EUREKA STREET

Vol. 6 No. 1 January-February 1996 $5.00

Summer Harvests

The selling of privatisation **Jon Greenaway**
The selling out of the forests **Juliette Hughes**

Reading in season

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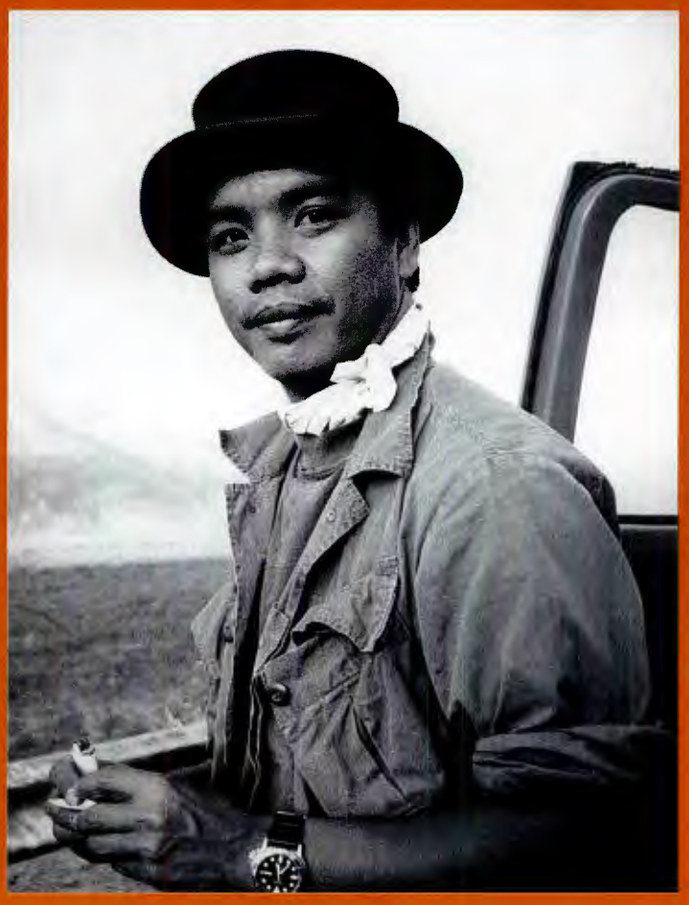
Down by the sea with **Jim Davidsdon**
Singapore sling with **Peter Pierce**

Plus reviews of **Tom Keneally** and **Tim Flannery**

Bumper Trivia Quiz



Out of the Dark

In 1991 two photographers, who had never met, walked into Eureka Street *in the space of a week, bringing with them some of the best documentary photography we had ever seen. A few days later a folio arrived from Sydney with dozens of beguiling, strong and witty images of life in Australian cities.*
The photographers were Emmanuel Santos, Andrew Stark and Bill Thomas (clockwise from right , above) . We have been using their art ever since, for its own sake, and to document events and ideas, and the texture of life in Australia and, as it has turned out, all around the world. We thought it was time that our readers met the faces behind images.

EUREKA STREET

A magazine of public affairs, the arts and theology

Volume 6 Number 1
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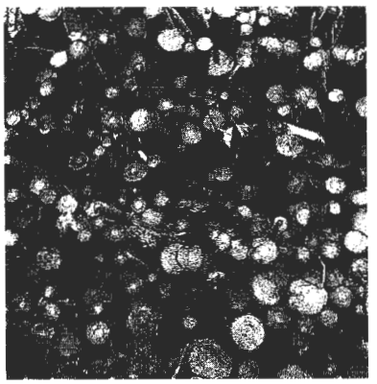

'What I saw in East Gippslands is a disaster in terms of forest practice.'

—**John Brumby**, Victorian Labor Opposition Leader.
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Cover: Summer promenade on the Esplanade, St Kilda.
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Graphics pp20, 21, 24, 31, 33, 53, 54 by Siobhan Jackson.
Cartoons pp 27, 50 by Dean Moore.
Photographs pp38-39 by Peter Pierce.

Eureka Street magazine
Jesuit Publications
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EUREKA STREET
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Eureka Street gratefully acknowledges the support of Colin and Angela Carter; the trustees of the estate of Miss M. Condon; Denis Cullity AO; W.P. & M.W. Gurry; Geoff Hill and Janine Perrett; the Roche family.

Eureka Street magazine, ISSN 1036-1758,
Australia Post Print Post approved
pp349181/00314
is published ten times a year
by Eureka Street Magazine Pty Ltd,
300 Victoria Street, Richmond, Victoria 3121
Tel: 03 9427 7311 Fax: 03 9428 4450.
Responsibility for editorial content is accepted by Michael Kelly, 300 Victoria Street, Richmond.
Printed by Doran Printing,
46 Industrial Drive, Braeside VIC 3195.

Unsolicited manuscripts, including poetry and fiction, will be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Requests for permission to reprint material from the magazine should be addressed in writing to:
The editor, *Eureka Street* magazine,
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PETER STEELE

Star and labyrinth

COME SUMMER IN AUSTRALIA, we all attend to at least one star—that partly-bridled hydrogen bomb we call Sun. Nothing on Earth, good or ill, would be possible without it, and it is not surprising that it should, in many religions, be adored. No surprise either that a string of rulers, when more than usually top-lofty, should invoke this interesting star. Louis XIV, *Roi Soleil*, did so: come to that, so did the six-inch Emperor of Lilliput, 'whose Head', by convention, 'strikes against the Sun.' If life is, as one Australian comedian puts it, 'something to do', Sun is something to see.

And what about the rest of them, immensely more sizeable than Sun, but hiding their light for the most part under the bushel of space? You may know as little as I do about them, but it is likely that they irradiate part of your consciousness. Hopkins' 'look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air' might leave the more measured of us cold: but what of Chesterton's dictum that 'One may understand the cosmos, but never the ego; the self is more distant than any star', or of Flaubert's claim that 'Human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when all the time we are longing to move the stars to pity'? Having the stars around the place 'influences' us: dead or alive, they pour themselves into our minds.

In the last few years there has been a notable array of books on the history and functions of astrology: as usual, the least condescending are the most intelligent. Some of the most brilliant people the world has known were, in a sense, starstruck, and it would take an implausible cockiness to say of this no more than, 'we have changed all that'. I suppose that part of the imaginative vitality of the star of Bethlehem, or of the Star of David, or even of communism's red star, lies in our latent conviction that we are drawn and swayed by focused forces—that the 'tall ship' which each of us is in some degree has 'a star to steer her by'.

When stellar issues arise, I like to think of two things. The first is that the International Geophysical Year, 1957-58, disclosed that possibly a hundred thousand tons of star-dust is collected daily by our little planet—the one Howard Nemerov's imaginary astronaut sees from the moon as a 'small blue agate in the big black bag'. The second is the racket known as 'Star-Scam', which was funded by those

naïvely supposing that, for a significant sum of money, some new star or other would be named after them.

The daily garnering of cosmic dust is a vivid instance of inevitabilities, of givens—of 'the way things are' made palpable. This can engross the least-scientific of people: much of art, much of social transaction, is given to the iterative and the reiterative: often, we are solaced by seeing, and by saying, that things *are so*. Irish has no word for either 'yes' or 'no', but even the most hibernian of personalities can warm to the factual, uttered for its own sweet or sour sake.

And 'Star-Scam'? Wise after the event if not before, we may shrug at the bilked investors, who quickly look as odd as those caught up, in an earlier century, in tulipomania. And yet there is something generous, something resolute even, in wanting to put the stamp of selfhood out there in the labyrinth of the heavens. Part of us hates inanity, the evacuated self, the evacuated world; courted by nihilism as many of us are, we want, however clumsily, to decline the gambit. 'Foo Was Here' is not much, but it is better—so much better—than nothing.

PERHAPS SOME SUCH INTUITIVE PERSUASION has contributed to the making, over thousands of years, of mazes and labyrinths. They have been fashioned out of an extraordinary array of materials, living or inert; you can see them done in wood or turf, silver or mosaic; you can inspect them with the eye of a hovering connoisseur, or be levelled with a rat as you prowl some resistant design. Egypt, Crete, Etruscan Italy, Afghanistan, Ireland, America, India, Germany—not to mention Bullsbrook, Western Australia—the mazers have been at their work.

What all of them offer is at least the insinuation of order in the midst of disarray. Depending on the bent of their makers, the disarray may have the last word, or the order. Over hundreds of years, mazes were incorporated into the design of Christian churches, conceding thereby our boxed-about fortunes even while an over-arching Providence was being alluded to. In the literature which labyrinths have prompted into being, the stress has been similarly various; now the reader 'loses' himself or herself pleasurably in the winding ways, and now the motif of entrapment or circumscription seems all-powerful. Not surprisingly, a Chaucer or a Dante will have money on success in exploration, whereas an Umberto Eco or a Jorge Luis Borges is much less sanguine. Borges, in 'Labyrinth', writes 'Forget the onslaught/ of the bull that is a man and whose/ strange and plural form haunts the tangle/ of unending interwoven stone./ He does not exist. In the black dust/ hope not even for the savage beast.' No bones, so to speak, about that.

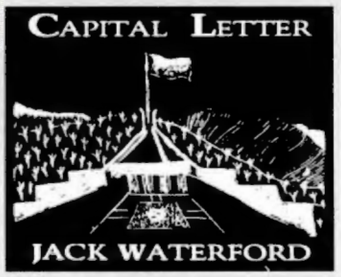
On the other hand, there are plenty of people who remain undaunted even though their sense is that moral action, especially moral public action, is labyrinthine. 'We shall see who emerges from the labyrinth', Daniel Berrigan wrote once, 'the minotaur or the man,' and the trope could apply in countless circumstances more private than Berrigan's. Perhaps just what is required for some of us to attain any significant moral stature is indeed exposure to labyrinth—not intricacies to be toyed with, but mazes to be confronted and endured. The mazes may take the form of our own or others' temperaments, of the social circumstances into which we are gridded, or of what artists and others would call, unfashionably, the life of the spirit.

At all events, from the many whose narratives might bring us heart, I keep going back to Dante. Put to infernal, purgatorial, or celestial labyrinths, he emerges at the end of each with his eye on stars. ■

Peter Steele has a Personal Chair at the University of Melbourne.

What of Chesterton's dictum that 'One may understand the cosmos, but never the ego; the self is more distant than any star', or of Flaubert's claim that 'Human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when all the time we are longing to move the stars to pity'? Having the stars around the place 'influences' us: dead or alive, they pour themselves into our minds.

The sun worshippers above are Russsian Jews, after Aliya (homecoming), spending Shabbat holidays on the beach at Ashod, Israel. Photograph by Emmanuel Santos.



The Prime Minister's double vision

One thing which Paul Keating thinks he has all over John Howard is some image in the popular mind for leadership, for willingness to take a serious long-term view of the world. While his critics are nit-picking about who said what, and are focused on short term politics, he has been, he thinks, sketching a view of Australia in the future, one at peace with itself because it is reconciled to its past, standing by itself because it has domesticated its institutions, and competing successfully in the world because it has reformed its economy and persuaded its international markets to adopt trading positions which are in Australia's own interests.

He would not, of course, do so merely for some abstract recognition or later canonisation as a principled leader who made a difference. It also, he thinks, makes good politics. The electorate is sophisticated; the voter can recognise quality and the capacity to make a difference. It is, at the end of the day, the vital difference, he thinks. In this sense there has not been much that Keating has been doing on the international stage of late which has not been sharply focused for domestic political effect.

But whether the achievement is as substantial as he would like us to think is not so clear. APEC, for example, is as yet no more than a general statement of good intentions about what might happen 15 or 25 years from now. The state of world trading politics now is such as to make APEC seem generally good sense to those who are enrolled, so that one can get broad promises of intention even from those who know that, right now, they simply could not deliver on some of the domestic changes, particularly to agriculture, it would involve. But the realisation of the APEC dream, even assuming it is a good thing, depends on more than words on a page.

A decade hence, for example, China will be under a completely new leadership and have a completely new economy. It may also have undergone major internal turmoil, with or without the collapse of the communist state. A decade hence, Russia should have found some equilibrium which may well involve a massive expansion of the economic potential of Pacific Russia, both as a marketplace for goods and services and as a source of raw materials, especially for Japan. Well before then, Indonesia will have undergone a change of leadership, perhaps a bloody one. Elsewhere in Asia, some of the more authoritarian regimes will have to deal, in some manner or another, with pressure for domestic liberalisation in a way which must effectively see off many of the prevailing institutions. Elsewhere in the world, the European Community's economic strength will not only be a measure of its capacity to find an effective federalism but of its capacity both to integrate the old eastern economies and to find some centripetal influences to overcome the centrifugal ones in areas such as the former Yugoslavia.

One does not have to be a pessimist about many of these outcomes to comment that the shape of the world in 2010 may not bear a great deal of relationship to what we have today. Even more, the prospect of Australia's fundamentally affecting most of these outcomes is fairly limited, though somewhat greater in the immediately local area, given that Australia has a GNP about the same size as all of ASEAN put together.

In the immediate region the biggest threats are not external threats to security but internal threats. Indonesia, with whom Australia has just signed a security pact, is a very good case in point. Indonesia is not a democracy, and its ruling institutions are not settled ones: they are mostly focused on its army, most of whose role is internal. There are no potential external threats to Indonesia on the horizon, although fear of China has for Indonesia the same function as fear of Indonesia has traditionally had for us, and with about as much basis.

But internally there are major issues of nation building, satisfying the aspirations of different cultural and ethnic groupings, particularly those with a tradition of revolt against centrist and Javanese power, differential rates of development, increasing demands for human rights, and increasing problems with Irian Jaya and East Timor, each of which is in an international spotlight. And Indonesia has a major problem of arranging a successor to President Suharto, with a substantial risk that the contentions for power could lead to local conflict and even a revisit of the 1965 massacres of ethnic Chinese, not popular at village level and ever-convenient scapegoats when demagogues are about.

Australia has a vital interest in a vigorously developing Indonesia, and little to fear from its growth. It does no harm having a vaguely-worded understanding with Indonesia that Australia will help protect it against external attack. Moreover, making such an understanding formal is a bit of a coup, because Indonesia has traditionally been unaligned. The risk, however, is that such an understanding could draw Australia into Indonesian internal politics in a way that it is very much in its interests to avoid. A fresh revolt in Aceh or a marked increase in tensions on the Papua-New Guinea-Irian Jayan border, or the manufacture, for Indonesian domestic politics, of some sort of stand-off over, say, the southern Spratly islands, with the Philippines, or Vietnam, or even China, could put Australia in a difficult position.

A major military and intelligence interchange is potentially compromising as well because it links Australia with the military apparatus when it must also retain links and provide encouragement to other forces within the polity—forces that stand rather more for political and economic liberalism . The idea that at the end of the day Wilsonian models of foreign relations—rather more focused on process, social justice and human rights than on the rigid pursuit of national interests—must give way to a realpolitik is a dangerous one. The real promise of Asia for Australia lies not in its market potential but in its simultaneous political and economic development.

Paul Keating, in short, may not have it right. Even if he does, where and what Australia will be in the region a decade hence may owe very little to anything he has done. He may not mind so much about this, however, if his own electorate will give him some credit for thinking about it in a way so far ahead of anything his rival is doing. ■

Jack Waterford is the editor of the *Canberra Times*.

JULIETTE HUGHES

Pulp politics

'After all, you have been in power for 13 years and you made great play today, Prime Minister, on woodchips. The reality is that your government is the champion woodchip exporter in Australia's history. No government has exported more woodchips than the Hawke and Keating governments.'

—**John Howard**, Federal Opposition Leader.
Extract from Hansard, December 1995.

FOR MANY WHO THOUGHT THEY KNEW the colour of the main political parties, it was astonishing when John Howard excoriated the Federal Government for failing to protect old-growth forest, and failing to restructure the timber industry.

When the Keating government's long-awaited forest policy statement was finally released in December last year, environmental lobbyists were hoping for an outcome that would at last protect the tall eucalypt forests that are prized by both the native forest industry and the rest of the community.

'The ALP traditionally has had a problem with seeing the full significance of the forests issue. To them it's just another industrial problem, where their normal constituents, the unions, have a dispute with the rest of the community.
They don't understand that the nature of their problem is fundamentally different: 80 per cent of the community oppose woodchipping.
They have been treating it like an industrial issue and have been trying to deal with it in ways that don't work now.'

—***Alec Marr**, Wilderness Society*

But they are prized for different reasons, and the forest industry, although it made a few disgruntled noises, was very satisfied with the document, which failed to protect most of the high-conservation-value forests. In effect its regulations provide a series of loopholes that make the avowed intention of limiting native forest woodchipping meaningless.

The Deferred Forest Areas that have been granted (far fewer than were recommended by the conservationists), are precisely that: only temporarily deferred from logging, *not* preserved. According to Professor Peter Singer, who holds the number one position on the Greens' Senate ticket in Victoria, 'The Government is just deferring the unpopular decisions until after the next election. It's not been agreed to permanently reserve remaining old-growth and high-conservation-value forest—and that's really what we need.'

THE RIFT BETWEEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL LOBBY and the Keating government has widened since the release of the statement. There is also the added irony of a diverse lobby, which had been seen as an extension of the ALP, now almost unanimous in its assessment that federal Labor needs to go into opposition to 'find its soul again'. According to Singer, 'Keating has destroyed the accord with the Greens and never had any interest in preserving it'. The fact that the Prime Minister's own department had overseen the whole 1995 process, since the embarrassment of David

What happens in the next five years is going to be crucial for the future of Australia's tall eucalypt forests. The heavily subsidised native forest industry is on the way out, but is determined to get all it possibly can of what is left. The only real beneficiaries of this will be the shareholders of AMCOR, Boral and North Broken Hill, in the main.

Beddall's decision to increase woodchip quotas in 1994, only serves to underline the fact that there was little hope of review, and that the rebuff administered to the environmental lobby was intentional.

In a time when relations have never been colder between the Keating government and the environmental lobby, the number of bureaucrats and departments involved in forest negotiations has never been greater. In the run-up to the release of the statement, a forests task force was set up under Roger Beale, from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Weekly meetings were held that involved the Department of Environment, Sport and Territories (DEST), the Department of Primary Industry and Energy (DOPIE), the Australian Heritage Commissions (AHC) the Australian Nature Conservation Agency (ANCA), the Department of Science, Industry and Technology (DIST) and the Prime Minister's Department. Over 50 bureaucrats were deployed full-time on the taskforce—a hugely expensive undertaking. The set-up was so complex that it was difficult for any interest group to have any influence; the only culture that prevailed was that of the status quo, which favoured export woodchipping interests.

The credibility of this weighty process has been compromised by the fact that the six million hectares that have been deferred from logging still include over 100,000 hectares of buttongrass in Tasmania, most of the radiata pine plantations in that state and NSW, 100,000 hectares of (unloggable) Banksia scrubland, any forests too steep to log, most of the areas Australia-wide that were clearfelled in the last 30 years, and the moonscape of Queenstown's hills, treeless for most of this century. And yet, of more than 80 areas proposed for deferment in Victoria, only two were granted. 2.3 million hectares were declared to be deferred in Victoria, but since there are only 1.2 million hectares available for logging in that state, many of the deferment areas are meaningless as far as protection of tall old forest is concerned.

The stated aim of the Deferred Forest Areas was to preserve 15 per cent of the forest types that were here at European settlement. Yet only 15 per cent of box ironbark forests, for example,remain; they are still being intensively logged and none of them has been deferred. Rainforest and wilderness will be logged in Tasmania, where Dr Bob Brown was jailed in December for protesting against the logging road being carved through the Tarkine Wilderness. We are still exporting woodchips in record amounts.

GIVEN ALL THIS, Federal Environment Minister Senator Faulkner's assertion that the conservation lobby is 'insatiable' and 'extremist' has caused even more disaffection in environmental groups.

To many Labor voters, it is a puzzle why, after such successful co-operation in the early 80s, the relationship between Labor and the conservation movement has deteriorated so far.

Alec Marr, of the Wilderness Society says,'The ALP traditionally has had a problem with seeing the full significance of the forests issue . To them it's just another industrial problem, where their normal constituents, the unions, have a dispute with the rest of the community. They don't understand that the nature of their problem is fundamentally different: 80 per cent of the community oppose woodchipping.

(continued p11)

Down to earth matters

AN OLD GROWTH FOREST SYSTEM is so finely tuned that the Galileo probe is a crude toy by comparison. Each living thing in it supports the whole by the effect of its feeding, breathing or reproduction. It takes many centuries to reach such a state of dynamic balance. Old tree hollows provide home to owls, parrots, gliders, possums, bats. These in turn process seeds through their digestive tracts, making them able to germinate. Old forest creates a micro-climate, collecting and filtering water that we collect and drink. It stores vast quantities of carbon.

In an old, tall eucalypt forest, if you hurry, you might still see trees 80 metres high. Thorpedale, in Victoria, boasted the world's tallest tree, a 375 foot mountain ash, until it was cut down by loggers in1884. You will see tree ferns of staggering antiquity (up to a thousand years old), survivors of many a wildfire. Tree ferns are an important key to forest regeneration after fire: their crowns sprout green within a few months, sheltering seeds below them, diffusing rain so that it does not wash away the bared soil. About 90 per cent of tree ferns survive wildfire. Fewer than 20 per cent commonly survive clearfelling.

When an area is logged for the first time, the loggers come in via the new road, built with state government money. The road can cross streams, muddying the water, often wiping out native fish and their breeding grounds. The erosion from the road washes down into the streams, silting them further. Then the loggers cut down almost every tree in the area with chainsaws. They leave a very few standing as token 'habitat trees', but these do not survive well; they often fall over when the rain erodes the soil round their roots.

The loggers remove the branches and drag the trunks they want with tractors to a log landing, to be stacked for the logging trucks to take them to the saw mills, or more likely, the chipper. This dragging of logs uproots, crushes or buries many tree ferns and other plants. The animals who were dependent on this area for their home and food go away and die: the rest of the forest cannot support extra passengers. The area is then burned to clear up the discarded material. This releases a good deal of stored carbon into the atmosphere. The rest of the carbon is released when the paper, often made in Japan from the woodchips, rots or is burnt, thousands of miles from its origin.

THEN THE AREA IS RESEEDED. There are probably a few new species there by then anyway: blackberry, boneseed, cinnamon fungus. But there is no attempt to replace the range of what is gone: foresters want coupes of even age, because their definition of sustainable forestry means sustainable timber yield. Thus they are able to describe the vanished old-growth as having been 'over-mature', because of the number of hollow trees, home to animals, but unsuitable for timber. The new growth will be a single, commercially desirable species, such as bluegum or shining gum. Foresters have stopped putting down 1080 to kill the animals who try to come back to feed on the new growth. Now they dust the seedlings with iron filings. The wallabies hate the taste, so they must fight for territory somewhere else, or starve.

Often this regeneration is not as successful as the foresters would like, so the area is then 'scalped': that is, bulldozed, ploughed, fertilised and hand-planted. Victoria spent more than $7 million doing this in 1994. What will grow there is a *de facto* plantation, but will be classified as forest or plantation according to requirements when it is time to export woodchips from there again, a planned time frame ranging from 50 to 80 years, a time that will see the young trees grow to uniform size and straightness. This is good for timber yields but will also ensure that the complex balance of creatures and water production will never exist again in that area. What is gone would take many human lifetimes to re-emerge.

And in the meantime, the Powerful Owl, the Tiger Quoll, Sooty Owl and Leadbeater's Possum will have had yet more of their habitat erased and be pushed just that much further towards extinction. Gradually, what old-growth tall eucalypt there is left will exist in vulnerable pockets, or in narrow strips like a mesh surrounding the clearfelled coupes, whose total area will now be greater than the old forest. It will all be counted as 'forest', but will mostly consist of *de facto* plantation trees, because people have found it difficult to see the trees for the wood.

In East Gippsland, right now, trucks thunder down the hills on their way to Midway chip mill, carrying trees so huge that they only can fit one to a load. ■

—Juliette Hughes

(from p9)

They have been treating it like an industrial issue and have been trying to deal with it in ways that don't work now.'

A motion has been made towards restructure of the industry with a Forest Industry Structural Adjustment Package (FISAP) of $107 million. But $60 million of this is to be spent in NSW, where overcutting in the past had forced a restructure on Bob Carr anyway. Dr Clive Hamilton, executive director of the Canberra-based Australia Institute, commented:

'Of the $107 million, $60 million (55per cent) has been promised to NSW, even though there is no indication in the documentation that NSW will be affected disproportionately. NSW accounts for only 35 per cent of the areas in Deferred Forest Areas. This situation is peculiar, to say the least, especially since the NSW Government has also allocated $60 million, some of which is for redundancy payments ... State Forests of NSW has conceded that it has been cutting above sustainable yields for many years ... It now appears that the Commonwealth's FISAP will be used as a smokescreen to cover adjustments made necessary by the mismanagement of the resource, and not by the creation of new reserves.'

RESTRUCTURE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY has to focus on plantations if it is to have environmental or economic credibility. Judy Clark's monumental report, *Australia's Plantations*, published in July 1995, proved conclusively what many had long suspected: that there is enough plantation wood 'to replace native forest sawntimber within five years.'

At least 80,000 hectares of plantations are past maturity and ready to be used, in addition to what is coming onstream now. There are 30,000 jobs in the plantation industry and there is capacity for at least half as much again in a proper restructure.

By contrast, the latest publication of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics (ABARE), gives the number of jobs in native forest woodchipping as fewer than 600.

What happens in the next five years is going to be crucial for the future of Australia's tall eucalypt forests. The heavily subsidised native forest industry is on the way out, but is determined to get all it possibly can of what is left. The only real beneficiaries of this will be the shareholders of AMCOR, Boral and North Broken Hill, in the main.

The local economies of the areas being logged for export woodchips will continue to decline. Tourism opportunities and water quality will be lost because pristine water catchment areas are clearfelled.

If this latest forest policy statement of the Keating government is its last word on the issue, then the next federal election will be deeply affected by the outcome of green negotiations with the Coalition. ■

Juliette Hughes is a freelance journalist.

