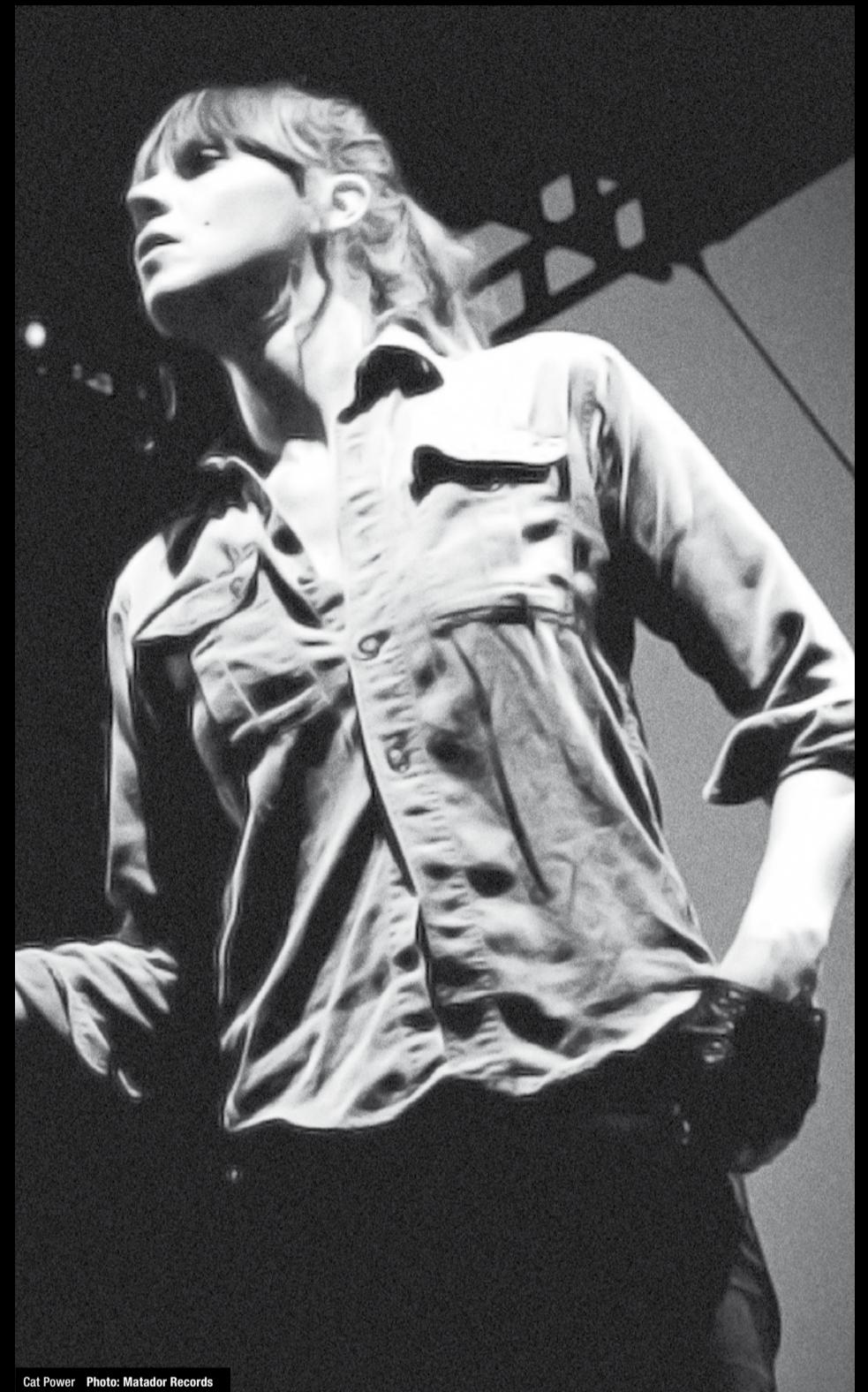
To those who adored her on-edge performances and unpredictability, fear not. As sober as Chan Marshall may now be, she is certainly still a kook. While she completes all the songs she starts (although she gave us a scare when she stopped halfway through a gorgeous rendition of her heart-rending song, "Good Woman", to change the settings of her amp), she is still beset by awkwardness and anxiousness, though there is now a playfulness about her too. She's happy to be on stage despite her comment, "Are you guys real nervous to be here?"

Under the shell-like ceiling of the Opera House, Chan shyly comes forward and undertakes a very cute bow, which immediately sends the crowd wild. She starts with her rendition of the Rolling Stones song, "Satisfaction". It bears little resemblance to the original. It is slowed way down, sparse, and haunting. Chan's beautiful, whiskey-and-cigarettes voice fills the space. She stands, playing the Danelectro electric guitar she's been carting around the world with her for years. This followed by the aforementioned "Good Woman" during which her backing band, The Dirty Delta Blues Band, joins Chan on stage.

What follows is a selection of covers and originals, all slow, all sparse. Notable is the sweet "Song To Bobby", written for none other than Bob Dylan, and "The Greatest".

Chan's performance of this track, in particular, reminds me of the old Cat Power. She plays the song that many in the crowd want to hear, but she does it her way. It doesn't sound even remotely like the album version (recorded with Nashville session musicians); instead it is slowed down to a funereal pace. The band plays in that vein, like a dirge, and Chan sings her heart out, facing away from her audience. It is brilliant, if unrecognisable.

