

Newcastle  
Young  
Liberals

# The News Castle

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September, 2000

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NSW YL Convention	2
Schedule of events	4
NUSA rorts waste students money	4
Student elections	5
Fighting the unwinnable battles	7

## Welcome!

The Newcastle Young Liberals has been an exciting and dynamic branch over the last 12 months and I have been delighted to be a part of this.

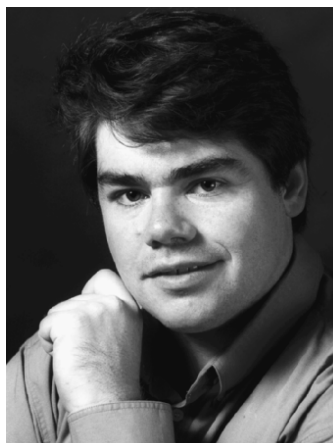
We have spoken on a great many issues—through the Newcastle Herald, on Prime and NBN television studies, and on radio stations 2NC, 2HD, NXFM and 2NURFM—from the referendum, to education policy, to National Textiles, to the Newcastle Knights, in all forms of media.

We have taken motions to the NSW Liberal Party State Convention, and to the NSW Young Liberal State Convention. We have had successful O-Week stalls and built up a Liberal Club at the University, and we have forged close ties with Senator John Tierney and the state-wide Young Liberal movement.

Last year, we were awarded the 'Patricia Forsythe Best Country Branch Trophy' by the NSW Young Liberal movement, in recognition of our achievements in building a strong branch, and establishing a Young Liberal presence in Newcastle.

I was elected to a position on the executive of the NSW movement itself, as the Tertiary Institutions Liaison Officer, responsible for establishing and developing Liberal Clubs on University campuses across the State. I am very pleased that a member of the Newcastle Young Liberals could participate on this

stout body and help fashion the direction of the Young Liberal movement state-wide. I was the only regional member of the Executive.



*1999-2000 President of the Newcastle Young Liberals, David M. Williams*

One of the difficulties of life in Newcastle is that Liberals are somewhat harder to find - but I am convinced the Liberal people we have in our branch are good and strong and enthusiastic and motivated. I am proud to be part of the team with you.

A new year is before us, and with it all new opportunities. I would implore you to make the most of your time with the Young Liberals, as your schedules permit.

The extent of your involvement in the Newcastle Young Liberals can be as active as much or as little as you like. You needn't feel you must be part of everything going on—but, if you like, there is no shortage of activity and opportunity for involvement. A new branch executive will be elected on September 3rd, and with it all sorts of opportunities for the coming 12 month period.

Sincere thanks go to Senator John Tierney, Ben Franklin and Colleen Hodges, for their invaluable help and time which they have given generously through the year. We could not have achieved as much as we have without these talented and generous individuals.

## Special points of interest:

- ? The Newcastle Young Liberals have appeared in the pages of the Senate Hansard
- ? Patricia Forsythe and Virginia Chadwick are former members of the Newcastle Young Liberals
- ? "The Newcastle Young Liberals" is an anagram of "We bug loners anesthesiatically"

# Young Liberal Convention 2000—What about Newcastle YLs ...

By Kara Densby  
Vice President, University of Newcastle Liberal Club

The NSW Young Liberal Convention was held in Kangaroo Valley on the weekend of August 11-13th. David Williams and myself went down on behalf of Newcastle Young Liberals, with David being prepared to move three motions on behalf of Newcastle YLs (included below). The weekend was a mix of policy debate and social functions, and full credit must go to Meredith Laverty and the Convention Committee, and Belinda Lawton and the Policy Committee.

“all branches with the exception of Newcastle had the opportunity to debate either all ... or the majority of their motions”

Guest speakers at the convention included Peta Seaton, Robyn Parker, Mike Gallacher, Kerry Chikarovski, Jo Gash, Danna Vale, Don Harwin, and Rhondda Vanzella.

Newcastle YLs submitted the following three motions for consideration:

1. *The Young Liberal Movement of Australia (NSW) Division urges the NSW Coalition to support the Crimes Amendment (Child Protection – Excessive Punishment) Bill.*

This motion was debated and lost.

2. *The Young Liberal Movement of Australia (NSW) Division calls upon the Federal Government to abolish STD pricing*

*divisions within states.*

This motion was not debated.

3. *The Young Liberal Movement of Australia (NSW) Division calls upon the Federal Government to institute laws to enable the prosecution of people who willingly inflict viruses and other computer programs designed to result in a loss of data or access, and also the formation of international*

*agreements resulting in the tracing and prosecution of such activities.*

This motion was not debated.

