

Inner Sydney  
Regional Council



for Social  
Development Inc.

# INNER SYDNEY VOICE

The Journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development



**APEC up close**

**ISSUE 109**  
***Spring – Summer '07***

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**PLUS:**

**Strong Communities  
Reconciliation  
APEC**

## Discrimination is still with us

### Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW is 30 years old

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act of 1977 was a milestone in NSW legal history and a victory for social justice.

The original Act made discrimination on the grounds of sex, race and marital status unlawful in the areas of employment, goods and services and accommodation.

Amendments over the years added further grounds and areas including:

- Physical disability in 1981
- Homosexual discrimination in 1982
- Racial vilification in 1989
- Compulsory retirement in 1991
- Age and HIV/AIDS discrimination in 1994
- Transgender discrimination in 1996
- Sexual harassment in 1997
- Carers' responsibilities discrimination in 2001.

#### *Where is the ADB?*

##### **Sydney**

Level 4, 175 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000

PO Box A2122, Sydney South NSW 1235

Ph (02) 9268 5555, fax (02) 9268 5500, TTY (02) 9268 5522

Enquiries/Employers Advisory Service  
(02) 9268 5544

People are still denied a new job or promotion because of their sex. Workers are still experiencing difficulties because they have a disability. Race discrimination is still occurring at pubs and bars.

#### ***Workplaces are still not free from bullying and harassment***

Discrimination is still a social problem and lack of awareness of the potential costs of discrimination persists. We still have a long way to go to protect the human rights of our people in NSW workplaces.

After thirty years of the Act, the pace has slowed. We need it now more than ever.

*Extracts from the Anti-Discrimination Board's Equal Time No 70 (Spring 2007)*

The NSW Anti Discrimination Board fields 10,000 enquiries and investigates over 1000 formal complaints each year from people who are still experiencing discrimination. In the 30 years of operation, the Board has investigated 34,290 cases.

#### **ADB Complaints Finalised**

***Complaints closed between 1 July 2006 and 30 June 2007***

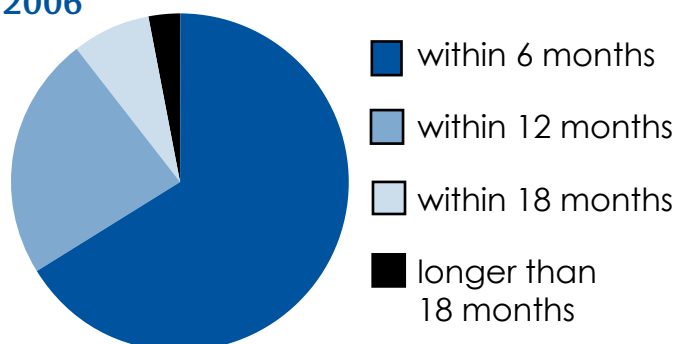
**1113 complaints closed since 1 July 2006**

**66.1%** (736) closed within 6 months of receipt of complaint

**89.6%** (997) closed within 12 months of receipt of complaint

**97.1%** (1081) closed within 18 months of receipt of complaint

**2.9%** (32) longer than 18 months.



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## In the new Commonwealth Australian Citizenship Resource Book – Under ‘Freedom of Association’

Subject to law, Australians are free to gather together and to protest against the government or any other organisation, so long as the protest is peaceful and does not damage any people or property.



*One way to protest*



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



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# INNER SYDNEY VOICE

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## Editorial

This Edition of Inner Sydney Voice has two main topics – APEC in Sydney and Building strong communities. One is a 'not to be ignored' local/global event and the other is a long held fundamental concern. Strangely, they are connected.

All sorts of anomalies arise from this proposition. From the perspective of the community sector, '**Strengthening our community**' happens when people's rights are respected and they are empowered to live fulfilling lives in a local context. **Sustainability and the future** are about reducing the impact of our

business leaders doing big deals.

As Anne Lanyon said in her article APEC - *good for business, not so good for Humanity* on 6th September 2007

"The social and economic differences between the 21 countries are huge and the challenges many and complex. In 2003, Dr Mahatir from Malaysia voiced the concerns of the poorer countries, telling the rich nations they were not giving due consideration to the poor nations. On the table are the issues of climate change, energy, security and non-proliferation.

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*The theme for the 2007 Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum was 'Strengthening our community: Building a sustainable future'.*

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consumption, finding ways to have meaning in our lives apart from rampant individualism and consumerism.

Yet APEC was actually about big business, especially trade liberalisation and economic growth. The meetings of heads of government were in some ways a sideshow to the meetings of

When the interests of the profitability of large corporations are at stake, human rights and the needs of all are further down the pecking order".

As well, the rights and power of local Sydney people were fully trampled on by the over-the-top security and policing.

## Is it a fact?

- That the review of the Redfern Waterloo Street Team Project, suspended in 2005, has finally surfaced, to reveal embarrassing results for Redfern Waterloo Authority Minister Sartor?
- That the project was established by the NSW Cabinet who thought that they had the 'solution' to a perceived problem?
- The whole thing shows the problem with government deciding what needs to happen without listening to local services and taking into account what really works on the ground?
- Project staff reported that the late night walks by staff, encouraged young people to stay on the streets late at night by offering them pizza and a ride home?

## Regional News

### Notes on Port Macquarie

Despite its sunny reputation, Port Macquarie put on four days of straight rain in the first week of spring when ten Housing NSW (Department of Housing) tenants from the Central Sydney North region headed up the coast to attend the Northern Regions Tenants Resource Service (NRTRS) annual training session and conference. The rain didn't deter any of the visitors from making the most of the experience, especially when the Port Macquarie tenants proved to be exceptional hosts, welcoming us into their communities with great warmth.

The event, run by Wendy LeBlanc, the Regional Tenant Worker for the NRTRS, and her assistant, Kate, was held over four days in various venues in Port Macquarie and was attended, including the Sydney mob, by about fifty Social Housing tenants from the Northern Regions. It involved a two day training session on 'Eldership' and a two day conference.

It was clear to the Sydneysiders that TENANT PARTICIPATION works on a very different scale in regional NSW to that of the inner city and northern suburbs. The tyranny of distance is a problem when working over such a large area. The Northern Region covers an area from Tweed Heads in the

north, down to Taree and inland as far as Narrabri. One Sydneysider said he would never complain about his bus service again after hearing the public transport woes of regional tenants.

'It was very interesting meeting other tenants, learning how their tenants groups work and finding out about the Northern Region Social Tenants Council' said Surry Hills tenant Sandy Henderson. 'To my mind, the networking proved to be the most worthwhile aspect of the trip.' Another Sydney tenant believed the bonding that took place between the members of the Sydney group was also invaluable. 'Most evenings were full of discussion about TENANT PARTICIPATION, community development and the role tenants have to play in both.'