From indie darling with a bad reputation, to a soul-singing professional, the contrast is stark. But Cat Power is still telling it how she sees and feels it.



Cat Power Photo: Matador Records



## Innocent Arctic

SSH

Sydney-based Emma Rowan-Kelly is a photographer on the rise with compelling visual stories

to tell. In the last 12 years she has traveled to over 80 countries, recording thousands of images.

This stunning debut collection

of large-scale photographs from the High Arctic features glaciers, icescapes and portraits of the many creatures that inhabit this hauntingly beautiful wilderness – the very same

locale that inspired Hans Christian Andersen to pen *The Snow Queen*.

The High Arctic archipelago of Svalbard is astonishing. It is a landscape where humanity is the rarest of species and much is yet to be discovered. The 24-hour daylight changes ever so subtly with soft pastel colours highlighting impossibly perfect reflections and vanishing horizons; shattered glacial "ice diamonds" flow into deep fiords; and the midnight sun is revealed.

Then there are the animals, managing to make this magnificently hostile landscape look so comfortable: polar bears play roly-poly down ice "meadows", seals relax on icy banana lounges with a look of superb contentment and walruses stretch out on glacial sofas. Is this some kind of snowy Utopia? Emma Rowan-Kelly has captured an *innocent arctic* playground, oblivious to its plight.

Traveling on the boutique adventure ship, The National Geographic Explorer, photographing alongside *National Geographic* photographers and surrounded by knowledgeable naturalists, the

experience was inspirational.

Emma Rowan-Kelly is a courageous explorer fascinated by the path less traveled. She has many more visual tales to tell, with further plans to exhibit collections from Bhutan, Iran and Central America.

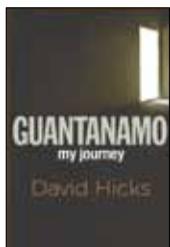
This is an important photographic record of an increasingly fragile place. It is a stunning collection of fine art photographs. Curated by Sandy Edwards, artistic director of AR THERE.

A percentage of proceeds from sales will go to the World Wildlife Fund Australia (WWF - Australia) "Adopt a polar bear" program: helping save as many polar bears as possible.

*Innocent Arctic Photographs*  
by Emma Rowan-Kelly  
*A Magical Expedition to the Land of the Ice Bears...*  
February 22 - March 5  
Depot II Gallery, 2 Danks Street  
Waterloo, Sydney NSW 2017  
OPEN: Tue-Sat 10am-6pm  
COST: Free

# The Reviews

## Book Reviews by Margaret Vazey



### Guantanamo - My Journey

**David Hicks**

**William Heinemann,  
Random House, Australia, 2010**

*Guantanamo - My Journey* can be read as a morality tale: this is what can happen when you venture into a foreign country which is in the middle of a civil war and you do not have a passport, a visa, a mentor, or friends, or money, or a language to negotiate with; also you do not look like a local.

You are in the area where angels fear to tread.

If you are very unlucky you will probably end up dead, if you are less unlucky you will most likely find yourself in some sort of trouble. If the most powerful country in the world, the USA, has declared war on this country, and has offered a handsome reward for the capture of any suspicious-looking characters, your bewildered self will be promptly frog-marched to the nearest cash-for-like-looking-terrorists post.

Apparently this is what happened to David Hicks.

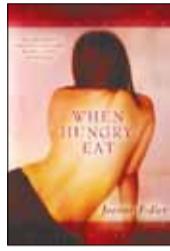
The first half of his book explains how he got to this unfortunate point in his life. Growing up, at high school, he was an indifferent student. He left school when barely fifteen, eventually training and working as a jackaroo on outback stations. This led to a stint of training horses in the winter months in Japan. Here, through the TV news channels, he became aware of the plight of the Albanian people in Kosovo. He resolved to join the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) so he could help these people. As soon as his contract in Japan was up, he made his way to a KLA training camp in Albania, from where he was sent to a KLA camp in Kosovo, under NATO command. Shortly after this the conflict ended. As the KLA had agreed with NATO, all foreign volunteers were then sent back to their home countries.

Back in Adelaide, he tried to join the Australian Defence Force, but was rejected because he had not got his Year 10 School Certificate. He had enjoyed his military training, enjoyed travelling, and wanted further adventures, so he visited the local mosque to ask why the Albanians had been the target of persecution, and whether there were any other groups suffering ethnic cleansing who could use his services, or another liberation

army wanting volunteers. This led him to Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan: to being in the wrong place, on the wrong side, and definitely at the wrong time.

The second half of the book is the record of how he survived nearly six years of the disgraceful treatment designed for suspected (but not proven) terrorists. His stoicism was heroic: how else could he have survived such treatment and lived to tell the tale!

This book should be compulsory reading for all young men who do not think hard enough about the consequences of their actions.



### When Hungry Eat

**Joanne Fedler**

**Allan & Unwin, 2010**

Witty and sharp, Joanne Fedler shows us how an exacting and frustrating weight loss plan may turn into a quest for identity. In eating less, Joanne found the joys of tasting more. In recognising that eating is a way of comforting oneself, she analyses why she is so desperately in need of such pampering. In her case, the culture shock she experienced by migrating to Australia from South Africa, was the trigger for over-eating.

