

Voice

INNER SYDNEY

The Journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development



SPRING 2005
Issue 101

HOWARD'S ATTACK ON AWARDS

The Impact on the community sector
ACTU on how you could be sacked
Bob Gould – let's hope history repeats itself

BUILDING E-COMMUNITIES

Professor Andrew Jakubowicz on community development and the changing nature of neighbourhoods

NORTHCOTT

How a housing estate became a community

PUBLIC HOUSING

Is this the beginning of the end?

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Where the money is - and isn't

The Australian Taxation Office has released the figures for 2002/03 taxable incomes by postcodes. Across the municipalities of Sydney, Woollahra, Randwick, Waverley, Leichhardt and Botany there are extremes of wealth and poverty. Topping the list are Point Piper, Edgecliffe and Darling Point with a mean income of \$110,607. At the bottom are Eastlakes and Rosebery with a mean income of \$36,982.



Photo: Jack Carnegie

Alexandria	\$50,320	Leichhardt	\$51,260
Annandale	\$56,427	Lilyfield	\$51,260
Balmain	\$73,875	Little Bay	\$40,411
Beaconsfield	\$50,320	Malabar	\$40,411
Bellevue Hill	\$100,761	Maroubra	\$44,382
Bondi Junction	\$55,486	Mascot	\$37,644
Bondi	\$49,254	Newtown	\$45,545
Botany	\$42,011	Pagewood	\$44,382
Bronte	\$62,470	Point Piper	\$110,607
Camperdown	\$49,546	Potts Point	\$61,850
Chippendale	\$41,287	Pymont	\$50,426
Clovelly	\$53,217	Redfern	\$45,925
Coogee	\$52,803	Rose Bay	\$74,950
Darling Point	\$110,607	Rosebery	\$36,982
Double Bay	\$82,253	Rozelle	\$59,867
Dover Heights	\$98,003	Sydney	\$49,836
Eastlakes	\$36,982	Tamarama	\$49,254
Edgecliffe	\$110,607	Ultimo	\$41,172
Erskineville	\$48,978	Vaucluse	\$98,003
Forest Lodge	\$52,970	Waterloo	\$42,462
Hillsdale	\$40,411	Watsons Bay	\$98,003
Kensington	\$48,635	Waverley	\$64,470
Kings Cross	\$61,850	Woollahra	\$86,532
Kingsford	\$41,393	Woolloomooloo	\$61,850
La Perouse	\$40,411		

Taxation Statistics 2002/2003 – Australian Taxation Office



Photo: Jack Carnegie

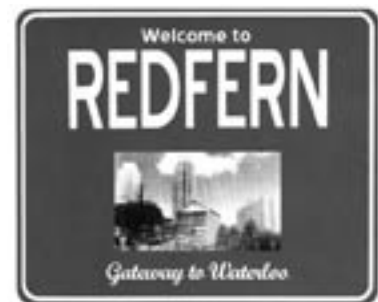
Not just another website - it's ours. Have a look, or you might miss something really important.



Photo: Jack Carnegie

Taking to the streets

The battle to protect workers pay and conditions is in full swing across Australia. From outback Western Australia to under the Harbour Bridge, workers and have rallied to voice their defiance to the Howard Government's attempt to wind back awards and the protection they provide.



Nick Bleasel

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Plus Regulars:
Material Needs,
Employment, Resources
and Organisations, Is It A Fact?
and more.

"Suburbs are rioting; the mad are sleeping in the streets; the jails are full; water levels are falling inexorably in the dams; hospital queues stretch around the block; commuters wait six deep for trains that never come....."
David Marr - SMH

Inside Northcott

In 2001/2002 we witnessed a number of critical incidents at the estate including multiple murders, suicides, assault and drug related crime. Our estate was named "suicide towers", "vertical slum" and "death estate". It was a very difficult time and the residents of Northcott estate were in shock, many too afraid to leave their homes.

inner voice



Photo: Keith Saunders

Inner Sydney Voice is the journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social



Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development (ISRCSD) is a non-profit organisation committed to the idea of information as a tool for community development. The organisation defines Inner Sydney as being the local government areas of Botany Bay, Leichhardt, Randwick, City of Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra.

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a word from the new executive officer

It's like coming home

This was my first impression when I started work at Inner Sydney Regional Council as the new Executive Officer on 3 July 2005. I had previously worked at 'Regional Council for eight years from 1990 to 1998 as the HACC Development Officer. I have also spent many years on the board as the Treasurer, so I knew the organisation well, including what all the money was being spent on and who was over budget! This knowledge allowed me to get to work right away, without the usual period of familiarisation necessary when one starts a new job.

The other very important aspect of familiarity was with the region and many of the people in the community services sector. It is a great privilege to have responsibility for community development by a community organisation covering what must be the most vibrant, complex and engaging region it is possible to get! We have it all – overdevelopment, transport chaos, great wealth and poverty, intense multicultural and indigenous populations, stunning physical beauty and urban decay. 'Regional Council's' new website has tried to capture this diversity pictorially and in the content. We are working to develop this website as an early point of reference for information about what is happening in the community sector across the region.

Having come from a State level organisation, I was immediately struck by the great benefit of being a regional organisation. As a regional worker, I can be in close contact with the local people, organisations and workers, but have the 'birds eye view' that allows me to identify issues and trends and take them up with the higher levels. Another way to describe it is to say that a regional organisation is at the intersection of the horizontal (the community) and

the vertical (government and peak organisations).

The Board and staff of 'Regional Council' have just had a planning session to set our priorities for the next year. One of our main directions is to operate more fully as a regional organisation. Over the many years we have been located in Waterloo, we have become increasingly more involved in local issues, especially through our Housing Communities Assistance Program (HCAP), which has the role of supporting local tenants in Redfern and Waterloo. We have not put in an Expression of Interest for the next stage of the HCAP Project, and hope that a local community organisation takes up the role, as it has better prospects of integrating Department of Housing Tenants into their local community. We have many plans to become more 'regional' and will be looking for opportunities to work with NGO's across the Local Government Areas of City of Sydney, Leichhardt, Botany, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra, especially in the areas of information, support and community development. So.....see you around the traps really soon.

Faye Williams



editorial

One of the great pleasures of this new job is to be editor of Inner Sydney Voice. It has to be recognised that a lot of the actual work is being done by Jack Carnegie, well known Inner Sydney activist and being responsible for what he does is another challenge in itself!

This new editorial team is not going to change anything greatly, but we will have more of a gradual refinement process. We are encouraged in this approach by the response to our recent Reader's Survey where you basically indicated you would like more of what we have been doing –with some useful suggestions for additional topics.

One change we do want to make will align Inner Sydney Voice more closely with our recent organisations plans. We want to operate more fully as a regional organisation and reflect issues and concerns across the whole of our region. While the social issues in places like Redfern and Waterloo are screaming for attention, we also need to talk about what is happening in Woollahra, Waverley, Leichhardt and Botany. Our next issue will look at the major environmental and social issues facing the residents and workers in all six municipalities across the region.

We also want to bring in some new features. The one in this edition is a little gem from our library, where we have just done a consolidation of original documents that capture the social history of the region over 30 years. Our first 'find' is an election pamphlet for Frank Sartor from 1987 when South Sydney Council was split off from the City. We love it and we hope Frank does too!



letters

I note in the last issue of your Magazine you included a NSW Ministry list. I thought in the interest of balance you might like to publish a list of the Shadow Ministers. Please find attached a Shadow Ministerial List.

Anytime I can be of assistance, feel free to be in touch.

Thanks,

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See the full list on page 27, along with the new Labor ministers. And we extend Brad's offer of assistance to all our readers.

Very sorry that I am unable to join you for the inaugural memorial lecture for Marg Barry. Hope it will become a yearly event and I might be able to join another time.

Best wishes to Inner Voice for attaining its first century – long may it continue its critical comments. Having just got the latest issue I wonder if anyone else noticed the generic resemblance between Redfern – Waterloo Authority and Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority. Maybe someone should remind Messrs Carr and Sartor that had SCRA been able to transform the Rocks into a high rise office zone (the highest and best land use in those times). Sydney would have lost not only much of its vibrant ambience but also much of its tourist revenue.

Best regards to Andrew Jakubowicz and wish him success in multiple realities. Above all "don't panic".

Zula Nittim

I enjoyed reading your article "Lost in Transmission" Inner Sydney Voice Autumn issue

100. I felt it summed up the dire situation for community television in Sydney. It is a pity that the mainstream media has chosen to ignore this scandalous situation.

Maybe TV Sydney would be better served to visit Inner Sydney Voice and learn how communities on very limited resources still manage to produce quality products. Unfortunately TVS is currently in hiding somewhere in the depths of the UWS Werrington campus.

Regards John Reynolds

Actively Radical TV

See John's update on TVS page 12.

This letter is to inform you of what, I believe, is the start of a plan to further reduce the status of Indigenous people in this country. Two current Bills before Parliament, the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2005 and the Skilling Australia's Workforce Bill 2005, will directly impact the education of Indigenous people with a reduction in the net spending on Indigenous education of \$3.7m.

These Bills are without doubt a direct attack on the independence of Indigenous education. They directly target: the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs, Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern, Tauondi in Adelaide as well as Tranby Aboriginal College. I would therefore seek the ongoing efforts of all Australians to lobby their Parliamentarians to reject these Bills.

Paul Knight

- Executive Director

Tranby Aboriginal College

event

Inaugural Margaret Barry Memorial Lecture

Andrew Jakubowicz - Professor of Sociology UTS

Building e-communities: community development and the changing nature of neighbourhoods

Redfern Town Hall 4th May 2005



This City Space

The land of what is now the City of Sydney has been contested space for over two hundred years. Here Pemelwuy led the Cadigal clan of the Eora people in resistance to the European invasion of their lands, until their defeat but not capitulation under the barrage of biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction deployed against them. As the British crown populated the land with a mixture of military guards and condemned criminals, a certain view began to establish itself among the settlers about the way land should be used. Over the following generations, Sydney, David Williamson's Emerald City, played out in physical space, the political struggles between classes, religions and ethnic groups that would define the city and its neighbourhoods.