Knotty questions

BRIAN WALTERS, BARRISTER AND CONTRIBUTING EDITOR of *Wild* magazine, analysed the new forest policy regulations and found disturbing anomalies:

'Part 3 of the *Export Control (Hard Wood Chips)* regulations purports to set a 'national ceiling' in relation to the export of woodchips. There are several important observations to be made:

• 1. The national ceiling only applies in respect of *controlled wood chips from regions to which a Regional Forest Agreement does not apply*(sub-regulation 11(1);

• 2.The ceiling is not, *prima facie*, reducing each year, but is fixed at 5.251 million tonnes green mass, subject to the application of sub-regulation (11)3;

• 3. Sub-regulation 11(3) only applies where at least 1 Regional Forest Agreement is in force at the beginning of a calendar year: in other words...the States can (subject to other considerations) maintain the ceiling at 5.251 million tonnes by refusing to enter into RFAs in any given year;

• 4. The formula appears to contemplate a deduction of the previous year's tonnage from RFAs from the previous year's national ceiling in order to arrive at a new ceiling. In other words, timber taken from RFAs displaces its own volume from the non-RFA ceiling. This means that:

a) the total volume to be exported (ie including RFA and non-RFA wood chips) is not subject to a reducing ceiling;

b) the volume of wood chips exported from RFA areas is not subject to any ceiling, but the amount so exported is deducted from the non-RFA ceiling;

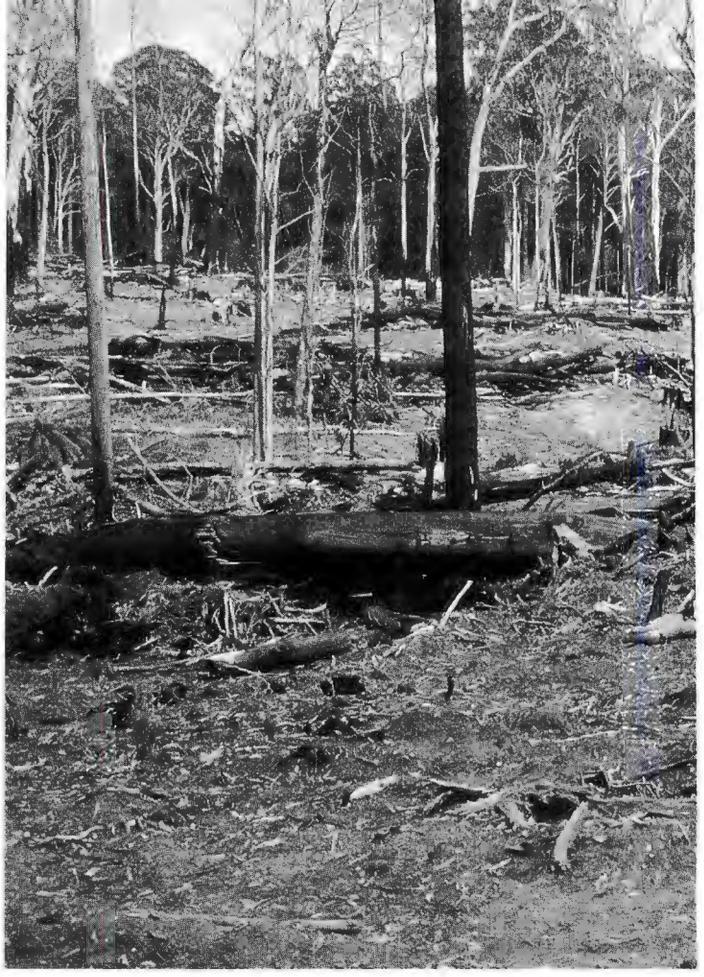
• 5. This formula does not, contrary to public statements, mean an immediate reduction in wood chip exports, and could well lead to an increase...

I note in particular that whilst an applicant for a licence can apply to the AAT for a review of a decision not to grant a licence, conservationists and others may not apply for a review of a decision to grant such a licence.

...Regulation 4 excepts from the definition of hardwood wood chips (and therefore from any export controls) "wood chips derived from either sandalwood, or from plantation-grown trees". I do not know why sandalwood has been excepted. There is no definition of either "plantation" or "plantation-grown". Accordingly, if a plantation were to be regarded as an area of trees which have been planted, it would cover a large proportion of regrowth forest areas in Australia. ...I do not think the term would be qualified apart from its ordinary or natural meaning. It follows, in my view, that the effect of these regulations is to exempt the majority of Australia's forests from any wood chip export control by the Commonwealth whatsoever.' ■

The colt from old regret

Victorian Opposition leader ***John Brumby*** *talks to* ***Juliette Hughes***



JULIETTE HUGHES: *What do you think has happened to environmental issues as far as governments, state and federal are concerned?*

John Brumby: The recession, which hit most savagely, I guess in the early '90s, took some of the focus away from environmental issues. And whether the pendulum has swung back as much as it might, is a debateable point. But at the end of the day it will be a judgment for all governments, about how they see the world, about how they see the meshing of environment and economic issues.

East Gippsland has been an eye-opener to me. We've all relied to some extent in the past on reports and departmental briefings to tell us about the industry and how it's sustainable and how logging practices comply with codes of practice and so on. But what I saw in East Gippsland is a disaster in terms of forest practice.

What I've tried to show is that we can protect our native forest and still have a viable plantation-based timber industry. A CSR forest product [brochure] was put in my letterbox at home. It showed all the things you can do now with softwood timber. It had everything, from retaining walls to pergolas to fences to decking to parquetry, everything you can do now with softwood [plantation] timber. And as Judy Clark's Plantation Report has shown, there is a huge softwood stockpile. And with the benefit of hindsight, that most incisive analytical tool,we can see what should have been done.

Hindsight is always 20-20.

Indeed. If a decade ago governments had done what I have been arguing for passionately this year, in terms of eucalypt plantations and so on, we wouldn't be having this debate today. We'd have our major forests; they'd be protected, and our wood industry would be sustained by a plantation system.

But we failed to take the tough decisions back in '83. In fairness I think it was because we were new to government and we didn't have all the facts. I think during the mid and late eighties other environment issues perhaps overtook the agenda. And we did progress in Victoria: the strategy that was released in '86 did protect large parts of East Gippsland that were previously not protected. So we did make progress but in hindsight governments, then as now, should have moved much more aggressively to plantations.

The whole State-Federal thing has a big question mark, doesn't it, since the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Environment. It seems to bind the Commonwealth in fact into administering state policy. What would you like to see happening on a Victorian level,

a federal level and then on an Australia-wide level?
The reason the Commonwealth (and when I say the Commonwealth I mean the Federal Labor Government) got involved in forest policy is because the practices of some of the states were simply so appalling. So while obviously many in the environment movement may be disappointed at the outcomes from this current process, I think that people should also respect the fact that the government did get involved in this area. And I see the role of the national forest policy as a safety net, if you like, below which forest standards and forest protection shouldn't fall.

It is then open to States, and it would be open under my government in the future, to make much stronger decisions in relation to protection of the environment, given that the states still have constitutional responsibility over land use.

WHAT THE STATES MUST DO, and what I would want to do, is to go somewhat further than the Commonwealth is going, in fact considerably further, to shape the forest policy of the future.

You see, I've been to East Gippsland recently and it's been an eye-opener to me. We've all relied to some extent in the past on reports and departmental briefings to tell us about the industry and how it's sustainable and how logging practices comply with codes of practice and so on. But what I saw in East Gippsland is a disaster in terms of forest practice.

What people are being told is occurring and what is actually occurring are poles apart. The forestry operations are way beyond sustainable. And what is driving it, you know, almost totally—is woodchip. [In] the bit of forest we saw, I think 15 per cent of the trees that came out of the coupe went to a sawmill: the rest was all chip or firewood or lay on the floor.

Given that native forest logging is basically assisted by the State forest agencies in each state, how would you envisage a [Victorian] Labor government looking at the forest policies of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)?:
Since the release of the Commonwealth forest policy statement I still have major concerns about the policy and operations of the DCNR, and how that department is going to meet its survey and reporting responsibilities.

There's got to be a sea-change in attitudes and culture in the DCNR. Many of the good people, I think, have left the DCNR, no doubt about that. And without universally criticising everybody who remains behind, the reality is that the majority of the people who are left behind there have a certain view of the world, a certain culture. And they are aided and abetted by a state government whose approach to forestry operations is 'open slather, let her rip'. It's a philosophical position for the Kennett government: 'the market's always right', only the fittest survive. That's a poisonous culture.

When you go to East Gippsland you see the 20-hectare coupes. Three blokes can clear that out in two or three weeks. Three blokes, three weeks' work, straight on a truck to Midway mill to be chipped. There are no real jobs in that.

Do you think it is possible to make statements about forest issues that are short and easily understood and yet truthful ?
It's always one of the problems in this debate. And it is going to be a problem during the next few months and up to the next election.There may well be a fair bit of industry money used to campaign against me. The industry is spending millions of dollars, as you know, with short, sharp, snappy lines of questionable accuracy and truth, painting a picture of operations. There are a lot of challenges there for me, and, I have to say, for the environmental movement too.

Wilder than question time: John Brumby on location in East

In my own case, having been a federal member for years, having worked in Canberra and on aspects of the National Forest Policy Statement, I have to say I never once got out and looked at forestry operations, never visited East Gippsland.

I've been talking to Caucus people recently and to my federal colleagues, to federal cabinet ministers who are involved in this. I said, 'I've got to implore you to actually go and have a look and see what really happens, because what is occurring there and what you see on the briefing notes are not compatible, they're not consistent.' And people in the industry side, a lot of the hardliners in this debate, they poke a lot of fun at Graham Richardson, as being, you know, cynical and vote-grasping and all that, but Richardson's conversion on forest issues was genuine.

He was a politician who actually got out and had a look.

The only people in the world with resource security are the overseas countries that are getting our export chip. It's anathema to everything the Labor movement has always stood for: they're not skilled jobs, they're not value-adding, we're not generating investment in Australia. It's the quarry mentality.

Similarly, if you go up to Ravenshoe, near the World Heritage wet tropics in Far North Queensland, they have a little sawmill that's been there for generations. But times changed, prices came down, they had to log more and more of the area, just to remain viable, and so they were reaching out further and further, destroying more and more forest. But they restructured to plantation softwood, and so there's still a local timber industry, and there's tourism too.

So there's a challenge there, in education, but you are competing against millions and millions of dollars of industry money.

Isn't it generally acknowledged that the native forest logging industry isn't really subject to market forces, in the way that the motor car and textile industries were made to be under John Button's restructure?

Yes, well, plantations grow the resource much more efficiently and closer to where it's utilised than native forest will. And if you priced the trees which I saw in East Gippsland, which had been knocked over mainly for chip, properly taking into account their real value to the Victorian community, then the only reason you would ever take one of them would be to turn it into a piece of Nicholas Dattner furniture. So you've got access being granted at way below the real price of the resource. And that's just to stick with the economics apart from any of the other considerations. So we're giving huge subsidies to knock down trees which in some cases have taken many years to grow. About a fifth of the tree will go on the back of a truck and may be sawmilled—the rest of it is either chipped or just lies there. So what's driving it [native forest logging] is subsidies and the wrong pricing system. With all the softwood that's on the market from plantations now, the fact that there are any operations surviving in native forest at all is a reflection of wrong pricing mechanisms and a failure to cost externalities properly; to reflect all the community values that apply to those forests.

How would you deal with the problems in the rural communities that would be affected by any restructure of the industry?

If you go down to those areas the sawmillers know that already things are pretty bad, most of them are putting people off anyway, because they can't sell their sawmill product. The biggest cause of job losses in rural areas is the Kennett government. In the East Gippsland area alone you've lost nearly a thousand jobs, far more than are employed directly in relation to forest activities, through Kennett goverment cutbacks and compulsory competitive tendering. More and more government departments are closing and shifting up to Melbourne.You could employ large numbers of people in these areas in forest rehabilitation, genuine conservation measures.

I've been talking to Caucus people recently and to my federal colleagues, to federal cabinet ministers. I said, 'I've got to implore you to actually go and have a look and see what really happens, because what is occurring there and what you see on the briefing notes are not compatible, they're not consistent.'

When you go to East Gippsland you see the 20-hectare coupes. Three blokes can clear that out in two or three weeks. Three blokes, three weeks' work, straight on a truck to Midway mill to be chipped. There are no real jobs in that. The only people in the world with resource security are the overseas countries that are getting our export chip. It's anathema to everything the Labor movement has always stood for: they're not skilled jobs, they're not value-adding, we're not generating investment in Australia. It's the quarry mentality.

CHANGE ISN'T EASY, but sometimes you've got to do these things. I recall that in the mid-eighties, the dairy industry was going through a crisis, similar in many ways to what's happening in forestry. Dairy farmers were being paid just to milk more and more. There were butter mountains all over the world. And they were all going broke, husbands and wives working harder and harder, absurd hours, getting more and more output and going nowhere.

What became known as the Kerin Dairy Plan changed it. I remember when John Kerin first proposed that, because I was then the Federal Member for Bendigo. I had quite a few dairy farmers in my electorate. I remember that you couldn't take him anywhere for fear of his personal safety.

There was one public meeting he was invited to at Echuca, which was outside my electorate, but [there were] quite a lot of dairy farmers in that irrigation country. The Victorian Police Special Operations Group (SOG) came to my office at Bendigo first and we were going to travel up in a car. The SOG rang us there and said they had intelligence sources and that they had prohibited Kerin from attending that meeting. They said there were people in the crowd with guns; they wouldn't be able to guarantee his safety, they wouldn't be able to protect him. So that's how bad things were.

Yet he pushed through that plan, and if you look at the dairy industry today, it's been totally refocused: it's much more sustainable, it's export-oriented, it adds value to its product, and it's a success story. But change had to occur. We need to make it utterly unambiguous when we're setting policy that the way of the future for the timber industry is through greater use of plantations. That is where we expect the industry to invest. ■

—Juliette Hughes

Laying an egg

ARCHIMEDES IS REALLY A PRETTY EVEN-TEMPERED sort of bloke. It takes a bit to get under his skin. The greatest rush of blood he's ever experienced was that day he rushed down the street screaming, 'Eureka!' But last month he came close to repeating the performance—in annoyance rather than delight.

It was the Federal Government's Innovation Statement which stirred him up, but not because of its content. What rankled was the way it was handled, by the Government and the media alike. It was yet another demonstration that this nation still has a bit of growing up to do.

For a country so utterly dependent on science and technology—telecommunications and transport to beat the vast distances, mining and farming machinery to earn export dollars, biology to protect a fragile environment—it is amazing how incapable we seem of coming to terms with them.

As the Prime Minister unburdened himself of the statement, I am told that Melbourne's World Congress Centre was thick with reporters—politics and finance journalists, that is. Very few media organisations thought to send science writers. After all, the Prime Minister was speaking, wasn't he?

And so the analysis went—in *The Age*, one-third of page one, all of page six, an editorial and about a quarter of a finance page. The actual science content made up less than one-fifth of that.

No one pointed out that Government had actually endorsed its Co-operative Research Centres Program by extending it. (The program has been one of the Government's science policy success stories.) Archimedes saw and heard no mention of the fact that there was no backing for the astronomy community's bid to become involved in the European Southern Observatory in Chile, which will be the next big step in optical telescopes. And what about the policy statements on the future of the CSIRO—they must have been lost in the fine print!

In fact, Michelle Grattan dismissed the whole exercise by saying there was 'not much for the average punter', and that most of the statement was concerned with 'boutique measures for boutique audiences' and—the real killer for any media story—'many initiatives seem *worthy*'.

Given that the future of this nation—its future exports, its future employment, its future environment, its future society—is almost totally dependent upon how it manages to handle science and technology, I would have thought 'the average punter' ought to be vitally interested in Government policy in the area. And if he or she is not, then there is something clearly lacking in our society.

To be fair to Ms Grattan, in one sense she was right. Politically, the statement won't win many votes at the forthcoming election. But the day that the worth of Government policy is judged solely on whether it is an immediate vote winner—on its ability to furnish short-term gains to 'the average punter'—is the day Government ceases to make any pretence at long-term vision, and the day that democracy dies in this country. Welcome to the tyranny of the average punter, whoever he or she may be.

It was a fellow political commentator—ABC Radio National's Pru Goward—who heard the real bum note in the Innovation Statement. Unlike past Keating policy extravaganzas, this one had no binding statement of vision to go with it. It was a grab-bag of policies with no common theme, no overarching explanation of what it was trying to achieve and why, and no pithy Keating encapsulation of what his Government was about.

Maybe one of these days Australia will actually realise that the countries at the top of the world pecking order share an appreciation—not uncritical—of science and innovation. They recognise that science is just as much a part of their society as footy, and treat it accordingly. By contrast, in the Land of Oz, science is treated like some demented goose that occasionally lays a golden egg. It is kept in quarantine, well away from real life, and has money poked at it every now and again. ■

Tim Thwaites is a freelance science writer.

ALAN NICHOLS

Looking right in Burma

BURMA'S DEMOCRATIC LEADER, Aung San Suu Kyi, has been out of house arrest now for seven months. She has withdrawn her National League for Democracy from the constitution convention process. She speaks to thousands every Sunday outside her gate.

But don't hold your breath for dramatic changes. The ruling junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), is receiving sufficient international approval for the small steps of liberalisation they have already taken and therefore may not go any further.

Australia's Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, is an increasingly lone figure within ASEAN when he presses the human rights case against Burma/Myanmar, and Australia's mild discouragement of trade has little impact on Burma's economy. So the ruling military seem likely to continue a policy of keeping a tight lid on their 42 million people, signing 'peace' terms with all the ethnic minorities, and oppressing any public dissent.

The 'running sore' from SLORC's point of view may be the 93,000 refugees remaining in Thailand. They remind the world of the persecution which sent them over the border and the oppression and poverty which keep them there. So SLORC definitely want them to go home, and in the process gain the extra benefit of silencing the democracy movement, as leading dissidents decide whether to go home and 'knuckle under', or stay in exile.

The repatriation of these refugees in Thailand has become a priority and will start next April with the 'easiest' to move—the Mon.

The 10,000 refugees of Mon ethnic nationality in refugee camps are a segment of the approximately four million Mon people who live normally in the Irrawaddy delta area. They are descendants of an ancient Mon-Khmer empire which stretched across Thailand to Cambodia.

During the period of British rule of Burma, the colonials undermined the last of the great Mon kings,

After 33 years of centralised military rule, Burma remains one of the least developed countries in the world.

Street vendor in Rangoon selling slingshots often used against the military. Photograph: Greg Scullin.

Aung San Suu Kyi, in recent addresses to the Sunday crowds outside her home in University Avenue, Rangoon, has been calling for 'dialogue' between SLORC and the ethnic nationalities.

and the Mon became just one more ethnic group, along with Karen, Kachin, Shan and Chin. About half of Burma's 42 million people today belong to these 'hill-tribes'.

The years since the 1962 military takeover of power within Burma have been very hard on the Mon. Their language was forbidden, their leaders disempowered, their young men taken for forced labour or conscripted into the army. The 10,000 who sought refuge in Thailand from 1982 had a particularly difficult time. Against the odds, they started a high school in the jungle, using the Mon language, and reintroduced traditional dance, story and culture.

All the time, they were overshadowed by the politically more astute Karen refugees to their north, who had better international contacts and a guerrilla army which had trained during World War II on the side of the Allies.

I CAN REMEMBER VISITING a Mon refugee camp, many hours by four-wheel-drive out of Three Pagodas Pass, where the Burma Railway once went over the mountain. Their food had run out; there were no school books; the teachers were untrained. There was an air of desperation all round. Nevertheless, Nai Tin Aung, chairman of the Mon Relief Committee, met us with courtesy, exercised the hospitality of his very humble home, and expressed deep gratitude that we had remembered them at all. Such was their sense of isolation.

The Burma Border Consortium of international Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)—including Jesuit Refugee Service and Christ Church Anglican Church, Bangkok—made sure of their basic food and health care while they could. But in 1993, the Thai authorities forced them over the border. They were going to be in the way of a commercial gas pipeline, and no one wanted sabotage.

Observers on the Thai-Burma border and in Rangoon currently feel that these people will be the target for the first repatriation. The Karen and Karenni will be next. Under pressure, the Mon refugee leaders have this year signed a cease-fire with SLORC. It could hardly be called a 'peace', with army presence everywhere, restrictions on movement, and a ban on public meetings.

What conditions for repatriation should the international community demand? First, repatriation should be voluntary, as under the United Nations Convention on Refugees. Second, returnees should have free access to their own villages and lands. Third, they should not suffer reprisals such as unreasonable taxes, or forced labour.

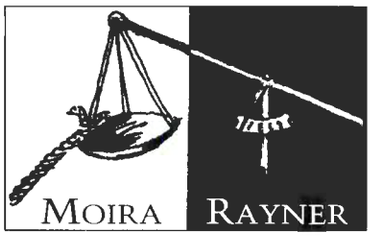
How will these be monitored? At the very least, SLORC should agree to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees having a presence in the Mon territory. This has happened with the return of the Rohingyas from Bangladesh during the last 12 months on the western border. It would be even better if international NGOs are permitted to start providing health, agriculture and community development. After 33 years of military centralised rule, Burma remains one of the least developed countries in the world.

This kind of development would have the effect of recognising that the ethnic nationalities within Burma/Myanmar have rights. Perhaps these rights will later be enshrined in a formal Constitution and in representation in Parliament (see *Eureka Street*, September, 1995, p12).

Aung San Suu Kyi, in recent addresses to the Sunday crowds outside her home in University Avenue, Rangoon, has been calling for 'dialogue' between SLORC and the ethnic nationalities. Perhaps the dialogue and the human rights action could go side by side. ■

Alan Nichols is an Anglican priest working with World Vision Australia.

Aung San Suu Kyi addressing a crowd in August 1988, just prior to being placed under house arrest by SLORC. Photograph: Greg Scullin



The rights price

WHEN THE COMMONWEALTH announced in late November that it had dropped the legislative priority of its so-called 'anti-Teoh' bill in the House of Representatives there was a frisson of relief among human rights advocates. The bill, which is meant to remove any expectation that Australian administrators will consider human rights unless they have been preserved by an Act of Parliament, probably won't pass before the next Federal election. The Damoclean sword remains, however, suspended.

The High Court's *Teoh* decision, in April 1994, that immigration officials had to consider the welfare of Ah Hin Teoh's Australian children before deciding to deport him, because Australia had ratified the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, had a major impact. *Legally*, it gave international human rights instruments as much effect as published, considered statements of government policy: according to earlier cases these citizens are entitled to expect that they will guide administrative discretions and they should be warned if they won't. *Politically*, it gave right-wing scaremongers such as P.P. McGuinness (writing in the Australian on 28th May 1994) another conspiracy theory:

> ...much of our law is being made far away from our parliaments by people who have never been elected and the policy reasons for which are largely kept secret, or debated anywhere but in parliament.

In fact the *Teoh* case did not oblige government decision-makers to implement a UN Convention, just warn the citizen if they intended not to.

Administratively, bureaucrats were shocked: it would make their job immensely more difficult, they said. More than 900 international instruments had been adopted over the years! Actually, only a handful would ever apply to particular decision-makers (shipping and food standards, for example, would rarely concern immigration officers making deportation orders) and a very few had that special status of 'incorporation'—of a kind—into Australian domestic law by inclusion in the Schedule to the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act*.

But the decision provoked a significant retreat from human rights principles by the Keating administration. It is part of a worrying trend.

We do not have a bill of rights, because our Constitutional fathers believed that 'the common law tradition' would be enough. Some human rights, such as the right of equality before the law and to be free from discrimination, have been enacted in domestic laws based on international human rights agreements, such as the *UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (enacted in the Commonwealth's *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* which also prohibits discrimination against men). Many other human rights haven't been enacted but the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is required to watch over their observance and handle complaints about their breach; they differ from sex, race and disability discrimination in that there is no enforceable remedy if they are broken.

But in the last year, those few Australian laws which do give a remedy for unlawful discrimination, suffered another legal wound. In 1995 Mr Brandy, an Aboriginal ATSIC employee who had discriminated against a non-indigenous ATSIC officer, proved in the High Court that the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission was constitutionally barred from acting as a 'court' and making binding determinations: he proved that the *Race Discrimination Act 1975* was not enforceable, along with all the rest. This had a profound effect on all Commonwealth human rights laws. Even if its hearings commissioners preside over 'hearings' and make orders, they are not enforceable unless the complainant sues, separately, in the Federal Court and proves it all again.

Mostly, it won't matter, because most complaints are sorted out through investigation and conciliation: this year, though, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) simply can't handle the enormous blow-out in complaints within its resources.

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS LODGED
under Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Legislation

Ground	93/94	94/95
Race	458	712
Sex	1304	1580
Disability	302	1229

The human rights watchdog, HREOC, has in fact very few powers, and many have been restricted by legal challenges and complex jurisdictional or procedural determinations by the courts, mostly at the behest of the better-resourced corporate respondent. If HREOC can't investigate complaints promptly, sooner or later public confidence in human rights protections will collapse. Why should it not, when governments exempt themselves from their own laws? When HREOC found that it was discriminatory to exclude all HIV-affected people from any employment in the Australian Defence

Forces, the Minister took steps to avoid the inconvenient effects of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* by regulations.

The Commonwealth Government's attitude to human rights depends on the circumstances. Gareth Evans was so outraged by the hanging of Nigerian Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Ken Saro-Wiwa, in November that he supported Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth, though equally obvious human rights abuses associated with the Indonesian takeover and pacification of East Timor are 'different'. Within Australia, the Commonwealth's power to make laws to implement international obligations has in general not been used—except for regulatory purposes related to trade (eg shipping, food standards) and aspects of discrimination (disability, race, sex, pregnancy and 'family responsibilities').

In the one outstanding exception the Commonwealth's 'sexual privacy' legislation goes half-way to protecting gay men from prosecution under the Tasmanian Criminal Code. But when Western Australia ignored the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1992, and passed draconian juvenile sentencing laws aimed at Aboriginal boys, the Commonwealth chose to do nothing. The result, reported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Dodson, is obvious. Across Australia, an Aboriginal child is 18.6 times more likely to be in custody than a non-indigenous kid. In Western Australia the likelihood is 32 times greater.

