

Newcastle
Young
Liberals

The News Castle

Issue 4

April, 2001

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Special points of interest:

- ? The Newcastle Young Liberals is the largest Young Liberal branch in the Hunter valley.
- ? Greg Hansen, Country Vice President and newly appointed Young Liberal patron, is a former member of the Newcastle Young Liberals.
- ? The Newcastle Young Liberals was voted 'Country Branch of the Year' 1999 and 'Best Branch Newsletter' 2000.

Welcome!

My apologies there was no March issue of 'The News Castle' - I have taken a new job and spent the entire month at my new company's head office, in Europe.

The very mention of 'Europe' seems to conjure images of exotic lands, cobblestone roads and the glories of long-gone empires.

True, I enjoyed a sangria or two on the river Tajus, saw a 200-year old chapel made from human bones, visited a city once considered the very edge of the world, and tried to manage Pesatos, Escuados, Pounds and Dollars.

Yet, as all of us who have travelled know—in the famous words of Dorothy, no less, *there's no place like home!*

Australia is a fine country where we enjoy wonderful health and freedoms. In fact, sometimes we can be so accustomed to how good we have it, that any emerging inconvenience or situation invokes the ire of the people and of the media—although I'm not always sure which one really does come first.

In Europe, all currencies apart from perhaps the Pound and the Franc are decreasing in value against the strong US Dollar. It's not that any of these countries are necessarily doing anything wrong, or suffering fiscal hardship—merely, the US is performing so well.

In Europe, petrol is at its highest levels. One weekend I spent over \$50 filling the tank of a compact-sized Fiat Punta. By way of contrast, that's how much I'd expect to spend on a family-sized V6 here.

It's true that the Australian dollar is at its lowest value, and it's true that petrol is at its highest price.

Yet, if one knew nothing of the outside world, the local press would have you believe that recession is imminent and that the Federal Government is leading us to ruin—despite its strong economic track record.

The truth is that anything we are experiencing here is a world-wide phenomenon.

It disappoints me greatly when I hear Liberals speaking negatively about the Howard Government's performance in these areas. In fact, I would go so far as to say it is grossly short-sighted and even *globally insular* of those who make such criticisms.

Let me leave you with this thought: in such world-wide circumstances, where would a Labor Government have taken us? Is it really so long ago that people can forget when Beazley and co. brought unemployment, 17% interest rates, and the recession we didn't have until "we had to have it"?

I don't want to minimise the burdens of Australian families, but let's keep perspective. Thank goodness we have a Liberal Government while these things transpire.



2000-2001 President of the Newcastle Young Liberals, David M. Williams

One Nation Preferences—My \$0.02 ...

By David Williams

The issue of One Nation preferences and how the Coalition will allocate them is one that obsesses the media and political commentators.

In our February branch meeting, the Newcastle Young Liberals enjoyed a spirited exchange with Party Vice-President (and former Newcastle Young Liberals President) Greg Hansen. Hence, I've taken this opportunity to add to the plethora of commentators with my own *personal* views.

Firstly, it seems to me that the afore-mentioned speculation is a phenomenon unique to the Coalition. People everywhere are virtually baying at the door to know how our preferences will flow, but yet the same is not asked of the ALP or others.

Indeed, in the most recent Queensland state election Peter Beattie really took the "coward's way out" by opting to exhaust all Labor preferences. This means he did not himself "put One Nation last".

This is ironic, because the whole fascination with One Nation preference deals arose with the preceding Queensland election when Beattie took power.

The Queensland Liberal Party had listed One Nation before Labor in their "how-to-vote" cards in many seats.

Labor ran a scare campaign, "don't vote for the Liberals because their preferences go to One Nation" and sadly people fell for it—and continue to fall for it.

After all, how often does a lower-house seat really come down to a contest between a third force

other than the Coalition and the Labor Party?

I am sure that in most every case, One Nation will have dropped out of the race before either of these parties' preferences are being counted.

In any case, surely the general public have the basic understanding that "how-to-vote" sheets are not binding in any way and only make a recommendation? If not,

"What does one deplore most? ... One Nation is a red-neck party ... Yet, on the other hand, the Labor Party is capable of forming Government"

then perhaps this is an education we should be spreading.