When I first became aware of inner Sydney I was a youngster hanging around my father's dry cleaning business in Taylor Square. His plant was in a lane behind

Kinsela's funeral business, and I would watch the comings and goings of the hearses and the men who worked them lounging about, smoking and telling tales of the lives of those whose corpses they handled. The streets would be full of colourful characters, from every corner of the world, though the politics of the area were firmly in the control of the Irish Catholic community whose churches and pubs seemed to catch my eye wherever I turned. I guess I would have been about five then, a time that the Australian Census tells us most of the inner city was made up of tenants living in decaying terraces rotting in the lea of decades-old rent control. Less than a decade after the end of the War, my refugee parents had established themselves in the heartland of an old Australia, albeit one experiencing the first surges of both the non-Anglo European immigration, and the local baby boom.

Over the next decade or so, until he moved his business to Bondi, my father and I would share my Saturdays and holidays working in the shop, and watching the face of Australia change before our eyes. Across the road the barber was Greek – the café we ate at was Czech, while the fruiterer was of course Italian. The employees in the business were mainly itinerant east coast Aussie drifters, some Aboriginal, straight out of *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, salt of the earth blokes. Later one was revealed in dramatic circumstances as the self-proclaimed Fuhrer of the Australian Nazi Party. He had been holding branch meetings upstairs after work, behind the back of his own favourite Jew, my father, whose parents had been annihilated in the Lodz ghetto in 1942. Australia harboured its own contradictions.

Thirty years ago

I returned to the inner city in my university years, living in Balmain as it first tasted gentrification, then

in Redfern where Marie Bashir was the local community psychiatrist trying to manage the impact of urban poverty and dislocation on the now crowded tenements, with their sleeping shifts of immigrant factory workers and their shell-shocked young brides. It was during this period that I first met Marg Barry. I was working on a community development project exploring the use of the new medium of portable video, using South Sydney Community Aid as a base, and making local contacts through the Settlement. She was a homeowner in Waterloo who had just come face to face with the redevelopment zeal of the NSW Housing Commission under its crusading Chairman Jack Bourke, and its very efficiently bureaucratic secretary David Richmond (later a Health and then an Olympics bureaucrat).

The politics of the inner city were never simple – this was a period of Robin Askin as one of the more corrupt Premiers in Australian history, funding vast redevelopment plans in conjunction with many of the post-war immigrant entrepreneurs, drawing on funding from the Moscow Narodny bank, and being opposed by the unions led by new Communist leaders such as Jack Munday. The old Irish Catholic Labor branches still ran the City, until Askin replaced them with administrators and then re-gerrymandered the boundaries to produce a right-of-centre council, led in those days by the maverick Lord Mayor, Nick Shehadie (Marie Bashir's husband). Then, as now, the politics of the city were about power – of capital over labour, of the Whites over the Blacks, of the old Australia over the new Australia, of men over women. Marg emerged as a leader of a new type, one of a number of women who were blooded in the resident action movement (like Carol Baker in North Sydney and later Genni Macaffrey) and proved to be relentless foes of the developers and demolishers who were seeking to remake the city in their interests.

Clover Moore is the most recent and arguably the most sophisticated of these. They occupied a niche that had not existed prior to the mid 1960s – tertiary educated homeowners drawn to the inner city by its Victorian architecture, village topography, and appearance of communal solidarity. They were informed by a unique combination of feminism, popular mobilisation experiences, middle class expectations about quality of life and control of one's space, and a passion for their own home. They nudged their way between the old power players – Labor machines representing Anglo-Australian tenants, who had campaigned for public housing throughout the fifties and sixties; state bureaucracies mandated to push over the old urban form and replace it with acres of modernist high-rise into which the welfare state would shoe-horn its clients; and the developers freed to package the sky under the Strata Title Act, devised by one of them (Dusseldorf of Lend Lease) in order to produce profit, quite literally, out of thin air.

Urban struggles and social change

Through the 1970s, urban battles raged across Sydney – in the Rocks, in Woollomooloo, in Surry Hills, in Glebe, in Ultimo, and in South Sydney. In the midst of these struggles the Federal government changed – Whitlam with his Urban Affairs Minister Tom Uren, swept into office on the promise of a new deal for cities. At the time the language was all about participatory planning – even developers sought to co-opt resident groups to devise frameworks for development that would avoid the feared call for a Green Ban. Although the Builders' Labourers' Federation had been tamed by the late 1970s there

Then, as now, the politics of the city were about power – of capital over labour, of the Whites over the Blacks, of the old Australia over the new Australia, of men over women.

remained a widespread recognition of resident rights, and an emerging strategy for consultative local planning.

In the midst of the turmoil the Federal government created the Australian Assistance Plan, an attempt to develop a participatory social planning model that would bring together local people, communities, local government and regional planners to devise programs that would help alleviate poverty and disadvantage. Across the country some twenty-five or so regional councils for social development were instigated, funded by the Commonwealth and requiring collaboration between local

The politics of the inner city were never simple – this was a period of Robin Askin as one of the more corrupt Premiers in Australian history, funding vast redevelopment plans in conjunction with many of the post-war immigrant entrepreneurs,.....

government and local communities.

For many local Councils, these regional councils for social development (RCSOs) with their paid community development workers and organising resources, were anathemas. They destabilised local power by enabling voluntary action groups to participate more aggressively, and to undertake research into community issues that were not directly defined and controlled by the old regimes. They also fostered the leadership skills and aspirations of people who were not tied by loyalty or business to either Labor or commercial interests (such as real estate agents). Implicit muscle in the new equation came at least early on from the militant unions and their capacity



Nicholson of "The Australian" newspaper: www.nicholsoncartoons.com.au

to interfere with the development agendas of major bureaucracies or corporations.

It was in this environment that the Inner Sydney RCSD was established and Marg Barry, by then a well-blooded activist in Waterloo against the Housing Commission, became its executive officer. It is a strange irony that this talk is occurring in the week following the Housing Minister's announcement that the rules are changing, the old certainties of public housing tenancy have been terminated, and a new era of public housing as welfare housing (rather than working class community building) is firmly on the page, guaranteeing that the capacity for community leadership will be reduced.

Communities in the 21st Century

This historical context can only provide a very broad indication of the dynamics at work in 2005 – thirty years after those first meetings of the ISRCSD in the halls of Surry Hills, Leichhardt and Redfern. We are still facing the same broad issues in terms of urban power. While we now live in a period of neo-liberal free-market ideology (though my memory of the 1970s under Askin suggests it was hardly different then), the class politics has changed a great deal. Trade unions are not nearly as strong as they were, and a much greater part of the population has no organised representation of their interests. Fewer people

belong to political parties. Far more households have female heads, more children live in poverty, and there are many more single people, often with serious impairments trying to survive in an environment that intensifies their disabilities. Chronic illness is more widespread and a far greater part of the population depends on the disability support pension. Indigenous communities are more self-aware but still very marginalised. Drug abuse and alcoholism has intensified, and people feel far less safe in their neighbourhoods than they used to do. Many more people have been in gaol, or are under the surveillance of the criminal justice authorities.

Turnover of population is accelerating, and as new housing developments bring thousands of new residents into the inner city, few structures exist to build community networks and create what is today fashionably known as social capital. As Emile Durkheim the French sociologist recognised in a similar period in Europe over a century ago, these conditions are classically those associated with rising anomic alienation, a state of disengagement from society that can intensify psychological anguish and social breakdown.

We are seeing in the city new forms of social networks, often facilitated among the young or more affluent through use of new technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones (especially SMS). As the city is transformed we

find new commercially-provided communal centres, especially fitness clubs and coffee shops, where people with disposable incomes can link up with like-minds, or check their emails on wireless laptops or multifunction PDAs. Cities are becoming more expensive, less hospitable and more dangerous. Sydney is in the midst of a cataclysmic planning crisis, with social statistics from suicide to asthma out of control, and the sustained run-down of social infrastructure revealing a crumbling edifice beneath. There is not a single social service that can meet the demands of its clients, while an ageing population creates ever-greater pressures for support and quality of life improvement. After decades of tax cuts and privatisation, we have a social framework that leaves many of our most vulnerable citizens stranded, and powerful economic forces feeling quite capable and justified in running them over on their way to greater 'shareholder value'. On the way antiseptic housing estates pop up like instant stalagmites.

Digital city

It is worth turning our attention to the digital divide, that chasm between those who 'have' and those who do 'not have' access to the Internet and related technologies. For 'the haves' government is shifting its service delivery to cyberspace, and Bill Gates has sprinkled Microsoft Foundation dollars on the

Commonwealth's national IT policy. For the 'have nots', we should explore what digital resources the community has and what we might mobilise to balance the traditional inequalities of power.

Information technology theorists talk about two sorts of IT community. One is the 'community of interest', where people build their own relationships, exchange information and strengthen their capacity to operate. Community is then about self-awareness and active engagement where we find everything from yahoo groups to closed societies organised around hobbies, or political interests or philosophical discussions.

On the other side is the commercialisation of community, the creating of groups that are not self-aware but are nevertheless linked because some government or corporate body wishes to see them as a group with common characteristics – as clients, customers or consumers. Here we find the increasingly omni-present Alpha practices of companies such as Amazon, that track individual Internet search patterns and feed back to them appropriate behaviours for people like them – usually purchase behaviours.

Back in 1997 the NSW government created *connect.nsw*, a plan to make the state a leader in the use of electronic networks. The goals were to incorporate community needs, improve regional and remote access and establish regional electronic communities. One of the outcomes has been the creation of Community Technology Centres (CTCs), but only some rural communities are actually connected in this strategy. The potential for the establishment of sites in urban suburbs, regions or neighbourhoods has not been activated. On a local government level, NSW councils have an IT project to build similar, though less sophisticated websites. *Local-e-Online action for NSW*, funded by the Commonwealth's *Networking the Nation* program, says it wants community participation and

enhanced democracy, but succeeds in delivering council information. Only in CTC's do we find some idea of access to technology as a strategy for facilitating social participation, and yet increasingly these CTCs are being driven to cover their bottom line through small business activities. In addition, the NSW Government's *Community Builders Website* facilitates communication about 'how to do' community development, but it has no sense of activism nor does it exude a philosophy of participatory democracy.

