



HUMANIST viewpoints

TIME AGAIN FOR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS - PLEASE SUPPORT OUR VITAL WORK



SEE PAGE 2 FOR OUR CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS IN JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

SEE PAGE 4 FOR A REPORT ON ACTIVITIES FROM APRIL INTO JULY 2018

SEE PAGE 6 FOR A REPORT ON THE CONVENTION IN ADELAIDE ON APRIL 14 2018

SEE PAGE 10 FOR THE NEXT INSTALMENT OF JOHN AUGUST'S HISTORY OF SECULARISM IN AUSTRALIA

COME CELEBRATE COMMUNITY IN SIMPLICITY AT OUR HUMANISTMAS FEAST ON SUNDAY 22 JULY

WHY NOT ATTEND OUR NEXT 'ACTIVISM MEETING' ON SUNDAY 12 AUGUST 2018

THERE'S A CHANCE TO DISCUSS YOUR FAVOURITE HUMANITARIAN CAUSE AT MEETUP ON SUNDAY 26 AUGUST

DON'T FORGET OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON SUNDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2018

**MEETUP ON SUNDAY 23 SEPTEMBER LOOKS AT HUMANISM, ATHEISM, SECULARISM,
SKEPTICISM, RATIONALISM, SCIENTISM & FREETHOUGHT**

Follow us on our website www.hsnsw.asn.au and Facebook



CALENDAR JULY TO SEP 2018

PLEASE REMEMBER THERE IS NO ENTRY TO HUVAT BEFORE 3.00PM DUE TO A COMMITTEE MEETING

HuVAT Sunday 8 July 2018 was the performance piece *Dialogue with the Devil* and a report is on page 4

NSW Humanists Meetup has 'LIVING COMMUNITY - HUMANISTMAS' 3-6PM on Sunday 22 July 2018

Each July we celebrate our community by sharing a meal together. Sunday July 22 will be another *Humanistmas in July*. Please bring food to share in communion and conversation. *Humanistmas in July* is an opportunity to participate in and experience humanist community at its most direct. The simplicity of sharing food that we like, combined with the community of sharing something of ourselves in open conversation. This is the time to come and rediscover friends you've made at Humanist House. The only way to have a community is to come along and join in with 'the rest of us'.

HuVAT Sunday 12 August 2018 3.00 for 3.15 p.m. is an Activism Meeting

At these meetings The Humanist Society of NSW gets together with invited guests from interesting activist organisations around Sydney and Australia to share ideas, and hear about current campaigns. How can we progress, regarding the values and issues that arouse and inspire the humanist community? Members are always welcome to come along and tell us all what they are doing, or just discuss the issues they'd like to see brought more into focus. We'll announce guests closer to the day, but come along regardless. We often go on to a pub dinner after the Activism Meetings.

NSW Humanists Meetup 3-6PM Sunday 27 August 2018 will discuss HUMANITARIANISM

The fourth Sunday in August usually falls between two days of international recognition of those involved in causes considered worthy. *World Humanitarian Day* (19 August) is particularly dedicated to personnel who have lost their lives working for humanitarian causes. It commemorates an extraordinarily repugnant act in bombing the UN Headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, killing 22 humanitarian workers. The *International Day of Charity* 5 September. was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 to raise awareness of charitable individuals, and philanthropic and volunteer organizations around the world. It draws its date from the dubious career of the notorious Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who died on 5 September 1997. We'll also discuss Aid and Philanthropy, and help disentangle these different styles of giving. What are, in fact, the more effective ways to spread equity, progress, hope and opportunity around the world and locally? Opinion will vary, so come and discuss. Which humanitarian endeavours do you advocate and support?

Sunday 9 September 2018 is the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NSW

Formal announcement will be made in due course, but please keep your calendar clear for this important day. Join in the business of the society, discuss achievements, plans and vote in the new committee. AGMs usually starts at 1.30 for 2.00pm.

NSW Humanists Meetup 3-6PM Sunday 23 September 2018 will look at HUMANISM, ATHEISM, SECULARISM, SKEPTICISM, RATIONALISM, SCIENTISM & FREETHOUGHT

Our New Humanists Sunday Open House event on Sunday 23 September will sort out the differences between Humanism, Atheism, Secularism, Skepticism, Rationalism, Scientism & Freethought. Come along to learn and discuss. And we'll probably throw in words like Agnosticism, Empiricism, Positivism, and Ethicism and attempt to clarify any other terms participants are confused or concerned about. How can we make humanism distinctive in this word salad of related terms? Does humanism have something more than these other responses to offer to a world of prejudice, bullshit and delusion?

ALL EVENTS ON THIS PAGE ARE AT HUMANIST HOUSE, 10 SHEPHERD STREET, CHIPPENDALE

'Open Forum' continues to meet each Wednesday night at Humanist House 8.00pm

The cover photo is from the Art Gallery of South Australia exhibition entitled "Being Human", visited after the convention in Adelaide. This set of Sidney Nolan paintings was placed beside the caption for the exhibition, which seemed to me to hint at a humanist viewpoint, despite the inclusion of religion with philosophy and science.



BEING HUMAN

Being human explores our evolving quest to make sense of ourselves and our place in the universe through philosophy, religion and science. Who are we, where did we come from and where are we going? The

MEMBERSHIP NEWS & VIEWS

President's continuing appeal to members to volunteer to assist in building our future

We depend on elder members who've been outstanding workers for Humanism in NSW. We wish them long life, but can't expect them to carry the load indefinitely. We know modern generations find many other demands on their time, but we nevertheless appeal to members between 20 and 70 years of age, to assist in growing a future for this organisation—one with assets to be treasured, heritage to be celebrated, a world network of activism, and a positive philosophy to be shared.