Lee Leek from West Ryde said 'It is great to see TENANT PARTICIPATION going strong in the north and full credit to the indigenous communities for their involvement'.

Housing NSW's did a session on the first morning of the conference. The Area Director was the Department's representative after the Director General and Deputy Director General pulled out at a day's notice, blaming the restrictions caused by the APEC summit.

The topics tabled for discussion were 'Rewards for Good Tenants'



and 'SMS messages – Do tenants want this?' The 'Rewards for Good Tenants' caused some lively debate about what defines a good tenant – one who is quiet and unproblematic for the Department or an active member of the community?

A number of tenants felt Housing NSW does not recognise the role of a volunteer.

A representative from North Coast Community Housing, Kate DeMarko, gave a presentation confirming their strong commitment to their tenants and to TENANT PARTICIPATION. The Northern Region Social Tenant Council spoke to the group about their role in helping to assist tenants interested in getting involved in TENANT PARTICIPATION in the Northern Regions.

Overall, the Sydney group felt they learnt a considerable amount from seeing how the Tenant Council and tenant groups in regional NSW worked. The visitors enjoyed themselves and met some great people. 'I've made some friends for life', said one of the Sydney tenants.



### Strong Communities: Why they are important

**B**oth the concept and reality of a strong community is essential in delivering services and more importantly in improving the lives and happiness of individuals. It is an element that is too often overlooked by government and community organisations in planning and delivering services. A strong community provides the context in which we work and the catalyst for delivering social justice and progress.

Yet it is rare to find this ‘whole of community’ context considered in a broad and fundamental way. You will find elements of community strength partly considered in many disciplines – government funded programs, urban planning, local government plans and community organisations. Both State and Federal Governments in Australia have attempted to improve communities that have problems by using a form of urban renewal that is negative, patriarchal and disempowering. Perhaps because that is the way government departments themselves work and there is no understanding of a different path. The Federal Government’s intervention in NT Aboriginal communities and the Redfern/Waterloo Authority are good examples.

#### What we think a strong community IS

First it is about changing the power from ‘power over’ to ‘power to’. Of course this is not a popular strategy for those who enjoy exercising ‘power over’ citizens. The basis of community development is to assist citizens to exercise the collective power they

have to deal with local problems and issues and to increase positive interaction leading to resilience and trust (social capital).

If governments and community organisations do not encourage citizens to work on self improvement and to assist others in their community, the task of government is much harder and more expensive. The recent discussion about the huge costs in delivering health services saw an expert identify that health prevention was more important than crisis and emergency health services, because unless we reduce the number of people coming to hospital, we will never have enough money.

Recently, the Department of Community Services in NSW has aligned the work of Neighbourhood Centres (who work in a whole of community context) with child protection and intervention, under the heading of ‘disadvantaged communities’. This raised the concern that people were being supported from a ‘problem focused’ and pathological aspect, with no capacity to empower people to improve their situation, nor for the community in which they live to give them support.

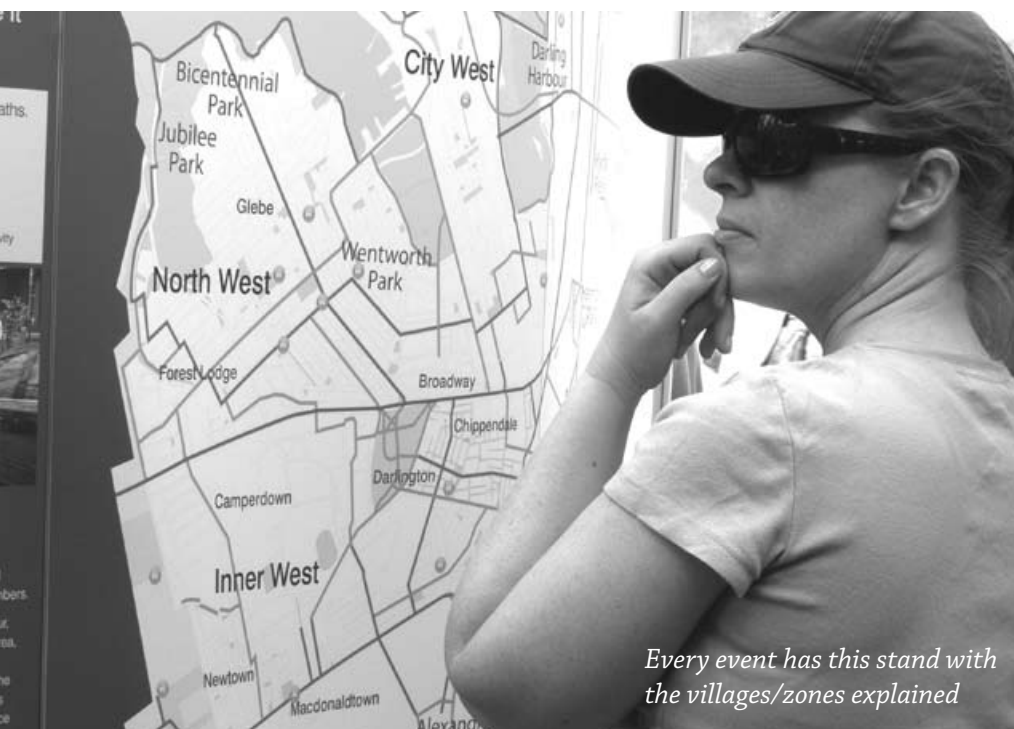
Federal and major State governments (except NSW) have departments or divisions promoting the development of strong communities. The Commonwealth Government’s Stronger Families and Communities Strategy includes research that shows prevention and early intervention programs develop stronger communities and create measurable positive social outcomes and cost-benefits for governments.

#### What we think strong communities ARE

One test for a strong community is when there is a disaster. A community with strong bonds between the people will pull together in times of crisis. A weak community will fall apart or turn on each other. Governments depend on these strong relationships and resilience when dealing with crises, like bushfires, floods and unrest. They talk about the wonderful selflessness of people helping each other. There does not seem to be an understanding that this quality is present all the time and only has to be encouraged and nurtured to be used on an ongoing basis. Building strong communities is as important an infrastructure as building a road system.

In this feature, Regional Council explored some Inner Sydney communities, especially to find which ones that appear to be strong and what contributed to that strength. The City of Sydney Council initiatives of building a ‘City of Villages’ is seen to be a good ‘whole of community’ move and we will have a look at how successful that has been. In the end, we want to see governments, community organisations and local residents see the importance of building strong communities in a holistic way and actively value and support that resource.

# Is where we live and work a city of villages?



**A** strong community is developed from a mixture of the urban environment and people relationships. Both are easier to identify (and build?) on a smaller scale. That is why the City of Sydney concept of a City of Villages is interesting – does this approach end up producing stronger communities?