There are apparently no government initiatives in the inner city; no need or desire to enhance democracy or encourage community participation as government priorities. A systematic exploration of the website of the City of Sydney council reveals no such public commitment, nor any framework for activism, other than a listing of neighbourhood groups and contact phone numbers. Among the groups Ultimo and Darlinghurst have active local networks, with functioning websites. So as with most things in the inner city, it has been left to community activists to try to develop ways of resisting the marginalisation of local people. The only community building websites in South Sydney are being developed by local communities – not by government as elsewhere. Newtown Neighbourhood Centre offers a local information service, though not a community network, while REDWatch offers a running commentary on the State government's activities in the Redfern area. As many critiques of e-democracy have noted, most governmental activity has focussed on telling people what government wishes them to hear/read/see.

The Victorian government has taken a rather different direction – establishing VicNet as a free environment for the building of communities of interest. As VicNet has grown it has enabled hundreds of social groups, to set up networks that allow information exchange and mobilisation.

Building digital neighbourhoods

Studies of digitally interlinked communities in North America reveal some interesting trends – showing quite striking social benefit from wiring living environments (or these days wirelessly them). In a study of a new Toronto community in the late 1990s, where some homes were electronically linked by high speed broadband and others were not, researchers found that wired households were more likely to know their neighbours, and more of them, more likely to interact with them socially and visit them, and more likely to share social tasks, thereby building social capital. Wired communities were felt to be safer, and more supportive.

In reflecting on the Toronto research in 2003, the researcher, Keith Hampton argued that collective action depends on a dense network of weaker ties – in fact very strong emotional ties may limit collective action. Wired residents, connected to a local neighbourhood email list (about 50-60 families) are part of a dense but weak network – exactly the conditions necessary for collective action to be facilitated. Hampton found that the capacity for collective action was dramatically enhanced through the sharing of information – in his case by frustrated homeowners of *Netville*, whose early experience of the estate on which they lived was not up to expectations.

I-Neighbors

When Keith Hampton moved to MIT in Cambridge, Mass. in the USA (where I interviewed him), he created "*I-neighbors*", a huge project that enables anyone in the USA or Canada to join a local virtual neighbourhood. Built around postcodes, Hampton and his students have created circumscribed electronic communities that are open to anyone living within the local area. Resources of the I-neighbourhood, including the "matches" function, which identifies people who are similar to you in the neighbourhood

continued next page

Building e communities

– potentially available to share in like-minded activities. Neighbourhoods can create polls to test local reaction to issues. You can decide to join (and leave) the local email list, and use the GovLink function – to send faxes (better than emails) to government officials and politicians, including those identified by local residents as important.

Conclusion

While governments have identified ICTs as being critical to efficient governance, pathways to increase participation and democracy are less apparent on their agendas. Activist networks and websites now abound, though they tend to attract the already committed individual. Community development requires us to move beyond that notion – and recognise that advocates can too easily lose their legitimacy if they are not closely connected to their constituencies. It is hardly in the interest of those with power in this city to empower those whom they wish to roll over; or to put it more crudely, it is unlikely they will go out for their way to help trouble makers make trouble. The challenge for community development remains as always, how to empower those without voices, enable those marginalised by social change, and encourage those devalued by the wider society. The digital world remarkably can help to do these things, and build on the struggles of the past in the process. Over the next few years, community organisations will have to take on these challenges, or find themselves digging weeds from the verges of the information superhighway. ICT is only a means to the goal of social justice, but increasingly it is a necessary means. ●

This is an edited version of the lecture

campaign



Photo: Jane Rogers

Still Not Happy, John!

The battle to protect workers pay and conditions is in full swing across Australia. From outback Western Australia to under the Harbour Bridge workers have rallied to voice their defiance to the Howard Government's attempt to wind back awards and the protection they provide. The first round has gone to us, with Howard's approval rating plummeting as Australians are informed of how their hard-won pay and conditions will be up for grabs if he has his way. And there's growing opposition in his own ranks, with some National Party senators and Family First's Steve Fielding expressing disquiet with the proposed changes.

The Australian Services Union represents some of the lowest paid workers in NSW and is determined not to let their members lose the modest increases they gained with new SACS award, in November 2001. Reducing the pay and conditions of those who care for the elderly, people with disabilities, occupants of refuges and others who are disadvantaged or marginalised could see good workers leave the sector and the standards of service drop. Apart from being unfair to workers, the proposed changes could affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of community service recipients in NSW.

Howard's proposed changes would abolish the SACS Award and reduce the sixty rights workers now have down to sixteen. The Industrial Relations Commission would no longer set the minimum wage; instead a body appointed by the government would set the minimum hourly rate. As Howard has opposed every increase granted by the commission, his appointees are sure to reflect his hostility to workers getting a fair wage.

The abolition of unfair dismissal laws would for workplaces under 100 would place the vast majority of community workers in workplaces where you could be unfairly dismissed and receive no compensation. Peter Costello has suggested, that ultimately, the laws will be scrapped altogether. The new head of the Anglican Church, Dr Phillip Aspinall has attacked Howard's proposed changes asking is it moral to allow workers to be unfairly dismissed? Workers in the community sector will be very vulnerable to arbitrary dismissal by employers who often put their workers rights and conditions last.

These attacks on organised labour is the most ferocious of any government in nearly a hundred years, and as Bob Gould points out in the following article, the last time a conservative government launched such an attack on workers rights it cost them dearly.

See ACTU facts on dismissal - page sixteen

The last prime minister who tried to abolish awards lost a referendum, government and his seat in parliament



There are striking parallels between Prime Minister John Howard's current attempt to transfer industrial relations powers from state to federal jurisdictions, and to destroy the federal arbitration system, and the efforts of conservative Prime Minister Stanley Bruce to do the same thing in 1926-29.

Bruce's proposal in 1926 was surrounded by the same kind of rhetoric as Howard's is today about getting rid of the anarchy of divided systems, and the virtues of freedom of contract.

Initially the federal opposition leader, Matt Charlton, supported the changes on vaguely Labor centralist grounds, as did a number of federal union officials who were located in Melbourne.

Immediately, however, militant figures such as Albert Willis in the Miners' Federation, and Arthur Rae, a Labor senator who was one of the founders of the AWU, started vigorous agitation against the transfer, which was rapidly backed up by the then emerging Lang machine in the NSW Labor Party.

The period around 1926 happened to be when the Lang machine was becoming a coherent force in the NSW Labor Party, and an important part of that machine was a group of union officials loosely described as the Trades Hall Reds, led by Jock Garden. These officials had a certain bureaucratic militancy in their industrial approach.

The NSW Labor Party prosecuted a potent mix of traditional states rights sentiment, expressed by Lang himself, and vigorous defence of the trade union advantages of preserving the state system, expressed by the Trades Hall Reds and Garden, and most articulately by Arthur Rae.

The NSW opposition to the transfer rapidly won trade union support in other states, and this opposition meshed with traditional states' rights sentiment in the smaller states..

In the event, the referendum was defeated, with narrow majorities in favour in NSW and Queensland and substantial majorities against in SA, WA, Tasmania and Victoria, to give an overall majority against.

In the run-up to the referendum, Matt Charlton and the Victorian federal officials were totally isolated and only got a few votes for the federal centralist position at a national unions conference (the form of national union collaboration before the formation of the ACTU) called to discuss the crisis.

Two years later, in 1928-29, Bruce tried again, in a slightly different way. He issued a kind of ultimatum to the states that unless they transferred industrial powers to the federal government he would effectively abolish the federal arbitration commission by an act of the federal parliament.

Billy Hughes, who hated Bruce and was still smarting over his removal from the Tory leadership, had a certain nostalgic interest in preserving the arbitration system, which had been one of the achievements, from his point of view, of the period when he was a Labor leader before the conscription split of 1916.

Bruce's legislation was eventually defeated in the Commonwealth parliament. He called an election, and the Tories were slaughtered. The Scullin Labor Government was elected and Bruce lost his own seat to E.J. Holloway of the Melbourne Trades Hall Council.

In 1944 the Curtin Labor Government went to the people with a powers referendum that would have transferred industrial relations to the federal sphere, and that referendum was also defeated.

After World War II, even up to the present, the division between the federal and state systems held certain advantages for most trade unions.

In NSW, the Industrial Commission has been the arena where a certain amount of industrial militancy, supplemented by energetic advocacy in the commission, has often led to wages and conditions outcomes for various groups of workers better than in most other states and the federal arena, and these breakthroughs have eventually flowed to other jurisdictions.

Howard's proposals to weight the whole system as it is weighted in the US, against unions and workers, is the greatest crisis that the working class has faced in Australia for many years.

Howard is moving ahead with his "reforms" in a period not unlike the late 1920s, when trade union organisation and density has receded somewhat, partly because of very mistaken policies by union leaders, such as the Accord and bureaucratically imposed union amalgamations, frequently not on rational industrial lines.

The working class is entering this struggle, as it often does, rather defensively. It's necessary in this situation for the labour movement and its assorted leaderships to do several things, informed by history and by examination of current circumstances.

It is indispensable that the unions mobilise the maximum possible industrial militancy in this struggle.

This particular socialist and left-winger has become a ferocious states-righter for the time being. Like Arthur Rae I think it's entirely reasonable to mobilise the states rights sentiments that always exist in Australian politics to defeat the Tory onslaught.

Bob Gould

This is an edited version of Bob's article. The full version can be seen at: <http://members.optushome.com.au/spainter/Bobgould.html>



Will Sydney ever see community television again?

The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) recently gave community television producer, TV Sydney (TVS), a 6-month extension to start broadcasting. Their new deadline to start transmission is now October 23rd 2005.