Email our President at lovemuz@gmail.com if you can help or have skills or resources we could make use of.

Please Consider Making a Donation or Bequest

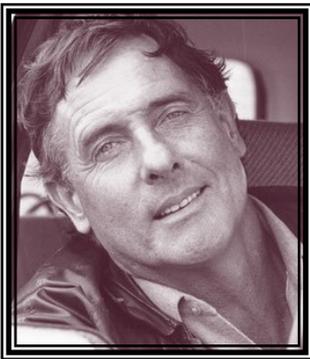
From \$5 to \$10,000, any amount can help protect and sustain the diverse efforts of the NSW Humanist Society. Please also consider us in your Will. All bequests contribute to the longevity of the *Humanist Society of NSW* and Humanism.

Please Send Your letters, articles, information and ideas for inclusion in *Viewpoints* or even *Australian Humanist*.

Some members are not on the Internet and some live far from Sydney. Attendance and interaction get more difficult as we age, and distances need more assistance to overcome. Stronger, younger and newer members can assist. A newsletter is one thing all members can share in. We have material on what's happening at Humanist House through the year, but also need contributions from individual members of the Society. You are welcome and encouraged to send in news and views for publication. These can be controversial - there's no party line. They can be on diverse topics - Humanism has a broad range. We love to hear from members who haven't contributed before, in short or in longform. Disagree with anything you see - or share why you do agree! We can't guarantee everything will be used, but we'd love to include all we can. Email is preferred. Handwritten/typed contributions might get postponed. **Email items to lovemuz@gmail.com.**

Membership Comings & Goings

2018 has been a quiet year for new members although a number of people have taken membership forms. The big news is that prominent activists and prolific authors Max and Meg Wallace have re-joined the NSW Humanist Society. Welcome back Max and Meg. Some sad news we missed last year, was the death of well-known former member Bruce Barry.



Bruce Barry was born in Gympie Queensland on October 24 1934 and died in a Sydney nursing home on April 20 2017. He was a notable Australian actor and showman doing everything from Shakespeare to soapies, appearing in such 1960s classics as *Bellbird* and the *Mavis Brampton Show*, but best remembered as a male lead in many stage musicals. Bruce suffered dementia at the end and lost touch with other old members as a result, although Affie Adagio and Angela D. remember visiting him at the nursing home. I can recall he dropped into Humanist House one day about six years ago, and we had a conversation about some old LPs he was donating to the book room for sale. He did record an LP of his own once. I don't think that was among them. I recall he still had his resonant voice and didn't strike me as aged in his late seventies at the time - which he must have been. Any other members with anecdotes of Bruce's involvements with the Society are welcome to send them in for future issues of the newsletter. **Vale Bruce Barry.**

Many thanks to Affie Adagio for noticing the announcement on the recent Logie awards, and passing on the sad news.

Member Letters

Bill Wright was inspired to write about the Royal Family, after watching the recent wedding on TV.

"The royal family seems subject to more public scrutiny than in the past. It's easy to be cynical, but I think the work of the two princes in helping distressed peoples and saving wildlife is the result of genuine motives, and wanting to play a useful role in society. This applies to other members like Charles and Prince Phillip. The British royals seem able to adapt to the changing society better than many others. As King Farouk said when dethroned in Egypt: 'Eventually there will be only five kings in the world : the king of hearts, the king of clubs, the king of spades, the king of diamonds and the King of England'!

The British royals are well educated and do act responsibly and are genuinely concerned with social problems. The recently retired Duke of Edinburgh presided over 22,000 charitable events." They are cognisant they have been born into privilege and use their position to help underprivileged and distressed peoples, as well supporting organisations like the World Wildlife Fund. The Queen is the richest woman in Europe although much of her fortune has restrictions on how it is to be used as it is really held in trust for the nation and her successors. Of course the spectacle of royalty attracts profits to the British economy despite the huge costs.

Intellectually, it's impossible to defend the *raison d'etre* of the panoply of royalty in this day and age. However if it is a force for good for mankind, and the British nation, then this is good reason to remain.

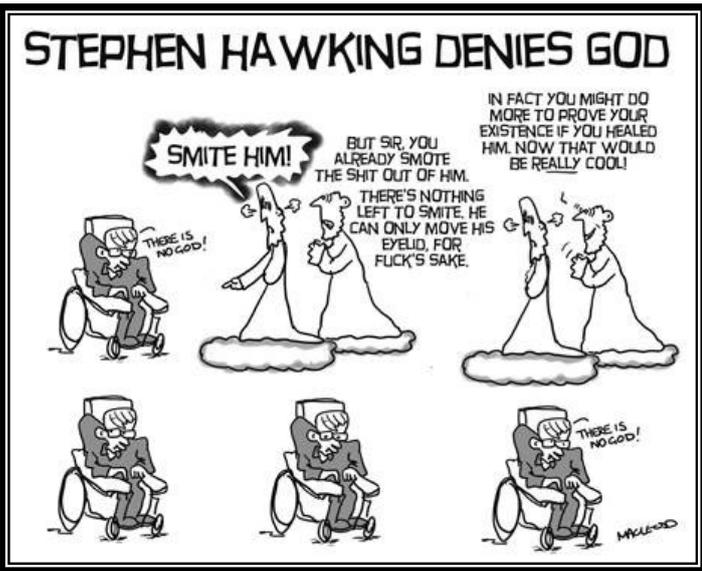
Many of the royals may well be closet agnostics, particularly Prince Charles. As a future head of the Church of England he can hardly declare it. Charles majored in anthropology at university - a discipline where one respects all cultures. Such knowledge has been a force for good, debunking racist notions which were so prevalent especially in last century. The coronation of Charles may well be a much more subdued affair compared with that of his mother. He may even want to abolish the anointing ceremony, with its biblical pretensions, which cannot be defended intellectually".