Inner City residents are 'into' the concept of city villages. We often don't feel we are part of a huge 50 km square slab of the flat coastal plain, but a resident of a small area where we like to go to the shops and restaurants on foot, where we chat to our neighbours, and where we get involved in local events, politics, and social activities. Obviously we travel outside our area, but what is it that makes our area somewhere we like or dislike?

Many who come back from a visit to the bush or a country town will say that the shopkeepers had time to talk to them, the pace was

slower, and the fears were less (of pollution, robbery, car accident etc). Yet we continue to live in the inner city and face the challenges of creating an acceptable lifestyle in a modern metropolis.

Some of the challenges of being a 'villager' in Sydney are:

**"I don't want to go shopping in Chatswood or Bondi Junction** because I can't find my way round, I will never see the car again, and the walking and the bombardment of new shops is too much." Yet these shopping centres flourish.

**"I want to live somewhere quiet".** Yet houses under the flightpaths of Sydney airport are now the same price as quieter streets.

**"I don't want things to change".** Yet large areas of Balmain, Pyrmont, Ultimo, and Zetland (amongst others) have medium to high density units which don't stay on the market for very long.

## Inner Sydney villages

If we look at what makes Inner City villages successful, or not, we might find clues to creating stronger communities.

Off the top of our head, here are some things that give that village feel:

- Pleasant look and feel to village centre - street scape, gardens, trees, traffic calming
- Place for people to meet – footpath café, park, and outdoor pub.
- People using those common spaces in a positive way
- Points of interest to differentiate this village from another place
- Well maintained public and private property
- Common actions – social capital developed through combined actions, sometimes to save a local icon or public space
- Shopkeepers have interest in community as well as business – they see good community as good business and not destructively competitive
- Community organisations to facilitate community action
- Community Leaders – long term residents to head up change
- Community organisations and services, both volunteer and paid, to help people who need support
- Impact of gentrification – are new residents brought into the community to benefit all, or is their role more predatory?





## Clear felling or infill?

We accept that there needs to be change in the inner city. Industries move out, houses are too small and therefore need to go up and outwards, gentrification happens and one of the things we enjoy about our area is that change is constant (well – except for supermarkets killing off the small shops – we want both). We remember the fights over the five industrial sites in Balmain in the 80's and 90's. Some would argue that the Balmain medium density units are now treasured by their owners. Is this because of the properties themselves, or because community infrastructure already existed in Balmain? By contrast, those people in the Meriton built mega-units beside South Dowling Street might wonder whether they have made the best of buys.

The current example of whether to clear fell or infill, is that huge slab of vacant ex-industrial land between the city and the airport, centred on Green Square. Do you get strong communities by building totally new precincts, or should areas be more gradually resurrected and new development in-filled? The crucial issue for Green Square is whether urban renewal is all that is needed to create a good place where people want to live. The Green Square

Town Centre is a model of urban renewal, fulfilling the Metro Strategy requirements of high density along transport corridors. While a set of social amenities is planned, shops and community facilities will be built using developer contributions after the housing and office blocks have gone in. There is an assumption in urban planning that all you do is build nice new buildings, sprinkle it with people, put in a couple of community facilities and a strong community village will grow. We would think the odd Neighbourhood Centre or community campaign would be important – maybe we could re-create the campaign against the Waterloo Incinerator, that got neighbours out on the streets and talking to each other in that area over the last 20 years.

## A city of villages

All councils in the inner city have realized the importance of developing the character and strengths of local communities. However Clover Moore has made villages a big part of her vision for The City of Sydney and action has been taken to put this idea into practice. The council has divided the City of Sydney into eight zones, and each of these zones will include a number of

villages, but the City states “their boundaries are flexible, and there are overlaps”.

The City Strategic Plan commits the Council “to work with all our local communities to identify, promote and enhance the distinctive character of our unique City of Villages”.

Local action plans have been prepared for all eight zones, with detailed plans available on the city website – some for this year, and others for the long term. It is important that residents are aware of the plans for their area, have input into the plans and follow up on whether they get carried out or not. The Council has invited residents to make comments (email [LAPS@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:LAPS@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)). There are also regular community forums for feedback.

Within each zone there are a number of suburbs, some of which can be considered villages. It is equally clear that some of the suburbs bear no resemblance to a village at all. For example, the Inner West zone is made up of the suburbs of Camperdown, Chippendale, Darlington, Erskineville, Eveleigh, Golden Grove, Macdonaldtown and Newtown. Erskineville stands out as a suburb that has the qualities of a village. Without wanting to upset the residents, it would be difficult to see Eveleigh or Macdonaldtown as having many ‘village’ qualities. It will be interesting to see if council plans to take action to make all suburbs more ‘village-like’. Other localities in Inner and Eastern Sydney that come to mind as having village qualities are Glebe, Bronte and Charing Cross.



## Feature – Strong Communities

### Erskineville

Since it is widely agreed that Erskineville is a good example of a community village, we thought we would check out what it is like in some more detail by looking around and talking to some locals.

In the Inner West zone plan the city quotes residents. “We love the village atmosphere. It has a small country town feel to it, yet only minutes to the city or the coast. Everyone looks out for each other and we try to keep the streets clean and tidy. Erskineville Road with its friendly community vibe is a place with no pretension. The village feel is reinforced by the school, the station, the square, the community centre, local shops, leafy trees and relaxed café hubs. Residents say Erskineville is a tight community with a strong sense of local identity”.

As well as enjoying what is there, residents have ideas about what they would like to see in the future. The city plans for Erskineville include:

- More local shops, cafes, and businesses for the village



- Improve children’s facilities at Harry Noble Reserve
- Improvements to Erskineville Oval

It seems that Erskineville gets less spending on infrastructure than other suburbs and after all Erskineville Oval is dominated by the Rabbitohs (which might change when they get back into Redfern Oval).

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*Marie on page 9 says  
“The Deli opening  
was a turning point”.*

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There are general plans for street trees and parks – but maintaining these and increasing them are major issues for Erskineville residents we have talked to.

***How does Erskineville line up with our list of things that make a village, outlined on Page 5?***

There is a pleasant look and feel to the village centre with places for people to meet at a footpath café or the small park, looking across to the outdoor drinking area of the Rose Hotel and the Green Bans Park add to the positive feel of the place. The small local shops are run by committed shopkeepers who want to improve their service to the local people. Shops have been done up, but kept the old feel about them.



## Feature – Strong Communities

Social capital has been developed through common actions – Save the parks resulting in Green Bans Park in 1992, save the post office campaign, and the recent action over the Stabling Yards at Macdonaldtown station. A current worry is the small business hub is threatened by a supermarket, taking business and energy away from shopping strip. Even the public buildings – the old council chambers – have a small and friendly aspect. The houses in the area are being bought by new people as the older people move out or move on, but most appear to want to keep the existing character of the area.