In getting rid of those extra kilos, she started to wonder why we carry so much extra baggage around with us, why we hoard stuff to the point where our houses are so cluttered that we cannot find what we want, why we collect so much stuff when we do not really need it.

As she shed unwanted body fat, she was able to recognise the hurts and difficulties that she was still holding, and hiding, in her heart, which needed to be brought in to a fierce and honest light. Finally she was able to forgive those she never thought she could forgive.

As she shed kilos, she became more generous, more revealing, especially about the comfort of her own religion (Judaism), and the problem of being isolated when bringing up small children. I found myself pondering about my own culture, and about tribalism. We can understand how comforting it is to belong to a sharply defined group, but also, how exclusive.

This thoughtful book gives us a very honest down-to-earth account of one woman's life journey as she unburdened herself and gained wisdom. It is a delightful read.

(I borrowed this book from the Bowen Library, Randwick. Try the Interlibrary Loan System if your own library does not have it.)

» [books@ssh.com.au](mailto:books@ssh.com.au)

## Theatre Review by Jane Barton



**Powerplant**  
**Festival of Sydney**  
**Chinese Gardens, Chinatown**  
**Artists: Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Kirsten Reynolds, Ulf Pederson**

*Powerplant* is a site-specific kinetic and sound sculpture experience that transforms the Chinese Gardens into a dreamy netherworld. Five artists, under the watchful eye of Mark Anderson, have colonised the space and created environments that are separate but maintain a dialogue with each other. Noise from competing sites spills from the dark recesses of the Gardens as the audience, released onto the trail in timed blocks, wander through an eerie and peculiar sound and landscape. Light shoots forth from trees casting gnarled shadows, layered patterns of textured sound from old gramophones spins hauntingly to produce hissing and rushing sounds; fake fireflies flicker through branches.

Old lampshades and empty frocks hang among the undergrowth with an accompanying whisper-voiced soundtrack. Then comes a neon forest and a water sculpture garden full of spinning pin wheel electric flowers, reflections bouncing off the water and wet rocks. In this space, a subtle mind-bending occurs as the viewer/participant wanders in the darkness with senses heightened and perception stretched and warped to accommodate the unusual sensory stimulation. There isn't anything shocking or violent about this meander through the darkened gardens, rather an evocation of certain emotions; nostalgia, longing, childhood games. The formal pathways of the Chinese Garden wend their way up and down uneven terrain, over bridges, through undergrowth, past water features transformed by the installations. Eventually you arrive in the bar to experience the unusual highlights – a choreographed fire show shooting flames up over the koi pond and the even more intriguing visuals provided by the large projected image of snails fornicating in a brass bowl, a Rorschach inspired test of perception raising. Along the way an animated conversation about the fate of the snails

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This thoughtful book gives us a very honest down-to-earth account of one woman's life journey as she unburdened herself and gained wisdom. It is a delightful read.

and the ethical implications of snail snuff porn. What better way to spend a balmy festival evening? Flat shoes are recommended, children likely to be captivated. Open every night of the Festival until 10.15pm, tickets \$12.00, located in the heart of Chinatown.

» [theatre@ssh.com.au](mailto:theatre@ssh.com.au)

## Film Review by Lindsay Cohen



**Catfish**  
**Directors: Ariel Schulman, Henry Joost**  
**Starring: Yaniv Schulman**  
**Genre: Sorry, can't tell you that**

As a movie critic, when I'm invited to a screening of a film where I am requested to not give away the twist my bullshit detector is put on high alert. But damn it, I'm also then so curious about what the twist may be that I can't help but to want to go along and see what the fuss is about.

So it was with the documentary

*Catfish*, a few months in the life of Nev Schulman. Nev is a photographer and a very good one, and when an 8-year-old girl starts painting his photographs his brother and mate decide to start filming the friendship that develops as a result between Nev and the girl's sister.

What starts off via Facebook quickly develops into a full-blown distant relationship of dirty phonecalls and fantastic potential. But all is not as it seems.

Now while I shouldn't tell you why that is, there's nothing to stop me giving away the ending! But let's just say this isn't a tale of horror or an exploration of humanity's darker side. There is no *Crying Game* moment or *Blair Witch* pseudo-reality experience which given the promotion of the film you might expect.

The true reality experience is more banal. That's not to say that *Catfish* is a poor film or that the characters involved are uninteresting. It's more that they are a little sad and a bit pathetic. In other words, very normal.

That's ultimately the message of *Catfish*: normal people are capable of incredible good but also can get caught in cycles of depression, desire and hope, much of it unfulfilled. That, and be careful who your "friends" are, especially if they're on Facebook.

Rating: Three anti-social networks.

» [film@ssh.com.au](mailto:film@ssh.com.au)

## Indonesian & Aussie classics



**SCOTT WINTER**

Every now and then, while out on my dining discoveries, I find restaurants that have that certain sense of "place". The Saucepan Cafe & Restaurant gave me not just this, but also a down-to-earth sense of dual nationality. All the Indonesian and Aussie classics rolled into one.

Ayam Bakar (Indonesian style char-grilled chicken), Sate Ayam (chicken skewers with peanut sauce), Rendang (Indonesian spicy beef curry). Alongside the true-blue champions – beer battered fish and chips, rib-eye steaks and salads. And who couldn't feel at home with veal cutlets, steamed vegetables, mashed potato and mushroom sauce/pepper sauce?