ACTIVITIES REPORT

The Society event on Sunday 11 March 2018 was another in our series of Activism Meetings, chaired by John August. We had Rajesh Konada from *All India Human Rights*, presenting on superstition and democracy in India. Discussion included same sex marriage in the light of the Ruddock review. We discussed democracy and the influence of religious conservative politicians. John August talked about the Pirate Party. There was no Meetup in March - the main organizers, Murray & Fay Love, were away in Mexico and the Caribbean.

On 8 April we had a well-attended HuVAT (*Humanist Viewpoints Afternoon Talk*) featured Ian Bryce talking on *Stephen Hawking: His Life and Legacy*. Hawking got off to good start in physics as both his parents graduated from Oxford. His disease and the technology enabling him to write and speak were described. His first speech synthesizer had a unique accent. Later he offered to switch to an English accent, but by then his family and the world knew him by the old voice, so he stuck with it.

Ian explained Hawking's contributions to cosmology, including Hawking Radiation, and the No Boundary Hypothesis - which Hawking said removed the need for a Creator. Stephen Hawking identified as a humanist and an uncompromising atheist. See cartoon.



The Meetup was set to return to normal on Sunday 22 April 2018 with an examination of the Ethical Culture stream of the world humanist movement (the E in IHEU), but this was interrupted with the unexpected appearance in town of Roy Brown, former President of the IHEU, with family in Sydney.

Roy had productively shared in the discussion on the eight commitments of Ethical Culture, but some Society members, who had come just to see Roy, wanted a traditional talk from him. Roy's stature and presence ably carried off an exposition on his days on the UN Human Rights Council, similar to the talk he gave to us when he visited a few years ago. Roy also read out the 2002 Amsterdam Declaration, which was new to some of the audience.

It was interesting to watch a skillful presenter at work. Roy had particularly come to talk about a book he's writing to help celebrants and others present humanism better.



Roy and Murray discussing the 2002 Amsterdam Declaration



Roy Brown's last day at the UN Human Rights Council in 2016

It is always awkward trying to fit in the unexpected on short notice, but we muddled through on the day, and it was great to get to know Roy a bit better.

There was also some confusion among society members about use of words like 'religion' in a humanist context, but the Ethical Culture stream is less inhibited about such words, rather like the 1933 Humanist Manifesto I, even though equally committed to the denial of supernaturalism.

The 'offending' passage read: "Life itself inspires religious response: Although awareness of impending death intensifies the human quest for meaning, and lends perspective to all our achievements, the mystery of life itself, the need to belong, to feel connected to the universe, and the desire for celebration and joy, are primary factors motivating human 'religious' response."

To interpret the phrase 'human religious response' as some kind of flight to supernaturalism is to miss the whole point of the passage, which is to reclaim deeper feelings of quest, mystery, connection and joy for humanism. If we slide into tone-deafness on language like this, we risk alienating potential humanists simply because they have imaginations.

There was a fifth Sunday in April, and the 29th of that month saw a special event at Humanist House. This was run by the NSW Rationalists, and titled *The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse* and featured speakers Steven Unthank and Lara Kaput.

Steven Unthank is an outspoken advocate for protecting children from policies of the *Watchtower Society* that enable and protect child molesters to prey on them. He filed a lawsuit against the Australian *Watchtower Society* when the State of Victoria's prosecutor would not.

The HuVAT for Sunday 13 May 2018 was *Marvels of Human Ingenuity II*. This was another commentated slideshow presented by Vice-President John August, examining extraordinary engineering works, antique machines, scientific curiosities and strange objects John has encountered and photographed in his travels. John revisited some of the best slides from last year's show and added new and previously unused material. It was once again a well-attended and well-enjoyed event with John's contagious enthusiasm for these special places.

May 2018 was fifty years since the student uprising in Paris and the Prague Spring. We were lucky to get a speaker to discuss this fascinating time in history, and its influence.



It was wonderful to have an academic speaker at the Meetup on Sunday 27 May. Simon Tormey is a Professor of Political Theory at the *University of Sydney*. He swept in right on time and carried us through the whole afternoon.

Simon kept us all engaged, explaining the philosophical background to the May 1968 uprisings in Paris fifty years ago. After his power-point presentation he deftly handled all the questions from the varied audience. In his response to my thankyou note he called us a "very nice bunch" and hoped we might thrive. He said it was fun, so I hope that means we might be able to get him back again some time.

The *Rationalist Association of NSW* brought another special event to Humanist House on Sunday June 3, inaugurating a series of *Occasional Papers*. Stephen Mutch PhD is a former lawyer and Liberal member of the NSW Legislative Council (Upper House) but now teaches at Macquarie University where he also researches cults. Combining his skills and interests, he delivered a talk titled *Cults and public policy: protecting the victims of cult abuse in Australia*.

The *World Humanist Day Workshop on the Future of Humanism* on Sunday became an enjoyable day of discussion, for about 30 members and friends - although better organisation might have allowed more structured and coherent ideas to be recorded.

