



Gimme Shelter

HELPING OUT THE HOMELESS

On Friday, 29 February, the Gimme Shelter concert raised approximately \$20,000 to assist St Patrick's Community Support Centre.

Enormous credit and gratitude must go to the organising committee, especially Dave Johnson and Phoebe Corke, the bands and performers who donated their performances and to all the wonderful sponsors.



THE ST PAT'S STARLIGHT HOTEL CHOIR

The night was the most rewarding experience so far in my time as the member for Fremantle.

I'm glad to say that the Rudd government is serious about addressing homelessness as part of our broad social inclusion agenda.

For the first time there is a dedicated Housing Minister in the federal government and we have already announced some proactive policies, including the creation of a **Housing Affordability Fund** and a **National Rental Affordability Scheme**.

We are well aware that aggregate economic growth does not guarantee that we all move forward together. In fact, a lot of people are left behind.

In some cases, the by-products of economic growth – lower rental vacancies, higher rents – actually make things worse and harder for the people who have very little to start with.

Compassionate and responsible governments and communities must look after the vulnerable in our society.



MELISSA PARKE AT GIMME SHELTER

I hope Gimme Shelter can be a model for more efforts, and more recognition, of the social inclusion task that exists in our community, and right across Australia.



Welcome to my electorate newsletter

As the new member for Fremantle, I have been hard at work in the first 3 months visiting schools, aged care centres, crisis accommodation providers and attending community functions.

The Rudd Labor government has reached its first 100 days after delivering on several key promises, including the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and the giving of a formal apology to the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

Already, at the local level, I have been pleased to see the commitment to improving infrastructure in our community, through the announcement of road funding to upgrade the quality and safety of Leach Highway between Carrington and High Streets.

I also welcome the creation of the Teen Dental Plan, which will provide up to \$150 to eligible families towards the cost of an annual dental check-up.

If there is anything my office can do to assist you in relation to federal issues, please call 9335 8555 or email melissa.parke.mp@aph.gov.au

- Inside this issue...
- Saying Sorry
 - Freo Prison Heritage
 - 2020 Summit
 - Organ Donat



Heather's Story

THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT'S APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

The first week of the 42nd Commonwealth Parliament was particularly notable for the fact that the Rudd Labor government honoured its promise to say sorry to the Stolen Generations, and to apologise for past instances of Indigenous dispossession.

Both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition committed future parliaments to holding a 'welcome to country' ceremony at the beginning of the Parliamentary year.

It was my honour and privilege to have Heather Vicenti, a Wongi woman and Coolbellup resident, with me as my guest on the day of national healing.

I endorse with all my heart the Prime Minister's speech, in which he concluded by saying:

'Let us turn this page together: Indigenous and non-Indigenous, government and opposition, Commonwealth and state, and write this new chapter in our nation's story together.'

(Extract from Melissa Parke's First Speech 14/2/08)

"Heather Vicenti is a Fremantle constituent and she travelled from Coolbellup to Canberra this week as my guest, on behalf of the people of Fremantle, to be present for the apology.

Heather, who is now 72 years old, was born in the goldfields east of Kalgoorlie, a member of the Wongi people, and she was taken from her mother when she was two years old. She spent most of her childhood at Roelands Church of Christ Mission outside Perth, where she was trained as a domestic servant.

During her challenging life she, in turn, had children taken away, and four of her seven adult children died in tragic circumstances, including a son who was shot by prison guards while in custody. Heather has written a book about her life and her experiences as a member of the Stolen Generations. Its title is *Too Many Tears*.

As Sir Ronald Wilson said in the Bringing Them Home report, 'The process of storytelling was itself the beginning of a healing process.'



MELISSA PARKE MP WITH HEATHER VICENTI IN CANBERRA

It is my hope that the stories of the stolen generations, and of Indigenous dispossession more broadly, will continue to be told and heard together with a celebration of the cultural diversity and richness of Australia's Indigenous heritage as one of the key strands within the new national curriculum.

I know that Heather's experience, energy and indomitable spirit are a kind of irrepressible magic that will remain a touchstone for me as I join with my fellow parliamentarians in seeking to bridge the unacceptable chasm in quality of life and life expectancy that still exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians."



The Rudd Government will convene an *Australia 2020 Summit* at Parliament House on 19-20 April 2008 to help shape a long term strategy for Australia's future.

The summit will bring together some of the best and brightest from across the country to tackle the long term challenges confronting Australia.

Melissa Parke MP supported several Fremantle nominations including a school principal, a local journalist

and a sustainability expert, among others.

Every Australian has the opportunity to make a submission to the summit. The deadline for those submissions is COB Wednesday 9 April 2008.

For more information, visit: www.australia2020.gov.au

Organ Donation: SAVE A LIFE!

On 22 February, I spoke in the House of Representatives on the issue of organ donation, not least to draw attention to the fact that it was Organ Donation Week.

There are approximately 1800 people awaiting organ donation in Australia – and both the number and rate of successful transplants in this country have remained stable for the last 20 years.

It is very encouraging that approximately 94 per cent of

Australians have indicated their support for organ and tissue donation. We now need to convert that high level of support into action.

The Donor Register is the only national database for recording decisions about becoming an organ and tissue donor for transplantation after death.

Without an Organ Donor Register Card, your decision is not recorded with the Australian Organ Donor Register.



Go to the following website to find out how to become an organ donor:

www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

or call 1800 777 203

Below: Melissa Parke and Peter Garrett with Alex Gillam. Alex is heading up the Youth Landskates Project, an initiative aimed at providing a recreational precinct for young people in North Fremantle.



Above: Melissa Parke at the UnitingCare Pancake Day with Volunteer Audrey Fraser, Reverend Raymond Clew and Volunteer Coordinator Dulcie Hale. The event raised funds for UnitingCare's work with Fremantle people in need.



Left: Melissa Parke with Alex Hyndman from Nexus Carshare, an innovative local business which is helping to reduce the number of cars on our roads in a practical and environmentally conscious way.

Fremantle Prison Heritage Nomination

FREMANTLE PRISON HAS OFFICIALLY BEEN NOMINATED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE LIST.

It forms part of the 'Australian Convict Sites' nomination, encompassing 11 convict sites across the country.

Melissa Parke attended the announcement on 31 January at a special event hosted by Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett.

"It's exciting to see us reach this milestone and move closer to a prestigious World Heritage listing for our special convict places," Ms Parke said.

"In the hope of a good outcome, I have begun the process of considering an appropriate celebration to recognise the significant efforts of heritage campaigners in Fremantle."

"These convict sites are a living memorial to the transport of more than 160,000 men, women and children to Australia, where they were confronted with a strange and isolated land and a new life away from family and friends."

"And Fremantle Prison is one of the largest surviving convict establishments in the world."

From here, the nomination will be checked by UNESCO



before being examined by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). It will continue through a comprehensive evaluation, including an ICOMOS visit to the sites and discussions with local experts.

Melissa Parke said if successful, the convict sites will join 17 other Australian places recognised as being of outstanding universal significance.

"These are iconic places like Kakadu National Park, the Great Barrier Reef and Sydney Opera House, which draw many international and national visitors every year," she said.

A final Committee decision is expected in mid-2009. For more information about Australia's World Heritage visit:

www.environment.gov.au

First Speech: My war against indifference

MELISSA PARKE MP GAVE HER FIRST SPEECH IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT ON 14 FEBRUARY 2008. HERE IS AN EDITED EXTRACT.

Politics is a war against indifference. Like many people who have sought or who seek to make a public service contribution through politics, I cannot be indifferent to the millions of Australians who have been left behind during the resources boom and who struggle with rising costs of living while their incomes remain static, or who cannot gain access to housing or health services when needed.

I cannot be indifferent to the massive under-investment in public education, skills training and infrastructure that has occurred in the past decade, or to the trebling of the HECS debt in that period.

And I cannot be indifferent to the homeless, or to those suffering mental illness, or living with disability, or to the one billion of our fellow human beings who live in extreme poverty.

As a new member I am deeply humbled to have been elected by the people of

Fremantle to be their 10th representative in this place since Federation. And I am at their service.

Fremantle was named after Captain Charles Fremantle, a man of somewhat dubious reputation and doubtful seafaring skills, who nonetheless had the foresight to declare Fremantle 'a place of consequence'.

Fremantle might properly be regarded as Australia's Ellis Island—the first landing place for migrants arriving by sea. Today it is a hardworking, multicultural community made up of men, women and children who are Australian by birth and Australian by choice.

Based around a major working port, whose efficiency owes much to the Maritime Union of Australia, Fremantle has developed a unique charm and character, being home to what many regard as the best-preserved 19th century cityscape in Australia, the busiest regional airport in the southern hemisphere, at Jandakot, one of the fastest growing local council areas in the country, at Cockburn, and the greatest football team in Australia, the Fremantle Dockers.

I am happy to say that indifference is anathema to the people of Fremantle. They are engaged, politically conscious and have strong and 'sometimes bolshie' views, as Carmen Lawrence noted approvingly in her valedictory speech.

I honour the very significant contributions of my predecessors in the seat of Fremantle, and I want to take this opportunity to thank Carmen Lawrence for the support and wise counsel she has given me over the last year and pay special tribute to her extraordinary contribution to state and federal politics.

[the full speech can be viewed via my website: www.melissaparke.com.au]



In his own valedictory speech, Kim Beazley Senior reflected generously on all the Parliamentarians that he had known in his 32 years, and he said: "I think that the Australian community has got a very high quality of representation. If it has, of course, that is what it deserves."

Well, I think it can be said without qualification that the people of Fremantle, and indeed of Western Australia, must have been doing something right to deserve a man like Kim Beazley.

He was always a man of principle and the bedrock of his values was his Christian faith. He was not prepared to bend his principles for the sake of political game-playing, and some have observed that this may have been to his personal loss. But I think it was to his eternal credit.

He said it best himself when he observed, "If you do not accept the importance of conscience, you accept only the importance of power."

Kim Beazley Senior Condolence Motion

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXTRACT FROM A SPEECH GIVEN BY MELISSA PARKE MP IN HONOUR OF KIM BEAZLEY SENIOR, WHITLAM MINISTER AND A FORMER MEMBER FOR FREMANTLE (1945-77)

Kim Beazley Senior was the embodiment and beacon of political conscience throughout his parliamentary career.

Reading back over the articles and obituaries from October last year, I think some commentators were too quick to put Kim Beazley in that well-worn category, 'the man who could have been king'. It is certainly true that he could have led the Australian Labor Party, and that he might have in other circumstances, but it is not true that his political life was in any way unfulfilled. There are kings and then there are kings.

Royalty is not a concept that we in the Australian Labor Party are necessarily all that fond of – but as a term of reference, as a way of acknowledging a person's stature – I think I might be forgiven for repeating the fact that when Kim Beazley Senior entered parliament he was known as the 'student prince' ... and for saying that when he left it, and when he left us, he was a king.