

## Housing diversity

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# the South Sydney Herald

NUMBER ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN FEBRUARY '13 CIRCULATION 22,000 ALEXANDRIA BEACONSFIELD CHIPPENDALE DARLINGTON ERSKINEVILLE EVELEIGH GLEBE KINGS CROSS NEWTOWN PADDINGTON REDFERN SURRY HILLS WATERLOO WOOLLOOMOOLOO ZETLAND



Shane Phillips with Luke Freudenstein Photo: Lyn Turnbull

## Demonising public housing tenants?

LYN TURNBULL

**DURING THE holiday season public tenants received letters from Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward urging them to declare their unauthorised occupants and to phone a "dob in" phone line to report their neighbours.**

The Minister has announced an amnesty on back rent for unauthorised tenants for Housing NSW tenants that declare between January 21 and March 17. The move is aimed to increase the amount of rent collected and encourage reporting of undeclared occupants.

"The NSW Government is giving tenants two months to declare all additional occupants. Tenants who do the right thing and declare additional occupants will have their rent adjusted from the date of declaration, and will not be charged back rent," Ms Goward said. "However, tenants with undeclared occupants who do not take advantage of the amnesty will forfeit protection offered under the amnesty and risk being charged back rent ... If you are doing the wrong thing, don't declare it and we catch you, you risk having to repay thousands of dollars and could face eviction."

Local welfare services have raised concerns about the communication of the amnesty, claiming the language used by the Minister has caused unnecessary anxiety for some of the most vulnerable residents already struggling to make ends meet, many living on only \$35 a day.

Greens housing spokesperson Jan Barham responded to the media release from the Minister's office, which was entitled "Report a Rorter: Crackdown to Catch Unauthorised Occupants", by saying the plan "demonises tenants while ignoring the real problems facing our public housing system".

The SSH spoke to Mike Shreenan, EO of The Factory Community Centre whose team works with social

Continued on page 2

## Local Hero says aim for stars, focus on process

DOROTHY MCRAE-MCMAHON

**REDFERN: SHANE Phillips received the Australian Local Hero award on Australia Day. It was undoubtedly well deserved, and just talking with him invites a new hope in people.**

Shane was born in Redfern, a place where many people, especially Aboriginal people, have struggled to survive. However, from his childhood, Shane was inspired by his parents to see and initiate new possibilities. Some of the enthusiasm of his parents arose out of their membership of the Koori Lighthouse Church. Today, Shane himself is a person of faith, but not of the church.

He also saw positive role models in Indigenous leaders of that day, like Charlie Perkins and others who encouraged their people to believe that they could do things to produce change. The boat, the Tribal Warrior, was also a special interest and later a place for training young people and FOR helping to fund his work.

When asked what principles lie beneath his mentoring work, Shane said that he invites others to focus on what they can do, rather than what seems too difficult. He finds that group work which brings peer pressure to bear in a positive way and creates a view of "cool guys" as those who achieve goals, rather than those who are pot smokers, really works well

for change.

When he and the local Police Commander Luke Freudenstein (who also received an Australia Day award) joined forces in a true partnership and together built relationships with groups of young people, the local robbery statistics went down by 82 per cent - 14 versus 114 per month. Relationships between the young people and the police were transformed and there was virtually no re-offending. None of this was due to special favours, just the developing of respectful relationships, self-respect and the sharing of stories.

Shane's dreams for the future include helping young people to begin and develop their own businesses as

well as their gaining more confidence in many settings for life. At the moment, 28 young people meet three mornings a week for training at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, and go out together. They give hope, strength and wisdom to each other, quite apart from that which they receive from their mentors.

Talking with Shane Phillips reveals a person who always has a new dream before him, who focuses on the processes of life, relationships and achievements. It would be hard to talk with him without feeling that you, too, could help to change the world, build a greater community and live out a greater hope. He truly is an inspiration! Thank you Shane. SSH

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# A safe and supportive space for women

ANNE JORDAN

**NAGLE HOUSE is a transitional house offering a safe and supportive space for women. It operates within the structure of Cana Communities under the leadership of Lorraine Winterbottom and Jo Manion. Through association with the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC), the Red Cross, and more recently, the Community Restorative Centre, Nagle House has offered a home for women of all needs since July 2012, including three women from the Cana community. To date, 18 women have already called Nagle House "home". At this time the inner-city house has a full complement of six women.**

The NNC referred Aisha\* a refugee from Ethiopia. Aisha stayed for two months and has since been granted an apartment through Women's Housing. It was a very touching day when Aisha was told by her caseworker that the dream of her own home in her new country had been realised. Also referred by NNC,

Kelly\* was one of our first and longest staying tenants. Kelly's confidence has grown remarkably since we first met her in July and she too has also now moved into her own apartment.

Martha\*, Rebecca\* and Di have been known in the Cana community for a long time. Whilst Martha was with us from the start she is now in prison - maybe she will want to come back to Nagle House when she is released next month. Rebecca is still at Nagle House but Di sadly moved to palliative care and died in December.

The Red Cross has referred two women, including Lin\*, who is currently with us, and thankfully her English is improving far more rapidly than our Cantonese!

The Community Restorative Centre works with women who are transitioning back into the community after being in prison. Since finding out about Nagle House they have been continually referring women to us. It is no surprise that these women face many different challenges themselves and in turn present



Making a home at Nagle House Photo: Fiona Powell

us with challenges too.

Each one of us makes the best choices we can for our lives if someone likes us and believes in us. We are in need of women who might offer a couple of hours once a fortnight to spend time sharing a meal or some time with the women of Nagle House. If this is for you, contact Lorraine

(lorraine\_david@iinet.net.au).

Nagle House opening ceremony was held on November 21. The ceremony gave us the opportunity to celebrate a special place and to reflect on how much we have achieved already.

\* Names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.



From left: Kai Strobel, Mele Lolo, Shane Phillips, Joya Waia, Rhane Lester, Jahannah Dare-Ryan and Sarah Francis in Redfern. The young people were part of a larger gathering of 45 Uniting Church leaders taking part in the National Young Adults Leadership Conference in January. People came from across Australia to spend one week in Sydney for leadership training, support and encouragement, and networking. On Wednesday January 30 small groups visited places like Redfern, the Wayside Chapel and Parramatta Mission to talk about leadership in context. Photo: Lyn Turnbull

## Superintendent's medal for excellence

LYN TURNBULL

**STILL IN his sweaty Redfern t-shirt after early morning training at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence's Eora Gym alongside Shane Phillips and the youth involved in the Clean Slate Without Prejudice program, Superintendent Luke Freudenstein was relaxed. He joked**

**that "Shane always manages to beat me to things by a day". Earlier in January Shane's birthday was the day before his and on the Friday before the Commander of the Redfern Local Area Command received a prestigious Australian Police Medal announced in the Australian Day Honours on Saturday, Shane was named Australian Local Hero for 2013.**

Superintendent Freudenstein joined the NSW Police Force in 1980 when the NSW Police Academy was located in Redfern and has been the Commander at Redfern LAC since 2008. He supports and sponsors a number of local Indigenous young people in training programs. He has worked with and gained the respect of local Aboriginal community groups

including Redfern All Blacks Football Club, the Junior Rugby League Football Association and Tribal Warrior Association.

Among the congratulations posted on the Redfern LAC's Facebook page was one saying "All of Babana Aboriginal Men's Group are proud to count Luke as not only a member, but a Brother!!! Congrats!!!!"

## Demonising public housing tenants?

Continued from page 1 housing residents on a regular basis. He said: "An amnesty can be very effective, depending on the manner in which it is delivered. It should be about people being able to declare something without fear of reprisal; however, when you hold an amnesty whilst encouraging people to report their 'orter' neighbours it will probably induce more fear, rather than trust, and undermine what they are rightly trying to achieve."

Tenants were notified by personally addressed letters delivered during January. Some residents felt they were being accused by the department when they had done nothing wrong. The Minister's office advised the SSH that another round of letters would be mailed soon as some people might not have received the notice due to the holidays.

Mr Shreenan acknowledged that "there are reports of overcrowding and people staying in people's homes without the department's permission and this can lead to a variety of problems - from

health and safety issues, to neighbour disputes, in addition to the economic loss for the government".

He asserts, however, that the reasons are many and complex: "Often people have unauthorised occupants because they have family who are homeless and they feel obliged to help. There are carers. There are those at the start of a new relationship who are not ready to make the commitment of a joint tenancy. There are those who fear the possibility of having permission rejected and fear it would jeopardise their own tenancy. In some cases people are being stood over and they don't want them in the house but are too afraid to seek help to have them removed."

While the amnesty may assist the last group, Mr Shreenan points to the real problem as the lack of public housing stock to meet demand. "The real solution, we believe, is in more affordable and public housing with the appropriate place management and support for tenants with high needs."

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THE YOUTH OF TODAY



# New talent on stage and screen

Emma Campbell in a scene from short film, *Stick*. Photo: Courtesy ATYP

**DOROTHY MCRAE-MCMAHON**

**AUSTRALIAN THEATRE for Young People (ATYP) is a great organisation where young people can get involved, at any time, as actors and playwrights. They have been around for 50 years now and are still inspiring, nurturing and promoting new talent on their stage at the Wharf in Walsh Bay – giving voice to a new generation of Australian writers, theatre makers, filmmakers and performers.**

Fresh Ink is ATYP's program for emerging playwrights. Young people

are invited to write a short monologue in response to a theme. Last year's theme was being "Out of Place". Selected monologues are printed in the Voices Project compilation and performed on stage at the Wharf, by emerging actors. Adaptations of several of these stage productions for screen are now being filmed. Participants are careful to maintain the integrity of the performance as a monologue, however shooting the performance for screen is a different process for the actors and offers much visual potential.

Martha Goddard is a Sydney-based filmmaker who has recently graduated

from the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS). Her focus is on directing narrative drama so she jumped at the opportunity to direct a monologue as it's a unique form and one she believes is perfectly suited to a short, engaging web series. Viewers can gain unique and personal insights into various situations and character's lives.

She chose to work with Carolyn Burn's monologue, *Stick*. In a local support group, Louise has the talking stick and shares a darkly comic perspective on what it's like to be a teenage girl with Crohn's disease.

There are a lot of real-life video diaries

on YouTube that talk about dating with a colostomy bag and the anxiety behind not finding a bathroom. These are things Martha has never had to consider but there are hundreds of thousands of people who do.

Carolyn's writing is biting with a darkly comic edge. Martha believes it is "utterly riveting stuff". The actor, Emma Campbell, gave a beautiful, nuanced performance.

There has been a lot of support for this project by the film crew, including a beautiful score and elegant cinematography. Martha is really excited by the final product. She feels it is really

important for young artists to have a platform on which to present their work to the community.

*Stick* will be launched online on March 1. See page 11 for an interview with director Martha Goddard.

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The beginning of 2013 marks an exciting period for the University of Sydney as we move a step closer to providing new facilities to create a dynamic and state-of-the-art learning environment at our Abercrombie Precinct redevelopment in Darlington.

Work on the University of Sydney's Abercrombie Precinct redevelopment commenced over the holiday period. Three buildings have been demolished, and the demountable buildings

from Codrington Street have now been relocated.

This year will see much progress for the Abercrombie Precinct. We expect to appoint the head contractor in coming months and we aim to begin construction work from mid-2013. A key requirement of evaluating the construction tenders will be to review alternative arrangements to move vehicle access to the development away from Abercrombie Street. The University will provide an update when an alternative location has been approved.

The University will also be consulting with the local community and the City of Sydney to develop a 'pedestrian and bicycle access strategy' for the Darlington precinct, investing \$2 million in improvements. Further details will be made available soon.

We will provide regular updates as this exciting project progresses. In the meantime, please call the University's community information line on 1800 252 040 from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, if you have any questions.

For more information, please visit [sydney.edu.au/abercrombie\\_precinct/](http://sydney.edu.au/abercrombie_precinct/) or email: [abercrombie.precinct@sydney.edu.au](mailto:abercrombie.precinct@sydney.edu.au)

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# Farewell to Redfern Centre

ADA LEE

**COMMUNITY GROUPS** have been asked to leave their home of 13 years to make room for church growth.

On January 9, community groups farewelled the Redfern Centre, located at St Saviour's Anglican Church. The old church hall came alive with around 64 friends reminiscing over their treasured experiences with the Redfern Centre.

In 1998, three friends – the Rev. John McIntyre, Faye Williams and Jack Carnegie – came up with the idea of using the neglected church hall to house community groups.

Since 1999, the Redfern Centre has been home to four community organisations that deliver services such as healthy food delivery and affordable transport to locals, particularly to the elderly and people with disabilities.