Things were rather spontaneous and most speakers spoke without notes or notice. We discussed humanism itself, *GetUp* as a model of future methods, the past, the communication difficulties and opportunities between different generations. Who is the future of humanism? Will it pass from the generations of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s

to those born in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s? Where are they?

Or does it skip all this, and go direct to more obvious 'young people', born in the 1980s and 1990s? Ideas we didn't discuss, included being more family friendly, to attract the missing middle generations, or being more intellectually satisfying to retain the professionals and post-graduates.

How can we get those recently retired to spare a little time away from the grandchildren to make things happen in the humanist movement? We may need to attract busy people away from other distractions and get them to value the serious side of the humanist movement.

Humanism should have something more to offer than mere atheism, secularism, skepticism, rationalism, or scientism—or even the broad category of freethought. We need to provide a serious alternative to supernatural religion, which addresses a need for meaning and for community, while respecting the facts of the world, and thinking for ourselves.

NSW has its turn to take in presenting a national humanist convention next year, and the issues and methods of building a future for our movement will be the theme of the proposed event. Watch for further details.

July is already upon us, and there was a special event as the 'HuVAT' for Sunday 8 July 2018. Rather than just another 'Afternoon Talk' John Levack, a member for over 20 years and a former committee member, wrote a whole performance piece in which a hapless human has a dialogue with the devil on the problem of evil.

Satan got all the best lines and was played by John, while Murray Love played the straight guy, with a little help from hemlock seeds and holy water. The devil discussed his disappointments with Adolf Hitler, his war work in the Middle East, genocide, pornography, and his annoyance at uppity women and gay rights.



John sees art and literature as a better vehicle than propaganda to stimulate thinking and spread ideas. He'd like to see a permanent theatre troupe arise within the NSW Humanist Society. We certainly had one back in the 1960s.

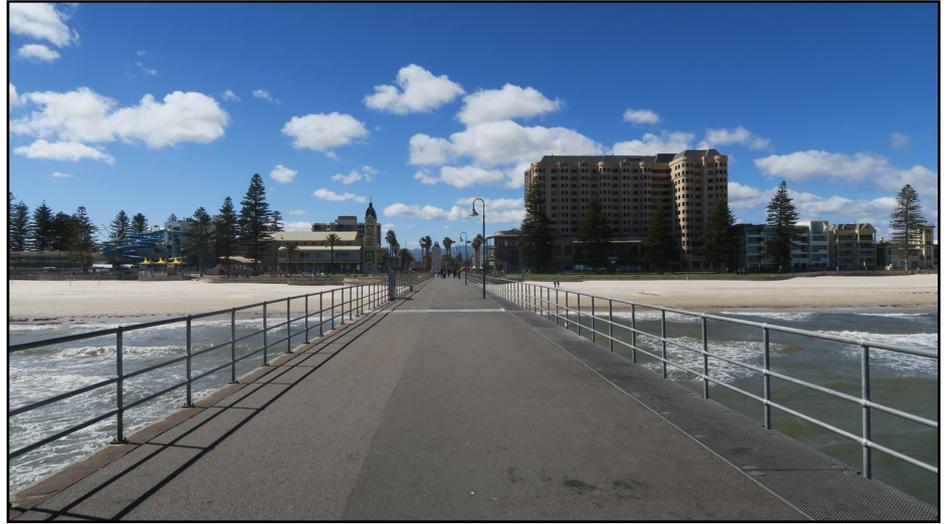
John stayed on in his demonic garb to consummately handle a lengthy Q&A on all the issues his piece had stirred up in the audience's vulnerable souls.

The audience was very appreciative of John's effort and about 25 people came.



Murray Love

ADELAIDE REPORT & PHOTOGRAPHS



In April 2018 Fay and Murray Love attended the Adelaide Humanist Convention, and also acted as the NSW delegates at the Annual General Meeting of the Council of Australian Humanist Societies. We got there a couple of days early as we hadn't visited Adelaide before, although Fay had done some wineries in the 1980s. We visited the zoo and saw the iconic pandas, unfortunately only visible through glass. The next day we caught the tram down to the beach at Glenelg where the colony had its beginnings. We also looked around the city which has preserved its ornate buildings better than some others. They have a free bus that takes you around the touristic streets and places, but unfortunately this has only locked windows so photographic opportunities were limited. It is a nice city to visit. But where are all the churches? Apparently the epithet 'City of Churches' references qualitative factors regarding diversity and influence rather than any exceptional density of church buildings around the city. For the weekend beginning Friday 13 April it was instead the 'City of Humanism'!



The Adelaide convention was held in cooperation with the Secular Society at *Flinders University*, so was able to use the University's facilities, which are right in the heart of the city of Adelaide. The convention occupied the afternoon of Saturday 14 April, and was hosted by Scott Sharrad.

It began with a Welcome to Country by Kurna Elder Uncle Lewis Yerloburka O'Brien, AO. Uncle Lewis drew on his amazing life from hardship and foster homes to *Citizen of Humanity* as awarded by the *National Committee of Human Rights*. He has become a University consultant on the language, culture, art, and science of his people, earning an Honorary Doctorate. He is currently a researcher in the Education Arts & Social Sciences department at the *University of South Australia*.

The first speaker after the Welcome to Country was Shane Grace, who spoke on his extensive experience of assisting domestic violence victims to leave their abusers, and helping women with issues like visa applications, so they can manage on their own without violent husbands. Shane has written a book on public speaking “to help those who don’t have a voice”, and to help those “in situations like domestic violence and the socially self conscious to stand up inside themselves”.