It was on reviewing the fact that Newcastle had just one motion of its three debated at the Convention that I have drawn up the following table, which clearly demonstrates that Newcastle Young Liberals were not given the same opportunities with regards to motions as many other branches were ...

Cast your eyes over the table below right.

Note: Urgency motions were also brought and debated by members

*of Shoalhaven (2) and Northern Tablelands (1). Southern Highlands motions were withdrawn, and hence are not included in the calculations below, however, based on their position on the program, they would have been debated.*

As you can see from the table, **all branches with the exception of Newcastle** had the opportunity to debate either all of their motions (**7 out of 10 branches debated all of their motions**) or the majority of their motions (2 out of 10 branches - these two branches are also classified as regional, with difficulty in attending Young Liberal Council!). **Only Newcastle** was left with the opportunity to debate **only one out of the three motions submitted**. I realise the fact that branches with only one motion up for

*(Continued on page 3)*

Branch	Number of motions on program	Number of motions debated
Policy Committee	13	8
<b>Newcastle</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Central Coast	2	1
Northcott	2	2
Shoalhaven*	2	1
Willoughby	2	2
Southern Highlands	2	Withdrawn
Bel-Air	3	3
Kingsford Smith	1	1
Northern Tablelands*	3	3
Newtown	1	1
Hurstville South	3	3

(Continued from page 2)

debate are included in these calculations, but I am taking an overall view of the whole situation. My main purpose in pointing out these statistics to you is to demonstrate that some regional branches were given the opportunity to present all of their motions at Convention (despite their position on the agenda), but this same treatment was not extended to Newcastle. Also, all Sydney branches had their motions debated. Draw from this information the conclusions that you wish.

The President of Newcastle Young Liberals asked the chair to consider a further Newcastle motion (i.e. only one more, he did not even ask for all motions to be considered), yet this was rejected. However, the chair did allow Bel-Air and Northern Tablelands to move their motions ahead of their position on the agenda – citing the reason that these branch members have to travel too far to attend Young Liberal Council!!! Bel-Air is closer to Sydney than Newcastle (and some Bel-Air delegates even live in Sydney)!! Northern Tablelands also were allowed to move urgency motions. What really was going on here??

To add insult to injury, the promised Young Liberal Council to deal exclusively with policy is scheduled for a Tuesday evening, meaning that the intended mover of Newcastle's motions will not be able to attend. This means that Newcas-

tle's motions will simply fall by the wayside, and those Sydney branch members, who find it much easier to get to a week-night council, will have no reason to go – their motions have already been debated! On inspecting the agenda for this Young Liberal Council, it is clear that Newcastle motions have actually been moved **further down the agenda**, replaced not only by other motions remaining from Convention, but also motions that were not even on the Convention program – including multiple motions from a single Sydney branch!

I'm not saying that Newcastle's motions should have been debated at the exclusion of all others. The point is simply that all Sydney branches had every single motion debated and all other

branches had the majority of motions debated, with the exception of Newcastle. Motions from Northern Tablelands and Bel-Air were moved up the program because they were regional – but what about regional branches Newcastle, Central

Coast and Shoalhaven!! Why should Bel-Air have all of its motions debated, yet Newcastle only one?

I have outlined above what I view to be a case of troubling injustice. Take from this whatever you feel is appropriate, and draw your own conclusion ...