Most good Indonesian chefs, like the Saucepan's very own Rusmanto Sudarno, are experts at creating dishes that make you feel as though you have taken just one step outside of their mother's home kitchen. The decor is unfussy and an open-plan invitation to all on Abercrombie Street and the exiting patrons of Glengarry Castle



Hotel opposite to come inside and realise that this area of Darlington does deserve a second thought.

This area, thanks to the introduction of the Saucepan, is becoming quite the cultural gourmet destination. It's no longer famous simply for offering visitors and residents kebabs and chips.

Average Meal Price \$27 (based on one entree & main course only).

Breakfast \$5-\$16.

The Saucepan Café & Restaurant  
Shop 5-6, 245-249 Abercrombie St  
Darlington NSW 2008  
(02) 9699 9875  
[www.bestrestaurants.com.au](http://www.bestrestaurants.com.au)

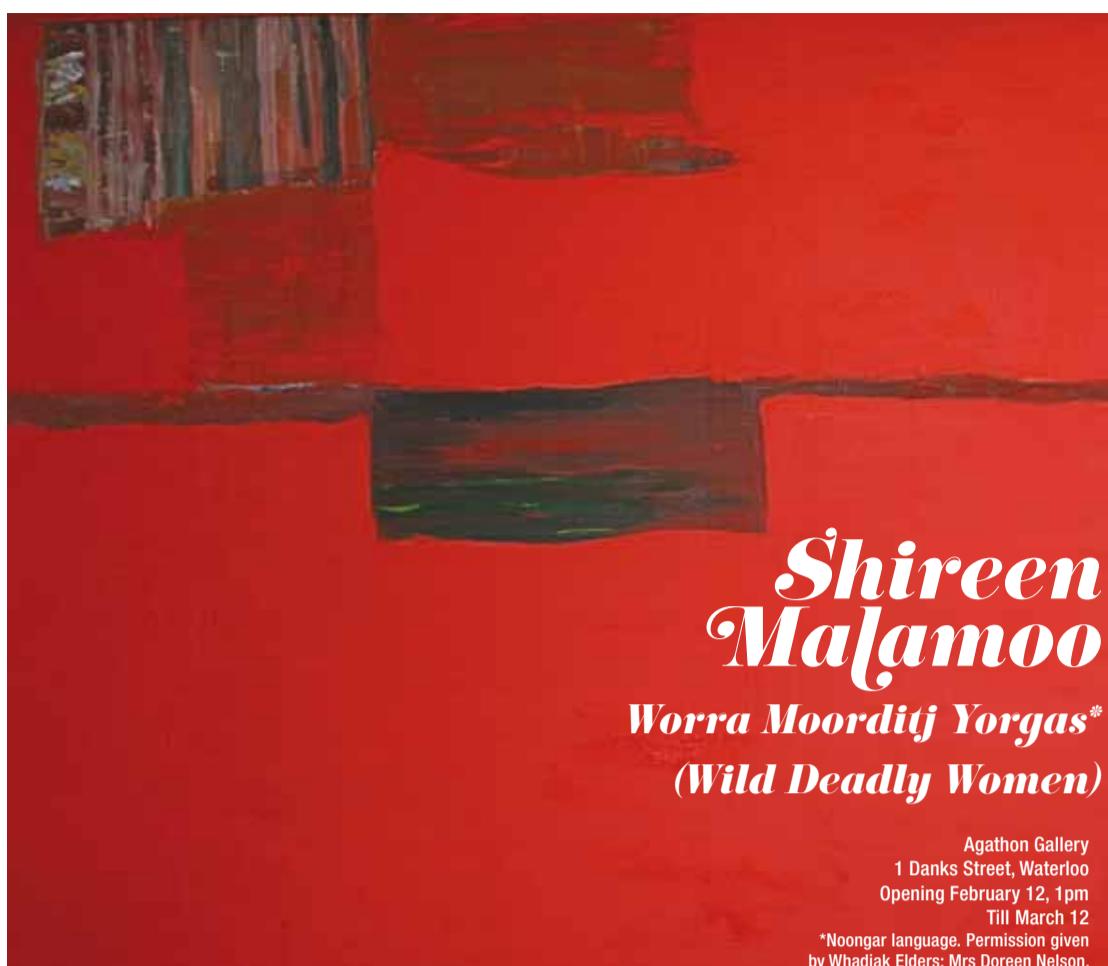


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Shireen Malamoo, "Blood and Destiny", 2011, oil on canvas Photo: Andrew Collis

## Shireen Malamoo

### Worra Moorditj Yorgas\* (Wild Deadly Women)

Agathon Gallery  
1 Danks Street, Waterloo  
Opening February 12, 1pm  
Till March 12

\*Noongar language. Permission given by Whadjak Elders: Mrs Doreen Nelson, Mrs Glenys Yarran, Mrs Gloria Bennell.

## Dress up, help unlock sex trafficking

SSH

Somaly Mam is the co-founder of Agir pour les Femmes en Situation Precaire (AFESIP), a Cambodian NGO dedicated to combating child sex trafficking, and she is also the president of the Somaly Mam Foundation. Somaly herself was sold into the sex trade at a young age. She is now recognised as one of *Time* magazine's top 100 most influential people (2009) and has many big name supporters. She has helped to save over 4,500 women and children from slavery in South East Asia. Her heart-wrenching autobiography, *The Road of Lost Innocence* (Virago Press), has been widely hailed as inspirational.