Further, what does one deplore most? I can definitely agree

that One Nation is a redneck party that attracts fringe elements of society and cannot answer any of the alleged problems it raises.

Yet, on the other hand, the Labor Party is capable of forming a Government if it wins enough seats.

It is a left-wing socialist party that panders to the trade union movement. It is historically demonstrable that the ALP is guilty of financial mismanagement.

Ultimately though, Australia is a liberal democracy. Surely, if a political party has the right to exist, then it has the right to engage in political negotiations with other parties. One would surely think the Labor Party with their historical stances against the dissolution of the Communist Party would think so!

Indeed, given the support One Nation seems to enjoy—higher than that of either the Democrats or the Greens—it is clear that to simply label the party as repugnant is to offend many voting Australians.

The manner in which the Coalition will disperse preferences is a matter for the State and Federal executives and campaign offices of the Party.

Sadly, a number of Liberal Party members have been suckered into speaking on this issue.

Without meaning to express disloyalty, I am disappointed that State Young Liberal President Andrew Constance has declared that the Young Liberal Movement will not give any assistance to Liberal Party candidates who enter into negotiations with One Nation.

To my mind, those seats in which the candidate is concerned with preference flows are going to be those which are marginal and which are most in need of support.

I can certainly declare that regardless of how preferences flow in nearby Paterson, for example, the Newcastle Young Liberals will be out doing whatever we can to see a good, hard-working local member returned in Bob Baldwin.

So, what am I saying? Am I advocating that we do or do not give preferences to One Nation?

The truth is that I believe to focus on such a question is to be simply suckered in by an ALP trick and by the media. And that's the message I think we should be putting out.

Let's not make internal party affairs a matter of public interest; instead let's make sure we win the next election!

Schedule of Events

- ? 8 Newcastle Young Liberals. 4:00pm, Customs House.
- ? 19 Drinks with Senator John Tierney. Level 3, 251 Wharf Rd., Newcastle. RSVP essential by 16th April to Kara on 0418 972 936 or rykar@hotmail.com.
- ? 23-27 Statewide bus trip. Contact Andrew Constance (details on back page).
- ? 28 Young Liberal Council, Sydney. Contact Andrew Constance or Lucy Wicks (details on back page).

April 2001

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
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| 30 | | | | | | |

O-Week Report and Coming Functions

By Kara Densby

The University of Newcastle Liberal Club had its most successful O-Week to date—signing up almost 40 members.

It is now our challenge to retain these people, and once again have an active, exciting year on campus.

None of this would have been possible without the fine support of all of the following people:



Mike Gallacher, Bob Geoghegan, Michael Davis, Ineka Whiteman, Jeff Leaming, Nathan Booker, Mark Coure, Andrew Jefferies, Shane Spruce, David Williams, Andrew Boychuk, Melissa Macey, and all of our wonderful ALSF friends—your good work makes me very proud to be a Liberal on campus.

Onwards and Upwards in 2001!

MI—Anyone who is interested is invited to travel down to Sydney in participate in a counter-protest with our Sydney colleagues. Please get in touch with Kara for more details.

Sunday 13th May—BBQ with Mike Gallacher, Leader of the Opposition in the NSW Legislative Council. Further details to be provided soon.

Your student union at work ...

By Kara Densby

[Editor's note: As you'll read elsewhere in this issue, Kara was elected to the 2001 students association at the University of Newcastle. She is also the new President of the University Club. Just what lurks in the inner sanctum of the students association? Here Kara removes the veil to relate her first two council (NUSAC) experiences ...]

NUSAC no. 1

Well guys, let me tell you it is not the most pleasant experience to walk into a room filled with 15 or so other people who hate the very fact that you walk on the very planet that they do :) - but I survived....

My first NUSAC was ... interesting. It went on for close to four hours though, as the nuts fought about offensive t-shirts (something about bikini-clad women I believe) and playing cards—yep this is the stuff that consumes NUSACs time.

I think they were pretty guarded in what they said/did due to my presence.

There was a hint from the President (Matt Thompson - who I really think is an ok guy and not a loony leftie) that VSU will come up again this year, and everyone was urged to get out there and tell students how great NUSA is.

