

Racist new welfare laws



The Howard Government has detailed changes to the provision of welfare payments and services to Aboriginal people and communities which will amount to a form of collective punishment imposed on a national minority based on race, and a violation of local and international law. Parenting, unemployment and other benefits will be made conditional on behaviour requirements which will be enforced via a "smart card" or the withholding of payments or services. The provision of services, infrastructure and assistance will also be made conditional on behaviour requirements.

The Government's approach to Aboriginal people "stinks of apartheid" said Aboriginal leader Mick Dodson. "It is racist to expect these rules to apply to Aboriginal people when they do not apply to everybody."

And it is more than an extension of the Government's cheap labour service to business, the "mutual obligation" work-for-the-dole scheme. The proposed changes play on and encourage racist sentiments, stigmatising and in effect blaming Indigenous Australians for their own poverty and social problems, particularly in remote communities.

If their behaviour does not comply with the demands of the authorities, they, their families and in some instances whole communities are to be punished. Punishment will be either financial, creating more hardship, or may be in the form of the non-provision of services or other assistance.

For example, Indigenous par-

ents could lose parenting payments if their children fail to attend school, do not shower daily or have regular health checks. Maintenance work on public housing might only be carried out if the children of families who live there attend school.

Welfare benefits would be paid through "smart cards", which store information on spending and could even set electronic limits on what is purchased.

There are also proposals that non-monetary payments be given to communities. For example, improved school attendance might result in the provision of a DVD player or the running of movie nights for children who attend school.

"Many Indigenous Australians do not have access to jobs, clean water and adequate housing and so their health is poor", said Australian Council for Social Service President Andrew McCullum. "Withdrawing income support to some parents as a 'stick' to influence behaviour will only mean that extended families have to spread their resources further. This is likely to lead to even worse living standards for Indigenous people."

Where families and communities are concerned, it amounts to a form of collective punishment. It adds to the Howard Government's long list of attacks on Indigenous Australians which includes the destruction of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the gutting of native title and the rejection of the existence of the Stolen Generations.

Communities would be expected to sign "shared responsi-

bility agreements" (SRAs) which will also include work requirements for adults. Examples cited include collecting rubbish from each house twice a week and managing the local rubbish tip.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, said, "I would be deeply concerned if conditions were introduced which place restrictions on access to services for one sector of the Australian community defined by their race."

"It would be unacceptable for Indigenous peoples to be denied basic citizenship services that all other Australians take for granted."

"Any proposals for reform must comply fully with the Racial Discrimination Act and the principle of non-discrimination more generally."

"Proposals which fail to do so should be rejected outright as morally repugnant and not fit for modern Australian society", he said.

Trial run

This is not the first such scheme where welfare payments were made conditional on carrying out specified activities. JobSearch, for example, makes payment conditional on attending interviews, filling out endless numbers of forms, applying for a certain number of jobs, undertaking training, etc.

The work for the dole requirements were imposed first on Aboriginal people, through the Community Development Employment Program before being extended to the broader community.

Thus, the scheme was trialled on Indigenous people, and once established extended to non-Indigenous Australians.

This is what the Government has in mind with this latest move. The aim is to gain public acceptance of the policy through its imposition on Indigenous Australians. Then the Government will seek to apply it to all welfare recipients.

It will be promoted using all the selling power of advertising. Already the Government is describing it as "self reliance" and "the end of passive welfare".

The concept of "self-reliance" is based on the false idea that poverty is voluntary, that people are to blame for their poverty – and that the only way to make them self reliant is to take away their welfare.

Poverty is not caused by welfare. It is a product of a system that is by its nature exclusive and discriminatory, that is in crisis, that has no solutions for ending unemployment, homelessness, or racism. The Howard Government, in fact, has the objective of reinforcing all these things and more.

Cabinet documents show that the government already has detailed policies targeting Indigenous communities on education, jobs, community service, income support and business development programs "to address passive welfare and encourage self-reliance".

Offices raided

The various policies contained in these and other leaked documents have been suppressed by the mass media. The *National Indigenous Times* had tried des-

perately to alert the public. It was only when the *Australian Financial Review* on November 10 published policy information on plans for Indigenous welfare that the whole malicious agenda made mainstream news.

The next day the Australian Federal Police raided the offices of the *National Indigenous Times* in the ACT with a warrant to seize two documents. The agents are reported as having removed six documents.

The paper's editor Chris Graham said the Prime Minister's Department ordered the raid because the documents, which the *National Indigenous Times* published, were embarrassing to the government.

But the newspaper had more secret documents it was preparing to publish, he said.

"This government has been dishonest in the way it's dealt with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal affairs generally."

"And I can understand them not wanting it to get out, but I can't for the life of me understand how they thought raiding our offices would have assisted their cause."

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance Federal Secretary Chris Warren condemned the raid. "The only crime that's potentially been committed is a bit of embarrassment for the government and a bit of embarrassment for some of the bureaucrats", he told ABC radio.

"To turn that into this sort of assault on press freedom, to take that embarrassment to that stage of raiding newspaper offices with police, is an extraordinarily serious step." ✪

The Guardian

No 1207

November 17, 2004

A symbol of the struggle against tyranny

Yasser Arafat died a hero and martyr of the Palestinian people. He was respected in many countries around the world but not by the leaders of the US, Australian and Israeli governments.

An estimated 100,000 Palestinians packed the square as his funeral was taking place in Ramallah. They expressed their love and affection for the man and his commitment with his years of struggle on their behalf. Only the security arrangements of the occupying forces prevented a gathering of a million mourners taking place.

Yasser Arafat has been the symbol of the Palestinian people's struggle against the most unrelenting oppression. He personified the striving of his people for a homeland and provided leadership to the three million people making up the Palestinian Diaspora.

It was always a David and Goliath struggle and Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian people never gave up despite the enormous odds facing them. Arafat did not betray his people and remained steadfast in defiance of the unrelenting aggression from the occupying Israeli forces.

He was there through the decades of armed struggle waged by the marginalised inhabitants of the region's refugee camps. He led these forces away from possible annihilation while in exile in Lebanon in 1982. He took personal responsibility for directing the Intifada that led to the breakthrough Oslo Agreement of 1993.

He rejected the subsequent attempts to rob the Palestinians of a viable homeland and stood firm in the demand for the return of all the lands occupied by Israel after the June 1967 invasion.

These facts were recognised by the international community when Yasser Arafat was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

This is why the Palestinian people shed tears and came to mourn in such numbers and with such emotion.

But even as he lay dying, the US and their military arm in the region, Israel, relentlessly pushed for a "change" of leadership that would capitulate to their demands and abandon the struggle for a Palestinian state. Of course, the push was not presented in this way. Arafat was said to be an obstacle in the way of a peaceful settlement who was unwilling to put an end to violence. Yet it was the Israeli leadership which only a few months ago was considering his assassination or expelling him from the occupied Palestinian territories.

It was the Israeli right-wing who years earlier assassinated Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin, an Israeli leader who was prepared to sit at the negotiating table with the Palestinians.

It is the government of Israel that is building an apartheid wall to separate the Palestinians from the Israelis and to carry out a massive land grab. It is the Israeli army that destroys the houses and orchards of the Palestinians and protects fundamentalist settlers who seize the lands of the Palestinians.

The Palestinians, with no standing army and facing the biggest military force in the Middle East, were left with no other course but to strike back in guerrilla raids.

The supporters of Israeli aggression, including the Howard Government, ignore all this.

The *Australian Financial Review's* headline declares that Yasser Arafat was "the dreamer who failed to deliver". Rupert Murdoch's *Australian* newspaper claims that Arafat's death "gives peace a chance".

John Howard declared that "history would judge Arafat harshly". Will it? All the scurrilous comments by the media in Australia and in other countries where the fundamentalist Zionist lobby remains strong and influential will not wash away the truth.

It is Howard's place in history, as a US sycophant who lied to the people to go to war, and much more, which will be a cause of shame and disgust.

Yasser Arafat will be long remembered not only by the Palestinians but also by the many others who recognise in him a symbol of national liberation fighting against a terrorist state.

Press Fund

"Deal on US free trade in sight", ran the headline in the *The Australian* newspaper, one of Rupert Murdoch's more subtle and sophisticated pro-Bush rags. Murdoch's News Ltd empire promotes the global dictatorship of the transnational corporations, and this includes the trade agreement with the US Bush administration which will allow the plunder of Australia's natural resources and the increased exploitation of the labour of Australia's workers. Of course there is opposition to the drive for world domination and we in Australia are part of this movement. But we need to build the newspaper that will counter the lies and half-truths we face every day in the capitalist media. *The Guardian* needs your donations. There are only five issues remaining for us to reach our annual press fund target of \$14,000.

Thanks to all who contributed this week.

JR \$100, Bert Appleton \$40, T Bartlett \$100.

This week's total \$240. Progressive total \$10,410

Howard's pathetic aid record

Sir Bob Geldorf – of Boomtown Rats and Band Aid fame – has lashed out at the Howard Government over its neglect of overseas aid. "Embarrassingly pathetic" was how the Irish artist described Australia's aid effort in a widely reported interview last week.

The Rev Tim Costello – brother of Treasurer Peter Costello – compounded the embarrassment for the niggardly Federal Government by publicly endorsing the criticisms. Australia's record low contribution of 0.25 percent of Gross National Income is one of the lowest rates in the world and is well below the agreed international target of 0.7 percent. It is considerably smaller than Denmark (0.96 percent), Ireland (0.41 percent) or even the UK (0.3 percent).

Australia has also drawn criticism for granting aid not on the basis of need but in ways that will advantage Australian corporations. Kerry Packer's GRM company

has reportedly scored \$200 million worth of contracts in just one example of this dubious "boomerang aid". Over 70 percent of Australia's overseas aid falls into this pro-corporate category.

The people of Australia are clearly not as stingy as the Howard Government. In 2003, 1.8 million people were involved in supporting an overseas aid and development NGO either as a regular supporter or by supporting a fundraiser or event, or giving a one-off donation. The Australian public donated over \$386 million to aid and development work through Australian NGOs – an increase of \$38.34 million or 11.03 percent over last year.

Not-for-profit campaigning group Aidwatch has asked Australians to write letters to the editor to protest the Federal Government's shirking of its responsibilities. They have set out a number of tips for would be letter writers in a recent media release:

1. Refer to the most important point in the first paragraph.

2. Reference the title, date and author of the original piece in your opening sentence if you are responding to a previously written article. For example, "Aid embarrassingly little": Tim Costello, AAP, Nov. 10th 2004

3. Write between 100 and 200 words – shorter is better. No more than three quick paragraphs.

4. Suggest what the reporter/author should have said.

5. Do not waste space repeating what the article said. Instead, begin with your main point.

6. Attach a contact phone number and residential address, in addition to your name.

7. Send it in ASAP to get in tomorrow's paper.

8. Forward us a copy so we can keep an eye on where the issue is going.

aidwatch@aidwatch.org.au ✪

Second Hospital Appeal for Iraq

Late last year the Communist Party of Australia through *The Guardian*, appealed for funds to provide medical assistance for the people of Iraq. As a result of the generous contributions from readers and supporters more than \$2,000 was raised.

This money was conveyed to the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and was used to help finance a Medical Tent to provide free medical treatment to the citizens of different areas. A number of doctors specialising in skin and heart diseases, dentistry and children's illnesses provided treatment and medicines free of charge to hundreds of patients.



The Iraqi Communist Party expressed its gratitude for the contributions made by readers and said that it would be used "to alleviate some of the suffering of our people and toiling masses as a result of the legacy of the ousted dictatorship, the consequences of war and ramifications of occupation, as well as the impact of the current political and economic situation."

The suffering and needs of the Iraqi people have not diminished over the last 12 months and the CPA is again appealing to readers, members, supporters and friends to help raise an even bigger amount this year – no less than \$5000.

Money collected will be conveyed to the Iraqi Communist Party to continue their medical services to the people of Iraq. We urge you to give what you can

Hospital Appeal for Iraq

I.....Of.....
.....donate \$..... to the above appeal.

I agree/do not agree to having my contribution acknowledged in *The Guardian*.

Contributions by cheque, money order or credit card giving name on the card, card number and expiry date.