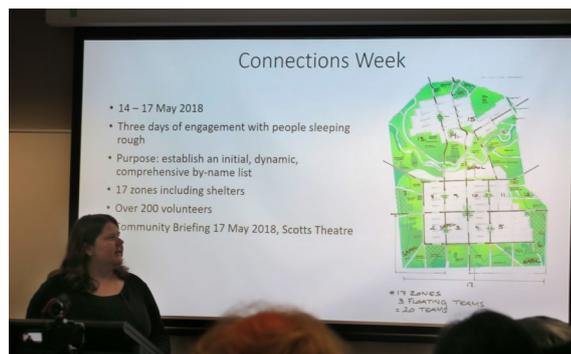


This was followed by Dr Robyn Layton AO QC, from the *University of South Australia*, a former Supreme Court Judge and former Deputy President of the Commonwealth *Administrative Appeals Tribunal*. She has been a social justice champion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, refugees, women and children.



She is a strong advocate for Justice Reinvestment, which involves shifting money allocated for future imprisonment costs into spending on community-based programs and services addressing the underlying causes of crime in identified communities. Dr Layton also spoke about the SNAICC *National Voice for Our Children*, a peak body representing interests of indigenous children, aiding with transition to school. She spoke on early childhood, child protection, incarceration, out-of-home care, child abuse and neglect, loss of cultural connection, juvenile detention and the need for inter-generational role models.

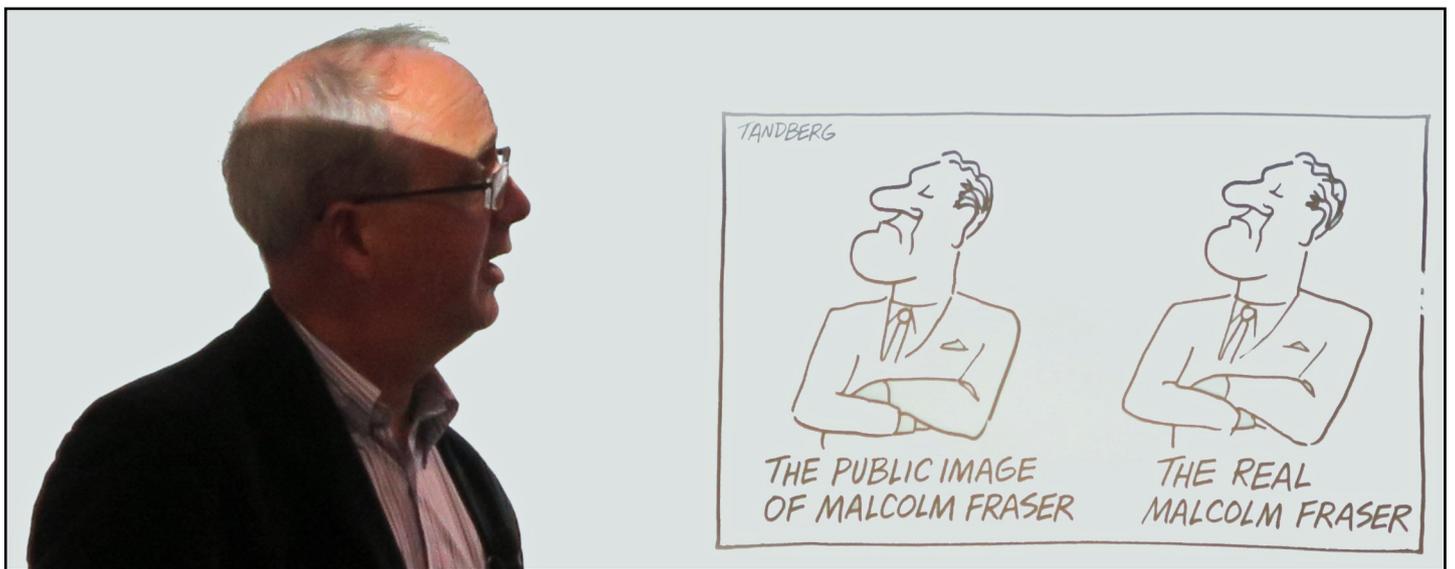
After Dr Layton came Victoria Skinner PhD, the Project Officer on Homelessness with The *Don Dunstan Foundation*. She explained the *Adelaide Zero Project* aimed at ending inner city homelessness. The goal of the Adelaide Zero Project is to end street homelessness in the inner city, ultimately leading to ending all homelessness in South Australia. This goal will be achieved by application of the Functional Zero approach. A community reaches Functional Zero when the average housing capacity can be shown to be greater than the existing needs. Critical data is gathered during ‘Connections Week’- a realtime list is compiled, where all homeless people in focus for a system are known by name, documenting their health, personal needs and circumstances, as well as the level of housing support required.



Following the legislation allowing same-sex marriage late last year, the Prime Minister appointed a *Religious Freedom Review* panel led by Philip Ruddock, as a concession to conservative members of his party. On the panel were Rosalind Croucher, Annabelle Bennett, Frank Brennan and Nicholas Aroney. This panel heard submissions at various cities around Australia. The Adelaide convention offered its own panel of speakers, who had each appeared before the Ruddock panel.

HSSA President Tanya Watkins, and CAHS President Lyndon Storey each got a chance to present humanist concerns to the panel, as did former Labor Senator Chris Schacht. Lyndon spoke about his experience in Canberra. Scott Sharrad interviewed Tanya about her day fronting up at the Ruddock Review in Adelaide, where Chris Schacht had also made his submission.