*The beautiful old fig tree in Green Bans park*



*Real Estate predictions are that Erskineville is one of the growth areas in house prices within the inner city. Here is a house sold in October for \$1.15million. It is substantial, but it could do with a paint job outside.*



*This site could become a Coles or Woolworths at the expense of smaller shops*



# Erskineville

## Observations on Erskineville from a long term community leader



### *Terry Murphy*

Terry was on the first Labor South Sydney Council for 17 years from 1979. He is proud of what they did, particularly the small parks and street trees that are such a part of the character of Erskineville. He says that new people started moving in, they realised it was close to the city, and prices started to rise. "Erskineville was a dump and a slum at the end of the 1930's, says Terry. Now it is much better, I like seeing the houses being restored, the little parks being used, and new shops opening in Erskineville Road".

"When I was young everyone rented. So it was just a roof over our heads, and crowded. My home (where he still lives) was three bedroom – one for the parents, one for the boys (six), and the other for the girls (three). Those

people who had some money built a weekender around Woy Woy. I think in the 1950's there were more Erskineville-born up there than remaining here. I used to know 80% of the people round here, now it is less than 5%. Where have they all gone?"

Erskineville in the depression was a dormitory, there was little employment there, and most of the jobs were in Waterloo and Alexandria and other surrounding suburbs. Landowners owned most of the houses and often the tenants moved out and the house was stripped and left derelict. The north side of Erskineville Road shopping strip was demolished to widen the road. Living near a pub meant you didn't loiter outside on a Saturday night as there were always fights.

## Observations on Erskineville from a new-ish resident

### *Marie Hamilton-Smith*

My husband and I bought a house here three years ago" says Marie,



"because we knew the area, liked it, and could afford to buy a house here. I was renting in Glebe, just couldn't find anything so looked wider and found Erskineville eleven years ago. I did have a time living near Centennial Park, but could only afford a small unit there, no-one is on the streets, and the huge SUV's dominate."

"We are renovating madly. There seems to have been a transformation in the last three years. But I don't want it to change too much. I have a neighbour in her 60's in an unrenovated house and I like that – we need diversity in the area. We don't have a car as the public transport is so good. I like it here, and wouldn't want to live on the west side of King Street, Newtown where the streets are narrow, the houses tiny, and the parking is diabolical."

Marie likes the growing number of up-market shops, and thinks the Deli opening was the turning point, then the bakery overhaul and the Pizza shop. She is concerned that the Hive building (on the corner of Gowrie St and Erskineville Road) might become a Coles or Woolworths and devastate the shopping strip as has happened elsewhere.

Marie met neighbours through the fight with CityRail over the Stabling Yards next to Macdonaldtown Station. This site had been empty for years, then trees were cut down and tracks laid. Residents could see the noise and lights would affect them. Now CityRail has agreed to a noise wall, and a high structure around the end to block out light. Marie now knows a lot more neighbours. So community involvement works!

# How to do/not to do reconciliation

## Do

### *40th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum*

The year 2007 and specifically Sunday 27 May 2007 marked the 40th anniversary of Australia's most successful referendum and a defining event in our nation's history. This 1967 referendum saw more than 90% of eligible Australians vote YES to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the national census of the population and to give the Commonwealth Government power to make specific laws in respect of Indigenous people. This event is often referred to as the first stage of the reconciliation movement in Australia.

Reconciliation Australia had set up a year-long program in 2007 to raise the profile of reconciliation and set up action plans to close the 17-year life expectancy gap, through health, education, employment and relationship building. The anniversary is being treated as a rare and significant opportunity to further encourage the Australian community's interest in reconciliation.

*From the Reconciliation Australia website*

## Not Do

### *An email to the ABC*

Dear Kerry O'Brien and 7.30 Researchers, I have just returned from the Northern Territory. I want John Howard to explain why house to house raids without warrants are being conducted by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in all the Alice Springs town camps.

I also want to know why at least two of the senior women who toured major cities speaking out against a uranium waste dump on their traditional lands have been raided by the AFP on warrants issued by a Federal Magistrate in Canberra, their furniture slashed with knives,

belongings damaged, laptops and mobile phones seized and phones tapped. I was told by one of the women that the warrant gave twelve hours access to her home, and that she was told that the measures were justified because of the security crackdown for APEC ministers. One of those women is an elderly grandmother.

I have also been told by town camp residents that the AFP has set up surveillance on all households in the town camps, and have photographed without consent, every Aboriginal child in those town camps. In the 1990s the AFP were successfully taken to court for exactly the same violations in Redfern.

Please report on this disgraceful conduct, and pursue a full explanation from the Howard Government.

Regards,  
Jennifer Martiniello  
*Member, Advisory Board*

*Australian Centre for Indigenous History, Australian National University*



Photos courtesy of Core Films Pty Ltd.

## Do

### *Watch a Film*

The Film **'When Colin met Joyce'** was shown at 10.30 on a Saturday morning at the Palace Cinema on Norton Street, Leichhardt. The screening was a special cast and crew screening, to which some of Colin and Joyce's friends were invited.

There are two powerful images in the film that hit me. Joyce is talking about her mother giving birth to her sister. Being Aboriginal she could not go into the hospital, so had to stay on the veranda. A storm blew up, she got soaked, caught pneumonia and died. The other image was Joyce breaking down in tears and being cuddled by her daughters and Colin as she looked at the broken down tin cottage where she was brought up, and I lost count of how many people lived in the tiny house, and how many shared each bed, or slept at the bottom of the bed.



# Met Joyce



*A love story that has lasted 40 years. Their lives together are an image of true reconciliation.*

Joyce was one of the activists who led the campaign that succeeded with the 'yes' vote in the 1967 referendum. Joyce says in the film: "I used to fill out the census and I put Aboriginal on the form. I asked someone what happened, cos I filled out the form, they said they just put a red line through it and threw it in the bin. That's when it came home to me how unimportant I was to the government".

Much of the film shows a couple struggling against racism and political norms in the NT and NSW. When I met them in the late 80's Colin was Deputy Director of the NSW Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employ and Joyce was chair of the Labor Party branch in Annandale, the first Aboriginal officer at the NSW Ombudsman's Office, and later an Aboriginal Employment worker with the NSW Labor Council.

They have returned to Maclean to supposedly retire, but continue to work and make an impact on Indigenous affairs.

The film is a part of the National Indigenous Documentary Fund between SBSi, AFC and FFC. This film was written and produced by one of their daughters.

Do see the film when it is screened on SBS in late 2008.

## Do

See the film when it is on SBS.

## Not Do

### *2007 Federal Election*

It is significant to hear the Prime Minister finally acknowledge the psychological 'terra nullius' that fuels indigenous detachment. Symbolic gestures of reconciliation that indigenous Australians have been advocating for years, such as a new preamble or an apology to the stolen generation, have been disparaged during the Howard era. Any suggestion of symbolic reforms sparked derision from the conservative commentariat as 'wishy-washy or not 'hard-headed' enough. But the spectacular failure of Howard's 'practical reconciliation', as evidenced by the Northern Territory intervention, has clearly forced a rethink.