It's interesting that there is a meeting organised to tell all of us Faculty Reps what to say about NUSA during our O-Week presentations - as they don't want people saying the wrong thing!!! I've got to say I think the only person they're worried about is me :)

In good news, the little weedy Green Left Weekly distributor (Peter Robson) failed to be elected VP—went to Matt Heys instead. I don't know much about Matt, but he's got to be better than Peter.

"My first NUSAC was ... interesting. It went on for close to four hours"

Also the Resistance faction got a motion up gaining NUSA support to have an open microphone during O-Week to bitch about the Howard Government and the Timor Oil Gap. (I don't know much about this issue, so if anyone does I encourage you to go along to defend the govt). My presence was felt though—Peter wanted to word the motion something along the lines of condemning the Howard Government re this Timor oil thing, and it was pointed out that that was probably not appropriate! It is clear from the minutes of previous meetings that this is a change—and I'm proud of that.

NUSAC no. 2 or 2.75 hours of pain!

I'll grant my NUSAC colleagues the fact that I was a little tired and irritable before I even pushed open the doors of the Nelson Room to be greeted by, well, less than happy faces at my arrival :)

I'd been at the Uni since 8:30am (do I even need to comment on the absolute stupidity of blocking off carpark no. 1 at the busiest time of the year ...) and I had six straight hours of classes from 1 to 7pm—so I was looking forward to getting home.

But no, I trudged along to NUSAC, thinking that we might be dealing with something worthwhile. I wonder what delusionary drug sparked that misconception in my brain.

Anyway, arriving 1.5 hours late as I did (and no, they don't deliberately put the meetings on when I have classes, which is a shame cause if they did at least I'd know they feared, rather than just loathed, my presence ;) didn't really matter,

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as it appeared they'd only just finished the free dinner that students' fees put on for them.

The highlights of the evening were:

- * The Weed's (aka the Green Left Weekly guy, known to also go by the name of Peter Robson) Che Guevera T-Shirt (probably made in a Vietnamese sweatshop by a 10 year old girl chained to a blast furnace whose only relief is the twice daily rendition of "Thank you for this paradise of communal joy, Ho Chi Minh"—Oh no, hang on ... only a Capitalist society would indulge in such practices!)

- * The amendment to the constitution to add in "other campaign material" to the clause allowing candidates 500 copies of their policy statements ... because of the "problems" last year ... Hmm, I wonder who they may be referring to? :) I note the Deputy Returning Officer was not there, but if she was I am sure she would have voted against this motion, as she took great effort to point out to me last year that policy statements does include *any* campaign material. Turns out she was just ahead of her time!

- * The Chair, Sam Russell—where to start ... his continual pleas for a more "progressive" speaking list

and his disappointment at the lack of females being heard. His mid-meeting "I'm going to the toilet" departure.

- * The President's "Porn Slut" T-shirt. I just mention that as a matter of interest, I actually like Matt Thompson a lot.

- * The long-winded heated debate regarding women's boxing, and the dubious distinction between boxing and sparring. Lefty scum v Lefty scum—show no mercy!!

- * The attempt to introduce a motion preventing a candidate from running on a policy that went against NUSA policy—ie Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU), for example.

"The Vice President rolling around on the floor! It's true. He did. In the middle of the meeting!"

- * What kind of message does a coloured shirt send out? Don't ask ...

- * The Education Officer's plans for a "media stunt" on The National Day of Action (April 5th) ... no substance yet revealed (not surprisingly).

- * The Vice President rolling around on the floor! It's true. He did. In the middle of the meeting!

Yawn! Anyway I left the meeting at 9:45pm, although it was not yet over. I was keen to get home and start dreaming about women's boxing, er, sparring.

Much better that than a nightmare about the hands our Students' Association rests in.



Our Thanks to Senator John Tierney

By David Williams

Labor NSW Senator, Steve Hutchins, made a bizarre personal attack on Hunter-based Liberal Senator, John Tierney, on the 1st of March.

Senator HUTCHINS --You hear deafening silence. That is all you hear from Senator Tierney now. You are going to get up and have a go. Good on you! We have never heard a word from you. All the people in the Newcastle region, up in the Hunter where you shadow, have not heard a word from you.

