

# GREEN

MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GREENS

Chinese  
pollution: who  
is to blame?



Societal  
impact on our  
wellbeing and  
happiness



Australia's  
refugee  
policy shame



# The Australian Greens launch into a brave new world of digital campaigning

# GREEN

MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GREENS



- 2** editorial
- 3** letters to the editor
- 4** brazilian greens  
senator marina silva heads for the brazilian presidential office
- 5** news and updates
- 6** charities by the book  
derek mortimer analyses the new charity laws
- 9** 10c for change  
the ongoing saga of a national container deposit scheme frustrates senator scott ludlam
- 10** social wellbeing & happiness  
james kelso attempts to answer the question: what makes us happy?
- 14** closing the borders  
the debate surrounding immigration and refugees has fired up again. senator sarah hanson-young takes us through the key issues
- 18** made in the east  
china often gets the blame for high levels of pollution, but who is really at fault? greg baines investigates.
- 20** public opinion  
we roadtest a new section for this magazine - looking at the positive and negative opinions of the greens
- 22** guest green  
adam stone talks about his experience working for Médecins Sans Frontières
- 24** bob's back page



We've launched our new national website, ready and raring to go for the 2010 Federal election. But this is only the first step for the campaign.

The Australian Greens don't rely on big corporate donors. Our strength comes from individuals going above and beyond. That makes your donation even more important and special.

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the australian greens wish to acknowledge that we are on indigenous ground – this land is the spiritual and sacred place of the traditional owners and their ancestors and continues to be a place of significance. further, we thank them for sharing this land with us and agree to respect their laws and lores.

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The past few months have seen a lot occurring in the world of the Greens. Polls now show the party sitting on a massive 16%, which translates to 2.2 million votes. To put that in perspective, in 2007 there were 960,000 people who voted for the Greens, and we gained two Senators.

The Tasmanian Greens have entered Government, with a Labor-Green accord putting Nick McKim into a Ministerial appointment, and Cassy O'Connor becoming Cabinet Secretary.

Derek Mortimer looks at the recent changes to charity law in Australia (pg 6), while James Kelso tackles the broader question of 'what makes us happy?' (page 10).

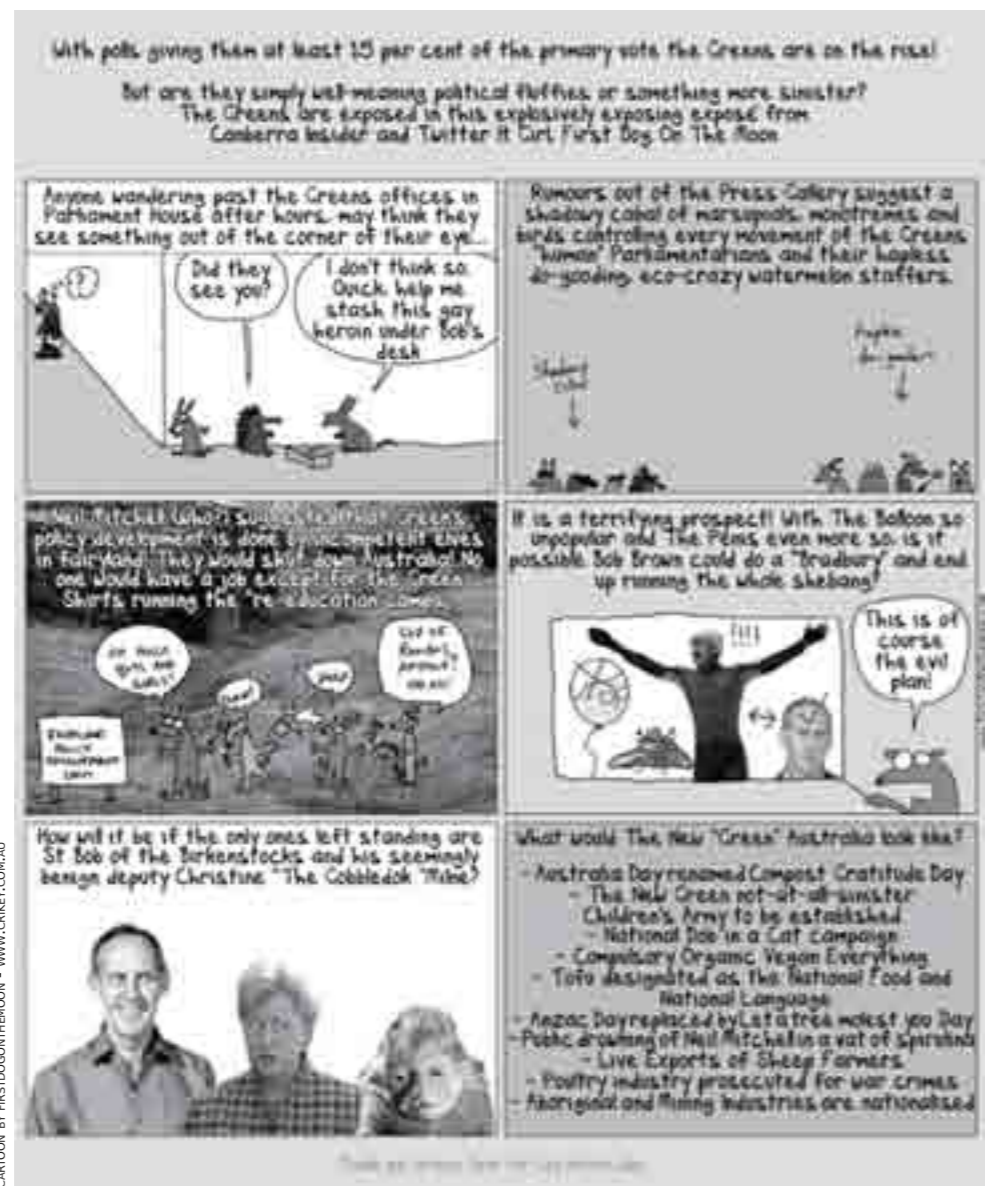
This edition we also have two articles from the Senate team - Sarah Hanson-Young takes us through the current landscape of immigration and detention in Australia (page 14), and Scott Ludlam gives an update on his ongoing campaign to introduce a national container deposit scheme (page 9).

Branching out beyond our own ranks, our Guest Green is Adam Stone, who recounts his experiences volunteering for Médecins Sans Frontières in Africa.

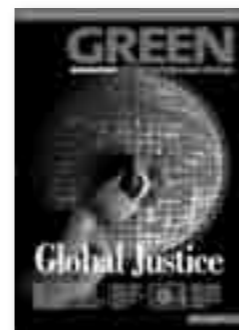
In the lead-up to the Federal election, the national campaign is gearing up and getting positioned on the starting blocks. A new, amazing website has been built at [www.greens.org.au](http://www.greens.org.au) to coordinate and educate on all things Green, and it looks to be a fascinating and fast-paced campaign.

We're also testing some new features in this edition - check out pages 20 & 21 for details. As always, I'd encourage members (and indeed, any other readers of this magazine) to send in your letters, feedback, articles and other suggestions.

**Lefa Singleton Norton - Editor**  
[greenmag@greens.org.au](mailto:greenmag@greens.org.au) ▲



CARTOON BY FIRSTDOGONTHEFLOOR - WWW.CRISLEY.COM.AU



I read with interest Claire Mallinson's article in issue 30 of *Green*.

The problem that I see is that the people from whom the rights legislation or constitutional reform will protect us is governments. How then can we expect politicians to give us those protections. It seems that all politicians, all lawyers are against it and everyone else wants it. That puts everyone else in a pretty weak position.

It should be noted that the only time people believe politicians is when they are talking complete drivel. I take as an example the odious ranting of Bob Carr on the subject of civil rights. "Do you want matters decided by an un-elected judge?" The right answer of course is "Yes please".

Who the hell wants elected judges. In bringing up the "Unelected" issue. Mr Carr is showing his fear of politicians losing the power to take away peoples' rights just as they wish.

Let's not forget Bob Hawke's try at this, which failed because the state governments were already doing the things that were to become unlawful, and so opposed the idea.

**ROB NEAVE**  
 Martin WA



In the leadup to the 2010 election, the Greens will

see the usual amount of attacks, smear campaigns and other nefarious tactics of the major political parties and their supporters.

It is important for us all to remember the real reason we are involved in this world - to affect real change.

We should not be drawn down to petty bickering or taking part in the usual political games that surround a campaign.

We have excellent candidates in every state, with excellent characters and true, good hearts.

I for one will be proud and glad to have more Greens representing me in Parliament, and look forward to the campaign.