Unfortunately the experience of 10 years of community TV development has now all but disappeared, as most of the previous TV groups have either ceased operation or been severely weakened by a 18 month absence of a station. The knowledge of operating a Community TV service has also disappeared, as TVS has chosen to avoid any connection with the previous licensee. In reality the only model they have for developing a non-government funded TV station is the commercial television model of big buck capitalization, with the advertiser's and sponsor's dollars financing the entire operation.

If TVS don't manage to get their act together by October 23rd they have two options. One is to give the license back, an option they considered late last year at the time of David Hills failed time at the helm. The other option is to apply for a further extension meaning no Community Television for at least 2 years.

TVS has been an abject lesson in how not to go about developing a Community TV service. It was a vision by people completely disconnected from the community, with only mainstream (ABC) and corporate experience and theory behind them. It was a vision to be imposed from above on the community.

It was a wild dream of education, community, local government and state government all happily coming together to give Sydney a dream community TV station. From day one it proved a failure. From the first TVS board meeting it was clear that a power struggle would ensue. And it did, with UWS and Metroscreen (their junior partner)

basically taking over the major decision making relegating the community arm of the consortium (SLICE TV) to playing a bit part in the development of the station.

To better understand what is going on, one also needs to look at the bigger picture of media activity in Australia.

The Channel 31 spectrum was the last available spectrum for use as a free to air television service. Community TV gained the license back in 1993 not because of the Keating governments strong commitment to developing community media but because the commercial TV operators, particularly Kerry Packer, fought hard to not allow a fourth commercial operator to gain that spectrum. Commercial TV stations actually lobbied to give the license

TVS has been an abject lesson in how not to go about developing a Community TV service.



to the community. Which is what happened, with the proviso that government at any level not provide one cent of public money to help establish a Community TV Service.

So Community TV floundered for years due to lack of finance until about 4 years ago when it did a deal with a private organization Prime Life Media (Renaissance TV) which then financed Community TV nationally. Sydney received around \$450,000 per year from Renaissance TV. It received another \$300,000 per year from program providers paying to have their programs aired. Renaissance in turn took 8 hours of daytime television, beaming old sitcom shows.

However, once finance became secure for Community TV the Commercial operators

tiny little community television, which has been sitting on a commercial goldmine, will potentially be shafted.

community media

went on the attack, particularly after they noted that their daytime TV ratings were on the decline. They deliberately set about destroying the financial base of Community TV nationally. Renaissance TV eventually went to the wall. And Community TV around Australia contracted markedly and ceased operation totally in Sydney -because the ABA had the opportunity to give the license to a rival bid.

What the government and the commercial TV operators want is a weak Community TV sector. The commercial operators because they do not want any competition for the advertisers dollar and the government because it is doing a review of media in Australia with a mind to restructuring the Australian media and it wants to keep the Channel 31 spectrum vulnerable and potentially available prior to this restructure.

The review by the Department of Communications into the possibility of a fourth commercial TV station and into cross media diversity (two "separate" reviews) was due to be completed around December 2006. However with the conservatives now controlling both houses of parliament it appears that this review process will be bought forward. Their is speculation that as early as October a decision may be announced with regard to a fourth commercial TV operator as well as cross media diversity.

With this in mind the ABA has been happy for Community TV in Sydney to lurch from crisis to crisis as it prepares for major changes in the mainstream commercial media and the possible re acquisition of the Channel 31 spectrum for commercial use. Giles Tanner General Manager of the ABA alluded to such a possibility in a speech of his lodged on the ABA website.

It appears that Rupert Murdoch's Fox Network is the frontrunner to become the fourth commercial operator. If Labor had won the election a consortium around John Singleton appeared to be the frontrunner. The only other possibilities are privatizing SBS or the ABC (which would probably currently prove too difficult to achieve and Telstra is to be the first cab off the rank anyway). Or as rumours are circulating Kerry Packer selling Channel 9 and Rupert taking over that TV station, thus maintaining

a three way split - the best outcome for Community TV.

Obviously the three commercial license holders aren't thrilled at having to divide their booty into four. This is where cross media "diversity" comes into play. Kerry Packer will almost certainly be allowed to purchase a controlling interest in the Fairfax press or some similar capital city newspaper. And undoubtedly Kerry Stokes and Frank Lowry will also be equally compensated.

And so tiny little community television, which has been sitting on a commercial goldmine, will potentially be shafted. And being seen to be a failure anyway, the government will be able to better justify stealing the channel back from the community. With a bit of luck they may be offered a digital channel as compensation. Digital TV at this stage is somewhat akin to operating a Satellite TV service. It is not very well dispersed, with completion of the digital conversion now much more likely to happen sometime after 2010.

Community TV has certainly not helped its cause in Sydney by remaining bitterly divided for over 10 years now. If Community TV is to succeed these divisions need to be resolved quickly, otherwise it will be a beautiful idea lost forever. The broader non-media community sector also needs to see value in a television service and develop a stronger interest and advocacy in supporting Community TV.

The community needs to regain control of the TV license from UWS who have no real community interest in running a TV station. Their main interest being to diversify their revenue stream, as well as further develop their media/communication student courses. And their junior partner, MetroScreen, have, over the past 10 years, maintained only a token commitment to community media development.

The Slice TV AGM is fast approaching, it does provide an opportunity where the previous hostile parties could through some reconciliation and attempt to get Community TV back on track. If this doesn't happen, then I do not hold out much hope for Community TV in the foreseeable future.

John Reynolds



Northcott

how an estate became a community

Our estate was named "suicide towers", "vertical slum" and "death estate".

The Northcott Housing estate, my home, has a sordid history. Years of inappropriate housing allocations saw our estate house the most vulnerable and disenfranchised including those who have lived for many years on the streets, those who have spent time in prison, those with drug and alcohol problems, those with serious mental health issues and elderly single people. In 2001/2002 we witnessed a number of critical incidents at the estate including multiple murders, suicides, assault and drug related crime. Our estate was named "suicide towers", "vertical slum" and "death estate". It was a very difficult time and the residents of Northcott estate were in shock, many too afraid to leave their homes. Northcott was a talking point, however no one was really listening and we the tenants had no voice. There were calls from government, the media, tenants and the wider community for something to be done. But do what?

For more than two years we, the tenants, have worked from ground up in partnership with national arts organisation Big hART, staff of the Department of Housing, the Police, Clover Moore and others, using arts and community and cultural development interventions. We are moving Northcott Housing Estate from a traumatised and dysfunctional place to a multi-functioning and developing community.

Big hART, who have worked extensively with us, works on the philosophy that "if you know someone's story it is much harder to hurt them" and story making has been at the core of much of the work that we have done. Tenants are sharing their experiences of living at Northcott through theatre, music, photography and film. The photography elements of the interventions – named tenant by tenant – recently

won the art critics award at annual Walking the Street exhibition in Newtown. A selection of the portraits are currently on exhibition at the SLOT Gallery in Redfern. Tenant photographers and subjects, under the mentorship of a professional photographer, are sharing their experiences of being involved in the project with each other, at forums and in mainstream galleries. One of the tenant photographers shares that in the past she would walk around the estate and see nothing but ugly concrete and sad people but she now sees potential photographs, amazing faces and incredible stories as she walks and plans her next shoot.

Those that share their stories express that they feel that their experiences are validated and they share that feeling with others. Opportunities for story making are limitless and collective stories are beginning to emerge. More and more people are coming out of their units and getting to know each other, getting involved and helping each other out.

Our Community Centre, celebrating twenty-one years of service, has a mixed

Photo this page: Mel and Tamara by Char-maine from Tenant by Tenant - an exhibition by tenants.

Facing page: by Keith Saunders, mentor photographer BIFhART



history. The construction of the small centre on Department of Housing land was funded by Sydney City Council and opened in 1984. The establishment of the Centre was due very much to the efforts of a small group of tenants who saw the need for a space outside of the hundreds of units for people to meet, socialise and participate. Over the years, the Centre has been managed by tenant groups, a local Neighbourhood Centre and at times not managed at all. It has gone through times of closure and restructure. There have been times of conflict and different agendas.

The Centre now has a new committee, a new constitution and a new lease of life. Ninety tenants attended a meeting to approve the new constitution, all of them interested, passionate

and concerned about the future of the centre of their community. The committee is in the process of registering as an incorporated association. The officer bearers are keen and learning fast. We are applying for funding to help us to provide more and more activities and are developing partnerships with others to help us to meet the needs of our neighbours. The Centre is available six days a week, has an open door policy, encourages people to drop-in and runs groups and activities every day. The Centre is about inclusion – and the weekly darts games, with modified rules, handicaps and help for each participant – serves as demonstration of that philosophy.

I am very proud of the Centre and the tenants involved in its operation. In the past the doors of the Centre were always closed, the blinds shut



and the drab brown paint peeling from the exterior all sent a clear message to me – “You are not welcome here. This is not your place.” In 2005, the place is wide open. It has had a colourful lick of paint. Inside, the walls are lined with well-thumbed but ordered books, and each and every window displays posters advertising weekly activities. People come and go and new people continue to come inside each day. The message that the Centre gives out is clear now. So clear, it is written on the white board that sits outside for all to see... “Have you any suggestions about your community centre? Come inside and have a chat and a cuppa, this is YOUR place tenants.”

We have worked very hard to get to where we are today. We still have problems, but with the skills to help ourselves and each other we are getting there. People are beginning to care about themselves, their neighbours, their community and their future. We have a voice now – and while every situation is different, we have skills and experiences that can be shared in other communities and at other “problematic estates”. We are excited about the future of both our community and the opportunities emerging for us to share our experiences with others.

Sandy Henderson

Sandy Henderson is a resident of Northcott Public Housing Estate in Surry Hills. She is also the Chairperson of the newly invigorated Tenant Association.

Sandy told Emily Mayo of her experiences living at Northcott.



Boss Power

workers face the sack for just about anything

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Federal Government's plan to abolish unfair dismissal protections for employees in businesses with up to 100 staff would leave more than 3.761 million Australian employees without any protection from unfair dismissal.

Employees in more than 575,800 private sector businesses would be have no unfair dismissal rights under the Federal Government's plan to exclude businesses with up to 100 staff from unfair dismissal laws.