On a cycling trip to Cambodia in 2007, 24-year-old Stephanie Lorenzo read Somaly Mam's book. The story opened her eyes to the devastating issue of sex trafficking. In March 2009 Stephanie decided to organise a charity bike ride across Cambodia which raised US\$79,000 for the Somaly Mam Foundation. After meeting survivors of sex trafficking and hearing their stories, Stephanie established Project Futures Ltd with a team of like-minded, enthusiastic, creative and committed individuals. The team members work full-time in their respective professions and use their own time, funds and networks to run the organisation.

"I want Project Futures to revolutionise attitudes and provide an outlet for young people everywhere to get involved in activities that will ultimately motivate an internal positive change. I hope through our vision more people from our generation are able to think outside themselves," Stephanie says.

Project Futures has already raised over AUD\$300,000 through



Somaly Mam Photo: Supplied

charity cycle rides in Cambodia and fundraising events in Sydney, all of which has been donated to the Somaly Mam Foundation. Through annual cycle rides, events, media outlets, video campaigns and school presentations, Project Futures is successfully raising awareness and funding to stop this human rights violation.

Somaly Mam is in Australia to endorse the Project Futures Goes Global campaign.

Celebrate the global launch of Project Futures as it expands to New York in partnership with the Somaly Mam Foundation. This is a night to dress up and enjoy, knowing you are helping young Cambodian girls have a chance of a new life.

*Cocktail Party -*

*"Project Futures Goes Global"*

Thursday February 24, 6.30-9.30pm  
The Vault Hotel,  
122 Pitt Street, Sydney  
Cost: \$60 per person includes canapés, wine/beer and Special Guest

### KEY FACTS ON SEX TRAFFICKING

(SOURCES: US State Department; UNICEF; UN Office of Drugs & Crime)

- Sex trafficking is a widespread, global issue.
- 2-4 million young women and children will be sold in the sex trade in the next year.
- Many of these children are sold for as little as \$10 and some are as young as 5 years old.
- Human trafficking is the second largest organised crime in the world. That means more people profit from trafficking children for sex than smuggling drugs.
- Profits from sex slavery exceed US\$9.5 billion per year.
- Human trafficking victims are subject to rape, torture, forced abortions, starvation and threats to family members.

entertainment (to be announced). Tickets through Moshtix online [www.moshtix.com.au](http://www.moshtix.com.au) OR by phone 1300 GET TIX (438 849) [www.projectfutures.com](http://www.projectfutures.com)



Charlotte Dibben, detail from "Transcription Of Allori's Pile of Drowned Men", 2010, oil on canvas Photo: Supplied

## Art teachers' best in show

SSH

Andrew Collis (parish minister) offered a "personal and slightly pastoral riff" on the theme of the current group exhibition at the Orchard Gallery: the pet projects and passions of the five teachers who lead art classes each month at the South Sydney Uniting Church in Waterloo.

"As far back as I can remember I've loved art and religion – my own pet passions. And I've long been wary of mediocrity in art and religion – lazy, merely illustrative, emotive or derivative art and religion. In my childhood experience (at its worst) religion was reduced to ideology (zealous, socially conservative, gnostic) and art was reduced to promotion of ideology. For a long time I felt frustrated and/or embarrassed about my passions. I didn't fit in.

"At some point there was an epiphany. It had something to do with poetry (a lot to do with poetry) and life's sheer beauty. It had something to do with truth embodied (that was crucial) and shot through with mystery – a spiritual materialism.

"In his artist statement Johnny Bell speaks of a 'crazy' love for all people. Charlotte Dibben's work, 'Transcription Of Allori's Pile of Drowned Men' examines 'divergences

in values between ... artistic and social contexts'. The intimate prints of Hayley Megan French bear witness to a pet passion for abstraction, the 'beginning of consciousness ...'. Adrian Spry's passion is romantic, born of the moment. Jo Tracy speaks of an abiding interest in 'science, art, spirituality and culture'.

"This show is exciting because our five artists are passionate practitioners. They teach by creative example. They engage, experiment, explore. They mean it. This show is exciting because there's nothing mediocre about it. And that's not merely exciting. It's radically inclusive.

"In the presence of these works I'm reminded of the very best teachers I've known in my life."

Those in attendance for the Opening on November 27 were impressed by the work of curator, Eve Gibson, who selected and presented the very diverse works within the space. Fine catering was provided by Judy French, Marguerite Louez, Bill Maddox, Mark Bridgett and the artists.

**Teachers' Pets: New works by Johnny Bell, Charlotte Dibben, Hayley Megan French, Adrian Spry and Jo Tracy**  
Curated by Eve Gibson  
The Orchard Gallery  
56a Raglan St, Waterloo  
Wed 5-6.30pm; Sat 1-4pm  
Till February 24, 2011

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# Colour-in for a chance to WIN an iPod

The SSH has  
an iPod Shuffle  
for the best  
coloured entry!

Colour-in the scene from  
the Moscow Circus, cut out  
and send to PO Box 2360  
Strawberry Hills,  
NSW 2012; or scan and  
email to editor@ssh.com.au  
Artworks by Winner and  
Runners-up will be published  
in March issue.