“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are”  
Theodore Roosevelt

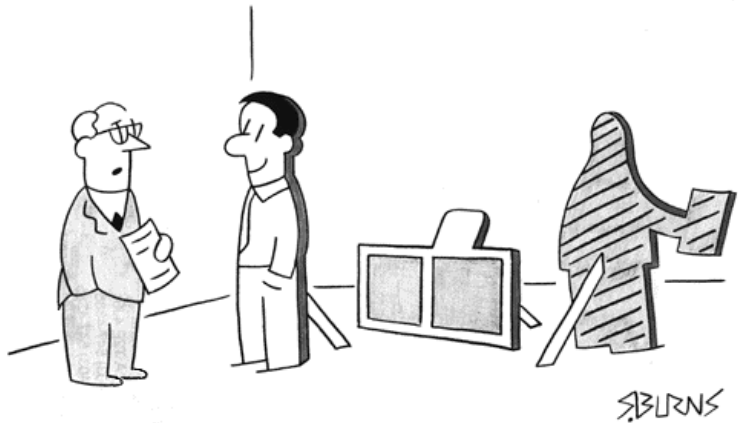
## Schedule of Events

- ? 3 Newcastle Young Liberals AGM. Customs House, 4pm.
- ? 4 Voting opens for NUSA elections.
- ? 5 Voting opens for Student Union elections.
- ? 5 Young Liberal Council. Dame Patty Menzies Room, Riley St, Sydney, 7pm.
- ? 9 Heffron SEC fund raiser. Guest speaker: John Brogden. Golden Kingdom Chinese Restaurant, 147 Anzac Parade, Kensington, 7:30pm. Call Ben Franklin from Kingsford-Smith YLs on 0407 011 030 for details.
- ? 15 Olympics begin (and Foxtel Simpsons Marathon begins!)

# September 2000

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3 AGM 4 pm
4 NUSA	5 YLC 7 pm	6	7	8	9 Hef SEC	10
11	12	13	14	15 Syd 2000	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

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"We've had some reports of fraud in this department, Milby. Know anything about it?"

## NUSA rorts waste student money

By Kara Densby  
Vice President, University of Newcastle Liberal Club

As most of you probably already know, I am the Liberal Club's candidate for the upcoming NUSA and the Union student elections. My policy statement, along with a list of the positions I am running for and the dates of polling have been included elsewhere in this newsletter (*editor—see next page*).

Having a few minutes before my Friday morning class recently, I went down to the notice board outside the NUSA office to check out my competition. There are no real sur-

prises – members of Resistance and the ALP dominate the nominations, so we can look forward to another year of high quality representation. I was also not surprised to see that, of the 20 to 30 candidates for NUS positions I happen to have lucked out, attaining last position on the ballot paper. Imagine the probability that the only Liberal running was rele-

gated to last position – what good fortune and luck for the powers that be! The good people at NUSA do tell me that the order was determined by ballot, but one has to wonder about the quality of this ballot, because when I inspected the ballot listings for the position of Education Officer, my name was curiously absent! On in-

(Continued on page 6)

# University student elections

The University of Newcastle student election season is upon us. Inexhaustible member Kara Densby is running for four positions, in two elections.

She is running for a position as a faculty representative for the Student Union Board of Management. The Student Union is the catering and amenities facilities.

She is also running for positions with NUSA—the Student’s Association, namely, a faculty representative, an NUS delegate, and as the Education Officer.

I am sure she would appreciate any assistance with campaigning—and students—be sure to cast your vote! NUSA voting is open from the 4th to the 7th of September, and for the Student Union from the 5th to the 7th.

Kara can be reached by e-mail at rykar@hotmail.com. Her policy statement is as follows.

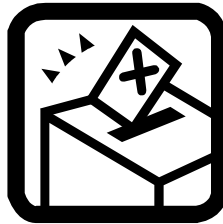
## Policy statement - Kara Densby

I am a third year Arts and Commerce student. I am committed to providing quality student representation. I will bring to NUSA my experience in administration and the political arena.

I am grateful for this opportunity to stand for election, to represent my fellow students. I have strong values and principles and will bring these to all activities I am involved with on behalf of students.

I believe in the right to freedom of association, and if elected will seek to make membership of NUSA voluntary - putting money

from your General Service Charge (GSC) back into the pockets of students where it belongs. Ultimately, I would seek to implement a complete voluntary student unionism



(VSU) regime whereby students have the right to decide whether they wish to join any of the campus unions or not. At the moment, students do not get this choice, and unless they pay their full GSC each year, cannot enrol in their chosen course of study. This is not just or democratic!

I believe in fostering and encouraging sport, recreation and extra-curricular activity and would strive to enhance the funding to clubs and societies on campus. Presently, NUSA spends much more money on affiliation with NUS - the National Union

of Students - than it does on clubs and societies. I would not seek affiliation with NUS, thus saving NUSA the burden of this large expense which provides no significant return, and which robs students of the services they should expect from their student’s association.

I believe NUSA has an obligation to provide quality services and representation to students. I would seek to bring NUSA back to its grassroots members - the students themselves. I would stop the silly political games and noisy lobbying, which waste students’ funds and have no relationship to student needs.

If elected, I will bring NUSA back to the students.

## Please comment on the Newcastle Young Liberals!

What can we do to improve the branch? What activities would you like to be involved in? What would you like to contribute to the branch? What would you like to get out of it? What days and times suit you best for meetings?

Activity suggestions (e.g. social, formal ...)

Policy interests (e.g. employment, taxation ...)

General comments

What activities would you like to see more of?