Practical and symbolic reconciliation are essentially two sides of the same coin, and most Australians understand the importance of symbolism in nurturing a sense of nationhood and the feeling of inclusion eg. Anzac, Kokoda, the wattle on the lapel. Symbolic gestures for Indigenous people, such as recognition in a constitutional

preamble will deliver some heightened sense of belonging and perhaps engender some uncontested truths about the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australian history.

Yet the symbolism of indifference embedded in Australia's policy cannot be neatly arrested by recognition in a preamble, as the indifference is too deeply entrenched. The constitution, Australia's founding document, remains imbued with racist intent and this legacy is clearly reflected in the races power that enables the Federal Government to pass laws to the detriment of any race.

Howard's symbolic gesture entails amending the preamble, which is technically not the preamble to Australia's Constitution but the preamble to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900. The preamble has no real legal effect. The Prime Minister stated that the recognition of indigenous peoples in the preamble should not be muddled by other constitutional niceties. In Howard speak, this means he will not touch the right of his government to legally discriminate against a group of people on the basis of race.

*Megan Davis, Brisbane Times, October 15, 2007*

## Do

### **SAY SORRY**



## An Answer to 'Bill Poster'?

Eleven locations are proposed for poster poles on city streets, primarily in areas such as Darlinghurst, Surry Hills, Newtown, Glebe,

Erskineville and Haymarket where there are many small local pubs with live music. Similar to those used in Paris and Berlin, the poster poles would provide alternatives to using street poles, hoardings and other blank walls to put up posters. Posters would remain on the poles for a week.

## Environment

During the 2006/07 financial year, the City spent \$5.6 million removing more than 249,000 individual posters and stickers covering 80,000 square metres in total size. Apart from adding to visual clutter, posters deteriorate quickly, washing into the stormwater system and polluting our Harbour.

## NSW Mayors Climate Change Agreement

Developed by the Local Government and Shires Associations, (LGSA) the Agreement is modelled on a similar US agreement which has been signed by 319 mayors. Signing the Agreement commits a council to:

- establishing baseline greenhouse gas emissions;
- meeting or beating the Kyoto target for Council operations;
- urging the State and Federal Governments to enact programs and policies to meet or beat the Kyoto target;
- publicly declaring greenhouse gas reduction targets;
- encouraging all sectors to adapt to climate change and reduce emissions; and
- monitoring and resourcing climate change initiatives.

The LGSA have also established a Climate Change Action Pack website to help councils to address the significant challenge climate change presents. It features resources and information on how to address climate change; the NSW Mayors Climate Change Agreement and best practice examples of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

## Community and Rabbitohs to Share Redfern Park Oval

The Community and the South Sydney Rabbitohs will share Redfern Park Oval. The community on weekends and the Rabbitohs during the week. The 20 year licence agreement, between the City and South Sydney District Rugby League Football Club, will ensure Redfern Park Oval continues as the Rabbitohs' spiritual home. The Club has played or trained rugby league at the Oval since it was founded in 1908.

The City's \$20 million upgrade of Redfern Park, now underway, includes a state of the art sports field and a new low rise grandstand with change rooms, a kiosk/café and meeting room.

Under the proposed licence agreement, included in the Redfern Park Plan of Management adopted by Council in 2006, the Rabbitohs will have:

- exclusive use of clubrooms within the grandstand which will comprise change rooms, gymnasium, physio room, toilets, store room and offices;
- use of the public amenities and public areas; and
- priority use of the playing field for 10 hours per week during the pre-season and 20 hours per week during the competition season.

## NSW Carbon Trading Scheme Might Collapse

The lack of clarity by both the Federal Government and the Labor Opposition on what their plans are for national action to cut greenhouse gas emission has caused the collapse of the NSW carbon market, threatening over 1,000 green jobs and putting at immediate risk the only large-scale domestic energy efficiency and greenhouse program in Australia.

The innovative NSW Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme (GGAS) is on the verge of collapse with the price dropping from \$12 to around \$6 in recent weeks. This scheme has allowed companies to set up to give away free low flow shower heads and low energy light globes, and to advice householders on how to reduce their carbon footprint. This catastrophic price drop started when the Federal Government announced plans for a national emissions trading scheme, and its intention to scrap all state schemes like GGAS. Without any details of transition arrangements, major polluters stopped buying carbon under the NSW scheme because their long-term obligations weren't clear.

## What we want the Federal Politicians to do?

**W**ith the Federal Election coming up, Regional Council did a survey of community service providers in the Inner City and Eastern Sydney to find out what issues are important to them. The issues reflect the needs of the hundreds of people using these community services in Inner and Eastern Sydney and the things the services need to do a proper job. Local candidates in Wentworth, Sydney and Maroubra electorates will be asked to respond.

A wide range of service providers answered the questionnaire, including neighbourhood centres, aged care and disability services, youth services, community development organisations, multicultural services, community transport and housing services.

### ***What things do people receiving your service ask for in Inner and Eastern Sydney?***

The responses clustered into six main areas, but there were specific needs in each.

#### ***Sufficient support services to meet people's needs***

***More child care, youth and aged care services***

***Services are able to be varied to respond to needs***

***Services open more hours during the day and evenings***

***More rooms and halls to hire for community activities***

### ***Housing and accommodation***

- Affordable housing is a huge need
- People need low cost housing and/or supported accommodation
- Social integration for people

- in low cost or supported accommodation
- 24 hour supported living for people under 65 years
- Accommodation for homeless people
- Aged care facilities – nursing homes and respite premises in Inner Sydney

### ***Transport services***

#### ***Community Transport***

- Funding to provide sufficient community transport services
- More hospital/medical transport
- Free transport for frail aged people and people with disabilities to appointments
- Older people to be taken by car to do shopping/banking
- Weekend transport to reduce isolation

#### ***Public Transport***

- Better public transport – more reliable and more of it
- More public bus services
- Low fares, as many poor people have to get to multiple services
- Better wheelchair accessible public transport and taxis

#### ***Youth services***

- Additional youth facilities, activities and resources
- School holiday activities for children

### ***Aged people and people with disabilities***

- These services have critical shortages - people will never get a service unless there is more funding.
- Increase in pensions
- Disability Care Packages

- similar to Aged Care Packages
- Increase the money in Aged Care Packages as six hours is not enough
- Aged people need social outings and conversation during a home visit or on the phone
- Recognising the real needs of people with a disability (PWD) and their carers and funding them
- Case management with brokerage attached for PWD
- More respite for people with disabilities
- More access for young people with a disability to creative leisure activities
- Increased access to home modification and equipment
- More high level personal care services for people with disabilities

### ***Health and related services, especially mental health services***

- More mental health services overall
- Focus on preventing mental health crises
- More drug and alcohol services
- Support for people with mental health problems when they are in crisis situations
- More mental health beds available in hospitals
- Funding for recovery and rehabilitation in the community

Support for young people with mental health problems to develop skills to re-integrate into the community and support for their families





### Linking Public Housing to Service Support

Over the past two years, The Department of Housing (DoH) is introducing several reforms that will impact heavily on DoH Housing tenants and those services that provide them with support.