## A night at the circus

ADRIAN SPRY

In early January we attended the great Moscow Circus (the "we" being myself, three children – Isabelle, Ollie and Grace – and

another adult, Mandy). As we walked down from Central through Chinatown to Tumbalong Park at Darling Harbour, a carnival atmosphere reigned. The sights of Chinatown – stilt walkers, buskers

and street performers – seemed the perfect preamble. We walked on, children laughing and skipping.

We arrive just in time as the lights dim and the circus performers

make their entry onto a stage set as a harsh Russian winter. The magic of "circus" begins. We sit back and take in the show.

The two girls are taken instantly by the beauty of the female artists – their athleticism and skill, the shine and shimmer of their sequinned costumes. I ask my 7-year-old son his opinion. He replies, "Yes, Dad, they are pretty." How true.

Miniature ponies elicit excited responses from the girls. All three girls love the ponies.

Then acrobatics of the highest order. Tumbling 30 or 40 feet in the air. Amazing!

Clowns engage personally with audience members, drawing them into the show. This is great! Jugglers, contortionists and magicians weave their spells. The children are wide-eyed in wonder.

This circus is very good. Absolute professionalism without becoming too slick. That earthiness you get from the sand, smells and flavours under a big top. The Ring Master does a great job. He is the glue that

binds the entire performance, and he sets the pace. Circus performers understand that timing is everything.

The lights are dimmed for the penultimate act. Zombies and German heavy metal music herald a grand finale. They drag a heavy, wheeled structure into place on centre stage.

The climax of the show is the Ball of Death – motorbikes at high-speed inside a confined space. Not one, not two, not three, but four riders pushing the limits of gravity and timing. Real daring. Real risks. I am amazed. My boy is even more amazed.

Afterwards we discussed and rated the show according to our personal preferences. The girls loved the outfits and all agreed the female performers were beautiful. We boys were still in awe of the courage shown by the bike riders and acrobats. We had a great time. The Moscow Circus personnel were friendly and obliging.

Thank you, Moscow Circus. Thank you very much! We definitely will be back when you return.

### A SHORT STORY

## Slow Growing

SHARYN GREEN

Lorrie was beyond exhaustion. Sending through the last mail finished her evening's work; she knew there'd be no time tomorrow. She flicked the computer switch and stretched back into her chair, swinging both legs onto the desk, her ankles crossed atop a pile of papers and the still unfinished report. Outside her window it was a stormy night but it wasn't dark.

Sinuous arms of light reached through the blanket of rain. The storm had threatened all day. Clouds the colour of bitumen built strength from the west and now descended in a vortex. Lorrie stared through the window for a few moments, and then glanced back at the desk with dread anticipation when fatigue took control. Within a few hours her day will start and she stretched once more, ignoring her aching muscles as she rose from the chair.

She collapsed into the sleep of a child.

All was quiet when she awoke. Hungry mosquitoes floated

through the light from the street as she walked cautiously into the garden, stopping to examine a small patch of dirt, both hands clasping a steaming cup.

The basil seedlings, their leaves ripped and bruised by hail, were flattened against the earth. The tomato and strawberry plants fared a little better thanks to Jaida's lessons on staking correctly, but this didn't save them from the onslaught of jagged ice, and now their fruit lay waste.

She felt Jaida's comfort as she searched for the first marigold leaves on their brave red stems, sprung in the last week but now disappeared. Jaida taught Lorrie how to grow from seed, harvested from one season to the next, kept in jars, waiting patiently for their time to grow. This way, and only this way, Jaida had said, can there be faith in life. *This is love*, Jaida had whispered.

Love. Lorrie was sunk in thought.

In the sun's first glimmer Lorrie imagined Jaida, this frail Croatian woman, her raw palms spread in honesty towards the earth. They were neighbours as Jaida aged, and

friends as Jaida talked of returning to the village of her childhood.

Well, Jaida, she thought, I will love to start again with my little seeds. And she sighed in the hush before dawn.

Lorrie turned towards the kitchen door and accepted the full weight of the day ahead; back-to-back meetings with pallid men in dark suits, arguing deadlines and dollars. Lorrie dealt with figures followed by enough zeroes to fill a sentence, incomprehensible to most, and increasingly meaningless to her.

Climbing the stairs she hesitated, and looked back over her shoulder at the place she returned to each night, bleak ordered space that deemed her a stranger. In that brief moment Lorrie pondered, just fleetingly, what life would be like in a coastal village, planting seeds.

WORDPLAY –  
CREATIVE WRITING GROUP  
Woolpack Hotel Redfern  
229 Chalmers St, Redfern  
6-8pm Wednesday February 2 & 16  
Phone Adrian on 9690 1427  
All welcome.

**Saucepan**  
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## food distribution network

home delivery of low-cost fresh fruit & vegetables

The Food Distribution Network is a not-for-profit organisation that delivers boxes of fresh and inexpensive fruit and vegies to older people, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS and carers who live in the City of Sydney and need assistance living independently at home. For \$9 you can have a box of 6-8kg of fruit and/or vegies delivered to your door each week or fortnight. Please call 9699 1614 or e-mail [enquiries@fdn.org.au](mailto:enquiries@fdn.org.au) for more information. These services are funded by the Home and Community Care programme and the AIDS Trust of Australia.