Professor Robert Phiddian of the School of Humanities at Flinders University spoke on his studies on political satire, and included many classic political cartoons of the last five decades among his slides.

Angela Carey is CEO of *Common Equity Housing South Australia (CEHSA)*, an organisation that promotes and supports housing co-operatives, by empowering them to build strong communities through providing administration, finance, property management and compliance support. CEHSA has eight member organisations, holding 122 properties across Adelaide city and suburbs, and regional areas like Wallaroo and Kadina, on the Yorke Peninsula. They support 129 tenancies with 230 total occupants, including single parents, musicians, artists, rural dwellers and the culturally diverse. CEHSA has grown over the past 10 years, and Angela has worked in housing for 20 years.



We also heard from NSW law graduate Sara Mansour, “an Australian born, Punchbowl-bred Muslim”, a founder of the *Bankstown Poetry Slam*, and a 2017 Australia Day *Young Citizen of the Year*. Sara is a designated ambassador both for the *Sydney Writers Festival* and, most importantly, *NOW Australia* - an organisation recently founded by Tracey Spicer and other women leaders, intended to make something tangible out of the *#MeToo* and *#TimesUp* movements by offering legal, counselling, and media support to victims of sexual harassment or sexual assault in the workplace.



The ‘last but not least’ speaker was Rodney Croome AM, a prominent gay activist from Tasmania. An early proponent of equal marriage rights, Rodney first gained prominence in the 1990s, when he took the Tasmanian government all the way to the High Court to force them to decriminalize homosexuality and protect sexual orientation within antidiscrimination laws.

He has authored a number of books and twice been shortlisted for *Australian of the Year*. He discussed the current conservative pushback against compliance on non-discrimination, programmes like *Safe Schools*, and continuing efforts at ‘gay conversion’. The fight for gay rights is not yet over, including their right to donate blood.



The long afternoon, packed with prominent social activists, was a model of how a humanistic conference can be managed on a small budget. South Australia relied on grants from CAHS, HSV, HSNSW & HSQ, gathering a budget of around \$2000 and keeping food and venue costs to a minimum, by cooperating with student organisations that leaders of HSSA happen to also belong to. The price of attendance was kept to around \$30, and a similar price for the dinner.



A late decision to fly in new *Australian Humanist of the Year*, Gillian Triggs, meant a packed Convention Dinner on the Saturday evening at *Duke of Brunswick Hotel*, Adelaide. The award was presented by former 1986 AHOY Anne Levy, while CAHS President Lyndon Storey looked on. Professor Triggs's speech has been presented in a recent *Australian Humanist*.



Report author and photographer Murray Love, as well as being a NSW delegate at the AGM, took on responsibility over the last year for organising the process of the 2017-18 AHOY, which eventually elected Gillian Triggs - for her courageous investigations into the plight of the forgotten refugee children.

Here is Murray photographed with Professor Triggs at the Adelaide Convention Dinner.

Murray was just back from a visit to Mexico City where he had purchased an exotic red Mexican shirt at a market in Mexico City's central square - the *Zócalo* or *Plaza de la Constitución*.



MORE AUSTRALIAN SECULAR HISTORY

In 1956, the year of Suez and the Soviet intervention in Hungary, Liberal Prime Minister Robert Menzies introduced the first aid to Catholic schools, limited to the A.C.T.

In 1960 former communist Tom Truman, who taught politics at Queensland University, wrote the book *Catholic Action and Politics*, attacking the political activities of the Catholic Church all over the world. He feared the Church had intentions to found a theocracy in Australia.

In 1962 Catholic schools in Goulburn NSW went 'on strike', for a week, leaving 2,000 Catholic children to descend on six government schools across town, with only 640 spots available. Menzies got the point, and committed to State Aid to Catholic schools, further undermining the ALP's Catholic vote. In 1964 Menzies directed money for science blocks and libraries to both state and church schools.

You can read more at: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/the-genesis-of-state-aid-20120713-2212s.html>

In 1967 the pressure group *Defence of Government Schools* (DOGS) was established to push back against State Aid. DOGS stood candidates in a succession of elections through the 1970s. Their middle class background meant critics could not use the usual taunts about left-wingers. In the 1971 NSW election, DOGS even outpolled the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) in six out of ten seats.

DOGS tried to make Government MPs more aware of state school underfunding. The Shadow Attorney General Lionel Murphy turned up to Kogarah State school. DOGS tried to inspect Redfern Public School on Open Day, but the Principal closed the school and the Minister sent for police. In November 1971, Malcolm Fraser, Education Minister, visited Maroubra Junction Girls High, and saw the neglect. Fraser also met with a delegation in Tasmania.

In 1969 at a Sydney Town Hall meeting against per capita grants, Whitlam gave his assessment, in his loud booming voice, of DOGS's High Court initiative: "It will FAIL!" An exchange from the book *Contempt of Court: Unofficial Voices from the DOGS Australian High Court Case 1981* put a spotlight on Whitlam: "He will sell out the public system for the DLP preferences... What else do you expect? Power corrupts... Sends his own children to private schools."

Joan Coxsedg a former Labor member, has her own view on Whitlam: "In 1967, Edward Gough Whitlam, a shrewd ambitious politician, seized the parliamentary leadership from the less-polished Arthur Calwell after convincing American power-brokers he was made of the right stuff ..."

In 1970, believing he couldn't win the top job unless he purged the Victorian ALP, Whitlam went for the jugular. The catalyst was State Aid to private schools, opposition to which had been an important plank of the federal platform.