Beyond this, Mr McIntyre said that through the community organisations local people have been empowered to help themselves and each other. The benefits have been felt by clients but also by volunteers. Shaun, a volunteer, said the Food Distribution Network (FDN) enabled him to feel the responsibility of a job.

According to the community organisations, since Mr McIntyre left St Saviour's in late 2005, the church has considered reacquiring the hall for church initiatives such as a soup kitchen. Mr McIntyre said he disagrees very strongly with the church's decision. "I feel that church and community should work hand-in-hand," he said. "[The church is there] to offer what we have to the community."

Regarding St Saviour's new plans, Jane Rogers, Manager of South East Sydney Community Transport (SESCT), believes



Jenny Honeybrook, Frances Lim, Jane Rogers, Rufina Silveira, Blake Kegg and Jasmine Enright of SESCT Photo: Jack Carnegie

compromises could have been made.

Many community members are deeply saddened by the closing of the Redfern Centre. Ms Williams, former Home and Community Care (HACC) Development Officer, believes the church's decision is "very poor". "If the church supports the general community, they end up stronger than if they make a distinction

between the church community and the general community," she said. "It's disappointing."

Several people at the farewell emphasised that the biggest tragedy for community groups is the loss of collaboration, which was made possible by being co-located and centred in the local community. "We're all scattered

again," said Ms Rogers.

All four community groups are now forced into commercial real estate. Chris Campbell, Coordinator of FDN, said: "Now we have four agencies paying separate rents, separate electricities [sic]... It makes it harder for us to help people." FDN has been unable to find new premises.

Ms Rogers said that even for SESCT and

Neighbour Connections who are relocating to Ultimo, their new residence would not be permanent due to high rents. "Now we're in limbo," she said.

St Saviour's Anglican Church issued a written statement to the SSH under request that it not be amended or abbreviated. The full statement is on page 9.



Surveying land ravaged by mining Photo: Alex Moffatt

## Students call Old King Coal to account

JEMIMA HALL & JASON RAY

**THERE IS a long history of Australians and coal. This relationship is coming under increasing scrutiny nowadays, as the effects on our health, climate and land become more apparent.**

In spite of these concerns, the country is facing a massive expansion of not only coal but coal seam gas (CSG), facilitated by the state and federal governments. In many cases this expansion has been met with community resentment and opposition, particularly in communities that face the direct impacts. The struggle between Dart energy and Santos which took place earlier this year in St Peters is reflective of a wider struggle across NSW and Queensland.

Recently, students from ASEN, the Australian Student Environment Network, set out to explore and learn more about this growing resistance

to coal and CSG. Numerous Mining the Truth road trips have taken place nationally. We were fortunate to meet some inspiring people in NSW along the way and learn about the brazen ways the mining companies tend to operate. By visiting these communities we connected with many environmental, social, health and community issues.

We saw the leaking of sulphur-reducing bacteria and methane causing "dead zones" within the Pilgla State Forest. Operations within this area endanger the Great Artesian Basin which is drilled through in order to access the deep coal seams. Damage to this vital aquifer could have untold effects on the environment, as well as arable farming land. The conflict between coal and gas mining on the one hand and agriculture on the other was a recurring theme of the trip. We learnt of a coal train derailment in Boggabri expected to cost cotton and grain farmers approximately \$150 million.

These open-top trains transport coal from mines to the Newcastle Port, the largest coal port in the world. Increasing concerns have been raised over the fine particulate matter in coal which is found, in the vicinity of mines and of railway lines where coal is hauled in open-topped trains, at levels significantly exceeding World Health Organisation standards. These fine particles have been linked with respiratory tract infections. In fact, Newcastle has the highest rate of asthma in children across NSW. However, in the face of such findings and strong links between coal and public health issues, the industry continues with its development. NSW is facing a huge expansion in coal and gas mining and Port Waratah Coal Service is seeking approval to expand and double its export capacity.

In light of all these problems, not to mention the contribution any coal and CSG developments make towards climate change, the expansion of coal and gas

## City West in North Eveleigh

GEOFF TURNBULL

**CITY WEST Housing (CWH) has been appointed as the affordable housing provider for the North Eveleigh affordable housing project initiated by the RWA now UrbanGrowth Development Corporation. CWH is to undertake the design, seek planning approval, construct and manage a minimum of 61 affordable housing units at North Eveleigh. The final number of units will be determined through the design stage.**

CWH is a not-for-profit company established in 1994 to provide affordable housing to people on low and moderate incomes in Ultimo/Plymouth. It has expanded to Green Square and now covers the City of Sydney LGA. CWH is owned by the state government which approves an annual business plan but otherwise CWH operates as a private company with its own board. CWH currently manages 547 properties.

CWH housing at North Eveleigh will be open to those in need of housing who live or work in the City of Sydney LGA. There are local selection criteria allowing those who have previously lived in the area for two or more years or who have

immediate family currently living locally to also apply.

CWH mixes the income levels in its housing based on household income bands (before tax). Currently the income mix is 25 per cent of units allocated for households earning up to \$31,420, 45 per cent for the \$31,421 - \$52,612 income band and 30 per cent for \$52,613 - \$89,471.

Currently, Nace Civil Engineering (1300 556 889) is undertaking site infrastructure works, including a new access road, to support the affordable housing in the western portion of the North Eveleigh site including a new access road to the site. CWH is preparing a development application (DA) for the affordable housing to be lodged with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure before June 2013 for public exhibition and comment. Federal government funding stipulates that the housing is completed by December 2014.

CWH has a good reputation as both an affordable housing developer and operator, and works closely with the State Government and City of Sydney Council on affordable housing delivery.

More information about CHW can be found at [www.citywesthousing.com.au](http://www.citywesthousing.com.au)

mining seems absurdly reckless. Recent protests have resulted in police hauling away an elderly lady blockading for the community in Fullerton Cove against Dart Energy, the same CSG company that was kicked out of St Peters. When the government and industry are equally implicit in this kind of behaviour the only course of action we are left with is to organise within our own communities

and stand in solidarity with one another. The issue of coal is crucial, and close to home. Environment networks such as ASEN urge community members to recognise this issue and fight for a greener, coal-free Australia. For further information see <http://asen.org.au> or contact the SSH.

Jemima Hall & Jason Ray are members of ASEN.



Artist impression of Pemulwuy development Image: Supplied

## Building blocks for vibrant future

LIBBY HOGAN

**REDFERN: THE Pemulwuy project Development Application was approved on December 21.**

The development will be home to 62 affordable house dwellings for Aboriginal people, 42 units for multicultural student housing, a gymnasium, a childcare centre and community gallery. Shops and other commercial facilities will also make up the ground floor of most buildings.

The talk of change began in 1988 and CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) Mick Mundine is excited to finally

start rebuilding this year.

"We are professional developers now, so we have to think like developers planning for the future. We got to get out of that vicious welfare mentality. I think where we went wrong in the past was thinking we can't do anything unless the government helps us. We are standing alone here and we are going to show the government and our own people that Aboriginal people are just as good as any other nationalities in this country."

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Planning Minister Brad Hazzard agree that this part of Sydney has been crying out for renewal.

"The approval will allow for the creation of a vibrant new housing, community and cultural precinct close to transport and the University of Sydney," Mr O'Farrell said.

The AHC has contracted DeiCorp as the new designers and constructors. Investors are currently being sought with the hope of 2015 seeing the development completed.

Mr Mundine believes: "We have to show that we are Aboriginal people and we are running it ... A lot of people have doubt so we have to show our own people and others that Aboriginal people are very staunch and professional." SSH

### New growth precincts?

GEOFF TURNBULL

**WHEN LAND values are determined by lines on government maps showing growth areas and other potential developments it is important to get things correct.**

The December 2012 NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan showed a map of Inner City "growth precincts" on page 114. While some areas on the map had been announced for redevelopment such as the Frasers Central Park, North Eveleigh and Redfern Waterloo public housing estates, others like the Darlington Conservation area, East Chippendale and part of Redfern east of the railway line were new. Was the state government telegraphing the long-expected southward growth of the city? Would property speculation follow?

Both the former Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority and Council have now advised that the map in question was not adequately labelled. It actually shows growth in travel zones, which are statistical precincts used by the Bureau of Transport Statistics for transport modelling and for the Household Travel Survey. The proposed growth of North Eveleigh is shown across the whole of the Darlington travel zone in which it is located. Similarly, East Chippendale is shown because it is in the same travel zone as Frasers Central Park. REDWatch agrees with Council that the labelling on the map "should have made this clear". SSH

### Human services co-ordination

GEOFF TURNBULL

**AS PEOPLE with higher and higher needs are allocated public housing in Redfern and Waterloo the need for integrated service delivery grows. It is necessary to ensure people have their complex needs addressed and can maintain their tenancies, and that they do not impact adversely on their neighbours.**

Improving human service co-ordination has been a stated government goal for over 10 years. It was a focus following the Morgan Disney Review in 2004 and was a focus of the Redfern-Waterloo Authority with its top-down Human Service Plans, Senior Officers Implementation Group and Ministerial Advisory Committee. On the ground, little changed. Many groups ceased meeting with the wind-up of the RWA.

Discussions have been underway over the last six months between REDWatch and key government and non-government services about the need for a new move to co-ordinate the delivery of government services especially into public housing. A number of meetings between agencies such as Health, Police, Housing NSW and Council have been held with encouraging signs. Recently, a wider meeting of government agencies including important agencies like Probation and Parole met and decided they will hold monthly Redfern-Waterloo service co-ordination meetings. The involvement of non-government representatives is also being explored. SSH

### Business Chamber wants sculpture gone

SSH

**REDFERN: ON behalf of the local business community, the South Sydney Business Chamber (SSBC) is starting a campaign to remove "The Bower". The sculpture was installed in Redfern in 2008, near the station, at the intersection of Regent and Redfern streets.**

"The Bower" has been unappreciated by many in the community since its unveiling. Many feel it does not represent the vibrancy and diversity of contemporary Redfern. The SSBC supports the view that this sculpture has been inappropriately sited. Residents have commented that it is an assertive rather than collaborative piece of artwork, and are sometimes genuinely disturbed by its sharp edges.

The SSBC supports the efforts of the community to contribute to the positive rebranding, improvement and re-positioning of the suburb and has started an online and offline petition in order to seek support to remove the sculpture.

The goal is to collect 10,000 signatures. Residents can sign the petition either in some of the participating Redfern shops near and around the sculpture or online at the campaign's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/RemoveTheBower](http://www.facebook.com/RemoveTheBower). Several locals have posted ideas about how the intersection could better be utilised. See the Facebook page for these suggestions SSH

For more information contact South Sydney Business Chamber on (02) 8284 7716.



**Tanya Plibersek**  
Federal Member for Sydney

### Schoolkids Bonus

As the 2013 school year begins, families have already received a helping hand from the Federal Government.

Local parents have now received the first instalment of the Gillard Government's Schoolkids Bonus, worth \$410 for each child in primary school and \$820 a year for each high school student.

In the City of Sydney, a total of almost one million dollars has hit the bank accounts of over 2400 families.

The Schoolkids Bonus is helping to lighten the load for families and is paid in two instalments – in January and July.

Under the previous Education Tax Refund, parents had to keep receipts in order to claim expenses through their tax returns in the middle of the year. Many families ended up not claiming everything they were entitled to, or received their payment long after they had to buy their back to school essentials.

This new payment for families is under risk, however, after Tony Abbott and the Liberals promised to cut the Schoolkids Bonus.

The last thing our kids need is further cuts to support for their education, particularly after the \$1.7 billion in cuts to NSW schools and TAFEs announced by the State Liberal Government in 2012.

I hope in 2013 governments at all levels resolve to support families in giving their kids the essentials for a quality education.

The Schoolkids Bonus and increasing school funding through the Gonski reforms are part of the Gillard Government's plan to build a better school system for all students.

Authorised by Tanya Plibersek MP  
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# Dispensing information, while pushing ahead

GEOFF TURNBULL & JUSTINE MCNAMARA

**SYDNEY LOCAL Health District (SLHD) pushed ahead with installation of the Automatic Dispensing Machine (ADM) in front of the Redfern Health Centre without mentioning it at a public meeting on January 29. In contrast to the December meeting where locals opposing the installation primarily argued their objections with representatives of SLHD, this meeting was independently facilitated and featured a more balanced discussion about the issues with many supporters of the ADM in attendance.**

In the meantime, SLHD has released the material setting out the case for the facility presented in October and presented written answers to some of the key issues raised as well as an updated Management Plan for the facility. Community nominations for an Implementation Working Group were asked for at the end of the meeting.