Debates  
 Guest speakers  
 Campaign training

Visit Newcastle business  
 Community involvement  
 Social get-togethers

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

(Continued from page 4)

quiry, I was told that it was simply a mistake. If it really was a mistake (make up your own mind about whether you believe that), then it is appalling that such an oversight could be made. Clearly, this means that not only was my name left out from the “ballot” to determine places, no one even bothered to check this list against the list of nominations! And we pay these people money! Anyway, they told me they would re-do the “ballot” but no prizes for guessing where I ended up again on the draw. Not only was I last, but the other two candidates came out in the exact same order as before. Pretty amazing stuff, statistically speaking. But I don’t doubt the integrity of the election process. Really I don’t, even though on the revised ballot listing, for some reason my name is indented differently to the other two listings. This had initially led me to the conclusion that my name had simply, and very sloppily, been added to the bottom of the list, after a ballot was deemed unnecessary, but then I realized that that just couldn’t be true – after all, NUSA respects democracy.

So what has our Student’s Association been up to recently? I grabbed a copy of NUSA’s Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December, 1999, and gosh they make for interesting reading!

On inspecting NUSA’s receivables, I found a listing for student loans. From what I can tell, this represents the amount of funds lent by NUSA to students during the year. Sounds very gracious of NUSA doesn’t it? But the figures reveal something a little more troubling – Receivables for student loans total \$18,835, but the provision for doubtful debts (that is, that part of receivables that NUSA believe may not be paid) totals \$13,390! In other words, NUSA doesn’t expect to get back 71% of the funds it loans out!! Now I am the last person to criticize NUSA supporting students in financial need, but this is clearly an example of blatant irresponsibility. NUSA is throwing away your money. And why not – they are not forced to account for your cash!

Delving further into the accounts, I note such expenses as \$2,139 for condoms and

dental dams in 1999. I certainly can’t see the need to spend such a large amount of student funds in this manner. Moving on, NUSA lists its expenses in relation to its portfolios. Education totalled \$3,335, surpassed by Women and equity (\$3,383), and blown out of the water by Environment (\$4,942). I would have thought that Education would have been NUSA’s priority, but clearly Education pails in significance compared to the pursuance of these two portfolios. Is this the best thing for students?

Lastly, I have to point out the \$70,710 in total that NUSA’s affiliation with NUS cost us in 1999. This sum makes the contribution to

Clubs and Societies look paltry (\$29,083), but it primarily highlights the need to ask ourselves whether we are getting any value for money out of our affiliation with NUS. As far as I am concerned, this \$70,710 could be a lot better spent, as I don’t believe that NUS enhances the education of students in any way, shape or form. I believe that NUS cares little for the actual needs of students, rather it is devoted to pursuing a political agenda that is simply irrelevant to our education. This is not good for students, yet students are forced to fund it. That is just not right – it is time for NUSA to end its affiliation with NUS. If NUSA really cares about the needs of students this is the path they will take.

“... Sounds very gracious of NUSA ... but the figures reveal something a little more troubling ...”



The 2000 U.S. Democrats Convention say farewell to President Bill Clinton

## Fighting the unwinnable battles

By John Hyde-Page  
 Sydney University Liberal Club  
 and NSW Young Liberals Executive

Even in Australia's most successful party there are plenty of unwinnable battles to be fought. A Liberal who is active on a university campus, in the Non-English Speaking Community or a Labor stronghold like Newcastle has very little prospect of success, so it is not surprising if he or she is continually soul searching and questioning the value of a political involvement.

There are many ways of rationalising it however. Out at Sydney University we comfort ourselves that by being active and contesting the student elections we at least give ourselves a chance to win. Others locate some value in 'making a stand', or presenting constituents with both sides of the argument and helping them to make an informed decision, even though they are unlikely to respond at the polls. Candidates in hard luck seats are able to reflect that they are propping up the Liberal vote for the Upper House. Other people who I have spoken to point to examples of progress, such as modest swings towards the party in ALP-held seats and converts to the Liberal cause.

Yet among these and other reasons for fighting the unwinnable battles I believe one is paramount, which is: challenging a Labor stronghold and the underlying assumptions of its voters opens a path to future victory. Sustained activism makes people conscious of political alternatives and the flaws in the orthodoxy. It weakens their commitment. They are then susceptible to changing sides, such as they were at the 1996 election, when droves of voters came over to the Liberal side directly out of Labor's blue collar heartland.