ABS data suggests only 1.1% of private sector employers have more than 100 staff. Under the Government's workplace changes employees in 98.9% of private sector firms would have no protection from unfair dismissal.

Unlawful termination laws are very narrow and apply in far fewer circumstances than unfair dismissal. This means the Government's proposed unlawful termination laws will not cover most circumstances in which employees are unfairly dismissed. According to official figures only 147 unlawful termination claims have been referred to the Federal Court since 1996, this is less than 25 cases a year. Over the same period the AIRC has processed more than 50,000 unfair dismissal applications. (AIRC Annual Report 2003/4)

As well as failing to cover the most common reasons workers are unfairly sacked, unlawful termination laws do not apply if an employer is able to cite another 'lawful' reason for the termination even if that reason is unfair.

For example, an employer could successfully defend an unlawful termination claim regarding family responsibilities by arguing that it is the employee's inability to work

when required that is the reason for their dismissal – not their family responsibilities.

Unlike unlawful termination laws, unfair dismissals apply to any circumstance in which the dismissal of an employee is harsh, unjust or unreasonable. It covers a wide range of unjustified sackings.

If the Government abolishes unfair dismissal laws it will be legal for an employer of less than 100 employees to dismiss someone because the employer wants to give the job to a friend or relative. An employee could be sacked for being a few minutes late on one day. The employer may not have to give any reason at all for dismissing an employee.

Unlawful termination cases are far more costly, complex, time consuming and difficult for employees and employers than unfair dismissal claims.

Unlawful termination actions are heard in the formal and legalistic Federal Court, rather than the informal Industrial Relations Commission.

The cost and time of running an unlawful termination case are extremely high for both employees and employers.

A typical unlawful termination case would involve: the engagement of a solicitor and barrister, an application to the Federal Court, 4 – 5 days of hearings in the Federal Court, legal fees for employees of \$30,000 or more.

ACTU - Facts on Unfair Dismissal



Is it a fact?

The Howard Government is to make it harder for the unemployed to receive assistance from the Job Network by raising the level of disadvantage a person needs to be at to receive help?

Workers could lose their lunch break as well as their holidays under the new industrial relations regime?

The Howard Government plans to abolish all unfair dismissal laws, not just for enterprises employing less than 100 workers.

Michael Chaney, Business Council of Australia, said *"A fundamental flaw is that people tried to use industrial relations policy as a tool to achieve not only productivity and growth in the economy, but fairness."* ?

In the USA minimum wages are just US\$5.15 an hour and haven't increased for 8 years, leaving many working families living below the poverty line?

John Howard said recently "We're not governing for the unions, we're governing for the employers." ?

A member of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union, who was found drowned at Bondi beach, had been suspended earlier in the day for stealing a bread role from the restaurant where he worked?

The hourly rate for personal carers working in nursing homes is less than that of checkout operators in supermarkets, but requires TAFE certificate qualifications in aged care.

A rural postal employee with 31 years service, was sacked as a result of making an honest mistake that resulted in postage not paid on a transaction?

employment

The new Redfern Waterloo Authority

More is not being said than is being said

The huge changes to the suburbs of Redfern and Waterloo as proposed by the NSW government, are about to undergo a fundamental change. From the 1st July the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA) took control of all human services in the area.

These changes commenced in the Premiers Department as a 'place management' type project, called The RED Scheme, which was later upgraded in intensity and dubbed The Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project. All the work of these two initiatives are now subsumed by the new Authority. (You might be entitled to be confused at this point!) In the last edition of Inner Sydney Voice, we wrote up a summary of what the RWA is all about.

This 'changing of the guard' period seems like a good time to look at what has happened so far and see what changes the new Authority is intending to implement. While there has been quite a bit of consultation with the community, there is surprisingly little clarity about the intentions of the new Authority. For a government instrumentality, it has quite exceptional powers – a combination of planning, development approvals, sale of public land and property, raising funds and approving community projects. Yet if you listen to the responsible Minister Frank Sartor (as a lot of Public Housing tenants did on Saturday 8 July) there is really not much going and even less intended. Similarly at a meeting on Red Watch (a group of vitally interested residents, business and community people) Robert Dom explained that there is no detailed strategic plan, but some broadly defined 'Stages'.

It is hard to avoid the question, "Why is this splendid opportunity

presented by the NSW government not being taken up in the fullest sense? The community activists, who are keeping a very anxious and close eye on any changes, are then only left with previous experience over the last four years to surmise. Is there a plan, but it is so unpalatable, that it has to be kept quiet until the last moment?

Have parts of the plan been tried out and are not working?

Is there, as Robert Dom insists, no grand plan at all, but a group of broad ideas that will be tried out and see what develops?

A lot of the messages coming out of the RWA are what it is NOT about.

We are told:

- There is no grand plan
- It is not about large scale development
- Not about removing Kooris from the Block and Redfern Station Precinct
- It is not about reducing the amount of public housing
- It is not about forcing community organisations to amalgamate
- And it is certainly not about spending any state government money

So how do people in the Redfern/Waterloo community know what to think and how to respond?

While the RWA may just be starting its operations, a lot has already happened. Local residents and services have already had four years of supposed changes, consultation on Human Services and worry about the State government's intention re the huge amount of Public Housing



and the machinations around Koori housing and services on The Block and around The Settlement.

We are not clear what elements of the Partnership Project will continue and which will not. Again we cannot avoid asking, Are there clear intentions? Are they so unpalatable we cannot be told until the last minute or is the RWA just seeing what develops?

Human Services Review

One of the 'clients' for intervention by the state government in Redfern Waterloo are the local community organisations. The decision to target non-government organisations first, raises the question of Why start there? The government's own direct services – health, housing, police, transport make a far greater impact on people living in the area. Is it just that they are easier to push around and achieve some early 'outcomes'?

We understand that the findings of the Human Services Review run by the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project will be adopted by RWA and the work of restructuring Human Services will continue. The Human Services Review will be completed in August. Throughout the consultation process about human services restructure, there have been deep concerns in the community. Many people in the

cluster groups being consulted had problems with the process and did not feel that what they said was fully reflected in the cluster reports. 'Regional Council' became aware of this during meetings it ran to support small community organisations in their interaction with the Human Services Review Process. Despite the problems with the process and outcomes, we were hoping that when the cluster group reports were presented to the Human Services Advisory Committee, the communities voice and ideas would flow through to be an important part of the eventual Redfern Waterloo Human Services Plan. (Surely this is the intention of a consultative process!) The cluster reports at least provide an overview of what has been agreed from the cluster group process and have been feed into the formulation of the draft Human Services Plan. There is concern that the final priorities are being assembled internally within the RWA and that they may not properly reflect the views of the members of the Human Services Advisory Committee. Another question – Why have an Advisory Committee if you do not take their advice UNLESS YOU ALREADY HAVE A PLAN?. There is also concern that the performance indicators for the plan have become 'challenges' and that an important mechanism for assessing the success or otherwise of THE PLAN has been potentially weakened.

Unfortunately, as an underbelly to the supposed open planning process, the Human Services Review has demonstrated a fundamental attitude of criticism of small community services. This was demonstrated in a series of visits from employees of the Premiers Department (now working for the RWA) who visited certain 'identified' community organisations to tell us the details of our shortcomings that emerged during work done for the Morgan Disney Report. The visits also let us know that if we do not 'co-operate' with the changes, such as

the amalgamation of services, our funding will be put out to Expression of Interest.

This attitude is further promoted by the actions of Minister Sartor, who is waving a list of community organisation that provide services into Redfern and Waterloo and saying the list has to be cut from over 130, down to 20. When this list is examined, many holes appear in that argument. Every NGO in NSW would have more that 20 community services 'covering their area'. There are at least 10 government departments providing services into the area. Many of the services have only a small proportion of their funding covering Redfern Waterloo. Are these services to be split into Redfern Waterloo and non Redfern Waterloo services, providing two non-viable services, or will the Redfern Waterloo funding go to the more biddable and supportive large charities? Conversely, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development is located in Waterloo but covers the whole of eastern Sydney - six council areas and dozens of suburbs. The amount of funding to cover Redfern and Waterloo is small. Regional Council has done some hard thinking and come up with some observations:

What do we think it is about?
'Regional Council' has done some hard thinking and come up with some observations:

It's a long term piece of work

The only way to improve life for Redfern Waterloo residents is for consistent, long term, well-funded and positive support. It took a long time for such services to develop and it will take a long time for them to improve – if we start now. We were pleased to hear Robert Dom report at the Red Watch meeting that the RWA is in for the long haul – 10 years. Public Housing in the area is vital. The answer to improvement in Redfern Waterloo is not to move out people with 'problems'. The government has created the current mix of residents by its policy of restricting access to public housing

to people with high dependency needs and it has to act to change the situation.

All forms of development are important.

While community organisations are into development of the community, a large part of the Redfern Waterloo Authority is into development of development ie. making this area attractive to developers; encouraging an upgrade of private housing; employment and urban renewal driven by developers investing in the area. While this is one strategy, community development is also vital. Attacking small community organisations, which are proven to provide social capital, will not invigorate the area. They also need to be nurtured and developed, not undermined and restructured. An underpinning of social justice and equal rights

Any action undertaken by the Redfern Waterloo Authority should be as a bottom line, in keeping with the standards of social justice and equal rights enjoyed by the wider NSW and Australian community. And given the history of the place, additional helping of both those value are needed●

Note: We have not commented on the issues around The Block and The Settlement – that is a whole article in itself.



Photo: Jack Carnegie



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Please pay the FULL ACCOUNT AMOUNT of \$67.94 by 4.00pm on 11/07/2005.

PIAC looks at who gets disconnected and why

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) has called on the NSW Government to introduce measures that would lead to less people being cut off from essential services. This follows the release of their report *Cut Off: the impact of utility disconnections*. They have written to Utilities Minister, Frank Sartor asking him to:

- Review hardship programs and payment plans to determine their effectiveness in reducing the rate of disconnection of customers in hardship;
- Require that no residential customer face disconnection or restriction unless they have failed to accept an offer to enter a hardship program or failed to stick to the terms of that plan; and ensure that, notwithstanding compliance with a hardship program no residential customer experiences repeat disconnections by the same retailer in any twelve-month period.