Central to SLHD's argument is that Redfern-Waterloo has almost twice the HIV rate of the NSW average and three times the national average. According to SLHD the Hepatitis C rates in Redfern-Waterloo are 10 per cent above the state and national average. According to SLHD, "the Redfern-Waterloo area accounted for 30 per cent (1,055 patients over 3 years) of all treatment/interventions provided by drug health services within the Sydney Local Health District".

SLHD already has development approval for the ADM as it was included in the original Redfern Health Centre DA. Attendees at the October public meeting suggested SLHD should instead place an ADM at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. In January SLHD advised that one had been installed at the hospital and would commence in the near future but as an additional facility not a substitute. There was a push for the machine to be placed close to the police and railway stations but this was not considered practical by Redfern Police

or SLHD. Some argued that Redfern did not have a drug problem and that the problem was in Waterloo so the machine should be moved there, but this was met by assurances that drug use was equally high in Redfern.

The main argument used by Health is that it is attached to one of their buildings on a main street where it is highly unlikely people will stop to shoot up. They operate 150 ADMs across the state. Dr Theresa Anderson, the Chief Executive of SLHD reported to the meeting that in all their video surveillance there had only been one incident of a child accessing a machine and in this case they were on video being taught by an adult who was subsequently referred to DOCs under child protection.

At the end of the meeting Dr Anderson introduced Kate Reakes, the new Harm Minimisation Manager covering Redfern and Waterloo. Kate will not only deal with harm minimisation issues in Redfern-Waterloo but she will also fulfill



Artist impression of Dispensary in Redfern Street Photo: Supplied

a community health liaison role announced in October in response to representations by REDWatch. This additional role is aimed to help address broader community health issues, working with both the community and other service agencies to ensure that the people can locate the services they

need and that in complex cases there is a more coordinated approach. SSH

For more information contact Kate Reakes 0427 550 782 or view the SLHD papers on the REDWatch website at [www.redwatch.org.au/RWA/statesignificant/policecourt/dispensingmachine](http://www.redwatch.org.au/RWA/statesignificant/policecourt/dispensingmachine)

# The significance of the ibis

MICHAEL AIKEN

FOR SOME time now the Gunyadyu comic has been a regular feature in the SSH. Each issue, with a single image, the artist shares a word from the Dharug language, providing a context in words and scene that also reflect on contemporary Indigenous experience of inner-city living. Gunyadyu episodes range from the sweet and funny to biting and incisive, each one featuring the ibis as a symbol for Indigenous people, depicting urban life with all its ups and downs.

In light of the annual east coast ibis survey conducted a few weeks ago, and of the ongoing debate around the status of ibis as a native or pest species, we thought it a good time to learn a bit more about Gunyadyu and the significance of the ibis. The artist behind Gunyadyu chooses to remain anonymous, so this interview was necessarily conducted via an electronic intermediary.

**The comic has a very contemporary and very local feel, with images and ideas that anyone in the SSH area could find some connection to. Can you tell us why you chose to use ibis for the comic?**

The ibis was chosen because of its poignant metaphoric societal reference to the (stereotypical) urban Kooris. That being - a "problem", a "hindrance", "unsightly" and "noisy". Add to this, the ibis is in fact native but most likely from a different region.

**Can you tell us about the name Gunyadyu?**

When seeking a local language name for the ibis, I found I was somewhat restricted, given there are no speakers of the Gadigal language. So I consulted the only fluent speaker of a local language relative to the Sydney basin. I was hence informed that, whilst there was no direct language name for the ibis per se ... Gunyadyu refers to a "large bird who excretes a lot".

**Have you conducted research in developing and creating the comic, or is it more of a direct expression of what you already know and feel?**

No such research was required. The concept arrived to me immediately and as



Gunyadyu in Redfern Photo: Andrew Collis

per much of my art I purely went with the instinctive response and perhaps a direct expression of my observations during my time in Redfern.

**What do you think of the current "debate" around ibis? For example, many people commonly see them as a pest, and there are claims they were introduced to Sydney artificially, though the National Parks and Wildlife Service describes them as a "key wetland species" and has highlighted that their presence along the coast is an indication of disasters like drought further inland.**

Ditto for flying foxes, cockatoos, corellas and fast-food outlets.

**Do you have a particular audience in mind when creating Gunyadyu? Are there any types of people you'd prefer didn't "get" it?**

That would be somewhat discriminatory or at least ... subjective. There be already too much of that kind of attitude within the art/journalism world. I choose not to contribute

further. May all enjoy the Gunyadyu tale.

**What can you tell us about yourself? Is Gunyadyu intended to remain anonymous and separate from your other work?**

Well, that was the intention. I've had sufficient accolades throughout my emerging career but for once I wished to create an "unsigned" artistic contribution.

**You've shared a great deal with the SSH readership through your comic - cultural knowledge in the form of Dharug words, but also perspectives and critiques of contemporary inner-Sydney life. What has creating and sharing the comic done for you?**

For one ... given me a "free to air" voice of my opinions relating to grass-roots issues connected to our local community. It's also granted me the opportunity to publicise (creatively) the only Sydney-based Aboriginal language website ([www.dharug.dalang.com.au](http://www.dharug.dalang.com.au)). SSH

Gunyadyu will return to page 14 next month.



Annie Green Court in Redfern Photo: Supplied

# Quality care for disadvantaged seniors

MIRIAM PEPPER

**REDFERN: A much-needed new aged care facility has opened its doors in Redfern to people who have experienced significant social and financial disadvantage, including homelessness.**

Built with a \$16 million federal government grant, Mission Australia's Annie Green Court welcomed its first resident on December 10. Ultimately, there will be 72 people who will call Annie Green Court home.

The facility, which is located on the corner of Redfern and Elizabeth streets, consists of six pods, each having 12 bedrooms (with en-suites), two lounge rooms and a dining room. Annie Green Court also has a main activities room overlooking Redfern Park and a rooftop garden with plans for a barbecue area. Residents are free to come and go as they please.

Annie Green Court is the second such low-care aged care facility to be operated by Mission Australia. The multiple award-winning Charles Chambers Court in Surry Hills has been providing high-quality care for disadvantaged elderly people since 1998.

A model of care has been developed to provide support of various forms to residents who may be socially isolated, have aged early, and/or have complex behavioural issues.

For example, Jill Bicknell, Operations

Manager of Residential Aged Care at Mission Australia, says: "Whereas the social programs at other aged care facilities may encourage reminiscing, this approach is not suitable for people who may have painful pasts."

Particular features of the social program at Charles Chambers Court have instead included "CCC Idol" (inspired by Australian Idol), and the "Trip Around the World" program which showcases the diverse cultural heritage of residents. The latter program, which was awarded the Better Practice Award for Resident Lifestyle from the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, "visits" each of the countries from which the residents hail, through themed meals, talks and decorations. "Trip Around the World generates conversation and builds understanding. Many residents also feel proud when their country is celebrated," Ms Bicknell says.

Charles Chambers and Annie Green Courts have a corporate volunteers program, and also welcome individual volunteers. Particular needs for Annie Green Court include volunteers to assist with arts and music activities. SSH

For more information about Annie Green Court or to express an interest in volunteering, please contact Jill Bicknell, Operations Manager - Residential Aged Care, [bicknellj@missionaustralia.com.au](mailto:bicknellj@missionaustralia.com.au), 9305 9100. Information is also available at [www.missionaustralia.com.au](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au)

# UrbanGrowth in Redfern-Waterloo

GEOFF TURNBULL

THE STATE government authority responsible for delivering the Built Environment Plan 2, planning controls for public housing estates in Redfern and Waterloo and for planning on the former Eveleigh Railyards has made yet another transformation. The Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority, which was formally the Redfern-Waterloo Authority, became the UrbanGrowth Development Corporation on January 1. The UGDC retains the SMDA's Growth Centres powers which allow it to compulsorily acquire land and consolidate it in

designated growth centres (currently Redfern-Waterloo and Granville). It will play a broader re-development role alongside a partner agency called UrbanGrowth NSW.

The former SMDA CEO Roy Wakeling has been replaced as the head of UGDC by Landcom MD Sean O'Toole. The old SMDA board has disappeared and long-term and respected human service and community liaison person Julie Parsons was also a casualty of the restructure. Administrative staff and those working on planning matters for BEP2 and North Eveleigh have been retained to deliver current projects.

The Australian Technology Park (ATP) remains a subsidiary of the UGDC with its own board answering to the UGDC CEO. The ATP still has blocks for redevelopment justifying its continued link to the UGDC. It is likely, however, that in time the ATP will be moved out of the re-development stable. It may have a better long-term fit in the new Government Property Authority or with bodies like Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and Olympic Park.

Heritage will continue to be handled through the ATP for that site or through the UGDC directly for North Eveleigh. In a statement to the SSH a spokesperson said: "Any works on the [North Eveleigh]

site need to ensure the very important heritage qualities of the site are respected and where possible enhanced. UGDC is also liaising with Carriageworks and RailCorp (the owner of the site) to facilitate integration of works and activities at the site."

Redfern Station is not formally on the UGDC agenda although they will continue to assist Transport for NSW on this issue. A recent parliamentary committee suggested development over railway lines should be referred to UrbanGrowth but to date this has not happened.

Community input to the UGDC will continue as it has previously under the

SMDA. The historical information on the SMDA website will be preserved and rolled into a SMDA portal to allow easy access to material relevant to the local community. While there are no plans for a designated local advisory committee the UGDC will continue to respond to issues raised and it will undertake engagement with stakeholders at key stages in developments.

The change is part of a wider amalgamation of the SMDA and Landcom to form what is being generically called UrbanGrowth NSW.

For details on the new structure see online version of article.

# Help around the house

ANDREW COLLIS

RECENTLY, IN response to a query about a small repair job in the church, a helpful parishioner suggested I call OddJobbers. I was given a flyer with a phone number, retrieved with great care from the inner folds of a handbag. I made the call, left a message. Within a couple of days the work was carried out - effectively, in a friendly and humble manner. I was impressed.

It turns out that OddJobbers has been around a while. The concept of a cost-neutral service originates with the Central and Southern Waterloo Tenants Group. The service (comprising six on-call volunteers) commenced operations in 1999. The South Sydney Council and then Department of Housing were supportive. "The simplicity of it is the key," said Ross Smith, co-founder and monitor. "Assisting tenants with small, non-trade tasks can

make a big difference."

Mr Smith cites various tasks, including some that pose a risk or danger to older residents: defrosting a fridge, changing a light bulb, hanging a picture, lifting a heavy case of winter or summer clothes at end of season, taking blinds up or down. "We have all the tools we need in a shopping bag by the phone," Mr Smith explained. "A hand saw, an electric drill with a masonry bit, a hammer, tape measure and pencil, nuts, bolts and screws, an extension lead and a multi-purpose milk-crate."

OddJobbers volunteers pay an initial visit for assessment purposes (sometimes a referral to a tradesperson is deemed appropriate) and clients are asked to provide the necessary hardware for the job at hand - the lightbulb or battery, for example. A small charge based on cost recovery ensures a sense of self-sufficiency and pride. "It's all about enabling independence and quality of

life for people," Mr Smith said. "It's rewarding, down the track, to see an older person we've been able to help getting on under his or her own steam."

OddJobbers has enjoyed steady expansion. Mr Smith credits a certain inner-city community spirit and density (2500 households within a 10-minute walk) as well as fellow founders and volunteers Pieter Kamminga, Diana Whitworth, Betty and Charlie Bullivant, with the success of the association. In 2004, the support group was showcased at an international conference held in Sydney. On a single day, five waves of conference attendees paid visits to Waterloo. The low-cost, low-capital model has subsequently been adopted in parts of Ireland and Canada, as well as Tasmania and Newcastle.

Mr Smith recalls one conference delegate asking what motivated him to do what he did. "I remember answering, 'I'd like to think when I'm older that someone



Ross Smith Photo: Andrew Collis

would help me'."

Public housing tenants in Waterloo can contact OddJobbers on 9319 0329. Requests for help and offers of help are welcome.

Andrew Collis is parish minister at South Sydney Uniting Church in Raglan St, Waterloo.

# Like riding a bike

BEC LINDSAY

FOR MANY the benefits of cycling are overshadowed by the realities of riding on busy city roads. Bec Lindsay writes about how she gained the confidence to ride with little more than a hand-me-down bike, a free riding course and the wonders of route planning.

For a long time I have liked the idea of cycling. It fits my philosophy of life - mostly in avoiding the need to actually use my driver's licence, but also in trying to live into the sustainability I would like to see more of. A friend gave me her hand-me-down bike when I moved to Parramatta a few years ago. Sadly, living off a busy road inconveniently located at the top of a hill saw the bike neglected. I wasn't game to ride downhill alongside all that traffic. With a move closer to the city imminent, I was determined that in a new (hopefully flat) environment I would learn to ride my bike.