**JESSICA HANDEL**  
 Corio VIC



Claire Mallinson [*Green*, summer 2010] left little doubt that the struggles for a Human Rights Act have been prolonged and born little fruit of any significance; more disturbingly, there is little cause for optimism considering that the government has ruled out any alteration to the constitution to accommodate such an Act.

The hypocrisy and selectivity of this government's position is glaringly evident in Rudd's threat - during March - of using a referendum to bully the states into accepting

his 'health revolution'. Apparently the PM envisages constitutional change as a mechanism for centralising power in Canberra, thereby hoping to endorse his own political and policy agendas.

The situation with regards to a Human Rights Act was accurately conveyed by Rudolf Rocker in 1947 when he wrote that "political rights do not originate in parliaments; they are, rather forced upon parliaments from without." Rocker warned against complacency: for even when rights have become law there is "no guarantee of their security" because "governments are constantly trying to restrict those rights or to reinterpret them by juridical hair-splitting. Political rights do not exist because they have been legally set down on a piece of paper, but only when they have become the ingrained habit of the people". The most blatant and recent reinforcement of this statement is the plethora of *Patriot Act*-style legislations throughout western 'democracies' under the guise of protecting communities from terrorists.

One right, essential to any self professed democracy, that is absent from both Mallinson's article and the Constitution is the right of citizens to be on the electoral roll; for in order to vote one must be registered

on the roll. Currently, there is no explicit right to vote embedded in the Federal Constitution, in fact voting rights are entirely a matter for the parliament. Thus, what we as citizens presume to be our basic democratic right is at the discretion and generosity of 'our' representatives.

Considering that government is fundamentally a contract of faith between the population and parliamentarians, and that those who govern are permitted to do so according to the consent of the electorate, there is a dichotomy, a breach of that faith when the Constitution fails to protect voting rights from the potential for aberrant vagaries that may emerge amongst elected representatives. However unlikely we may presume that potential to be, we currently have no safeguards in place.

**GRAEME DRYSDALE**  
 Ballarat-Hepburn region



**ED: Thank you to all our letter writers. We're interested to hear what all members think, and we encourage you to write a letter to the editor on any issue regarding *Green* magazine and its content. Letters are requested to be no longer than 400 words and will be edited for length. Please email them to [greenmag@greens.org.au](mailto:greenmag@greens.org.au) ▲**



Got something to say? Drop us a line at [greenmag@greens.org.au](mailto:greenmag@greens.org.au)

# brazil elections

If you thought the U.S. election was interesting, take a look at Brazil. The Green Party of Brazil has a new voice: Senator Marina Silva



Female, black, born in the heart of the Amazon, and analphabetic until the age of 16, Marina is the heir of Chico Mendes in the struggle to preserve the forest.

Marina has left the Worker's Party after 30 years and joined the Green Party last August to pursue a more sustainable economic development strategy.

Marina is standing as a candidate for the presidency of Brazil in the 2010 elections. This has already unleashed a movement, called the 'Marina effect' by the media, which has led the government and opposition to rush to propose green public policies and intensified the struggle for leadership in sustainable development.

Of course, because she is a black woman and very charismatic, the comparisons with Barack Obama have not taken long to arise. The obvious joke is that, while Democrats in the US had to select between an African American and a woman, Brazilians can get both in Ms. Silva.

In a presidential election which was restricted to the current government and opposition, both would compete to lead the race backwards. In this context, Marina brings

new and important questions to the presidential election process, giving voice to social and environmental movements who believe in a Brazil which is socially just, economically prosperous, culturally diverse and politically democratic.

The 'Marina factor' is already reflected in the polling for the presidential race in Brazil. Even without the same space in the media as the Lula government and Governor Jose

Serra, Marina was attracting 9.5% of the vote eight months before the election which will be held in October.

In the light of the new political landscape which the Green Party and Marina Silva are building in Brazil, we have to recognize that the green movement is becoming a strong new force, not only in Brazil but in Latin America generally. ▲

Roberta Moreno, Green Party -Brazil  
www.pv.org.br (portuguese website)

**“With the opportunity to try to construct this new future for Brazil and for the planet, I prefer to put my hopes in this movement.”**

**- Marina Silva**

# greens poll at 16%



The latest Newspoll (31/5) may turn out to be an outlier, but the marked drop in support and approval ratings for both Labor and the Liberal-Nationals, and their respective leaders, does seem to have a logical connection to the diminishing credibility and increasing cynicism and shallowness which both party's leaders have been displaying of late.

The 16% support level recorded for the Greens is not just a record for the party, but would be amongst the highest recorded for any third party at federal level. Of course it will be extremely difficult for the Greens to retain that level of support once the election is announced and the larger parties start kicking in their millions of dollars in campaign spending – not to mention their leaders' domination of the mainstream media coverage which inevitably occurs during the campaign proper.

But it makes Kevin Rudd seem almost prescient when he made his now notorious description of government misuse of public funds for self-promotion as a “cancer on our democracy”. No doubt the public are well conditioned to parties saying one thing in opposition and another when they get into government (and vice versa for that matter), but perhaps the speed with which Mr Rudd seems to have done this not only means his denunciations of the previous government are fresher in the memory, but also means memories of the previous government's own outrages in the same area are also fresher, making it much harder for the Opposition's cries of outrage to have much credibility.

Still, knowing that both the big parties practice the same abuses when they're in government that they criticise when they're in opposition doesn't do anything to stop it from continuing to happen. The very fact that the vast majority of people keep voting them back in despite this provides a pretty good incentive for them to continue the pattern. It isn't going to change unless enough people decide to switch their vote to different parties or candidates. ▲

Andrew Bartlett

# curtin uni forum

At a public policy forum at Curtin University on April 8, national Greens leader Senator Bob Brown recounted the story of the Chinese coal carrier Shen Neng 1, which ran aground on the Great Barrier Reef with 65,000 tonnes of coal and 1000t of oil. “We are told that a seaman fell asleep. But ... it is the government that is asleep,” he said.

The government continues to allow multimillion-dollar contracts to mine and export coal – one contract worth \$63 million dollars to China would add the equivalent of 12% to Australia's greenhouse gases if it were used here.

Senator Brown noted that the Kimberley gas project would add significantly to the production of greenhouse gases, and once gone would leave us with neither wealth nor sufficient energy to supply our own needs.

Unlike Norway, which puts aside a windfall profit tax of 50% from its gas and other resources to build sustainable energy and infrastructure, Australia was not preparing for the future. It would be a failure of the Henry Tax review, (which was about to be released), if it did not consider a similar proposal to use large sums of tax revenue from today's “boom” times to fund infrastructure for a sustainable future for Australia.

The Greens' proposed carbon levy would get Australia off its present “carbon fix”, particularly if working alongside feed-in tariffs for renewable energy projects. Fundamental changes are needed to take us from the age of materialism to one that is “about happiness and being able to relate in peace with our fellow human beings.”

Humans are currently using 130% of the planet's natural resources, endangering its ability to support and heal itself – a lesson lost on many at Copenhagen last year, who signed only non-binding agreements.

The two major parties are turning into one rightwing juggernaut, leaving the Greens to deal with the persistent and destructive character of capital. At the conclusion of his talk Senator Brown fielded questions on a range of topics, including the proposal for a carbon tax and its effects on business, climate change, and renewable energy. He supported the “registering and tagging” of political lobbyists in Canberra, the banning of political donations by corporations, limiting individual contributions to \$1000 and public funding of election campaigns. ▲

Richard Titelius



# charities by the book

Derek Mortimer looks at the law surrounding the political activities of not-for-profit entities and green groups

**A**id/Watch Incorporated will appeal to the High Court later this year against loss of its tax concessions. Whilst we await this appeal, it is worth reviewing a notable point in history and some popular misconceptions about political engagement by charities.

The imperative to prohibit slave trading may seem beyond doubt today, but it was not so in the early 1790's. This was the period of the French Revolution. The British public and government were fearful of uprisings by emboldened slaves aware of the new French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Some 40,000 British troops had apparently died to quell a slave uprising in what is now Haiti. This according to the British newspapers of the time, led to an "ambivalent attitude" within the British public to abolishing the slave trade.

It was in this atmosphere that the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, established in 1787, had to operate. The Society's members gathered evidence of conditions aboard the slave ships and engaged in "awareness campaigns" such as pamphleteering and making public addresses. The Society organised petitions to be brought to the British Parliament. The objective was to secure a legislative ban on slave trading. Unable to achieve this on their own, the Society helped to persuade independent Member of Parliament William Wilberforce to famously advocate in the House of Commons.

Today charities continue the tradition of research and awareness campaigns on matters of political controversy. The British registered charity Anti Slavery International is the direct successor to the early slavery abolitionist organisations. Slavery remains a live issue in our world.

Like the slavery abolitionists, some Australian charities such as Sea Shepherd Australia Limited need political intervention to fulfil their objectives. Other charitable institutions such as The Australia Institute, undertake research on matters of political controversy like climate change. The results of this research are disseminated to the public and can be used by political parties to develop policy.

Charities sometimes incorrectly assume that they cannot undertake political activities such as government lobbying or public awareness raising. But under Australian law, a charity may undertake activities that inherently are not charitable, providing the activities are relevant to furthering the charity's purpose.

These "incidental" activities (as they are called in charity law) include commercial activities and political activities. Incidental activities need not be minor or trivial. An incidental activity can be a charity's major activity. We know from the High Court decision in the Word Case (2008) however that the activity must "naturally and probably" support the charitable purpose of the entity ie the activity must be relevant to the charity's purpose.

In the Word Case, an organisation ("Word") operated a funeral business. Surplus from this business was used by Word for a charitable purpose, namely to advance religion by the translation and distribution of bibles. The High Court found that Word was a charitable institution because the business cash surplus was "naturally and probably" applied to a charitable purpose.

If political activities are not relevant to a charity's purpose, then a legitimate question does arise whether the organisation is a charity at all. It may be that the organisation has "morphed" into a quasi-opposition political party. This role may be useful, but it is not charitable. Hence charities need to remain vigilant to ensure they do not experience "mission drift", away from their original charitable purpose.

Charities and their supporters may also think they should avoid engagement with political parties at all and just get on with the job of "saving the world" from environmental and social disaster. This point of view is easy to understand when political processes seem inept or futile.

Ironically though, the more effective a charity is at addressing an issue, the more this can provide an excuse to the government of the day to do nothing. A charity that avoids engagement in political activity can

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effectively let a government “off the hook” from taking its share of responsibility for sometimes creating an environmental or social issue or to resolve it.

Charity regulators can protect charities from improper political interference. For example, in the lead up to the British 1997 election, several charities became involved in the “Real World Coalition”. The Coalition’s purpose was to raise green and social issues and to rate the political parties against how well the parties addressed those issues.

The then Prime Minister, John Major, wrote to the charities to express surprise that the charities were making a “political statement”. The charities according to media reports, perceived the Prime Minister’s letter to be a veiled threat. The Charity Commission stepped in however and affirmed that charities were entitled to remain in the Coalition.

Laws other than charity law help regulate the extent charities may engage in political activities. Charities like anyone else are entitled to the qualified privilege

of political communication, and must abide by laws against vilification and defamation, laws governing public demonstrations and laws preventing misleading and deceptive advertising.

It is worth remembering that the social purpose driving a political party such as the Australian Greens may broadly align with the purpose of some charities. A charity must maintain its independence from political

parties but there is scope to work together. The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade knew its limits; it needed the political voice of William Wilberforce if it was to succeed. But William Wilberforce also needed the Society, for without it he would have had little in Parliament to say.

This article is intended to encourage those

green groups who think that to engage in political activities may threaten their charitable endorsement to think again. Green groups should not rely upon this article however to replace legal advice based on their specific purpose and activities. ▲

**“Charities sometimes incorrectly assume that they cannot undertake political activities such as government lobbying or public awareness raising.”**

# 10c for change

Scott Ludlam experiences the slow suffocation of container deposit legislation in Australia



The Government has been strongly criticised this year for rolling out massive policy initiatives without properly thinking through the costing and institutional frameworks required to make them work. The \$43 billion National Broadband Network (NBN) and the home insulation scheme are two examples of big picture budget items that proceeded at breakneck speed unhindered by the normal process of internal checks and balances. The tragic results are a matter of record in the case of home insulation; the jury is still on the fence with regards the NBN. But what happens when the reverse occurs - when a simple good idea falls foul of bureaucratic inertia?

This seems to be the case with national Container Deposit Legislation (CDL) - one of the brighter ideas in an otherwise bleak waste management landscape. The concept is simple and familiar to anyone in South Australia (and now the Northern Territory). You get 10c when you return your used beverage container.

That’s it.

Since this time yesterday, Australians used and discarded about 38 million beverage containers. Maybe read that again. 38 million cans, bottles and tetra packs used once and then binned - about half of them recycled, and the other half headed for landfills, rivers and the side of the road. Since yesterday.

Putting a 10c deposit on each container will lift recycling rates into the 80 or 90% range, provide a handy source of income for sports clubs and school groups, create more than a thousand jobs, and save about 1.3 million tonnes of greenhouse gas. It will also establish a network of neighbourhood recycling collection points around the country that will also be a handy place to bring dead batteries, tyres and other intractable byproducts of the throwaway age.

A couple of years ago the Commonwealth Government noticed the manifest benefits of introducing such a

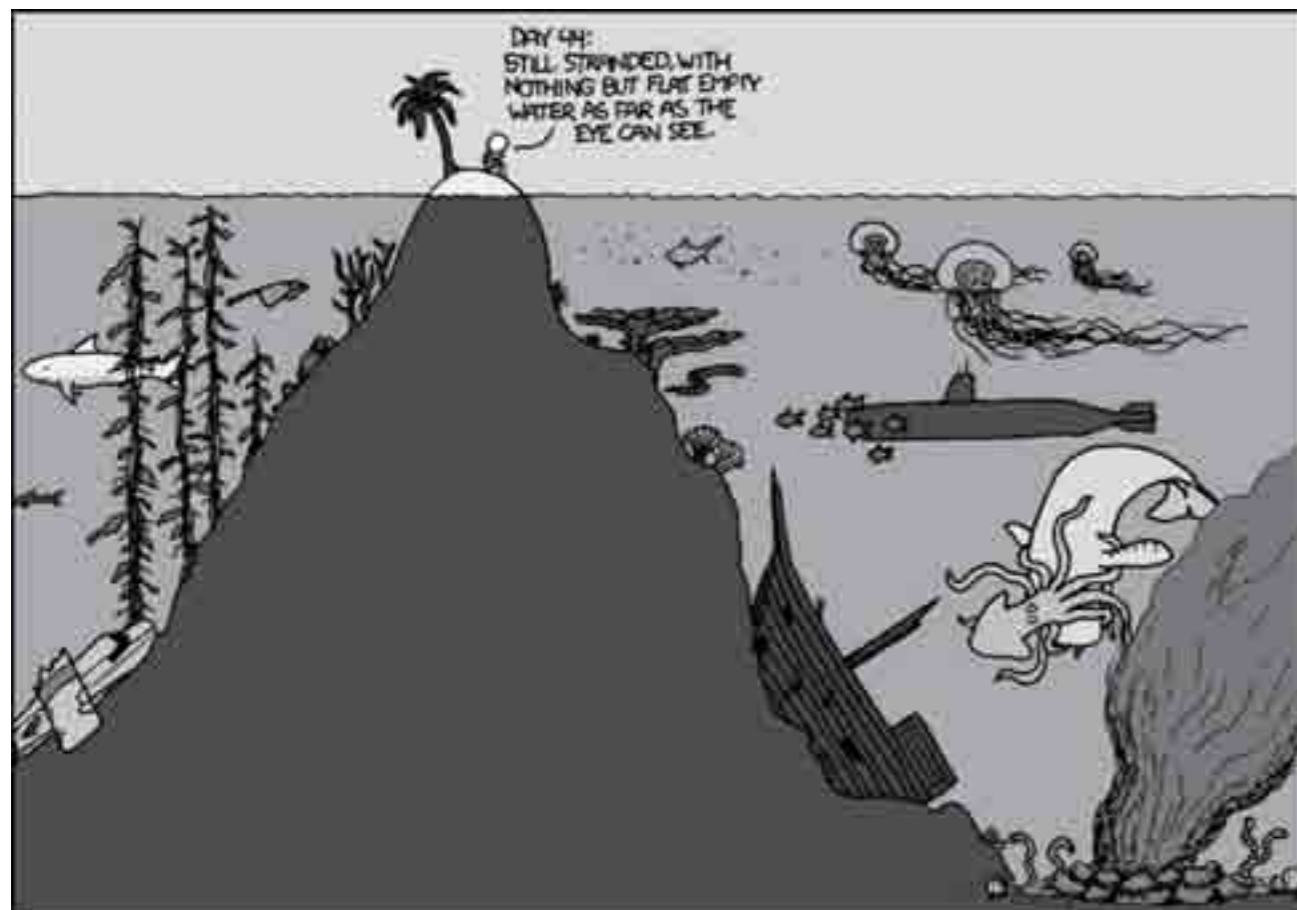
scheme nationally, glanced at the South Australians where the scheme has run since 1975 (for 5c initially) and taken the idea up for serious consideration within COAG. That was a couple of years ago. Something sad and familiar has been happening since then.

Sections of the beverage industry are extremely concerned that a scheme that will force them to take a small measure of responsibility for the products they pump into the world is supported by only 80% of Australians. They’ve run a focused and highly deceptive campaign of misinformation to which COAG has responded by smothering the national CDL scheme under a paralysing series of reviews, counter reviews, peer reviews and willingness to pay studies. The last time the WA Government tried to bring in a state scheme the industry did the same, and effectively killed the idea within the former Carpenter Government.

Consider the alternative: a national electronic waste scheme is just about to get on its feet, with \$23 million dollars worth of Commonwealth funding and concerted support from zero waste advocates, major industry players and the general public. Unlike a national broadband network, this really isn’t rocket science.

The way the gossip goes, Environment Minister Peter Garrett wants this scheme up and running, and industry opposition is fractured and half hearted. Unlike previous phases of industry push-back, key industry players including Alcoa, Revive Recycling, Eco Waste and SITA Environmental Solutions are now in support. A handful of Commonwealth bureaucrats are now the only ones holding out, piling review on top of review in an attempt to suffocate the scheme to death.

To get an idea of how this works in practice, spend ten minutes in an estimates hearing and see if you feel like faceplanting the table by the end - I certainly did. ▲







# social wellbeing & happiness

The pursuit of happiness is something that takes up a lot of thinking (and possibly acting) time in all of our lives. James Kelso attempts to answer the question: is all the effort really worth it?

Personally, I do not believe that 'happiness,' whatever that vague and variable floating signifier in life is, is really worth all the enormous and constant effort people put into 'finding it'. Some psychologists do not even believe in the concept of 'finding' happiness; that is, we only need look to a different state of mind in our own present lives to live it right now. I doubt that it is so seductively simple, but it is an enticing concept.

The problem with happiness is that it tends to get inextricably tangled up with other human emotions, such as the pursuit of wealth, a 'lifestyle', affluence, esteem, standing, influence or even power. These other emotions (and some more besides) people seek, but concurrently with, rather than apart from, happiness. Indeed, it seems almost counterproductive to the pursuit of a simple happiness to seek these aims, which is, I guess, why so many people find 'happiness' elusive. Happiness is like a chameleon – the closer you get to pinning it down, the better it becomes at changing to something else.

The problem is that people are unwilling to sacrifice those more high-falutin and complicated aims to find happiness. However, their task is made virtually impossible by the consumer market and economy that we live in. It is almost as though happiness is a word best known in the past tense, because if it is talked about in the future tense, it is really a source of anxiety and frustration, rather than joy and flourishing.

There has been a trend in the media over some years expressing the idea of an affluent, relaxed, comfortable,

well-catered for happiness, where one has all the trappings, the partner, the family, the pet dog, the suburban estate, the high-paying job, the café-lifestyle; but for most people this is a myth, an aim or aspiration. I do not think that it encapsulates the traditional sort of uncomplicated, non-desire-led happiness that exists in even relatively recent memory (a generation or two ago), and certainly not that of more romantic ideas of the past. It is as if there are two forms of happiness - one, that mostly exists as a myth in the past, and the second, which needs vastly greater resources, luck, expertise, talents - and constant hard work. The present is overlooked because that time is constantly spent

fantasizing about and pursuing the future.

This ethic has come into being as a result of media representations. These seduce the customer with the idea of a well-rounded, happy, comfortable lifestyle for the purposes of selling a product.

Whether someone attains happiness by constantly living the life that the media suggests, is anyone's guess; but I suppose that they are probably happier than the poor, deprived and desperate. Of course, the fact that constantly pursuing this lifestyle leads vast hordes of consumers to be poor, deprived, and desperate – is overlooked.

And that is the problem. In urban, developed societies with a strong media and market, i.e. a strong sense of consumerism, the media seems to take pains to avoid representing a happy, relaxed, contented lifestyle without the product. Indeed, it is rare these days to see representations of a happy, contented, relaxed lifestyle without desire and something bought in the picture.

**“We truly do live a life beyond our means, and yet none of us seems to know how to say ‘STOP’.”**

PIC CREDIT: STOCKXCHING

But perhaps the media, the government, private bodies, or benefactors, could pay for public representations of an enjoyable, healthy lifestyle in which little or nothing is spent. The media's cruelty in always tempting, prodding and requiring us to spend more than we do now, or can afford, for the essentials (or inessentials) of life is a prime cause of consumer unhappiness, leading to unhappiness generally in life. We truly do live a life beyond our means, and yet none of us seems to know how to say 'STOP'.

In the market economy no-one is allowed to be happy until they have 'made it', but, I ask, how much desire and frustration is left unabated until the mystical moment occurs? Even if one has 'made it'; that is, is comfortably well established in life and has a comfortably greater-than-average income, supposedly leaving one in a position not to be passive to the advertising media anymore, I doubt that such people really are free from desire. They will always want a bigger house, a newer, more prestigious car, a yacht, more investments, more real estate, or anything that will allow them to keep one step ahead of 'their Joneses', and, in their eyes, more aloof and isolated from the rest of 'ordinary mortal' society.

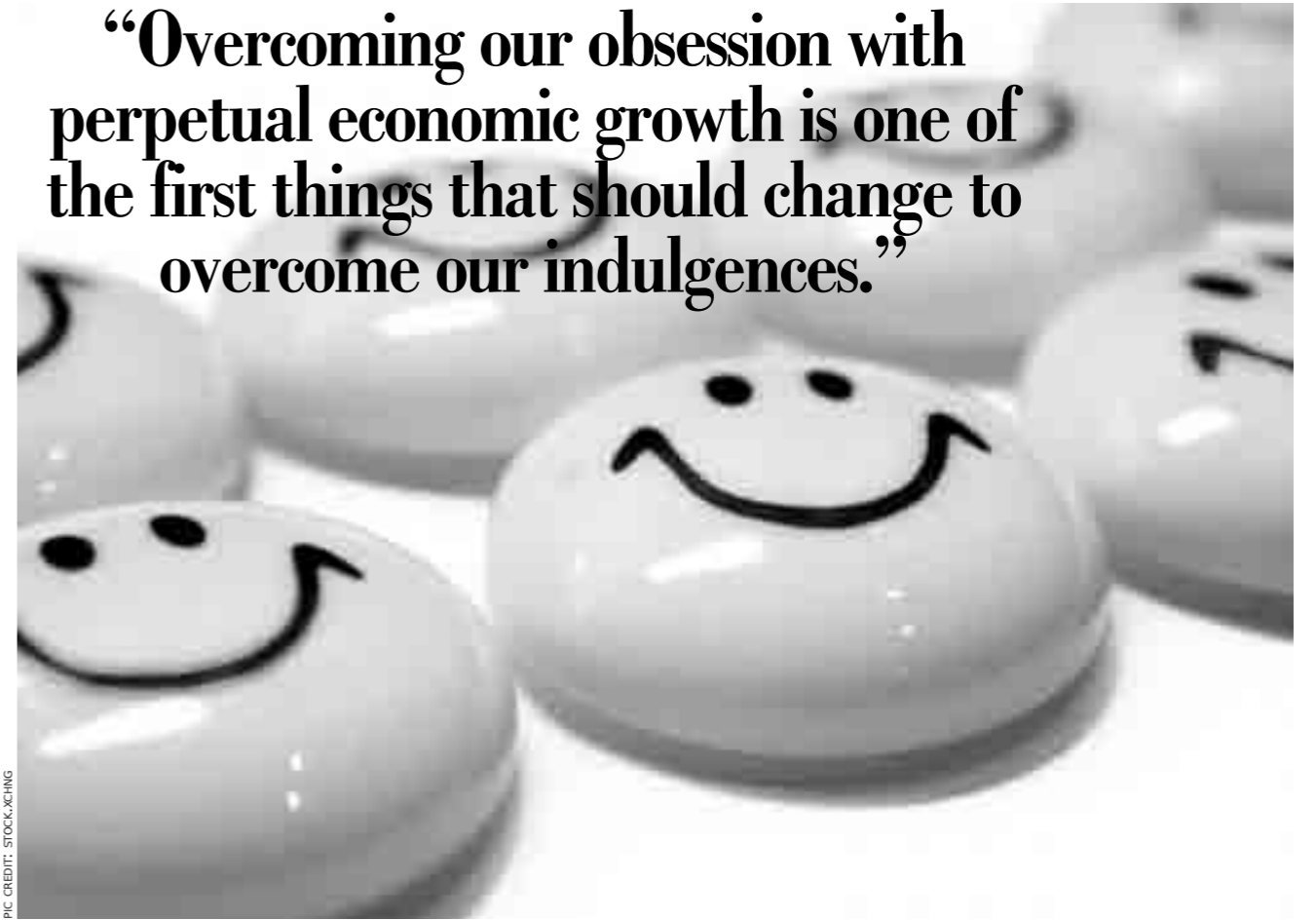
In the current era of unrestrained and unsound capitalism, this is the sort of thing that is allowed to occur. It is 'Selfish Capitalism', as the UK Clinical Psychologist and author Oliver James notes. Due to the constraints of the environment and the labour market, there is no possible way that everyone can live such a lifestyle anyway. Everyone in the Western

world should know that our 'affluence' is at the price of virtual enslavement of millions in the Third World, and our solution seems to be to give them another form of enslavement – our way of life! Of course, the environmental consequences of this consumer profligacy are ongoing and huge. However, the 'fault' can only partially go towards the consumer themselves. The consumer, as our current society will testify, in most cases will just accept and pursue what is given to them, like schools of fish swimming in the sea. The real people to blame are governments, captains of industry, and even some international (quasi-governmental) political and economic institutions, whose leaders have 'set up' the world, and the Western world, in particular, for this inexorable slide into consumer depression, unhappiness, and also environmental oblivion. It is also known that unhappy consumers make for more consumerism and purchasing – a sort of 'cheer up' pill – thus sustaining and perpetuating the cycle.

However I still think that we, as humans, should aim to keep parity between the achievements and success of all human beings, so that we can all be treated, and seen to be, as equals.

A globalised economy and interdependent political and cultural structure has made the spread of the product an unrestrained juggernaut. People need to realise that there is such a thing as happiness without buying things. It may be chatting to a friend, going for a walk, visiting a favourite nearby spot, visiting the

**“Overcoming our obsession with perpetual economic growth is one of the first things that should change to overcome our indulgences.”**



PIC CREDIT: STOCK.XCHNG

local library, or relaxing in the sunshine, but so many enjoyable things can be done with little or no cost. Today's consumerist lifestyle is dependent on the 'rush' that buying a product brings, and the period of delight (however short) that appreciation of this new product brings, before that appreciation is diminished or lost and we realise that we have yet another piece of detritus taking up room and cluttering the house.

Throwing these 'new purchases' out is difficult, sometimes impossible, too, because we think that 'they may have a use', or 'they should have a use', or 'someone could use it', but the fact is that with so many of them we don't want them any longer yet we can't bring ourselves to admit that we have wasted our precious money. Of course the solution is yet another consumer product on how to store, throw out, or clean up, just as the solution to 'overstress' from 'overwork' (necessary for our lifestyles), is to go on a holiday (the higher the expense, the better – we will advertise it for you, too, and make you wish you could go on a better one).

The consumer ethic to buy, buy, break down (deliberately), become dissatisfied (deliberately), and buy again (of course deliberately) is not going to make any way of life for future generations. Based on the sales of antidepressants, anti-anxiety drugs, and the need for all sorts of therapies, including over-spending therapies and the massive and continuing rise of mental illness in western society, my conjecture is that we have wrecked our current way of life also.

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So it seems that consumerism and the attainment of happiness have little in common. Whilst consumerism may promise happiness, most of the time it just leads to a diminished bank balance (causing unhappiness), and desire - sometimes a very strong sense of desire - for more (also frustration and unhappiness). The happiness that it does bring is too short lasting and transitory to have any long-term effect – your 'happiness' is dependent on you 'keeping up' – and keeping on spending. This is the basis of the whole of the Western economy!

My wish is that we can collectively extricate ourselves from this completely unnecessary condition that we have piled innumerable resources, thought, effort, and human imagination into creating over the last 50 years or so - really since the start of the Industrial Revolution. This starts with the acknowledgement of the problem, and an earnest desire to overcome the hangover of our bounty. Overcoming our obsession with perpetual economic growth – which is a key cause of climate change – is one of the first things that should change to overcome our indulgences. It seems that for all the forethought put into the consumer economy, remarkably less attention was paid to human psychology – will more stuff make us more happy?

We shall never find happiness so long as there is a greedy market, and people not necessarily concerned about their health or wellbeing, but their appearances. ▲

James Kelso is a Mental Health advocate and Greens member from Melbourne





# closing the borders

Sarah Hanson-Young looks at the Government's treatment of refugees and the consequences for our society.

Australia is meant to be a country that is proud of our commitment to justice, human rights and a fair go, yet in the heat of an election year all too often this seems to be forgotten by leaders of the old parties.

The Liberals under Malcolm Turnbull got the ball rolling last year when they announced a policy to bring back Temporary Protection Visas under another name – a clear contravention of Australia's obligations under the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

As the year ended, the saga of the *Oceanic Viking* and Kevin Rudd's decision to call in the Indonesian Government to intercept a boat with more than 250 asylum-seekers on board – who were then taken to Indonesia and left stranded at the port of Merak for 100 days - kept the issue running.

Entering an election year, the pressure on the Federal Government to turn up the frequency of its dog-whistling continued to increase, leading the Prime Minister to bolster his political rhetoric by announcing a "get tough on refugees" policy. However the policy announcement, when it came, caused great controversy.

At the heart of Labor's new direction was a decision to suspend processing of claims for asylum from Sri Lankans and Afghans. This retrograde step sent a clear message that Kevin Rudd had turned his back on a humane and compassionate approach to refugees.

The Refugee Convention prohibits discrimination against asylum-seekers based on their mode of arrival, so Australia's use of mandatory detention and excised territories already breached our obligations.

It was immediately clear that the suspension was also in direct contravention of Australia's international obligations, but experts quickly questioned whether it was also in breach of Australia's domestic anti-discrimination laws by singling out two particular nationalities for different treatment.

There is another fundamental problem with the suspension. The justification from the Government was that changing circumstances in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan that meant people should no longer be automatically seen as genuine refugees just because they were from the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, for example, or the Hazara community in Afghanistan.

The problem is that it is not at all clear that circumstances have changed in these countries. The civil war has ended in Sri Lanka, and large numbers of people have been released from the notorious camps run by the Sri Lankan Government, but there are still reports of Tamils being targeted for persecution.

A report released late last month from the International Crisis Group recommended a war crimes investigation to look into activities during the Sri Lankan civil war. It also raised doubts about the advisability of returning people, particularly members of the Tamil community, to Sri Lanka, even after the end of official hostilities.

In Afghanistan, the situation is just as bad. There are continuing reports of Hazaras being attacked and killed in a number of areas. It is believed that a number of Hazaras who are currently in detention in Australia are from areas where attacks are still taking place.

The suspension is a misguided attempt to look tough by the Government. The Greens believe it will do nothing to reduce boat arrivals, and will only lead to more vulnerable men, women and children being left in indefinite detention for no other reason than their country of origin.

The second plank of the new policy was a tacit acknowledgement that the detention centre at Christmas Island was completely overwhelmed by the numbers of asylum-seekers, because of the Government's own failure to process claims in a timely manner.







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Nevertheless, the Government's announcement that it would renovate and re-open the discredited "desert prison" at Curtin in outback Western Australia was a huge concern to all who support human rights in this country.

When the Federal Government followed up by announcing \$143.7million in budget funding for new or existing detention facilities, it was assumed that the money was going to Curtin.

From the latest Estimates hearings last month, however, it now appears that the new facilities will also include a disused mining camp at Leonora, more than 800km from Perth. Reports suggest that up to 30 families could be housed at Leonora within days. *[Ed: since time of writing, this has indeed occurred.]*

The Greens believe that asylum-seekers should be brought to the mainland, rather than Christmas Island - not detained in isolated desert prisons but rather metropolitan facilities which are closer to services, save taxpayers money and are better for detainees' mental health.

**“It is vital that all asylum-seekers have the right to legal aid and judicial review of all decisions that affect them.”**

As if the debate on asylum-seekers had not degenerated enough, Tony Abbott dragged his party even further to the right, vowing to re-introduce John Howard's notorious Pacific Solution – providing an offshore detention facility in another country – if the Coalition is elected.

Throughout this race-to-the-bottom on asylum-seekers by the old parties, the Greens have continued to stand up for the rights of vulnerable people:

The Greens would abolish the cruel regime of mandatory detention, while ensuring that full security and health checks continue to be conducted.

The suspension of claims is nothing more than a headline-grabbing manoeuvre – the Greens would move to end delays by reinstating processing for all asylum-seekers, in keeping with Australia's international obligations.

The Greens would end offshore processing on Christmas Island, and vehemently oppose any attempts to bring back the Pacific Solution, or TPVs. It is vital that all asylum-seekers have the right to legal aid and judicial review of all decisions that affect them.

The Greens, as they have always done, oppose detention as anything but a last resort, and oppose the detention of children under any circumstances. The truth is that Australia has an obligation to protect those who arrive on our doorstep, regardless of how they arrived.

No one is happy with the use of people smuggling to move asylum-seekers and refugees, but trying to turn boats back is not the answer. The answer is taking concrete action to support vulnerable people so they are not forced to make the trip in the first place. But for those that do, we must uphold our responsibility to protect them, not make them suffer further, simply because they were desperate enough to board a leaky boat.

The Greens support the establishment of proper assessment and processing of asylum claims in source countries to avoid the inevitable contract of people smugglers. It is also essential to provide greater support

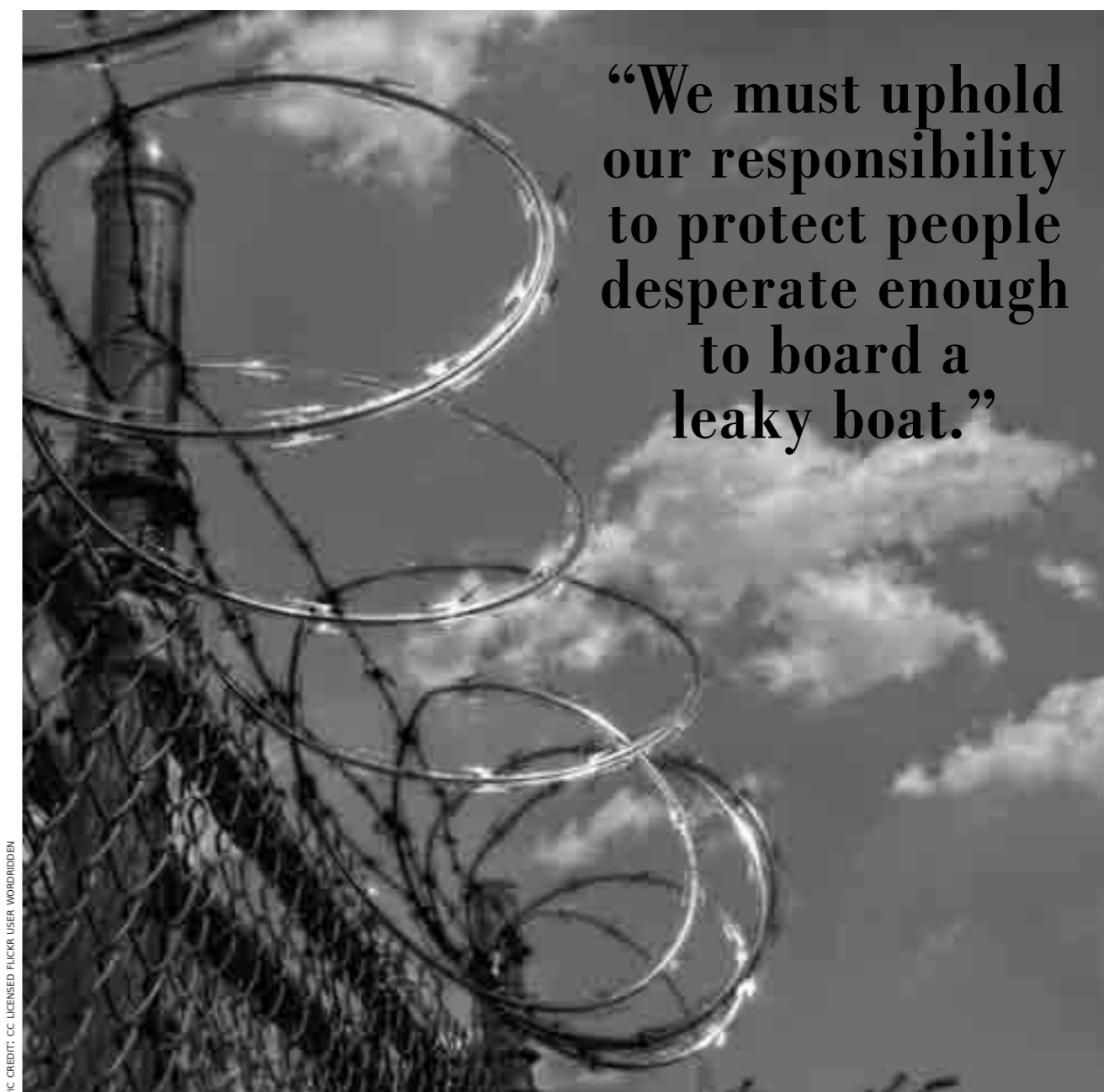
to specialised asylum-seeker and refugee services, both here and in places like Indonesia and Malaysia.

There is no guarantee that the old parties' false "test of toughness" on asylum is over yet – it is hard to see how much further Labor or the Coalition could go after the return of the Pacific Solution, but it would be foolish to rule out the possibility of more announcements once a campaign is called.

Regardless, the Greens will continue to hold the old parties to account, to question the need for inhumane treatment of vulnerable people, and to stand up for the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees.

We will reinforce the message to the Government and Coalition that the principle of the fair go must not be limited simply to those of us privileged enough to live in this beautiful country of ours. ▲

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young is the Greens Spokesperson on Immigration and Human Rights



**“We must uphold our responsibility to protect people desperate enough to board a leaky boat.”**

PIC CREDIT: CC LICENSED FLICKR USER WORDRIDDEN



# made in the east

Greg Baines looks at China's reputation for polluted cities, but is this dirty stamp warranted, or does the responsibility lie in the west?

**“It would be foolish to ignore the benefits to China of this dirty export manufacturing”**

It's common knowledge. Chinese cities have dirty skies, blue sky is rare, and pollution is a real threat. Beijing last year had around two hundred 'blue sky' days, and 2 days that were dangerous to humans. This is the cleanest the skys have been since data started to be collected in Beijing in 1998, but it is still not a healthy environment. Guangzhou, China's manufacturing centre, experiences between eighty and one hundred bad air quality days a year, days when the sky is unclear, and pollution is at dangerous levels. In 2007 it was reported that in China's 14 largest cities alone, air pollution was responsible for the deaths of 50,000 newborns each year.

There is a problem, illustrated above, with writing about "China". Most people from the outside don't factor in how big the place is. Looking at figures that average figures over the entire country are misleading. Cities like Dalian, in the country's far north, have received international awards in recognition of their attempt to clean up the environment. They are actually relatively healthy cities to live in. However, Guangzhou and similar cities further south, have a long way to go in cleaning the air pollution.

Dirty Chinese cities still pump out an immense amount of CO2 and 'bad air'.

This is framed in the international media as a national problem- China should put pressure on companies, China should impose tough regulations on industry, its up to China to tackle its pollution problems.

But who is really responsible for those problems? This is a question rarely addressed, but one that needs answering. Policy positions and solutions come after identifying the real underlying causes or problems, and working out fair ways of dealing with them. Knee-jerk nationalistic reactions to global issues are just bad policy, and do none of us any good.

Western countries like Australia do not complain about the reduced cost of electronics and consumer goods, which are being imported from China. Our continued high standard of living, to a degree, is bolstered by access to these relatively inexpensive goods. One could say our very standard of living is now in no small part 'made in China'.

Western consumption is driving many cities in China. Some Chinese now argue that the Chinese economy depends too much on exports to the West. These exports help to employ young rural people escaping poverty, and jobs for many of China's thousands of new University graduates. It is hard to get precise figures on the number of Chinese who are in employment because of the export industry, but its safe to say that tens of millions rely directly on export driven industries for their livelihood. This has consequences for the Chinese people and their survival.

It has been estimated that these same industries, the industries geared for export to us, spew out around a staggering one third of all China's pollution. About a third of all Chinese carbon emissions between 2002 and 2005 (or half of its rise over that period) were the result of producing goods for export. This comes after research, by Carnegie Mellon in 2009, found that 33 percent of China's emissions come from goods made for export. Put simply, we may be responsible for producing anywhere from a quarter to a third of China's pollution, and all the indirect costs which that imposes on the Chinese- from long term health issues to degradation of the land and soil.

It would be foolish to ignore the benefits to China of this dirty export manufacturing. It has benefited China in many ways. But to claim that China alone made the mess, and so should be pressured to 'clean up their own backyard' is absurd. The structure of the

international market system the Chinese had to join, promotes a race to the bottom not only for salaries and working conditions, but for environmental standards. The pressure to keep goods cheap means any expensive investment in production, or costs imposed by government to devote to environmental development, will see trans-national corporations (dominated by management and shareholders from the West) move to a country where the costs are less. Corporate globalisation is a race for the cheapest, and dirtiest products.

To shout at the Chinese government to clean up their act while we enjoy the cheap products, and western companies apply pressure to keep costs down, is hypocritical and a dereliction of our responsibility. Westerners could boycott Chinese products, but that would cause human misery and enormous economic instability.

We, as well as the Chinese government, need to work in partnership to help to not only clean up China, but partner to develop sustainable solutions together. There is a real will within the Chinese body politic, and the influential middle classes, to do this. There is a will amongst broad majorities in the West. But our governments are passing the buck, and waving their national flags at each other.

If China's dirty skies are made in the west, and if the world really is one 'global village', then we need policies that build partnerships between nations. Arguing about environmental issues on the basis of lines imposed by us on a map is outmoded, and destructive. We need to rethink the problems so we can think about more clever and responsible solutions. ▲

Greg Baines is a Greens member based in Shanghai



# public opinion

Sometimes the most interesting comments about the Greens come from unlikely sources. In this new section, we feature both praise and criticism of the Greens', to spark and fan the flame of healthy debate and encourage readers to get involved in the public debate through the mainstream media.

If we had a democracy where decisions were based on the public's best interest, then that [the Greens' proposal for an interim carbon price] would be taken up in a heartbeat. Neither of the major parties gets it - or they don't want to get it.

**Dr James Hansen, Director of the NASA Goddard Institute of Space Sciences. The Age, 4 March, 2010**

Bob Brown is not the Messiah, and it simply isn't true that the Greens are any form of pure alternative. What is true is that they're sophisticated politicians, skilfully executing a political strategy. During the Howard years, the Greens used the PM, his Government and the US alliance as an ogre to prove their purity. But with Howard gone, the Greens needed a new Great Satan, and what greater Satan could there be than the Australian Labor Party?

**Luke Wallage. ABC The Drum, 8 June 2010**

As people become increasingly disillusioned with the government (down to a 35% primary vote) and wary of the opposition (on 41%), there is now a real prospect of serious power in the hands of the unaccountable, job-killing ideologues of the green movement.

**Miranda Devine. Sydney Morning Herald, 3 June 2010**

Tony Abbott's Coalition is considering dumping a habit of an electoral lifetime by hunting Green preferences. Let's be clear. These are [the] Australian Greens who in previous elections the Libs and Nats have held at arm's length and condemned as the far left and soft on drugs or worse.

**Malcolm Farr. Daily Telegraph, 1 June 2010**

There's lots of positive changes within the Greens' amendments that could make [the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme] better.

**Fran Kelly. ABC Insiders, 15 November 2009**

The most thought-provoking comment I've seen on the budget came from Senator Christine Milne of the Greens. "Every Australian knows," she said, "that if you have two credit cards, it is very bad management to pay off your debt on one of them by racking it up on the other." The budget "pulled down the national economic debt, but it continued the process of racking up our ecological debt".

Sadly, it's true... Milne is right: we have been paying off our economic credit card by racking up debt on our environmental credit card.

**Ross Gittins. Sydney Morning Herald, 19 May, 2010**

Finally, there's Senator Bob Brown, who may be taken seriously as people turn green in desperation. He should not be taken seriously. His policies are constructed in fairyland by incompetent elves. They would shut down Australia.

**Neil Mitchell. Herald Sun, 3 June 2010**

I'd rather see the [Australian Building and Construction Commission] law go now because the ABCC is still targeting and harassing construction workers. But I also don't mind the fact that under a Green balance of power we are likely to see a far more friendly piece of legislation.

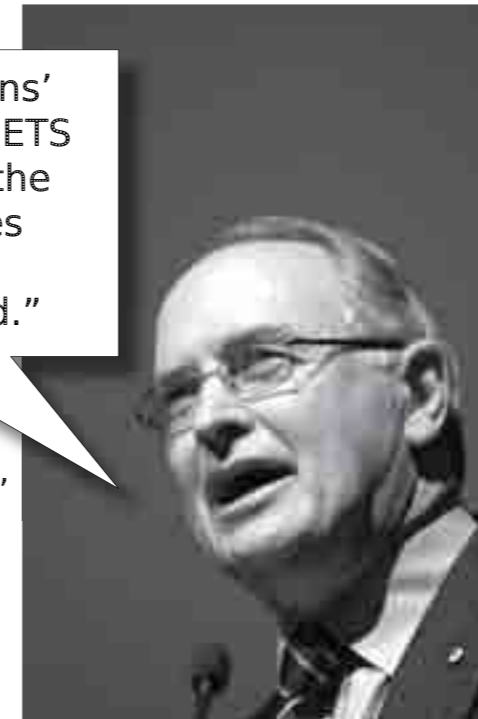
**Paul Howes, National Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union. The Age 15 December 2009**

The Greens risk is not radicalism, but timidity. Far from being radical, Greens representatives have been remarkably centrist in their politics. In terms of the perception of the party as being a collection of 'radical greenies', the firm foundation of the party and identification with environmentalism has given the Greens a clarity and continuity of meaning, message and purpose that the more centrist Democrats never had.

**Aron Paul, former national president Australian Democrats, ABC The Drum, 8 June 2010**

"The Australian Greens' recent support of an ETS with a fixed price in the early years introduces another politically practical way forward."

- Professor Ross Garnaut,  
25 Jan 2010



Even when [Rudd] announced billions of extra dollars to the biggest polluters on Tuesday, he lacked the policy nous to make this conditional on cuts to emissions. Instead, he subsidised them to keep polluting as usual.

**Brian Toohey. Australian Financial Review, 28 November 2009**

[The Greens] are the only party to emerge from the debate on the emissions trading scheme with reputation intact.

**Richard Farmer. Crikey, 25 November 2009**

The real criticism that should be levelled at Mr Rudd and Senator Wong is that they devised a policy that was too generous in its compensating payouts to high-emission industries such as aluminium, and to power generators and households, and was therefore likely to be ineffective in changing behaviour. No wonder the Greens would not support it.

**Editorial. Australian Financial Review, 30 April 2010 ▲**

## And now it's your turn...

What are your thoughts after reading these comments? Do you think the criticism aimed at the Greens is valid? Are you surprised by some of the positive thoughts coming from these sources?

As always, we welcome your feedback on any of these topics in our letters to the editor section.

We'd encourage all readers of *Green* to follow the mainstream media reporting of the Greens in the lead-up to the election and encourage you to write letters to the editor. You can find more info on how to make your voice heard in the media at

[www.greens.org.au/letters](http://www.greens.org.au/letters)

From our next edition and into the future, we will be featuring a range of views on some of the issues most central to the Greens.

For our next edition, we're interested to hear your views on the subject of **urban infill**.

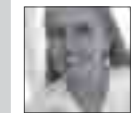
Do you support it? Are you against it? Have you experience in this area?

Drop us a line and let us know - [greenmag@greens.org.au](mailto:greenmag@greens.org.au)



**@RichardDiNatale**  
Victorian Greens lead  
Senate candidate

Hard to believe that Rudd could spend less on mental health than Abbott did when he was health minister.



**@LeeRhiannon**  
Greens NSW lead  
Senate candidate

Upper House votes 27 to 4 against Greens Gaza motion. We called for blockade lift, UN investigation. #nswparl



**@GregMLC**  
Victorian Greens  
Member for North Metro

Brumby's new integrity commission goes further than an ICAC and picks up many issues we've been pushing since 2006



**@AlisonXamon**  
Greens WA Member  
for East Metro

The discovery of a new species of fish vindicates the decision not to proceed with the Yarragadee water supply project



**@SenatorLudlam**  
Australian Greens  
Senator for WA

About to ask Kim Carr in Senate #qt on why the NT is still being targeted for radioactive waste

Find these green tweeps and more at [www.greens.org.au](http://www.greens.org.au)



# adam stone

In 2009, Adam Stone left the safe surrounds of suburban Canberra to volunteer with Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) in northern Nigeria



## Where were you posted and what was the work you were assigned to undertake?

I was sent to Jahun, a small village in Jigawa State, northern Nigeria, where Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) runs an emergency obstetric project as well as a surgical project repairing vesicovaginal fistulas (VVF). VVF is a hole in the vaginal wall generally caused by prolonged obstructed labour. It results in involuntary discharge of urine into the vagina, leaving women incontinent and potentially ostracised from their communities.

MSF is working at the public hospital in Jahun alongside Ministry of Health staff, offering free surgery to VVF sufferers in an effort to repair the damage. Sixty percent of women are continent when they are discharged from the hospital, and they receive follow up treatment for three months after the procedure. Médecins Sans Frontières is also working in the maternity ward, trying to prevent fistulas being created in the first place.

I was the logistician and administrator for the project, looking after supplies, transport, hiring and firing, finances, repairs, reporting, security. All the non-medical stuff, basically. I don't really have any skills, as such, so I should stress that I was working alongside a large team of Nigerian staff who actually knew how to do things.

## Was the experience what you expected?

Ummm, I don't know. I don't think I had any clear expectations. I guess in some important respects it was. On a selfish level, I hoped that I would have a much greater opportunity to become part of the community and befriend the locals than is usually possible when travelling, and that certainly happened. On the other hand, I thought I would learn a range of practical skills to do with generators and cars and water and sanitation, but for the most part I found I was stretched to the limit coordinating such things, with little opportunity to be involved in a hands-on capacity.

I also assumed that I would feel very involved with the circumstances of our patients and feel invested in their recovery (or otherwise). But in reality, I was so caught up with my non-medical responsibilities that the patients and their medical successes continued to feel quite distant. While of course I knew we were all there for them, I wasn't very involved in the emotional ups and downs of their individual medical outcomes. I was more intimately involved in the health of our generators, cars, etc.

## What drew you to volunteering for an organisation such as MSF?

A combination of the do-gooder impulses we 'bleeding hearts' suffer from, a desire to get some international field experience with a humanitarian NGO, a hunger for constant change, excitement, adventure, and the chance to become part of a community in an unfamiliar culture/country.

## Did you have a particular interest in aid work before volunteering?

I have a longstanding interest in international humanitarian NGO work. I have a background in

international law and in conflict resolution, so I am very interested in NGOs that monitor and report on human rights/international humanitarian law conditions (e.g. Human Rights Watch, the International Committee of the Red Cross) and push for improvements, and in NGOs that are involved with conflict analysis and resolution (e.g. the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, International Crisis Group). So my personal focus has not really tended to be aid work exactly (understood as international development assistance). It's an important area though, so I am pleased that there are reputable organisations out there working on it. And I am particularly interested in the non-government organisations undertaking such work, as they are free to operate in a more independent way with no agenda aside from assisting their target populations (not necessarily in all cases, of course, but at least they are free from the dictates of governments' foreign policies and sensitivities).

## Do you think this experience has broadened your understanding of aid work in developing countries?

It has given me a more detailed picture of some of the myriad difficulties of working in developing countries. A general lack of good skills, education, quality materials, reliable electricity, clean water, a culture of accountability, and many other resources that we form a habit of expecting to be available, complicates just about everything you do. It can be very involved and time consuming managing just the basics of establishing, staffing and sustaining a project before you even begin to look at the far bigger issue that the project has been established to address. That was my experience in a peaceful environment (the ongoing violence in the Niger Delta and the ethnic violence that recently erupted in Plateau State did not affect life in Jahun) with one of Africa's biggest cities (Kano) only two hours drive away, so imagine how it must be intervening in a medical crisis during an active conflict with no access to local supplies!

It has also given me first hand experience with the scale of some of the issues that aid organisations set out to address. The project where I worked was stitching up fistulas and looking after the maternity ward. To do this, they had a team of 8 expatriates, living quarters with office, warehouse, pharmacy, around 60-70 local

staff, 4 or 5 generators to provide all of those places and the hospital with electricity, 4 cars, bores/pumps/tanks/chlorine to provide clean water to MSF premises and the hospital, and the list goes on. With all of these resources, the project managed to operate on up to 20 or so VVF cases per month (in addition to a hefty workload in the maternity ward – some 200 admissions and 150 deliveries each month in 2009). Yet all around that region, new fistulas were being created every day due to a lack of adequate obstetric care. To actually solve the problem, hundreds of midwives would need to be trained and based in the villages. This would obviously require a massive and ongoing injection of funds into Nigeria's health system and the right health policy settings. It is far beyond the capacity of a small, localised project by an NGO.

## What lessons do you think the Greens can learn from the programs and work of MSF?

MSF has projects in 60 countries or so, often with multiple projects in many countries, like Nigeria. They publish information about their projects and the broader context in their countries of operation. So whenever we Greens are considering our policy on an issue with international ramifications where Médecins Sans Frontières is involved, it would be worthwhile consulting their reporting for a source of independent information about circumstances in the country concerned. ▲

*Médecins Sans Frontières has worked in Nigeria since 1996. In addition to the program in Jahun, they run a trauma surgery and hospital program in Port Harcourt in the oil-rich Niger Delta, and also primary health care and mother-and-child healthcare programs in Bayelsa state. They run a maternal health program in Sokoto state in the north. In 2009 the organisation was also responsible for a mass vaccination campaign against a meningitis outbreak where they vaccinated over 4.5 million people in three months.*

You can read more about the work of MSF at [www.msf.org.au](http://www.msf.org.au)  
*The opinions expressed in this interview are the individual's and do not represent the opinions of Médecins Sans Frontières.*





# Bob Brown



## BOB'S BACK PAGE APRIL 2010

### Tasmania's 22% triumph

Twenty-two percent of Tasmanians voted Green, topping Kerrie Tucker's ACT vote of 21 percent at the last Senate election and a whisker short of the 23 percent scored lately by the French-speaking Belgian Greens. In Europe there is a mature reaction to the Greens' success. Here, The Australian argued that Green voters should be effectively disenfranchised. No "one vote one value" in Rupert's world!

Tasmania's L-plated Liberal leader Will Hodgman refused to talk with the Greens. After declaring he wouldn't talk either, the Labor leader, David Bartlett, came back to Earth and (at the time of writing) was discussing limited options with Nick McKim's team.

### Dirt works

In South Australia, despite earlier poll predictions, the Liberals lost to Labor, and Independent (and former Greens) MP for the seat of Mitchell, Kris Hanna, lost by 305 votes. Without Labor's dirt in Tasmania, the Greens' 22 percent would have been 25 percent, and the Greens' five seats, seven. Unless Kevin Rudd explains otherwise, it is safe to assume Labor's both-barrels attack in Tasmania, which paralleled those in the same week on SA Liberal leader Isobel Redmond and Kris Hanna, was nationally coordinated.

In all three cases Labor representatives mounted a false attack, claiming their Greens, Liberal or Independent opponents were promoting illicit drugs and seeking favours for, or from, jailed killers or rapists. Dirt works – and the media love it. Labor's ads on its opponents got big profile coverage in both states. Seeing this nasty plan unfolding, I moved in the Senate for a Truth-in-Political Advertising arbiter to be set up in the Commonwealth Electoral Office. The Labor and Liberal senators (including those in your state) voted against the motion and not a soul in the Press Gallery covered it. So, get ready for such dirt to be rolled out against us Greens in the federal election – by Labor or, perhaps with the Exclusive Brethren's help, the Liberals.

### Dingo

Paul and I had four lovely days in Australia's Red (Green!) Heart - here's a picture from Kings Canyon. Forty years ago I slept out under Centralian skies with a dingo calling in the hills. We relished that experience, with Venus setting before the new Moon as russet Mars moved west and a coruscade of falling stars painted trails across our retinas – with the dingo yowling in the hills. Have you ever swum the stunning slit of Redbank Gorge?

### Nuclear numbskull

There was also a vigorous question time after my National Press Club debate with Ziggy Switkowski on his plan for 50 nuclear power stations in Australia. I highlighted the acute risk of spreading nuclear technology facilitating terrorism. That sent *The Australian's* David Penberthy into a fizzyfit. His Weekend Australian rant, the following weekend, claimed (in his words) that I declared "its far too risky for Australia to develop a nuclear power industry because all those damned terrorists out there will try to blow up our reactors or steal nuclear material to make warheads". He should have waited a few days for Obama's global leaders (where was Rudd???) conference on nuclear terrorism. Australia's Ambassador to Washington, Kim Beazley, said that someone has to bell the cat and say "Well OK, we all say it (nuclear terrorism) is a no brainer, but what do you actually do about it?"

President Obama pointed out (as I had at the Press Club) that "terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda have tried to acquire the material for a nuclear weapon, and if they ever succeeded, they would surely use it"!

Don't expect Penberthy to grizzle about such senior politicians "belling the cat". It drives him crazy that the Australian Greens are taking a domestic lead on this vital issue. Penberthy, in brushing aside my "alarmist nonsense", advocated that if we're bold enough to embrace a nuclear waste storage industry "it would make us a stack of money". The extreme right's argument always comes down to money.

### Liffey arch

The Sydney Harbour Bridge is getting a rival. Friends are helping with design and engineering to build an arched steel footbridge over the turbulent Liffey River where the old road bridge collapsed two years ago. So, soon the track to home and up Drys Bluff will begin with an exciting new bridge walk. It will also be the ideal spot to watch for platypuses. Everyone will be welcome. Meanwhile, enjoy the winter. ▲

### Bob



*'A company we can invest ethically with is music to our ears.'*



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“Environmental pollution is responsible for a tenth of all physical defects in Chinese infants.”

Hu Yali - Genetics professor at Nanjing University



Factory in Shimen, Hunan province, China.