The *Teoh* decision, and the antidote legislation, was important, and a natural result of the Common Law system. For some years courts have been able to use international treaties to 'fill in the gaps' in Commonwealth laws or, where standards or discretions are to be applied, guide their exercise. Many, including myself, predicted that the High Court's decision would progress to a formal requirement of the rules of 'natural justice' or procedural fairness, a well-established principle of the Common Law system.

The extraordinary response, a year later, from the Attorney-General and Minister for Foreign Affairs manifested itself twice. First, in May 1995, was their 'published, considered' Ministerial statement of government policy that there was no 'legitimate expectation' that by entering into international human rights obligations the Government intended to be bound by it. Second, a few weeks later, came the *Administrative Decisions (Effect of International Instruments) Bill 1995*, with which I began this piece.

This bill, if enacted, would have a dramatic effect, not only on the scope of courts' judicial review of bureaucratic and ministerial discretions, but possibly, unintentionally, on other laws. For example, the *Industrial Relations Reform Act* in 1994 requires the IRC to act to eliminate 'discrimination', which is not defined except by reference to *International Labour Organisation Convention 111*, which prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation. The bill would probably prevent the IRC from applying those definitions at all, which was an argument put to the IRC by the State of Victoria during the national wage case in 1995.

THE REAL REASON for the Ministers' reactions was that to act according to the *Teoh* principles had huge resource implications: that, in other words, the Commonwealth does not consider human rights when making decisions.

Why do we enter into these contracts with the international community of nations if we have no intention of obliging ourselves to implement them?

Australians cannot, self-righteously, condemn other countries whose governments deny human rights—Nigeria, Bosnia, Somalia, Sri Lanka—for their 'uncivilised' behaviour if it is unwilling to recognise present-day statements of rights, duties and standards of conduct in its own administration. The failure of those countries' social institutions is the eventual consequence of the failure of ideas, the abandonment of common understandings about essential values, the failure to accommodate diversity and dissent. Agreements are not enough, but they do give non-conformists the status of outlaws: two days after the hangings of Saro-Wiwa and his fellow activists, Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth by CHOGM.

The Commonwealth Government's attitude to human rights depends on the circumstances. Gareth Evans was so outraged by the hanging of Nigerian Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Ken Saro-Wiwa, in November that he supported Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth, though equally obvious human rights abuses associated with the Indonesian takeover and pacification of East Timor are 'different'.

Statements of principle in laws and procedures give powerless people a place they can stand; to those on the margin the formal recognition of their human rights is symbolic of all the denied aspects of their humanity.

What governments value, they will pay for. The Commonwealth Government's failure to institutionalise human rights thinking and principles in the administration of its own policies and programs is a refusal to make a politically animating, socially cohesive act. Human rights should never be doled out by the powerful as a kindness or award, which is the option the Ministers leave to Australians if they revive the 'anti-Teoh' bill, as a Howard government probably would.

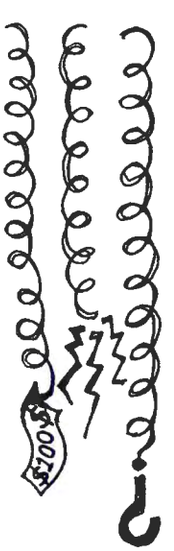
Charters of rights act as a kind of prism, a way of looking beyond our precious selves and concerns to the fragile autonomy of others.

Moira Rayner is a lawyer and freelance journalist.

At your service

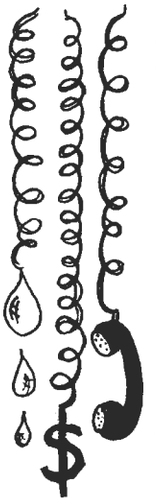
Privatisation is the buzz word of the 1990s, but polarisation has been the way of the debate. ***Jon Greenaway*** *reports on the view from both sides.*

DURING HER RECENT TOUR of Australia, Lady Thatcher made particular point of congratulating the Victorian Government on its policy of privatisation. In a speech delivered at a lunch at Melbourne's Regent Hotel, Lady Thatcher declared to the assembled—among them Jeffrey Kennett—that the principles of 'Thatcherism' would revive Victoria as it had Britain. 'May I say, Premier', she declared, 'I think we've both got it right.'



It is a comparison that has often been made, but not, until now, by the grand architect herself. The Tories' sell-off of Englishpower and water utilities is held up by the opponents of privatisation as the folly to be avoided. Prices and disconnections have risen, they argue, service has been compromised, and significant government assets have been swallowed by the market. This abrogation of the state's role in the provision of essential services is a policy which has produced, at best, dubious results.

While it presents an immediately accessible comparison, the program of privatisation designed by Victoria's Treasurer, Alan Stockdale, is understood better in the context of the series of structural reforms undertaken by the Commonwealth during the last decade than it is by placing it side-by-side with the British experience. The break-up of the old SECV into separate distribution and generation companies and the current sale process occurred under different circumstances. However, the philosophy, the vision, and the *mood* share a common source. 'Every man is a capitalist' Lady Thatcher declared to her receptive audience.



The UK example is evoked because there are no local equivalents of what the Kennett administration is doing in Victoria—and few in other developed countries. Whereas the contracting-out of infrastructure services has many precedents, the complete transfer of significant portions of public utilities is not so common. How this genuinely radical program fares will no doubt be keenly observed by other state governments. As the Economic Planning Advisory Commission's Private Infrastructure Task Force noted in a report to the Federal Government in September of last year, 'experiences in Victoria...will provide guidance on this matter'. Even the experts don't know.

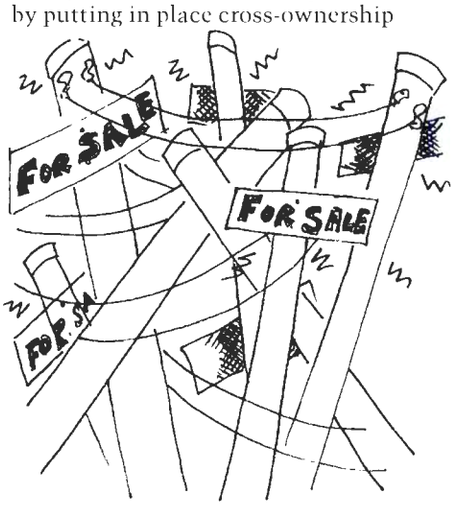
But Alan Stockdale, is convinced of the benefits privatisation will bring to the state. On the day after the last of the five distribution companies had been sold—taking the gross sale price up to $8.8 billion—Stockdale was talking of how effective the reforms will be. And despite the comparisons made by both his opponents and Lady Thatcher, they owe much, he suggested, to close study of problems experienced in the UK:

'We've learnt from what they got right...but we've also learnt from what they got wrong. In particular, the failures in the UK have been twofold:

'They didn't introduce enough competition into generation so we've insisted on individual power stations bidding against each other in our pool arrangements ... so they won't be able to manipulate the amount of electricity they supply in order to push the price up.

'And secondly, the British government went ahead and privatised without restructuring the industry. We have restructured before privatisation and a large measure of the efficiency gain has already been achieved.'

The Victorian Government has also moved to entrench this restructuring to the benefit of competition by putting in place cross-ownership



rules designed to prevent the emergence of a monopoly.

'A purchaser and related purchaser can own 100 per cent of one company, can only own 20 per cent of a second company, and they can only

Whereas the contracting-out of infrastructure services has many precedents, the complete transfer of significant portions of public utilities is not so common. How this genuinely radical program fares will no doubt be keenly observed by other state governments.

own 5 per cent of a third or any subsequent company,' Stockdale says.

'There are some exceptions for passive investors...but we didn't go to all this trouble to set up a competitive market only to see it monopolised through cross-ownership.'

According to Stockdale, the reform of the old SECV, launched some three weeks after the coalition won government in October of 1992, will prevent excessive returns to shareholders, boards, and executives—as has been the case in Britain—plus the taxpayer will benefit from a larger debt reduction brought about by a much better price.

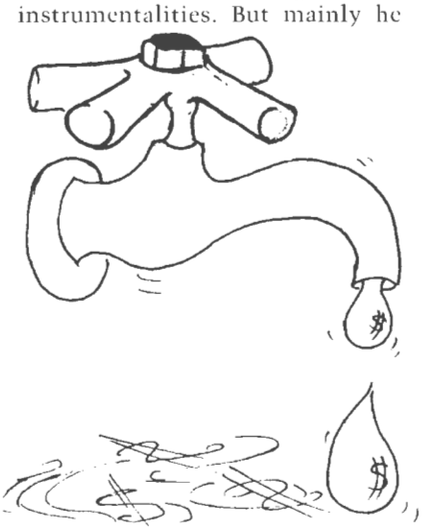
At the time *Eureka Street* went to press, the first of the generation companies, the Yallourn coal mine and power station, was being offered for sale against a backdrop of industrial dispute.

The short and medium-term benefit of the sale is the reduction in the interest paid on the budget deficit. Stockdale labels debt as Victoria's biggest risk:

'When we reduce debt, we're doing two things: we cut our interest commitment in the here and now, and we reduce our exposure to higher interest rates. So for the security of the state budget, the security of service delivery, and the level of taxation Victorians have to pay their state government, reducing debt is a very important priority.'

However, some regard the $8.8 billion figure as far below what could be called a fair price when the loss of the earnings these facilities provide the government is fully considered.

John Quiggin, professor of Economics at the ANU and James Cook University writing in the *Australian Economic Review* earlier this year, argued that in many of the privatisation cases he has studied in Australia and overseas, the sale price is around 50 per cent of the value of earnings forgone. This results in the reduction of the net worth of the public sector—limiting its ability to borrow in the future. Working on the estimates offered by the government that the distribution companies earn $1 billion a year—no official figures are publicly available because of commercial confidentiality agreements—Quiggin argues that the taxpayer should have received $17.5 billion. He puts the discrepancy down to the transfer of risk to the purchaser and the profit demand, plus the fact that the companies will not be exempt from company tax since they are no longer state instrumentalities. But mainly he



attributes the difference to the political ends which are served by the means of privatisation: delivering the market to the faithful:

'... I agree with [the] conclusion that the grossly inflated discounts of the Thatcher period are a thing of the past, but would caution that some degree of politically motivated discounting is likely to be a continuing feature of public floats.'

Discussing the sale of the distribution companies in particular, Professor Quiggin says it is difficult to get a true picture of what the financial implications of the sale are because all we have at the moment is the Treasurer's word:

'We know what they've been sold for and we can easily work out the saving on the debt, but as I understand it there are no up-to date figures public on what the earnings have been let alone what the projected earnings are...the question is what have we foregone in terms of earnings?

'In all of the privatisations I've analysed, the earnings foregone have been much greater than the debt interest savings.'

Leigh Hubbard is Trades Hall Secretary and one of the convenors of The Public First Campaign, a coalition of church and welfare groups opposed to the privatisation of Victoria's utilities. Hubbard is not so much concerned with the fiscal aspects of the sale of the electricity industry as he is with the loss of control:

'The electricity industry is a system which provides a public service and this role has no place in the market.

'These things are publicly owned for a reason. Gas and Fuel was originally a collection of private operators before it was made public in the 1950s, and the SECV was formed in the '20s by Monash. This is because they provide essential services to the community.

'The Kennett government has no mandate for these reforms,' Hubbard argues, 'They were announced three weeks after the last election. This is why the Public First Campaign is demanding a referendum on privatisation.'

As well as being concerned for the public well-being of consumers of electricity, Hubbard believes the environmental impact of electricity production will increase. Market operators, he argues, will naturally want the public to consume more rather than less. At the same time he feels that the privatisation process has taken its toll on the industry, which has lost economies of scale with the break-up of the SECV and undermined the talents and resources of its workforce:

'Over the last four to five years 23,000 jobs have been whittled down to less than 7,000. The brain drain and the loss of morale is apparent and the community in the La Trobe Valley has been devastated.'

Leigh Hubbard also asks why the accounts for the electricity industry are not publicly available, so the sale could be better scrutinised. This has been one of the main criticisms levelled at the government by Kenneth Davidson, editor of the *Australian Rationalist* magazine. In his columns for the *Age* he has continued to ask Alan Stockdale for these figures:

'It is scandalous that at this point we've had all the distribution com-

'One of Victoria's competitive strengths was an ability to transform muck into some of the cheapest electricity in the world. We are now selling that expertise to foreigners who are only interested in Australia as a market.'

—Kenneth Davidson

panies sold off, we've had the so-called generating businesses being hawked around the world and we still don't have the accounts for 94/95. Why?

'Well it's a very simple answer. Those accounts, I believe, would show very clearly the value of these assets to the people of Victoria. That in fact those assets were generating a very substantial stream of earnings...and that was what was being given up.

'After all, that information should belong to the owners of the business who built it up out of the retained earnings from their electricity bills before these assets were sold in their name.'

Like Quiggin, Hubbard questions whether these assets are being dramatically undersold, given that he believes the electricity industry could well be generating more than the $1 billion of earnings before interest and tax that Alan Stockdale estimates. Furthermore he wonders whether the public has the full picture on what effect the gradual introduction of competition will have.

Currently, with the exception of a handful of extremely large customers, the five distribution companies have captive markets. From the middle of 1996 until December 2000 choice will be phased in so that by the turn of the century every account, be it held by an aluminium smelter or a bed-sit flat, will be subject to competition. The government will regulate prices until the end of the year 2000, after which the Office of the Regulator-General will determine what benchmark pricing standard the distribution companies cannot exceed. The theory goes that five companies competing for the Victorian market by delivering electricity from a pool serviced by several generators will result in better service and cheaper electricity for the customer, which will in turn provide a boost to the economy.

DAVIDSON BELIEVES THE IDEA of competition is a 'fig-leaf' used by the government to conceal the damage being done to Victoria's economy:

'Irrespective of who you choose as your electricity company, it is still going to go down the same set of wires to get to you and probably 70 to 80 per cent of the cost of the electricity which is delivered to you will be the cost of usage of the wires.

'So the component of the bill which is subject to competition is tiny...because the competitor is not going to set up a competitive system of wires.

'The idea of competition, except for a few really big consumers of electricity, is just a farce. And in any case what those big consumers want above all else is certainty of supply.'

Davidson also predicts the sale represents a lost opportunity to promote jobs and future growth of Victoria's economy:

'Even that old, inefficient system [before corporatisation and privatisation] was producing electricity at a cost which was less than any other producer in the world for certain types of customers. And overall one of the lowest cost electricities in the world, produced out of brown coal which is basically dirt with 40 per cent water.

'One of Victoria's competitive strengths was an ability to transform muck into some of the cheapest electricity in the world.

'We are now selling that expertise to foreigners who are only

The streetview of privatisation. Photograph: Tim Stoney

interested in Australia as a market.

'That is the other tragedy with what's happening to the old SECV. It could have formed the basis for the export of infrastructure services to our region, but now other people will be doing that, we won't. And this is going to be repeated in areas like water and so on down the track.'

The Regulator-General of Victoria, Robin Davey disputes that the benefits of competition will be minimal. His position was established by the Victorian Government to ensure fair and competitive trading in the electricity, gas and water industries and as the government withdraws from active participation in infrastructure his office becomes more significant. After the year 2000, the Regulator-General will be the sole arbiter of the price and service of electricity under the auspices of the Electricity Industry Act of 1993. The office is in the process of establishing customer contracts which will preserve a basic standard for infrastructure services:

'What we've done is set a benchmark contract and a benchmark charter and the companies are free to innovate above that, they can't go below it. I can't tell you what that will be [the contract for electricity will be released early this year] but some companies are quite positively going to give a higher level of service than is required by the benchmark contract.

The basic customer contract can be continued after the year 2000 so they'll have that safety net.'

The office will be responsible for regulating and standardising the cost of the transmission so that the companies which own them can't exploit their monopoly to drive up prices. These safeguards, along with the presence of multiple providers, will preserve service standards, even for the most remote rural customer who up until now has benefited from cross-subsidisation:

'The distribution companies have got to provide open access to their networks like Telecom provides Optus with access to its network and Optus provides Telecom with access to its network....So people can say, "We don't like Powercor, we think we can get cheaper elec-

(cont. p24)

Inside the Gates

COMPUTER VIRUSES SOUND NASTY, but what do they actually entail? Perhaps a mouse with an exotic strain of influenza, or maybe a malfunctioning mainframe? Talk of computer viruses has eased its way into common language, but though widely recognised as a form of cyber-malady, viruses and their effects are still not fully understood.

Dr Fred Cohen, who has pioneered a study of these viruses, offers this simple definition: a computer virus is 'a program that can "infect" other programs by modifying them to include a possible evolved copy of itself.' A variety of viruses lurks on contaminated disks, on public bulletin boards, or on a computer's hard-drive. Take one example: *worms* replicate themselves *ad infinitum*, overwriting existing files until there is no memory left on a computer. *Trojan horses* are another example; these apparently normal programs corrupt or erase files when they are opened. Viruses, or rogue programs, can also contain *time bombs* and *logic bombs*. The *Michelangelo virus*, named by two Melbourne academics in the 1980s, is harboured until March 6 each year—the date of Buonarroti's birthday. The *Jerusalem virus* activates every Friday 13th. *Logic bombs* wait for specific words to be typed before they are triggered.

Viruses are contagious. When you connect with another computer, for example via e-mail, you're connecting to every computer that computer has ever connected to. Sharing disks involves a similar risk—this is how the contagion spreads. A few viruses are benign (for example, maintenance viruses may automatically update old information) and some are oddly appealing. The *Drop virus* causes letters to fall from the end of words and into a heap at the bottom of the screen, if a document is left open. At its worst it is like a cantankerous screen saver. The majority of viruses, however, are designed with malicious intent. The damage a virus can cause ranges from file corruption to rendering a computer inoperable.

It is difficult to say who is responsible for creating viruses. William Gibson's landmark novel, *Neuromancer* (1984), romanticises the symbiosis between hardware and humanity in the hacker community, and is partly responsible for establishing a techno counter-culture. But computer-usage is so widespread that it crosses social groupings. So it is fair to say that computer viruses can be composed by anyone. The psychology of the virus engineer is difficult to specify, because the problem is so generalised.

Psychology aside, viruses are perceived by many as an electronic form of vandalism. Anti-virus software and virus-scanners have become a growth industry over the last few years. Computer companies are constantly updating anti- virus software to ward off new strains. One industry-leading program is renewed monthly, and December's issue contains 250 updated 'definitions' to cope with new viruses. Another award-winning program (now exported from Australia) is designed to scan for between eight and nine thousand viruses. Obviously, virus engineers hold the advantage; anti-virus groups are left with the task of controlling viruses, through constantly evolving software.

Computers are now perceived to be an important vehicle in the processes of government, business, education, and even peace. There is an element of the utopian ideal contained in the concept of an electronic global village. But this is the purists' vision. The reality is somewhat different. Computer viruses belong to the much-publicised shady districts of the cyber-milieu, to the gung ho rebel/hacker/computer user-without-a-cause. ■

Dan Disney is a freelance writer.

tricity buying from Eastern." Eastern has access to deliver its electricity across Powercor's wires.'

According to Davey this will allow for common-interest groups to secure discounts through collective bargaining, as has happened in telecommunications. And the forced efficiencies of a competitive market will, he says, allow a drop in the price of energy for some customers as dictated by government:

'The large customer on a heavily subsidised tariff may find that prices will go up because the subsidy has been removed. But the benefit is that the smaller customer is not subsidising the larger customer.

'So smaller businesses—restaurants, garages and so forth—are getting a 22 per cent reduction by the end of the year 2000, domestic customers are getting a 9 per cent reduction.'

ROBIN DAVEY IS CONFIDENT that these benefits will not be sacrificed after the government ceases to regulate pricing after 2000, despite the argument of Davidson that there is little room for cost saving through competition. He argues that the price of transmission is not as large as Davidson suggests and that savings will be made through more efficient management of other components of the cost without sacrificing the quality of the service:

'We'll be putting pressure on them [the distribution companies] and they *must* maintain standards. There are a stack of codes on what they must deliver and what they must do. If they fail to do that it's a breach of their licence condition and they face a penalty.'

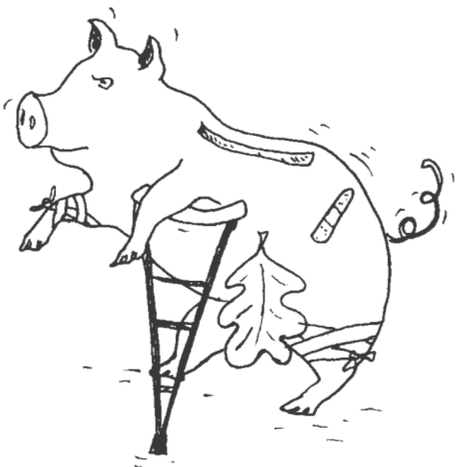
Despite the assurances of Davey that the well-being of small customers will not be sacrificed in favour of large consumers, KennethDavidson argues that the less well-off will not fare well under the new arrangements, because such customers become commercial liabilities:

'They [the private companies] are in the business of generating and selling electricity incidentally to making money for their shareholders. Whereas when it was a public utility it was about providing a service to people.

'The argument is that if you're providing a service to people there is some altruistic component to what you're doing, therefore this is automatically less efficient than if you're battling it out in the marketplace.'

The Private Infrastructure Task Force Report mentioned above concluded that there are no hard and fast rules regarding the benefits of involving the private sector and that it must be judged on a 'case by case' assessment.

The same report questioned the use of Build Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT) schemes for road-building—such as that offered to



Trans Urban as part of the Citylink project and the M2 motorway in Sydney—because since there is no intricate technology involved in its operation (it is, after all, just a bit of bitumen) there are no costs to be saved in its management.

Also, a tollway is a monopoly within a larger network which will affect how it operates. Both the New South Wales and Victorian governments are willing to compromise the public transport systems which serve the same area so as to attract private concerns and even to compensate the operators for loss of revenue. This seems a long way from the vision of vigorous competition that Alan Stockdale is currently constructing, yet he contests that if it were to be done as a capital works project the circumstances would be the same, only its construction and operation would be less efficient.

With regard to the other utilities, Stockdale is not definite as to when gas and water distribution will be privatised. The gas industry is subject to litigation at the moment and a Commonwealth tax régime makes it less attractive to the private sector. The Treasurer also doubts that water will be privatised in the next ten years, because of complex negotiations with the Commonwealth and other state governments. But he points to a national trend towards the privatisation of utilities:

'The very strong pressure from the Commonwealth for the development of an interstate market will tend in the direction of the Victorian reforms,' Stockdale argues, 'And of course the Commonwealth put a carrot there as well as a stick in the sense that...if states meet the reform agenda that the Commonwealth and the states have agreed to they get part of the benefit of national economic growth paid back in additional grants from the Commonwealth. Something a bit under a $1 billion dollars is due to the states if they meet the reform agenda.'

There is little doubt that Canberra has created favourable conditions for Victoria's privatisation program—state debt and philosophical leanings aside. In the last decade the Commonwealth has taken greater control of taxation while reducing the level of grants it distributes to the states. This has limited the opportunities for revenue-raising available to the states.

The principle of the Hilmer reforms has entered into agreements reached through the Council of Australian Governments and the impetus to reduce the control of monopolies is being propelled by the Competition and Consumer Commission and the Trade Practices Act. In New South Wales electricity has evolved into the Pacific Power corporation and South Australia has contracted out of the management of its water system. In other states BOOT schemes are being given more than passing consideration.

But, as Stockdale argues, it is Victoria that has 'shown the way' and the reforms he has initiated will be the Australian test case. He is certain the rest of the country will follow. ■

Jon Greenaway is the assistant editor of *Eureka Street*.

RICHARD CURTAIN

Generation X-cluded

IRONICALLY, RUPERT MURDOCH HAS A POINT. In drawing attention to Australia's high level of youth unemployment late last year, he touched on one of our most critical social problems.He did not propose a remedy, except to blame government.

As a major employer, he and his employment policies must be part of the solution. Experience has shown that society cannot rely on government.

The challenge of creating a meaningful future for teenagers moving from education to work is a critical test for Australian society. The fate of 200,000 teenagers a year depends on our response.The limitations of government are evident from the rise in the number of people stuck in a cycle of bad jobs and umemployment, despite government initiatives.

The initiative must come from employers. They must learn from societies such as Germany and Japan which have far more successful transition policies than Australia.

The number of teenagers looking for full-time work in November 1995 reached almost 96,000. This represents 29 per cent of the 15 to 19-year-old age group who are working or actively seeking work. The unemployment rate for persons aged 20 looking for full-time work for the same period was 8.1 per cent.

It is the highest rate of teenage unemployment in 18 months despite the record highest monthly growth in jobs (112,000). Teenagers looking for full-time work accounted for 12.3 per cent of the unemployed.

The Government's reaction to Rupert Murdoch's criticism was defensive. It claimed that the statistics presented a worse picture than the reality because of the narrow definition of those included in the measure. Full-time students, for example, are not counted as employed or unemployed.

What is the true picture? This requires asking some basic questions about what is happening to school leavers. Australia's record can best be gauged by comparing its performance with other industrialised countries. Can we learn from the success of Germany and Japan in helping their young people make a smooth transition to work?

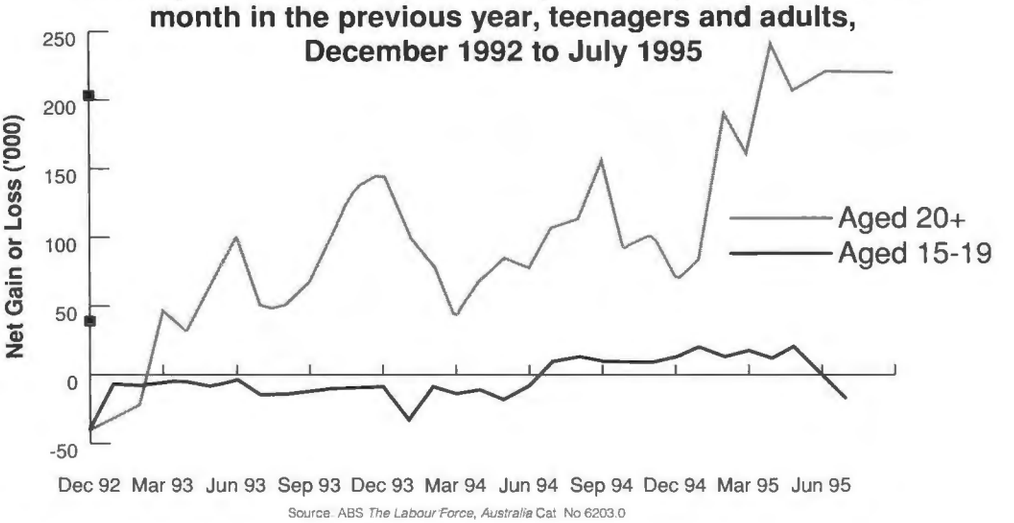
The unemployment rate is a poor measure of what is happening to school leavers. The measure itself understates the number of jobless and fails to say anything about the type or length of jobs held.

President Roosevelt's New Deal Administration in the United States first adopted the narrow, activity-based measure of unemployment in the mid-1930s. Roosevelt's advisers were concerned to limit the number of job seekers to make it easier to have Congress vote funds for job creation.

The activity-based definition of unemployment, now used internationally since 1954, overstates the number in work. Everyone working an hour or more a week is included even if they are also actively seeking work. The numbers classified as unemployed are understated because seeking work is narrowly defined. Looking at newspaper adverts, for example, is not classified as active job searching. So women who judge that the CES has few white-collar jobs and rely on newspaper ads would not be recorded as unemployed. Some 70 per cent of discouraged job seekers are women.

A better place to start is to look at the number of full-time jobs taken up by teenagers compared with adults. Data, from the early 1990s to now, show a net gain in full-time jobs for adults. However, teenagers have consistently failed to benefit from the job growth (see Figure 1, above).

Figure 1
Monthly Gain or loss of full-time jobs compared to the same month in the previous year, teenagers and adults, December 1992 to July 1995



Source: ABS *The Labour Force, Australia* Cat No 6203.0

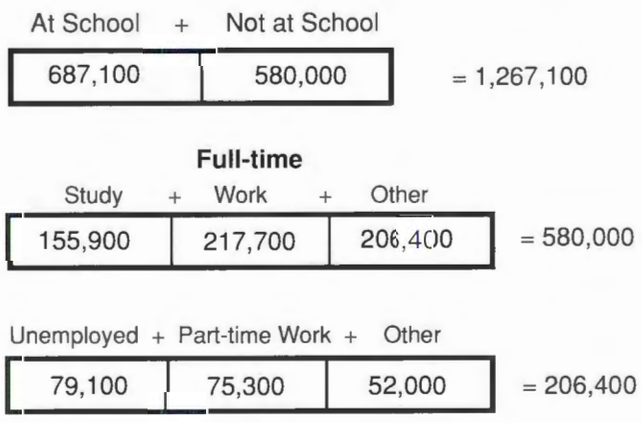
Another measure of what is happening to young school leavers (15-19 years) is the number who are in neither full-time education nor full-time work. The percentage has more than doubled since 1990. Richard

Sweet, of the independent Dusseldorp Skills Forum, has highlighted the limited opportunities facing young people. He has shown that between May 1985 and May 1995 the chances of a teenager being outside full-time education and a full-time job have risen from 1 in 4 to 1 in 2.

In November 1995 the percentage of school leavers aged 15 to 19 years without full time work and not in full-time tertiary education stood at 36 per cent. This represents 206,400 young people who have no clear or long-term post-school option. Of these, 75,300 are in part-time jobs, 76,100 are looking for full-time work and 51,900 are not looking for work (see figure 2). A large number of young people are trapped in a cycle of casual, part-time work, looking for work or have given up the effort to find a job.

It is this increase over the last decade of school leavers with limited prospects that is most alarming. It strongly suggests that our mechanisms for helping young people to move easily from school to work are not successful. Major attempts by government over many years to improve the situation have borne mixed results. The above figures suggest that these efforts still fall far short of Germany and Japan.

Figure 2
What Young People are Doing.
(ages 15 to 19, November 1995)



Source: ABS Labour Force, November 1995. Table 7, original data.

Two basic approaches exist for managing the school-to-work transition. One is work-based and the other is school-based. The Germans use the apprenticeship system to give trainees the skills sought by industry and commerce. In contrast, the Japanese approach is to encourage most (95 per cent) teenagers to complete senior high school and for enterprises to recruit employees through close ties with individual high schools.

Both economies are not only successful in keeping their total unemployment levels low (3.2 per cent in Japan in May 1995 and 6.5 per cent in Germany in December 1993). The differential impact on young people, so evident in the Anglo-American economies as well as France and Italy, is not present.

In Japan, for example, despite a major recession, only 160,000 graduates in May 1995 could not find work. This is in a workforce that is eight times larger than Australia's workforce. Germany has up to 70 per cent of its post-compulsory school-age teenagers in apprenticeships and the remainder in tertiary education.

The difficulty with Australia's approach is that it is neither fish, flesh nor fowl. Both work and school-based approaches exist side by side with little involvement of the community and employers in either.

Heavy emphasis has been placed in Australia on the work-based option in the form of the apprenticeship and traineeship systems. It is an inherently limited mechanism because it has to be linked to a job. The continuing poor record of job growth for young people means that work-based training such as apprenticeships is available only to a minority of school leavers.

Many young people also see apprenticeships and traineeships as only providing access to dead-end jobs. In many cases, the level of on-the-job training is either non-existent or of low quality. In the absence of trained workplace supervisors and mentors, work-based training provides a weak foundation for further skills upgrading.

ANOTHER LIMITATION of work-based arrangements in Australia is that they tend to operate in a low-trust environment. Many employers of apprentices and trainees are small. Compliance with the provisions of the system is enforced through state regulation with little or no involvement by employer associations and unions at the regional or local level.

Germany, in contrast, operates its apprenticeship system in a high-trust environment. The legislation is backed by the close involvement of the local chambers of commerce and industry. The unions in Germany accept lower incomes for apprentices because of their confidence in the high-quality skills outcome.

Most Australian schools stand at arm's length from the workplace. This is reflected in their heavy reliance on an academic curriculum. However, more schools are starting to offer an integrated general and vocational education with linkages into TAFE courses and other vocational options. Some schools have succeeded in establishing closer links with enterprises. A recent survey has shown that 9 per cent of all secondary school students spend some time in the workplace with 3 per cent of students in a workplace for twenty days or more in a year. The number of school programs offering a proper work placement has jumped from 120 in 1993 to 600 in 1995.

The most successful model of linking schools to workplaces is the TRAC program. TRAC stands for Training for Retail and Commerce, the sector in which it originally operated. What is different about TRAC is that it has been initiated and maintained entirely by local community efforts. It started in a shopping mall in the Hunter Valley in 1989 with assistance from an independent foundation, the Dusseldorp Skills Forum.

THE PROGRAM HAS NOW SPREAD to 1,300 workplaces in activities as diverse as office skills, hospitality, retail, automotive repair and sports fitness and leisure.

TRAC works the opposite way to government programs. Instead of a subsidy, employers pay for their student placements. This funding covers the costs of a coordinator who works closely with up to ten employers. Each employer is expected to provide systematic training through an in-house mentor who assesses students as part of a subject for their Higher School Certificate. Flow-on benefits to students have included improved performance at school.

TRAC works well because it is employer-driven and has coordinators who are focused on the needs of the workplace. The coordinated approach of TRAC contrasts with the piecemeal efforts of many short-term work experience programs run by overworked teachers.

The Government in its Working Nation Statement has funded the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation to replicate the successful formula for up to 5000 students in 1995-96.

Close links between schools and enterprises are a feature of the Japanese approach. Employers in Japan play a strong proactive role in managing the transition from school-to-work. Japanese school-to-work linkages are regulated by the public employment security office (a national employment agency). They are based on long-term, semi-formal contacts between schools and enterprises. Employers allocate jobs to each high school and the school staff nominate and rank students for these jobs. This system is based on a ranking of high schools based on a student's performance in the admissions test.

The Japanese approach to school-to-work transition is to formalise the networks used informally by many school leavers in Australia. Young people's competition for jobs occurs primarily inside high schools with academic achievement as a crucial determinant of how jobs are allocated. The result is a smooth transition that is stable and highly predictable. Employers and teachers hold each in high regard because of the mutual benefits gained.

The quality of the options available to school leavers is a test of Australian society. The fate of some 200,000 teenagers each year depends on it. The limitations of the role of government are evident. The proof is in the rise in the number of young people stuck in a cycle of bad jobs and unemployment between school and work despite recent government initiatives.

Employer-driven initiatives are the little-tried alternative to government initiatives. The lessons of the German and Japanese successes are their strong reliance on local associations or informal networks to generate close employer involvement.

The high-trust societies of Germany and Japan are impossible to replicate *in toto*. Closer links between school and work can, however, be developed. Collective mechanisms started and run by employers along the lines of the TRAC program point to the future. Schools can play their part by carefully but comprehensively integrating vocational content into the curriculum.

Apprenticeship arrangements need to lift the quality of on-the-job training to give young people the basis for further skills upgrading. More local collective arrangements are also needed for small employers to help them provide high quality skills outcomes for trainees.

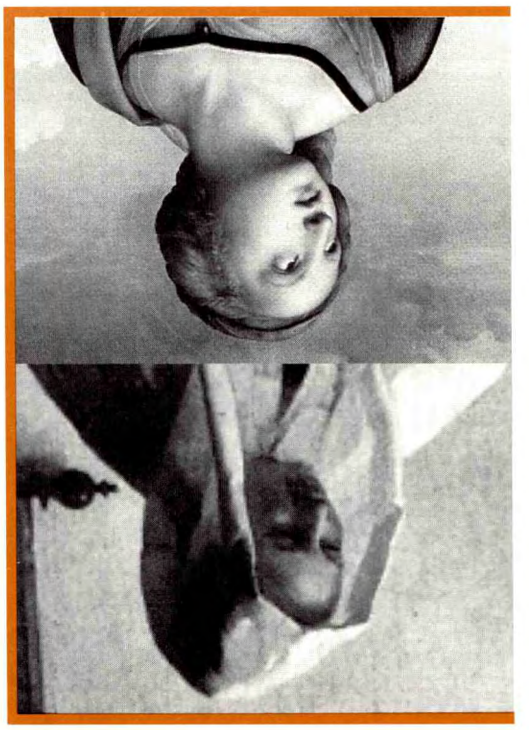
Fostering close linkages between local employers and individual schools through extended work placements organised through independent co-ordinators is needed to help greater numbers of young people move more easily into good jobs. ■

Richard Curtain is an independent industrial consultant. He was awarded a professional fellowship by the Japan Foundation in 1992 to study Japanese skill formation practices.

he Eureka Street Serious Su

1. Which is the only country to win a gold medal for rugby at an Olympic Games?
2. Which ground-breaking American novel begins with the words: 'Late in the afternoon of a chilly day in February, two gentlemen were sitting alone over their wine'?
3. Which existentialist philosopher wrote *Being and Time* (1927)?
4. Approximately how many monographs have dealt with the subject of the French Revolution?
5. Who said 'There are no atheists in foxholes'?
6. Where and when were the Jehovah's Witnesses founded?
7. Which Liberal Party federal parliamentarian was a member of the Australian test cricket team in 1963?
8. 'Schistocera gregaria' may leap like war horses, but what are they really?
9. What do the cock, the peacock and the butterfly all signify?
10. In a dearth of taxis, to whom would it be appropriate to pray?
11. Who has been the world's longest reigning chess champion?
12. Who was the first Vice-President of the United States?
13. Sydney's Nimrod and Melbourne's Pram factory were both seminal theatres. In what year were they established?
14. There are plenty of Australian expressions for a poor state of affairs. Name some.
15. Who was the first woman to fly from England to Australia?
16. How did the Queensland Government make history on September 5, 1977?
17. Whose was the first Roman Catholic episcopal ordination in Australia?
18. The first issue of *The Bulletin* appeared on January 31, 1880 and had eight pages. What was in the centre spread?
19. Everyone knows that the Lumière brothers were responsible for the first commercial motion picture screening in 1895. But what were they doing on the first Tuesday in November the following year?
20. In Australian rhyming slang, what does LKS stand for?
21. Which London tabloid has featured such front page screamers as 'Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster' and 'Up Yours Delors'.
22. What is said to be the first law of veterinary science?
23. Which story by Henry Lawson ends with the words 'the sickly daylight breaks over the bush'?
24. Which theologian claimed that God willed us to have 'everything through Mary'?
25. In the Australian slang of World War I, what did flybog refer to?
26. Which Australian Prime Minister said: *'Let me say this, that I expect into the future that the discussion about these matters will be conducted within the party, and I believe the attitude that was exhibited in the Caucus today was one of acceptance of that position that we have, from myself speaking on behalf of the ministry, indicated in good faith, that we will be consulting fully with the Caucus, with all sections of the party.'*
27. Australia supports at least 25,000 plant species. How many are there in Europe?
28. Why might one be wary of employing somebody suffering ergasiophobia and always decline the offer of a suggilation?
29. In what film does John Wayne say 'Truly this man was the son of God' and of whom was he speaking.
30. How has Ludmilla Javorova, aged 65, created a headache for the Vatican?
31. Which famous British band played as the Nobs in Copenhagen in 1970?
32. If you wanted to hear some squeaking and gibbering in ancient Israel, where would you hope to get it?
33. What was the name of the theological position governing the mainstream English response to the Irish famine of the 19th century?
34. Where in early Melbourne was Lake Cashmore and why was it so called?
35. In Thea Astley's novels, the fictional locations of Charco and Reeftown bear striking resemblances to which Queensland holiday destinations?
36. A sharp Scrabble player, with a tired opponent, can get five 'u's' or five 'n's in one five-letter word. How?
37. Name the artists and subjects in the centre of the page.

1. The United States
2. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
3. Martin Heidegger (d.1976)
4. About 250,000 to date. There has been a work published on Napoleon for every day since his death.
5. Fr W.T. Cummings, an American army chaplain in Bataan during World War II.
6. They were founded in 1872 by Charles Taze Russel in Philadelphia.
7. Ian McLauchlan.
8. Locusts.
9. Eternal life
10. St Fiacre
11. Emanuel Lasker from Germany was Champion for 27 years from 1894 to 1921.
12. John Adams, who became the second President.
13. 1970.
14. Things are crook in Tallarook. There's no work at Bourke. Got the arse at Bulli Pass. No lucre at Echuca. In jail at Innisfail. Things are weak at Julia Creek. Things are crook at Muswellbrook.
15. Mrs K Miller arrived in Darwin on Mar 19, 1928 in an Avro Avian. She had left Croydon on Oct 14, 1927. Amy Johnson was the first woman to fly the distance solo.
16. Premier Bjelke-Petersen announced a total ban on street protests.
17. Adelaide's first bishop, Francis Murphy, was consecrated on May 11, 1844.
18. The execution of the bushranger, 'Captain Moonlight'. The issue cost fourpence.
19. Filming the 1896 Melbourne Cup.
20. It is one of many terms for water. The rhyme comes from the LKS McKinnon Stakes, run over a mile and a quarter.
21. *The Sun*, owned by Rupert Murdoch.
22. Never put yourself down.
23. *The Drover's Wife.*
24. Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153).
25. Jam. It was often shortened to 'bog'.
26. R.J.Hawke, commenting on poor election returns. The year was 1984.
27. If you include Turkey, the eastern part of the former Soviet empire and the islands of the Mediterranean, Europe has only about 17,550 species.
28. The former word means fear of or aversion to work; the second is a beating.
29. Wayne was speaking of Jesus on the cross in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965).
30. She was ordained to the priesthood in the clandestine Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia in the early 70s and acted as vicar-general to Bishop Felix Davidek.
31. Led Zeppelin had to change their name because one Eva von Zeppelin threatened libel action if they associated her name with their 'trashy music'?
32. From wizards.
33. Providentialism.
34. Every winter the corner of Collins and Elizabeth St, near the haberdashery of Michael Cashmore, flooded 'not sufficiently deep to drown a man, but quite sufficient to half do it.'
35. Cooktown and Cairns respectively.
36. If you surreptitiously invert a couple of tiles, you will find that the word 'unnun' means to forsake the habit. But don't take up the habit of cheating.
37. Clockwise from top left: Fortitude, by Sandro Botticelli; Young woman with a Water Jug by Jan Vermeer; St Catherine of Alexandria by Raphael and Woman with a Pink by Rembrandt Van Rijn.



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CHRISTINE GILLESPIE

Peachy

THE GIRL SAT AT A LITTLE TABLE IN THE CORNER BY THE FIRE. She was allowed in the ladies' lounge to do her homework when the customers had all gone home to bring the washing off the line or to do the vegetables for tea.

She finished her eight sums and pulled the cakebook out of her bag, flicking through sugary houses, baskets, clocks, doors, windows, all made of icing. Patsy knew how cakes were decorated. She had watched experts, the cook Miss Steele and her sister Mrs Armstrong, with their icing extruders and sharp knives, decorating cakes for the Bendigo Easter Show. Their heads would bend over the kitchen table, Miss Steele's thin, sandy hair parted on the side and held back with two big bobby pins, Mrs Armstrong's tight perm a battleship grey. Miss Steele would take the plastic icing between her red fingers and mould it gently, pressing curled flower petals into roses, stroking icing strips into birds' wings and mice's tails, etching the delicate faces of fairies with a tiny pointed stick. Once, Patsy watched Miss Steele's frown smooth out and saw her actually laughing like a kid as she gently placed a fairy with wings like a butterfly in the middle of a smooth iced fruit cake. One of them always won the blue ribbon and her sister the second prize at the local shows. Miss Steele had made Patsy a Hansel and Gretel cake for her twelfth birthday last year, the steep roof decorated with jubes for tiles, with jelly bean window ledges and licorice allsort stepping stones up to the chocolate door. Miss Steele constructed three and four-tiered wedding cakes with delicate white lace work. The minister at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church gave out her name to the engaged couples with the telephone number of the church organist.

'Ssst!' Vic's red face appeared through the hatch from the bar. 'Want a raspberry lemonade while the boss is down in the cellar?' He winked. He liked little secrets, a free drink here and there, when the publican Mr Farrell was up the street doing the banking. 'I'll have a sarsaparilla,' said the girl, feeling sophisticated.

'And how's that old bag, Miss Steele? Still bashing around in her dungeon?' asked Vic. The girl giggled.

'Not very happy today,' said the girl. 'But, mum says Miss Steele doesn't have much of a life as a spinster, cooped up in pub kitchens for thirty years.' One of the PMG linesmen playing darts in the bar winked at her as Vic plonked the drink and his little transistor in front of her and turned up the volume. 'Don't step on my blue suede shoes,' he sang along with Elvis, grinning at her, pelvis thrusting forward, toes turned in. The girl looked down at the black drink on the narrow white bar towel and blushed. The linesmen whistled, threw their heads back and laughed at the end of the song while she studied the peeling paint around the hatch.

'What's the matter? Don't you like Elvis the Pelvis?' Vic pulled out a comb and brushed up the front of his hair and whisked the duck's tail back .

'Not much. Thanks for the drink.' She skulked back to her chair, hoping that he wouldn't notice that she wore a bra, only an A cup, but still a bra. The other day, she had been in the dining

room folding serviettes. A couple of the Farrell kids trooped in giggling. One of them gave her a red jelly baby out of his little white bag of mixed lollies. She wished the kid wouldn't stare at her chest. He fished out two buddies, little chocolates that swirled up into a pointy peak, held them against his chest like miniature breasts and yelled, 'Buddies, buddies, Patsy's got buddies.' She hunched her shoulders and buttoned up her cardigan as the Farrell kids laughed and ran out. The girl kept folding the bishops' hats.

Her mother banged the dinner gong in the hall and put her head in the door of the lounge. 'Give me a hand with the soups, will you love?'

'Nell, Nell!' The cook's voice was shrill. She must be in one of her moods. Perhaps her bad legs were playing up again and they were short-staffed. The publican's wife, Mrs Farrell, was in Ballarat visiting her mother.

Patsy slipped out through the dining room before the linesmen thudded in. 'The Monsignor's here with a couple of priests from Melbourne,' said her mother, flustered. Mr Farrell rushed past with whiskies and Patsy hoped that the Monsignor would leave two shillings under the soup plate again.

Patsy helped with the washing-up that night then followed her mother up the back stairs. Their poky little room looked onto the kitchen light-well and absorbed the greasy smells of corned beef and cabbage, braised sausages, fricasseed rabbit that Miss Steele produced for the dining room and the counter lunches. The girl watched her exhausted mother slip into her old rayon nightie, with a hole under the arm, but slinky. The white material clung to her hips and her round buttocks looked like fruit, an apple, no, a peach. Patsy lay waiting for her mother to go to sleep, feeling thin and gangling in the cold bed, the torch in her hand. She was glad that the Monsignor had left a shilling under the soup plate. It was all the cash she had left after buying the ingredients for the cake and the icing. Mrs Farrell gave her ten bob a week for helping wait on the tables or washing-up after dinner.

When her mother's breathing was regular and deep, Patsy crept slowly around the landing and down the dark back stairs, the boards dusty under her bare feet. She moved carefully around the metal buckets and mops next to the gully trap and opened the wire door of the kitchen, trying not to squeak the hinge.

She switched on the fluorescent light and looked at the box above the top cupboard. A beaming chef, in pale blue, with freckles on his nose and wearing a tall hat, looked down from the side of the box. It was packed with Miss Steele's proper piping bags and nozzles, spatulas and palette knives, paint brushes and modelling tools. She opened her own tin and lifted out the cake that she had baked a week ago and covered only last night with marzipan icing to give a smooth even base for decorating. Ten o'clock. There was the whole night ahead of her and still two days until her mother's birthday. She looked up at Miss Steele's box. But she couldn't use Miss Steele's things. Her father had always said, a good tradesman never lends his tools. She remembered a lot of things he said and she missed him. Now he was working on the railways in Queensland and she didn't know when he would come back or when they would all be together again in Melbourne. A tear dripped down her nose. She stared out the window at the shadows across the doorway of the men's toilet. A stifling whiff of phenol drifted out. The concrete yard reminded her of the cellar. Sometimes, she was allowed to climb down the steep steps below the bar and look for coins that fell through the grating from the street. Vic told her that a man had hanged himself there a hundred years ago. His ghost was probably behind the cellar wall. Patsy shuddered, squeezed her thighs together and turned back to the table.

SHE UNPACKED HER TOOLS: cones of folded grease-proof paper for piping bags, her geometry compass for mapping out fine patterns on the icing, an old ruler, paint brushes from her art class. She filled jam jars with water for washing the brushes, took some marzipan icing out of the bag and dripped food dye onto it. Her mum, the PMG linesmen, the Farrells and Miss Steele were all in their beds. She kneaded the food dye into the icing. A toilet flushed upstairs and she held her breath. She wasn't doing anything wrong but didn't want to be found decorating a cake in the middle of the night, especially

by Miss Steele in one of her moods. The icing was now a pale apricot colour. Even Mrs Farrell kept out of Miss Steele's way when she swayed around the kitchen on her bandy legs, stockings knotted just above the knees, muttering, barking orders and sloshing brown gravy on to the white plates for counter lunches. Mr Farrell would laugh. 'Temperamental,' he'd say to Patsy, 'just as well she knocks up a good Irish stew.'

Patsy traced delicate lines on the white surface of the cake with her school compass. She moulded pieces of fruit, her fingers sliding over the glittering balls of icing. She picked one up, made a gash along its side, smoothed the edges and massaged the split with her index finger.

✦

I'VE GOT A CAKE FOR MUM, said Patsy as they raised their beer glasses to toast Nell for her birthday. Miss Steele had a shandy in one hand and a tea towel in the other. The girl lifted up the beer box in the middle of the table . Her mother gasped, Mr Farrell whistled and Miss Steele said nothing as they all stared. The cake was a white velvety box with finely piped scallops of sugary lace all around filled with a cluster of yellow clingstone peaches, a slight blush of pink icing on each piece of fruit. Luscious peaches. You could have broken them in half with a twist of the wrist along the smooth crease and seen the thin layer of red flesh around the rough stone—if they had been real. Miss Steele flicked her tea towel, killed a fly on the wire door and thrust a big tray of macaroni cheese in the oven. Peaches—at least eight of them, with a leaf and a tiny twig attached to the one in front. Patsy watched her mother's face.

'Sweetheart,' said Nell. She clapped her hands like a girl, reading what was on the top of the cake. On the white icing, painted in golds, browns, russets, it said, 'peachy, peachy, peachy', the y curling into the next p of peachy.

'Well, I'll be...' said Vic padding around the table in his blue suede shoes for a squiz from the other side.

'Are you going to cut the cake, or what?' asked Miss Steele, slapping a large knife on the table.

'No,' said Nell sharply, 'of course not.' Miss Steele turned on her heels and threw a handful of potatoes in the big black pot. A splash of water hissed on top of the stove. Mr Farrell downed his beer and scratched his head.

'I knew you were good at art, Patsy, ' he said, 'but this is terrific. We'll put it in the dining room on the sideboard.'

The next day was Saturday. The clerical party was back in for lunch before the picnic races. The Monsignor walked over to the cake and ran his eye smoothly over the peaches. 'Rather voluptuous,' he said and stared at the girl as she put the little glass dish of butter on his table. He was a man of the world. She didn't know what voluptuous meant, but blushed anyway and tucked a strand of long, honey-coloured hair behind her ear. 'This cake should be in the Easter Show, Jack. It's a winner,' said the Monsignor to Mr Farrell and sat down to lunch as Nell swept in with the soups.

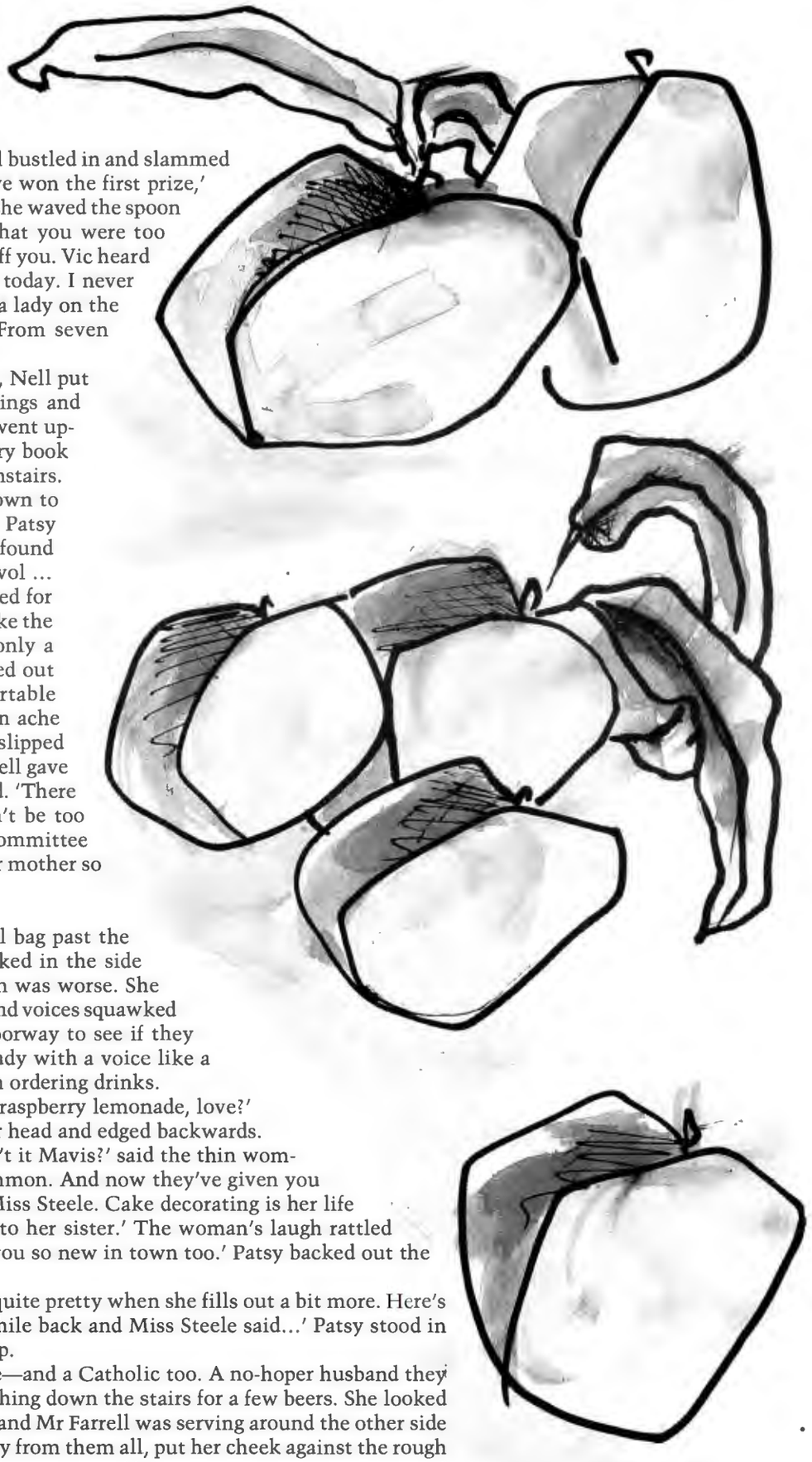
✦

Patsy stood and looked in the glass case at the Mechanics Institute. Miss Steele's cake, a basket of roses, was on the top level of the display stand with the first prize blue satin rosette attached. A little lower to the left was Mrs Armstrong's wedding cake with the second prize ribbon. On the other side was the lacy box of velvety peaches with the third prize card inscribed with her name in black copperplate writing. It reminded Patsy of three athletes accepting their medals at the Olympic Games down in Melbourne a few months ago. She wished that her cake was at the top. 'You gotta be in it to win it,' Mr Farrell had said last week as they backed out of the pub yard in the FJ and motored off with the cake to the showgrounds office.

Patsy watched people edging past looking at her cake before they moved on to the preserves.

✦

'They're getting savage out there,' said Vic, jerking his head towards the kitchen and whistling through his teeth, 'and it's all about you.' Patsy crept over the brown, polished lino floor and peeped into the dingy kitchen. Miss Steele was stomping around, stirring the fricasseed rabbit that boiled wildly on the stove. Nell, her lips clamped tightly, darted around the kitchen with furious



precision. Patsy set the tables and waited until Nell bustled in and slammed the butter box down on the table. 'You should have won the first prize,' she said, spooning butter curls onto dishes. 'They,' she waved the spoon towards the kitchen, 'told the judges yesterday that you were too young, being only thirteen, so they took the prize off you. Vic heard about it from some old dear in the ladies' lounge today. I never thought they could stoop so low. I'm going to see a lady on the Show committee tonight. I know her by sight. From seven o'clock Mass.'

When the dining room closed at eight o'clock, Nell put on her coat, straightened the seams of her stockings and marched out, Miss Steele broke a plate and Patsy went upstairs early. She couldn't concentrate on her library book with Miss Steele slamming cupboard doors downstairs. All this fuss. If Miss Steele's cake was lowered down to second place, she would be in a mood for weeks. Patsy remembered the Monsignor, slid out of bed and found the little dictionary in her school bag. V ... vo ... vol ... Her finger slid down the page. Voluptuous: designed for stimulating or gratifying the senses. Patsy didn't like the sound of this at all. What had she done? It was only a cake, a birthday present for her mother. She turned out the light and stretched, trying to find a comfortable position. She was tired and had two dull pains, an ache just inside each hip bone. Her mother came in and slipped her coat and shoes off. Patsy burst into tears and Nell gave her a hug. 'We have to do the right thing,' she said. 'There is nothing in the Show rules about age. You can't be too young to win first prize. I'm going to talk to the committee in the morning.' Patsy had never seen her mother so determined.

THE NEXT AFTERNOON, the girl lugged her school bag past the door of the public bar and the brewery truck parked in the side street. She still felt tired and the ache in her groin was worse. She went in the residential entrance. The fire crackled and voices squawked in the ladies' lounge. Patsy peeped around the doorway to see if they were about to leave. 'Come in dear,' said a thin lady with a voice like a cocky. Another woman in a hat stood at the hatch ordering drinks.

'A shandy, Vic, and a beer. Would you like a raspberry lemonade, love?' Patsy stretched her mouth into a smile, shook her head and edged backwards.

' A very beautiful cake you made, dear. Wasn't it Mavis?' said the thin woman. 'Come in dear, come in. Peaches. Most uncommon. And now they've given you the first prize. They've taken it away from poor Miss Steele. Cake decorating is her life and she's not used to coming second, unless it's to her sister.' The woman's laugh rattled around the green shiny walls. 'Your mother and you so new in town too.' Patsy backed out the door.

'Funny girl,' said one of the voices, 'she'll be quite pretty when she fills out a bit more. Here's your shandy, love. I popped into the kitchen a while back and Miss Steele said...' Patsy stood in the hallway near the lounge and her body felt limp.

'...and that waitress, Nell, is getting a divorce—and a Catholic too. A no-hoper husband they say...' Patsy began to sob. The linesmen were crashing down the stairs for a few beers. She looked around, panting. The hatch to the cellar was open and Mr Farrell was serving around the other side of the bar. She slipped down into the darkness away from them all, put her cheek against the rough brick wall and cried. There was a thud further along. She wiped her nose on her sleeve and peered around the corner. Vic was rolling barrels off the ramp from the street above. He stood in the shaft of light from the grating. 'Well, look who's here. Hi peachy,' he said, walking towards her. ■

Christine Gillespie is a Melbourne writer.

JIM DAVIDSON

The gallop towards the sea

PEOPLE BEGAN TO GO TO THE BEACH in droves only in relatively recent times. In the eighteenth century, the Mediterranean coast was usually avoided during the course of the Grand Tour to Italy. Instead of warm water, people were conscious of hot sands, a pestilential coastline, lurking immorality and a Sun that might painfully weather you to the hue of the working classes.

A conscious interest in the seaside has quite an unexpected provenance, since it originated in therapeutic courses of treatment engaged in by the upper classes. With the shift in sensibility that occurred in the mid-eighteenth century, the sea began to attract people because of its untamed nature—

increasingly seen as a corrective to the perceived evils of urban civilisation. But the cures quickly became more specific. Doctors believed that immersion in water had a tightening or loosening effect upon the tissues, according to the temperature. 'To bathe in the sea is to have not only a cold bathe', declared one, 'but a medicinal cold bathe.' Others added massages with freshly collected seaweed. For those who went into the water—swimming was usually not included in the cures—there were bathing machines, as well-appointed as a bathroom.

A social life sprang up around these activities. On the beach there was no sunbathing; just walking and conversation, horseriding, and, for a time, organised races. But in the resorts that first grew up in Britain—such as Weymouth, Scarborough and Brighton—elaborate social patterns were soon articulated.

Brighton affords the clearest example. In the mid-eighteenth century the fishing village of Brightelmstone had been declining when fashionable society began to resort there, attracted by its sea breezes and relative shelter from northerly winds. Once the Prince Regent decided to grace it with a Royal Pavilion, the place functioned almost as a second capital. By 1833 it was remarked that the line of splendid buildings banked up along the seafront had no equivalent outside St Petersburg. Its social rituals, taken over from spa towns, reflected its social importance: a master of ceremonies made introductions, arranged for the names of new arrivals to be published, and settled matters of precedence.

Once the railway bridged the fifty miles from London, as it did in 1841, this exclusive order was doomed. In the first six months of 1844, Brighton trains carried 360,000 people—seven or eight times the town's population. By 1890 day trippers were so numerous that for a short time they were actively discouraged. Foremost among the attractions luring them were an aquarium (the first) and the West Pier, which extended for 1115 feet. The band playing there each morning and evening was soon augmented by a theatre, and a concert hall, to entertain the promenading crowds. By the 1890s an even more extravagant second pier, with cafes, a ballroom and shops, complemented the first.

Brighton therefore was the resort uppermost in Australian minds right down to the First World War. There are Brightons in every state except Western Australia. Sydney could be said to have two: in addition to Brighton-le-Sands there is Manly, which until the turn of the century sometimes promoted itself as 'the Brighton of Australia'. The link remains in the North Steyne and South Steyne, which circumscribe Manly Beach; promenaders in the English Brighton would walk 'along the Steyne'.

Promenading, with its opportunity for agreeable exercise combined with social display, had often taken place in England, usually after church, when people could show themselves off in their Sunday best. In

Brighton, and about the same time in Nice—where one of the main streets is still called Promenade des Anglais—the custom migrated to the seaside. Nineteenth century Australians were only too happy to follow suit. If malaria was—quite literally—bad air, then that available at the seashore was decidedly fresh and bracing: ozone-bearing breezes contained oxygen in a particularly pure form. Ozone became a buzz word for the late Victorians, much as aerobics have become today; the paddle steamer 'Ozone' regularly took Melburnians across the Bay to the Ozone Hotel at Queenscliff.

The vogue for piers was, quite literally, an extension of the promenade, effectively rerouted to become a highway to ozone. The piers were a seeming triumph against nature, carried on the back of the vastly improved Victorian metallurgy; from the beginning they were much more democratic, offering amusement, social mixing and possibilities for adventure. It is no accident that risque postcard humour was invariably located at the seaside.

Australia, being a pioneering country—and exultingly democratic—went in for functional jetties rather than piers. The only grace note on a jetty at Cottesloe was its widening halfway along to encompass a bandstand. At Manly there had been plans to build a grandiose Palace Pier in the manner of Brighton (as the name indicated), but these came to nought. One that was built, however, was the Ocean Pier at Coogee, complete with neo-oriental pepper pot towers that paid homage to the Royal Pavilion. Constructed in 1928, amid optimistic statements about its supplying a much-needed facility in 'SYDNEY, THE CITY OF PLEASURE', the pier was soon declared unsafe by the local council, and in 1934 it was demolished.

St Kilda pier, with its Federation-style pavilion, is still there to remind us that this Melbourne suburb doubled for a long time as a premier resort. Initially it had something of the character of a 'patrician village'—Toorak before Toorak—but once the cable trams came, as they did in 1888, St Kilda was overwhelmed in much the same way as Brighton had been. The working classes of the northern suburbs flocked to the place. Sideshows and amusements sprang up along the foreshore, sometimes leading to complaints about noise from the toffs in their mansions on the Esplanade. But the tide was too strong: of all the English seaside resorts, it was Blackpool which was growing fastest at this time.The nexus of ordinary folk going to the shore for extensive entertainments, established there, quickly reproduced itself here—even to the fad for Pierrots, troupes whose amateurism accorded well with Australian style.

Hotels such as the Esplanade (built to face the pier) and the George (whose suites included pianos) catered for the well-to-do. There were always at least a dozen others, but guest houses, increasingly located in old mansions, provided accommodation for the great majority of those choosing to stay in St Kilda. By 1931 there were 319 of them.

However, in their eternal quest for the unspoilt, tourists had already advanced further down the Bay: to Sandringham (where my grandparents went for their honeymoon in the 1890s), or to Mentone (as recorded in the Conder painting). In addition, there were clusters of campers along the Bay, so that 'for ten miles it may be described as one enormous camping ground'. A particularly favoured spot was Carrum. All of these resorts would be snuffed out, one by one, by the remorseless advance of suburbia.

Edwardian Manly: formal clothes, umbrella against the Sun, and a line-up along the shore of people staring at those foolhardy enough to enter the water.

St Kilda remained the exception because of the range and quality of the entertainments offered. In 1913 the Palais de Danse opened on the Esplanade, in the building soon to become Palais Pictures; it was then relocated next door. That new building boasted the finest dance floor in Melbourne, as well as the most popular musicians; the orchestra which played at the picture theatre also helped to pull in the crowds drifting about outside. In 1914 these would amount to 40-70,000 on a warm Saturday night.

Luna Park, opened in 1912, claimed to be the newest, greatest, and best amusement park in the world at that time. Its modernity extended to providing the very first successful photos-while-you-wait. Modelled on Coney Island, the venture was a success, whereas Sydney's Wonderland City, tucked away in a gully south of Bondi, had foundered; Sydneysiders were therefore particularly careful to secure a prominent Harbourside site when they opened a Luna Park in 1935. Success was immediate for Melbourne's Luna Park: John Monash (as chairman of directors of the Luna Park Company) reported in 1913 that over 439,000 people visited the place in its first four-month season.

But it was the sea that was the major drawcard. In 1881 St Kilda boasted no less than five bathing

establishments, and it was possible to buy rail tickets which not only included admission to Hegarty's Railway Baths (as they were eagerly styled) but to most of the others; extras such as towel and costume hire could also be paid for in this way. Advertising hype had quite early put the baths in people's consciousness. In 1865 hundreds of posters posed a cryptic question: 'Where Is Sam?' The answer turned out to be at Hegarty's Baths, where he was the new proprietor.

Amusement strips sprang up at the seaside because the crowds were large, mixed and idle. Often they began with relativley simple entertainments, such as this one at Bondi, c1900.

When in the 1840s a rich landowner built Strathbarton near Hamilton, in Tasmania, the facade of this Georgian house looked in the direction of a romantic glen. It also faced south; it was not till eighty years later that subsequent owners effectively turned the house round by building a double storeyed veranda on the north side, to catch the Sun. This was no isolated fancy; sunbaking had become popular in Germany since the turn of the century, and in 1923 a number of Riviera hotels—hitherto always frequented by those seeking to escape the northern European winter—decided to remain open during the summer. This was for the first time.

St Kilda, then, got caught up in this massive shift towards the Sun and the sea. Attempts to keep it decorous extended, as late as 1931, to having a Battle of the Flowers, just like Nice. Earlier, there had been extensive land reclamation, with gardens and embankments put in place, complete with palms, just like Cannes. But there were still many residents who, if they had an image of any other place at all, would have thought of respectable Bournemouth. Moreover, that site of pleasure, the pier, doubled as Melbourne's ceremonial entrance: while the city was the national capital royalty and governors would land here, then sweep along Fitzroy Street and St Kilda Road and so to Government House. The issues suddenly presented by the upsurge of bathing—as swimming was constantly referred to even as late as the fifties—therefore involved St Kilda in a contest between countervailing images more sharply than anywhere else.

In New South Wales, the position of Manly was relatively uncomplicated. By contrast, the large seminary, St Patrick's, scarcely dented the place's ambience as a resort; indeed, since there was no rail or tram link, the only way most people could reach Manly from Sydney was by ferry. So when in 1902 the crusading editor of a local paper, William Gocher, became bent on publicising his personal defiance of the prohibition on daytime bathing there, resistance was slight. The following year the council rescinded the relevant by-law, contenting itself with the regulation of costumes and conduct. With a surf beach that could now be readily enjoyed, Manly leapt ahead. Five years after daytime bathing had been legalised, Manly's population had increased by 50 per cent, while house rents and rates had doubled. Property values rose even more spectacularly.

Given this extraordinary change in Manly's fortunes, it needs to be explained why swimming in Australia took so long to emerge. Initially the attitude of government was unequivocal: an 1833 ordinance in New South Wales was confirmed and extended in 1838, forbidding all bathing between 6 am and 8 pm, not only in built-up areas, but also in waters adjacent to bridges and roads. But there was simply not a great deal of interest, as those who attempted to found a gentlemen's bathing club in Hobart in 1847 soon found. Standards of propriety were still British, and it was only when people began to take to the wilder, unEnglish surf beaches that these were increasingly perceived as irrelevant and restrictive—although often not by local residents. In the words of St Kilda's historian, the move to the beaches entailed 'a social revolt ... a bathing revolution by the new generation.'

Three separate issues soon emerged, the hours and location of bathing being the first. Apart from the fact that initially costumes were scarce, and there were no changing facilities, the new craze for bathing did contain an anarchic element in its rude democracy. 'Plain primitive manhood and womanhood', said the *The Lone Hand*, 'are the only tests the surfbather applies to distinguish one from another'. So while Tom Roberts was painting *The Sunny South*, with its idealised male nude bathing, a policeman appeared on the Manly beach at seven each morning to ensure that no bathing of any kind took place. And while the battle was won there after Gocher's plunge, it still continued to be fought at St Kilda and elsewhere. Sunday bathing occasioned a demonstration at St Kilda in 1922, but the council was reluctant to legalise it even though it was prepared to leave the ruling unenforced.

At a time when there was a clear line drawn between the public sphere and private behaviour—very much the case until the 1950s—the beaches were a natural target for wowsers, since they invited display

and provocation in what were, after all, public places. Early concerns that bathers should proceed in 'a direct line' to and from the sea were elaborated by South Melbourne Council in 1932, when it forbade anyone in a swimming costume to 'sit, lie, loiter or run along the beach.' Fresh regulations would often be made, and even where they were not, old ones dating from before the First World War remained in force even though generally accepted behaviour had rendered them obsolete.

St Kilda Council, for example, remained committed to the idea of segregated bathing for men and women (the second major issue) well into the twenties. The English resort of Bexley had permitted mingling since 1901; shortly afterwards in Sydney it was accepted as an inevitable consequence of open-sea bathing. Elsewhere though there were baths which put up a white flag when women swam, and a red flag for men; even when 'mixed' bathing was introduced, a huge rope divided the sexes, a policeman being called if there were any infringement. Despite the rising popularity of open-sea bathing, the St Kilda Council was still intent on building new sea-baths—stables for the horses after they had bolted. On opening in 1931, the baths housed a gymnasium, and dancing and bridge parties; but returns were poor, once the council disallowed mixed bathing in the ladies' section. In fact many women felt safer swimming in restricted areas, and, mobilised by the conservative Australian Women's National League, two successful campaigns were run in St Kilda in the 1930s to maintain them.

The issue which remained alive longest was swimming apparel. Even before the extension of hours, this was seen as a more serious matter: Manly fined people £2 for swimming illegally, but £10 for costume irregularities. The threat of impropriety was a real concern. Initially women's costumes might involve as much as ten metres of material while men were required to wear neck-to-knee outfits. 'Suicide suits', a St Kilda lifesaving squad dubbed them, for they certainly got in the way of serious swimming. On the whole, though, regulations were simply ignored as fashions became bolder: attempts to impose standards sometimes produced laughable results. Concerned about the way costumes tended to feature the male anatomy, councillors insisted that men wear briefs over their costumes—and later, since that did not always result in a becoming modesty—that trunks should have a 'modesty skirt'.

At St Kilda, it was only a sudden unavailability of neck-to-knee costumes which led to the council abandoning them in 1938. Even at Manly there were attempts to put the clock back, but after World War II the battle shifted to women. Bondi had only just made the 'modern costume' legal in 1951, when shortly afterwards inspectors were escorting the first bikini-clad woman off the beach. She was lent a jacket to preserve her modesty.

Much of this story represents white Australia's belated adaptation to a new environment. Captain Cook had approvingly noted Aboriginal body surfers, and it was an islander, Tommy Tanna, who first showed white youths how to 'shoot' the waves at Manly in the 1880s. Although Hawaiian-style surfboards had reached Australia early, it took the visit of the champion swimmer Duke Kahanamoku in 1915 to show people how to use them properly. Sixties journalists who likened the ways of surfies to a Polynesian lifestyle wrote truer than they knew.

But there was a cost from the very beginning. By 1902, seventeen deaths from drowning had occurred at Manly alone. Early attempts at rescue were basic, extending to a lifebuoy and rope hanging on a pole put up on three of Sydney's beaches. The first to have a lifeboat was Manly, operated by a local fishing family. The government was approached for funding, and when the request was turned down, it was decided to raise money by holding a surf bathing and lifesaving display. This was the very first, in 1903; by 1908 the prototype of later lifesaving carnivals had been held, while the 1913 carnival drew 30,000 people.

Beyond the half-dozen Australian towns named directly after the primal English resort, there were in addition a number of hotels drawing on the memory of Brighton's glamour.

The Royal Lifesaving Society had been present in Australia since 1894, but its methods had been imported from England, and were more applicable to still waters and closed spaces. The surf required different techniques; and so at Bondi, arising from a committee designed to defend the local vicar—who had broken the swimming laws—there grew a Bondi Surf Bathers Lifesaving Club. It is a toss-up as to whether this one or a rival at Bronte was the first such organisation in the world. Whichever, there were enough of them in Sydney in 1907 to form an association. Australia's emerging beach culture had found its focus. ■

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PETER PIERCE

Fortress Singapore

SINGAPORE—THE NAME IS LULLING, SIBILANT. If one's eyes keep to department store windows and one's hands on the Tiger or Singapore Sling, the country promises an interlude from care.

Rightly, it is a fabled land in which to eat. We often used a place called a plaza, which is really an enlarged alley with tables along either side. Behind them are restaurants—Indian, Thai, Chinese, even Turkish. The air is velvet warm. The food is cheap and excellent, swiftly served by waiters who—although they tout for custom—are far less intrusive than their counterparts in Lygon Street. Over-chilled so that it tastes of brass, the beer is good, if much too dear. But there are flaws in this *al fresco* idyll. One of the restaurants offers a steamboat buffet, yet more prominent than the menu is a stern warning against taking too much food. Anything left uneaten, diners are informed, will be weighed, and then subjected to a charge of eight dollars per hundred grams. Regurgitated food presumably attracts the same penalty. Confusing good manners with the desire for minatory supervision of behaviour, obsessed with the trivial, encouraged by a government which favours social coercion, the notice to customers could only have been written in Singapore. This is a country which sometimes seems to be the best-run primary school on earth.

Another of the implications of the restaurant directive is the need for wariness in the midst, and because of prosperity. In August, the mentally-beleaguered mini-nation of Singapore celebrated the 30th anniversary of its independence. One of the highest standards of living in Asia has been achieved despite a paucity of natural resources. Lush as the island is, frequented by thunderstorms of theatrical severity, it must still import water from Indonesia and Malaysia. In July the government initiated a water-rationing exercise. For 18 hours, five thousand households were deprived of water, except from buckets. On each of the next five days, another five thousand Singaporean families went dry. This enforced sacrifice was an exemplary encouragement to three million fellow citizens: husband what we have; rely on ourselves wherever possible; remember how far we have come in only three decades, and how easy it would be to regress to the dishevelled life of the *kampong*.

Since 1965 the projection of Singapore as an embattled island has suited the political designs of its leaders. To return to the uneaten buffet: two visits back, in 1993, I was first confronted with the issue of gross feeding in Singapore by a feature in the *Straits Times*. That remarkable newspaper, 150 years old, and now an organ of government, reproving, self-righteous, solicitous, incapable of error, is one of the truly distinctive features of Singapore. The paper is the engine of the social campaigns that the government favours. Littering is a perennial target, as are spitting and touting, for which pushers of copy watches can, and do, go to gaol. In mid-1993, it was the turn of gourmandisers to feel the scorn of the *Straits Times*. For those delighting in the buffet spreads at hotels off Orchard Road, this article was hard lines. Beware, Singaporeans were told, of behaving like the gluttons of the West when confronted with the plenty on a buffet board. Eat fastidiously; show restraint; conserve resources—feel superior. Keen to follow such prescriptions, the steamboat emporium in Cuppage Plaza had proudly placed the warning sign in its window. Did

they weigh the prawn-shells, or rice on the chopsticks? And who had paid in the first place?

'Surprising Singapore' is the theme of the country's latest advertising campaign 'down under'. Would-be Australian tourists are advised to think no longer of a bland, sanitised, safe, warm place (although what was wrong with that?) but instead of a vibrant night-club land with Bugis Street restored (without transsexuals), Raffles newly resplendent and Chinatown saved in parts from demolition for more high-rise. At the same time Singapore actively sought Australian, Japanese and other cashed-up revellers of the region for the Great Sale. This was meant to begin in mid-July, just as we left, but by good fortune, many stores disloyally jumped the gun. The paper ran over-hearty 'shop till you drop' pieces. The emphasis was on what gave Singapore an identity. No matter that this was the fervid pursuit of material goods (no-one suspected 'culture' in old, discredited Western senses), as long as Singapore was identifying itself, the latest government strategy was on its way to realisation. The *Straits Times* allowed no sceptical opinion of the Great Sale, but retailers evidently found revenues less than they hoped. Retrenchments of staff were rumoured. The strong Singaporean dollar (on a par with Australia's literally, if not otherwise) was exacting its toll on the shop floor. Predictably, the *Straits Times* berated shop-keepers for competing—'not pulling together as a team'. That this latest, mild shock came through Singapore's most saleable asset—what it has to sell—was a neat irony.