The problem with trying to learn how to usefully ride a bike in Sydney is all the cars. I I don't like driving let alone cycling near Sydney cars; a bike goes slower and with less outer layers for protection. Drivers have a reputation for a lack of patience with cyclists; cycling can feel "in the way" and an obstruction to the free flow of traffic. Enter the City of Sydney's free Cycling in the City Course, run at Sydney Park by Bikewise.

The four-hour course aims to make



Cycling in the City Course participants Photo: Adrian Emilsen

cycling a sensible and effective transport option. We began with theory and some practical advice: See and be seen; plan your route carefully; ride graciously. This was followed by practice exercises at the cycling centre before hitting the road as a group.

We rode between Sydney Park and Central Station, often amazed when the instructors pointed out where we were,

crossing Botany Road or Elizabeth Street. There were drills at three locations, giving participants the opportunity to practise riding elements such as stopping, turning and deciding where to take position on the road. On our return I was quietly amazed that we had made it.

Two days later I took the plunge. Filling my water bottle, donning my helmet, route-map in hand, I commuted

from home to a work meeting. Having planned a route based on the local council cycleways map I barely encountered traffic. I arrived at the meeting proud and invigorated, finally believing the words of the course leaders: "Route planning is everything." The home leg was also successful, cementing the sense of confidence instilled through participating in the course. I don't imagine I will ever

ride particularly far or fast, but riding will be enmeshed in my transport routines. Neglected no more, my steed and I will be route-planning many an adventure.

City of Sydney currently offers the free Cycling in the City Course as well as other courses in bicycle maintenance, riding for kids and more. Register online at <http://sydneycycleways.net>



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# LEGAL MATTERS

BY MARK HANNA

## Moving into shared premises?

### A simple guide to legal issues for students and other renters

For many, especially students, moving out of home and into share housing for the first time can be something remembered fondly for the rest of their life.

But a move into a shared house can also be something of a minefield. Apart from finding the right place, the right people to move in with and being able to predict whether they will be angels or animals, legal issues can screw up a move into shared accommodation.

If you don't want to end up stuck permanently in a pigsty, with someone who parties day and night or even worse, evicted without rights, you need to know some legal basics.

#### 1. Setting up or joining an established share house?

It is easier if someone else has done the leg work, has found a good place and made arrangements with the landlord. The landlord is the person or entity from whom a property is rented. Sometimes they even live onsite but, more often than not, that is not the case and you may never meet the landlord.

Usually a landlord operates through a real estate agency who manages the property for them. You will pay the rent to the real estate agency and deal with them on issues of maintenance and repairs.

The first legal step in renting is that someone or people need to sign a residential tenancy agreement (lease) which gives that person/s the right to occupy the property for a certain period of time and have certain rights and responsibilities in regard to that occupation.

If you are moving into an established share house, a lease already exists. The question then is, do you want to be added onto the lease (and share both the rights and responsibilities of that) or are you happy for others to have those rights?

In its simplest term, not being a leaseholder can result in your being kicked out of the house by the tenant/s with little legal ability to do much about the eviction. Your rights depend on your legal status in the house. Rights vary according to the type of tenant you are.

#### 2. Are you a Co-Tenant, a Sub-Tenant, or a Boarder? Which is best?

A what? Before you head starts to spin, here are some definitions as well as the pros and cons of each type of occupant.

##### CO-TENANT

Legally, this is where two or more tenants sign the Residential Tenancy Agreement (lease). As the agreement is between the landlord and tenants, each of the co-tenants is jointly and individually responsible for paying the rent and bond and for any damage to the house. This means that any one of these co-tenants can be held **wholly** liable for any debt owed to the landlord.

##### Pros

- No one in the house can kick you out unless your housemates get an order from the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) [see below].
- Everyone on the lease has equal status and is a decision maker.
- You can claim your rights as a tenant directly against the landlord; for example your right to have repairs done or challenge rent increases.

##### Cons

- You are directly responsible to the landlord, and may be individually or jointly liable.
- Disagreements between co-tenants cannot be resolved at the CTTT, unless the disagreement is over the bond or terminating the lease. You will have to work it out yourselves or try mediation.

##### SUB-TENANT

A **SUB-TENANT** enters an agreement with the **HEAD-TENANT** (the person/s whose name is on the lease) to have exclusive use of a room and to share other facilities equally. While the head-tenant must have the landlord's permission to sub-let, if the head-tenant lives at the premises, a landlord cannot reasonably refuse a partial sub-let.

Under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, if the head-tenant lives in the share house, a spoken agreement between a head-tenant and a sub-tenant will not be regarded as a tenancy agreement and the sub-tenant will not be covered by the Act. These types of share housing arrangements are usually informal and sub-tenants don't always think to get their agreement in writing.

Often sub-tenants assume they are tenants covered by the *Residential Tenancies Act* and don't worry about having a written tenancy agreement. If you want to have the same rights as a tenant, the sub-tenant **must have a written residential tenancy agreement**.

If the head-tenant sub-lets but does not live in the house, an oral agreement is adequate and the sub-tenant is covered by the Act.

##### Pros

- The advantage of being covered by the Act is that the head-tenant must give the sub-tenant a written notice of termination. E.g. a head-tenant cannot throw you out without giving the correct notice.
- You can apply to the Tribunal if there are any disputes about the bond. You need to decide what type of arrangement works best for you.

##### Cons

- You have to comply with the Residential Tenancies Act, e.g. you must give your head-tenant 21 days written notice if you want to leave (or 14 days notice at the end of a fixed term agreement if you do not want to continue a fixed term agreement, or if they have breached the agreement).
- Your head-tenant can ask you to leave if they give you the correct notice of termination (90 days written notice, or 30 days written notice at the end of the fixed term agreement or 14 days written notice if you have breached the agreement)
- Also, the sub-tenant cannot leave without giving the head-tenant proper notice, leaving them to cover all of the rent.

Summary: The relationship of a sub-tenant with a head-tenant is legally identical to that of a tenant with a landlord. Sub-tenants must pay rent to the head-tenant and the head-tenant must carry out repairs. As a sub-tenant, you do not have a direct relationship with the owner of the house, so any complaints must be dealt with through the head-tenant.

##### BOARDER

If the landlord keeps overall control of the house, including your room, then you are likely to be a boarder or a lodger. The most typical situation is hostels and boarding houses, where you rent a room and can use common facilities but generally have no say in the overall running of the establishment. You might also be considered a boarder or lodger if you share a house with the owner.

Boarders and lodgers are **not** covered by the *Residential Tenancies Act* and have virtually no protection under the law. For example, they can be evicted with very little notice and do not have the right to apply to the Tenancy Division of the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT).

##### Pros

- Your arrangement is flexible; you can move out with very little notice.
- You're not responsible for the debts and actions of the other housemates.

##### Cons

- You can be asked to leave with very little notice.
- If you have a disagreement with your landlord or head-tenant, you generally cannot go to the CTTT for a solution, unless the landlord is renting the place as a business.
- You don't have the right to control what happens with your room.

#### 3. Disputes. Bonds withheld or unfair landlords etc

Should discussions fail, there is always the CTTT – the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal. This body was established to resolve residential tenancy disputes. It is similar to a court, but not as formal. It costs only \$37 to make an application to the Tribunal (\$5 if you're on Centrelink benefits or a student on Austudy/Youth Allowance/Abstudy) and there are usually no other costs.

##### SUMMARY

This guide is a brief description of a few of the most basic legal issues that arise when moving into shared housing. For more information, consult a lawyer or contact a non-profit legal centre for advice such as Redfern Legal Centre or Inner Sydney Advice and Advocacy Service.

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Mark Hanna is Principal of Mark Hanna Lawyers  
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GUEST EDITORIAL

MIRIAM PEPPER

IT WAS predicted to be a hot summer. And hot it has been indeed. Temperature records have tumbled across Australia – including the hottest day, the longest heat-wave, and the hottest four-month period.

Bushfires blazed at the start of the year in multiple states. Later, while fires still burned in Gippsland, communities in southeast Queensland and northern NSW experienced severe flooding – some for the second time within as many years.

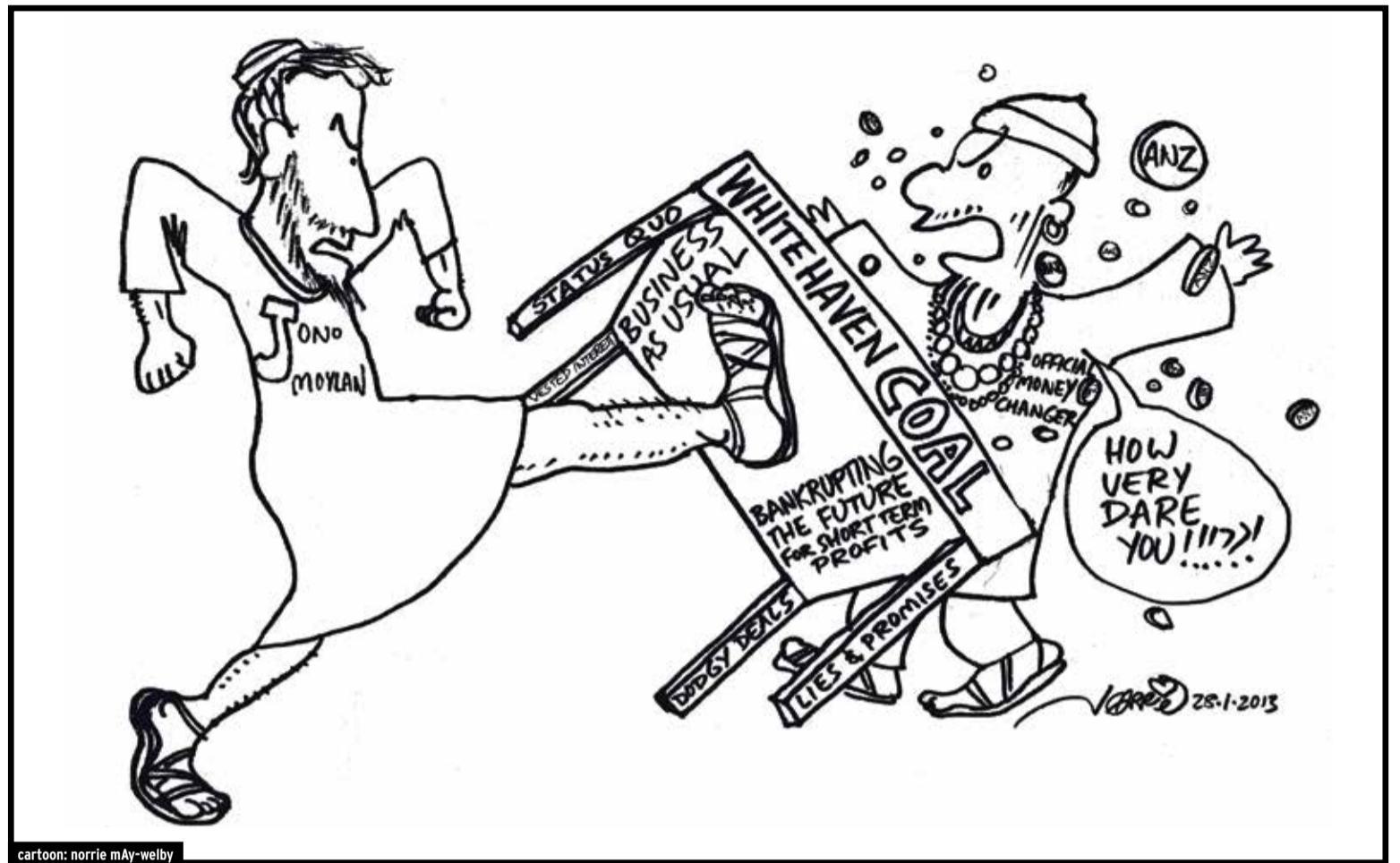
Australia is one of climate change's frontlines, and also a major source of its primary cause – fossil fuels.

While the mercury soared and the fires roared, Jonathan Moylan issued a fake press release claiming that the ANZ bank, which is bankrolling a massive new coal project at Maules Creek in north-western NSW, had withdrawn its loan. Whitehaven Coal's share price plummeted temporarily before the hoax was uncovered.

The scale of fossil fuel expansion in Australia is astonishing. Already the world's biggest coal exporter, planned mine expansion could see this output double. The implications locally for farmland, forests, human health and aquatic life as well as globally for the climate are severe.