### BABANA

#### Aboriginal Men's Group

Next meeting Friday, February 25  
12-2pm, PCYC, Redfern  
Contact: Mark Spinks 9243 3546



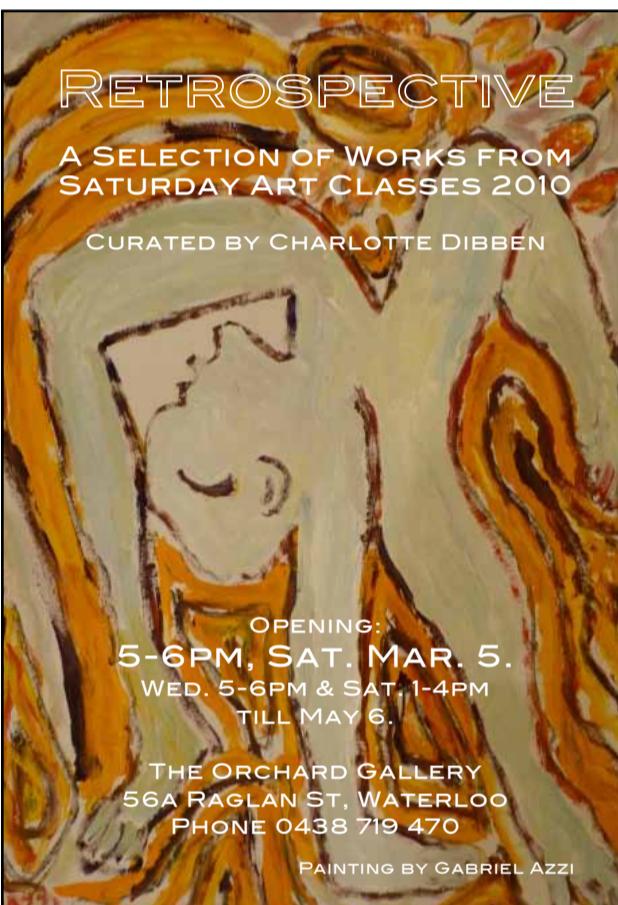
## Meet Your Marrickville Candidates Newtown Neighbourhood Centre February 23, 7-9pm

NNC will bring both community and candidates together under one roof to promote a democratic and inclusive leadup to the State election. Community members will have an opportunity to ask questions to candidates about local issues. Candidates from Labor, Liberal, Socialist and Greens parties have agreed to attend. Renowned academic, activist and social commentator Eva Cox has once again agreed to chair the event.

### NOTICE OF DEATH

The SSH notes with sadness the passing of long-term Alexandrian resident, Rayworth (Ray) Noble. Ray, married to Cliff Noble (deceased) passed away on December 12, 2010, aged 89. A funeral was held at Woronora Cemetery on December 17.

**SSH advertising works:**  
*"Since our ad has been in the SSH, it's been phenomenal. It has really raised our profile in the community. Interest has increased ten-fold from the old way of letterbox dropping."* Wayne Blindeman, Food Distribution Network, Waterloo



## Volunteering Opportunity with Compeer

Compeer is a friendship program that matches caring volunteers with adults who are living with a mental illness. Volunteers commit to meet weekly with their matched friend in simple social activities such as going for a walk or having a coffee. We are currently seeking **male and female** volunteers in your area aged 25-65 years. For further information or to register for our next training sessions being held on February 5 & 12. Please phone Marina Glover on 9568 0294 or email [marina.glover@vinnies.org.au](mailto:marina.glover@vinnies.org.au)

### YOUR LOCAL MEMBERS

<b>Tanya Plibersek MP</b> Federal Member for Sydney 150 Broadway, Broadway NSW 2007 T: 02 9379 0700 F: 02 9379 0701 <a href="mailto:Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au">Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au</a>	<b>Malcolm Turnbull MP</b> Federal Member for Wentworth Level 1/5a Bronte Rd, Bondi Junction NSW 2022 T: 02 9369 5221 F: 02 9369 5225 <a href="mailto:Malcolm.Turnbull.MP@aph.gov.au">Malcolm.Turnbull.MP@aph.gov.au</a>	<b>Verity Firth MP</b> State Member for Balmain 112a Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 T: 02 9660 7586 F: 02 9660 6112 <a href="mailto:balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au">balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au</a>	<b>Kristina Keneally MP</b> State Member for Heffron Shop 117, 747 Botany Rd, Rosebery NSW 2018 T: 02 9699 8166 F: 02 9699 8222 <a href="mailto:Kristina.keneally@parliament.nsw.gov.au">Kristina.keneally@parliament.nsw.gov.au</a>	<b>Clover Moore MP</b> State Member for Sydney 58 Oxford St, Paddington NSW 2021 T: 02 9360 3053 F: 02 9331 6963 <a href="mailto:Sydney@parliament.nsw.gov.au">Sydney@parliament.nsw.gov.au</a>	<b>Carmel Tebbutt MP</b> State Member for Marrickville 244 Illawarra Rd, Marrickville NSW 2204 T: 02 9558 9000 F: 02 9558 3653 <a href="mailto:Marrickville@parliament.nsw.gov.au">Marrickville@parliament.nsw.gov.au</a>

### Uniting Churches

**South Sydney Uniting Church**  
56a Raglan St Waterloo  
Worship (Eucharist) 10am Sunday  
Rev Andrew Collis 8399 3410  
Welcoming people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations and identities. Peace with justice, integrity of creation.