Soon the National Day celebrations would expunge an unpleasant episode. While we were in Singapore during July, thousands of uniformed students drilled in the streets and on the ovals in front of Parliament House. Girl guides, scouts, youths of the Boys' Brigades, army reservists clicked heels in unison as the island which Lee Kuan Yew had seized from his erstwhile communist allies, then from the wreckage of union with Malaysia, celebrated 30 years on its own version of the capitalist road. Yet the reverberations were hollow. As identity is manufactured in Singapore, so spontaneity is confected. Often the results are cheerless public spectacles, risible to jaded Western eyes, as when 30,000 Singaporeans (a world record) worked out together before aerobics instructors who led them down the fitness road.

AND YET ONE IS NOT SPEAKING of a weak or credulous people, no matter the image in which the government would wish them to be made. Local communities are forming and reforming in Singapore, without much regard for the abstractions of 'identity' or 'national unity'. We went to Yishun, at the northern extremity of the excellent Mass Transit Railway. It is already provided with pools and schools, shopping centres and markets, as are numerous other high-rise settlements around the island, some of between 200,000 and 250,000 inhabitants. One suspects that many of them harbour scepticism about the rhetoric of their government, but overt expression of it is as hard to find as a brothel in this virtuous city-state. In Chinatown one stall daringly sold 'Fine Day' T-shirts, whose design listed the penalties for the many infractions that flesh is heir to, even in Singapore. Such cheek is rare, and students wait until they've reached decadent Australia before mocking the attraction of eugenics for the authorities in Singapore who dreamed up what was in effect a dating agency for its brightest graduates, its lack of a free press, or the treatment of homosexuals.

On our last morning, I fell into conversation with an intelligent, disaffected man. This might have earned me a quicker trip home. He was homosexual, socially well-connected, and with a deep hatred for a regime to which his sexual preference was a 'phobia'. The 'coming race' in Singapore, insofar as he discerned official intentions, was to be comprised of 'blue-eyed boys': favoured, genetically superior Chinese successors of the British, who could exploit the advantages of a dual heritage. Highly literate, deeply insecure, my confidant stands for much that the government of his country wishes to suppress or deny. If he does not represent a social or political force that might overthrow it, he witnessed to the covert fissuring of the relentlessly imposed facade of unity in Singapore. Oppressed from within, rather than threatened from without like Hong Kong, Singapore—under its present dispensation—may struggle to see a 50th National Day. There may come a point where the intensely defensive self-congratulation that the island's rulers promote will cease to have even ceremonial meaning for those living and working there.

The government élite's sensitivity to criticism

was sharply illustrated when the Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, his predecessor Lee Kuan Yew and the latter's son, Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, sued the *International Herald Tribune* for suggesting that the Singapore judiciary was pliant to their wishes. As the price of continuing to do business, the paper paid damages, though much less than first sought.

The Male Prostitute's Soliloquy

i'm at work
don't interrupt me
the question now is not
to be or not to be
the question is
to be had or not to be
but the newly acquired sense of sheer passivity
is a thrilling experience in which
you watch yourself being fried into meat balls
barbecued with suckling pig
scrambled for mixed meat
sliced steamed and simmered
then spiced and
poached in clear soup

until you are perfectly
cooked

but let me come to your point
ed shoes and wait for the first dinner
to begin

Ouyang Yu

More troublesome to the regime was the case of the Filipino maid, Flor Contemplacion, who was found guilty of murdering a fellow worker, and the child of her employer. She was executed in March. Singapore found itself exposed to opprobrium, not only for the living conditions of its guest workers, but for readiness to use the death penalty. The *Manila Chronicle* remarked that 'a tragic mistake of judgment' had been made in a country 'where everything is aplenty—money, shopping malls, goods—except mercy'.

The *Straits Times* unremittingly reinforces that impression. On 9 July, a feature article admonished Singaporeans for relying on an army of cleaners (some no doubt Filipino) despite 27 years of anti-littering campaigns. When these began in 1967, transforming Singapore into a clean city was declared a national priority 'second (*sic*) only to defence and economic development'. Now that Singapore *is* so clean, the fear is that it may not remain so. The government dreams not only of a rich nation-state, but of a society kept in stasis, its equilibrium maintained by legal and social pressure. That this condition is not sustainable, may be the prime, secret torment of its rulers.

Other problems are summarily despatched. Next day the paper casually reported the hanging of a drug trafficker and two murderers at Changi. The latter had been involved in bloody secret society or gang affrays. Yet they commanded less space than litterbugs. Stories of exemplary punishment are popular, but concern lesser offences, such as the graffiti art of the American teenager who was caned for it. The back page of the *Straits Times* on 10 July had an artful shot of lines of men in shorts, reflected on a wet pavement. The heading 'Ramrod spirit of a new dawn' hardly prepared for the information that these were inmates of a drug rehabilitation centre, still less for the homiletic conclusion that the photograph 'reflects their indomitable spirit as they hold their heads high to face a new dawn'. Was no stifled laughter heard across the breakfast tables of Singapore? Or is such a suggestion a Western misapprehension of the social priorities of the nation?

THE 'RAMROD SPIRIT' IS SUMMONED in evil-doer and lawful Singaporean alike. Anxieties of this July included annual registration of primary students, which leads parents to desperate measures to ensure entry into favoured schools. A change in arrangements for the Central Provident Fund, whereby companies no longer had to pay their expatriate employees' 20 per cent levy, meant a potential wage cut of such severity that Singapore may be deserted by the skilled foreign workers whom it still needs. More seriously, Hugh Grant's front-seat antics prompted a letter writer to describe him, not as 'insane', but as symptomatic of the 'moral avoidance' which bedevils Western societies and must be discouraged in Singapore.

Any society so publicly humourless must one hopes—be breeding a generation of ironists. Those, like Catherine Lim, who have written sympathetically of the Singaporeans who live far from the sources of power (in such collections of stories as *Or Else, the Lightning God*) do not enjoy the favours of the government. Nor, of course, is the tourist encouraged to read her way across the grain of the public surface of Singapore, to uncover the communal tensions, existential unease, unequal burdens on women and the old, besides the unreassuring affluence in which few place long-term trust.

Rather her eye is led to visual delights: the wet (fish and reptile) market in Chinatown, the corner temples of many faiths, the languid opulence of the

low-slung Raffles Hotel, the Chinaman Scholar Gallery, with its shoes for bound feet, opium pipes, photographs of ancestors and of taipans pictured with the clocks that emphasise how here, as in the West, you-know-what is money. A junk ride in the waters around Singapore discloses the vain naval fortifications against the Japanese, the kitsch of Kusu island—a turtle theme park—but also the miracle of the region: a city rising out of the water. Across the crowded causeway to Johore Bahru in Malaysia (a second connection is scheduled for completion late in 1997) one comes upon two versions of the past: Singapore in the early stages of its modernisation, and the survival of British institutions and upper-class customs. In the Istana Besar, old palace of the sultans of Johore, a dynastic life of motoring, hunting and material acquisition is celebrated. Here are chairs of Baccarat crystal, a superb collection of Malay weapons, medals awarded to sultans past from everywhere but Ruritania, a hunting room with details of 35 tigers killed, antelope legs and elephant feet as umbrella stands and rubbish bins, a smoking set made from a tiger's skull, besides an Ablution Room for the Royal Remains. Such happily vulgar ostentation has no place in the austere polity of Singapore, where the display of power is oblique, if no less sure.

Australia was intimately involved with Singapore by trade and imperial politics long before the coming of the People's Action Party. Episodes of K.S. Prichard's pot-boiler *Moon of Desire* were set here, and her title has been appropriated by one of the writers for the 'Futuristic Romance' series popular at MRT book-stalls. Both literature of war-time heroics (Ronald McKie's *The Heroes*) and of endurance (the POW memoirs by Rohan Rivett, Russel Braddon and Ray Parkin) had Singapore as their site of trial. A visit to Changi, whose museum and chapel are more emotionally affecting because modest and domestic in scale, is a potent antidote to historical amnesia. For Mike Langford, war photographer hero of Christopher Koch's novel *Highways to a War*, Singapore is the first intoxicating sniff of the East, 'the place I've always been waiting for'. It is here that Bruce Grant's *Cherry Bloom* and the title story of Ian Moffitt's brilliant, dark collection of stories, *The Electric Jungle*, take place. In vital ways which ought to have been recognised long ago, part of Australia's history is Singapore. Its problems are serious, and, despite the ostensibly crazy scale of the comparison, resemble some of our own. In common are not only a national identity that seems perpetually in need of fabrication, but abiding uncertainties over one's place in a supposedly hostile region. The condescending comparisons which Singapore's leaders have made with Australia may signal fears that the two countries share a doubtful future, as well as a chequered past. ■

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A Man of Future Speaks about Love

i mean why do you have to bother
the japanese have practised surgically removing their appendix
at an early age longer than any culture in the world
so do we
get rid of the instinct for love at one remove
by using high-tech instruments
the human body is nothing
but an index to his mind
an index that contains all kinds of cross-references
as many times as you would like to cross
we now produce babies by the tube-loads
or put them away in euthanasia
love?
i have never heard of that word being said
nor seen it being used
they'd be laughing their heads off to hear me say it
although i know
that they do use it
as a kind of aphrodisiac
when they have sex
to make the whole thing feel nice

oh yes
there are some scholars
specialized in love
as an ancient tradition
that is going out of fashion near the end of the twentieth century

Ouyang Yu

DAVID BRADDON-MITCHELL

This little piece of earth

The Future Eaters,
Tim Flannery, Reed, Australia, paperback
1995. RRP $19.95 ISBN 0 7301 0487 7

YOU'LL LEARN SO MUCH from this book that it might be hard to pin down the central themes. You'll learn how the lands of Australasia—Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand and New Caledonia were carved from Gondwana, how the different geological histories have surprising consequences for life today, how the initial arrival of the two-legged predator *Homo sapiens* changed the environments in these lands forever, from the mass extinctions of large herbivores to dramatic changes in the kinds of flora that dominate.

The mixture is extraordinarily rich; just about every page is crammed with ideas and facts about the ecological history of Australasia which range from excited explication of established orthodoxy, through passionate advocacy of less established views, to always interesting but sometimes fairly unfettered speculation.

It's good that the book should manage to do all these things, but by way of complaint it's not always easy to tease them apart. Here's just a small example: in telling an ecological history of the Maori people, Flannery tells us that the Polynesian settlers of New Zealand arrived probably with chickens in tow (which they would have called 'moa', a fairly standard Polynesian word for chicken) but didn't bother to continue to domesticate them since there were enormous chickens (actually large flightless birds of the genus *Diornis*, distant relatives of emus) to be had for the taking.

Naturally the large birds were called 'moa', and were hunted to extinction over the next two hundred years. It's a small worry, but although Flannery doesn't insist that it's at all certain that the ancestors of the Maori brought chickens with them, I think most reader would get the impression that it's a fairly uncontroversial view. A little bit of research reveals that in fact the orthodoxy is that the longer-than-usual voyages required for Polynesian settlement of New Zealand make it likely that it was the exception to the usual pattern of settlement with chickens. I'm not sure that the orthodoxy is right: I doubt that the matter could ever be settled short of discovery of old enough chicken bones (and if only one generation of chickens survived we shouldn't expect this even if Flannery is right), but it's enough to recommend a little caution in how you take his claims.

Out of all this rich and fascinating detail, though, a central theme *does* emerge even more important than the way humans have shaped the environment of our lands: it's how those environments have shaped humans. It's a theme we must learn well if we want to have any influence on the sort of peoples we become.

I'll illustrate this theme with two contrasting accounts of the impact of the environment on human culture.

FIRST LET'S FINISH FLANNERY'S story about the moa: the mass extinction caused by the first human settlement of New Zealand soon included the moa and large number of other edible species, and many of the predators that might have depended on them. The result is a major food crisis, with few and unsuitable crops, and no domestic animals.

Quite reasonably; it would have been a waste of time to till or husband during the years of plenty. It's after the years of plenty are over that fortifications start to emerge and with a fairly predictable climate, populations are usually at the upper limit of the carrying capacity of the land, with a resultant constant jockeying for control of scarce resources. By the time of white settlement an extraordinarily militaristic society had evolved.

By contrast, in large parts of Australia the climate and the poor land has produced a very different result. After the initial bounty is consumed a kind of balance gets imposed. The El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is the weather pattern that is responsible for Australia's unpredictable mosaic of droughts, floods and fires. Because it is so unpredictable, nothing much can be done to guard against it (even, it would seem, by contemporary agriculturists who you might hope would factor in drought more effectively into their long-term plans).

The result was that when the bad times came the population was reduced, so that during the good times—which were most of the time—there was abundance. But although there was abundance relative to the population, the carrying capacity was low: it took a

Out of all this rich and fascinating detail, though, a central theme does *emerge even more important than the way humans have shaped the environment of our lands: it's how those environments have shaped humans. It's a theme we must learn well if we want to have any influence on the sort of peoples we become.*

lot of land to support the genetically viable minimum population of around five hundred. A consequence of that: during the good years the most scarce resource is actually genes, so complex social connexions with populations at great distances were encouraged.

THERE IS A TONE OF environmental determinism to these accounts that may worry some. But environmental determinism admits of degrees. You can think that Flannery's accounts are substantially correct while admitting that if the initial cultural practices of the peoples that came to these lands were very different, so would have been the effect that the lands had on them.

What importance do these tales have for us? Reflecting on the history of environmental impacts on culture is crucial for our cultural and material future. I think that we can, without too much golden age romanticism, take the impact of ENSO and the low fertility of the lands to have exercised a benign cultural influence, though it is not our place to judge whether the deaths during the bad years were worth it. And the cultural impact of persistent scarcity with a population always on the edge of the carrying capacity of the lands is unlikely to make us into the people we want to be.

In a world economy, the influence of ENSO is evened out by borrowing during the bad years in a kind of ecological Keynesian cycle. So a future of increasing devastation of our resources in a culture gradually transformed by working at the margin of our carrying capacity is a very real possibility. But the economically smoothed out ENSO won't cull our population, and nor would we want it to. So we have to have a deliberate population policy that has general acceptance, and an attitude of respect for and management of our ecological resources that doesn't always maximise our short-term interests.

What we need is a dramatic change to a whole range of cultural practices in so far as they affect population, agriculture, and the management of our resources. In short, a dramatic response to a threat which cool, calculating, rational persons have determined using the best theories of the day—a dramatic response which may well be contrary to our short or even medium-term material interests.

Now it's my turn to engage in some highly speculative guesses about the impact of the environment on human culture or even, perhaps, human psychology. We aren't very good, as a species, at responding to coolly-calculated long-term threats that proceed slowly and imperceptibly. This is hardly surprising. Our best guesses about the long-term future have, over the period of human evolution, been at best random and at worst preposterous.

Portents of doom have been discovered in every age; and there have always been theories according to which great and terrible events were to occur. A culture or a psychology which led people to take such portents seriously, and change their lives in ways that reduced their harvests relative to their neighbours, was a culture or psychology that was usually on the way out.

Something has changed in the past hundred years or so. These guesses about the future have got dramatically better. For perhaps the first time in history, our middle-to-long-term predictions about the state of the natural world are good enough to be worth acting on. And, sadly, the actions are urgently required. Failure to respond to them may be catastrophic. But there is little reason to suppose that our capacity to be *motivated* by these guesses has improved, for that improvement

could need a long history in which acting in line with best rational guesses about the middle-distant future was rewarded. We don't have the time for a long history.

So what might be motivating? A glance at the past helps again. It's controversial, but it does seem as though societies have at times organised themselves in ways which haven't always promoted short-term prosperity because of religious or spiritual convictions. Maybe those are the motivational tools we need to access.

BIMBERI PEAK is the highest mountain in the ACT, one of the northernmost high peaks of the Australian Alps. In summer the peak is an alpine herbfield scattered with the occasional massively-gnarled Jounama snow gum, crouching tentatively as if unsure whether the land is above the treeline or not. It is at the heart of the fastness of the Bimberi Wilderness, defended on various sides by other wildernesses which it overlooks: including Kosciusko to the south, and the Brindabellas to the north.

Insofar as you can be sure that anywhere in Australia is safe from over-exploitation, you can be sure that this place is adequately protected. For some reason it was here that I was thinking about the final sections of Flannery's book, in which he wonders how our practices and culture needs to change to allow us to 'think, understand and act to make our lives better'.

I tried thinking about some of the pressing problems that future-eating have given us; desertification of Western NSW in ever-growing amounts, the near-death of the great river systems that fairly directly feed us, and the die-back that is killing our trees in alarming numbers. These problems are greater in every way than any threats to the Bimberi, both because Bimberi faces relatively few threats (unlike so many of our other wildernesses) and because, viewed dispassionately, to despoil the Bimberi would do less harm than, say, the widespread ruin of agricultural land due to unsustainable practices.

And yet, strangely, protecting Bimberi is far more *directly* motivating to me than prevention of those greater threats. Bimberi and other places in the Namadgi are sacred sites to some who now live in this region, even if they are not as central to our way of life as they were to the indigenous peoples who have been driven from these lands. And it is that sense of the sacred, and the need for the protection of the sacred, that provides the motivational power to act on questions that we might admit, in a more dispassionate moment, matter more.

Sentiment generated by the passion for particualar sacred places motivates protection of the greater environment. People who have never been to the Daintree, for example, or the Tarkine, have acted to help its protection. I doubt that in many cases it is because they think that valuable biodiversity in its depths might contain biological resources, or that it contributes to carbon scrubbing, good reasons though these are. Rather, they value these places because they have learnt to love the land in a local way, perhaps even imbuing a sense of place with an almost religious feeling. Then it is easy to generalise that love that on to the wider natural world and its impact on our cultures.

So the complaint that some have that the environment movement is a quasi-religion ought, I think, be no complaint. And the sometimes awkward passion with which Flannery imbues his writing about ecological matters is in fact one of its strengths.

THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES have a fascinating story to tell about how we came to be the people we are, and about the kind of people we may become unless we better respect the land that feeds us. But just understanding that story alone will, by itself, lead few to act on that knowledge. We must cultivate in ourselves a sense of the sacredness of our lands, and hope that the passions so generated will act in concert with knowledge. Flannery's book, for all its frustrations, is a feast for both reason and the passions. ■

David Braddon-Mitchell teaches philosophy of biology at the Australian National University.

PHOTOGRAPHY

BILL THOMAS

In focus

Olive Cotton: Photographer, Introduction by Helen Ennis and Memoir by Sally McInerney, National Library of Australia, 1995. ISBN 0 642 10649 5 RRP $29.95

OLIVE COTTON: PHOTOGRAPHER is a delightful book. For those not familiar with the work of this unusual Australian woman, this volume provides an informative and technically fine introduction. Those who are familiar with Cotton's images will welcome this addition to their libraries.

Helen Ennis details Cotton's life and the important role photography has played in it. The first section of the narrative is liberally peppered with quotes from Olive that breathe life into the times she was working in and clearly locate her as an important figure in the history of photography in this country. The second part is a very personal account of Olive's life and work, by her daughter Sally McInerney

The photographs themselves form the main body of the book. Each of them is reproduced in rich duotone and accompanied by Cotton's own commentary, offering a rare insight into her working methods—fascinating for professioanl or amatuer— and into Olive Cotton herself. ■

Bill Thomas is a freelance photographer. His work appears regularly in *Eureka Street*.

Photographs: Girl with a Mirror (1938), above, and Teacup Ballet (1935), left, by Olive Cotton.

GERARD WINDSOR

Green salad days

THE AUSTRALIAN 1950s nurtured a peculiar species of prose. Lush, learned, larrikin, earthed, hyperbolic, amusing and unintimidated, its practitioners first began writing in that supposedly boring decade but have enjoyed a protracted heyday. I can't think of predecessors, nor of any comparable group of more recent developers. Bob Ellis, Germaine Greer, Robert Hughes, Clive James are looming personality writers whose mould seems to have been smashed by the mid-1960s.

A preliminary scientific description of the species would note that it's a New South Wales phenomenon; these four who, to me, exemplify the tradition most forcibly, are all graduates of Sydney University (though Greer of course was originally a Victorian). Secondly a strong religious background is present in all cases except that of James; that whole dramatic, mysterious iconographically-riddled world seems the appropriate mulch for this style. Thirdly it seems to be nourished by getting permanently out of the country. Fourthly, it is well-suited to satire, polemic, essays, reviews, columns; *pace* Bob Ellis, it gets in the way of scripts or fiction—the flamboyant swagger of the writer doesn't let any other personalities get a look in.

Tom Keneally is of this era, and partly of this colour. In his memoir, *Homebush Boy*, he promises us a 'tale ... of the one reckless, sweet, divinely hectic and subtly hormonal year'. This is a personality where the words brim and bubble over. Keneally is the conjuror, grinning broadly amid the fizz of his verbal eruptions, rather than the gifted craftsman, selecting and paring and placing. In fact Keneally is a gifted public performer, an always worthwhile talent for the media. His individual linguistic genius is voluble, febrile, emphatic—and this makes him at least as

Homebush Boy, A Memoir,
Tom Keneally, Minerva,
Melbourne, 1995.
ISBN 1 86330 502 5 RRP $18.95

suited for the quick sound bite as it does for the lecture or the guest speech.

Yet Keneally has neither the learning nor the cavalier ideological sang-froid to be a Greer or a Hughes, nor the professional funny man interest to be an Ellis or a James. On the other hand he has a capacity for empathy and drama which have made him primarily, and at his most successful, a writer of fiction.

Some of the tensions of the might-have-beens are evident in *Homebush Boy*. Look at the title. Tom Keneally, publicist and performer, is doing natty things with it. It's hardly cynical to imagine there'll be a large format, illustrated edition of the book for the year 2000. America's visitors to the Homebush Bay Olympics should find their favourite Australian writer's local memoir the perfect souvenir. For the moment, however, this American market is a blight on the book. There are too many lumps of dead verbiage which only make sense as potted Australian history and culture for a US readership. So, jammed into the text we get footnote material on, for example, the Archibald Fountain, the Industrial Groupers, slips (as in cricket), athletics team (apparently unheard of in the USA). On page three I puzzled over the words 'During the Second World War sentimental Yanks (some of them, of course, Southerners) ...' until I realised the distracting parenthesis was entirely for ... Yanks. I want to yell, 'Look Tom, you're a very good writer. Stop this defacing, stop trying for two birds with the one stone. Hang the expense. Do two editions. Get a good editor. Slow down.'

In *Homebush Boy*, an account of Keneally's seventeenth year, his final one at school, the drama centres on whether he will or will not decide to be a priest. This is material vulnerable to a mocking, over-the-top treatment. One could imagine it—has seen it—in the hands of an Ellis or a Hughes. In his early pages Keneally too doesn't quite avoid it; his enthusiastic, romantic youthful self (the father to the man all right) gets the flashing arrows pointing at him a bit too often. His devotion to Gerard Manley Hopkins, for example, becomes an exceedingly boring refrain. Other characters remain shadowy, but, without exception, on the side of the angels, especially the women. Tom Keneally can't let a woman pass by without marking her with an unambiguous tick. 'Bernadette Curran's parents raised their splendid daughters' or 'the bungalow where the Curran women stored their beauty and cleverness.' As a woman friend pointed out to me, whatever about Tom Keneally's own straining feminist intentions, this brand of

reflex, unspecific extravagance is actually a clerical mannerism—'May I speak to your good wife ... How's your wonderful mother.'

As the book advances, Keneally focuses and reins in. The fiction maker asserts himself. We get more dramatic set-pieces—and very good ones—such as his interview about the priesthood with Cardinal Gilroy. He does not repudiate or even make much fun of his 16-year-old self. There is no Whig version of even Australian history here. For all Tom Keneally's later changes of life and strenuous political activism, *Homebush Boy* is no dismissal of a benighted and well-rid-of world. An old life is brought out and handled affectiontely.

IRONICALLY, IN SPITE OF its frequent lush fruitiness, this book is a memorial to ordinariness, extreme ordinariness.

> Back with Matt to Shortland Avenue, then dawdle home with Mangan, calling at Frawley's on the way. Like a more accustomed adolescent in that: delaying going home if you could. On top of that, delicious hours of study lay ahead. In a life rich in experiences, I would later live as richly but never more so.

This is the man who has covered Eritrea, and given Steven Spielberg an entree to serious respectability, and had his name read out from the card for the Booker Prize in the London Guildhall. Yet the hero of *Homebush Bay* is suburban Australian life—neighbourhood and community—and of the 1950s what's more. Boys, girls, parents, teachers—supporting and dropping in and chatting and competing and watching one another. At the end, when the Curran family travels up to Newcastle for the entry of the always wry, always level-headed daughter, Bernadette, into the Dominicans, the Keneally family accompanies them right to the convent parlour.

For young Tom (still Mick at this stage), the catalytic moment that sends him off to the seminary at Springwood comes at afternoon tea at the Currans. There are other friends there, Rose Frawley who is also entering, and boys who have been part of this circle all through their schooldays.

> Either Matt or Larkin the agnostic said, 'Which one of you will be Mother Superior first?' and we saw Mr Curran hide his face and turn his shoulder, which began to shudder. A shamed silence fell over everyone, and Mrs Curran went and laid a hand on his arm.
>
> In that second I knew I was going too. The sense of seeing the rituals from the *inside*, the way GMH had, overtook me again, but now did not fill me with terror. It was in part a matter of crazily knowing that grief could not be avoided, and this grief displayed by the Curran parents was purposeful and noble. In the Curran's house at tea the richly-coloured skeins of motivation—a yearning for GMH's God, a desire to serve, a desire to instruct, a taste for drama, a preference for fleshless love, an exaltation in the Latin rites. I would never be bored by them, I knew. I would never listen surreptitiously in the confessionals, between penitents, to the Saturday races.
>
> So I walked home with Matt and Mangan knowing I would go. How the decision chastened, calmed and yet exhilarated me.

This is perceptive and moving and utterly unpatronising. It gives full value to a whole culture, without the distorting excess of either sentimentality or latter-day scepticism. Keneally is giving us genuine communion of saints stuff, Australian variety.

Homebush Boy might be Tom Keneally's Portrait of the Youthful Artist, but this adolescent is neither solitary, not alienated from family or teachers or faith or nation. Far from being an elect soul, he is determinedly one of his people—not only Tom but Mick as well. The prose of seigneurial flourish and self-regarding performance remains a siren for Tom Keneally, but the democrat and the dramatist in him wrestles it ceaselessly. ■

Gerard Windsor's alternative account of the 1960s, *Heaven, Where The Bachelors Sit*, will be published in 1996.