I have previously had the privilege of participating with Moylan at coal protests. And at around the time of his ANZ stunt, John the Baptist was in the Christian lectionary. For me, the parallels between John and Jonathan have been striking.

John the Baptist lived in the wilderness. Jono the Activist has been camping for some time in the Leard State Forest near Maules Creek, at a Front Line



cartoon: norrie may-welby

Action on Coal mine blockade.

John got himself locked up by criticising the behaviour of Herod, the then ruler of Galilee. For making the announcement that ANZ should have made, Jono could now face a potential 10-year gaol sentence or a fine of up to \$500,000.

When followers suggested that John the Baptist might be the Messiah, he pointed away from himself and towards

the Christ that was yet to come. When the spotlight has been shone onto Moylan, he has repeatedly deflected the attention towards the resistance of the Maules Creek community and towards the impacts if the project goes ahead – the loss of farmland and critically endangered forest, the drawdown and potential contamination of the aquifer, the coal dust, the impacts on the global climate.

In a recent opinion piece, Moylan

urges us to act: "We are living in a dream world if we think that politicians and the business world are going to sort out the problem of coal expansion on their own. History shows us that when power relations are unevenly matched, change always comes from below. Every right we have has come from ordinary people doing extraordinary things and the time to act is rapidly running out."

Whatever our age, ability or infirmity

we can all play a part in such change from below.

Dr Miriam Pepper is a resident of Waterloo, a parishioner at South Sydney Uniting Church, and involved in several environmental and climate change groups. This is an abridged version of an article first published by Christian Ecology Link. The full text can be read here: [www.greenchristian.org.uk/archives/4844](http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/archives/4844)

# Searching for the truth

FAITH

JAN MCINTYRE

One reality about being people of faith is that we can never claim to know the whole truth. Only God knows that. This makes it all the more important for us to have the courage and conviction to challenge each other and to enter into sometimes costly dialogue in order to search for what is true. In recent times, the congregation at St Saviour's Anglican Church in Redfern has made significant changes to the way it will live out what it believes to be its mission. Jan McIntyre, wife of the now Bishop of Gippsland, John McIntyre, who was the previous priest of St Saviour's, has written the following open letter to the St Saviour's congregation with copies to Archbishop Peter Jensen and Bishop Robert Forsyth.

I am writing to express my deep shock and concern at the eviction of the community groups from The Redfern Centre. The coming together of church and community groups under the roof of the church hall has been

a remarkable example of the church working with and for the community, giving unconditional Christ-like love, acceptance and invitation into the fullness of life offered through Jesus.

The Centre has meant a caring presence of people was there in connection with the church, even when no-one was at the church or at home in the rectory (though we did try to have the church left open much of the day, with great appreciation by those who entered for many reasons). The good relationship between those working in the Centre and the congregation and leadership of the church meant communication and conversation happened in regard to church and community care.

The groups moving into the hall gave them a stable home at a reasonable cost and we were able to fix up the decaying hall for more specific church use. Now a lot more of the groups' hard-won government funding will be spent just on accommodation, taking it away from the people using the services. The stability will probably be lost, too. Also, the groups learned much from simply working beside each other – the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The benefits of

having a relationship with the locals also meant assistance to locals was more than just through the professional services provided by the groups.

Many other communities now seek for such opportunity to create places where people often on the edges of society can come into a safe place to share voluntary work, a chat, a cuppa, a healthy meal or to air personal and community concerns. This can help diffuse difficult situations and develop creative solutions.

The people can come without the weight of expectation or conditions. Some of those volunteers came to church, but that was never a condition put on them. One man with cerebral palsy, and his carer, began by helping with the Food Distribution Network, and then came to church weekly. They travelled some distance to do this. Usually though, the volunteers are very local and many don't or can't drive. They are not the wealthy or powerful, educated or advantaged, beautiful or articulate. They are the ones who know their need and their brokenness. They don't need the church to be telling them they are sinners (haven't we all fallen short anyway?). That only makes them feel

worse and as if God doesn't care or won't come near. God welcomes and invites us while we are still far off!

So I am stunned (as are those I tell) that you told the people in the Redfern Centre, that you can't work with them to run a soup kitchen because they "are not Christians". For one thing, just because they maybe don't attend church regularly (or not one of which you approve) or express a Christian faith in the words that you want to hear, does not mean they are far from God. Dare I venture to suggest that if you were to have real conversation with them, you may find the light on their hill is lit by God. Your making such a harsh, rejecting judgement (after an offer to work together) is not exactly doing as Jesus tells us to do. Or rather, it is judging when we are told not to do so.

A further example of this took place during a recent funeral for a tireless voluntary community worker. The mourners were told, as part of the words in the service, that it is not good enough to be a good person or to do good things and that if you're not "saved" (by whose measure?) then you are going to hell! These cannot be words spoken by someone

who has heard how Jesus responds to people. Well, yes, the Pharisees do get into trouble because they do "good" works but put conditions on people and burden them with their own, not God's rules.

People cannot be frightened into the Kingdom. They are to come to Jesus, to God and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, because of the true freedom and love he offers, which they don't find elsewhere. There is no freedom in fear. These words only push people away from being able to hear the Gospel and Jesus is not too happy with people when they won't let the children go to him.

Jesus was tender, gentle and just, and he created an atmosphere of trust which drew honesty from people. He did not basically bully them into his Kingdom. Many years ago, a local from Redfern told me, "You can't sell God. God is not a whore – you cannot whore God". Did I say "not articulate" earlier? This is very clear and perceptive!

Many more than you know are shocked, saddened and horrified by your action and your justification for removing the community groups from The Redfern Centre.

# Statement from St Saviour's Church Council

COMMENT

THE CHURCH Council of one1seven church (also known as St Saviour's Anglican Church) would like to express its appreciation to the management, employees and volunteers who have worked in the Redfern Centre to provide valuable

services to our community.

Growth in church ministry has made it necessary for the church to reacquire the hall and office facilities of the centre. These ministries include the one4food soup kitchen, feeding on average 50 people every Friday night

with provisions from OzHarvest and a growing youth ministry.

The original working relationship between the Parish of South Sydney and the Department of Ageing, Disabilities and Home Care (DADHC) included provision for termination upon agreement by both parties. The re-acquisition of the Redfern

Centre has been carried out over a 12-month period, and in consultation with Redfern Centre management to ensure minimal disruption to services. We are encouraged that most of the government agencies providing services to the community have already found alternate premises to continue their work.

Minister of one1seven church, Matthew Johnson, says the church appreciates the professionalism with which all necessary parties undertook this process. "My hope is for one1seven church to be a base to reach out to the people in our community, to bring them together and to tell them about Jesus."

# Affordable housing in many guises

JOEL PRINGLE

**THOSE WHO join the Australians for Affordable Housing campaign, would be struck by how broadly the issue of affordable housing has affected the community. Some of us are aware of the issues faced by pensioners and others on government payments, and the stress faced by those relying on private rental properties. But the breadth and number of people compelled to tell their stories of housing stress, and to have their stories shared, may well be a surprise.**

Housing stress affects people who wish to buy a home, as repayments on the large mortgages now required take an increased percentage of average salaries. Average first home loans in NSW rose 65 per cent in the 10 years leading to 2012. For many workers the repayments on these loans can be over half of their take-home salary.

Housing stress affects renters even more so. Between 2000 and 2010, NSW rents ballooned by 72 per cent (later data was not available). Saving for a house deposit whilst paying

such astronomical rents requires a herculean effort. Those in rented accommodation who are not looking to buy face years of uncertainty over their costs and insecure tenure.

Frequently we hear from single parents in Sydney who are working but can't afford rent, and they are not able to access public housing, due to the shortage of properties. A common story from Melbourne is of families who have had to leave the city and move to the country to find affordable accommodation.

Inner-city communities are hit especially hard by housing stress, due to the highly desirable proximity to jobs and lifestyle options. The impacts of gentrification on established communities has long been recognised; however, with high house prices and rents in areas such as South Sydney, the initial agents of gentrification, young professionals, are now being pushed out as well.

This housing stress has a number of impacts. In a recent publication the Australian Bureau of Statistics highlighted the increased prevalence of over-crowding in communities across Australia, including urban communities

and amongst young people. One way of adapting to high prices has been more people fitting into smaller residences, with obvious impacts for those in crowded accommodation and the community more broadly.

Another impact is that our suburbs that were once cherished for their diversity are seeing their communities forced out.

South Sydney, like many similar inner-city communities with a high number of public housing residents, is experiencing increased concentrations of both disadvantage and of wealth and privilege, but the middle is being squeezed out. Without communities to bridge the two, the negative impacts of inequality will become further pronounced.

Whilst the impact of housing stress is felt by many, it is those who are already most disadvantaged who are most affected. As middle-income households move into what was otherwise lower-cost housing, people on lower incomes end up in over-crowding, homelessness, or under-resourced public and community housing.

One of the solutions advocated by

Australians for Affordable Housing is for the government to increase investment in social housing. To meet requirements of financial viability, community housing organisations house tenants from a range of backgrounds, though all would otherwise be experiencing housing stress. Rather than only focusing on residents with high and complex needs, as public housing does, community housing provides mixed developments for communities including pensioners, young families and low-wage workers.

For people connected with South Sydney, it is heartening to see a few such projects proposed locally. The Green Square affordable housing development, supported by the City of Sydney, and the North Eveleigh affordable housing development will play a key role in maintaining diversity in these communities.

However, further investment will be required to meet the demand for affordable housing in South Sydney and around the country. Australians for Affordable Housing are calling on the federal government to use the upcoming budget to introduce an Affordable Housing Growth

Fund, and much scoping work has been done into how this could be funded through the creation of an affordable housing bond scheme.

The causes of the housing crisis are many and complex, but one thing is clear: successive governments have encouraged housing speculation to prop up other areas of the economy, and they have lost control of house price inflation. For their role in the housing crisis, it's time to take responsibility and address the hardship that has been created. Solutions to Australia's housing crisis need to consider how to provide options across the housing spectrum: we need a strong and well supported public housing system, we need affordable rental properties (including that provided by community housing organisations), and we need to address the tax incentives that drive property speculation in the private market.

.....  
**Joel Pringle is the Campaign Manager of Australians for Affordable Housing. To find out more or to take part, go to [housingstressed.org.au](http://housingstressed.org.au) or follow the campaign at [www.facebook.com/housingstressed](http://www.facebook.com/housingstressed)**

## Solving the housing crisis



Denis Doherty at Cowper Street Photo: Lyn Turnbull

DENIS DOHERTY

**AS HOUSE prices climb beyond the reach of more families and rents rise even faster, more and more Australians are experiencing housing stress. Instead of seeking solutions to this crisis, the NSW Government has turned its back on the problem in the vain hope that the markets will solve it. The markets have no interest in people in stress, low socio-economic groups and especially the homeless. The problems are set to get a whole lot worse.**

The time has come for governments to accept that the way forward is massive reinvestment in public housing. This will result in more

and better accommodation for lower socio-economic groups, more affordable housing, less homelessness, falling rents and a decline in housing stress. It will even improve the housing construction business whose numbers are again down in the last period reported.

Over the last 40 years, public housing, previously available to low-income working families, has been restricted to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians. These already disadvantaged tenants have been further marginalised by being abandoned in estates, often in city outskirts, with poor or no services or maintenance.

The widespread inadequacy of public housing maintenance has been called "demolition by neglect".

Governments then use the excuse of housing stock deterioration and high maintenance costs to sell public houses off to the private sector.

Low-income working families have to find homes in an increasingly expensive private rental market which has, in its turn, produced housing stress. This is defined as when tenants have to pay over 30 per cent of their income on shelter. In some cases people are paying 57 per cent of their income, and even higher, on rent.

Parallel to the sell-off of public housing has come a concerted attack on public housing tenants as irresponsible, "bludgers", and so on. Few realise, and it should be repeated often, that public housing is subsidised housing, not free. Tenants pay 25 per cent of their income

for shelter. If a tenant pays this amount of rent for 50 years he or she has paid for that home many times over.

Private home owners do not attract the criticism that public housing tenants get. Yet private housing attracts six times more public money than public housing gets through first home owner grants and tax concessions.

Every litre of diesel used by mining companies attracts a subsidy. Car industry giants Toyota, GM and Ford receive subsidies. But these groups do not attract the hostility of the media and the general public.

One example of the failure of government housing policy can be seen in Cowper Street in Glebe, but there are many other examples across "the city of villages". In summary, 16

low-rise apartment blocks, housing a long-standing community of nearly 300 public housing tenants were demolished, with the promise that the land would be used to house both public tenants and private owners.