"challenging a Labor stronghold and the underlying assumptions of its voters opens a path to future victory"

This conversion of the 'battlers' into a Liberal constituency did not take place overnight, and nor was it a knee-jerk reaction to the horrors of the Keating government. Rather it has been a long-term trend of considerable permanence, related to structural factors such as Labor's dissociation from its trade union base and the almost visionary work of people like Bronwyn Bishop and Shayne Mallard in fostering support out in Sydney's Western Suburbs. In fact it is inconceivable that the change would have occurred without that long line of Liberals who have been willing to fight the 'unwinnable battles' and lay the groundwork for the penetration of new constituencies.

Thirty years ago the citizens of places like Broken Hill used to boast that nobody could get a job or set up a business in their town unless they accepted the hegemony of local trade unions. Dissenters were simply ostracised or boycotted. Under these conditions the contribution of dissent is to open up chinks in the culture and to cause people to think anew about their political allegiances. This is good for the Liberal party and good for the health of our democracy as well. Of course the benefits sometimes seem elusive. However it is certainly accurate to say that closed shops such as used to exist have been done away with, progress has been made and it should continue.

Wherever possible, therefore, we must contest the issue with the Labor party, even in those constituencies where they receive their strongest support.

Long live the Newcastle Young Liberals!





PO Box 65  
Union Building  
Callaghan 2308

Phone: 0419 226 354  
Fax: 02 4921 6911  
Email: [youngliberals@hotmail.com](mailto:youngliberals@hotmail.com)

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## The value of the individual

David Williams

I am committed to the dignity and worth of the individual. I believe in the rights and freedoms of all people to self-determination. By this, we mean the determining by a people to the form their government shall have, without reference to the wishes of any other people.

I commend the present Liberal Federal Government for its bold stance in East Timor last year. The Prime Minister, John Howard, made a stance for freedom, peace and dignity.

The Labor Government during the Hawke and Keating eras negotiated, signed (in 1989) and implemented the Timor Gap Treaty. The Labor Government under Keating was the only member of the United Nations to recognise Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

Fortunately, in 1998, the Liberal Howard Government broke a ban on contact with the East Timorese resistance when Australia's ambassador in Indonesia, Mr John McCarthy, met with the gaoler resistance leader Xanana Gusmo.

In its Foreign Affairs and Trade Policy - released during the recent 1998 election campaign - the Howard Government said it attached importance to a resolution of the problems of East Timor. It supported greater autonomy for the people of East Timor and would support all parties maintaining a dialogue leading to a resolution of this problem.

It is very interesting to note the confusion that came from left-wing organisations and political movements. Indeed, it was as if they felt that a conservative Government is not supposed to do such things as work towards a free East Timor.

It's true that the Liberal Party supports business and initiative and enterprise. It clearly has an excellent record on economic issues. Yet, in its nearly four years of Government now, we have seen gun laws, an open vote on the republic and progress to reconciliation.

The Labor Party lives in a policy vacuum; this is clearly true - but yet it is even more irrelevant when one realises that the Coalition has a strong commitment - and track record - on social policy.

We face an interesting twist here. Conservative Governments with clear economic strength are not typically regarded as having strengths in social policy.

Yet, this is not the case: if we look through the history of the Liberal Party we can see that it has made such actions as financing the distribution of free milk to all school-aged children under 10 in 1950 under Menzies. It established a Youth Homelessness Early Intervention Programme in 1998. It established the Department of Environment, Aborigines and the Arts in 1971 under McMahon. It made whaling in Australian waters an offence in 1980 under Fraser. It established schools for Aborigines in the Northern

Territory in 1950 under Menzies, and granted Aborigines full citizen rights in 1967 under Holt. It launched ethnic television stations in 1980 under Fraser. It established the Australian Institute of Sport in 1980 under Fraser. It announced a national Literacy and Numeracy strategy in 1997. These actions, and others, demonstrate that the Liberal Party does indeed govern for all.

The Labor Party does not have such a record on human rights issues. This makes sense, of course, because Labor's ideology is towards the will of unions, and fostering a spirit of welfare dependency. Labor does not permit a free vote within its ranks on issues like the republic. No, the Labor Party is a party that quells the voice of the individual.

How can the Labor Party support human rights issues to the same strength when it is clearly a party that ultimately does not cherish and value the individual?

By contrast, the Liberal Party has proven that it is well rounded; it is driving Australia forward in economic issues, and it is leading the way in social issues. Day by day the Labor Party becomes increasingly irrelevant.

I am committed to the dignity and worth of the individual. That's why I'm proud of the record of the current Federal Government under John Howard.