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Federal Election FUTURE PROMISES

With the looming Federal Election the *Bush Tele* interviews Liberal, Labor and Green candidates on local issues. Gilmore, which covers from Kiama to Bateman's Bay, is considered a safe seat for the government and needs a swing of 9.4% for it to change.

Patrick Thompson

NEIL REILLY is the Labor Party candidate. He sees a bright future for Gilmore with the development of new industry for the region. Using, as an example, the modern Irish economy, Neil sees the Shoalhaven is well placed geographically to attract new light industries and service providers, like those from the financial sector. Towns, such as Nowra and Ulladulla are logical choices for future growth centres.

Speaking enthusiastically of Labor's 'educational revolution', Neil Reilly has put forward his candidacy as a relative newcomer to politics. Aged 54, Neil is from Kiama and has a background in advertising.

He only joined the ALP in 2005. Making a virtue of his being a non would be politician until recently, he sees the need for fresh vision which he believes a Kevin Rudd led government would bring to Australia.

Speaking about our region Neil would like to see investment made in harnessing 'wind and wave action' as sources of future energy needs. A further suggestion was the development of a local superannuation fund with monies being invested in regional development and to provide housing loans for the families in our area.

He also told the *NBT* of his growing concerns over inappropriate developments that are threatening the heritage values of Huskisson and believed the Commonwealth should intervene to help fund the purchase of the RSL car park site so that its value could be safe guarded in the public interest.

BEN VAN DER WIJNGAART is the Greens candidate. Aged 59, Ben served 33 years in the RAAF before becoming a consultant and subsequently devoting most of his time to climate change related issues. He speaks of the importance of our region to Australia in an emerging world where climate change is the most important issue facing the community.

Strongly critical of both major political parties he sees the decision to promise the bulk of the spending in this election on tax cuts as seriously mistaken. What Ben believes is that our electorate has amongst the highest youth unemployment in the country and the lowest educational achievement levels, so there is a pressing need to save the 'tax cuts' and address these problems.

Like Neil Reilly, Ben believes the Shoalhaven needs to become a centre of educational excellence but unlike Labor, he thinks that it is essential that government needs to operate with 'climate change' as its starting point and policy development should proceed from there.

Speaking of the bleak future facing dry farming in Australia's Murray/Darling basin, Ben believes the Shoalhaven with its rich Class 2 soils will be needed more in the future as a regional source for food production. In the Green view of the world 'bio-regions' become the centre of planning and local area self sufficiency based on permaculture principles is the way forward.

JOANNA GASH is the Liberal candidate and the current Member for Gilmore. She was elected in 1996 and is aged 63 years. Having consolidated her posi-

tion during her years in office, she believes she has built a reputation based on hard work and achievement. She sees supporting local business and development projects as one of her chief aims.

With a practical approach to politics, Joanna understands the importance of health as an issue, considering that Gilmore, according to the 2006 census, has 21.6% of its population aged 65 and over, the highest proportion in the country, and the median age of 45 is also the highest in the country.

On education she is able to point to the establishment of the Shoalhaven Campus of the University of Wollongong in 1998, followed by the medical faculty on that campus, shortly to be followed by a nurses' school and in the future there will be one of the Commonwealth's new Australian Technical Colleges in Nowra.

Joanna understands the growing importance of the green vote in the electorate and is careful to stress her personal view that she opposes any high rise development on foreshores. As for other development pressure she is only willing to say these are state and local government issues.

As a member of the Howard government she has played a part in the nuclear power stations' politics and the intervention into indigenous affairs. Following her leader's position on the nuclear issue, she seems to have jumped initially feet first into the reactor itself, then become more equivocal as the political reality of having a nuclear reactor in her own electorate set in. She opposes such an idea. She does however offer her constituents the opportunity to sign either pro or anti petitions in her electoral office. On indigenous affairs, as reported in the last issue of *NBT*, she supports Federal intervention at Wreck Bay. Of the three main candidates, she is also the last remaining monarchist, at least until the Queen dies. ■

Intervention? Not 'me too'

Ev Pettigrew

SINCE 2001 I have been privileged to spend months in several remote aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory visiting and supporting Daughter No .1 who has been teaching there.

The Federal Government's emergency legislation and intervention in 74 Northern Territory aboriginal communities has sat uncomfortably with me... "What is really happening?"

Two forums have given me some answers – one in Sydney and one in Darwin... people living and working in the affected communities.

Real people, community leaders and others, spoke of widespread fear and confusion across the Territory, grievances about the top-down, paternalistic approaches taken by government; government failure to consult or to use available expertise; failure to strengthen and build on already existing programmes that have been demonstrated to work; disruptions caused by the influx of public servants, many of them ill prepared and culturally insensitive.

I heard of the hardships created by the indiscriminate 'quarantining' of 50% of all welfare payments regardless of individuals' abilities to manage their affairs. Centrelink issue vouchers redeemable for 'approved essential items' from approved stores. This scheme will effect 25,000 welfare recipients and cost \$88 million dollars to administer, in 2007-08 alone.

The CDEP programme which has provided training and employment for residents in these communities has been scrapped, disrupting many businesses and services and forcing 8,000 people into welfare and hence income management.

The legislation allows the suspension of Native Title and changes to the Land Rights Law including the scrapping of the permit system (which enabled communities to control access to their places) and the uncompensated acquisition of community areas for five years.

Daughter No 2, working as a doctor in Darwin hospital, providing emergency phone support to clinic nurses in remote communities, tells me

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Rodeo, Palumpa NT



EDITORIAL

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Patrick Thompson

WHEN you start talking economics most people's eyes begin to glaze over, but it is still the number one issue voters consider around election time and for my money Rudd missed his chance when Howard announced his \$34 billion in tax cuts. By choosing to follow Howard down this path the ALP may have lost this election in the first week of the campaign. In matching Howard on tax cuts Labor has made its biggest mistake. Instead of having a substantial kitty of billions in tax monies to finance its 'education revolution' and fund other important issues Rudd has like Howard spent most of the money.

If Kevin Rudd had taken a different course he could have castigated Howard for recklessly offering tax cuts at a time of rising interest rates. He could have quoted Costello's recent criticisms about the money spending, electioneering PM and put his own economic credentials in a better light than those of Howard. He could still have promised future tax cuts under Labor but ones properly considered according to the economic circumstances at the time.

The public are not stupid. They understand good economic management. Keating did not lose the 1996 election because of poor economic management. The public knows, as Howard himself now admits, the ALP under Hawke and Keating

brought about essential reforms to the Australian economy that Howard whilst Treasurer in the Fraser government had failed to do.

The Howard Government continues to claim that it has an outstanding record when it comes to economic management but with our current account deficit at around 6% of GDP are we doing so well? In these unprecedented boom times, our export volumes as a percentage of GDP have not only been falling in the first five years of this decade, but have suffered the biggest fall in 45 years of data. This has now resulted in some 68 consecutive trade deficits.

Labor has been slow to pick up on this economic data, which is hard evidence of a government that has been tardy in building a sound economy and left Australia vulnerable for the future when inevitably the down turn will come. The fact is Australia has been a major beneficiary of China and India's expansion that has resulted in a resources boom, but as Alan Kohler of the *SMH* has pointed out that whilst prices have gone up volumes have not. A poor export performance in Australia's case is a sign of poor management at the top.

Then there are the vast corporate profits and record government surpluses from the economic boom of the Howard/Costello years. So what has happened to these? Well largely we have been spending

the dividends of the mineral boom and this is what has made the rich feel times have never been so good. True the Howard government has lifted welfare payments, along with weighted tax cuts and appealing superannuation arrangements for those who are better off, but that is mostly where it has all gone.

Treasurer Costello would like to paint a different picture. He likes to blame the states for our poor exports and everything else as well. They are the ones responsible for infrastructure building and they have failed, and that is why there are bottlenecks at the ports. Hasn't Costello given them 'windfall gains' with the GST monies? Not according to Rory Robertson of the Macquarie Bank who has shown that the states are receiving less money from the Commonwealth than at any time in the last three decades.

Then there is Treasurer Costello's own tax collecting. His government likes to portray itself as 'low taxing' but again according to Rory Robertson, Canberra is collecting more taxes as a share of GDP and keeping more for its own use than ever before. No wonder that state budgets are under stress and basic services, such as schools, hospitals and public transport are in such poor shape and infrastructure spending, so important for economic growth, has been neglected.

It is said that governments are seldom voted out when economic times are buoyant. John Howard stands for unbridled capitalism in the same mould as Margaret Thatcher.

There can be no doubt that there are those who did well under Thatcher as there are those who have done well under Howard, but does this make them good economic managers?

Britain and New Zealand without the benefits of a mineral boom, have managed their economies successfully under Labor governments. There is no reason to believe a fiscally conservative Kevin Rudd would not do so here. The former Reserve Bank governor, Ian Macfarlane, in the 2006 Boyer Lectures, probably painted a truer picture of what really has taken place. He talked about the period of the 1980's being a decade of 'a large amount of productivity-raising economic reform'. True, the reforms contributed to turbulent years that ended in 'the recession we had to have' but it must be remembered that this was an international recession, just as there had been an international recession when John Howard was treasurer in 1982 and interest rates reached even higher levels than those under Keating.

As Macfarlane says there is an enormous political advantage for the government during the recent decade of economic stability. 'People who have now enjoyed fifteen years of low inflation and continued growth' says the former Reserve Bank governor, 'Find it difficult to understand the previous era of high inflation and high interest rates; it is not surprising that some are fearful when the possibility of its return is drawn to their attention'. ■

LETTERS

IRAQ VIEWPOINT

The Iraqi Resistance continues to thwart the efforts of the US led invaders despite being outgunned and outnumbered. The US military has 168,000 soldiers occupying Iraq. But even with the surge in US forces the Iraqi Resistance has been able to avoid capture and to attack the invaders and those who collaborate with them. The US led invaders continue to murder innocent Iraqi men, women and children and to prop up a corrupt government in the green zone. But the cost in US lives grows each day thanks to the Iraqi Resistance.

The Iraqi population lives in fear of their security. Their basic services including electricity, sewerage, garbage collection and even petrol supplies are spasmodic at best. Child mortality rates are at an all time high and Iraq's hospitals are unable to cope. The only exception to this is in the heavily fortified green zone where those who consort with the invaders benefit from their largesse. Iraq is a basket case with millions having fled the country causing a brain drain that has only worsened the plight of those left behind.

While attacks by the Resistance in Baghdad may have diminished

temporarily due to the surge in US led forces, they continue to move and attack the invader around the country. Their struggle is a just and noble one because they have decided to lay down their lives in defence of their country despite the enormous odds. Don't be deceived by the Western propaganda that terrorists or Al Qaeda lead the Resistance. The Iraqi Resistance is made up of a diaspora of different Iraqi groups and religions. Their one overriding motivation or reason for being is to evict those who wrongfully invaded their country and now occupy it. If my country, Australia, were invaded I hope I would display the same bravery as the men and women of the Iraqi Resistance.

The US led invaders of Iraq are responsible for a calamity that has now resulted in close to a million Iraqis killed and millions more fleeing their homeland. Bush, Blair and Howard and their respective 2003 Cabinets were the key architects of this appalling evil and none of them have been charged with war crimes or crimes against humanity. The invasion and occupation of Iraq is an act of state based terrorism. The US and its allies in Iraq are not peacemakers. They are determined to maintain their power in the Middle East no matter what the

cost to those who live there. Their actions are a key reason why Iran must consider developing nuclear weapons in order to deter US and Israeli aggression. It is sad but true – the US land of the free is determined to impose its values and systems of government on other nations even if it means using force. To deter such aggression other nations like Iran must fast track their defensive deterrent capabilities.

Adam Bonner
Meroo Meadow

HARD FOUGHT GAINS

While it is an unmitigated disaster and completely goes against all environmental principles that Stockland could have been given the go ahead by the State and then Federal Govt, we need to understand that our input DID cause problems for Stockland and they have had to compromise some of their development.

Because now...

They have had to forgo the 150 integrated houses planned for the area on the left of the existing pathway going down to the Leisure Centre from The Wool Rd

which is used by the school children to walk to the Leisure Centre. This whole area (including that area on the right of the existing road into the Leisure Centre) and some on the left is now designated as Environmental Zone. This has been done to protect the JB Leek orchid and to enhance the Habitat Corridor which is part of this area. As well as this Stockland has to remove and rehabilitate the existing road into the Leisure Centre which now runs through the EZ. There will be a new entrance to the Leisure Centre.

Stockland will develop Stage 1 (already happening) but must complete management plans for vegetation, fire, weed, feral animal, fencing, research into the leek orchid wasp pollinator, hydrological threats to the orchid, monitoring of the Bristle bird and leafless tongue orchid as well as long term management of the EZ and give evidence that sufficient resources will be allocated to implement the ongoing management of the EZ. (Surely this should already have been done before approval???)

Stage 2 of the development cannot proceed until these actions have been completed.

Interesting to note for all those people who insist they want



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Responsibility for political comment in this pre-election issue of New Bush Telegraph is taken by Patrick Thompson, editor, member of the Australian Greens and vice chair and member of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness; and by Dennis Argall, web editor, member of no political party though advisor to Labor, Liberal and Greens at different times, former senior federal public servant and ambassador to China.



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Stockland to develop this site because we need shops, while the concept for the shops has been approved the plans are still not in (Stockland said they soon will be) so who knows how long it is going to take. I am sure Stockland won't build the shops before they have the support of the new residents in the new houses they are building. HAVE been told they are likely to be there for about 10 years building.

So the moral of this story is that it is important to actively work for change. If there had not been actions with letters, submissions, protests etc from local groups and people, Stockland would have gone ahead and done exactly what they wanted - without any compromise as their first plans suggested.

There have been achievements so it is always worthwhile to try.

Maureen Webb

Mentors for 'at-risk' teenagers

Dennis Argall

LIZ Foster is looking for mentors. "What exactly are you looking for?" I asked.

"I want people who are in it for the young person."

"And..."

"That's it. That's it, really. Everything else falls into place."

I had just done two Saturdays of training in Liz's program. Excellent training days, challenging at times, learning issues of safety and risk management; absorbing a whole, carefully constructed system of care. Wonderful to discover I was joining a lively team of people of all ages.

The project is funded by the federal Attorney General's Department, targeting children in 'out-of-home' care. Young teens whose parents not there, for whatever reasons.

"Some may be as young as 12, probably they will move on at 15 or 16. Some of them may be in foster care, many in custodial grandparent care," said Liz.

"The custodial grandparent group is enthusiastic, but this is not a respite program in any sense. Research indicates that young 'mentees' are less likely to become involved in crime or drug and alcohol abuse than their peers who are not mentored. They are less likely to leave school early and they have better relations with the people around them."

The project envisages weekly phone or other contact, plus group activities: "In the interests of both sides, a mentor-mentee pair will not be alone." Liz has been carefully



Mission Australia's Linking Lifetimes project matches adolescents in out-of-home care with mentors who can help them develop healthy relationships, increase their self-esteem and build upon their existing strengths. The Nowra program is being developed and managed by Liz Foster, who welcomes inquiries: fosterl@missionaustralia.com.au 02 4422 0455

shaping the project, at Mission Australia, since April 2007, with a steering committee backing her and with twelve years experience in youth work, plus years as a foster parent. "I enjoy managing a small team. I will always be available in support, as also my colleagues at Mission Australia Community Initiatives. We will have mentor team workshops as we go along. Some subjects, like pain-based

behaviour, can best be discussed as we go along."

With ten mentors signed on, the mentees also have had training, enabling pairing up.

"We have a commitment to add ten to the program each year. I hope to run the next mentor training program early in 2008," Liz said. "Some people will doubt they can do this. That's actually a good start. I'd love to discuss it with anyone." ■

Intervention? Not 'me too'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of an incident this week, where, as they struggle with a severely haemorrhaging patient, the clinic nurses are unable to take a haemoglobin reading because the intervention workers have been through the community and used up all the clinic's test

strips. As of early November, of the 3,400 child screenings no additional report of sexual abuse have been made.

As I listen to these accounts, I rage internally - what right has our government to remove what little power these people have, to treat them as if they have "no rights and no brain", to add

hardship to lives which already struggle. In what cause?