Credit card _____ Expiry date _____

Please send donations to: 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Govt causes rail crisis

Sydney commuters are in limbo as rail workers prepare to take industrial action over the Carr Government's determination to blame them for the problems besetting Sydney's rail services. "For too long the government has tried to shift the blame onto workers. It's not on", Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union Secretary Paul Bastian said.

Mr Bastian, whose union represents maintenance workers at RailCorp, lambasted the government for failing to maintain adequate investment in rail infrastructure.

Industrial action by united rail unions is looming as RailCorp management refuse to shift from a "take it or leave it" approach to enterprise bargaining negotiations.

Bosses get rise

These developments come as RailCorp senior management pockets pay rises of up to \$15,000 a year for presiding over the chaotic system.

And because the Government and the *Daily Telegraph* target rail staff, blaming them for the system's shambles, frontline workers have been bearing the brunt of a "train rage" epidemic.

Union leaders have called on the public not to blame staff for the system's failings.

Commuter action

Meanwhile, commuter anger has coalesced into a refuse-to-pay-day scheduled for Monday, November 22.

The campaign has been organised by Rebecca Turner from the Sydney suburb of Carlingford. Ms Turner is appealing to disgruntled commuters to protest against the state of Sydney's train system by refusing to buy a ticket on the 22nd.

"We support the public campaign over poor service and understand their difficulties", Unions NSW Secretary, John Robertson, said.

"Public inquiries at stations tell us there will be thousands of people turning up without tickets on Monday November 22. This will result in commuters arriving without tickets creating potentially unsafe situations on the stations, which may require station staff to

open automatic barriers to facilitate the safe movement of passengers.

"It would be impossible for Transit Officers to issue fines for thousands of commuters.

"We would expect them to assist in safely moving people."

Rebecca Turner has set up an email address for frustrated commuters to get in touch with her campaign. The email address is angrycommuter@hotmail.com

Long suffering Sydney rail users face the troubles because of the intransigence of the Carr Government which is attempting to scapegoat rail workers for the system's problems.

"They've blamed wet weather, hot weather, cold weather, windy weather, trees and train drivers", says Nick Lewocki from the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU). "The only people left to blame are the passengers.

"What will they do next, suggest that the system operate without passengers so the trains can run on time?"

RailCorp staff have reject management claims that late or non-existent train services are the fault of drivers taking sickies. RailCorp's attempts to "demonise" staff came after the parties failed to reach agreement on enterprise bargaining negotiations.

officials have a mandate to call industrial action", he said.

The beleaguered rail system reached meltdown earlier this month when not one afternoon service ran within four minutes of timetable and several didn't show up at all.

Newspapers were full of letters from angry patrons whose plans had been thrown into disarray by late or non-existent services. Trains are just as unreliable on weekends, even after management slashed weekend services by 40 percent.

In the wake of a rush hour shambles two weeks back, staff reacted angrily to management suggestions that they were responsible for the system's flaws.

The RTBU says it is concerned that the industrial relations agenda of the Carr Labor Government is based on the same criteria as RailCorp's agenda and will result in the same chaos that is facing the people of Sydney that use the rail network.

"Donkey Kong"

Rail unions are also alarmed about RailCorp's lax approach to safety, especially when management introduced a makeshift method for testing drivers. Labelled "Donkey Kong" by the workers, RailCorp are using what are known as psychometric tests. The unions say these are not designed to test driver safety, but to give RailCorp management an excuse not to invest in safety infrastructure, such as an adequate communications system and proper training.

Meanwhile, a purpose-built, \$21 million simulator sits idle at Petersham.

Experts called in to examine the RailCorp tests asked why a train driver simulation wasn't being used to test drivers.

One of the tests inflicted on drivers involves a computer game-style process using what looks like an oversize Game Boy to "test" your brain.

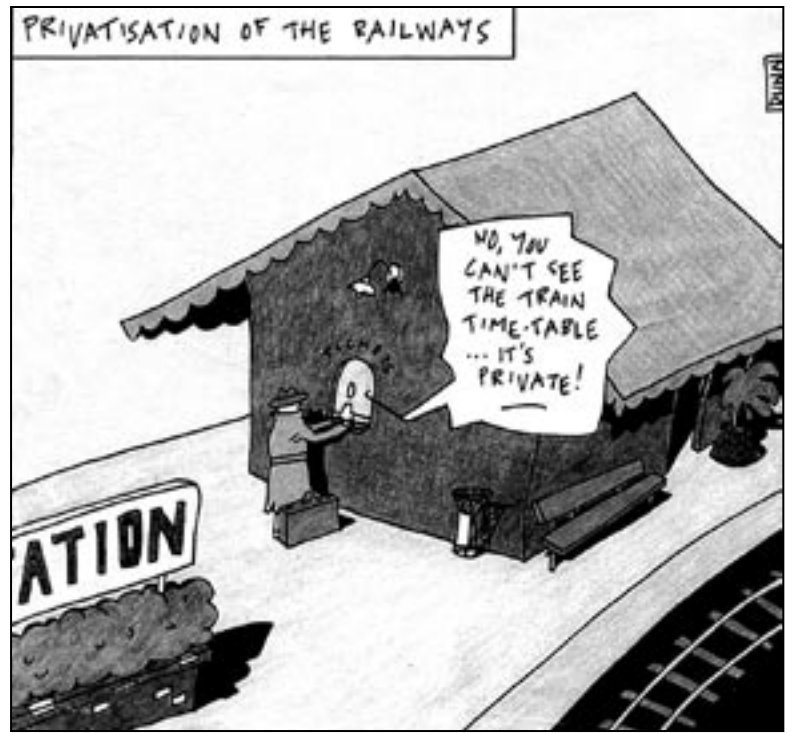
"This would be great if we were getting Donkey Kong to drive our trains, but luckily we deal with real people", commented Mr Lewocki. "We have had members who have, out of their own pocket, had themselves re-tested, only to find that RailCorp's tests were way off the mark." *

**Meanwhile,
a purpose-built,
\$21 million
simulator sits
idle at Petersham.**

Sticking points include family-friendly leave provisions, rosters, equal penalty payments for all employees, quick resolution of disciplinary procedures (which can currently drag on for 18 months) and a move by RailCorp to split rail maintenance workers onto two agreements.

Mr Lewocki confirmed industrial action was likely.

"While the government maintains its current position union



Australia's wealthy keep that winning smile

Australia's wealthiest citizens receive 4.5 times more public funding for dental care than those who live in abject poverty, says a new report on dental health.

"Dental services are the least subsidised of health services and the public subsidy is inequitably distributed", said John Spencer, Professor of Social and Preventative Dentistry at Adelaide University.

"Decision-makers see Australians' oral health in terms of their own middle or upper income, advantaged position. It is a myopic view and one that denies the reality of the polarisation of oral health which has left many at great disadvantage."

Professor Spencer described the gap between the dental health of Australia's rich and poor as a "chasm".

The 30 percent Private Health Insurance Rebate was identified as a significant factor in steering public dental funding into the pockets of the wealthy.

The report also identified John Howard's abolition of the \$100-million Commonwealth Dental Health Program in 1996 as contributing to the overall decline in Australia's dental health standards since the mid-1990s.

The report, *Narrowing the inequality gap in oral health and dental care in Australia*, detailed the suffering of Australia's low-income earners:

- 40 percent of adults in low-

income households surveyed in 2002 said they suffered painful toothache and avoided certain foods because of teeth and gum problems.

• 41 percent of Health Care Card holders avoided or delayed accessing dental care because of cost.

• 31 percent waited more than six months for an appointment – compared to 0.4 per cent for affluent Australians.

• 17 percent have difficulties speaking because of their teeth

• Almost one third felt self-conscious about eating.

Not only was the dental health of Australia's poor at a very low level, but also was continuing to deteriorate.

"A substantial effort is required to reduce social inequalities in access to care. Unfortunately, the level of effort has been inadequate", said Professor Spencer.

Professor Spencer outlined six key areas where significant increases in both state and federal government funding would be required to reduce the widening gap in oral health between Australia's rich and poor.

These included extending the water fluoridation to cover the 30 percent of rural Australians who currently lack the service; revitalising the school dental services and increasing access to the public dental services; and expanding Australia's dental labour force. *

Pete's Corner



Sydney

ASBESTOS CAN KILL

National Asbestos Awareness Day

Friday 26 November 10am - 3pm

Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour

02 9637 8759 or toll free: 1800 006 196
asbestos@optusnet.com.au

Renovating?
Seek professional advice
Call ADFA on 1800 006 196

Proudly presented by the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia Inc

Bullying bosses targeted

A boss in Castle Hill, in Sydney's north-west, with half his staff on stress leave, stands accused of systematic bullying. The Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) has heard the disability centre manager abused and swore at staff, made them work over 18 consecutive hours, and forced a sick worker out of the toilet to attend a meeting.

The Australian Services Union (ASU) told the Commission the manager pressured staff to alter legal documents and forged a signature.

Seven staff at the centre, all on workers' compensation, were at home recovering from workplace stress.

Deputy President Grayson of the IRC stressed the paramount

importance of occupational health and safety (OHS) issues at the workplace and directed the state's OHS body, WorkCover, to do a safety audit of the centre.

He also directed parties to confer in relation to the manager's continued presence in the workplace. Most of the seven board members who oversee the centre have so far stuck by the manager but it is understood at least one has quit, citing philosophical differences. The manager, who was on honeymoon with a board member, did not attend the IRC hearing.

ASU organiser, Jim Piotrowski, says the bullying case is the worst he has ever heard of.

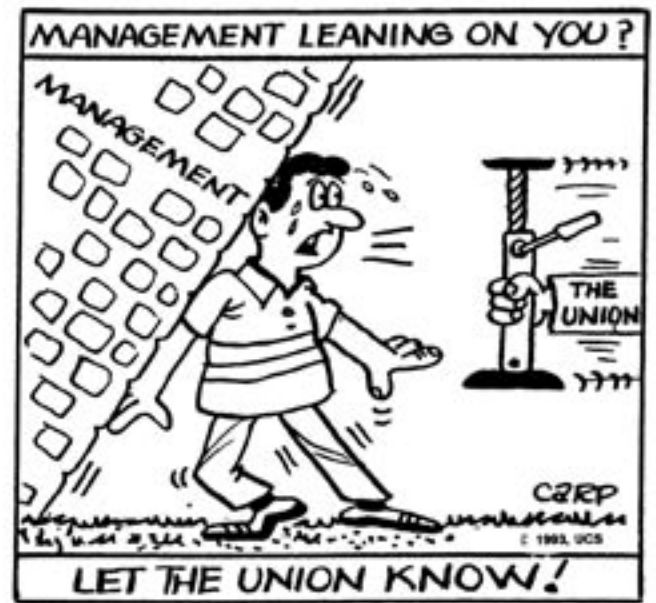
"What we want is a safe workplace. We will be making repre-

sentations to the state government which ultimately funds the service", he said.

Meanwhile, the manager of a Fairfield disability service is standing his ground after accusations of bullying and harassment led to a two-day strike.

Work bans are continuing and more strike action is possible unless the manager stands down while an independent inquiry probes workers' concerns.

Nearly 20 staff at the Fairfield Community Resource Centre have sworn stat decs alleging a pattern of bullying and overbearing management practices. The ASU alleges experienced workers are leaving the centre because they can no longer tolerate the manager's behaviour. ☘



LABOUR NOTES

Fifteen workers undertaking maintenance work at the Liddell power station in the Hunter Valley stopped work after they were exposed to asbestos dust. While NSW WorkCover has issued rectification notices against HIS, the contractor that employs the workers has obtained an order from the Australian Industrial Relations Commission requiring the men to go back to work. Macquarie Generation, the Government owned entity that runs the plant, has also refused to make up lost pay, calling it illegal strike pay. The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union who covers the workers has filed an application to overturn the Commission's order and called for a state-wide audit of all power stations to identify hidden asbestos. The NSW Government could, but so far has not, stepped in to ensure the health and safety of the workers.

A report before the Western Australian Worksafe Commission has recommended a set of guidelines limiting the amount of hours and consecutive shifts to be worked in industries where there are around the clock operations. The guidelines if approved by the WA Government, would apply to hospitals, manufacturing industries, hotels and the mining industry. Some of the recommendations include restricting workers to maximum eight-hour shifts (on night shift). Others include workers only working to a maximum of seven days on eight-hour day shifts or six days on 10-hour and 12-hour shifts. Another recommendation is that workers on evening eight-hour shifts must complete travel to and from work within 13 hours. In supporting the need for some of the recommendations WA Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection cited a case of a mining contractor that forced workers to endure 12-hour shifts for 13 weeks without time off.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union has come to a national in-principle enterprise agreement with packaging manufacturer Visy, although National Secretary Doug Cameron said the deal was still subject to final agreement on some lesser matters. Visy and the printing division of the AMWU had been in and out of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission for some months. Visy had previously offered workers \$1000 incentives not to support a national deal. If approved the deal would cover 600 workers across 13 sites in four states. The union is now looking towards national agreements with other packaging companies, Amcor, and Carter Holt and Harvey.

Company does runner with wages

A luxury boat shapes as the best hope for 45 Perth workers whose boss did a runner after convincing them to work for eight weeks without wages. The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) has warned Wavemaster creditors that no work will be done on the \$2 million catamaran until union members get their money.

The ultimatum came at a creditors meeting at which banks and the union rolled the company's bid to appoint its own auditor, William Buck, as administrator.

Employees were terminated after accepting repeated assurances that owed wages and entitlements would be paid "next Monday".

It has since been discovered that Wavemaster's owner, Malaysia-based Penang Shipping Company,

has engaged in a corporate reshuffle that saw its Western Australian operation transferred through Body Focus to an entity called JR Marine.

Union representatives are trying to trace directors of the company.

AMWU organiser, Steve McCartney, said even the factory manager had been taken in by company assurances that the missing money would eventually appear.

"It's hard to believe that people would keep turning up to work when they weren't being paid", Mr McCartney said. "But he told me late payments had been happening for at least six months. It hadn't been unusual for the staff to wait four weeks for their money.

"This time, every Friday, there were assurances that the money would be paid on Monday. My

personal belief is they stripped the company of its intellectual property then collapsed it, but we are trying to follow the paper trail to see who has been taking the money out."

The company told creditors that ongoing operations in Victoria and NSW were now completely separate from the Perth concern.

AMWU lawyer, Luke Edmonds, was voted onto the creditors' committee at last week's meeting.

Wavemaster occupied Henderson premises about five doors along from Eagle Air, another company bought out and collapsed by Malaysian interests, leaving employees stranded.

The AMWU was successful in retrieving money owed to 13 members employed by Eagle Air. ☘

Australian shipping under attack

Defence of the Australian shipping industry and cabotage were at the top of the agenda when the Maritime Union of Australia's national council met in Sydney last week. Some 30 councillors, national officers and guests from around the country and across the Tasman attended the five-day meeting at the union's national office in Sydney.

The political colour of the hefty Productivity Commission's latest Review of National Competition Policy Reforms 400-page discussion paper is unmistakable. Cabotage and the Australian shipping industry are under attack.

"The Australian Government has yet to review cabotage arrangements that continue to limit overseas competitors' access to Australia's coastal shipping trade", the report

said. "The majority of coastal shipping is still carried by Australian-registered vessels at freight rates which are very high by international standards. Such high rates inevitably deter some otherwise efficient usage of coastal shipping", the report said.

"Even though the reference is buried, the intent is clear. Clear and present as they say. It's all about replacing Australian seafarers with foreign guest labour and replacing a strategically critical Australian industry, Australian business and workers operating under Australian laws with the anarchy of unregulated shipping interests that dominate international trades", said MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin.

"No mucking around with this, we need to throw everything we've got at it. It's again clear that this

union is a target of the ultra right, the HR Nicholls Society and the Howard Government", said Mr Crumlin.

"We are a strong and militant union; we have to stay a social force and a political force. This union is not just about wages and conditions. It's about human rights. It's about genuine national interest. And the international solidarity we've created is going to make it harder for them to get up their Trojan horse and lay siege to Australian labour standards."

The union has enlisted the support of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the ACTU, industry leaders and academics in preparation for the launch of a full-scale shipping campaign. ☘



A new CPA badge

with the official CPA logo in yellow outlined in black on a red background. Light weight, 3 cm x 1.5 cm, iron stamped, soft enamel with plating & butterfly clutch on back.

Cost: \$5 each plus \$1 p&packing.
For CPA branches ordering 20 or more badges, the cost is \$4 each plus \$4 postage and packing.
Please send orders with payment
Cheques payable to "CPA Port Jackson Branch".
CPA Port Jackson Branch,
PO Box 40, Glebe NSW 2037.
(No cash or credit card payments.)

Sydney

Eureka Stockade (1854) Celebrate the 150th anniversary

Sunday 28 November 9.30am – 4.00pm
NSW Writers Centre, Rozelle

9.30 – Forum "Flying the Flag"
2.00 – "Eureka150 Concert"

\$10.00 adults, \$5.00 children under 12, infants free
Morning tea and sausage sizzle included.
Feel free to bring picnic lunch.

For more information visit our website at <http://eureka150.net>

Organised by NSW Labour History society, New Theatre & Sydney Trade Union Choir.

Getting There: (Follow signs)

Enter the main entrance of Rozelle Hospital at the Cecily St traffic lights, turn left, left again, then right.

or Enter Wharf Rd at the Balmain Rd – Perry St traffic lights, turn into Cottage Rd, turn left, then right into Central Ave, right (again) into South Crescent, then left.

Bus: Route 440 from Central Station, Route 445 from Canterbury Rly Stn, Petersham or Balmain Wharf

No Dump score important Court victory

Peter Parker

The No Dump Residents Association in the Sydney suburb of Auburn has scored an important victory in the second round of its legal battle with transnational giant Collex. After a three-day hearing the Land and Environment Court ruled that while Collex had permission to build a waste transfer building they had no authority to perform waste transfer activities outside the building – basically making operation of the facility impossible.

David versus Goliath

Collex are a division of the French conglomerate Vivendi. Their legal team included two gowned barristers and a raft of solicitors and helpers. In contrast residents were represented by two locals, Alan Brzason and John Drake, everyday Auburn residents with no formal legal qualifications.

Instead of a bloated legal team, Alan and John were given moral support by local residents, businesses, councillors and activists who provided an overflow audience for the proceedings.

This is the second time John and Alan have faced Collex in the Land and Environment court. Back in November 2003 they won a historic victory, when the court ruled that the development of the waste transfer terminal was unlawful. Justice Bignold based his ruling on the "unsuitability of the development site to accommodate a waste transfer station because of its adverse environmental, economic and social impacts and its adverse precedential planning effect".

Bob Carr's "Special" legislation

Instead of appealing the decision in the courts, NSW Labor Premier, Bob Carr and Collex decided to rush legislation through State Parliament to overturn the court's decision. But the No Dump Residents Association argued that although the legislation gave Collex the right to build the facility, it gave them no right to actually operate it. In Alan's words "it let them build a multi-million dollar shed, but nothing else". And it was on this key point that the court ruled against Collex.

Environmentally Sensitive?

Before the verdict Auburn's Local Paper, *The Auburn Pictorial Review*, included good coverage of the court case. Collex's contributions to the article tried to highlight

how environmentally sensitive the company is, but residents say this is just another example of corporate spin.

Collex's parent Vivendi, is a French multinational with an environmental record that hardly supports Collex's position. In 1998, the UK Environment Agency listed Vivendi subsidiary, Tyseley Waste Disposal Ltd as the year's second worst polluter. Another of Vivendi's subsidiaries, waste management company Leigh Environmental received the fifth highest fines of £87,500 with seven prosecutions for pollution in 2000.

Adelaide's "Big Pong"

Australia has already suffered from Vivendi's environmental mismanagement when its United Water International (UWI) consortium engulfed Adelaide in a "Big Pong" after equipment failures and inadequate monitoring allowed raw sewerage to be pumped directly into settling ponds. UWI consists of Vivendi, Thames Water and a five percent holding by Adelaide's Kinhill Engineering.

While residents complained of mood swings, nausea, sinus problems, asthma, headaches and sleeping disorders, the company and State Government blamed the weather!

Water treatment expert Ken Hartley of the University of Queensland blamed UWI's failure on cost cutting saying "It was dollars driving everything; the big emphasis was on minimising costs. The [Adelaide] incident is an illustration of what can happen when things like monitoring and maintenance are cut to the bone."

Political Donations

Collex is a major donor to Bob Carr's Labor Party. Greens MLC Sylvia Hale stated in the NSW Parliament on November 13, 2003, that "Collex, a company whose international record is one of total disgrace and discredit, and whose executives have been jailed for bribing State political and municipal officials, has embarked on the same program in this country: what you cannot get by virtue of the value of your proposals you get by handing over vast sums of money. Between 1998-99 and 2001-02 Collex donated \$88,950 to the Labor Party."

These donations continued in 2002-2003 with the Australian Electoral Commission web-site showing Collex donating another \$12,000 to the NSW Labor Party.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* on November 30, 2003, reports that

Collex "contracted Belinda Neal, a former ALP Senator and the wife of Labor powerbroker and Special Minister of State John Della Bosca. It also used the services of a former electoral adviser to former Premier Barrie Unsworth, Shane Easson. He is the twin brother of former NSW Labor Council Secretary Michael Easson".

Profits drive corruption

Since the 1980s there has been a massive wave of privatisations of formerly government run services – this includes power generation, telecommunications, water and sewerage, waste collection and other environmental services.

Where governments used to run these services for the benefit of society as a whole they are increasingly being sold off or awarded as contracts to private companies. These companies don't collect our garbage, run our telephone systems, and generate electricity to make our lives better – they do so for the sole purpose of making a profit.

Providing these services in a near monopoly position is massively profitable; just imagine how profitable when the OECD estimates that corruption linked to privatisation generates some US\$80 billion in bribes per year.

People before profits

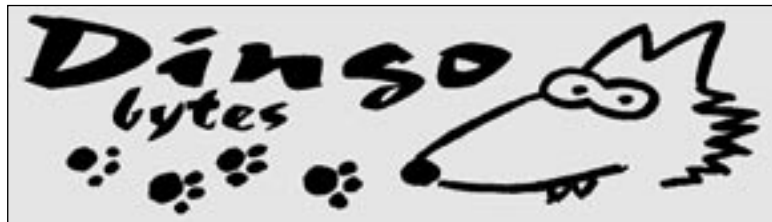
Public services run for the benefit of the community can redirect corporate profits into better services, improved health and safety for workers and better pay and conditions for employees. What's more, there is a clear democratic link between the services provided and the councils and governments that provide these services – privatisation removes this link and is fundamentally undemocratic.

Mobilise to defeat Collex

While not having a crystal ball, we think that more legislation by Bob Carr is likely if the residents win the next round in the courts (sometime in 2005). But Bob Carr only managed to pass the last raft of special legislation with the support of cross-bench members of the upper house. After the Liverpool Orange Grove fiasco and a second defeat in the courts for Collex this support cannot be guaranteed. Auburn residents have already started to mobilise to demonstrate their opposition to the plans of Carr and Collex. ☺



Sylvia Hale(left), Alan Brzason(centre) and supporters leave court after the win



The Howard Government is up and running, opening the door to the complete privatisation of Australia's university system. Federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson has told the vice-chancellors of the country's 38 publicly-funded unis that the protocols under which universities were established are to be changed. This is to make it easier for a "diverse" range of universities to be established – diverse meaning private. Under the proposed changes these new unis would not have to conduct research. The National Tertiary Education Union warned that the move spells the beginning of the end of a comprehensive curriculum "driven by a strong relationship" between teaching and research. "To be a university you must undertake research", said the union's Carolyn Allport. "That is the distinguishing feature."

The successful scare campaigns run by the Howard Government have had the desired knock-on effect. Last week a unionist travelling by plane from Melbourne to Sydney was escorted off it by Federal Police for making a joke about a bomb. Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union organiser Maurice Addison was stunned when, after making the joke on the plane, which was on the tarmac in Melbourne, the aircraft's captain informed him his comments were against the law and ordered him to leave. When he refused the pilot called the Federal Police.

And while on terrorism, High Court judge Justice Michael Kirby has warned of the increasing dangers of terror laws. He put it like this: "There is a tendency in this area to give legislation stirring names in the hope of rendering exceptions to civil liberties more palatable and opposition to such laws more difficult."

"US wants Australian role in N Korea" ran a headline in *The Australian* newspaper last week. The article was about how the US administration intends to use Australia to interfere in the internal affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, vis à vis its nuclear program. It might be handy now to remind people of the last time Australia headed into Korea on behalf of the USA, in the early 1950s when the US began the war that resulted in the division of Korea into north and south. Australia contributed military backing and aided the US in its stated intention to bomb the north "back to the stone age".

CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK: is the Archbishop of Sydney George Pell, who is in the US promoting conservative Christian values as a counter to what he claims is the "emerging alternative world view" of Islam. He attacked "secular liberal democracy" as being empty and selfish. Curiously he claimed that it was communism that had exposed the "emptiness of the secular approach". He correctly observed that communism provided an alternative for those who are alienated and embittered and sought order and justice. Of course, his speech doesn't mention the word "capitalism", the root of alienation and injustice.

150th Anniversary of Eureka

On Sunday November 28 Sydney will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade with a forum and a concert at the NSW Writers' Centre in Rozelle.

"Eureka was a defining moment in Australia's history when a group of diggers took decisive action at Ballarat to defend their rights and liberties. It left a legacy of freedom and democracy, and provided many of the foundations on which today's Australian society is built", said Bob Walshe for the Eureka 150 Sydney organising committee.

"Melbourne and Ballarat have arranged an extensive program of

activities to mark Eureka and its legacy, and Sydney is having a celebration as well", he said.

The day will start with a morning forum on the significance of Eureka. Guest speakers will be Dr Anne Beggs Sunter, Ballarat authority on the history of the Victorian goldfields and the Eureka Stockade and Bob Walshe, Sydney historian. Bob was secretary of the 1954 Sydney centenary celebration of Eureka and has been promoting the importance of Eureka in Australian history since then.

In the afternoon the Eureka 150 concert will be based on histori-

cal and modern themes of Eureka. It will feature well-known artists including Lyn Collingwood, Alex Hood, Carole Skinner and John Dengate They will be backed by New Theatre and the voices of the Sydney Trade Union Choir.

"A \$10 charge for the day includes morning tea and a sausage sizzle lunch. We hope that everyone inspired by the spirit of Eureka will come along to be part of the celebration", added Bob Walshe.

For further info contact:
Bob Walshe 02 9528 0444
Paula Bloch 02 9665 0559
pbloch@bigpond.net.au or
http://eureka150.net ☺

Iraq: difficult and challenging times

Iraqi Communist Party's contribution to the International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, Athens, 8-10 October 2004

We seize this occasion to express our high appreciation for the internationalist support and solidarity extended by the Communist Party of Greece and fraternal parties, over many decades, against dictatorship and fascist campaigns of terror, mass executions and physical liquidation against Iraqi Communists and democrats, especially under Saddam's dictatorship.

While continuing the fight today, under extremely difficult and complex conditions, to end the American-British occupation, restore national sovereignty and independence, and build a democratic Iraq, we look forward to your continued support and solidarity. Iraqi Communists know only too well, from their own bitter experience, who their true and tested friends are: those who share their values and lofty aims of freedom, democracy, human rights, peace and socialism.

International solidarity with the Iraqi people and democratic forces, including our Communist Party, has acquired special and exceptional significance in these difficult and challenging times. We therefore look upon progressive forces and broad mass movements opposed to the war and warmongering policies as allies in our battle, not only in bringing about a speedy end to occupation but also in providing concrete support for building democracy and peace. For only truly democratic regimes, expressing the free will of their people can stand up to imperialism and its aggressive policies for domination and hegemony.

Dear Comrades,

It is now one year and a half since the war and the occupation of Iraq. Our country has witnessed exceptional developments during this period, giving rise to a totally new situation. It is extremely complex, and fraught with enormous dangers, as well as holding real potential for leading our country out of its prolonged ordeal, and moving forward towards independence and the democratic alternative our people aspire for.

We had been fully convinced, long before the war, that there was no way out of the comprehensive crisis engulfing our country and people, no end to catastrophes and tragedies, and no hope for any reconstruction except through achieving internal change and getting rid of Saddam's dictatorial regime.

But our Party rejected the war, considering it to be the worst alternative, exposing its real objectives as part of the strategy of the US administration to extend and consolidate its hegemony through a doctrine of pre-emption, using the events of 11 September as a pretext to wage an endless "war on terror".

While joining in the worldwide anti-war movement, Iraqi Communists stressed the need for distinguishing between the Iraqi people and Saddam's regime, warning against one-sided positions which overlooked the regime's responsibility for the dangers and tragedies suffered by our people. Thus we called for clarity in positions and slogans, as well as pressures on the dictatorial regime to avert war through dealing in a responsible manner with its international obligations and by opening up

to the people and releasing democratic freedoms.

When war loomed and became the most probable outcome, as a result of Saddam's utter disregard for the fate of the people and country, and also the determination by the US administration to pursue its policy, our Party called upon democratic and progressive forces, and the peace movement, to support the alternative we favoured most.

National democratic & patriotic alternative

It was a national democratic and patriotic alternative, which relies on the struggle of the Iraqi people and their armed forces, as well as the unity of patriotic opposition forces, backed by legitimate international support. Such an alternative, supported by pressures to force the dictator to step down, would have averted war and its tragic consequences.

The outcome of the war, the speedy collapse of Saddam's military institution, and even the whole Iraqi state, exposed the bankruptcy of the dictatorship and its hollow claims. Furthermore, all this revealed our people's overwhelming desire to get rid of the regime.

Thus, in an unprecedented development, of enormous significance for Iraq and the region, the people chose to stand aside, watch-

The country has faced, since April 9 2003, a host of urgent and interconnected tasks, the essence of which is creating the conditions for ending the occupation and putting Iraq on the path of national and democratic development.

Throughout these difficult and challenging times, our party has made a vital contribution to efforts aimed at building broad national unity against occupation, foiling plots and manoeuvres to divide and rule, while working at the same time to rebuild the democratic movement, including independent trade unions, women, students and human rights organisations. Work continues to prepare for the elections by the end January 2005 as part of the first phase of the transition period. Significant progress has been achieved, but the difficulties are enormous.

Iraqi Communist Party

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Communist Party has re-emerged, despite losing thousands of comrades and supporters under decades of fascist rule, as a major political force ... as the best organised democratic force in the country. Its organisations are now active all over Iraq, with more than 85 party offices in provinces and districts. But the relentless work continues to address shortcomings, to raise the level of cadres, as well as the level of political awareness among the people, to fight not only against the occupiers but also for fundamental basic human, democratic



Brutal occupation replaces brutal dictatorship

al sanctions, which led to fragmenting the social fabric of society, the lack of democratic traditions, and absence of normal political life.

This situation was aggravated by the consequences of the war and invasion, the collapse of the whole

always emphasised the need to continuously combine between our work within the Council, and in the present interim government, and our efforts of a mass character, as well as strengthening relations with all forces that want to achieve the transition to end the occupation and build a united federal democratic Iraq.

Resisting occupation is a right enshrined by the UN Charter. The Iraqi people, therefore, have a legitimate right to resort to various forms of struggle to end the occupation and restore national sovereignty.

Opposition to occupation

But resisting occupation is not limited to employing violent means in struggle, but rather includes various forms of political struggle. The lessons of history teach us that people only resort to armed struggle when they are forced to do so after exhausting political means.

As a matter of fact, armed operations carried out by shadowy groups, whether extremist Islamist or supporters of Saddam's regime, inflict harm on the desired aim: to get rid of the occupation as soon as possible. Such operations actually provide the pretext for the occupying forces to prolong their presence, as well as perpetuating the state of tension, concern and fear among the people.

Terrorist acts targeting innocent civilians, such as criminal car bombs, kidnappings and killings, as well as sabotage against basic services, electricity networks, and oil pipelines only aggravate the suffering of the people and further alienate them. The victims were thousands of innocent people, dead and wounded. These terrorist acts have been strongly condemned by the Iraqi people.

There is also a patriotic element. Violations and blatant acts of aggression against the people by the occupying forces have led to violent reactions, giving rise on many occasions to spontaneous armed operations targeting these forces.

It is important, therefore, to distinguish between groups and forces that carry out such operations. On

Armed operations carried out by shadowy groups, whether extremist Islamist or supporters of Saddam's regime, inflict harm on the desired aim: to get rid of the occupation as soon as possible. Such operations actually provide the pretext for the occupying forces to prolong their presence, as well as perpetuating the state of tension, concern and fear among the people.

ing a fight between an imperialist power, which they knew only too well, and a deeply hated regime. The 9th of April 2003, the day when the dictatorship eventually collapsed, has come to embody the complexities and contradictions of the new situation. A brutal dictatorship had gone, but it was replaced with occupation.

The overwhelming majority of our people were overjoyed at the regime's shameful collapse. But it did not bring about the emergence of the democratic alternative they desired. A dangerous political and security vacuum resulted, with serious political, economic and social consequences that are still with us today. Tackling this situation was, and continues to be, a top priority.

It is important to point out that our people, despite rejoicing at the fall of Saddam's regime, did not embrace the occupation forces or receive them with flowers (as some had expected). The developments over the past one and a half years have vindicated our Party's rejection of war, invasion and occupation.

and social rights.

Important battles have been fought, and won, such as that against [the] attempt to abolish a law upholding fundamental women rights. Such battles are continuing along with the national battle against occupation, for sovereignty and independence.

This is why it is of fundamental importance to understand the close interconnection between the national and democratic levels of the fight which is now being waged in Iraq. A one-sided approach will not help to understand the present complex situation and how best to provide concrete support to progressive and democratic forces on the ground, inside Iraq.

Legacies of war and dictatorship

The difficult situation which now prevails is due to the fact that we are now facing both, the legacy of dictatorship and the legacy of occupation: three catastrophic wars, 12 years of US imposed internation-

Iraqi state, the resulting power vacuum, the policy of the occupation authority and blatant violations by its armed forces numbering 140,000 troops. There is also the scandalous "reconstruction" effort, with more than US\$8 billion of Iraqi money squandered by the occupation authority during the first year of occupation.

Conferring international legitimacy on occupation through UN Security Council Resolution 1484 in late May 2003, instead of handing over power to an Iraqi broad coalition government, as all political forces, including our Party, had demanded, created further serious obstacles. The setting up of the Governing Council, with limited but important powers, and with the participation of all major political parties at the time, was therefore a compromise, reached with active mediation by the UN.

Our Party stressed that the Council was only one arena and one platform, among others, for our struggle to achieve national sovereignty and independence. We

nes



The bell tolls for Hemingway home

Thomas D Herman *

One day in February 1926 an unknown American expatriate writer walked out of a New York snowstorm and into history. An important piece of that history is now in danger of being lost forever, caught in the controversy over the US trade embargo against Cuba.

The unknown writer was Ernest Hemingway, and the New York office he walked into was that of Scribners Sons' Maxwell Perkins, the most famous American literary editor of his day.

It is difficult to conceive – 80 years and an incandescent literary career later – but when Hemingway met Max Perkins that day, hoping that Scribner's might be interested in taking him on, the idea of publishing the 26-year-old Hemingway was a big risk. Hemingway had not yet published a novel. Indeed, his only published fiction consisted of a few short stories and poems, mostly in obscure Paris literary journals.

Yet Mr Perkins, as Hemingway was to call him for years afterwards, even after they had become close friends, took the risk. On the spot, he offered Hemingway a two-book deal with Scribner's that included a generous US\$1500 advance on an unfinished, unnamed novel that Perkins had not even seen. Hemingway eventually decided to call it *The Sun Also Rises*.

Hemingway and Perkins began



But the house, a rambling Spanish colonial villa given to the Cuban people by Hemingway's widow, is in danger of collapse. Now a museum, it will store the documents, along with Hemingway's 9000-volume library (which includes many first editions of Hemingway's books and those of other famous writers), his fishing tackle, his boat *Pilar*, and other personal belong-

architects, engineers, and consultants to travel to Cuba to research a feasibility study to help the Cubans save Finca Vigia. This denial, which is contrary to the letter and spirit of the law, is being appealed.

In the eyes of the Treasury and State departments, saving Ernest Hemingway's home is against the foreign policy of the United States because it might encourage tourism to Castro's Cuba. This is ironic, not the least because Finca Vigia is the home of an American literary giant who wrote harshly critical eyewitness accounts of the dictatorships that enslaved much of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s and whose writings championed democracy.

Finca Vigia is a Cuban-American landmark where democratic values are celebrated. The home's literary significance and value to scholars is enormous.

Under this kind of policy, if our relations with, for example, France deteriorate further, Americans may find that preserving the cemetery and monuments at Omaha and Utah Beaches may someday be prohibited? And what if the monument to Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders at San Juan Hill in Cuba is endangered?

Max Perkins and Scribner's took the risk of publishing Hemingway in 1926. One might hope that the Treasury Department will reconsider and allow Ernest Hemingway's legacy in Cuba to be saved.

* Thomas D Herman, an international lawyer, is counsel to the Hemingway Preservation Foundation. ✪

many occasions in recent months, such as last April in Falouja, the American occupation forces resorted to oppressive measures, such as the excessive use of force and collective punishment, which were strongly condemned by our Party.

The biggest losers in this confrontation were innocent civilians, with more than 600 people killed, including women and children. A similar situation developed in Najaf, but was later contained through political peaceful initiatives that were widely welcomed.

The forces behind the deteriorating security situation are mainly supporters of the previous regime and anti-people terrorist forces of various shades. Saddam's fascist security organisation was left untouched. Through subversive and criminal activities, these elements want to assert themselves as a power in the political scene. It is worth mentioning that some forces in the US administration want to deal with and accommodate these elements in order to contain the current complicated situation.

Tackling the security situation requires urgent political, economic and social measures. First and foremost, prerequisites must be provided for a speedy handover of power to the Iraqi people, empowering them to decide their own political future and social system, with their own free will, through free and fair elections.

The future of Iraq, and stability and peace in the Middle East, the defeat of imperialist and Zionist aggressive schemes, and the triumph of the just cause of the Palestinian people, depend to a large extent on the outcome of the on-going political process in our country.

The voice of the Iraqi people must be heard. They demand full control on all internal and external affairs of the Iraqi state, including control of security, military matters, and control over financial and economic resources, i.e. the restoration of full sovereignty and independence, and an end to occupation and foreign military presence.

In this multifaceted and complex political process, your continued support and solidarity, along with all progressive and peace-loving forces in the world, will be essential in helping to achieve the legitimate aspirations of our people and their democratic forces: ending the occupation, eliminating the legacy of dictatorship, and building a free unified democratic and federal Iraq.

We look forward to strengthening and developing further the fraternal ties among our Communist and Workers parties in the joint international struggle, against imperialism, and the onslaught of capitalist globalism; for freedom, democracy, social progress, peace and socialism.

(Slightly abridged – cross-heads added) ✪

Saving Ernest Hemingway's home is against the foreign policy of the United States because it might encourage tourism to Castro's Cuba.

a correspondence that lasted for 21 years, until Perkins's death in 1947. A number of those letters are now housed in Cuba, at Finca Vigia, where Hemingway lived longer than anywhere else. It was at Finca Vigia that he wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Thanks to the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation and the leadership of Massachusetts congressman James McGovern and others, many letters and original manuscripts and thousands of photographs, all in precarious condition due to age and tropical climate, are now being conserved in Cuba. Copies will be sent to the John F Kennedy Library in Boston.

ings. Finca Vigia has been called a preservation emergency by experts: It is in such bad shape that the next hurricane could blow it away.

A group of Americans, including Hemingway's grandson Sean, Perkins's granddaughter Jenny Phillips, Lauren Bacall (whose acting debut was in a film based on a Hemingway novel), and James Gandolfini (who is playing Hemingway in a new film), is trying to save the house and its contents. Yet the US Government won't let them.

The Treasury Department recently turned down the Hemingway Preservation Foundation's application for a licence to permit its

Our Party stressed that the Council was only one arena and one platform, among others, for our struggle to achieve national sovereignty and independence.

Sydney
Maritime Branch CPA
Invites you to join them in celebrating
Harry Black
50 Years of Struggle! – 50 Years of Leadership!
Sunday 12 December 2pm
CPA Headquarters,
74 Buckingham Street, Surry Hills
Light Buffet \$5.00 – Drinks available
Hear Comrade Black on this unique achievement
See the historic film November Victory
RSVP 1/12/2004 Ina Heidman 9818 1743, 0419 407 907

Photo: Ana Pho

This mine is destroying our land

Open letter from
landowner, Porgera,
Enga Province,
Papua New Guinea

I am writing this open letter to the management of the giant Porgera gold mine, national leaders and local leaders. When you fly over the mine, you will notice that the waste dumped into the Kaiya river by the mine has caused a lot of damage to the land on both sides of the river banks.

The worst affected have been the Kewai tribes people. These people, like their forefathers, are subsistence farmers. Hopefully, their children and grand-children will have suitable land available but with the way things are, I very much doubt there will be.

I am a young man from Kewai and I have lived here all my life and hope to pass my land onto my chil-

dren. Even though I am employed by the mine, I still rely on my land for food.

I like gardening and my wife has passed down traditional gardening methods and the different names of vegetables, flowers and so on to my children. Having land and making gardens is not only about having enough food to eat. It's part of our culture and way of life. We identify ourselves by our land and have emotional and historical ties with our land.

Without my own land, I am nothing. My land is my anchor to my people and tradition. This land keeps us together as a tribe and as a family. The damage has been so great that some families have lost more than 40 per cent of their best gardening land.

The mining company (PJV) has allegedly paid very little compensation. What they pay is enough to last a few months and then it's

gone. PJV won't help my people by giving contracts. So much for the business developments and opportunities they are always preaching about. Most contracts allegedly go to the same people that already have one or two wantoks as PJV employees. This is one area that PJV must look into. We are the people being most affected but get little benefits.

The North Anawe people signed agreements with PJV when their land was used for a dump. So why can't we, the Kewai people, be shown the same respect and courtesy by one of the biggest mines in the world and definitely the biggest in PNG. We do not get royalties which was promised many years ago for waste dumped into our river.

We are not asking for millions, just enough to ensure that the quality of life that we now enjoy can be sustained.

The practice that PJV allegedly has in secretly dealing with individuals must stop. Sometimes, PJV allegedly pays the wrong person and then says that the rightful owner should take that other person to court. This raises tension and animosity in the villages.

PJV allegedly has a secret policy of "divide and rule". This has been going on for more than 15 years. PJV must realise that when the mine first started, the landowners who signed the agreement then, were all uneducated. They were also led to believe that untold wealth and



The land is the anchor to the people and tradition

riches would be theirs. They now have realised that they were being fooled. The people who told these lies are now living in Port Moresby. They hold positions that give them access to money that belongs to the people of Porgera.

They have made themselves rich by stealing from the people. They know who they are and should resign immediately. The good Lord will reward you one of these days for stealing from uneducated people. ☘

Israel desperate to bury nuclear secrets

Bob Briton

Israeli security forces rearrested nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu last Thursday in a show of armed force at the compound of East Jerusalem's St George's Cathedral. Thirty security men stormed the Anglican Church property and ignored pleas from Bishop Riah to respect the sanctity of the place by putting away their machine guns. Vanunu was taken into detention at Petach-Tikwa before being released into house arrest later that day.

The arrest was carried out in response to the urging of Knesset (parliament) member Yuval Shteinitz who has been outraged that Vanunu continues to call for international inspection of Israel's nuclear weapons program. The campaigner had been released from prison in April after serving the full 18 years for treason and espionage.

The charges were originally laid when Vanunu went public with information confirming that Israel had secretly developed nuclear weapons. He went into hiding and remained on the run until he was kidnapped in Rome by Israeli security forces and returned for a secret trial.

Vanunu still does not know if new charges will be made against him. It is thought that he could be charged with violating the conditions of his release, which included a ban on speaking to the foreign press. He had given interviews to Swedish and British journalists but denies that he has given away any of Israel's nuclear secrets. In fact he insists that he has no more to pass on.

US writer Daniel Ellsberg,

author of *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers*, has said: "The only secret Mordechai Vanunu has left to tell the world is the one he revealed on the day of his release from 18 years in prison, April 21, 2004: 'I am a symbol of the will of freedom, that the human spirit is free. You cannot destroy the human spirit.' ... Israel should let the foremost prophet of the nuclear age go forth to be honoured throughout the world - and we call on them to do so - but even if it returns him instead to his 6-by-9 foot cell, Mordechai Vanunu will remain the most free man on earth."

A reporter for Israel's Channel 2 has called the incident at St George's Cathedral "unnecessary and embarrassing". It appears that the Police had chosen to mount the terrifying raid rather than simply asking Vanunu to accompany them for questioning. Many others commented on the lack of respect for the religious site where Vanunu has been given sanctuary.

Some commentators have noted the timing of the move against Vanunu. Rayna Moss, Israeli coordinator for the International Campaign to Free Vanunu, said: "The attempt to silence Mordechai Vanunu on this of all days, is an attempt to bury Israel's secret nuclear arsenal together with Yasser Arafat. While the world media and attention are focused on the burial of the Palestinian leader, the Israeli Government is attempting to disappear the nuclear whistleblower, whose only crime is revealing the terrible truth that Israel is trying to hide: weapons of mass destruction that are concealed from Israeli citizens and from the world." ☘

South Africa Forty-nine organisations endorse "Red October"

The South African Communist Party's Red October Campaign has received wide-ranging support from progressive South African organisations. To date, 49 organisations have formally endorsed the demands of the Campaign. These include the ANC (African National Congress), non-government, youth and landless people's organisations, trade unions and churches.

In summary, the Campaign demands are:

1. Acceleration and consolidation of land and agrarian reform in favour of, and access to, ownership and control of productive land by the workers and the poor

2. Access to basic services and rights by the workers and the poor in farms and rural areas

3. A National Land Summit

By endorsing the Campaign demands, all these progressive forces are clear that South Africa needs a complete review of the land reform policy framework which must start with a national and comprehensive land audit.

"We agree with the SACP", says

a statement issued by the Council of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), "We support the SACP demands..."

"This is a struggle for the transformation of the lives of the rural poor. We have to free farm workers from the poverty, insecurity and even violence that is still the everyday reality for thousands of them."

"COSATU wishes the SACP well in its campaign and pledge to everything possible to mobilise support and achieve their aims", the statement concluded.

The Communist Party is also pleased that the ANC "supports the broad objectives of the campaign" and its call "on all other social partners, including organised agriculture, to constructively engage in the struggle to fundamentally redress the legacy of apartheid and improve the lives of the rural poor".

It is such a broad front of organisations which can win access

to farms, rural communities and any other place where farm workers and rural people live and work to organise, assist and mobilise them against evictions, abuse and for their own interests.

The widespread support which the SACP campaign for land and agrarian reform has already drawn across the country is indicative of the dissatisfaction that exists among the overwhelming majority of our people with the content, pace and progress of land reform, and underscores the urgent need for speeding up the pace and progress of land reform based on an extensive overhaul of the land reform legislative and policy framework.

This widespread support for the campaign is a clear message to organised agriculture that our people are fed up with resistance to land and agrarian reform which has contributed significantly to slow the pace and progress of land reform. ☘

A full list of the 49 organisations endorsing the Communist Party's "Red October" campaign can be found at www.sacp.org.za/pr/2004/pr1103.html

Portland

Combines South East & South West Annual Union

Family Picnic Day

CFMEU CEPU AMWU AWU Building Trades Federation

Monday 13 December 11.00am - 3.00pm

Portland Soccer Ground End of Percy St, Portland

Contact: Mark Solly AMWU 0427 013 186; Travis Lawson CFMEU 0417 247 999; Margaret Brabender Portland 03 5523 4272; Aaron Cartledge CFMEU 8211 5532; Chris Nesbitt AWU 0429 988 004 Tickets are available from the Union Office, job delegate, organiser or on the day at the picnic
Supported by the Portland & SE Trades and Labour Council



Adelaide

Annual Union Family Picnic Day

CFMEU CEPU AWU AMWU Building Trades Federation

Monday 6 December 10.00am - 3.00pm

Bonython Park

(opposite Coca Cola)

Tickets are \$17.00 and are available from the Union Office, job delegate, organiser or on the day at the picnic

CFMEU 8424 3040

Visit CFMEU at www.cfmeu-forestdivision.com.au

Fight back against right-wing agenda

Tim Wheeler

With a note of defiance, leaders of the broad democratic movement vowed a determined fight back against George W Bush's extreme right-wing agenda in a second term. While soberly reflecting on the gains of the Republican right in the November 2 election, they rejected calls for retreat or compromise.

"We will never give up", said Kim Gandy, president of the 250,000-member National Organisation for Women. "We must fight back against Bush's regressive policies on every issue. Now is not the time to be timid. We must not give in to an agenda that endangers our rights, our freedoms, our liberty, and our lives."

Gandy hailed the women's equality movement and its allies for their efforts in turning out 56 million votes against Bush-Cheney. She urged a grassroots effort to block any Supreme Court nominee or cabinet member "who would deny our rights and liberties" and called on Senators to filibuster Bush nominees who would turn back the clock on women's equality.

Referring to the one-million-strong women's rights march on Washington last April 25, she added, "We must continue to march for women's lives across the country - expanding our million marchers into millions of voices speaking up for women's rights."

Richard Trumka, peak union body AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer, also sounded that undefeated note in a post-election interview at the federation headquarters. "This was the biggest election mobilisation we have ever had", he told the *People's Weekly World (World)* newspaper. It included 250,000 union volunteers and 5000 staff working full time across the nation, with 78,000 volunteers in four battleground states: Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Florida.

"Working people make this nation work", Trumka said. "The problem is that the nation isn't working for working people. That's why it was so easy to mobilise union members in this election. They are looking for someone who will stand up for them against the corporate interests."

George Kourpias, president of the Alliance for Retired Americans, praised the thousands of ARA volunteers who pounded the pavement to get out the vote. He warned of "difficult days ahead for older Americans", citing Bush's threat to privatise Social Security. "The Alliance and its allies will not allow this to happen", Kourpias said. "We will continue to lead the fight to protect a Social Security system that provides guaranteed benefits ... for comprehensive health care seniors can depend on through Medicare, including affordable and accessible prescription drugs."

Tony Fransetta, president of the 118,000-member Florida ARA, told the *World* that, while Bush won by pandering to the Christian right on issues like gay marriage, "now he wants to spend his political capital on issues that are completely different, like privatising Social Security". With these policies, said Fransetta, "the rich will get even richer and the poor will fight to hold onto what they've got."

"True religious values look after the well-being of all God's children, the poor and the disabled, not just the rich and powerful", he commented.

Democratic presidential contender Reverend Al Sharpton warned that Bush will try to "erode some of the gains we made under the civil rights movement and he clearly will have economic policies that will reward the rich".

"If there ever was a time that we had to gear up activism and put pressure on Congress like we've never done before, now is the time", Sharpton said.

The fightback mood resonated in the peace movement. Veterans for Peace (VFP), Military Families Speak Out and others scheduled protest marches, rallies, and vigils on Veterans Day, November 11, as the bloody US assault on Fallujah continued in Iraq. VFP planned a vigil at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, where hundreds of wounded GIs are being treated. Patrick McCann, a spokesperson for VFP and Vietnam Veterans Against the War, told the *World*, "People feel bummed out by the elections. Many are angry. They are looking for someone to step out and provide some leadership. Who better than veterans? We are building a very positive, strong movement against this war."

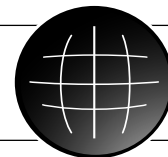
League of Conservation Voters President Deb Callahan said, "While we are deeply disappointed in the results in the presidential race ... we are enormously proud of the fact that LCV won seven of eight congressional races where we invested significant resources. ... In total, nearly 90 percent of our endorsed congressional candidates were victorious." In Illinois LCV helped elect Melissa Bean to a House seat and played a major role in Senator-elect Barack Obama's primary victory with an aggressive ad campaign based on clean air issues. "We will not rest until all three branches of our government are represented by pro-environmental public servants", Callahan said.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, warned that the religious right, crowing that they were key to Bush's victory, are demanding payback. "We're not about to roll over and play dead", Lynn said. "Millions of Americans oppose the theocratic agenda of the religious right. Bush's victory in a close race by no means gives him a mandate to knock down the church-state wall."

People's Weekly World ☪



A protester in a George Bush mask waves to motorists during the campaign



Global briefs

CHINA: The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) has reiterated its demand that all private enterprises, including foreign-owned firms, comply with Chinese labour law and allow their workers to unionise. "All enterprises investing in China should abide by the Trade Union Law on setting up trade union organisations", said Guo Jun, deputy director of the ACFTU's Legislative Affairs Bureau. He called on unions and cities to target particular situations for a breakthrough. A number of transnational giants operating in China, including Wal-Mart, Kodak, Dell and Samsung, are violating the law, the ACFTU said.

SOUTH AFRICA: Cape Town's Labour Court ruled last month that restaurant waiters are permanent members of the staff and not "independent contractors" with no rights of employment. The case involved two servers at one of the city's top restaurants, which closed in May. After they were discharged without reason or procedure, the two took their case to the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration, which ruled in their favour and granted them an award of nearly \$13,500 each. When the restaurant appealed, the Labour Court again found for the workers.

RUSSIA: Some four million teachers and other education workers have held a one-day strike to protest against their low pay in the largest labour demonstration since President Vladimir Putin took office nearly five years ago. Teachers and school workers demanded that their pay be increased by 50 percent immediately, and doubled by next year.

PERU: The Lima International Tribunal on US Crimes during the Korean War brought together delegates from nearly 20 countries, international and regional organisations from Asia, Europe and Latin America. Participants - including representatives of lawyers associations in several countries, among them the US National Lawyers Guild - called on Washington to formally apologise to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for provoking the Korean War and for the crimes committed by the US military during the war, and to punish those responsible. They also urged the US to stop its adventurous moves to provoke another war on the Korean peninsula, to end the US military occupation of South Korea, and to replace the 1953 armistice agreement with a full-fledged peace accord.

DPRK: The Mt Kuwol natural reserve in the central part of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was inscribed on the list of international sanctuaries according to the decision of the 18th meeting of the International Coordinating Council for Man and Biosphere Programme of the UNESCO held in Paris on October 29. The reserve, which abounds with flora and fauna and is endowed with beautiful scenery, includes Mt. Kuwol, one of the six famous mountains in Korea, an agricultural area and a migratory bird sanctuary in Unryul. Growing in the reserve are more than 600 species of plants, including 86 species of trees, 90 species of edible herbs including 30-odd which contain medicinal properties. Also thriving in the mountain are 30 special subspecies of animals including Korean water-deer, wild boar, hare, fox, hedgehog, squirrel. There are over 100 species of birds and more than 30 kinds of fish.

Canadian province OKs same-sex marriage

Tim Pelzer

Another victory for equal rights was won in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan on November 5 when a judge ordered the government to legalise same-sex marriage.

Justice Donna Wilson of the Court of Queen's Bench declared marriage to be the "lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others". Refusing a marriage licence to gay and lesbian couples would violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, she said. Both the provincial and federal governments did not oppose the judge's ruling. Five same-sex couples had launched the legal challenge.

Laurie Arron, director of EGALE, Canada's gay advocacy group, welcomed the court ruling. "Eighty-five percent of Canada's population now enjoys full marriage equality. Equal marriage diminishes no one. Canada is being strengthened by the inclusion of these loving, committed couples."

Saskatchewan becomes the seventh Canadian province to allow same-sex marriage. Alberta, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories are the only remaining provinces that retain discriminatory marriage laws.

Activists believe that govern-

ments will not oppose planned court challenges in these provinces and territories, with the exception of Alberta, which has passed legislation defining marriage as between a man and woman. Two gay couples last week filed a court action in Newfoundland, asserting that the province's ban on same-sex marriage violates their constitutional rights.

In related news, the New York State and Local Retirement System announced that it will treat American gay and lesbian couples married in Canada the same as opposite sex couples in respect to retirement benefits and obligations. The decision was communicated in a letter from the state comptroller to Mark Daigneault, a state employee. He asked in September how getting married in Canada would affect retirement benefits for him, his same-sex partner and their two children.

The comptroller told Daigneault, "Based on current law, the Retirement System will recognise a same-sex Canadian marriage in the same manner as an opposite-sex marriage, under the principle of comity. That principle has been legal practice pursuant to New York Court of Appeals rulings for many years."

People's Weekly World ☪

Sydney

Bougainville

Thursday 18 November 4pm

Tours of Pacific Anthropology Collection
Australian Museum, Sydney College St
Tours by Taloi Havini & Moses Havini
Pacific Wave Association

Festival of events

13-28 November

At venues around Sydney
Supporting Pacific Arts, Culture, and Performances
Please see website for the full program:
<http://www.pacificwave.org.au>

Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
74 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010



email: guardian@cpa.org.au

From the working people's perspective

The editorial "The right-wing push" (Guardian 3/11/2004) is making a serious misjudgement by suggesting that the workers harbour illusions about the capitalist system. The majority of workers know they are being exploited.

More serious, however, is the conclusion that this knowledge "will have to be explained again and again by those who recognise this truth". Many workers will be offended by what will be seen to be a patronising attitude. Many will simply continue to regard the Party as being of no account. It also has a bearing on the ability of the Party to win new members. Presumably it is the communists who are faced with the lengthy task of doing the explaining to that vast majority, as a precondition for militant action.

The problem of the absence of a militant attitude and the answer lies elsewhere. The foremost priority for working people is to feed themselves and their families. All other considerations take second place.

Given the choice between what is perceived as an immediate benefit, however minor, as opposed to benefits that might materialise in the future, particularly if they require

struggle, the individual worker will choose the former. This is the situation that must be taken into account in the difficult task of building living connections with the working class.

The working people can see the system is in crisis, and they are clutching at straws. With the ALP, in order to get into government, set to continue or modify policies aimed at gaining the support of big business and of those working people who aspire to better themselves by striking out independently. The way is being left open for the Marxist Left to win the support of "the army of blue and white collar workers who remain the driving force of production and the economy".

The workers are looking for dynamic leadership. They would support policies that are feasible and geared to take effect immediately. The CPA, unfortunately, proposes that the situation can only change with the formation of a People's Government.

**Bob Saltis
Adelaide, SA**

Has Bob Carr lost the plot?

I wish to raise my concerns with you all as to the condition that Bob Carr's Labor Government has the state of New South Wales languishing in. Let us examine just how bad things really are with most government services.

1) Health

Let me start by reminding readers of the situation at a major hospital in Sydney's south west that had an elderly woman with a broken leg and needing to be admitted straight

away was kept on an ambulance trolley for eight hours in a waiting room before being finally admitted. Since then her condition has become worse that she now has serious complications causing great concern to her family.

I'm sure that there are plenty more similar cases. You just have to visit your local GP and see first hand the utter chaos that the Carr Government has the health system reeling under – the seamless never-ending queue to get to see your overworked friendly GP. If you are unfortunate enough to need admission to a state-run hospital with overworked and underpaid nursing staff, what chance do you have of making a speedy recovery?

2) Transport

In a recent survey done on the performance of Bob Carr's City Rail services it showed that 90 percent of trains that were surveyed on that particular day were running late and the trend seems to be on-going with no solution in sight. Bully-boy Michael Costa has his sights set on the train drivers saying they are to lift their game by not having so many days off sick.

Well Mr Costa, do something positive about drivers' wages and conditions and we will see a vast reduction in drivers calling in sick. The Carr Government has to look at spending a lot of money on the rundown City Rail infrastructure to keep our rail network running on time. Is it too much to ask that the train you depend on gets you to work on time and if your lucky home again?

3) Water

The one thing that we humans must have is a clean water supply. Before the recent rainfall in some

of Sydney's catchment areas the storage level had dropped to thirty-nine percent of capacity, very low in anyone's terms.

In recent years the Carr Government has seen the numbers of outdoor staff employed by Sydney Water slowly decrease to a mere skeleton staff. In the past Sydney Water employed many workers attending breakdowns and patrolling the large water mains that carry water to homes and businesses in the city and metropolitan areas.

Does Mr Carr know how much water is wasted by leaking or burst water mains and slow response times by repair crews? All too often we see water running away from a burst main and repair crews nowhere in sight, this problem could be averted by re-employing more people and stopping the privatisation.

4) Power

Since the Carr Government decided to privatise the supply of electricity, the price of electricity has steadily climbed to unprecedented levels. It costs more and more to run the average home with electricity and there is no end in sight.

In recent months the warmer weather in Sydney brought on increased demand for power, overloading the ancient and outdated electricity sub-stations in northern Sydney and causing a major black-out.

It caused major problems to the traffic flow through the city and storekeepers had to discard some of their frozen stock as it melted.

It was reported that the remaining on-line mostly overloaded sub-stations were being cooled by garden hoses running water over

the cooling fins on the transformers. Not good enough Mr Carr, these sub-stations are old and out-dated and millions of dollars needs to be spent on a major up-grade of the electrical infrastructure.

The state of NSW is in bad shape and Bob Carr and co. have a lot to answer to as state owned services slowly crumble under the pressure of daily life.

I ask, "Has Bob Carr lost the plot?"

**Peter Kennedy
Muswellbrook, NSW**

Deported to Iran

Today a young man listens to the planes and waits.

His eyes are black with fear and his face is pale.

It is Perth Airport. The planes are Emirates Airlines. The young man is a Christian and he fears he will be forcibly deported to Iran.

Australia may not take his religion seriously, but the Iranian authorities certainly will.

Under Sharia Law is it a serious offence to turn away from Islam for another religion.

And he will be forced, like others before him, to carry his own damning evidence with him. There is a Bible in his bags, and his Baptismal Certificate.

Will this young man be one of Christianity's newest martyrs?

Does the Howard Government think it has a mandate for hard line policies that are cruel, inhuman and anti-Christian?

**Elaine Smith
West Haven, NSW**

Culture & Life

by
Rob Gowland

Spoken with the dead lately?

Spoken with the dead lately? No, not the Australian Democrats, but people who are actually physically dead, deceased, kaput.

Well, neither have I, but according to the *Sunday Telegraph* on November 7, "it's not uncommon to be in touch with the spirit world". Apparently everybody's doing it.

That is, according to the *Sunday Tele's* aptly-named *Body & Soul* supplement. The November 7 issue had four main feature articles: three of them predictably enough on such topics as eating less, natural skin care and reducing the size of your bum.

The fourth, however, the two-page lead article in the supplement, was a piece of pseudo-scientific nonsense about communicating with the dead. Specious, irresponsible, absurd and dishonest it was tabloid journalism at its worst.

Its first paragraph started off seriously enough, reminding us that people have been probing the "tantalising" question of whether there is life after death "for as long as man has inhabited the Earth".

Then in the fourth sentence it lurched into the wilds of fantasy: "Serious exploration remained uncharted, however, until in the 1840s" Whoa! *Serious exploration?* Of the *afterlife?*

This is not serious writing, it's a

TV script. Some variant of *Stargate* or *Sliders*. Or possibly *Dr Who*.

Can't you see the intrepid explorers setting out to cross the River Styx in their inflatable rubber dinghies, under orders to capture one of the inhabitants of "the other side" and return at once?

But what, I hear you ask, was the "serious exploration" that took place in the 1840s? Why, that was when "the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, revealed their unique gift of communicating with the dead through séances.

"The search for clues to the spirit world was popularised, as even sceptics couldn't disprove their claims."

Right here, at the beginning of the article, the *Sunday Tele* has made its position clear: "communicating with the dead" is to be accepted at face value, as fact. Far from requiring spiritualists to *prove* that they are communicating with the dead, it is up to sceptics to "disprove their claims".

Most of the article is made up of anecdotal "evidence", recounting what people claim to have seen or heard. Some of these hardly come close to qualifying as communications with the dead.

One young woman from the Sydney suburb of Sutherland, reported that while "going through a particularly stressful period", she had a vision of her dead grandfather. This apparently gave her a sense of calm and gave her life "the redirection it needed".

As an "after death communication", however, it is tenuous, to say the least. Incidentally, the spirit world cognoscenti call these communications by their initials, "ADCs". There's nothing like jargon to make something seem real.

The ADC I like best is however one from a woman in Wollongong, whose husband reportedly died last

Christmas eve. She has, according to the article, "found some respite through incidents that she feels are a sign that John [her dead husband] is near".

One of these is then detailed: "On a weekend away, a white feather mysteriously found its way to [her] bedside table, disappeared suddenly, then two months later was found in a tiny, hard to get to compartment of her travel bag."

Why on Earth would *that* make anyone think that their dead husband was trying to communicate with them? He had a thing for feathers?

The most quoted authority in the article is an English author, Emma Heathcote-James, who spent five years at Birmingham University researching "contemporary testimonies of angel visitations" (you can get away with anything at English universities).

Obviously adept at self-promotion, Heathcote-James' research produced "numerous media releases", followed by a BBC TV documentary and then a book, *Seeing Angels*. Basically a record of people's accounts of their supposed encounters with angels, the book generated so many letters containing accounts of further "uncanny experiences" that she was able to put them together as a second book, *After Death Communication*.

Her latest book is called *They Walk Among Us* (don't laugh, this woman is serious). According to the *Sunday Tele*, her new book "explores the science behind many ADCs".

Unfortunately, Ms Heathcote-James tends to talk with her foot in her mouth, as witness her explanation of the "scientifically measurable" way to examine after death communications:

"Summon a spirit through someone who is a highly skilled



"Can he get back to you? He appears to have stepped away from his body."

medium, using them as a portal for the deceased to return to our world, as in a séance-type setting.

"The information can be witnessed – scientists can record and research the outcomes, using subatomic physics and maths."

That sounds eminently technical, until we remember that watching an apple fall off a tree, as Newton did, is also "subatomic physics".

The only real scientist quoted in the article is Salih Ozgul, Manager of the Psychology Clinic at the ANU in Canberra. One sentence only is quoted from what was obviously a very carefully worded statement from Ozgul concerning the use of the idea of an afterlife as a way of easing grief after bereavement.

"Believing in the existence of

an afterlife and that a person may become reunified with deceased loved one on their own death, may for some people, provide solace."

Torn from its context and dropped into the middle of the article with no qualifying comment, Ozgul's quote serves to give the appearance of local scientific support to the rest of the pseudo science and mumbo jumbo in it.

Finally, in a mish mash of nonsense and nonsense, the *Telegraph* quotes Heathcote-James saying that "many enlightening works" on near-death experiences and out-of-body experiences remain unpublished because what she calls the "scientific elite" prefer apparently "to stick to Einstein's big bang theory of 'when you're dead, you're dead'".

Say what? ☹



Sun November 21 ~
~ Sat November 27

The treatment of history as high drama, which the British do very well, has its drawbacks. One is that the history becomes subject to the needs of the drama.

Gunpowder, Treason And Plot (ABC 8.30pm Sunday) is a case in point. Very well acted by an excellent cast, it is by its nature unable to admit of more than one interpretation of events or to allow for uncertainties in the historical record.

So the Gunpowder Plot of the unfortunate Guy Fawkes is presented as a genuine plot that James I and his government uncovered and dealt with to their advantage. The very real possibility that it was in fact engineered by James and his ministers, through an *agent provocateur*, expressly to give him the excuse to crush the Catholic opposition and become the *de facto* protector of Parliament, cannot be accommodated in this dramatised version.

The Protestant churches arose as the religion of the then new social system of capitalism. No longer would a rich man's chances of getting into Heaven be likened to a camel's chances of getting through the eye of a needle!

Today, the most rabid capitalists, the like of George W bush and the Republican Right, are followers of Pentecostal churches whose key teachings are that Christians are destined to be joyful, successful and prosperous. Especially prosperous.

Guy Sebastian's Church, screening on *Compass* (ABC

10.15pm Sunday), uses last year's *Australian Idol* winner, Guy Sebastian, to publicise the Paradise Community Church, a huge so-called "contemporary" church that sits in the foothills on the outskirts of Adelaide.

Sebastian and his family have been active members of this church throughout the past decade and now he's the poster boy for one of its largest ministries, "Solid Rock Youth". Specifically designed to draw in teenagers, the youth ministries draw hundreds of new worshippers every year – overwhelmingly young people – with a blend of music, modern marketing and the promise of prosperity, all wrapped around a conservative Bible-based moral message.

Geraldine Cox is a feisty Australian woman who is mother to a family of orphans in the constantly volatile political landscape of Cambodia.

Director Janine Hosking filmed Geraldine Cox over a period of three years to make **My Khmer Heart (ABC 8.30pm Monday)**, an intimate and personal portrait of a gutsy lady.

The film won the Best Documentary Award at the Hollywood Film Festival.

This week's episode of **Dynasties (ABC 8.00pm Tuesdays)** is devoted to **The Ashton Family**, who have been synonymous with circus in Australia for over 150 years.

Ashton's Circus is Australia's longest-running performing arts organisation. But today they've been brought to their knees by competition from the giant multinational hi-tech circuses, as well as the modern issue of animal rights.

Perhaps it's time to raise the question (which this program doesn't) of whether Australian circuses should continue to be private, family companies or should they be publicly-supported community or state cultural enterprises?

What **The Child Sex Trade (SBS 8.30pm Tuesday)** makes abundantly clear – if it needed to made clear – is that child

prostitution and sex trafficking is a product of poverty, gross income inequality and hopelessness.

Kids facing a life of unemployment and poverty on the streets of Bucharest (as in this documentary) who are offered what seem like large sums of money to have sex with Western paedophiles are much more likely to say yes.

The unfortunate children shown here live in the underground and survive by begging during the day and selling sex at night. The triumph of the counter-revolution did not bring them any more benefits than it brought the Romanian workers.

Filmmaker Liviu Tipurita is however primarily concerned with exposing the vicious trade in young boys and girls among German, British and US paedophiles.

Earl Silas Tupper invented the watertight, airtight Tupper seal in the 1940s, but his polyethylene Wonderbowls (as they were then called) languished on store shelves.

The secret to Tupperware's success was Brownie Wise and her story is told in **Tupperware (ABC 9.00pm Wednesday)**.

Divorced from a drunken husband, Brownie, a former union organiser and now a single parent, earned extra income by selling Stanley Home Products – cleaning aids and brushes – at home party demonstrations.

Stanley was a pioneer in direct selling, and the job was a perfect fit for Wise's drive, ambition and charm. She had quickly become one of the top Stanley sellers.

In the late 1940s, Wise and several other Stanley branch managers around the country figured Tupperware should be sold at home parties, because users needed to learn how to "burp" the airtight Tupper seal correctly.

In 1950 Wise, her son Jerry, and mother Rosie all moved to Florida. Wise started a company she called Tupperware Patio Parties, and was selling far more Tupperware than the stores.

Her success caught the eye of Earl Tupper, who had unsuccessfully started a home party division at Tupperware. He saw his opportunity



A conservative bible-based message (Guy Sebastian's Church)

to make home parties work, and asked Wise to be vice president of his company.

Earl Tupper took Tupperware out of the hardware stores and department stores, and from that time, Tupperware was sold exclusively on the home party plan.

Wise took what she had learned in Stanley and improved on it tenfold. She had an intuitive grasp of selling, of consumer culture, and the fantasies shared by many Americans in the 1950s.

She recognised women who got very little recognition elsewhere in their lives, bestowing upon them trophies, luxury goods and applause. With Tupper's blessing, the company's public relations staff promoted Wise extensively (she was the first woman to make the cover of *Business Week*).

Over time, however, Wise became increasingly high-handed, and she was less patient with Tupper's micro-management and

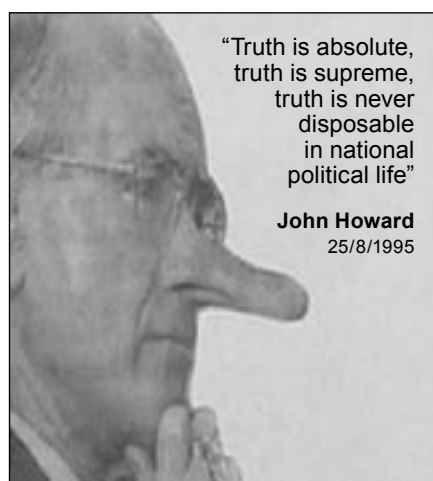
unpredictable temper. In 1958 Earl Tupper unceremoniously and abruptly fired her, booting her from the multi-million dollar company she had helped build; she held no company stock and was given just one year's salary.