### Glebe Cafe Church

Crn St Johns Rd & Colbourne Ave, Glebe  
Worship Sun 7 for 7.15pm 'Colbourne Ave' Intimate Candlelit Concerts Thu 8pm Steph Gesling 9518 9413

**Newtown Mission**  
280 King St Newtown  
Worship 9.30am & 6pm Sunday  
Rev Ps Doug Clements 9519 9000

**Paddington Uniting Church**  
395 Oxford St Paddington  
Church Open 10am-2pm  
1st and 3rd Saturdays  
Worship Sunday 7.30pm  
Office 9331 2646

**Pitt Street Uniting Church**  
264 Pitt St, Sydney  
Worship 10 am Sunday & 6 pm (2nd and 4th Sundays)  
Rev Ian Pearson 9267 3614

**Ultimo University Church**  
Cnr Bulwara Road and Quarry St, Ultimo  
Worship 6.30pm Sunday  
Rev Dr John Hirt 0408 238 117

**Wayside Chapel**  
29 Hughes St Potts Point  
Worship 10am, Bible Study 5pm Sunday  
Ps Graham Long 9358 6996

**South Sydney  
Uniting Church**  
**Xmas Day – 9.15am**

**Wayside Chapel**  
**Xmas Day – 10am**

## Greg Inglis – Indigenous youth the centre of his attention

MICHAEL PAGE

**REDFERN:** There has been much talk about Greg Inglis these past few months. His withdrawal from a contract with the Brisbane Broncos, closely followed by his decision to sign with the Rabbitohs and then a long and protracted period where the deal with Souths seemed to be in jeopardy. All sorts of "discussions" between Souths' management and the NRL were reported in the press. Former Rooster and now NRL auditor Ian Schubert seemed to be at the core of it – as the NRL torpedoed Inglis' third-party agreements. Inglis began discussions with AFL club Essendon, until a final flurry and an agreement on Christmas Eve that the deal would be approved.

The deal came at a cost – the loss of the much-loved Beau Champion to Melbourne was a blow that many supporters, who had grown to love the loyal and likeable Rabbitoh-emblem-kissing centre, found hard to accept.

When Inglis finally fronted the media as a bona fide Rabbitoh in early January, many of the questions were focussed on the signing saga, the salary cap and Inglis' change of mind on the Brisbane deal.

The tall, calm, quietly spoken Inglis showed his experience dealing with the media and tactfully deflected questions and avoided answers that might reignite the debate over the NRL's overly fastidious approach or any of the other issues. Still recovering from a shoulder operation, Inglis was keen to start training with "the boys" and put the last few months behind him.

A disappointing aspect of the saga is that a core reason for Inglis coming to Souths became buried amongst it all. In the middle of the press conference somewhere in and around the multitude of the many questions about the signing saga, Inglis' tone changed as he enthused about his interest in working with the Aboriginal community: "It's always been a passion of mine and I want to help the young kids have a better life."

A week later the SSH spoke to Inglis at the unveiling of his role as Aboriginal Health Ambassador for the Aboriginal Medical Service in Redfern. Born in Kempsey and raised in the nearby Aboriginal community of Bowraville, Inglis revealed that his interest and passion for Indigenous youth issues was heightened during his time in Melbourne, most particularly through his visits to juveniles in jails. Showing a commitment not just to the cause but also to his life after football, he decided to take up study and undertook and passed a Certificate IV in Youth Work.

Chair of the Aboriginal Medical Service, Sol Bellear, enthused about Inglis working with young people face-to-face as well as working on DVDs and other media promoting healthy messages on diet, in particular diabetes. "Diabetes is the biggest killer of Aboriginal people. I spoke to Greg a year ago when I was involved in the Indigenous All Stars team, well before there was any talk about him coming to Souths. We need a 'be fit and eat healthy' positive role model and he was perfect for it."

Bellear was also impressed by Inglis' knowledge, passion and commitment



GI signs an autograph for a fan Photo: Ali Blogg

to gaining the educational qualifications required to play a role now and after his football career has finished.

Inglis is familiar with the Redfern community having been a frequent visitor for knockout competitions in his early days in football. "It's come a long way. The streets are cleaner and there are more alcohol-free zones, but the issues for Aboriginals are still there, particularly in the commission housing areas. We need to look at health, drugs and alcohol, and the incarceration issues, and housing

issues after they leave jails."

Bellear's comments probably summed it up best. A former George Piggins' board member opposed to the Crowe/Holmes-a-Court takeover, he is invigorated by Inglis' involvement in the service and is now readying

himself to go to his first live game since 2006. "I've always been a Souths supporter – it's Souths' turn. There is a lot of interest in Souths in Redfern, the whole community is buzzing about this and it's great to have Inglis and the Medical Service on board."

SSH

## RAVENS RUNNING GROUP

The Ravens meet each Saturday at 7am on the corner of Botany Road and Raglan Street in Waterloo. New members (and beginners) always welcome! Phone Adrian on 9690 1427.

## Learn To Swim with us!

The NCIE offers a comprehensive Learn to Swim program for children called 'AquaSafe'. Our program is about more than just 'learning the strokes' it's about water survival skills.

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