Whitlam set out to reverse the policy to placate the bishops and bring back the Catholic vote. He was strongly supported by a powerful in-house group called the 'Participants', mainly from the legal fraternity, who pushed hard for intervention into the Branch's internal affairs.

The issue of needs based funding vs. per capita grants was further muddled when Church schools claimed to be 'poor'.

If this was true of Catholic schools, many state schools across the nation were even poorer!

There was skulduggery along the way. In 1970, Frank Costigan tried to get an injunction against DOGS handing out election material. A judge missed the first half of a game he liked and he denied the request. We don't know if it was a point of law or a judge pissed off about missing a game. Kath Taylor, DOGS candidate for election was threatened on the phone. There was violence against Ernie Tucker from a Labor supporter, and intimidation from police in 1970. Equally, there was one helpful officer in Special Branch.

DOGS could not initiate a legal challenge on their own. They needed a fiat from a state Attorney General, even though they were funding it themselves. Finally in 1973 the Victorian Attorney General agreed, and they made a start.

Between 1973 and 1981 there were half a million dollars of legal bills. Opponents claimed they were petro-dollars, but in fact they were just the finances of committed people. Opponents of DOGS strangely had no comprehension whatsoever of the commitment of the DOGS people.

Joan Kirner was originally a signatory to the court case, but left after becoming involved with the state school network including advocates for the catholic system, and later had her name removed. Bill Hartley, in spite of a lot of pressure from mainstream Labor, stood firm as a signatory.

Jean Ely's 2011 book *Contempt of Court* details the confusing set of many different factions, The Real Left/Socialist Left vs. Centre Unity/Independents/Participants.

In 1978 religious schools were admitted to the DOGS case as 'friends of court'. Then in February 1979 the 'trial of facts' began - after forcing this on the court, the Catholic Church declared it to be "irrelevant"! In March 1980 the full DOGS hearing commenced, and in February 1981 the judgement was delivered. The majority found against DOGS and the case was lost - only Justice Lionel Murphy found for them.

In a strange sideline, in 1973 some DOGS people become involved with former members of the Ustasha - Croatian fascists in Australia. There were letter bombs and other violence, and it led to the book *Ratlines* about the Vatican helping to ferret away war criminals. Yugoslavian relations were an issue, with Croatian agitators being trained in Australia, and the leaking of a document perhaps resulting in the assassination of a Yugoslav official in France.

Now to return to the general political history of Australia. Gough Whitlam won Government in 1972. Some now consider Gough himself to have been a dangerous lefty, but in his time he had to deal with real left-wingers in his cabinet, like Jim Cairns. After winning again narrowly in 1974, Whitlam held a joint sitting of both houses and implemented Medibank and electoral distribution.

In 1975, Sydney's Rev. Ted Noffs was brought up on heresy charges by the *Methodist Church*, much of which later merged into the liberal *Uniting Church*. A lot has changed.

Whitlam was a life-long agnostic but called himself a 'fellow-traveler' with Christianity. He attacked Joh Bjelke-Petersen as ostentatiously religious, and a bible-bashing bastard.

During the 1975 Dismissal crisis, Sir John Kerr, selected as Governor-General by Whitlam himself, moved to appoint Opposition Leader Malcolm Fraser as caretaker Prime Minister, pending an election. Whitlam lost. The idealistic middle class who'd put him in power had gone sour on him.

Bob Hawke said Labor had "had its guts ripped out", and blamed David Combe and Whitlam. Bob was a notorious drinker, but committed to going off the drink if he entered parliament. Hawke was influenced by his clergyman father's social conscience, but himself had become an agnostic.

Fraser's Razor Gang slashed government spending, but he was also involved in some big-spending initiatives like the Art Gallery, the High Court building, and the new Parliament House. Rather than sexual indiscretions, in Australia it was minor financial breaches and evading customs duties that led to some ministerial sackings.

Fraser was an agnostic who supported multiculturalism and set up the SBS. He later led the non-religious charity CARE Australia. In 1976, Dr. Richard Ely published *Unto God and Caesar: Religious Issues in the Emerging Commonwealth, 1891-1906*, helping to develop the secular perspective.

Protesters continued to attack Fraser and Kerr over the Whitlam dismissal, but, in 1977 Fraser won another term. Don Chipp founded the *Australian Democrats*, undertaking to "Keep the Bastards Honest". They became a progressive party with a balance of power in the Senate.

In 1979, Russia invaded Afghanistan. Fraser called it "The most serious threat to world peace since World War II". The west supported Islamic opposition groups in Afghanistan, and the results are with us to this day.

Unemployment grew. The ALP opposition offered job-creating innovations. Fraser drove his cabinet mercilessly (shades of Rudd), and ran a dictatorial style. Vietnamese boats started appearing in Darwin Harbour. Fraser was sympathetic to the 'boat people' who were often Catholics who had supported the former South Vietnam government.

Labor changed leaders from Hayden to Hawke just before the 1983 election, throwing the Libs off balance. Hayden reckoned a 'drover's dog' could have won the election! Bill Hayden later became an *Australian Humanist of the Year*.

During the campaign, Fraser claimed money in banks would not be safe under Labor, and people should put their savings "under their beds". Hawke said "They can't put them under the bed because that's where the commies are", turning an old taunt back against the Liberal Party, and making them look paranoid and out of touch.

Hawke, in any case, won in a landslide. His *Prices and Incomes Accord* sought to offer productivity growth, and economic growth without inflation. He handed back Uluru to its aboriginal owners, and successfully introduced *Medicare*.