Senator Tierney --Yes, they have.

Senator HUTCHINS --No, they have not. You have hardly had any impact at all.

Now, I'd like to think I have an interest in politics and keep an eye on what is happening, but I firstly must confess I have never heard of Steve Hutchins before! According to the Parliamentary Web site, Senator Hutchins has in fact spent almost two years in the Senate now.

Not only have we not heard from him, but one can only presume that he is a man of no great reputation given there was not the fanfare of, say, John Della-Bosca, upon his preselection and eventual election to the Senate.

Nevertheless, let us consider the accusation at hand. Senator Hutchins is ultimately suggesting Senator Tierney has not contributed to Newcastle and the Hunter in any way.

However, such a charge cannot stand. One need not think back too far to recall the Kosovars taken to Singleton who were less than pleased by the quality of accommodation they received.

Senator Tierney met with them personally and helped in negotiations to persuade the refugees to leave their bus. He spent a night himself at the Singleton camp, demonstrating the accommodation's suitability.

When National Textile workers near Maitland found that their company had collapsed, leaving millions of dollars of unpaid entitlements, it was Senator Tierney who worked with the Prime Minister to negotiate Government assistance.

Now, Senator Hutchins uses the particular wording that Senator Tierney "shadows" in the Hunter. Presumably he means that the Senator is the sole Federal Government representative in the area. However, to say Senator Tierney "shadows" would suggest to most reasonable people that he is acting as an Opposition spokesperson—and as the Liberal Party is in Government, federally, the logical conclusion of Senator Hutchins' words are that Senator Tierney is not only fulfilling his role as a Federal Senator, but is also acting as the Liberal voice on NSW state issues, where the Labor Party is in Government.

I'm pleased that Senator Hutchins' has, in a sense, raised this fine point—because it is true indeed.

Here, in "dead-red" heartland, the Labor Party has squandered their remarkable opportunity to fill safe seats with quality candidates.

Instead, in Newcastle, a jar of mayonnaise could get elected if it belonged to the Labor Party. And we find that is what has happened—our local Labor members get voted into office and simply disappear—goodness knows where—until the next election comes.

Luckily for them they need never work the electorate and have to actually persuade the voters to cast one for them! Fortunately for us, we are not without representation, because Senator Tierney has kept a watchful eye on the state and we find many a Senate speech relating to the governance of NSW.

Senator Hutchins insist that "all" the people in the Newcastle region have not heard of Senator Tierney. That is firstly an absurd statement from an allegedly intelligent person, because of course even the existence of one person who has heard of the Senator renders it false.

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More so, however, it is simply not true. After all, one need just read the letters page of *The Newcastle Herald* to find a weekly reference to Senator Tierney. Sure, the regular ALP stooges get their bit in now and again, but the fact of the matter is that Senator Tierney's name is one we read and hear again and again. Who can remember the last time Allan Morris was in the press? Oh yes, I think it was when he announced he was going to retire this year, after a memorable 18 years on the back-bench.

To conclude, Senator Tierney has been an ardent supporter of the Newcastle Young Liberals and the University Club. We have been grateful to him and his staff for his time and facilities over and over.

Some branches elect patrons to honour those who they respect and who has been of tremendous support. This is something we have never actually considered or have done, but I am confident that to all extents and purposes, Senator Tierney is a patron to our branch. We are grateful for his hard work and we recognise his excellent contribution to our region.



The University of Newcastle Liberal Club soars forth in 2001 with new President

By David Williams

The University of Newcastle Liberal Club is up-and-running and looking forward to another thrilling year battling the gamut of campus socialism from 'A' to 'Z'.

In 1999, a (very!) small handful of committed Liberals saw the need for a campus society that would boldly put forth the Liberal message.

We didn't know what would happen, and nor did we have a guide-book to follow.

We simply photocopied page after page of catchy blurbs and a pamphlet, and booked a desk during the coming University O-Week that year.

We attracted 35 people and began an amazing journey that has seen us grace the local TV stations, breakfast radio, the pages of our daily newspaper and Hansard itself—oh, and also regular criticism in *Opus*, the student publication!