NSW Governments Plan for Reshaping Public Housing 2005 made changes to eligibility (tenants must have a complex need) and tenure (now short-term, fixed-term leases). Shelter described the changes as “driven by fiscal imperatives, they were dressed up as social justice-based reform”. This financial difficulty and the need to update and add to housing stock has seen the department involved in sales, demolitions and transfers to social housing. Other reforms are around providing service support for the new tenants (and ageing long term tenants) with complex support needs. There is the “Ageing in Place” and the “Hi Rise Strategy”. The Human Service Accord is one of these important new changes. The formal definition is:

***The Accord is a policy framework to co-ordinate services for social housing residents through partnership agreements with the Department of Housing (DoH).***

The government departments that have signed up to the Accord including Community Services (DOCS), Ageing Disability and Home Care, Juvenile Justice, Corrective Services, NSW Health, NSW Police, Aboriginal Housing Office as well as Community Housing providers.

The most important aspect of the Accord is that service providers get to nominate their

DoH. In return, the DoH gets assistance in maintaining the tenancies, services for their tenants and joint care planning where needed.

There will be no resources allocated to implementing the Accord because the DoH, like other recent government departments in reform mode, sees the Accord as a mechanism to ‘streamline and co-ordinate existing service provision’.

A number of projects are already in trial across the State. The most well known housing project under the Accord in this region is HASI which provides 30 targeted properties for chronic homeless people living in the City of Sydney. Support services are provided by Mercy Arms and DoCs. This project was established some time ago and has been independently evaluated and by all accounts is viewed as a very successful partnership.

The Accord fits in with other recent reforms to housing tenure. Previously, DoH provided affordable housing for people and families on a low income. Housing is now only provided to people who are assessed as needing and agreeing to service support. Other changes to eligibility include improving access to housing for older people and people with disability. Basically, DoH now only houses people with welfare needs and public housing has disappeared. The impact of this change and the huge reduction in government spending on public housing is one factor in the current affordable housing crisis.

The Eastern Suburbs Home and Community Care (HACC) Forum recently had these changes explained to them – maybe because they provide a lot of

people with a disability. They agreed that “A client focused, co-ordinated and planned approach to social housing and improved access to housing for older people and people with disability is welcomed”.

The Forum is concerned, however, that a co-ordinated and planned approach will be undermined by the lack of a coherent strategy to communicate with the non-government sector, who are often the major service providers services, especially on the housing estates. This view is supported by the news that an older person’s housing site is planned at Gallop Court, Maroubra. The refurbishment is underway, residents affected have been moved out and those meeting the new criteria will be able to return once the building is completed. The HACC services working in the area did not know anything about this, yet DoH and DADHC have been discussing it for some time.

The high staff turnover and poor communication from local DoH teams, who themselves are often uninformed of new departmental initiatives, was raised as an ongoing challenge for community services in working with social housing residents. There is also concern that there is no safety net for those who do not accept support services or for those on short term tenancy agreements.

If the Accord is to deliver the promised client focused and co-ordinated services for social housing residents, the government partners will need to engage with the non-government sector through the existing community networks, where co-ordination and planning of local service delivery occurs.

*Inner Sydney Voice*





### We Need More English Teaching for Adults and Children

**F**or new arrivals to Australia only 510 hours of English tuition can be provided through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). 510 hours is not enough time to become functionally literate in English. The result is that only about 20% of students leave the program with functional English.

The Federal government is responsible for the AMEP and the scandalous under-funding of essential English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for migrant and refugee students. There are probably more than 40,000 students in NSW public schools who are identified as needing ESL classes but have no ESL support.

Without significantly enhancing English teaching programs this lack of English will effectively exclude a section of the population from full participation in Australian society.

### Reduced Funding for TAFE Increases Skills Shortage

**T**he skills shortage in Australia is largely a result of a decline in the availability of apprentices and vocational training. Research has identified the need for higher level skills for workers and greater investment in TAFE as essential for future growth and prosperity. Federal funding over the last decade has decreased by 26% (with no increase from the NSW State) and up to 40,000 students per year are being turned away from TAFE because of under funding. Whilst completion of Year 12 is a very important landmark for young people, so is the attainment of a post school qualification such as provided by TAFE.

Student fees more than doubled a few years ago and more and more courses are now being made commercial with some students having to pay as much as for a university course. Additional costs continue to rise. If you are doing a course in the metals area or in cookery, both

skills shortage areas, you need resources to work with in your course. Students are increasingly being expected to pay for these resources, as budgets to teaching sections are cut. TAFE students are now having to work longer hours, and that is affecting their ability to study fully.

### We need more school counsellors

School counsellors deal with complicated issues everyday, including greater anxiety amongst children as they face the complexities of life in the 21st century. As well, school counsellors deal with the trauma refugee children have suffered.

The role of school counsellor is critical to the wellbeing of our children. There are only 790 full time counselling positions across NSW and 812 school counsellors currently employed.

In his report following the Inquiry into Public Education in 2002, Professor Tony Vinson recommended that 700 additional school counsellors should be employed in NSW over ten years.

### *It is a fact –*

#### Accelerated Decline of Maths & Science in our Schools

- Around a quarter of maths teachers don't have a major in maths, and nearly 10 per cent have not studied any university maths at all;
- Australia's maths and science education ranks only 29th in the world according to the World Economic Forum Annual Report on Global Competitiveness;
- Maths Departments in Australia's top 8 universities have lost almost a third of their permanent academics according to a report by the Australian Academy of Science;
- Australia graduates less than half the OECD average number of students with a maths or statistics qualification; and
- According to the National Report on Schooling, between 2000 and 2005, there were 40,000 fewer year 12 students studying science subjects and 17,000 fewer studying maths subjects.



### Counselling: respected intervention or society's emotional band-aid?

**O**ur society is slowly coming to the view that mental health is important, and mental health problems are less cause for stigma and discrimination. Part of this should be a genuine appreciation of the value of counselling, rather than seeing it as simply a means to a quick fix for major problems.

People seek counselling for many different reasons. The most publicly acknowledged of these is during the aftermath of a traumatic event, when we are assured that teams of crisis counsellors are called in. Their role is viewed by government disaster response staff as equal in importance to that of the emergency medical teams. Side by side with the medics, counsellors assess and triage damage, respond to immediate emotional crises, listen, empathise, reassure, stabilise, debrief, and refer. We know that offering help promptly in the short term alleviates longer term distress and cost to both the individual and society.

In recent years, we have seen significant Government funding go to brief intervention counselling of up to 12 sessions (18 in some cases) for a range of mental health problems. This is surely a positive move.

The oft-cited call of “prevention is better than cure” certainly applies here. Deal with problems early before they escalate into

something much bigger – in this case, serious mental health problems further down the track. This is true for all of the reasons that lead people to seek assistance with their emotional lives. Not good for the individual or their family. Not good for the health system.

I am not disputing the need for immediate or short term intervention, and I am not suggesting that counsellors in these situations don't do a good job and provide an invaluable service for people and the community. What I am saying is that it's not enough just to rely on these services to fix social problems and manage trauma.

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### *Seeing a counsellor does not mean you're crazy*

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What I am saying is that it shouldn't be seen as a weakness to ask for help. Every one of us needs some kind of support from time to time, even those of us with strong social networks. Sometimes we need help even where no trauma has happened – when life is confusing, has no meaning, or we're stuck in a destructive pattern.

As human beings we make sense of ourselves and the world around us in many ways. This is why we're inclined to ring a friend to talk when something out of the ordinary (positive or negative) happens in our life. We are also intrinsically

social beings, needing a sense of belonging and connection with other people. Feeling like someone else has listened and understood can be enormously relieving.

Of course it goes further than this, and seeing a trained counsellor is quite different from talking things through with friends. Unlike the reciprocal relationship with friends, the focus is solely on you. Also, you can step out of your life temporarily, within a neutral and supported relationship. Unlike family or friends, counsellors have no vested interest in your life choices. And after a painful or traumatic event, many people don't want to burden family or friends with their very strong feelings, or their overwhelming need to talk about it for long periods of time. Counsellors are trained in listening, and understand the processes that people go through, so can help you in the stages of dealing with a problem and managing your life with its effects.

While there are many different approaches to counselling, the common thread through all is supporting people through life's challenges and facilitating change processes. Seeing a counsellor does not mean you're crazy. Nor is it about a “magical cure”. Sometimes it can take some time, depending on how complex the problems might be.

*Dr Fiona Rummery is Senior Lecturer in Counselling at the University of Western Sydney. She also works in private practice as a counsellor and psychotherapist.*

## From our library

Regional Council has been concerned about the inner city having accommodation for people needing support for many years as this 1991 project shows.

### Inner Sydney Interchange

Will a "Better City" have decent places for low-income families



### Inner City Interchange

The inner areas of Sydney between Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay, stretching west towards Canterbury, face a complexity of problems. The capability of low-income residents to remain in the inner regions of the city, close to a variety of services and facilities often greatly needed, is being jeopardised by long-term land-price inflation and redevelopment.

Many agencies in local, state and federal governments have powers and responsibilities relevant to maintaining low-income residents in the region; none has strategies to this effect.

Is there a future for the poor in inner Sydney?

The Inner Sydney Regional Council has been working in the region for the past seventeen years. The Board of the Regional Council consists of residents, community workers, local government managers, and planning consultants. We believe that new cooperative approaches to planning for the region is needed.

The *Inner City Interchange* seminar is one step in a longer process of bringing this about. It's time that the players of the inner city game started sharing information on the rules and constraints they work under, so a better understanding can lead to better communication and in turn to a better inner Sydney. Ignorance breeds suspicion and contempt.

We believe the fate of low-income communities should not be the accidental outcome of policy decisions. A more conscious policy development process starts with sharing of ideas about possibilities; that's the aim of this seminar.

### Inner Sydney Interchange

Increasing attention to the limits to urban sprawl has raised pressure for redevelopment in the Inner Sydney region. Whether the policy is called *Urban Consolidation* or *Better Cities*, debate so far has ignored the question of who will live in the inner suburbs, many of which have traditionally provided low-cost homes for low-income families.

Will Sydney be a city where poor people are fringe-dwellers?

One view, of course, is that people are simply the "flexible" element in urban development. Communities move "naturally" in response to inflation in land prices; people "adapt" to the city's physical and economic forces. However, under this approach low-income residents may only be able to remain in degraded areas where they do not receive capital gains from land price inflation.



What should government do about the future for lower-income inner Sydney residents?

- \* allow their replacement by higher-income people in upgraded suburbs, and move the people west (like hospital beds)?
- \* recognise that lower-income people will become more concentrated in degraded areas with poor accessibility, and focus support services at those areas?
- \* use powers and programs to minimise the "replacement" trend.

A preferred approach is to identify feasible options for public sector action by identifying relevant powers, then to debate which is desirable strategy. The debate then has a practical value.

The Seminar is structured on a unique basis to encourage the sharing and responding to the attitudes and opinions of people looking at the region from different perspectives.

The *Interchange* is designed to communicate what the sectors do, examine common themes, clarify complaints from other sectors, allow a response to these, and develop new ways of working. Attendance will be limited to 25 participants each from four sectors:

- \* government planners
- \* residents
- \* local government
- \* community workers

Departments with a major role in planning the future for inner Sydney people will be asked to prepare a background paper outlining:

- \* what plans do they have for the next ten years
- \* which of their powers might influence the location, continuation and quality of low-income communities
- \* how do they trade-off between regional and local priorities

### Examine

A panel will initiate discussion by examining with the participants the types of powers covered in the background papers. A professional moderator will facilitate exploration of the underlying issues.

### Clarify

Each of the sectors will meet in small group discussion to clarify the approaches they see as most feasible. Each group will identify key opportunities and difficulties in evolving a strategy for low-income resident retention.

### Respond

Each group will convey their conclusions to the other participants in a report-back plenary. As well, two speakers will present information on some initiatives and models that are being developed.

### Cooperate

The final session of the seminar is a plenary aimed at moving towards a common view, and identifying the most fruitful options for more thorough investigation. A general discussion lead by the moderator will briefly see if some consensus can be derived about new patterns of working together in Inner Sydney.



## APEC Up Close

### It is on our patch

The residents of Inner Sydney do understand that we are part of a global village, and can see there may be benefits in international meetings such as Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Forum, but we do live here and work here, so feel that we should be able to roam as freely as possible throughout our home city.

Why did so many of us get upset about the APEC invasion of Sydney? Was it the \$330 million cost, including \$170 million on security, or the fortress around the Domain and Opera House, or the hyped-up aggression of the police? Possibly for a lot of us it was that our city was just blocked off for a whole week, and on the Saturday you couldn't go north of Park Street.

### *So what are the benefits of APEC?*

BIG! Big security, big business, big voices, big spending!

- APEC is good for business- it's a Business Summit for the region's most prominent business leaders
- It's agenda is trade liberalisation and economic growth
- Because it is an economic cooperation meeting, not an independent states meeting, China and Taiwan can both attend.
- It furthers the Australian Government's priority for things economic
- It brings together 21 national leaders from the Asia Pacific rim who get to talk to each other away from advisors, the media and issues between countries.

*by Anne Lanyon "APEC good for business, not so good for humanity"*





### ***What got us upset***

Workers at Regional Council went into the city to see what all the fuss was about. First we had a look around on the Thursday. Bush had arrived from Washington via Baghdad on the Tuesday, but all the other leaders weren't expected until Friday. There wasn't much happening. We presume that people were working in the offices in the northern part of the city, but not many of them were on the streets. All the pedestrian gates on the ridiculous convoy tubes were open, so people could walk around the north of the city – they just couldn't drive. The large number of tourists didn't know where to go. We explained to some that they could walk to Circular Quay,

but couldn't get to the Opera House or Farm Cove. The Domain was completely divided off with the same type of barrier as in the streets and huge concrete blocks had smashed the footpath, presumably in the hurry to get the fence erected.

### ***Saturday was a completely different thing.***

There were a lot more people in the crowd than was expected (even by the organisers) in front of the Town Hall. There were police everywhere. The mounted police, on their mountain bikes rather than the flu-ridden horses, wanted to be busy but had nowhere to go. George Street, north of the Town Hall was completely empty. It felt like dawn on a summer Sunday, but it was 10am on a Saturday. Soon one of the police officers, barking orders as if there was a nuclear attack, got four buses lined up and touching each other, strung across George Street from York Street to the Queen Victoria Building. But he hadn't finished yet and barked orders for the wing mirrors to be pulled in and metal shields to be fixed to the windows and over the wheels. Finally a line of robocops were stretched out in front of the buses.

### ***The crowd realised that the over-the-top police theatre had started.***

People at the rally were chatting away, enjoying seeing the people usually seen at rallies. There were older people insisting on their rights to peacefully demonstrate, young people holding banners or dressed up in costumes and strutting to their drums. We couldn't hear the speeches, which



(of course) were not allowed to be given from the Town Hall steps. After an hour the march set off. The route was 300 metres down Park Street to Hyde Park. It would take less than five minutes of normal walking. The organisers of the march had decided to stop every 50 metres for a bit of a cheer and a shout before going on. So there was Park Street, with police along the footpath, empty except for the beginning of the march, and the 300-odd press and photographers milling around.

In one of these breaks in the traffic, suddenly people were running beside us and at least 10 policemen were chasing a guy. He was tackled, several police jumped on him and the rest formed a circle around him. One was punching him. We yelled out several times to stop punching him and stood around as more people and cameras came up, mostly to see what was happening and to film. The police stopped punching, but there were so many sitting on top of him, we thought he would be squashed. The police said something about resisting and



## APEC Up Close



he said he was not resisting – a bit hard with at least four big men kneeling on him.

The policeman in charge of the group yelled at us several times to get back and then said “I don’t want to get hurt”. The person standing in front of him was a small 60 year old woman! He looked afraid and very jumpy. The police on the ground got handcuffs on the protestor and took him to the van.

### *We continued the march*

At Elizabeth Street the procession – which until then had been across the whole of Park Street - had to funnel into Hyde Park through a tiny pedestrian entrance on the north east corner. After an hour of marching 300 metres, those at the back had had enough, and refused to be squeezed into Hyde Park, so went home in disgust. Meanwhile the park looked tamer than most of the gigs usually held there, with the most irate people being the Saturday morning shoppers who wanted to get to the CBD to do some make some purchases or have a coffee and could not get past the line of police blocking off the shops CBD from Hyde Park.

### *Over the top policing*

A lot of the \$170 million on security was spent on our police. They seemed to have gleaming new equipment (someone suggested that this was because they were all newly out of the Goulburn Academy). Under whatever categories you rate it, there was an excessive amount of money spent,

on a project of very limited duration, and no lasting benefit to Sydneysiders. So we end up with a concern that the police were given increased powers and although the APEC Act has finished, it is suspected that some of the powers, the equipment and the police anti- terrorist training will just go on being used.

The Premier has said he is proud of the police, and supports all their actions, even though the new Commissioner and his riot chief made over-the top statements about the threat.

The head of the riot squad said at the court hearing about the march “I have absolutely no doubt that minority groups will engage in a level of violence not previously experienced in Sydney.” So

the strong measures were not aimed at ‘terrorists’ who may have infiltrating the demonstration, but ‘minority groups’ who disagreed with the mainstream view. And the new Police Commissioner Scipione, who had suggested two days before that the Chaser boys were lucky not to get shot by his snipers. To which Morrow (producer and actor in the Chaser) replied that “well, they were lucky we were not Al Qaeda”.





## *Will it go away?*

Probably not.

Our experience of APEC was that measures put in place to protect the population against the threat of terrorism were applied to a situation that was clearly not threatening. The presence of high wire fences, lines of police, fortress buses, water cannon and repressive crowd control constituted a climate of repression and 'over the top' policing. The stated intention of the Premier and Police Commissioner to use these same measures whenever they decide in the future is a huge change to civil liberties in this country.

Our conclusion is that protestors will now be treated as suspect terrorists, with their rights restricted because of fear from the authorities, rather than any actual risk to the community. The days of the big march against the war in Iraq are in danger. Now any march will be seen as a terrorist threat to the State.

Even individuals are at risk. The accountant in Pitt Street who was dragged away for crossing the road was imprisoned and released later without apology. Two weeks later a transport company went bust and 700 of their workers wanted to find out what was going to happen to their entitlements. They were

all on their work site, and the riot squad was sent in (the police all had the same riot squad jackets on, and the vehicles had riot squad, or public order stickers on them). This seems an unnecessary use of force and possibly would not have happened without the training and resources for APEC. It will be interesting to see what happens on World Youth Day. All we know is the Commissioner and Premier have said the training and resources will be useful in controlling the crowds when the Pope visits next year.



## **From the offices of Sylvia Hale, Greens MP in NSW**

NSW Police threatened to take court action to stop the Greens conducting a media event inside the APEC security zone last week. Despite this threat I informed the Police that we would not change the location of the event. After it became clear that we would fight them in the Supreme Court, the Police changed their mind at the last minute and dropped their opposition to the event.

Like any citizen I find it disturbing to receive legal threats from the NSW Police. I have no doubt that the Police were trying to intimidate us into moving the event. Despite posing no threat to any person or property, our event was surrounded by scores of police.

It is imperative that we maintain our democratic right to express a political opinion in a public place.

In the wake of the heavy-handed security during APEC I have called for an independent inquiry into the actions of NSW Police. There is ample video and pictorial evidence of what appear to be violent assaults by NSW Police officers on protesters in Sydney last weekend. Yet new Police Commissioner Scipione's response is "that's the way we do business in NSW now".

Police violence is not acceptable. The APEC special police powers have now terminated and should never return. The APEC security measures were the most authoritarian display of Police powers in this city in recent memory. We must not allow that sort of oppressive policing to become an accepted part of living in this city.

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