The peculiarly capitalist American Dream had claimed another victim.

The odd-ball success of the pedestrian yet likeable Austrian cop-show *Inspector Rex*, about a police dog who is smarter than the humans around him, has spawned the inevitable imitator.

To make room for the new dog on the block (and use up the *Inspector Rex* episodes with an M rating), SBS has moved *Inspector Rex* to Friday nights at 8.30 pm. Rex's Thursday night slot will be taken over by **Turbo (SBS 7.30pm Thursdays)**.

Turbo is a handsome border collie who works for the Italian police, and likes to ride on motor scooters. Isn't television amazing? ☺



"Truth is absolute, truth is supreme, truth is never disposable in national political life"

John Howard
25/8/1995

Politics @ the Club
FEDERAL ELECTIONS

ADELAIDE

- ARE YOU...
 shocked?
 angry?
 grieving?
 all of the above?

Hear progressive speakers and then share your thoughts in an open forum

SUNDAY 21 NOVEMBER, 2-4 pm
SEMAPHORE WORKERS CLUB

Cnr Dunn St and The Esplanade, Semaphore Alcohol & bar snacks available. Organised by a group of concerned Port residents Contact **Anne** anniemac@adam.com.au or **Bob** bobbrit@planetmail.com

Sydney
MANUFACTURING FEAR
Forum 2 – FACING FEAR

Friday 26 November 9am – 5pm UTS Broadway (Room to be confirmed)
No entry charge, refreshments provided

This forum focuses on the people and communities, racialised as 'Other', who have their freedoms curtailed, and currently are insecure, fearful, feeling terrorised in their own homes and how people working with racialised communities have themselves responded, finding innovative ways to tell their stories.

Organised by: NSW Civil Rights Network
+ Research Initiative on International Activism, UTS

www.civilrightsnetwork.org www.international.activism.uts.edu.au
manufacturingfear@yahoo.com James Goodman 02 9514 2714

Sydney
Politics in the Pub

Every Friday night 6pm – 7.45pm

Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills

Dinner afterwards in the Royal Exhibition Hotel across the road

November 19

NATION BUILDING IN THE PACIFIC
CAN AUSTRALIA BE A TRUE FRIEND?
Nic MacLellan Journalist and Researcher on Pacific Affairs, author of *After Muroroa – France in the South*
Peter King Prof International Studies Sydney Uni

November 26

ACEH AND WEST PAPUA – STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM
Dr Nurdin Rahman Human Rights Activist, formerly Lecturer English, Uni Aceh
John Martinkas Journalist and film maker, author of works on East Timor, Iraq

Inq: Pat Toms 02 9358 4834 pbtoms@bigpond.com; Janet Fischer 02 9398 8891; PO Box 325 Rozelle NSW 2039; Win Childs Fax 02 9660 6554
www.politicsinthepub.org

Subscribe to **The Guardian**

12 MONTHS: \$88 (\$80 conc.) 6 months: \$45 (\$40) 3 months: \$23 (\$20)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____

Pay by Cheque Money order
to: Guardian Subscriptions

74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010, Australia

or by credit card: Bankcard Mastercard Visa

Card #

Amount: _____ Expiry Date: ____/____/____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

The Guardian

74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833
Email: guardian@cpa.org.au

Editor: Anna Pha

Published by
Guardian Publications
Australia Ltd

74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010

Printed by Spotpress
105-107 Victoria Rd
Marrickville 2204

Responsibility for electoral comment is taken by T Pearson, 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010

Rejoice not

Uri Avnery

"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him." **This biblical injunction (Proverbs 24:17) is one of the most profound Jewish moral tenets.**

In this connection, Israel is very far from being a "Jewish State", as it likes to define itself. The disgusting filth poured out over Yasser Arafat during the last few days in practically all the Israeli media makes one ashamed to be an Israeli.

The demonisation of the Palestinian national leader, which has been the centre-piece of Israeli

the Palestinian ministers, religious dignitaries and diplomats, I was vividly aware of the intense emotions of the huge crowd around us when the helicopter touched down. I remembered the scene of Gamal Abd-al-Nasser's funeral in 1970, when the masses surged forward and literally captured the body of their beloved leader from the soldiers, and felt that this was going to happen here at any moment. And it did.

No Arab leader – and very few world leaders – evoke such profound love and admiration among their people as this man, whom Israelis consider a veritable monster in human form. The Palestinians



Yasser Arafat brought his people to the threshold of independence

No Arab leader – and very few world leaders – evoke such profound love and admiration among their people as this man, whom Israelis consider a veritable monster in human form.

propaganda for decades, continues even after his death. It seems that 37 years as occupiers have bestialised our society and left it bereft even of common decency. Ministers and fishmongers, TV icons and university professors, "leftists" and outright fascists tried to outdo each other in utter vulgarity.

Never was the huge gap in the perceptions of the two peoples more striking than on the day of Arafat's funeral. While Israeli commentators and "experts on Arab affairs" – almost all of them veterans of the various intelligence agencies – described the late leader as a veritable monster, the epitome of cruelty, viciousness and corruption – a hundred thousand grief-stricken mourners in Ramallah exploded in a burst of emotions that nearly threw the funeral into pandemonium. If the Israeli army had not surrounded and isolated all Palestinian towns that day, more than a million people would have been there.

Gush Shalom, the only Israeli organisation that openly mourned alongside the Palestinian people, decided to send a delegation to the funeral. All of us activists, women and men, wore on our breast a big sticker displaying the Israeli and Palestinian flags.

The sheer pressure of the multitude split us up among the crowd. Throughout the hours of the funeral, we felt completely safe, even when thousands of shots were fired around us into the air to express grief and bereavement. We encountered hundreds of expressions of gratitude and friendship from Palestinians of all ages and stations in life.

I was in the middle of the melee when the helicopter bearing the coffin arrived from Cairo. Standing beside the grave among

trusted him, relied on him, let him make all the big decisions that demanded courage, derived from him the strength to defy the intolerable conditions under a brutal occupation. Now, suddenly, incredibly, they found themselves alone, like orphaned waifs, in a world changed by the death of a man who left a huge gap behind him.

What will happen now? Arafat has brought his people from the edge of oblivion to the threshold of independence. But the battle for liberation is still far from over. The new leadership will have to face all the problems that confronted Arafat, without the towering authority of Arafat.

Abu Mazen, Abu-Ala and their colleagues are upright, decent people. I have known them for years, mostly from meetings with Arafat. But they have no deep roots in their people. It may be years before a strong leadership emerges.

At the moment, the Palestinians are united in their resolve to show the world that they can overcome this crisis in a civilised and responsible manner. This could have been a chance for Israel (and the United States, of course) to open a new chapter in relations with the Palestinian people.

What could have been done? Well, there should have been a show of goodwill with such gestures as the mass release of Palestinian prisoners, including the much respected Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, who has been sentenced to serve five consecutive life sentences. Sieges should have been lifted and army operations at least reduced. Peace negotiations should have been announced for the near future.

The first test was, of course, the funeral itself. Arafat should

have been buried in Jerusalem, according to his wishes. His interment in Ramallah will only strengthen the resolve of the Palestinians to fight until they are able to re-bury him there. The Minister of Justice, Tommy Lapid, an extreme rightist posing as a liberal, reached new heights of vulgarity when he declared that "Jewish Kings, not Arab terrorists, are buried in Jerusalem". Well, Menachem Begin, a terrorist who became a "king" and was buried in Jerusalem, could have served as a precedent.

But the most important thing is to enable the Palestinians to hold elections within 60 days of the death of the President, as their constitution demands. Actually, my last conver-

sation with Arafat, a few weeks ago (when, by the way, he looked quite healthy) concerned elections. We agreed that they are impracticable while the Israeli army routinely assassinates potential candidates and makes movement between towns and villages almost impossible. How will candidates – if they remain alive – canvass their voters? How will they distribute material, hold meetings and debate policies, with tanks in the background and helicopter gun-ships hovering overhead?

This situation must be changed at once. All troops must be withdrawn at least from the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority (so-called Areas A and B, according to the Oslo agreements),

freedom of movement restored, the assassination campaign stopped and, most importantly, international observers invited.

Will this happen? Probably not. Ariel Sharon has absolutely no interest in sitting opposite a democratically elected leadership enjoying international legitimacy and respect, perhaps even weakening his control over President Bush and obstructing his plan for the annexation of most of the West Bank. He will do everything to prevent elections, and, of course, blame the Palestinians.

As always, it is advisable to ignore what Sharon says – and pay close attention.

Yuri Avnery is a leading Israeli peace activist. *Gush Shalom* www.gush-shalom.org

Iraqi Communist Party's Central Committee Mourns the Loss of Leading Member Comrade Wadhah Hassan Abdul Amir

The Central Committee of the Iraqi Communist Party has mourned with deepest sorrow its enormous loss with the death of Comrade Wadhah Hassan Abdul Amir (Saadoun), the member of its Politburo, and also a member of the Interim National Assembly, who was martyred on 13th November 2004, along with two of his comrades, while travelling from Baghdad to Kirkuk. Their car was attacked by a criminal gang of murderers and remnants of the ousted dictatorship.

A statement issued by the party said that martyrdom of comrade Saadoun constitutes "a grave loss which would be difficult to replace".

The comrade was "an example of pure and genuine patriotism, full of love for the people and homeland ... He was a fully dedicated communist, who committed his life for the cause of the oppressed and toilers, and for the ideals of justice and socialism, devoting all his abilities and potential for its triumph".

Comrade Saadoun joined the party in his early youth, embarking along a path of relentless struggle, full of courage and sacrifice, along with its members. After joining the Partisan Movement of the Party and armed struggle against the bloody dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, he emerged as a courageous leader through battles fought in the mountains and valleys of Kurdistan. This feat won him the admiration and affection of the people of Kurdistan.

During that period and afterwards, he was actively involved in the Party's clandestine work against the hated regime, thus deserving additional wrath and hatred by the Security and Intelligence apparatus of the dictatorship. He was targeted and pursued by agents of these instruments of repression and terror, with the aim of capturing and physically liquidating him.

After the collapse of Saddam's regime, the late comrade devoted all his potential for the process of

rebuilding the Party, consolidating its organisations in the new conditions so as to enable it to continue its march forward. These qualities, as well as other personal merits, meant that he emerged, at a relatively young age, as a leading cadre who was then elected to the Party leadership.

The Central Committee statement also mourned the martyrdom of two courageous comrades, Nawzad Tawfiq Tawfiq and Hasib Mustafa Hassan, who were accompanying comrade Saadoun; conveying its deepest condolences to their families, comrades and friends.

Iraqi CP's Central Committee strongly denounced the cowardly criminals who are shedding the blood of patriots and innocent citizens, and reiterated the Party's determination to continue the fight alongside the Iraqi people in their just battle for freedom, democracy, justice and progress.

Iraqi CP site on internet: www.iraqcp.org



Communist Party of Australia

Central Committee:
General Secretary: Peter Symon
President: Hannah Middleton
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833
Sydney District Committee:
Rob Gowland
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833

Newcastle Branch:
303 Hunter St
Ph: ah 02 4926 1752
Wollongong Branch: Leanne Lindsay
PO Box 276 Corrimal 2518
North Illawarra Branch: Janice Hamilton
16/26-30 Hutton Ave
Bulli NSW 2516
Ph: 02 4283 6130

Riverina:
Geoff Lawler
PO Box 1016 Wagga 2650
Ph: 02 6921 4316 Fax: 02 6921 6873
Melbourne Branch:
Andrew Irving
PO Box 3 Room 0 Trades Hall
Lygon St Carlton Sth 3053
Ph: 03 9639 1550 Fax: 03 9639 4199

The Guardian
Website: www.cpa.org.au/guardian/guardian.html
Email: guardian@cpa.org.au

West Australian Branch: Vic Williams
5B Jemerson St Willagee Perth 6156
Phone: 08 9337 1074
Brisbane Branch: David Matters
PO Box 2148 Salisbury East 4107
Ph: 07 3398 9623
South Australian State Committee:
Marie Lean Rm 5, Lvl 1, 149 Flinders St,
Adelaide 5000 Ph: 08 8232 8200

Website: www.cpa.org.au
Email: cpa@cpa.org.au