Before our first year of operation was up, we had been recognised by the Australian Liberal Students Federation as *Most Improved Club* (1999).

Membership and activities have just simply grown from there without sign of abating!

Last year, despite dirty tricks (as reported in our October 2000 issue), Kara Densby even won a position on the student's association council (NUSAC).

Actually, in some ways she could be considered to be the only popularly-elected Liberal in the whole city of Newcastle!

I'm proud of the University Club and what can be achieved by those with energy and vision.

After two years—and my resignation from the University—it's more than time for me to move on!

I'm proud to announce that Kara has naturally stepped into the role of President and has already forged strong networks with other Liberal Clubs around the state.

She ran our entire O-Week campaign this year and we made a new record in terms of numbers signing-up.

2001 begins a new era in the University of Newcastle Liberal Club story and it is undoubtedly going to be an exciting one!



The Newcastle Young Liberals' executive contact details

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| President | David Williams | 0419 226 354 |
| Vice President | Kelsey Andrews | |
| Secretary | Kara Densby | 0418 972 936 |
| Treasurer | David Beddoe | 0409 311 279 |

PO Box 65, Union Building
Callaghan, NSW, 2308

Email: youngliberals@hotmail.com

The NSW Young Liberals Movement executive contact details

President Andrew Constance 0402 224 153

Vice Presidents

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Policy | Belinda Lawton | 0409 305 000 |
| Development | Mark Coure | 0419 479 010 |
| Administration | Lucy Wicks | 0410 539 563 |

Directors

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Communications | Simon Moore | 0403 046 556 |
| Activities | Ainslie Thomas | 0418 240 637 |
| Community Youth Outreach | Dean Gillespie | 0410 623 444 |
| Finance | Trent Mumford | 0412 115 400 |

Officers

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Membership | Adla Abraham | 0410 577 715 |
| Political | Matthew Watts | 0409 017 891 |
| Administration | Natasha Maclaren | 0409 227 496 |
| Women | Melanie Gibbons | 0418 212 120 |
| Tertiary Institutions Liaison | Nathan Booker | 0414 872 547 |
| Website | Andrew Perry | 0413 045 300 |

Note: All members of the NSW YL state executive can be reached by e-mail using an email address of the form firstname.lastname@younglibs.org.au (e.g. andrew.constance@younglibs.org.au)



PO Box 65
Union Building
Callaghan 2308

Phone: 0419 226 354
Fax: 02 4921 6911

Email: youngliberals@hotmail.com
Article contributions welcome!

NEWCASTLE YOUNG LIBERALS

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Congress/6749/>

Taking Newcastle Forward!

NSW Young Liberal Movement Calendar of Events, January—June 2001

| | | | | | |
|----------|----|---|-------|-------|--|
| January | 21 | Friends of the Movement Drinks (Email Mark Coure for details) | April | 8 | Newcastle Young Liberals Meeting |
| | 25 | Newcastle Young Liberals Meeting | | 8 | Young Liberal Sydney Harbour cruise |
| | 30 | Young Liberal Council | | 15 | Deadline for May <i>Action!</i> magazine |
| | 31 | Deadline for February <i>Action!</i> Magazine (Send articles to Simon Moore) | | 18-20 | Youth Forum 2001 |
| February | 4 | Newcastle Young Liberals Meeting | | 23-27 | Statewide Bus Trip |
| | 5 | Office Bearer's Assembly | | 28 | Young Liberal Council |
| | 7 | New Members Evening | May | 1 | Certificate of Political Representation |
| | 15 | Young Liberal Business Network | | 2 | Debating Training Seminar |
| | 27 | Young Liberal Council (Including Single Speakers Competition) | | 13 | Newcastle Young Liberals Meeting |
| March | 4 | Newcastle Young Liberals Meeting | | 13 | Young Liberal Debating Competition |
| | 9 | Women's Breakfast | | 25 | New Members Night |
| | 20 | Mock Pre-Selection | | 29 | Young Liberal Council |
| | 27 | Young Liberal Council | June | 8 | Dorothy Peters Memorial Dinner |
| | | | | 10 | Newcastle Young Liberals Meeting |
| | | | | 14 | Mock Parliament |
| | | | | 26 | Young Liberal Council |