The development would have involved a net loss of almost 50 per cent of the public land to the private sector and loss of about 100 places for lower socio-economic strata tenants. This was bad enough, but almost three years after demolition, in January 2013, Cowper Street is a wasteland of weeds, no families, no trees, no gardens, no birds – and with no immediate prospect of a building going up. A waste and a scandal!

The human cost of the dispersal of the Cowper Street community was appalling. Support networks built up over years were destroyed as tenants were scattered near and far. London's Lord Mayor Boris Johnson described the policy of dumping public housing tenants in out-of-the-way areas as "social cleansing". This is what is happening in our city too.

There is no reason why Australia could not adopt a large-scale commitment to public housing. The obstacle is the socially destructive ideology of destroying the public sector to give free rein to those with the money to make a real-estate bonanza.

Present and past NSW state governments have this destructive ideology in spades. The present Liberal National Coalition Government does not even have a housing minister!

The time has come for local, state and federal governments to put a massive effort into public housing. The main responsibility falls on the Federal Government to reverse the policies of the past 40 years and get all levels of government working on public housing.

People concerned with the destruction of public housing in Sydney need to unify so we can put a more powerful voice to governments for a bigger and better public housing system. In the richest country in the world, we have the resources to solve the problems of housing our people. It is time governments listened!

.....  
**Denis Doherty is the spokesperson for Hands Off Glebe, a pro public housing group based in Glebe. He is also a former mayoral candidate for the Housing Action Team. Denis is a well-known local activist for social justice who lives in the inner city.**



Scene from Yabun 2013 Photo: Isabella Moore

## Stronger into the future – Yabun 2013

ADA LEE

ON JANUARY 26, *Survival Day*, over 10,000 people united at Victoria Park to celebrate Australia's Aboriginal heritage. Yabun is the biggest one-day Aboriginal festival in Australia and it proved the best place to be for the national holiday.

"The whole Sydney community was invited," said Bianca Williams of Gadigal Information Service. Yabun aims "to say to the rest of the world that Aboriginal culture is surviving ... We're heading even stronger into the future."

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore attended to pay her respects to Australia's First Peoples. Quoting Paulo Coelho, she said: "It's what you do in the present that will redeem the past and thereby change the future."

Victoria Park buzzed with friendly faces, cultural pride, and, of course, the music. Kids got artsy in the Jarjums Tent and played in the Corroboree Sand. There was rock climbing and jumping castles. People gathered amid stalls and in the Speak Out Tent to discuss Aboriginal Australia's future. The food was truly multicultural and I got the chance to try crocodile.

Yabun translates to "music with a beat", and in this regard, did not disappoint. Families and friends gathered to witness some of the greatest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander upcoming and established talents. It wasn't your typical perfectly timed concert with hyperventilating fans and

idolised celebrities. The line-up ran half an hour late and the wind knocked things over but it didn't matter. It was perfectly imperfect. It was the feeling of community.

On the Main Stage, MCs Constantina Bush and Redfern Now actor, Alec Doomadgee, provided the perfect mix of comedy and seriousness. Musical highlights included JPoint's soulful hip hop, the elegant Thelma Plum with an indie voice that felt like floating, Dizzy Doolan's feminine ferocity and seeing Vic Simms and the All Star Band of 50-somethings rocking out like teenagers. But regardless of what musical genre tickles your fancy, it was the heart of the festival that proved most captivating.

The crowd favourite was undeniably Archie Roach – not just because of his ARIA awards and iconic deep voice but more because he embodies perfectly the Indigenous survival story and the meaning of Yabun. When his voice dripped with regret and longing as he sang "Old Mission Road", you saw him as a 3-year-old Aboriginal boy, stolen from his parents. And when he got the crowd dancing to his upbeat, soulful new release, "Song to Sing", you saw a man who had survived and inspired. Roach told the crowd: "No matter how insurmountable things might seem, we're going to rise above it."

Yabun Festival 2013 was a day of exceptional talent, entertainment and sharing. Most of all, it was a day of remembrance and hope.

More photos online: [www.southsydneyherald.com.au](http://www.southsydneyherald.com.au)



Writer Carolyn Burns, actor Emma Campbell and director Martha Goddard Photo: Courtesy ATYP

## Dark comedy highlights strength of character

BRITTANY JOHNSON

DIRECTOR MARTHA Goddard talks about her new short film, *Stick*, a dark comedy about a teenage girl with Crohn's disease, and what it was like working with the Australian Theatre for Young People's (ATYP) The Voices Project.

In your own words, what would you describe *Stick* as being about?

For me the film is about a teenage girl's perspective on discovering she has a chronic illness and finding a way to still be empowered as opposed to feeling degraded. She actually feels different, is proud of it and she's found a way to cope. So on that level, I think everyone can relate.

What attracted you to the project?

The idea of Crohn's disease was completely new to me so I did a lot of research and now I'm fascinated by what people overcome and how we adapt. Humans adapt to any situation that's thrown at them. Philosophically, the piece appealed to me as I see the strength of a teenage girl named Louise, finding a way to cope with this debilitating illness.

As director, what was the biggest challenge in making *Stick* into a film?

*Stick* was first written as part of ATYP's Fresh Ink emerging playwright program, then performed as a monologue in theatre and now it has been

transformed into a filmed performance. So the trickiest part was adapting the piece from theatre to film with a visual style that wouldn't impinge on the drama, whilst maintaining the integrity of the character's monologue.

How did you find working with writer Carolyn Burns and ATYP's The Voices Project?

I love what ATYP is doing. I genuinely think that they are one of the great opportunities for young voices. Carolyn [Burns] had a very clear vision of what she was writing and she really understood the voice of the character. The situation is quite absurd in that the threshold of what's appropriate and what's not, is gone – which then makes the piece funny! I don't think Carolyn has seen the film yet so I'm really curious to see what she thinks! I hope she likes it.

I think she definitely will! How would you like audiences to react to the film?

I want the audience to be shocked, provoked, confused and then uplifted. I want them to feel the fragility behind this young girl's way of handling the situation that she's been given. I think it's really great for people to be aware of what Crohn's is and to be reminded that we all struggle with different challenges.

*Stick* and the rest of The Voices Project short films will be launched online on March 1. For more information head to [www.atyp.com.au](http://www.atyp.com.au)



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# The Reviews

## Film Review by Lindsay Cohen



**The Impossible**  
**Director: Juan Antonio Bayona**  
**Starring: Naomi Watts, Ewan McGregor, Tom Holland**  
**Genre: Drowning, not waving**

Disaster films are a staple of the film industry. Wikipedia lists hundreds of them, all nicely categorised into sub-headings such as monsters, aliens, volcanoes, earthquakes and much more. A cavalcade of death and destruction, and nearly each of them a tale of survival against the odds.

*The Impossible* is no exception to the rule, but it differs in important ways.

For one thing, it's a true story of survival, in this case of 2004's Boxing Day tsunami. Every disaster has its miraculous tales of survival. Babies are often pulled out of earthquake rubble eight days after the earthquake, for example. That a family of five can be smashed by a tsunami and separated and then not only survive but find each other is even more remarkable.

Secondly, *The Impossible* is actually very good. Disaster films may make great use of computer-generated special effects (*Independence Day*, *Deep Impact*, *Twister*, *Titanic*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, etc.) but the disaster in all its "glory" is usually the centrepiece of the film. This is just as true of the clunky B-grade classics of the 1960s-80s: *The Poseidon Adventure*, *The Towering Inferno*, *Airport*, *Airport 2*, *Airport 3* and so on.

The tsunami sequence in *The Impossible* is as breathtaking and horrifying as it is visually and technically impressive. But if anything, *The Impossible* goes beyond the bounds of other disaster films by featuring great acting, tear-jerking reunions, and a solid storyline that doesn't rely on special effects and superstar tales of heroism.

Sure, in the context of thousands of people dying, one family's survival might seem irrelevant, but they were surrounded by and participated in thousands of little acts of heroism by tourists and locals alike, and that is a truly remarkable thing.

Rating: Four sobs

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

## Book Reviews by Margaret Vazey



**Deranged Marriage - A Memoir**  
**Sushi Das**  
**Bantam, Random House, Sydney, 2012**

Read this book to cry and laugh about the getting of wisdom of a young woman: born in India, arriving in England as a very young baby, going to school and growing up in London, going to university in Hertford.

Growing up in one's own culture can be pretty painful, especially during the teenage years. It is even more painful growing up in a different culture to that of your peer group as well as that of your parents, and especially if you are also recognisably different. If you are a sensitive soul, the bullies have a field day. You also might blame yourself for not being the person that everyone, including yourself, expects you to be.

Well-meaning, concerned, anxious parents also contribute to the angst, especially if they feel it is their moral duty to arrange a suitable marriage for you.

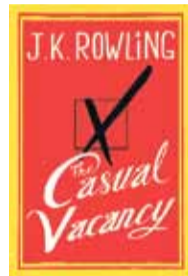
With a deft and stylish touch, Sushi Das takes us through this painful period of her life. Her efforts to fit in by trying to be like everybody else, and to be liked by everybody, may remind the reader of similar painful moments from his/her own life.

Sushi Das does not spare herself: all

those awkward, often foolish decisions that a person can make are teased out in both anguished and hilarious detail. Her fierce refusal to marry an excellently suitable young man, her mother's sorrow and disgust, her father's rage and fury, her younger sister's lack of comprehension of her stand, and her brother's contrasting and envied freedom (because he was a boy), are acutely described.

It became clear to her that she needed to deliberately choose her own way of life – not just to react and oppose her parents on principle – but with courage and strength to take responsibility for her decisions.

This lovely, ultimately joyous memoir, celebrates the struggle of everywoman in this situation.



**The Casual Vacancy**  
**J.K. Rowling**  
**Little, Brown, 2012**

This is not the book for Harry Potter fans: for this is the world from which Harry Potter escaped when he passed through the brick wall at the railway station. It is J.K. Rowling's version of the real world: the one that cannot be fixed by waving a magic wand.

With surgical precision, she dissects the personalities of the inhabitants of the imaginary but true-to-life town of Pagford, a pretty little town, tucked away in the English countryside not far from the larger, uglier city of Yarvil. The leading characters of Pagford are like big fish in a small bowl. They rival each other and struggle to better themselves at each other's expense. Their foolishness, foibles and frailties are ruthlessly exposed, as well as the meanness, selfishness and cruelty of specific individuals.

In particular, the writer is at pains to show us the effect that this behaviour has on the next generation growing up in Pagford, what they have to put up with, indeed suffer, from the adults in their lives. She questions how anyone could grow up to be a kind, generous adult in this environment.

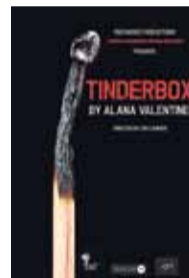
Yet someone does: a local councillor, Barry Fairbrother, whose presence is felt throughout the story. The casual vacancy is created when, on almost the first page of the book (so I am not really giving anything away by telling you this), he dies.

The writing is brilliant, accurate, convincing, but it is a very sad book, especially about the rites-of-passage for the teenagers in the story. There is no lovely, exciting, challenging, encouraging and rewarding private school for these kids. They have to make the best of the grim and not so grim realities of their lives.

Just as Charles Dickens exposed the dark side of Victorian England in his stories, so J.K. Rowling invites us to ponder our own society, and question what will be our legacy.

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

## Theatre Review by Catherine Wood



**Tinderbox**  
**Written by Alana Valentine**  
**Directed by Zoe Carides**  
**Darlinghurst Theatre, January 8-27**

As expected from playwright Alana Valentine, *Tinderbox*, directed with a lyrical toughness by Zoe Carides, is both provocative and tender.

The ravages of bushfires, the agonies of land, animals, humans and their habitations, are well-documented throughout the play, and weight the balance against those individuals, so frequently young men, who deliberately start them. However, by focussing on a flash point in the lives of rural neighbours, Ben (Benjamin Ross), the son of a single parent and fire fighter Tom (Alan Lovell) and their fey neighbour, Viv (Nastassja Djalog) *Tinderbox* treats a teenage arsonist with compassionate understanding.

The physical conditions for bushfire are simply and beautifully conveyed

(Ally Mansel and Benjamin Brockman) through an arc of intersecting bare branches, a circle of sand and artful backlighting. The possibility for violent destruction, inherent in the combination of a parched earth and combustible material, referenced by the presence of smoke, becomes a powerful metaphor for a human situation. Lack of love, of acknowledgement, of acceptance, or of understanding can create anger that at any moment, spontaneously or provoked, erupts into small cruelties or an urge to annihilate.