Cut Off found that the most common disconnection was from electricity. Gas disconnections were less frequent than those from electricity, and water restrictions made up a small proportion.

The great majority of disconnections were to family households rather than single person or group households and a relatively high percentage were from larger households. The 'working poor' and 'welfare dependent' are the most vulnerable to disconnection. The main source of income for just over half of those disconnected was a Centrelink payment. People disconnected were largely in the private rental market, although public housing tenants were over-represented. A disproportionate percentage of those disconnected were unemployed and/or sole parents and Indigenous people were greatly over-represented.

The most frequently reported reason for people not having enough money to pay their bill was related to difficulty financing ongoing household costs, such as rent and bills, rather than a particular event. An unusually high utility bill (such as the end of winter) often precipitates disconnection. Other factors were illness or injury, relationship break down, and difficulty heating or cooling the house. The great majority of those disconnected had contacted the supplier about their circumstances but the disconnections went ahead.

The NSW Energy and Water Ombudsman has reported that between 1 July to 31 December they received nearly 12,000 calls to their complaint line and that 58% of these were billing or credit issues.

The NSW Seniors Card, which provides discounts to a range of goods and services (including subsidised public transport) is given to people over sixty regardless of their wealth or income, provided they don't work more than 20 hours per week. The elderly working poor, on low wages and spending a large proportion of their wages on fares, are ineligible if they work over twenty hours a week.

While the Salvation Army and the Australian Council of Social Services estimate that 2.2 million Australians are living in poverty, in 2005-06 the Coalition government will cut \$3.8 billion from income taxes paid by the wealthy.

The richest 10 percent of Australians own almost half of the total household wealth of the country. Australia's poorest ten percent have no wealth and have an average debt of \$6000.

If Parliament passes the Budget changes to welfare, ACOSS estimates at least 300,000 Australians – 150,000 adults and 150,000 children – could be worse off after July 2006 because instead of receiving pensions they could be put onto lower allowance payments. ACOSS is concerned about proposed changes to rules for payments which include suspension of payments for eight weeks for minor infringements like failing to attend a Job Network interview. This could leave people with disabilities including mental illness and single parents raising children in difficult circumstances struggling for basic necessities



The NSW government appears determined to go ahead with an expensive and energy-intensive way of producing more water, rather than getting Sydneysiders to conserve and recycle. While Bob Carr didn't go for a nuclear powered desalination plant on Bondi beach; the announcement that Kurnell is the lucky suburb has attracted criticism from all quarters, including John Howard and

Jeff Angell from the Total Environment Centre.

Speaking on ABC radio Angell said: "The desalination plant is an act of political desperation, born out of incompetence and incapable planning for a sustainable water cycle by this and previous governments."

Howard achieved a first in having many on the Green side of politics agree with him when he said on the same program: "Well I do, however, know that desalination is expensive. It's also energy intensive. I would hope that all of the recycling options are fully explored. I do worry that the New South Wales Government has been a little too ready to dismiss almost out of hand the options of recycling, and I'm not convinced that the case for preferring desalination has been strongly enough made."

Kurnell residents had to endure an onslaught on their suburb by government heavies Carr, Knowles and Sartor, all saying what a dump Kurnell is and you won't notice the plant tucked between the oil refinery and sand mine.

Dorothy Exon, President of the Kurnell Progress Association responded by saying "What a

joke, the government have never been clear or upfront about the desalination plant. They won't even tell us which site they are going to use. All they can do is make derogatory comments about my home of 24 years and this is completely unacceptable. How dare Frank Sartor say no one will be concerned about the final location. Well, the residents of Kurnell are concerned and we don't give up on a fight easily. And I just wish Mr. Knowles had the courage to come down here and tell us to our faces that this isn't a nice place to live."

Keeping up the propaganda war Utilities Minister Sartor released the results of a survey saying Sydneysiders would not accept recycled water. He didn't explain what they would use instead, if water recycling were introduced Greens MLC, Ian Cohen responded: "The great lie of this Government is its claim that large-scale water recycling is too difficult and residents won't swallow it. It's just a matter of political will, courage and public education. The beauty of recycled water is that it provides certainty of supply at an affordable price."

"Hundreds of millions of litres of stormwater is also there to be harvested in Sydney for use in areas where drinking-quality water is being wasted, such as in industrial uses, irrigation and for badly needed environmental flows in the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system".

The great water debate looks set to occupy top place on radio talk shows and in newspaper opinion pieces for some time. As they said in the sixties: *save water, shower with a friend.*

New NSW Premier Morris lemma has announced that there is to be a review of the plans for the desalination plant.

Is it a fact?

Amendments to the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which were passed in June, will enable the NSW Government to push through any development anywhere in NSW, while excluding councils and the public from having any say or right of appeal.?

If the water desalination plant goes ahead it will be a "critical infrastructure project" and not subject to any existing NSW environmental, heritage and planning acts?

The cost of the plant will be in excess of \$2 billion and the price of water will double?

The energy consumed by the desalination plant will accelerate the building of more coal fired power stations in NSW, adding to greenhouse gasses, leading to climate change, resulting in even less rainfall in the Sydney catchment area?

Water conservation and recycling could solve Sydney's water shortages.?

NSW is going against the national trend of water reclamation and reuse which has climbed from 14% in 1998 to more than 20% in 2000?

Sydney Water is one of only three water utilities in Australia sending primary sewage directly into the sea and discharges seven times as much as the second biggest dumper?



The non-profit sector in Australia according to the Business Review Weekly estimate is worth about \$70 billion, so there is no mystery to the fact that for profit companies are moving in and the corporations are taking over. Profit is the core motive of every commercial business, however it just doesn't sit well with community organisations that aren't concentrating on the bottom line.

However over the past five years there have been major systemic changes to the third sector with fundamental shifts in national demographics, political right-sizing, impact technologies, social welfare corporatisation, ethical blinding, compliance overbearance, competitive tendering, regionalisation, population group planning and reactive governance. In a society where big is better and welfare is a for profit business, how can the fundamental inequalities in a society be addressed by corporations whose primary purpose is to reduce costs, increase revenue and maximise their market share.

The basic issue is; there aren't enough services to go around and people are missing out on what they need. Families caring for children or adults with a disability can't find enough respite care. In the Eastern Sydney Area adult and children's respite care units operated by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care have blocked beds. These are respite care beds with people permanently occupying them; they have nowhere else to go. And while the beds are blocked nobody in the community can use them, so the amount of respite is reduced.

The Department of Community Services is now sourcing casual employees for its group houses projects from for profit providers,

"Goods and Services Tax" means the Goods and Services Tax as defined in A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999;
 "Minister" means the Minister (or any person so acting) for the time being administering the Department;
 "Nature of the Service" means the type and extent of Service to be provided under this agreement described in Schedule 2;
 "Non-Significant Funding Variation" means a one-off variation to the Funding which is either equal to or less than:
 (i) 15% of the total Funding; or
 (ii) \$50,000.00;
 whichever is the lesser;
 "Policies and Guidelines" means all Departmental guidelines and governmental policy as amended from time to time which are relevant to the Service and includes, without limit:
 (i) Program and Sub Program guidelines and policies;
 (ii) Program performance indicators;
 (iii) Program data collection requirements;
 (iv) Departmental Minimum Standards of Care, Licensing or Code of Conduct requirements.

because they can't obtain enough staff. The Department of Housing is sourcing commercial tradespeople, the Department of Health is sourcing private cleaning firms and the Ministry of Transport is sourcing transport from private companies. Security, maintenance, recruitment, computer technology, information, research and many other jobs are all being outsourced. Nobody understands how this is supposed to save the Government money but they do it.

In the community this means people in Department of Housing can't get repairs and there isn't enough public housing stock to house the ageing population. People with psychiatric disabilities are being placed in public housing without support. This practice is causing immense problems for them and the residents living around them. In Neighbourhood Centres across the Eastern Sydney Region the number of people with mental health issues presenting at the front counter has risen substantially over the last few years, but there is no funding for the Neighbourhood Centres to deal with this specific issue. An

Eastern Area Mental Health Forum working party has been established to address the issues, but the point of the crisis is that there are not enough services.

Then there is the growth in consultants. These new messiahs of the neo-liberal outsourcing, who have descended from on high to tell us, inform us, change us and deliver us from the past and launch us into the future. Don Watson in his book 'Weasel Words' defines consultants as 'the plague rats of management'.

An outstanding example of this outsourcing dismanagement is the debacle over the Minimum Data Set (MDS) and the software CRS (Client Referral System) commissioned by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) from a private Information Technology Company. The development and introduction of the IT program was thus outsourced and implemented across the State as part of the Home and Community Care (HACC) Reform Agenda. It was suppose to be a major innovation in program identification and integration, which undoubtedly cost the Department a serious amount of money to achieve.

Don Watson in his book *Weasel Words*, defines consultants as ‘the plague rats of management’.

Nobody is saying how much it cost but it is rumoured in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In 2005 community organisations received a letter from DADHC stating ‘as you may be aware DADHC has been developing a replacement software program for HACC service providers to use in place of the CRS.’ DADHC is phasing out the CRS over the next twelve months. It will be replaced by the HADS software which is purportedly more robust and effective in ‘a climate of continuing changes’ and is a Commonwealth initiative.

At the grass roots level the MDS program and its evil twin the CIARR (Client Information and Referral Record) experienced immense problems. They included failure of the program to account for numbers correctly, problems with transmission of the electronic version, differences in Department and organisation service levels, file corruption and verification problems. It’s a good thing they’re scrapping it, but will HADS be any better.

But this is the way all things pass, as with the demise of the video tape - replaced by DVDs, analogue mobile phones being replaced by digital ones, tube screen televisions being replaced by plasma screens,

film cameras being replaced by computer chips and community centres being replaced by call centres. The list is endless.