BOOKS: 4

JEREMY CLARKE

Whispering Jose

IN 1988 GOUGH WHITLAM, as President of the Australia China Council, was visiting the People's Republic of China with fellow council members on a 'human resources development tour'. The Australia China Council planned to evaluate the effectiveness of their cultural exchanges and government-sponsored study programs by talking with Australian exchange students 'on the ground.'

Chinese Whispers: cultural essays, Nicholas Jose, Wakefield Press, Adelaide 1995.
ISBN 1 86254 336 4 RRP $16.95

Nicholas Jose, cultural counsellor at the Australian Embassy in Beijing at the time, had the task of coordinating with the local authorities the movement of foreign students from one city to another. Thus it was that, by the cold banks of Lake Tai near Wuxi, inland from Shanghai, I, along with five other young Australians, was one such human resource being developed.

Our meeting with the Great Helmsman was at once enjoyable and brief. At its conclusion, as he and his entourage were whisked to one side for sumptuous local delicacies, we were led to a back room for a quick bowl of noodles before the afternoon train back to Shanghai and further 'development'.

Muttering idiomatically-colourful descriptions about bureaucrats and dawn journeys across a wintery Chinese landscape, we found to our delight and surprise that Nick had chosen to accompany us back to Shanghai. Leaning back against the antimacassars and sipping our China Railways tea, we talked long of things Chinese and, with now friendlier eyes, watched the countryside sweep under the train .

In *Chinese Whispers*, a collection of writings from 1980 to 1995 grouped together as 'cultural essays', Jose continues to be a sympathetic guide to things Chinese, alert to the great march of hopes and dreams that is contemporary Chinese society.

Writing about things Chinese is a bit like writing about God—the more definite one is, the more one is likely to be wrong. Clarity and insight are perhaps only achieved through metaphor, anecdote and suggestion, by a putting of questions rather than the pronouncement of grand answers.

Jose describes Tiananmen Square as an epicentre for his collection of writings. The essay 'The Beat Goes On' is a must-read for all who want to believe the revisionist (trade-inspired?) line that there was no massacre in Beijing—'...like Thomas I have seen the bullet hole in a friend's leg ... '

Jose is well qualified to put these questions, 'having had the unusual role of a policy advisor who is also a novelist.' In addition, he has also been a teacher in both Beijing and Shanghai, is a current member of the Australia China Council, and from 1987 to 1990 was cultural counsellor, a job that entailed not only the facilitation of cultural exchanges between China and Australia, but also helping Australians understand what was happening in China—'which meant trying to understand it myself.' *Chinese Whispers* draws on this rich variety of experience.

Australia has been described as a country which takes Sinology seriously. With this collection of essays Jose joins that group of Sinologists who are able to blend academic discipline and popular interest with flair and integrity. These writings place Jose alongside such China watchers as Geremie Barme and Linda Jaivin, long-time observers of everything from Chinese punk rock to contemporary literature, and Michael Dutton, writer on policing and punishment in the People's Republic of China.

Learned yet not musty, informative but with an eye for the quirky, Jose's collection is a reflection of the value of personal experience and exchange over the meagre gold dust siftings of academic research.

The volume is short and sensitive—less a series of snapshots of author with stuffed panda at the Great Wall than a looking-through-a-glass-darkly at issues like politics, travel, history, art and literature. Although the catchall title 'cultural essays' does not include much for those wondering whether the People's Republic will enter a rugby team for the Hong Kong Sevens, Jose's perceptive pieces are nevertheless wide-ranging.

An essay about a 1984 cultural delegation to China that included Manning Clark and Kath Walker is followed soon after by one on Sang Ye, a Brisbane-based Chinese author who has cycled from Adelaide to Darwin. (Sang Ye's massive collection of Cultural Revolution memorabilia lives in the National Library, Canberra.) Commenting on Alison Broinowski's *The Yellow Lady*, Jose highlights some of the government and media responses to Chinese students in Australia: he shows the subtle demonisation that arises when 'misinformation, innuendo and racist cliché (are used) to make their behaviour seem threatening and un-Australian.'

The complexities surrounding that terrible June of 1989 are examined in the way Jose examines other issues in the book—with insight, with a delicacy that avoids simplicity, but above all with compassion. Jose describes Tiananmen Square as an epicentre for his collection of writings. The essay 'The Beat Goes On' is a must-read for all who want to believe the revisionist (trade-inspired?) line that there was no massacre in Beijing—'...like Thomas I have seen the bullet hole in a friend's leg ... '

THE LAST ESSAY, 'ICE CITY', perhaps describes best the gradual understandings and the desires for intimacy that epitomise true cultural exchange. Jose had travelled to Harbin to meet with a local artists' collective that included printmaker, Shen Shaomin, two of whose works have been acquired by the New South Wales Art Gallery.

A walk along the frozen Songhua River almost ended in tragedy when 'the safe markers disappeared under falling snow and the ice broke', throwing Jose's two companions into the freezing water. Jose was able to haul them out. They raced back to the shore, clothes frozen as hard as boards, and were able to get to the collective. Later, brunch included dog ribs, skewered sparrows and stewed frogs; and the traditional toasting to the success of the venture was vigorous as friendship between the artists of Harbin and Australia was proclaimed.

Jose writes: 'I keep in touch with the Harbin gang. When I left China a few years later, they told me that I had only shown my true self to them twice in the time they had known me. The first was when I didn't save my Australian friend from the frozen water at the expense of the Chinese who couldn't swim. The second was when they drank me under the table. Maybe that's why they continue to deal with me.'

Jose's essays reveal a similar mixture of honesty, sensitivity and the unusual, although certainly without the consequent headaches. ■

Jeremy Clarke SJ studies at Jesuit Theological College. He lived in China during 1988-89.

Greater Interests

As he grows older his life has not slipped away. All he has to show
Is so much and so various he has long given up keeping track of it all.
As the days keep drawing in to a close he knows he is getting older,
Yet he has not missed anything, there is nowhere he has gone disastrously wrong.
Why should he be the one who does not feel lonely? Why has he no sense that
Farewell speeches might be in order? He thinks, it would be lovely to say
Behind him are only bright and happy memories and, strangely, this is the case.
Hold it there! The catastrophe proves there is no art to losing touch.
Certainly it isn't sentiment he feels, more like a growing puzzlement
Or breathtaking distance that is twenty years of his life filled with greater interests,
But who are these men, he asks himself, who were they then?
They walk almost float down the street in their Levis.
Smoke cheap Bank that they stuff back into their checkshirt pockets.
They carry red bass guitars and yellow Gibson twelve-strings in black cases.
Past milk bars and chemists, across the empty car parks with empty
Paper and empty boxes rolling across the cold top. What were those rivalries for?
To grow into friendships that would soon meet other friendships, and there
Recognition broke down the inhibitions. Moneyed and mollified suburbs,
Beyond the smog, quiver as the transistors play a request favourite. Materialism,
That was an easy target of the young men who lived in better times,
Who knew nothing worse. They cross the Shell service station under a silvery sky,
On their way to Gazza's place. If it wasn't Gazza's it was John's or Bill's,
In the days of getting a car licence, of writing riffs around electric lover words.
And who are these women? Sitting in their cords at bus stops,
Twisting their curls and playing hard to get, an easy game to learn.
They harbour boy interests but in their arms are scholarships to universities.
Leather jackets and motorbikes are a catch-all, anything will be done
To rip up Whitehorse Road into the hills for the day. Women won't miss out.
They hold smiles they find hard to make. Some make records
They find hard to live down, and it is always in the name, not of revolution,
Not of religion, not of money, it is always for love. They smile and they while,
They wait. Cigarettes down by the creek or up at the rail embankment.
Who are they, before job prospects harrowed them, before drugs propelled them,
Before the meaning of school became more than time wasting? How does he see them?
Do they seem innocent now? Going home again to jumpy TV comedies
And homework about differentials and the Westminster division of powers.
Executive cars pull out of driveways. Other cities require their unique expertise.
Somewhere a soul desperate disappointment leaves him wishing for his old circles,
But it is too late now. He read about the catastrophe this morning, quite by chance,
On page seven. And he himself has his own worries, two children who talk back
And a wife who hates her job and the sight of all those dishes.

Philip Harvey

Greater Interests won the ABC Radio National 1995 poetry competition.

GILLIAN APPLETON

Birds of the air

The Coming Out Show: Twenty Years of Feminist ABC Radio,
Liz Fell and Carolyn Wenzel (eds),
ABC Books, Sydney 1995.
ISBN 0 733 0433 8 RRP $16.95

THE ABC'S SATURDAY afternoon feminist radio program, the *Coming Out Show* (now known as *Women Out Loud*) turned 20 late last year. Most of us who were involved in fighting for its establishment probably feel a mild sense of surprise that it has lasted this long and, by and large, remained true to its original objectives. ABC Books marked the birthday with this collection of contributions from a dozen women who have been involved in the program at various stages from its inception to the present.

Liz Fell and Carolyn Wenzel remind us that much of the program's life has often involved debilitating battles: with ABC management and Board, with conservative listeners and groups such as 'Women Who Want to Be Women'. The program has acted as town crier or referee in ideological struggles of various kinds. Yet *Coming Out* survived to prove there was a place on the national broadcaster for raw, passionate, in-your-face radio. It covered issues that no one else had dared to tackle, used four-letter words and, on occasion, cast a cool eye on feminist icons and feminist dogma.

A trawl through ABC archives has revealed a surprising degree of support for the program on the part of some ABC managers in the face of persistent onslaughts from without and within. Typical of the hate-mail was this response to a program about lesbianism: 'These serpents are spoiling all natural impulses and the enjoyment of love for those who come under their black influence ... If this is what the "liberated women" have to offer then they may as well return to their neglected kitchens and commune with the cockroaches.' At the other end of the spectrum was the 'rapist' who wrote from Maitland Jail that the program had helped him to change many of his attitudes.

It is astonishing now to contemplate the outrage at the program's use of voices which did not fit the genteel ABC norm, and an overall sound at odds with the ABC's sacrosanct idea of 'broadcast quality'. Much more important but, sadly, less influential on the wider ABC, has been its role as a microcosm of issues of race and gender. Jill Emberson and Penny O'Donnell present a sometimes painful account of a difficult (and not yet fully resolved) dilemma for the program, when Aboriginal women and women of non-English-speaking background fought for the exclusive right to cover stories about themselves, leading to cries of censorship and rifts with the mainly white middle-class women whose voices and interpretations had dominated the program's early years.

Carolyn Wenzel demonstrates how central the program has been to feminist theory in Australia—by being first off the block to give a platform to proponents of new feminist analyses, and seeking alternative, feminist voices to comment on such matters as the Federal budget. (It is satisfying to note that one such voice, Eva Cox, was the 1995 Boyer lecturer.) In a critique of a *Coming Out* series on feminist theory, Max Harris -who did not mean it as a compliment—wrote that the program '[reaches] the most people and [has] the greatest influence of any ideological outlet in the country'.

Given the recent, largely media-generated, stand-off between older and younger feminists, one hopes that the latter may find some value in the book's accounts of how things used to be. Former co-ordinator Nicola Joseph writes: 'Having listened to the old programs and learned about the early days, I wish I had known the history when I first started'. What would today's young women make of the proposals (radical at the time) put forward by ABC women to mark International Women's Year in 1975—such as one day with female announcers and program presenters, or a concert of music by women composers, or Boyer Lectures presented by a woman? What would they make of the description, by sometime ABC chairman, John Norgard, of the program that 'the girls have a go'. Statements reported here ('I think an awful lot of women are boring') by his successor as chairman (*sic*) Leonie Kramer, not a notable supporter of *Coming Out*, serve to show that she is at least consistent.

This is a no-frills publication. There are no photographs or graphics, and there is no index. Sparse details about sources and dates can make for frustrating reading. The inclusion of full-page archival memos in the middle of the body of the text tends to jar and interrupt the flow.

But there are compensations. The inclusion of a list of the topics covered by every program since 1975 offers a fascinating insight into recent women's history and the issues which have concerned us, some of which recur with sobering regularity—rape, abortion, domestic violence, child care, working conditions, equal pay. The program's coverage of issues such as these has given rise to a common cry among its critics, that it is one long whinge. Yet, as the list shows, *Coming Out* has celebrated women's energy and

creativity as much as it has highlighted sexism, oppression and discrimination.

What of the future? The Dix Committee of Review of the ABC, reporting only six years after *Coming Out* began, encapsulated a continuing dilemma when it suggested that '[t]here should be increased sensitivity across the whole range of programming, so that "women's issues" are not simply relegated to one small corner of the output in a "women's program" (in whatever format).' Dix also recognised that there would be no great improvement until 'more women hold positions of authority at the program and policy making levels', a view fully shared by the co-operative which launched the program. Yet despite advances at some levels, 20 years on, fewer than one third of ABC senior executive staff are women.

Today, Radio National programs like Geraldine Doogue's *Life Matters* and *Australia Talks Back* regularly tackle topics which would once have been the preserve of *Coming Out*. Has the program outlived its relevance? It would be disappointing to see it become a sort of feminist *Blue Hills* or *Family Favourites*, historical examples of the ABC's tendency to flog programs way past their use-by date. But provided it continues to reinvent itself, to attack difficult and unpopular issues head-on, and to seed ideas and people through the rest of the organisation, it should justify its existence. There are similar programs on community radio, but the importance of *Women Out Loud* is that it reaches a national audience, including isolated country women.

KATE MILLER, A FOUNDING mother of *Coming Out* and now an ABC senior manager, says: 'While this isn't an equal society and the ABC doesn't have an equal culture for women, then there is a real role for [the program]'. Regrettably, this remains the strongest argument *for* its retention. ■

Gillian Appleton was a founder member of the Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-operative. She writes about broadcasting and cultural policy.

IN MEMORIAM
JOHN COTTER

Gwen Harwood
1920-1995

DOROTHY GREEN, in the *Canberra Times*, 20 February, 1971, asked where were the poets working 'outside the academies': there was 'an advertising man', and 'a nursing aide' she said, but 'There is also Timothy Kline , who is said to be an Idea in the mind of Gwen Harwood, and therefore doesn't have to earn a living.'

Back even further, in July, 1961, Gwen Harwood earned that most treasured Hobartian award: to be known locally as 'a rum'un'. She had tweaked the monstrous mainland's tail when she tricked Sydney *Bulletin* editor, Donald Horne, in such scandalous fashion that even Vin Buckley would not print the details in his autobiography, *Cutting Green Hay*.

James McAuley took me to see Gwen Harwood in August 1961. He had mentioned emerging and exceptional poetic talent 'in pieces from locals Gwen Harwood and Vivian and Sybil Smith, and from young Mainlanders Chris Wallace-Crabbe and Peter Steele. Come and meet Gwen Harwood,' he added. How many more firsts could I take after my first Bass Strait crossing; first island; first snow: first Cascade beer; first archbishop; now first poet. Three-minute drive, then 'Gwen, this is John Cotter.' 'Pleased to meet you, Mrs Harwood.'

The room breathed the old, the quiet, the restful.The view from a large window tempted our gaze in all directions. The room had a piano, soothing furniture, ornaments. Gwen ('Mrs') Harwood set a steaming teapot and homemade eats on the table. Surely that's not applecake, I thought. 'Mrs' Harwood and my guide discussed writings and publications. She smiled encouragement at me but I feared talking and choking on applecake in front of two poets. James McAuley did enough talking for two anyway as he munched vigorously on the homemade eats, stepped over to that window again, played one-handed at the piano, cup and saucer in the other. Gwen Harwood nodded corner-dimple smiles. He was fervently on his newish Roman and political high and somewhat saturated with Archbishop Guildford Young. Gwen looked about a bit as if saying to herself, 'O dear! Poor Jim does wear these curiosities on his sleeve a bit.'

'Mrs' soon became Gwen: Gwen here, Gwen there. Sturdy gait, radiant smile, poet, pianist, organist, hymnist and psalmist. We had several years of casual contact in Hobart in the 1960s, but other than reading her I never encountered Gwen again until the 1994 Melbourne Writers' Week session, 'God moves in mysterious metres', sponsored by *Eureka Street*. She was early, arranged her chair and papers on the stage, then stood near the door simply watching passers-by. 'It *is* Gwen isn't it? I'm ... 'I know who you are.' 'Gwen, you're as punctual as ever.' She beamed, 'O that's love thy neighbour.' 'Gwen, that first day at North Hobart ... it was applecake, wasn't it?' 'Of course. You were new.'

On the stage Seamus Heaney sat beside Gwen. What a day that was. I won't attempt description. My old choirmaster would have intoned *Haec Diem Qui Fecit Dominus*: This Is The Day The Lord has Made.

Gwen had a cup of tea, standing up with me afterwards. She was transcended. We chatted. 'Didn't I warn Jim that archbishop was a crank?' We said our goodbyes. Gwen put her arms around me and rested her head on my chest for quite a while. ■

John Cotter is a Melbourne writer.

MICHAEL MCKERNAN

Pen and sword

AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS 1945-1995 gave us all a warm feeling. It was nice to recall the old people in the community, to celebrate their achievements, and to marvel at their tenacity. It made us feel that Australians had a history and a significance and we all felt good about ourselves. And then Peter Ryan came along and spoiled the party.

Writing in *Quadrant*, and awarding points to the organisers of the party for a nice try, Ryan noted that *Australia Remembers* 'missed the inwardness'; all the activities in the year-long program were about war, not of war. Leaning on Eric Partridge, Ryan concluded: 'People who try to write about the war without having served are attempting something "they cannot possibly understand".'

The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History, Peter Dennis, Jeffrey Grey, Evan Morris and Robin Prior (eds), Oxford University Press Australia, 1995.
ISBN 0 19 553227 9 RRP $69.95

So we who had not served could look at the *Australia Remembers* logo with its image of a returning prisoner embracing his wife and two children but we now knew that we could not penetrate it. We could think about the emotions that the little group might have been experiencing, relief, security, love, lust, fear and we could imagine how we might have felt. But we would not know what terrors four years of Japanese brutality might have burned into this one serviceman's spirit. In the words of another POW: 'You cannot explain it to anyone else. Because we are unique'.

The editors of this fine book might have thought about these things. I imagine that every serious military historian who has not known combat will worry and tussle with the problem. Travelling with veterans, as I have done this year, and reading historical prologues to them, explaining Australian action at places like El Alamein, Suda Bay, Tarakan and Balikpapan, produced a sense of fear that I might have got even one small detail wrong, and an unease that I was presuming to tell them what they had lived through.

And yet the veterans seemed to like the prologues to each of the ceremonies. One wrote to me afterwards that he never read them through beforehand, he liked to hear them read fresh. These words, and the ceremonies of which they were but a small part, were a reaffirmation for the veterans that their lives, and the lives of those they had come to remember, mattered. They were looking at the inwardness not of war, but of life.

And so does all good history. It should help us to enter into lives and experiences that are remote from our own and give us the information we need to interiorise it, to make it, in some way, part of our own experience. Perhaps this is more difficult with military history than with, say, the story of the Aztecs, but I doubt it. Certainly we need guidance with strange terms, with swirling chronology, and with a cast that is gigantic on any scale.

And so to this admirable *Companion*. If I'd had my choice of publishing any book in the years that the Australian War Memorial was a mainstream publisher, this would have been it, or something like it. But 'in your dreams'—for only Oxford would have had the resources and the series support that a project like this entails. So many of those who want to know about our military past do not have the time to hunt through the voluminous official histories to gather the essential facts that they will need. They do not possess the libraries that will

enable them to cover the span that Australian military history represents. They need access to clear, crisp, understandable information with which to begin their own explorations.

The main ingredients of this book, which justify its purchase price alone, are the accounts of the 'Australian' campaigns of both the world wars. Written by John Coates for the Second World War and by Robin Prior (I suspect) for the First World War these are gems of compression, narrative and analysis. John Coates knows what he is talking about. A former Chief of the General Staff, a campaigning soldier, and a writer with a lifelong passion for military history, he should meet Peter Ryan's requirement of 'inwardness'. Supported by good maps, Coates tells us what happened, what went right and what went wrong, who performed well and who poorly, hints at the political issues each campaign provoked, locates the campaign within the bigger picture of the war, and assesses its place in the developing Australian legend. All in the space of a few thousand words, each one selected for the absolute clarity of the argument. These campaign summaries are a breathtaking achievement.

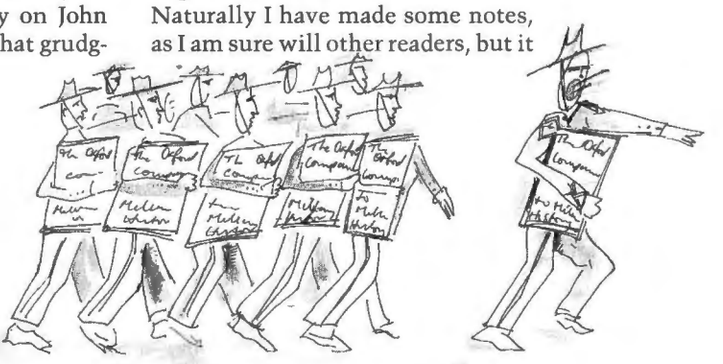
They are also the spine that supports all of the rest. And the rest is a comprehensive coverage of almost everything that could be associated with Australia's past, from a military perspective. Thus there are articles on film, language, literature, humour, the death penalty, administrative arrangements, people galore, honours and awards, machinery, myths and the unknown Australian soldier. The aim of the book, 'a reference work that will explain how military questions have affected Australian history', requires this comprehensive coverage.

There are some surprising omissions and I wonder how widely the headwords were debated outside the editorial group and how extensively they were circulated for comment. I was surprised to find that the *Companion* did not account for every Australian Victorian Cross winner, and in fact only five are given space. Indeed this *Companion* seems to have a problem with valour, losing sight of Albert Corey, for example: Military Medal and three Bars; and preferring 'Jo' Gullett, a brave soldier and a fine writer certainly, to Roden Cutler, R. H. Middleton, or 'Diver' Derrick. I would have thought, too, that each wartime Prime Minister deserved an entry; the omission of Ben Chifley is remarkable and the entry on John Curtin is brief and somewhat grudging. If the *Companion* wanted to tarnish Curtin's halo, it needed more words than are allocated here, to be fair.

I think it was a pity, too, that the in-house entries were not signed. We can pick a quarrel with John Coates or Peter Stanley, and we know their form, but it is harder to pick a fight with Jeffrey Grey, for example, when we can only guess that he wrote this particularly provocative piece. The entry on the Anzac Legend, one of the most important articles in the *Companion*, one of the most thought-provoking and contentious, is unsigned, and I would really like to know with whom I am dealing when I ponder all that it contains. I'd also like to have direct quotations sourced, as in this entry which gives us a long and important quotation from 'the historian Lloyd Robson' without any other clues as to provenance. And I think all writers of substantial entries should have been asked to provide brief lists of further reading. I believe that I can make this criticism fairly confidently because the entry on John Hetherington, the biographer of Blamey, complains that his book is 'not helped by the lack of scholarly apparatus such as footnotes'.

THIS BOOK WILL BE A GODSEND for teachers and reference librarians but they should have been enabled, easily, to give their determined enquirer additional references. They should have been able, too, to have complete confidence in the material presented here. And I distinguish between facts and opinions. There are, refreshingly, plenty of opinions in this *Companion*. I'll accept as an opinion that there is a certain ambiguity about the meaning of Anzac Day, mourning or celebration, but I'll deny the statement that the first Dawn Service was held in Sydney in 1927.

There are too many errors in this book, many of them of no great consequence, but errors nevertheless. Naturally I have made some notes, as I am sure will other readers, but it would be tiresome, possibly pedantic and doubtless arrogant to place my list of errors here. And yet the publishers may be angered by this unsubstantiated assertion. I sympathise with the complexity of the task and I do not wish to detract from the achievement, but a second edition—and there will be many more over the years—should produce a crisper product.

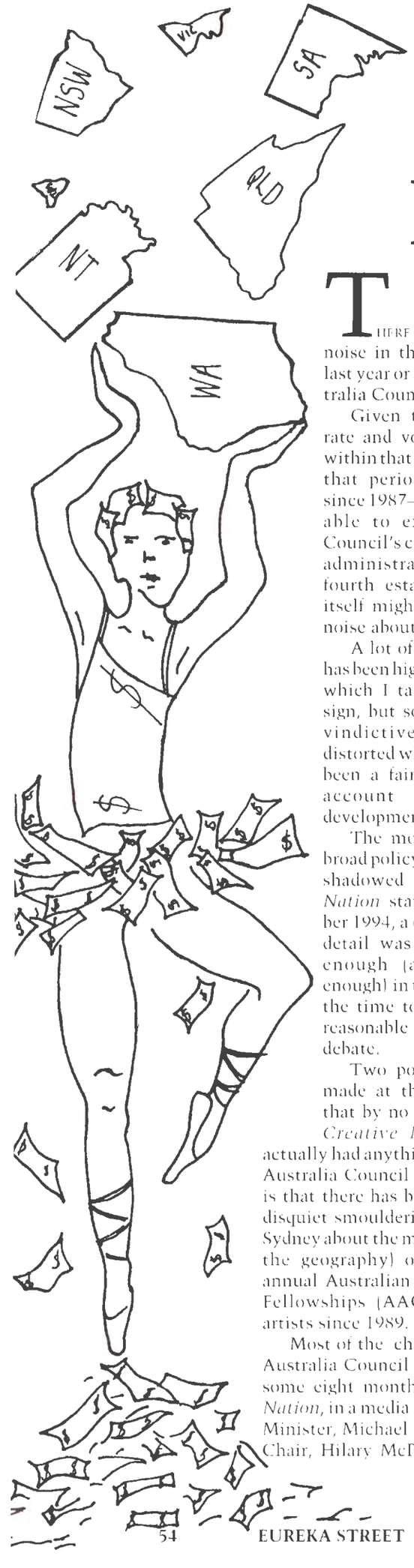


Despite these concerns this is a book that I'll be consulting for years. It is a pleasure to read and handle and it combines the most modern scholarship with clarity and accessibility, and opinion, and that is rarely attempted in scholarly publishing. It stands easily in comparison to the *Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, produced this year in London, with, I bet, vastly superior resources. The editors of the Australian *Companion* deserve great credit for their ambition and their enthusiasm. They have done Australian military history a great service. Peter Ryan, whom the *Companion* credits correctly with the 'brilliant memoir' of the Second World War, *Fear Drive My Feet*, may find sufficient 'inwardness' to make up for the general lack of combat experience. ■

Michael McKernan is Deputy Director of the Australian War Memorial. He also contributed two articles to the *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*.

GEOFFREY MILNE

Figures on stage



THERE HAS BEEN A LOT of noise in the press over the last year or so about the Australia Council.

Given the considerable rate and volume of change within that organisation over that period—and, indeed, since 1987—it's only reasonable to expect that the Council's clients (artists and administrators alike), the fourth estate and Council itself might make a bit of noise about it.

A lot of the press debate has been highly impassioned, which I take to be a good sign, but some has been so vindictive that it has distorted what ought to have been a fair and reasonable account of important developments.

The most recent of the broad policy shifts were foreshadowed in the *Creative Nation* statement of October 1994, a document whose detail was quoted broadly enough (and accurately enough) in the major press at the time to have generated reasonable crossfire and fair debate.

Two points need to be made at this stage; one is that by no means all of the *Creative Nation* policies actually had anything to do with the Australia Council itself. The other is that there has been considerable disquiet smouldering away outside Sydney about the method (or, rather, the geography) of awarding the annual Australian Artists Creative Fellowships (AACFs) to mature artists since 1989.

Most of the changes within the Australia Council were announced some eight months after *Creative Nation*, in a media release from Arts Minister, Michael Lee, and Council Chair, Hilary McPhee, on 31 May 1995. I have not seen the simple (albeit controversial) details of that release reprinted with any accuracy in any major Australian newspaper from that moment to this, but the reaction to it has bordered on the vitriolic. One particularly tenacious element in the Melbourne press has maintained a savage attack on the Commonwealth Government's arts policies in general and the Australia Council in particular—with a clear, but inaccurate, implication that the two are indivisibly connected.

One of the most consistent allegations throughout this anti-Australia Council campaign has been that there is a Sydney (or NSW) bias in its grant allocations. This curious allegation has been circulating for at least two decades and it is not restricted to Melbourne, of course. The Melbourne campaign, nonetheless, built to a lively crescendo on 2 November, 1995—the day Keating opened a new School of Film and Television building for the Victorian College of the Arts, and announced the winners of the new younger Australian Creative Fellowship awards. On that day, the Victorian Government took out full-page advertisements in the local papers demanding to know 'WHY IS MR KEATING PUNISHING THE VICTORIAN ARTS COMMUNITY?' and drawing attention to the considerable discrepancy between the Commonwealth Government's levels of funding to 'Sydney's [sic] Australian Film, Television and Radio School' and the VCA's School of Film and Television.

An obliging arts commentator in one of Melbourne's dailies filed a passionate piece the same day, under an introduction alleging that 'the Australia Council's favoritism of Sydney in arts funding is over the top and has to end.' The piece began with the familiar but not unfair indictment of the AACFs ('In the seven years they have been awarded, 43 of the 57 fellowships ... have gone to artists in NSW and the ACT'), and went on to compare Victoria's population with those of NSW and the ACT combined (as if they were one and the same), in a reasonable bid to highlight the obvious discrepancies in geographical distribution of the fellowships. The remainder of the article attacked predictable targets, including the Sydney-based Australian Opera's funding vis-à-vis the Melbourne-based Australian Ballet's, the preferral of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra over the Melbourne Symphony and the discrepancy between Federal funding to the Australian Film, TV and Radio School and the VCA's School of Film and TV.

There was even a graph entitled 'Where the Dollars Go', which showed a discrepancy between Australia Council grants to NSW and Victoria—in dollars per head of population—over a ten-year period (although what a *two*-worm graph was supposed to show in the context of an organisation awarding grants to *eight* states and territories I am at a loss to understand). I am also unable to understand (after detailed research into Australia Council funding figures and annual reports over the past twenty years) what most of this has to do with the Australia Council at all. It is important in the interests of sensible argument to make it clear whether one is attacking a Commonwealth Government arts agenda (and Keating in particular) or the Australia Council as such.

FIRST, FUNDING OF ARTS industry training schools is *not* an Australia Council matter and it is not productive of sensible national argument to imply otherwise. It should be regarded as a national scandal if the national government did *not* fund a national school at a higher level than any of the regional ones. Secondly, the Australia Council *administers* the AACFs, but they are funded from

and selected under a separate Commonwealth program. Thirdly, any apparent bias that is discernible in Australia Council grants does *not* seem to favour NSW or punish Victoria particularly, as table I demonstrates.

This table shows the overall trend clearly enough. The volume of grant money tends to decrease in line with population, although on that basis we might expect the more populous WA to receive more than SA, and the ACT to outscore the NT, and we would expect Queensland to get twice as much as SA.

Table 2, based on Australia Council grants per capita of population (which Australia Council reports don't publish) shows a broad funding 'bias' in favour of the territories and the smallest state on a dollars per capita basis.

WHILE NSW DOES HEAD Victoria (and WA) narrowly, the obvious 'loser' in this comparison is Queensland, which looks to be grossly underfunded by comparison with the other mainland states. Table 3 demonstates the Performing Arts Board figures over the same period.

Tasmania and the ACT clearly lead the rest of the field; Victoria just shades NSW on average (in a generally declining trend for both) but drops behind in 1994, and while some of the other trends are rather volatile, WA and SA show general gains. But the loser, again, is Queensland. (Similar patterns emerge, incidentally, in Literature and Visual Arts.)

In the face of this evidence, it would be necessary to show that there is a calculated imbalance in the ratio of grants awarded over applications rejected from any one state or territory if the accusation of bias is to be sustainable. But this is not the case and, happily, such allegations have not (so far) been made; the volume of grants awarded happens to represent a fair ratio of applications received.

A final comparison should be made between the relative levels of support given to the arts in each of the states and territories through their own artform grants programs. Table 4 illustrates these in dollars per capita for 1993/94, obtained from their annual reports; in order to compare like with like, I only consider grants for arts activity as such and ignore incomparable items like capital works and so on. The first row shows arts grants per capita across the board, the second shows theatre grants as separate components; the states and territories are arranged in ascending population order.

There is an almost perfect arithmetical symmetry here: the smaller the state or territory population, the higher the per capita expenditure on arts grants, with the exception of cash-strapped Tasmania. Theatre grants reveal almost the same pattern, apart from their relatively low proportion in the Northern Territory and high proportion in Tasmania.

One conclusion to be drawn here is that, with some statistical variance the overall trend in the states' and territories' grants programs is not all that different from the Australia Council's. Another is that the arts (except in Tasmania) tend to receive more money per head from their states and territories than they receive from the Australia Council. Nonetheless, Australia Council critics in states that feel 'punished' might like to look to their own arts ministries and departments for a bit more commitment—and identify their rhetorical targets more clearly. ■

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Table 1

AUSTRALIA COUNCIL GRANTS BY STATE AND TERRITORY (in $)

State/Terr.	1990/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	Average
NSW	12,861,801	12,881,071	11,069,578	11,101,679	11,978,532
Vic	9,043,848	9,499,874	7,645,150	7,280,484	8,367,339
Qld	3,402,776	3,614,839	4,074,131	3,417,403	3,627,287
SA	3,715,687	3,463,385	3,665,167	3,649,450	3,623,422
WA	3,113,654	3,433,942	3,501,025	3,307,912	3,339,133
Tas	1,735,987	1,842,340	1,976,258	1,650,015	1,801,377
NT	1,342,135	1,422,789	1,339,543	1,204,924	1,327,348
ACT	1,015,464	1,102,744	950,935	1,026,837	1,023,995

(Source: Australia Council Annual Reports, 1990/91—93/94)

Table 2

AUSTRALIA COUNCIL GRANTS: $ per capita

	1990/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	Average
NT	8.01	8.41	7.92	7.00	7.84
Tas	3.71	3.91	4.18	3.49	3.82
ACT	3.49	3.70	3.18	3.40	3.44
SA	2.56	2.37	2.50	2.48	2.48
NSW	2.17	2.15	1.84	1.83	2.00
WA	1.89	2.06	2.08	1.93	1.99
Vic	2.04	2.13	1.71	1.62	1.88
Qld	1.14	1.18	1.30	1.06	1.17
Nat Average	2.09	2.12	1.93	1.82	—

Table 3

PAB GRANTS: $ per capita

	1990/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	Average
Tas	2.16	2.19	2.16	1.98	2.12
ACT	2.15	2.08	1.75	2.17	2.04
NT	1.81	1.57	1.38	1.33	1.52
SA	1.29	1.25	1.32	1.42	1.32
Vic	1.48	1.53	1.02	0.92	1.24
NSW	1.45	1.37	1.01	1.00	1.21
WA	0.93	0.98	1.09	1.19	1.05
Qld	0.53	0.56	0.54	0.56	0.55
Nat Average	1.27	1.26	1.01	1.00	—

Table 4

GRANTS	NT	ACT	Tas	SA	WA	Qld	Vic	NSW
All Arts	17.55	9.31	3.32	7.37	6.21	3.43	2.65	2.23
Theatre	1.45	2.10†	1.08	2.04*	1.36	.78**	.63	.49

† includes Jigsaw grant from Education Dept; * includes State Theatre Co.; ** includes QTC

FLASH IN THE PAN

James who?

Goldeneye dir. Martin Campbell (Hoyts cinemas). Ever since a scantily clad Ursula Andress emerged from the Caribbean waves in *Dr No* (1962), the exploits of the ageless casanova and defender of the free world, in the longest running and most successful film franchise in motion picture history, have entertained audiences around the world.

This is the seventeenth instalment in the official Bond series—there have been two 'alternative' Bond films—and, with ever more outrageous stunts and special effects to distract audiences from the thin storyline, it is bound to please many viewers. However, despite the best efforts of Brosnan—who looks fantastic and plays Bond well—and an action-packed script, the concept is wearing thin even for committed fans like myself.

Here Bond (Pierce Brosnan) races against the clock to retrieve a secret Russian weapon, stolen by a renegade British agent, with the usual intent of blackmailing world powers with the threat of a new superweapon.

To a world embroiled in the politics of the Cold War, and approaching the sexual liberation of the late '60s, James Bond was believable, exciting and risqué.

In the 1990's, when sex is commonplace and world politics dominated by the US—it's hard to believe individuals still have fantasies of world domination or that the British secret service is as important as it was 30 years ago.

Goldeneye may inadvertently signal the end of James Bond. The most telling line of the film is uttered by Judy Dench, the first woman to play 'M'—'I think you are a sexist, misogynist dinosaur, a relic of the Cold War era.' Perhaps it's time Bond traded in his Aston Martin, downed his last Vodka Martini and hung up his Walther PPK for good.

—Tim Stoney

Screen to screen

Toy Story dir. John Lasseter (Village cinemas). Disney's latest offering, the world's first computer animated feature-length film, is like nothing seen before. The film's *raison d'etre* is to showcase an impressive new form of animation that looks as close to live camerawork as you can get.

The story, which acts purely as a pivot for the technology, begins in Andy's room, with the toys in crisis. Andy is the owner of the toys and with his birthday approaching, a new toy could mean the bottom of the toy box for the old ones.

Andy's favourite toy is Woody (featuring the voice of Tom Hanks), who is the pseudo-leader. This birthday Woody is faced with a new opponent—Buzz Lightyear (Tim Allen). The new birthday toy is a futuristic spaceman and the struggle between Woody and Buzz dominates the plot.

However, it's the smaller parts, played by the other toys, that really give the film its personality. Toys like *Mr Potatohead*, *T-Rex* and a never-ending army of plastic soldiers fill up the holes left behind by the simplistic story-line. When Buzz and Woody are the sole characters on screen the film lacks the quick pace injected by the other toys.

The attention to detail that *Toy Story* offers is what sets it apart from other animated movies, creating an effective three-dimensional look in place of the traditional two dimension. It is an impressive film and will appeal to both adults and children.

—Patrick Delves

Former Yugoslavia

Underground dir. Emir Kusturica (independent cinemas). The past two winners of the coveted *Palme D'Or*, for Best Picture at the Cannes Film Festival, (*The Piano* and *Pulp Fiction)* have excited far more interest in Australia than the little known 1995 winner, *Underground*.

The film begins in the former Yugoslavia, in 1941, with Blacky (Lazar Ristovski) and Marko (Miki Manojlovic) running through the streets of Belgrade, followed by a five-piece brass band. From here on the pace never slackens, as Kusturica coflatess five decades of Yugoslavian history with a blackly humorous and at times tragic celebration of a nation struggling against oppression and division.

After a severe German air raid Marko and Blacky hide their families in a cellar, where they establish a secret munitions factory. Blacky is injured, almost killed, but recovers in the cellar, where he and the other families remain for 15 years, deceived by Marko into believing the war is still going on above them. Meanwhile, Marko becomes a high official in the Yugoslavian Communist Party, rakes in the profits from their labours, marries Blacky's fiancée and even unveils a statue celebrating Blacky as a dead war hero.

Kusturica deals with his subject matter symbolically, in a film exaggerated in every sense of the word. *Underground* is an ambitious undertaking, which will leave audiences intrigued by the histroy of this troubled part of the world.

—Tim Stoney

Brotherly love

The Brothers McMullen dir. Edward Burns (independent cinemas). The first impression to be had of this film is of a collection of bumbling romantics tripping over each other in a poorly-shot, chop-edited, loosely-

directed farce. It's not until you twig that many would describe their love-life this way that it starts to make sense.

Three brothers of Irish descent with very different outlooks on life are brought together for a time in the family home on Long Island, New York. After their abusive, alcoholic father died five years earlier their mother moved back to Ireland to live with an old love. Each has tried to come to terms with the absence and neglect within the traditions of their Irish Catholic tradition. Jack (Jack Mulcahy) the eldest, has the traditional married lifestyle with Molly (Connie Britton). Barry (Edward Burns) is a womanising writer of film-scripts, complete with cane and cloth-cap. And Pat (Mike McGlone) is as devout and comically-repressed as a Catholic can be.

All three have difficulties coping with relationships as a result of their unhappy childhood. But as they are brought together under the one roof they involve themselves in each other's problems. Pat's inhibitions, Barry's fear of commitment, and Jack's fear of non-commitment are dealt with one by one.

The Brothers McMullen is a quirky look at men in love that is not often seen in this day of big-budget thrillers. It has a tendency to be light and entertaining so as not to scare the horses—the influence of their father for example is never really articulated—and the performances are mixed. But it's worth seeing if only for the delightful exchanges between writer/director Edward Burns and Mike McGlone.

—Jon Greenaway

Eureka Street
Film Competition

Sean Connery, above left, is considered the quintessential *James Bond*. For the *Eureka Street* movie prize of $30, name all the actors who have played James Bond on screen.

The winner of the November competition was Paul Garret from Flinders, Vic. with this fascinating insight into thrigins of the Australian legend, Errol Fynn.

'Errol Flynn was born in Patrick Street, Hobart. His father was a Professor or Senior Lecturer at the University of Tasmania when my father was on the Senate of that institution. The Flynns were neighbours of my parents and Patrick Street, being the steepest street in Hobart, the little Errol was often falling over, his nose and knees being tended by my mother who seems to have regarded him as slightly neglected.'

Young blood

Kids dir. Larry Clark (Village cinemas) By the time *Eureka Street* readers receive this editon any controversy generated by first time director Larry Clark's confronting film about New York teenage culture will probably have subsided. Unfortunately, many of the issues it raises—teenage sexuality, HIV, drug-taking, the role of parenting in the 1990s and relations between young men and women—will also remain unattended.

The film, shot in docu-drama style, with lots of hand held camera work, is a gritty chronicle of 24 hours in the lives of a group of teenagers in New York. It captures the insecurity, the aggression, the anger, the bravado and the exploitation of young people exploring an increasingly harsh and unforgiving world.

Kids has hit Australia at a sensitive time. It comes hot on the heels of a number of well-publicized teenage deaths from drug overdoses and in the midst of the Victorian Kennett Government's war on drugs. The film has variously been accused of being child pornography, glorifying a whole range of vices and as potentially harmful to children—hence its R-rating.

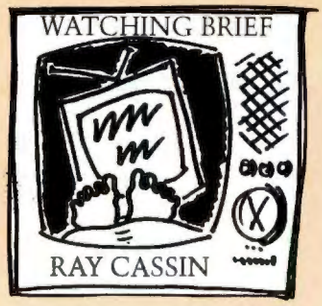
The R-rating is one of the main controversies about the film. Many of the actors, themselves teenagers, would be legally unable to view the film in Australia and the rating excludes many of the very people who could most benefit from seeing it.

The most dangerous thing for Australian viewers is to believe the culture depicted in *Kids* is exclusive to the United States. Unfortunately the problems of teenage drug and alcohol abuse, reckless exploration of sexuality and male/female relationships depicted in the film are all too real in Australia. More and more young people are experiementing with alcohol, sex and drugs, at younger and younger ages.

The main crime that *Kids* commits is to take the lives of young teenagers seriously. It is a frightful, shocking, disgusting and confronting film. But all the more imortant for these reasons.

Unlike many American films, *Kids* avoids allocating blame for the social problems it examines. The glaring absence in the film—and perhaps the finger is being pointed by exclusion—are the parents. Mothers and fathers are either not there or don't care what their children do. In defence of parents it is harder and harder to raise children who have had the mystic of adult experiences stripped away from them through TV, video, cinema and social problems such as marriage breakdown, unemployment, AIDS and poverty.

—Tim Stoney



Real life

SURVIVING STANDARDS OF TACT and good taste dictate that we cannot watch someone die on television. More specifically, television news reports do not broadcast scenes of real people being shot, stabbed, electrocuted, dismembered or flayed, or even dying peacefully in their beds. Different standards, of course, apply to the deaths of fictional characters in television drama, or in Transport Accident Commission ads. And the assassination or attempted assassination of a public figure is always a grey area. We are permitted to witness the man with the gun approach Yitzak Rabin or Bobby Kennedy or Indira Gandhi or the Pope, we hear shots, and we see the Great Man or the Great Woman crumple. But an arrow, a circle or some other computer graphic is usually needed to tell us which of the many individuals crowding round the fallen hero is the bad guy, and the gunshots we hear probably owe something to the work of a sound technician. And that's about as close as we get to the deaths of real people on television.

Well, not quite. True, we are never going to see too many of the grisly details. But in another sense, no death is more public than the death of someone we know from television—a personality, as they say. Consider, for example, the late Andrew Olle, whose death in December occasioned an outpouring of grief by the entire media, print and broadcast, that was chiefly remarkable for being so contrived.

Lest I be misunderstood, I hasten to add that I do not question Olle's achievements as a journalist, or the sincerity of the esteem that numerous colleagues professed to have for him. But let's be honest. Would the deaths of Michelle Grattan or Paul Kelly get quite the same kind of media attention? I don't think so. Their passing would not go unnoticed, for their contributions to journalism in this country have been at least as great as Olle's, and arguably greater. But neither of the print journalists would be mourned in the same way that Olle was. Their faces may be recognisable to readers who have followed the photo bylines over the years—or, more significantly, who remember their occasional appearances on television programs such as *Meet the Press*. But the fact that Grattan and Kelly work principally in another medium means they have not been beneficiaries, as Olle was, of television's great illusion: their readers could never feel that they know them.

The death of Andrew Olle became a big story *because* he was on television. He was a familiar, reassuring, talking head, even to people who scarcely ever watch ABC current affairs programs. The tabloid newspapers in Sydney and Melbourne, whose readership is more likely to overlap with the audience of *A Current Affair* than with that of *Four Corners* or the *7.30 Report*, were intensely interested in Olle's death and the events leading up to it. So were the commercial television networks, whose news bulletins managed to report the story with a degree of dignity and restraint not often accorded to other public figures. They even managed to restrain their glee when reporting how ABC radio had announced Olle's demise before the actual event. And, thoughout the entire saga, no one, in the broadcast or the print media, found any irony in the way in which the assembly of reporters assigned to Olle-watch meekly complied with requests, from other journalists like Mike Carlton and Peter Luck, to respect the privacy of Olle's family.

Perhaps the foregoing comments seem churlish, a print journalist's expression of resentment at the fact that respondents to opinion polls usually lump his end of the media in with used-car dealers, pimps and parking inspectors, while according television journalists something like the demigod status of the medical profession. Well, if the disavowals of someone who consorts with pimps and parking inspectors can be believed, let me say that I cannot begrudge Andrew Olle his fame, in life or death. After all, I get paid for writing about the great image machine.

WHAT IS MORE, I have to record the passing of Andrew Olle as the most significant television event of 1995. For in asking what will be different about television in 1996, one has to say that, apart from the absence of that reassuring talking head, the answer appears to be 'Not much'. We plebs watching free-to-air television are in for the same fare:

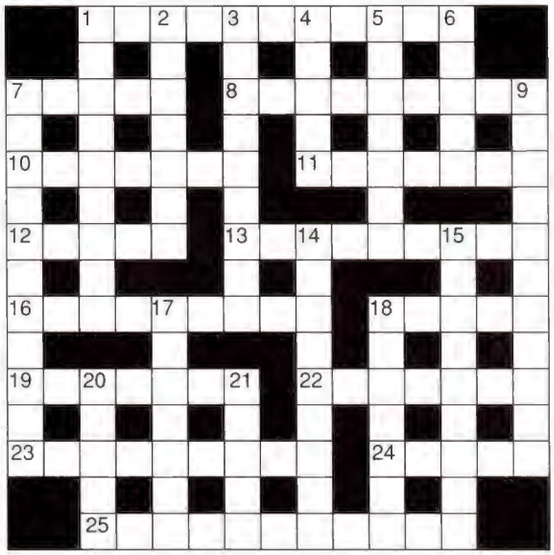
- More American soap operas in the *Melrose Place/Models Inc* vein. (The latest offering, *University Hospital*, doesn't even deserve a so-bad-it's-good epithet.)
- Australian soap operas will continue to rely on the same clutch of social issues that has served them for years.
- The sharpest show will be the next round of *The Simpsons*, followed distantly by *Roseanne*.
- The ABC, having reinvigorated the *7.30 Report* with Kerry O'Brien and Co., will provide occasional relief from the daily current affairs stodge offered elsewhere.
- Outside rating periods, the most watchable films will be screened after midnight. Unless, of course, some cable conglomerate has bought up the rights to them.

And that, minus Olle, is that. Sad, isn't it? ■

Ray Cassin is a freelance writer.

Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 40, January-February 1996

Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM



ACROSS

1 & 25 Statements of praise at this time of the year, such as 1-down, 8-across. (11, 2, 3, 6)
7 Game of wits? (5)
8 Lamentations or salutations? (9)
10 Being born not applicable to perfume. (7)
11 Stupid clot! Is a man able to endure so much? (7)
12 Computer memory with afterthought plays boisterously. (5)
13 What a commotion! Mischievous child on donkey as No. 1 returns...it will inflame! (9)
16 Made a distinction, omitting reference to imperfect dish; looks noble in the French manner. (9)
18 Board the train, for example, to succeed. (3,2)
19 Young scouts taking its unusual painters. (7)
22 After the club, have a gin cocktail. The need is pressing. (7)
23 Somehow sharing an American city can be paradise on earth! (7-2)
24 Different exits are created as needed. (5)
25 See 1-across.

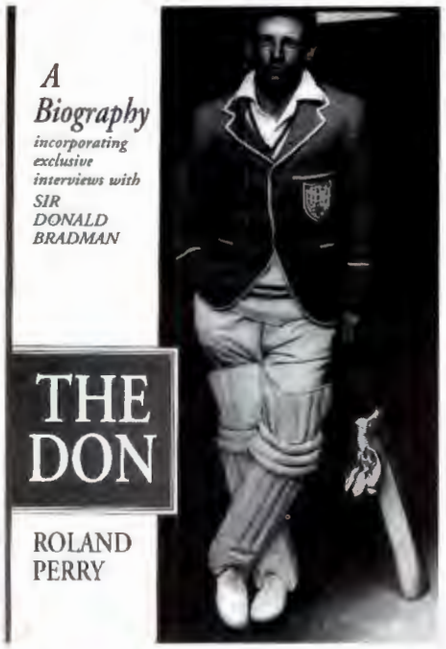
DOWN

1 & 7-across Noel's time to receive or send them? (9,5)
2 It seems to me, stars of golfing tournaments play this one. (7)
3 The illumination about north can be striking! (9)
4 Fitting encounters? (5)
5 Any ideas about ribbons—for decoration, perhaps? (7)
6 Sort of boom which, for some reason, I climb over. (5)
7 A tentatively argues: 'Perhaps a hundred—not drastic enough?' B replies: 'That's a lie!' (11)
9 Was 1-down originally dark and quiet, as described by Carol? (11)
14 What is said about the subject indicates his quality. (9)
15 Popular coaching for exams, perhaps, produces some apprehension. (9)
17 Sounds as if one could urge to an understanding similar to 15-down. (7)
18 Do they increase in height or are they cropped? (7)
20 Audio-visual held by Brother meets with shout of applause. (5)
21 What the stars do on a 9-down, especially at the first 1-down? (5)

Solution to Crossword no. 39, December 1995

D	E	P	U	T	Y	■	A	D	J	A	C	E	N	T
E	■	U	■	R	■	A	■	E	■	V	■	X	■	R
P	A	R	■	E	X	C	E	L	L	E	N	T	L	Y
O	■	C	■	M	■	I	■	I	■	R	■	R	■	S
S	T	E	R	O	I	D	■	V	I	A	D	U	C	T
I	■	L	■	L	■	■	■	E	■	G	■	D	■	■
T	A	L	L	O	R	D	E	R	■	E	V	E	N	T
O	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	■	■	■	■	E
R	O	P	E	S	■	M	A	D	H	A	T	T	E	R
■	■	R	■	E	■	O	■	■	■	M	■	R	■	M
P	R	O	S	A	I	C	■	T	Y	M	P	A	N	I
L	■	B	■	W	■	R	■	R	■	O	■	N	■	N
E	X	A	M	I	N	A	T	I	O	N	■	S	E	A
A	■	T	■	N	■	C	■	M	■	I	■	I	■	T
T	U	E	S	D	A	Y	S	■	W	A	T	T	L	E

EUREKA STREET & Pan MacMillan



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ISSN 1036-1758