I weep with anger and shame... but... I am not completely powerless - I can help alert other Australians to what is happening and I will not on 24 November be voting for any political party supporting this intervention. ■



School class, Palumpa NP

Vote **1** Greens
Ben van der Wijngaart

Double the value of your vote.
You can stop Howard by voting 1 Green, then giving your second preference to Labor.



My pledge to Gilmore voters is that I will seriously work to address climate change, establish fair jobs in sustainable industry, fund public education and local health services, ensure Jervis Bay and Australia remain nuclear-free, and make a real difference to poverty and inequity within our community.

Authorised by Howard Jones 158 Williams Rd Kiama

No Voice for the Community

Patrick Thompson

SHOALHAVEN City Council does not like constituent voices to be heard too loudly. Unlike some other Councils ours does not give residents the opportunity to speak from the floor at Council's meetings. This would be a bold move by Shoalhaven standards but one that residents should be asking from a future Council.

Now in a move which will further weaken residents' opportunity to participate in the running of our city, Council has voted to disallow the opportunity for community groups to make contributions at public meetings

convened by Council on development applications. Previously, Council, the applicant and a community group (such as a consultative body) could make a contribution before questions and comments would be taken from the floor.

Among those Councillors who opposed the decision, Councillor Gareth Ward believes most residents would be 'disgusted' by this lost opportunity for community groups to have their say at resident briefings.

Councillor Ward went on to say: 'For democracy to work effectively, everyone should be entitled to have their say. Perhaps Councillors voting in favour of removing this element from residents' briefings would care to explain to our community why they think that developers should be able to make their case while the community can not!' ■

MOLLYMOOK DEVELOPMENT GIVEN GO AHEAD

As reported in the last issue of the Bush Telegraph, a proposal for a 5 storey development adjacent to Mollymook beach has been given the go ahead by Council. According to Green's Councillor Richard Bates, this development is being allowed in a residential zone, and 'either flouts or interprets favourably the LEP, the REP, the Medium Density DCP, Council's Coastal Areas Policy, NSW Coastal Policy and Coastal Design Guidelines, 3 SEPPs, the South Coast Regional Strategy and the Land & Environment's Court principles on views, all of which were set up to protect the coastline from development such as this'. Councillor Bates concluded dryly: 'But in the Shoalhaven - no worries!'

"Only a partnership based on good will and trust can achieve sustainable and positive outcomes and change." Patrick Dodson, Annual Lecture, Centre for Dialogue, Latrobe University 10 October 2007

"There is no relationship between the Federal response and our recommendations. We feel betrayed and disappointed and hurt and angry and pretty pissed off at the same time." Pat Anderson, co-author of the Little Children are Sacred Report, speaking at an Indigenous Health Conference in Gulkula, Gove Peninsula, 7 August 2007.

"...the report, 'Little Children are Sacred', told us of one set of cases of child abuse after another, way in excess of any acceptable national norm," [Kevin Rudd] said. "That's why dramatic intervention was necessary, [it] certainly was controversial, I accept that but we've got to give a new approach a go." ABC News 24 October 2007.

Links to this and more at www.newbushtelegraph.net

Senate victory

Dennis Argall

IT is the Senate that determines the outcome of this 2007 election – no matter what happens in the House, no matter who forms a government with a majority in the House... and regardless of former Prime Minister Keating's 1992 description of the Senate as 'unrepresentative swill.'

Keating's remark reflected NSW derision, as a big state, of an electoral system which gives equal representation to all states: Tasmania 12, NSW 12.

The Senators elected from the State electorates are elected for six years. Every three years half are up for re-election. The two territories, ACT and NT, have two Senators, both elected for three years every three years.

Labor can't win a Senate majority; the Coalition has a majority now which it may or may not retain. Smaller parties may have a controlling influence in the new Parliament, as they have done before.

The whole state votes as one electorate. To elect six Senators from a whole-state Senate electorate, any candidate needs a 'quota' – one seventh of the electors (about 14.3%) plus one more vote.

If you exceed your quota, your votes go on to the next preferences marked on ballot papers, at a reduced percentage. So first preferences count... and all preferences are counted. When all preferences of successful candidates have been redistributed, then preferences from unsuccessful candidates are redistributed, starting at the bottom. More on this at www.newbushtelegraph.net

elegraph.net

The numbers of Senators for the past three years have been:

- ❑ Australian Democrats 4
- ❑ Australian Greens 4
- ❑ ALP 28
- ❑ Country Liberal [NT] 1
- ❑ Family First 1
- ❑ Liberal Party 34
- ❑ The Nationals 4

– Total 76 (six states x 12, two territories x2) of which 39 Coalition (Country Liberal, Liberal, National) --- half of 76 is 38, so the Coalition has had a one seat majority.

It is statistically impossible – experts agree – for Labor to secure a majority in the Senate elections this time.

The NSW Senators who are seeking re-election are:

- Helen Coonan and Marisa Payne (Liberal),
- Greg Campbell and Ursula Stephens (ALP),
- Kerry Nettle (Greens) and
- Sandy Macdonald (Nationals).

While Senators face the polls now, it is important to remember that unlike local members, including our local Member for Gilmore, the Senators serve fixed terms and the Senate will remain exactly as it is till 30 June 2008.

That is, the present Coalition majority will remain in control of the Senate for at least one sixth of the term of the next government.

There are 79 candidates (representing 25 parties, plus four independents) for the six seats to be determined on 24 November. On 2 November, the places on the ballot paper were drawn by the Electoral Commission. The Liberal-

National Coalition drew first place on the ballot paper, Labor 23rd of 25 places... way down the end. Family First and One Nation are 3rd and 4th, Greens in seventh place. This will advantage the Coalition, disadvantage Labor.

Historically there has been a great reluctance by parties to focus on the Senate and the issues there, other than in attitudes, especially, to One Nation. The poor planning of Labor Party preferences in Victoria saw the candidate of Family First, a deeply conservative party, elected to the Senate in 2004 – Labor was then passing its preferences away from the Greens or Democrats.

For the past three years, the Coalition majority in the Senate has been able to pass legislation unhindered and without serious review.

We face these contingencies ahead:

Howard Government with control also of the Senate:

- allowing speed with many things... Nuclear industry? Further WorkChoices legislation? Further invasion of the Northern Territory, alienation of Aboriginal lands, disruption of communities whether troubled or not? More layers of national-security-justified elimination of human rights?

Rudd Government with hostile Senate:

- General mess, with legislative program failing (unless looking entirely Howardly)... prospect of early 'Double Dissolution Election' where,

if bills (draft laws) are repeatedly rejected by the Senate, the government can tip the lot of the Senate as well as the House out for a new election.

Rudd Government with control of the Senate:

- Statistically impossible. In 2004, Labor nationally scored 35% (over two quotas), Coalition scored 44.7%, (three quotas). The big Coalition numbers elected in 2004 are in the Senate till 2011 – this makes Labor majority impossible to secure now.

Rudd Government or Howard Government without Senate majority, needing support of minor parties for legislation to be approved:

- Much depends on who the Senators with the balance of power are. The Democrats appear to be disappearing. The 'third force' candidate in NSW with best electoral prospect is the Green's Kerry Nettle. On the Right, however, is Shoalhaven's own councillor, Paul Green, standing as the candidate of the Christian Democratic Party. The CDP Party will give its preferences to Family First. Both of them court One Nation.

- Much depends (see box) on whether the Ruddist tendency to get close to Howard on many critical issues is a non-core promise, dumpable after being elected. Will the need to work with the Senate and especially the Greens, produce fresh perspectives? Stay tuned! ■

Additional resources and references at www.newbushtelegraph.net

SCHOOL DAYS

A recent exchange of email brings back memories...

It was Master Finn, who actually jumped out the window in Fred's class room (Fred being a kindly but elderly Christian Brother). He jumped out on the Kirk St side so not a big fall. Myself and the late Allan Edmonds (RIP a returned Viet Vet) had dropped some sulphide into some hydrochloric acid in a vegemite jar, I had in my old desk, so it whiffed up through the ink-well. A couple of minutes later Fred realized what was happening (he was not as dumb as we thought) so Fred the sly old fox went and ordered the boys to close all the windows. He then locked both doors as he left the room leaving us boys to suffer the smell. I can just imagine the smirk on his face. Anyway when he came back he and Finn had an altercation about some thing? The long and short of it was while Fred was chasing Finn around the room, so he could strap him, Finn opened a window and despite his size (he was a big boy) he sprang up and shot out the window. Not sure how it all finished...

More on THE BOY FINN

In Mr. Chip's class he refused to take his punishment like a gentleman should and was well accustomed to on a regular basis. Master Finn had a faint of arm and could not keep his hand in the required position for a full-on six of the best of the 1" thick strapping device which was the wont of some teachers (not the rather gentle Mr. Chip) to secrete about their bodies. The boulder bolted for the door leading to a tuck shop retreat where the protective mums worked. Mr. Chip gave valiant chase and managed to apprehend the Boy felon in a head-lock around the throat. Vice like pressure was scientifically applied and Master Finn lost his grip on the railing of the steps leading to the playground where many boys honed their bullying techniques to absolute perfection and to the jealousy of some hardened 'teachers'.

Hope my memory has not failed in any aspect of this story after the passage of so many decades. These 'old school days' certainly made an ever burning impression on us all. ■

(Editor's correction: It was not the Boy Finn but in fact another, who on this occasion beat a hasty retreat).

Promises, promises!

DENNIS ARGALL

A decade ago John Howard coined the term 'non-core promises' – election promises that do not have to be kept. In this campaign he has added the concept that a promise made in TV advertising over (only) two days is not a promise at all.

Among many of goodwill wishing for change of government, there is a new twist in the matter of non-core promising. Concerned about the absence of hoped-for sensitivities on the part of Rudd, so many are saying: "I'm sure that when they get into government they

will be different..." What's this? Is moral softness a non-core promise?

GetUp – the internet based non-partisan lobby group – has established a 'Promise Watch' site for these elections where anyone may register any candidate's promise... and where watch can be kept on their fate.

On 14 March 2007 Treasury Secretary Ken Henry gave an address to his staff, later leaked. Henry then placed the full text on the web. An important speech worth reading. In it he said:

"[We]... will be under pressure to respond to the growing

number of policy proposals leading up to the calling of an election and once the election is called. At this time, there is a greater than usual risk of the development of policy proposals that are, frankly, bad.

More so than at other times, we need to be mindful of the high opportunity cost of proposed policy actions, to advocate sound and wellbeing-enhancing policy action."

Will Treasury next year recommend to government that the massive tax cuts promised from 2008-9 be cut? What other promises will need to be reviewed and chopped in more difficult economic times ahead? Will either Howard or Rudd

Government hope that the Greens, ironically now the party of great fiscal sense, will pull them back from their tax policies. Senator Bob Brown said on 20 October:

"Mr Howard and Mr Rudd are gambling on people being greedy and I think they're making a big mistake. I think Australians are much more caring and sensible than that and they'll want the money to go into schools, and hospitals, and pensions, and roads."

This, fellow children, is not a moment to make decisions based on lollies offered.

.....see *Bush Tele* on the web for links to this and more. www.bushtelegraph.net

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Environmental flows for the Shoalhaven River

Richard Bates

COUNCIL recently received a long-awaited briefing from the Sydney Catchment Authority updating us on the situation regarding transfers from and environmental flows for the Shoalhaven River.

Back in March Council signed an agreement with the State Government guaranteeing the Shoalhaven's water supply security for the first time and ratifying the new environmental flow regime for the river.

The new regime will operate with or without increased transfers to Sydney.

Council's position was formulated after consultation with your Greens councillors and written into it were many requirements that the Government had to agree to gain our support.

We required that the dam be pumped down no more than one metre below full, that the scheme be carbon neutral, that a fish passage be constructed, that a multi-level take-off structure provide better quality water downstream, that environmental monitoring & rehabilitation take place and many other things.

All of our requests were acceded to - in fact the flow regime we agreed to was vastly improved - but what we didn't know was when the new regime would start.

Now we know that the new regime will commence when Sydney's water restrictions are lifted and the new infrastructure work on the dam wall is complete in about March 09. Let's hope the drought breaks before then.

Water restrictions are likely to be lifted for Sydney once total catchment dam storage reaches 65%.

Until then pumping will continue under emergency drought measures but once the new regime is in place it will remain indefinitely regardless of drought.

The new regime is infinitely better and will guarantee the natural health of the river all year round regardless of transfers which will be done at appropriate times only ie when the river has at least a medium to high flow.

There will be far more spills and a much higher base protected flow - 2 to 3 times than that at present.

No decisions have been made regarding increase of transfers or pipeline options.

These have been put on the back-burner as ironically the decision to build the desalination plant has taken the heat off the river.

The main infrastructure project is a state-of-the art fish lift which will have its own viewing platform and is destined to become a tourist attraction in its own right.

The fish-lift was essential for our support as was protective fish screening for habitat protection, riparian stabilisation, continued aeration, surface draw-off for environmental flows (as opposed to the deep and cold outlet now), a spillway dissipation pool and many other features including improvements to both Tallowa Dam picnic grounds and Bendeela camping area.

This to my mind is a huge win for the consultative and cooperative approach that we have taken with Council, the SCA and the State Government. By engaging with the process we have participated in an outcome that is even better than what we asked for. ■

Tallowa Dam; Photo Ron Doughton

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Written and authorised by Joanna Gash, Liberal Party Candidate, Berry St, Nowra



Going organic

Katie Choice

SOME people may wonder if there's really much difference in choosing organic food over conventionally grown food. Here is a brief overview of why choosing to eat and grow your food organically not only benefits your well-being, but the well-being and sustainability of our planet as a whole.

Organic food and farming offers:

❑ **Better Nutrition for us and the land.** Research indicates that mineral, antioxidant and phytonutrient (cancer fighting and health promoting compound) levels of conventionally (non-organically) grown food have declined significantly in the last 50 years. Combine this with earlier (pre-ripened) picking, longer storage, and more processing of crops, and it's not surprising that we are getting fewer nutrients in our food

❑ **Far less contamination with harmful chemicals for our body, our soils and**

waterways. Conventional farming practices use a range of chemical pesticides and fertilizers which in turn absorb into and contaminates our soils, food chains and washes into waterways. A large percentage of non-organically grown foods have been shown to either absorb some of these pesticides or retain chemical residues with potential harmful effects on our health over time. Organic fruit and vegetables are grown without the use of toxic pesticides and chemicals or genetic modification (GE)

❑ **It honors nature's cycles and TASTES BETTER!** Artificial fertilization associated with conventional crops produces lush growth by swelling produce with more water and as mentioned above fruits and vegetables are often picked before they are ripened and stored for long periods, all of which reduces the flavour of the foods. Organic food however, as a result of being grown naturally and allowed to mature, ripen and develop its full nutrition content the way nature intended, is not only higher in nutrients and antioxidants, it tastes better & fuller in flavour.

These are just a few of the primary benefits of choosing organic foods! Availability of organics is increasing within our community, check out the Shoalhaven Food House-volunteer run organics stall at the Tomerong Markets. ■

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Learning how to manage land

Kelly Upton

Property owners have a lot on their plate when it comes to land management. They often are aware of all of the things that they should be doing, but somehow may never get around to doing them all due to a lack of resources, time, skills or knowledge.

Dealing with weeds in the bush is often a task at the end of the long list of 'things to be done'.

If you are fortunate enough to have bushland on your property, then it should be treated as an asset and managed appropriately.

Managing weed infestations such as Privet or Lantana, commonly found in remnant bushland, may at first seem like a daunting task, even overwhelming in some situations, however, there are local solutions and opportunities available to develop the skills required to be able to turn a weed-fest into an ecological asset.

One of the first things to do is to identify the type of vegetation that you have on your property. What are the dominant Eucalyptus species, Acacias and understorey plants present? Do you have rain-forest remnants or vegetation of conservation significance? Are there any weeds and if so, are any noxious species that you may be legally required to give control priority to? Skills in plant identification and basic botany would be most helpful when it comes to developing a species list for your site.

Next, what are the environmental issues of the site? Is there erosion or sedimentation problems? Do you have feral animals on the site? Do you keep livestock? When was the last bush-fire? Does the site have potential to regenerate naturally or should you be planting trees?

There is a lot to consider but essentially it comes down to identifying what you've got on your property, what the problems are and then coming up with a strategy for management. Once you get to that point, then you can look into resourcing a project on your land, identifying funding opportunities and building a network with other land managers.

The Illawarra Institute of TAFE delivers Certificate 2 in Conservation and Land Management at Nowra TAFE Campus.

The subjects covered in the course include:

- Plant identification
- Treat weeds
- Conduct natural areas restoration
- Propagation Practices
- Seed Collecting
- Soils
- Erosion and Sedimentation Control
- Revegetation works
- Observe environmental work practices
- Chemical handling and use and more...

The course is held one day per week from 8.30am to 5.00pm on Thursday's for one year duration. Enrolments for 2008 will be on Friday February 01 and Monday February 04 at Nowra TAFE Campus. Fees are \$209.00 per semester or \$418.00 for the full course.

Students who receive a government benefit will only pay \$50.00 for the year and some students may be fee exempt.

The delivery of the course is very hands on with regular field trips and practical sessions supported by theory in the class.

Property owners and members of bushcare and landcare groups are strongly urged to enroll.

For further information please contact teachers: Kelly Upton and Gerard Proust on 4443 6537

PARALLEL COMMUNITY

Richard Creasy

Recently a small group of people in Cornwall on the south west coast of England decided they had had enough. Frustrated by their inability to make their voices heard on issues such as the world's obsession with endless economic growth, over development of land, exploitation of scarce natural resources and the negativity of modern politics they formed an organization called Parallel Community. The organization has spread throughout the British Isles and is now moving overseas with supporters in a number of countries including Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Switzerland, Malta and the United States.

The goal of Parallel Community is to bring together millions of people around the planet to create a support network for the purpose of building a peaceful and harmonious world. It has no affiliation to any political party or organization. Rather than working through mainstream political parties, community organizations and pressure groups it aims to build an alternative platform where people can express their positive contribution for change. It seeks to change the way the world runs so that it works for everyone, not just a select few.

Branches of the organization throughout the world will be able to share information and resources and network together on local issues. For more information on Parallel Community go to the website at www.parallelcommunity.com or email the south coast branch connectors at rjcreasy@aapt.net.au

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BOOK REVIEW

The Dying Darling

Patrick Thompson

IN giving a review to this book I am reminded by a comment about the last Bush Tele that it contained no good news. As a publisher I know that depressing titles don't sell books. I think Sarah Moles should have called her book, simply, The Darling. Her partner Michael Pospischil has provided the images and the originals were executed in charcoal on gesso panels. What Sarah and Michael have produced together is in the words of Dr Tim Flannery 'A wonderful book with lots to say about Australia's longest and most interesting river'.

What Sarah has attempted is to present a wide range of personal views on a river that has evoked sustenance and emotion for a generation of people who have lived with its heartbreak and sorrows. Ordinary folk who have witnessed the changes from

when the graziers benefited from the sporadic floods that inundated thousands of square kilometres of floodplains to when the headwater dams, the thousands of weirs, hundreds of private on-farm storages and the over-allocation of water to irrigation, changed everything.

To understand its history and its people the compiler and artist undertook several long journeys to gather the stories of the people who live and work with the river. Quite unexpectedly, they found 'that their journey taught them that the Indigenous perspective includes fundamental truths that are critically important if we – all Australians – are serious about our long term future'.

At the time of publication the Prime Minister was announcing his 10 billion plan to "Save the Murray-Darling Basin". Whilst the injections of funds must bring hope to those clinging on to survive the on-going drought,

Leah Bracegirdle

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one must expect that the Basin can never return to long term health 'when economies we live in are more important than the land we live on'. Prophetic words!

Living in the Shoalhaven where it rains more than in most places, it is hard to get a perspective on what it all means. The Dying Darling provided me with insights about a dry land that the author hoped it would. Reading the book will lead to being more informed and therefore better equipped to take part in a much-needed debate about the role and value of water in this most important region. It is available for \$20 (post free) from the *New Bush Telegraph*. ■

Clean Energy for Eternity

A GROUP of local residents concerned about the impact of climate change have formed the Shoalhaven branch of Clean Energy for Eternity (CEFE).

CEFE has set a target of 50/50 by 2020, meaning a 50% reduction in energy produced and 50% use of renewable energy by the year 2020. CEFE now operates in Bega, Bermagui, Cooma, Eurobodalla, Mosman, Snowy Mountains and Shoalhaven. Both Bega and Eurobodalla Councils have taken on the 50/50 by 2020 target with much support from the business communities in those areas.

The group believes that to help our children have a bright future we need to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Members of the group are exploring ways they can reduce their energy

consumption and looking at ways they can support alternative energy sources such as solar and wind powered energy.

One step the group has taken is to audit their personal energy use, including a waste audit organized by Shoalhaven Council. They will use the results as a benchmark and look at ways to reduce their energy use over the coming year.

The group believes there are lots of simple things that individuals can do, such as change over to 100% accredited Greenpower, change your light globes to compact fluoros, wherever possible buy locally produced food and walk instead of drive the car for short distances.

Evidence shows that to mitigate the effects of global warming we need to act quickly and act

collectively as a community. There can be benefits to acting quickly on climate change. We can be supporting emerging renewable energy industries, creating a healthier local environment and strengthening our community. Many local businesses will be able to benefit, for example in providing services to help people retrofit their houses to make them more energy efficient.

If you would like to know more about Shoalhaven CEFE email at little_earth@internode.on.net

Shoalhaven CEFE contacts:

- Kim Thompson, group convener, ph (02) 4454 3696
- Julie Ramsden, publicity officer, ph (02) 4455 7194

ENVIROSCENE

PORT KEMBLA

Bernie Clarke

For decades Port Kembla's Inner Harbour and its tributary, Allen's Creek had been in receipt of large volumes of toxic waste including cyanide, zinc and chromium from industrial companies. One of the outfalls was licensed to discharge 900 million litres of waste a day and up to 45 kilograms of cyanide and 4.5 tonnes of zinc a day! Many were critical of the State Pollution Control Commission licensing industry to use the marine environment for cheap toxic waste disposal.

A study carried out in 1992 showed the daily discharge into Allen's Creek and Port Kembla Inner Harbour included: 83 tonnes of suspended solids, 16.5 tonnes of grease, 4.8 tonnes of zinc, 3.9 tonnes of ammonia, 180 kilograms of phenol, 62 kilograms cyanide and 45 kilograms chromium. Other toxic metals include lead and hexavalent chromium.

The NSW licensing agency issued a permit to companies discharging into 17 outlets flowing into Allen's Creek, which allowed for a total effluent discharge of 1.6 billion litres a day!

Heavy metals once disturbed mobilise in the water column. Shipping and tug movements disrupt bottom sediments causing the release of toxins to be widely dispersed through turbulence far and wide by the tide and current.

Perhaps its time for government to inform the public if the fishing ban imposed on Port Kembla 27 years ago remains in force.

If the ocean were to cease to function as it does, human life would come to an end.

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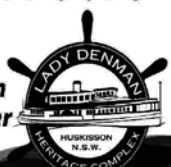
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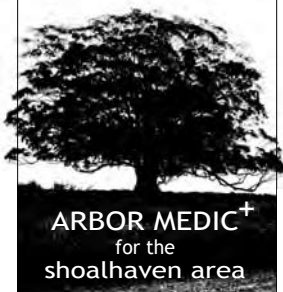
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Authorised by Howard Jones 158 Williams Rd. Kiama

JOHN.E.RYAN

Truth and Illusion

Story and Photo courtesy of Susan and Dennis Sluys - lily's door photography

At the age of 21, after returning to London from Spain – 50 pounds wringing wet, broke, and with no plans, John's brother gave him a book on Zen Buddhism and meditation ... this was to be a life changing experience. He had no preconceived ideas on what to expect from meditation, which may explain the ease with which he managed to still the mind and experience something he had never expected and knew nothing about.

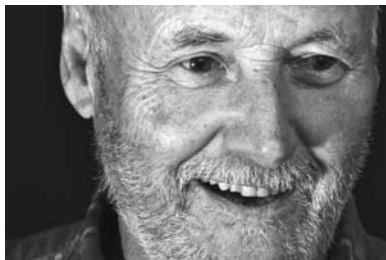
'Eyes see, ears hear,
But lost in illusions
We miss the moment
And life'
JOHN.E.RYAN

John realised that everything had now changed. This experience raised questions, which would take John from his birthplace of London through many countries including Sweden, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India and Malaya finally ending in Australia.

The answers to John's questions were not to come easily. Questions such as what had he experienced? What did it mean? What was he to do with the knowledge he now had?

John carried on with life, working on the railway in work gangs, when a sixteen pound hammer was still swung to drive spikes into sleepers; he worked in the Australian outback as a surveyors assistant for a mining company. He married and had children but the questions remained, he began meditating again and over time the answers came.

John has written a book called *Truth and the Ego-Minds Illusion of Truth.* with hopes that it may help others to understand what he now understands.



Follow the song within
Be at rest
Relax,
Eat lollies
Become enlightened
JOHN.E.RYAN

John's story will be part of an exhibition titled 'In Our Midst', at The Barracks in Bomaderry on 23,24 & 25 November.

Twilight of the morning

Gerard Proust

I go down to our backyard to relax and see the important 'things' of life happening all around me. So the other day while I was sitting quietly taking in another glorious start to the day in Tomerong I watched nature do her stuff.

There was a great bustle of movement and sound coming from the bushland behind our garden. The bird activity was quite simply amazing. From 500am till 600am that day I recorded 22 bird species in and around our food garden. The first bird of the day was the Emerald Catbird doing its daily morse-code tap dance at our back glass door. The rest of the birds greeted me as they moved through the different layers of the garden and forest.

The Bassian Thrush with its cryptic colourings and discerning eye for slugs is my current favourite. This Thrush is just one of a dozen or so of bird species that regularly go through our garden getting all the pests. The Superb Wrens were gleaning all the little insects from the veggies. The Pardalotes were gathering feathers from the chook run to take back to their nest in the nearby dam wall.

The sounds were just as

captivating as the sights. Three different rainforest pigeons were a cooing and a doing up in the canopy. My young children arrived as the raucous Wattlebirds were laying siege to the male Common Koel. The Koel was taunting the Wattlebirds with its loud coo-ees so its mate could lay an egg in the reluctant parents nest.

The night before I had sat in the same spot at the start of twilight watching the forest insectivorous bats put on an aerial display as they caught their nightly feed. This was just another part of the forest that we rarely see, these days. There is so much we miss out on when we sit in our big boxes watching our little boxes.

Sitting in this dynamic oasis I reflected on the benefits of living in Tomerong and living next to a natural ecosystem. We all gain so many benefits from these areas such as a sense of place, beauty and revival, our clean air and water, plants and animals and all their interactions that go to make up part of where we live.

I left the garden and started to prepare for the day teaching Conservation Land Management (CLM2) at TAFE. I realized yet again how lucky we are and how important it is to preserve and restore what natural areas we have left. ■

Your Winning Team



Kevin Rudd



Neil Reilly

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Authorised by Neil Reilly 118 Attunga Avenue Kiama