In this machine age everything old is irrelevant and everything new is instantly disposable. Call centres are the epitome of the disposal outsourcing gone wrong. They are meant to provide us with answers, give us the solutions, connect us to the experts and solve our problems. They never do, instead there is the interminable waiting on the telephone, the computer voice selection and the operator who has no idea of what you’re asking them or how to fix it and finally there is the knowledge that your call has been redirected to India or somewhere else on the sub-continent.

In the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing’s new strategy for community care report entitled ‘The Way Forward’ which many in the community are calling The Way Backwards, there are Weasel Words galore, it is a virtual plethora of verbosity. The Minister, The Hon. Julie Bishop, acknowledges that there needs to be ‘strategies that would simplify and streamline current arrangements for the administration and delivery of community care services.’ This sentiment is admirable and highly commendable but not if this

means the wholesale butchering of the community sector and the gutting of local services, so that larger corporatised organisations absorb the bulk of the funding and homogenise services to the point of where they are identical but useless.

If we look through the political doublespeak we get to understand the facts. Firstly, programs will be combined. Secondly, the number of organisations receiving funding will be reduced. Thirdly, workers will lose their jobs and lastly and most importantly people who receive services will have them changed and cut. The Government calls this streamlining.

The Federal Government’s Report, ‘Participation Support for a More Equitable Society - July 2000’, extols the virtues of Social Partnerships, Social Entrepreneurships, Mutual Obligation and ‘the growing divide between the ‘job rich’ and the ‘job poor’ households’. The Report is a manifesto of welfare reform and is a ‘vision’ of achievement. It says that ‘Australia is in the midst of a profound economic and social transformation’ and tells us the current social system is ‘failing many of those it was designed to help’.

This is true. It is the heart of the matter. But the final solution is not as simple as the Government would have us believe. Forcing people off the Disability Support Pension and returning them to work is not reform but coercion. Encouraging greater participation by threatening to cut off people’s Centrelinks’ payment is not inclusion but exclusion. Raising Medicare’s threshold payments is punitive. Placing community services in the hands of big business is not sound economic reform; it is dangerous and foolhardy●

1.1.1 Where the following words start with a capital letter, in this Agreement:

“Acceptance of Variation” means the form of acceptance to a Significant Funding Variation which the Service Provider must execute and return to the Department in accordance with clause 6 of this Agreement before the Significant Funding Variation takes effect;

“Adjustment Note” means a document prepared by a Service Provider in accordance with the legislation and rulings associated with the Goods and Services Tax, and issued where any funding made under this agreement is to be repaid;

“Australian Business Number” means a business identifier number that is issued to eligible entities by the Australian Taxation Office;

“Continuous Improvement Strategies” means the quality measures as amended from time to time to be put in place, which are agreed between the Department and the Service Provider.

Sartor.

INDEPENDENT FOR STATE PARLIAMENT

Let's save our Council

It is likely that the City Council area will be carved up after the next State election. This would cause cuts in services, higher rates and a loss of any say in the development of the City Centre.

This is the view of Premier Barrie Unsworth. After he dismissed the City Council he appointed ex-Judge Goran to conduct an inquiry into "the appropriate system of Government for the City of Sydney". The deadline for submissions to the Inquiry is next week.

The most likely plan involves removing the Central Business District (CBD) and making it a separate statutory authority run by Government appointees, such as the Darling Harbour Authority and the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority. The remaining area would then either form one Council of 'left over' suburbs or would be carved up and transferred to the neighbouring municipalities of Woollahra, Botany, Randwick, Marrickville and Leichhardt.

This would have a number of drastic effects on residents.

- The wealthy CBD would no longer pay for services needed to combat the many social problems it causes in the neighbouring suburbs, e.g. Kings Cross. It is only fair that developers pay for the consequences of what they do.
- Rates would rise sharply. The CBD currently contributes about \$37 million each year to the residential areas. This would be lost. The creation of a new "left overs" Council would mean a rates rise of 80 percent.
- If the residential suburbs are transferred to neighbouring municipalities, residents will suffer cuts in services, inferior services, and, in some cases, higher rates. They would become 'forgotten suburbs'.
- Residents would lose all say in the development of the City Centre. Inner city suburbs are greatly affected by large developments in the Centre, especially by the traffic they cause.
- The development of the CBD would be solely in the hands of faceless bureaucrats, and State Government Ministers like Laurie Brereton. With no public accountability, the current development anarchy would continue and the City Centre will be ruined.
- Residents of The Rocks, Millers Point and the CBD would be permanently denied local Government.

There is no good reason to alter the City Council area. It is purely for the political expediency of the Unsworth Government.

A well-run City Council, with the existing boundaries, is the best alternative for inner city residents.

Make your views known to Judge Goran. Unless you speak up now your community will suffer.

Frank Sartor

Frank Sartor
26th August, 1987



Frank Sartor

Independent Candidate
for McKell
5 Bucknell Street
Newtown 2042
Telephone 516 4228

Things you can do

- Write to the City of Sydney Inquiry, Room 3113, 121 Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000, calling for the restoration of a democratically elected Council. **Note: submissions must be in by next week.**
- Sign (and circulate) our petition to State Parliament calling for the restoration of a democratically elected Council. Copies are available from me at the above address.
- Come to our protest rally at 12 noon on Saturday 26th September in Sydney Square (Town Hall).
- Support the Independent Campaign for McKell (see back page).

Please turn over ►

There is an alternative – Vote Independent

They say a week is a long time in politics, and so is seventeen years. Here's a younger Frank Sartor railing against faceless bureaucrats taking planning powers from the people and their local government representatives. These days Frank is the minister responsible for an undemocratic, all-powerful authority, overseeing a team of faceless bureaucrats who can bypass the local council and ignore the state's planning and heritage laws.

Public Housing

Tenants to lose security and pay more rent



Photo: Jack Carnegie

On April the 26th the State Labor Government announced the Reshaping Public Housing Plan. As part of this policy the Minister announced a wide range of new tenant charges that were calculated to bring in an extra \$640 million for the next ten-year period. This announced policy means that the Dept. of Housing has reverted to being a landlord supplying housing on a cost recovery basis.

Eligibility for Public Housing

All new applicants for public housing will have to show that they have a low income and have complex needs e.g., they are frail aged, have a disability, or are homeless; or are unable the access affordable housing.

This change is making public housing available to fewer people. Already, too many people who need housing cannot get into public housing. The real solution is to build more housing, not tighten the eligibility criteria to reduce waiting lists.

Tenure

The Department will no longer offer lifetime tenure to new tenants. All new tenants will sign fixed term agreements, either short-term (2 years or less), medium-term (between 2 to 10 years) or long-term (10 years fixed). Before the end of the fixed term, the Department will review the tenant against new eligibility criteria which includes income. If the tenant does not meet the criteria the tenancy will be terminated at the end of the fixed term. This change means people will be evicted when they improve their circumstances. It creates a poverty trap: tenants may lose their home if their income increases. For many

people, secure, affordable public housing is what enabled them to improve their circumstances - when they are evicted they will be back at square one. Renewable tenancies undermine the security of tenure that is a key attribute of public housing. This has particular implications for vulnerable people who are making an effort to improve their lives but face having the carpet removed from under them.

Sustainable Communities are Communities where people work, yet the DoH seems to be pushing a line that Sustainable Communities are not part of their problem with these changes. Studies have shown that people need about 5 years before they add their footprint to their communities, engaging in those communities. These changes will stop these communities from developing. We have the Minister saying that even home owners move every so often, and they settle in to their

new communities quite well. No! Vulnerable people who become DoH Tenants can't move or impact on their communities as easily as home owners. But when they do interact with their communities, their roots are stronger as they rely more on their communities than home owners. Tony Vinson's Study on Community Adversity and Resilience brought this out. People in DoH dwellings have strong Social Cohesion compared to home owners.

People need stability to improve themselves and their lives, and the Tenure changes do not allow for this stability.

Rent Subsidy

The Department will increase tenants' rents. Tenants who receive Family Tax Benefit Part A will pay an increased portion of that benefit. Tenants on 'moderate incomes' will pay 30 per cent of their income in rent (up from 25 per cent). These changes will commence in November 2005.

This change means most tenants will pay more in rent, and some tenants may pay a lot more. The 30 per cent rate for tenants on moderate incomes creates a poverty trap. Tenants may actually lose more than they earn if their income increases. Combine this with the 6% increase in water usage and you have a Tenant on a moderate income paying 36% of his income in charges to the Dept of Housing moving them into Housing stress. What the Department regards as a 'moderate income' is by most standards very modest - as low as \$46 000 for a couple with two children.

These changes exacerbate existing poverty traps and stigmatisation, and it comes just as the Federal Government is requiring greater workforce participation by sole parents and people with disabilities.

Cost of Water Usage

For the first time, the Department will charge tenants for water, including where premises are not separately metered. Tenants of unmetered premises will pay a charge proportionate to their income,

on top of their rent. This change means that tenants of un-metered premises will pay a charge for water that does not relate to the amount they actually use. These tenants will not be able to reduce the amount they pay by reducing the amount of water they use, so this is not really a 'water usage' charge at all - it's just another rent increase.

How much do we think that the rent increase will be? Working from 3 supplied figures: Average water charge per household will be \$5.00 (from the DoH's fact sheets), there are 127,768 DoH dwellings and the Average Net Rent collected by the Dept. over all its properties is \$77.31, then the percentage that a Tenant will pay will be 6% of his income. (6.46%). That gives an increase of \$31,890,892.80 extra per year into the coffers of the DoH, take away water used on common areas usage and you'll have about \$30 million dollars, which is what the Dept says that it will collect.

If the increase was say 5% of earned income, then the average paid by Tenants is \$4.06, raising a tad over 27 million. We know from the Dept's figures that they are raising \$30 Million, so the % has to be over 5%.

One of the questions raised by Tenants was: Will the water usage appear on the rent statement and if you fall behind even by two weeks will you be in arrears, with the ability to then be evicted? This of course means that Water usage is in reality a rent increase.