David Combe formed a relation with Valery Ivanov of the Soviet embassy. Hawke made a stand, expelling Ivanov. In 1984, Geoffrey Blainey claimed too many immigrants were coming to Australia, echoed by John Howard, earning Hawke's criticism. Valid comment or political correctness?

Paul Keating was competent with "the disciplined infallibility of his Catholicism". To be fair, there was no evidence of

Catholic inspiration in his policies. There were economic tensions, and in 1986 Keating expressed concern Australia was in danger of becoming a banana republic.

There was a downturn in commodity prices, after the US started selling subsidised grain to Russia. Keating criticised both Labour and Capital for avoiding tax and excessive wage increases. Labor became isolated. Graham Richardson said they'd forgotten they were politicians, not economists!

Labor was doing badly, but Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who hated Howard, ran a *Joh for PM* campaign, misjudging the Australian people, and helping Labor to another win in 1987. This defeat was the beginning of the end for Joh, who had supported a Queensland version of the Religious Right.

Tension between Hawke and Keating was distracting the Labor government. Keating said Hawke had secretly agreed to pass over the leadership. There were significant economic problems. L.J. Hooker collapsed, mortgage rates reached 17%, and strikes, lockouts and sackings in the airline industry added to problems. The Libs changed Howard for Peacock, but somehow Labor won the next election in 1990.

Labor sold off the *Commonwealth Bank*, and Howard quoted back Hawke's 1985 *Light on the Hill* speech. Hawke traveled to Gallipoli, talking about peace, but supported the Iraq war. Finally, Labor changed leaders to Keating after opposition attacks over the economy, and Keating's internal lobbying.

New leader of the Liberal party, John Hewson, pushed *Fightback*. Keating pushed *One Nation*, and an Australian republic. Keating focused on Kokoda as a more meaningful event in Australia's military history than Gallipoli.

Keating won the next election through attacks on *Fightback*, the GST and personal attacks on Hewson, along with support from women such as Beryl Beaufort and Anne Summers.

In victory Keating was arrogant, which put people off.

Keating forged closer ties with Indonesia. Problems in Bougainville at the time are described in Waratah Gillespie's book *Running with Rebels*. Waratah was briefly a Vice-President of the *Humanist Society of NSW*.

In 1992 there was the *Mabo* case, endorsing Native Title at common law - at least, in some limited cases. Keating supported the decision but the Liberal Party and especially the National Party opposed it.

John Hewson was a little too socially progressive for the Liberal Party endorsing *Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras* in 1994. Years later he expressed concern about a religious right in his party's NSW branch. Hewson was replaced by Alexander Downer who resigned in 1995 to be replaced by a revitalized John Howard, who then won the 1996 election.

Along with Peter Costello, a fundamentalist, Howard, an arch-conservative, greatly changed Australia, introducing many measures favouring religion.

How might things have been different if Hewson had won in 1993? In the next instalment I'll discuss the John Howard years.

John August



HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NSW INC.

Humanist House, 10 Shepherd Street,
Chippendale NSW 2008

<http://www.hsnsw.asn.au/>

President/Editor: Murray Love, lovemuz@gmail.com

Vice President: John August, john.august@mail.optusnet.com.au

Vice President: Ian Bryce, ianrbryce@gmail.com

Secretary/Membership: Fay Love, faylove@rocketmail.com

Treasurer/Peace & Environment: Angela, abraxas@tpg.com.au

Meetup Organizer: Murray Love, murrath@rocketmail.com

Humanist House Manager: Fred Flatow, 0418 616 304

Phone at Humanist House (when attended): (02) 9212 2122

Humanist House Bookings/Open Forum: David Duffy,
(02) 4782 1130 (am only); (02) 9212 2122 (Wednesday evening)

Sustainable Population Australia: George Carrard,
george_carrard@yahoo.com.au, www.population.org.au

South Coast Contact: John Dillon (02) 4233 0780

Newcastle Contact: Jim Bright (02) 4942 5197

Canberra Contacts: Dierk von Behrens, (02) 6254 1763
Lyndon Storey, 0432 938 739, humanistexplorer@gmail.com

Humanist Celebrants Network Chairperson: Dally Messenger,
(03) 9646 1649, 0411 717 303, dallymessenger@mac.com

Sydney Celebrants Contact: Affie Adagio, 0421 101 163,
affie@affie.com.au, PO Box 617 Potts Point NSW 1335

Our Patrons



Robyn Williams AM

Chosen as Humanist of the Year in 1993, talented actor, science journalist and broadcaster Robyn presents Radio National's Science Show and Ockham's Razor. Robyn Williams has written more than 10 books and received Honorary Doctorates in Science from Sydney, Macquarie and Deakin Universities.



**Dorothy Buckland-Fuller
AM, MBE**

Mother, feminist, bilingual sociologist, peace activist, environmentalist, and committed to the cause of reconciliation with indigenous Australia. A founder of the Ethnic Communities Council, Dorothy has been a vital influence in the ethnic communities

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE AND YOUR SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED

Subscriptions for membership & newsletter are due 1st July every year. Single \$35, Double \$45, Concession \$20, Viewpoints only \$20. Payment options below (please consider including a donation):

Direct credit to Society's Bank Account: (*Annotate the deposit with your name and purpose*)

BSB: **062-003** Account No. **0091-0957** Account Name: **Humanist Society of NSW Inc.**

PayPal. Pay to accounts@hsnsw.asn.au and send an email to that address stating purpose of payment.

Cheque to **Humanist Society of NSW**, 10 Shepherd St, Chippendale NSW 2008.