Tom, for instance, has been deserted by his wife for another man, and if Viv's grapevine is to be believed, because he was sexually inadequate. While Tom is outwardly a strong, reserved male, dedicated to his occupation as a fire fighter and trying to bring up his now teenage son, it is apparent that his composure masks a deep inner anger. Tom's obsessive involvement, noticed by Viv, in his story of the injured Alsation suggests that he too bears a "raw wound".

Tom's emotional reticence has been at the expense of his son. Having been denied the attention, the active "listening to" that gives developing individuals a sense of their own worth, Ben is deeply frustrated by his powerlessness to impact on his immediate world. Ben's anger is evident in his restless movements, his bodily tension and his urge to have "a bit of a clear out". He directs his anger at all that is "old", at "old growth", at "old ideas", and, personally although indirectly, at Viv, a volunteer at the local museum, and loving caretaker of the past.

More importantly, Ben sees his own outsider status reflected in Viv's social isolation. Set apart from others by highly developed imaginative and intuitive capacities, Viv has chosen to live in her own world. However, when she witnesses Ben's desperate but, as she notes, obtrusive attempt at arson she chooses participation. Not only does Viv step forward and name her neighbour's son but she also defends Ben's character in court and to the community.

Tom stands by Ben because most parental love is strong and not deserting a child who has struck at what they hold dear seems to be part of that painful contract. However, is Ben really a good boy, as the tender Viv contends? It depends. Is Viv the moral centre of the play?

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



Sharon Van Etten Photo: Shervin Lainez

# Flawless, without fanfare

REVIEW BY JULIA JACKLIN

**Sharon Van Etten,**  
**The Famous Spiegeltent,**  
**Hyde Park, 9/1/13**

**I MANAGED to get a seat front and centre in the intimate Spiegeltent, so close that if I keeled over in fan girl admiration I'd be laying at her feet. Which was exactly what I wanted to do her entire set.**

After a short wait, Sharon Van Etten graced the stage, setting up her guitar and launching into "Peace Signs" from her second album *Epic*, introducing the Sydney Festival audience to her signature strumming style that would be utilised throughout the set. Van Etten was joined by a three-piece band: lead guitar (Doug Keith), drums (Ben Lord) and the multitalented Heather Woods Broderick on backing vocals, bass, keys

and effects.

I noticed, a few songs in, that Van Etten had tears rolling down her cheeks. Whether it had to do with the personal subject matter of the songs or the fact that this was the final show in a year-long tour I'll never know.

As the show went on, Van Etten gradually became more comfortable in the environment, talking with the crowd in a self-deprecating manner, which from my observations made all those in attendance want to embrace her in a group hug. One of the stage banter highlights was when someone yelled out a reference from *The Castle* (Van Etten had mentioned a recent holiday), and straight away she shot back with: "This show's going straight to the pool room!"

The bigger numbers, "Serpents" and "Magic Chords" from highly praised current album, *Tramp*, were delivered flawlessly, without fanfare.

What makes Van Etten and her

music/performance so special is that she still has the awkward and endearing presence of someone much less established. She seemed genuinely surprised by the crowd's response, which helped to break down the performer/audience divide. She held back her vocals, letting a few hints of her vocal range slip through, so that when she really let go everyone was floored by its clarity and strength.

Another highlight was when band members jammed together, lead guitarist Keith using a bow that managed to create a giant wall of sound that you could almost feel pushing on the confines of the tent. He emerged from the floor with a broken bow and a huge smile on his face.

After a one-song encore they took a bow and left, only to return a few minutes later to pack up their gear, giving one grateful fan the opportunity to gush her admiration.

# Weirdness, workshops & music

FESTIVAL REVIEW BY LAYTH SAEED

Peats Ridge, 29/12/12-1/1/13

PEATS RIDGE Sustainable Arts & Music Festival, a three-day camping event held in the Glenworth Valley over the New Year period, has always been able to offer punters plenty of weirdness, workshops and music from both established acts and emerging artists. This summer's festival (the eighth) was no exception. The line-up included John Butler Trio, Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings, 65daysofstatic, The Black Seeds, Tijuana Cartel, Unknown Mortal Orchestra, Hiatus Kayote, Tuka, DJ Morgz, Brian Campeau, Crooked Fiddle Band, Rusty Spring Syncopators, and Salta.

As well as providing a pretty excellent line-up, Peats Ridge also offers many arts and sustainability workshops. The festival has won multiple sustainability awards, and this is mainly due to the entire festival being powered on renewable energy, compostable everything, and volunteers. Everything might not run as smoothly as something like Harvest, but Peats Ridge is willing to give you a go. Whether it be a free ticket for helping out, a spot on the line-up after hearing only a few demos or just a fun, safe, community atmosphere for New Year's Eve. Sadly, the Peats Ridge team has indicated that the festival (probably) won't be back after running at a significant loss this year.

Unknown Mortal Orchestra has been gaining a very solid fan base since the 2011 release of its self-titled debut. Funk/hip-hop based rhythms drive beneath front-man Ruban Nielson's high-range



Unknown Mortal Orchestra Photo: Jagjaguwar

vocals and powerful psychedelic guitar lines. With their second album, *II*, due for release on February 5, and at the beginning of a massive run of shows all around the world, I'm glad Ruban found the time to sit down and have a talk about everything from the new album to seeing Jza at one of his shows.

I've had a peek at your touring schedule on the net and I've noticed you guys are playing a show a day for the next couple of weeks. Is that a daunting undertaking?

Yeah, we end up doing that quite a lot, actually. We did 29 days without a day off last year, which kind of destroyed me,

so we don't do that anymore, but we'll definitely do a week or two without a break. But I'm getting better at learning how to keep my voice going.

Also, while checking out your website, I noticed that you have an advance download of your new album available for those who pre-order. Was that your idea?

It was kind of everyone's, really. We all thought it would be cool to give the hardcore fans a bit of an exclusive package with a bunch of goodies in there, and one of the things you got was the advance download, to make up for the wait. I mean, it's a bit hard to sit on the

album for almost a year after you finish it knowing there are some people who really want to hear it. It's really for those few people that are really amped I guess.

Back in 2010, you released your first track, "FFunny FFriends", anonymously on Bandcamp, and it wasn't until after Pitchfork and various bloggers got a taste for it that you claimed it as your own. Why so shy?

It wasn't so much shyness, it's really that I had made the recording without telling anyone I was doing it. I was in a band at the time called the Mintchicks and we hadn't said the band had broken up yet, but I had already left and I didn't really want to deal with any issues regarding that, and I didn't really think I was going to release it. When I eventually put it up I didn't really bother with anything because of all that, as well as working a lot at the time. So I came back to it a little while later to check if anyone had heard it or anything, and there was this huge traffic spike. So I checked out all the links to see where the traffic was coming from, and it was all these blogs and eventually Pitchfork, then I set up an email for the band to see what would happen and it got a bit flooded. There were heaps of labels writing in, bloggers, people asking when we're going to play and stuff, it was really weird. Eventually, I threw together a band because we got offered a tour with the Smithwesterns and we'd only done a few rehearsals. Then at our first show, there were all these people there to see us from like A&R and other labels. Then right after we played, this booking agent rang us up, he's the same guy that does Gotye and Foster the People and stuff like that, and he said, "I'm going to start booking you guys." Then we were on the road for like two years. It was pretty insane.

You've always got quite a funk/hip-hop feel to your rhythm section. Do you care

to elaborate on any of your influences?

Yeah, I'm a huge fan of Rza, Gza and all the Wu-Tang stuff, and also Sly and the Family Stone. I quite like soul and hip-hop and stuff as well as classic rock. I mean, I've started referring to my music as Psy-Rn'B because I feel that's the way it's really going. I also have a lot of respect for other Psychedelic musicians like Tame Impala and Connan Mockasin, and I kind of want to carve out my own little space in the genre and not just be in the shadow of those bands that do what they do so well. So I've been really digging deeper into the soul and Rn'B side of things.

Growing up, what was the one album that you just seemed to play and play?

Well, it depends what year it was, but the albums that come into my head straight away would be *Ill Communication* by the Beastie Boys, I don't know, for some reason I just loved that album; this one called *Hot Wrecks* by Frank Zappa, Zappa's first solo record; and *Liquid Swords* by Gza, that was a big one as well, I listened to that album a lot. I didn't even know what it was about but I really liked the sound. Yeah, he came to one of our shows in LA and sat right in front of me; it was really weird, I met him afterwards and he was really into it. I was like, "What the hell!?"

Did that catch you a bit off guard?

Sort of. There was this guy in LA that we work with who knew him and I ended up talking about *Liquid Swords* a lot and he surprised me by inviting him to the show. Gza was like, "I'm here to see it, show me what you got", and then just sat down in front of me. I think it was probably one of the best shows we've played, actually. I think the pressure probably helped.

More interviews online: [www.southsydneyherald.com.au](http://www.southsydneyherald.com.au)



## Women loving life after 50

MICHAEL PAGE

THE ONSET of the 50th birthday is often a time people fear. For women, it marks a significant turning point in their life. As award-winning photographer Jennifer Blau approached "the big 5-0" she found herself becoming more and more absorbed in finding out about what women thought and felt about the big birthday and years following.

Blau turned her fascination into a captivating documentary project within her Master's Degree in Documentary Photography at Sydney University, interviewing and capturing the stories of a large number of women over 50.

"Many women are undergoing significant changes in their life with changes to family responsibilities as children become more independent," Blau explains, "so this time becomes a crossroads when many women, after

years of giving, can begin to feel a bit irrelevant. These feelings can be further exacerbated by a society obsessed with youth and beauty leading to many women fearing a slide towards invisibility."

Yet despite the barriers and perceptions that go along with turning 50, Blau found incredible inspiration in the stories and photos of the women she interviewed. "Everyone had their individual story to tell. This mid-life

crisis is often a mid-life opportunity as women reflect, take stock of their achievements and accumulated wisdom and discover a time of liberation and possibility. For many, it's a window of opportunity that women in previous generations were not afforded," she says.

Blau has now self-published this series of intimate portraits and personal stories as a unique book about women's feelings about the big birthday, and years following. She is keen to extend

her project and is looking to connect with a wider range of women in their 50s, from different ethnicities and backgrounds, to add to her collection of stories and photographs with a view to possible exhibition or further publication.

She is looking for volunteers to be photographed and interviewed. If you are interested you can contact Jennifer Blau at [jaz@isp.net.au](mailto:jaz@isp.net.au).



**REVOLUTION**  
ETIQUETTE

iEtiquette & The Factory Community Centre are holding a fundraising event showcasing an amazing array of talented performers from the Village Performing Arts Centre on the 9th of March, 2013 at the Everest Theatre - Seymour Centre Time: 7pm

Book now at Seymour Box Office 02 9351 7940 or <http://www.seymourcentre.com/events/event/revolution> or contact iEtiquette, Inc. or The Factory Community Centre Phone: 0418 977 322 E: [sponsorship@ietiquette.org](mailto:sponsorship@ietiquette.org) [www.ietiquette.org](http://www.ietiquette.org)

# Milk Crate creativity

BRITTANY JOHNSON & ANDREW COLLIS

IN DECEMBER Milk Crate Theatre was presented the Macquarie Group Foundation's Social Innovation Award in recognition of its community shows program, Australia's only ongoing theatre program devised "by the homeless community for the homeless community". Long-time participant, Helen (not her real name), spoke with the SSH about acting, artistic collaborations and developing skills for life.



Fearless, Carriageworks, September 2012 Photo: Milk Crate Theatre

Before becoming involved with Milk Crate via opportunities with Catholic Health Care's Mercy Arms in Waterloo as well as Edward Eagar Lodge in Surry Hills, Helen experienced significant mental health and relationship issues leading to disempowerment and isolation. The Waterloo resident, mother and grandmother, has known the hardship of poverty and abuse, as well as the risk of homelessness. "I wasn't allowed to talk for 41 years," she said. Helen made repeated reference to the confidence she has gained as a participant in Milk Crate Theatre. "It's very rewarding and exciting."

Helen, who is also a keen painter, has performed in Milk Crate productions in Woolloomooloo and Parramatta over the past four years (there is also an ensemble in Newtown). Each production is unique, she explained. "The process is quite involved and includes exercises, workshops, storytelling, set design, and of course, rehearsals – usually six weeks of rehearsals." It's a process she clearly enjoys. "Often, we get to work with professional actors and musicians like Graham Rhodes, Bernadette Reagan and Christa Hughes."

Artistic director Beck Ronson is singled out for praise. "Beck's back from leave this year which is good news. She knows exactly what to do, what to get us to do, she makes us work," Helen said. "She won't take any nonsense!"

Helen will make a decision this month about getting involved in the first production for 2013 at Woolloomooloo. "Workshops start soon," she said. "Sharing ideas, experimenting – usually the shows comprise a series of short plays. The ideas evolve, with all of us having a say."

Learning with others is something Helen has come to value. She spoke of camaraderie, companionship and friendship. "It gives you confidence, working with other actors. You learn that it's not just about you. There are other actors and creators. There is also the play itself."

When invited to name the single most important lesson or skill learned over more than six theatrical productions including a recent Christmas show at the Belvoir Theatre (a high point), Helen was quick to reply. "Discipline," she said. "A typical day of rehearsal is from 2pm to 5pm – that means it's important to get to work, to listen, to focus."

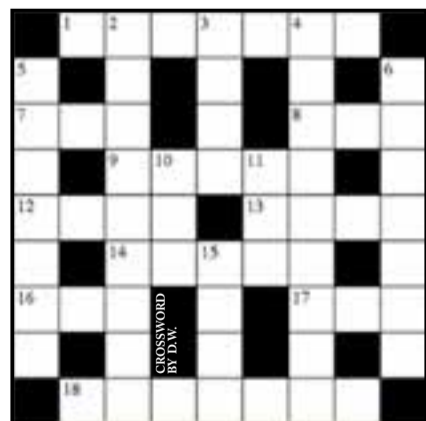
A professional respect for the craft informs Helen's approach to performance. "I get nervous, I think that's normal," she said. "It shows that you care about what you're doing. I have some strategies I've learnt to deal with that – walking up and down backstage, deep breathing. The hard work brings accomplishment – our payment is the enjoyment of the audience."

[www.milkcratetheatre.com](http://www.milkcratetheatre.com)



78 Saab farewelled fans with a final show at the Annandale Hotel on December 1 (more photos online) Photo: Lyndal Irons

## South Sydney Crossword



### Across

1. \*Debate about bar having being involved in crime (7)
7. Wax creator (3)
8. \*Headless pale variety? (3)
9. 500's superior suit (5)
12. Bounced sound (4)
13. \*Lost head from the hooch, sweat it out (4)
14. Grinder (5)
16. Epoch (3)
17. Commercials (3)
18. \*Articulate skill it takes to use frypan (7)

### Down

2. \*Blemish gave Spooner howl of joy (9)
3. \*Skirt for Desmond (4)
4. Evanesce (9)
5. On the grid (7)
6. \*Pass on, or un-stop? (3)
10. 50c coin animal (3)
11. Extinct NZ bird species (3)
15. \*Lie around and chuckle loudly...?? (3)

\*Denotes cryptic clue



LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION

First correct entry receives a prize. Send to: South Sydney Crossword PO Box 3288, Redfern NSW 2016

## Poetry

### Einstein's Wires

Under kitchen sink  
question Einstein  
time and space  
candles, containers

electrical wires  
clean/sort emergency stash  
toolmaking farmer

dust, wash, repack  
hammer, nails, nuts, bolts  
sharpening stone,  
garden cutters

she shared her desire  
handywoman my mother  
colours, paper, fabrics, sticks

discouraged, dismissed  
did creative behaviour  
glue, rags, recycles

who can remember  
woman working with Einstein  
what was her name

### Not really a white peach

My life is long now  
I'm getting old  
My days are spent  
at a steady pace  
I love to sleep  
the soothing balm  
of peace

And each new morning  
is a blessed thing  
I hope your life is long  
and true, I hope you  
achieve your victory  
And may all you behold  
be in time with  
your mind, your spirit  
and death.

– Catherine Wood

– Adrian Spry

– Cecile Pauly

WORDPLAY – CREATIVE WRITING GROUP  
WOOLPACK HOTEL, 229 CHALMERS STREET, REDFERN. 6-8PM  
WEDS 6 & 20 FEB. PHONE ANDREW ON 8399 3410. ALL WELCOME

## 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 Lindeman, Food Distribution Network, Waterloo

### BABANA

**Aboriginal Men's Group**  
 Next meeting Friday, February 22  
 Souths on Chalmers 12-2pm  
 Babana Shed open Mon-Fri  
 (72 Renwick St, Redfern)  
 Contact: Mark Spinks 0411 282 917



## Saturday Art Class

12-4pm Sat. Feb. 9 & 23  
 South Sydney Uniting Church  
 56a Raglan St, Waterloo

**ALL WELCOME!**  
 All materials provided  
 Gold coin donation Ph. 0438 719 470

Print by Naomi Ward (2012)

### 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

Cnr St Johns Rd  
 & Colbourne Ave Glebe  
 Worship Sun 7pm  
 'Colbourne Ave' intimate  
 candlelit concerts Thu 8pm  
 Allison Forrest 9518 9413

#### Leichhardt University Church

3 Wetherill St, Leichhardt  
 (near Norton St)  
 Worship 10am & 6.30pm Sunday  
 Rev. Dr John Hirt 0408 238 117  
[www.leichhardtuniting.org.au](http://www.leichhardtuniting.org.au)

#### 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

#### Wayside Chapel

29 Hughes St Potts Point  
 Worship 10am  
 Rev Graham Long 9358 6996

LOVE TO SING?  
 Come & be one of

## THE Darling TONES

Always wanted to sing but loud but not on your own? We are an a cappella choir based in Darlinghurst. Soprano, alto, tenor & bass singers wanted! Join in the song and have some fun. Be a part of our community and bring some harmony in to your life.

For all enquiries email:  
[TheDarlingTones@yahoo.com.au](mailto:TheDarlingTones@yahoo.com.au)  
 or call 9698 3642

Sydney's newest a cappella choir

### ERSKINEVILLE REUNION

Sunday February 10 from 10am,  
 Erskineville Oval

DONATION: Gold Coin

CATERING: Food and drinks will be available from the Erskineville Alexandria Bowling Club adjacent to the oval

CONTACTS: Pam Butt 0418 443 922 & Betty Hammond 0421 047 830

### Waterloo Recycling Workshop

Workshop and market open Fridays 9am-12pm.

Turungah Flats, 1 Phillip St, Waterloo (lower car park).

Affordable furniture and household goods.

Donations gladly received (no white goods or electrical apps).

Volunteers welcome (phone Naomi on 0407 576 098).

## 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 \$10 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 State and Federal Governments.

### SYDNEY CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL 2013

Celebrate the Year of the Snake at Sydney's famous Chinese New Year Festival.

The 2013 program is overflowing with cultural events, authentic Asian markets, cooking demonstrations, tours, exhibitions and entertainment, most of them FREE.

With more than 80 events to choose from there's plenty for everyone. Go to the Sydney Chinese New Year website and start planning your festival now: [sydneychinesenewyear.com](http://sydneychinesenewyear.com)

## REDWatch

Meetings first Thursday of the month at The Factory Community Centre.  
 Phone Geoffrey Turnbull (02) 8004 1490.  
 Email [mail@redwatch.org.au](mailto:mail@redwatch.org.au)

Seeking volunteer to help with data entry for website.

### VOLUNTEERS' NEWS

BY PAT CLARKE

A really happy and hopeful New Year 2013 to all our volunteers, readers and friends.

We are coming up to the Chinese Year of the (Water) Snake, and while many of us find snakes scary and creepy, ancient Chinese wisdom says

that a snake in the house means your family will not starve.

This seems to have a correlation with the UN's International Year of Quinoa (Keenwa), in an attempt to eradicate hunger and malnutrition throughout the world. Let us hope that the international community will work harder towards this goal.

As children go back to school this

month, I hope parents and children have enjoyed the summer holidays and the Festival of Sydney despite the variable weather.

I'm sorry I wasn't there to meet you all at our End-of-Year get-together. Unfortunately, I mistimed the dates and went off to WA to watch my baby brother do an Iron-Man event. (He's not a baby anymore - he's 63!!). I hope you all had a wonderful

time as always. Tripod and Rev. Andrew always make sure of that.

I'll be contacting all our volunteers in the next month to confirm all your distribution routes, but in the meantime I hope you have your walking shoes on to distribute the SSH February issue.

And Breaking News: Congratulations to the Sapphires

cast and to the original members who looked absolutely beautiful at the AAFTA awards ceremony.

With best wishes to you all.

Pat Clarke  
 Distribution Co-ordinator  
[patriciaclarke@optusnet.com.au](mailto:patriciaclarke@optusnet.com.au)

## YOUR LOCAL MEMBERS



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St Peters parkrun celebrates its first anniversary Photo: Paul Wilcock

# Fitness is a run in the park

ESTHER BUTCHER

**ST PETERS:** On a Saturday morning in January 2012 a group of 60 runners gathered at Sydney Park for the first St Peters parkrun. Just over a year later the group celebrated its first birthday run on Australia Day with 204 registered runners undertaking the timed 5km course.

Parkrun organises free weekly 5km timed runs all over the world.

Local organiser Paul Wilcock first heard of parkrun when he started running for fitness in 2011 and was disappointed to find there wasn't a group nearby, so he started one. "I've always wanted to do something for my local community. A few months later I'd gathered a few other runners who helped me test out the course and we were ready to go."

For those who have never run before Paul recommends the Couch to 5K program with parkrun incorporated into the latter stages of the program.

"When I first started running, 5km seemed like an impossibility as I was barely able to run for two minutes before gasping for air. As the months went by, the weight dropped off and I was soon running half marathons."

If half marathons aren't your idea of fun don't be deterred. parkrun welcomes runners and joggers of all fitness levels, with kids, dog walkers and pram pushers all welcome. "All you need are two willing legs and a positive attitude," says Silpa Parmar,

a veteran of 43 parkruns. But be warned! "It's super addictive," she says. "You'll be forever chasing your PB [Personal Best] once you set it."

One of the many benefits of running with a group is the people you meet. parkrun has developed a vibrant community around it during the last year. Silpa admits to getting a bit bored of running on her own. "The social aspect of parkrun has been the absolute highlight," she says. "Everyone is so friendly and

I've made some incredible friends through running and volunteering."

Parkrun newbie, Andrew Geeves, agrees. "The whole event has an incredibly friendly, community-oriented vibe. There is something about running with a diverse group of people from the local area that is so inspiring."

"And you'll get your daily exercise in before 9am," adds Silpa.

Visit the parkrun website to find out more and to register: [www.parkrun.com.au](http://www.parkrun.com.au)



L to R Back Row: Buddy Gordon, Nathan Merritt, Anthony Mundine, Andrew Tuigamala. Front Row: Jayze Tuigamala Under 6 Best and Fairest Photo: Supplied

# Family club invites community involvement

PERRY JOHNSTONE

On a bright sunny Saturday morning in December, over 350 players, family and friends of the Alexandria Rovers Rugby League Football Club attended the club's annual presentation day at Botany Pool to celebrate a great season in 2012.

Every player from the Under 5s through to the Under 12s received a trophy, and a few lucky ones received an additional trophy for superior play during the season. The senior teams each had 4 or 5 team trophies awarded for superior play during the season.

To see the look on the young kids' faces when they get their very first trophy is priceless. It makes all the hard work worth it.

Every player, coaching staff member, committee member and

volunteer received a Rovers hoodie, Rovers hat and Rovers training shorts. Senior players also received a Rovers sports bag and primary school-aged players received a Rovers back-pack. All in all, 278 Rovers goodie bags were handed out.

It was great to see local sporting identities who have made it in the big time, to see them attend their footy club's presentation day, to see that they have not forgotten their sporting roots. A big thank-you to Anthony Mundine, Buddy Gordon and Nathan Merritt.

As the season officially concluded with the end-of-season presentation, we would like to thank everyone who made it a great success on and off the field.

The Rovers have always been known as the family club, but there's always been a lack of girls' sporting clubs in Alexandria.

As we prepare for 2013, we're working towards launching Alexandria Rovers Netball. It's a big job, and more than ever, the club is on the lookout for community minded people to jump on board and get involved at a grassroots level. Whether you have lived in the inner city for your entire life or are only new to the area, joining in and putting back into your community is a very rewarding experience. If you don't know many people in the area it's a great way to meet new friends.

Let's hope 2013 brings good will and great health for all South Sydney Herald readers, and we look forward to keeping everyone informed on the Alexandria Rovers in 2013.

Perry Johnstone (0431 274 512) is Rovers Club Secretary. [www.alexandriarovers.com.au](http://www.alexandriarovers.com.au)

## Alexandria Fair

**Alexandria Park**  
Sunday 24 February  
11am - 3pm

**PRIZES, GAMES & FUN**

\*For entry conditions email [AlexandriaFair@arag.org.au](mailto:AlexandriaFair@arag.org.au) and check [www.arag.org.au](http://www.arag.org.au) for updates (ie: the weather)