New Approach to Maintenance

The new maintenance regime was announced to help the Department move to a planned maintenance regime. The NSW Government has committed an initial \$125 million to implement its new maintenance program, which has already started in the Sutherland Shire. This trial is being expanded to 16 other areas across the state this year, then finally across the whole state in 2006.

The Department says that the changes to rent and rent subsidies

are expected to raise an additional \$340 million dollars over ten years, and the water charges an additional \$300 million over ten years, giving a total of \$640 million over the next 10 years.

The Department has said that this money will help 'build or acquire 12 000 new homes in the next ten years'. Note that these are not additional new homes: instead they will replace older stock that is sold or destroyed. The Department has said that it is seeking to keep the amount of stock at its current level. Current tenants are basically paying for improving the quality of the stock, i.e. this is a Tenant Financed Project. The Department is making public housing tenants, who are the poorest members of



the community, pay for the long-term failure of State and Federal governments to properly fund public housing. There will be no additional housing built or bought as a result of the reforms - any new stock will simply replace stock that is destroyed or sold. As the population grows, public housing's share of the total housing stock will continue to shrink, and the pressures on public housing will continue to grow. This is not a sustainable direction for public housing.

Market Rent Review

The Department will now regularly review the rents of its properties to match the rents of the private rental market. These market rent reviews will now be done annually and as a result may increase market rents more frequently.

The Government, or the Minister of Housing, seems unconcerned about the broader question of

affordable housing, and as a result low-income workers risk being priced out of the Sydney market. From these changes, it seems that the DoH have no idea, or choose not to see the long term problems that this will create. We are seeing a change from building Communities and individual's lives to Crisis Warehousing. In fact if Tenants do well and get their lives semi-together after a period of crisis, we are seeing that they may very well be turfed out. Why then get you life together? The Dept of Housing is in reality creating more enclaves of disadvantage and ghettos. The higher the percentage of special needs, high maintenance tenants, the greater the chance there will be nuisance and annoyance, discrimination, and conflict. By Crisis Warehousing the DoH will have to rely on other services to provide services to their clients. These services are just not there. JGOS is a joke that everyone (except the DoH apparently) realises it doesn't work. It is making DoH Tenants reliant on services that just aren't there. There is real scepticism of the worth of MOUs on co-ordinated service provision, and concern if funded services (e.g. SAAP) were expected to do extra, with no additional funding. There is of course a fundamental conflict between the Anti-Social Behaviour legislation and the Reshaping Public Housing changes. On the one hand we are going to house them, and on the other hand we are making it easier to kick them out.

Carl Scully (the former Minister for Housing) once stated that if the government had known then what it knows now about the DoH estates at Macquarie Fields, Minto and Airs they would never have been built. In 15 or 20 years time the government looks back and see at what has happened to the Department of Housing, the creation of enclaves of disadvantage and ghettos, will the Minister of housing at that time then ask, "If we had known this, why did we make that decision then?"

NSW Shadow Ministry

John Brogden	Leader of the Opposition Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Major Projects Shadow Minister for Ethnic Affairs	John Turner	Shadow Minister for Local Government Shadow Minister for Fair Trading
Andrew Stoner	Leader of the Nationals Shadow Minister for Roads Shadow Minister for Energy and Utilities Shadow Minister for Ports	Brad Hazzard	Shadow Minister for Community Services Shadow Minister for Youth Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Barry O'Farrell	Deputy Leader of the Opposition Shadow Minister for Health	Peta Seaton	Shadow Treasurer Shadow Minister for the Illawarra
Don Page	Deputy Leader of the Nationals Shadow Minister for Skills Development and Training Shadow Minister for State Development Shadow Minister Regional Development Shadow Minister for the North Coast	Peter Debnam	Shadow Minister for Transport Services
Mike Gallacher	Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Shadow Minister for Police Shadow Minister for the Hunter	Andrew Humpherson	Shadow Minister for Justice Shadow Minister for Emergency Services
Duncan Gay	Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Leg Council Shadow Minister for Primary Industries Shadow Minister for Mineral Resources	Michael Richardson	Shadow Minister for the Environment
Andrew Tink	Shadow Leader of the House Shadow Attorney-General Shadow Special Minister of State	John Ryan	Shadow Minister for Commerce Shadow Minister for Disability Services Shadow Minister for Ageing Shadow Minister for Western Sydney
Chris Hartcher	Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations Shadow Minister for Planning Administration Shadow Minister for the Central Coast	Andrew Fraser	Shadow Minister for Housing Shadow Minister for Small Business
Jillian Skinner	Shadow Minister for School Education Shadow Minister for the Arts	Katrina Hodgkinson	Shadow Minister for Tourism Shadow Minister for Rural Affairs
George Souris	Shadow Minister for Gaming and Racing Shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation	Adrian Piccoli	Shadow Minister for Natural Resources Shadow Minister for Lands
		Catherine Cusack	Shadow Minister for Juvenile Justice Shadow Minister for Women
		Gladys Berejiklian	Shadow Minister for Mental Health Shadow Minister for Cancer and Medical Research Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on Ethnic Affairs

Changes to NSW Ministry

In our last issue we published a list of NSW ministers and their portfolios. Then Bob decided over a nice chardonnay that there was more to life than being top dog in NSW. Andrew was told he wasn't wanted anymore and Craig spat the dummy because he didn't get Bob's job. After the deals were done, knives pulled out of backs, a few chairs were reshuffled.

Morris Iemma MP	Premier, Treasurer, and Minister for Citizenship
John Watkins MP	Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for State Development
John Della Bosca MLC	Special Minister of State, Minister for Commerce, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, Assistant Treasurer,
Bob Debus MP	Attorney General, Minister for the Environment and Minister for the Arts
Carl Scully MP	Minister for Police and Minister for Utilities
Michael Costa MLC	Minister for Roads, Minister for Finance, Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for the Hunter
Frank Sartor MP	Minister for Planning Minister for Science and Medical Research, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer), Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts, Minister for Redfern-Waterloo
Reba Meagher MP	Minister for Community Services, and Minister for Youth
Cherie Burton	Minister for Housing and Minister Assisting The Minister for Health (Mental Health)

Full Ministry <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/Parlment/>



resources & organisation

The latest way to fund the community sector

The Department of Community Services has a lot of money to get out to the community sector – and in a hurry. Gul Izmir, Deputy Director General came to the last FONGA* meeting and gave this update.

She was looking for an open-minded exchange of views and said we were 'in this together' to provide better services and outcomes. For DoCS, the process has gone really well, with approximately 300 proposals, double the number expected, with an even mix of small and large organisations, a variety of partnership models covering of all parts of the state

Gul explained the internal process, which was:

- Appoint a finance and management consultant to help design the selection process
- Devise a framework covering all aspects that needed addressing
- Appoint an evaluation panel to use the framework, consisting of senior DoCS executives with expertise in areas like early childhood, finance and economics.

Have the panel members evaluate projects separately, then all together. The separate evaluation prevents dominant people from having too much influence.

In Stage 2, preferred services fill in refined templates to give a more extensive description of the services they are proposing

The Community 2025

What will the Community Sector, look like in 20 years time? The NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) held a meeting with interested FONGA* members, to work out how we might do some futuring for ourselves. Canada and the UK have been through this process and they came up with some directions and strategies to help keep what is

essential in human welfare. Rather than going for a funded national approach, this meeting thought that covering NSW was a large enough task. The meeting covered the following topics:

Ways for the sector to work co-operatively

A list of questions to ask ourselves

What is the best process to use?

How to engage all the bits of the sector (Is this a compete and collaborate challenge?)

What resources do we have?

The bottom line is taking the chance to 'shape our own destiny' not just waiting to see what happens

What is FONGA?

It is the *Federation of Non-government Agencies*, consisting of peak organisations, regional organisations (like us) and large charities and statewide organisations. . It is resourced by NCOSS.

Are Eastern Mental Health Services getting any better?

The Eastern Suburbs Interagency is not just talking about Mental Health problems in their area, but trying to do something positive. After holding a Mental Health Forum, they have set up a working party to get something done. They have purchased equipment for the FILOH Psychiatric Centre in their area from funds they raised themselves. They have also set up ongoing meetings with the Executives of the Area Health Mental Health Section. While admitting that there is a crisis in mental health care, the executives say it is hard to make any changes like increasing case management because of a lack of staff and training to get new staff. It might also be a bit hard to focus when the health areas, under previous Minister Morris Iemma stretch from Northern Beaches to the Illawarra!

Is It A Fact?

That a new AMCO has been formed?

No, it is not a resurgence of a multi-national oil company, but the sectors own version of entrepreneurship. AMCO stands for Association of Major Charitable Organisation's. Its members are the large charities and statewide organisations and it has been formed to represent their combined interests, such as submissions to government enquiries. The web tells us that AMCO South Australia was representing the major charities of that state in 2000. It is just a bit of a mystery that people who have been working across the sector have not heard of it before.

At least \$16 million allocated in 2004/05 and a further \$20 million in capital funding from 2003/04 had not been spent on HACC services?

That the NSW Housing Department is to cut the outstandingly successful project it has been funding at Northcott? The project worker with the help of government departments, community groups, council and MP Clover Moore have turned Northcott from a battle ground into a model housing precinct.

The Council of Social Service of New South Wales had a seventieth birthday bash (dress formal), excluding most low-paid community workers because the tickets cost between \$80 and \$140? Was the cost of a ticket based on the employers grant income, not the workers pay?

INNER SYDNEY VOICE

Did you enjoy reading Inner Sydney Voice? Do you like to hear about what is going on with social issues that impact on the Inner Sydney region? You might like to subscribe and get your quarterly journal posted out to you.



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OCCUPATION:

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.....

I apply to be admitted as a member of the above incorporated association.

I am now lodging the Annual Service Fee of \$22 for individuals and \$38.50 for organisations. Concession rate \$5.50 (please send proof).

If this application is approved, I agree to pay all charges required by the society and agree to be bound by the rules and by any alterations registered in accordance with the above-mentioned Act.

I am over 18 years of age.

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Dated: