

# Melbourne Confidential

Talk is cheap, gossip is priceless



## Bitch

Melbourne's Secrets

### Usual suspects again

■ Another **Australia Day** has been and gone, and many of the usual suspects were again appointed as **Australia Day** ambassadors. Some of the ambassadors travelled long distances and acquitted themselves excellently at community celebrations for our national day. Others did little at all. **3AW's Bruce Mansfield** again went nowhere on January 26, but gladly accepted the plaque. **Mansfield** this year even snubbed the **Ambassadors' reception at State Government House**. It's time for a shake-up of the predictable line-up ... some say it is becoming a cosy club, especially with more than half-a-dozen representatives from one **Melbourne** radio station alone.



● **Bruce Mansfield**

### In black and white ...

■ Aboriginal activist **Mick Dodson** was last week named as **Australian of the Year**, by Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** (on a rare visit to **Australia**).

**Observer** columnist **John Pasquarelli** writes: "So **Mick Dodson** is **2009 Australian of the Year** - amazing yet tragic stuff. How can a person who has said that 'assimilation is genocide' be **Australian of the Year**?"

Assimilation is a process of joining together, understanding, mutual cooperation and a coming into harmony. "How on earth can this be equated with the mass murder committed by **Hitler** against the **Jews** and others - and the acts of genocide by **Stalin** and other assorted lunatics? On what crazy road are we travelling?"

### Patti Newton and the Ham

■ **Molly of Chelsea Heights** writes: "I thought you would be interested to know that **Bruce Mansfield (3AW)** is a very generous **'Santa Claus'**. Do you believe, he is so generous with other people's presents - he even gave a (station sponsor) **Bertocci** ham to none other than **Patti Newton**! I couldn't believe my ears.

"**Mr Big Noter** could have surely known **Mrs Newton** could afford to buy her own. I thought perhaps she may have politely refused the offer. Or perhaps given it to someone less fortunate - but no.

"When she returned to **Nightline** after Christmas - she thanked **Bruce** once again and dutifully remarked how nice it was. Someone challenged him on **Nightline** talkback and was politely told by the pair of comperes that they can choose who they wish to give a prize to and they couldn't understand what the fuss was about."



● **Mick Dodson**

## ARISE MAL GARVIN ... BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY?



● **Mal Garvin AM**

■ Radio man **Mal Garvin** was last week recognised in the **Australia Day Honours** "for service to the community through the establishment of **Fusion Australia** and the development of social welfare programs that support and guide young people, and as a broadcaster and author".

**Garvin** was made a Member (AM) in the General Division of the **Order of Australia**.

There are many **Melburnians** who remember **Garvin** as Managing Director of **Fusion Media Pty Ltd**, then-operators of radio station **3AK**.

Under **Garvin's** stewardship, some millions of dollars went unpaid to **3AK** creditors, including staff who never received outstanding wages or superannuation entitlements. They would still like their cash.

Administrators were appointed in 2001. A deed of arrangement was put into place, and final accounts lodged in 2004. **Australian Securities and Investments Commission** records show the company to be still operating from **Poatina in Tasmania**.

Radio intrigue lived on after the **3AK** financial collapse, with the station later taken over by **Data and Commerce Ltd**, **Jeff Kennett** becoming a director and presenter for a short time, and it later becoming the sports station **1116 SEN**.

The **Fusion Australia** organisation became involved in the **7HRT Heart 95.7** community radio station in **Tasmania**, with **Garvin** as President. **Fusion Australia** was contracted to run the day-to-day management of the station. The station's Vice-President and Treasurer were also linked to **Fusion**.

**7HRT** Public Officer **Michael Ansky** told the **Australian Communications and Media Authority** that the station incurred losses in 2005 and 2006, and had negative equity, and had debt owed to **Fusion Australia** in an arrangement that went undocumented.

The station is still located at **Poatina**, a **Tasmanian** hydro township purchased by the **Fusion Australia** group.

**Garvin** runs a daily morning program, **A Tassie Morning**, and the Sunday night **Conversation Of A Nation**, on the station which is promoted as running on 60 radio stations across **Australia**.

In April last year, **ACMA** gave a preliminary view that it was not prepared to renew the **7HRT** community radio station licence. **ACMA** had earlier written to the station saying that it had "serious concerns about certain aspects of **7HRT's** compliance with licence conditions".

**7HRT** continues to operate.

## Short & Sharp

■ One or two more **Victoria Cross** medals on the way soon for **Aussie** soldiers?

■ Did you spot **3AW** weekend presenter **Alan Pearsall** on the TV news last week, as a **Connex** rail passenger, having train plans explained by **State Government Transport Minister Lynne Kosky**.

■ We're told **Fairfax Community Newspapers** has closed its **Moreland Community News** weekly.

■ Radio man **Keith McGowan's** recording, **A Little Boy's Christmas Prayer**, has been removed from the **You Tube** website, with the operators claiming a 'copyright violation' by the user who 'uploaded' the audio track.

## Rumour Mill



Hear It Here First

### Buyer for radio stations?

■ **Rupert Murdoch's** son **Lachlan Murdoch** has been suggested as a buyer for the **Fairfax Media** radio interests including **3AW** and **Magic 1278**.

### Reject Shop had rejects

■ **The Reject Shop** stock children's top products which exceeded permissible lead levels, and a cosmetic product did not comply with mandatory standards. The company has given an enforceable undertaking to the **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission** that it will not stock items such as the **Knights Playset** and **Universal Wipes**.

### The Adventures of Bazza



● **Cate Blanchett with Barry Crocker**

■ Entertainer **Barry Crocker** warned of the danger of **Australians** becoming Americanised, when he appeared on **Today Tonight** last week.

In a true-blue **Aussie** move, **Barry** was pictured with former **Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School** student, **Cate Blanchett**.

## Whispers

### Sober



● **Tracy Bartram**

■ Entertainer **Tracy Bartram** impressed many with a frank radio interview over the summer break. She told her trials as an alcoholic, realising she was "powerless over alcohol". She has been sober since Christmas 2002. These days, **Tracy** runs a retreat at **Warburton**.

### Deported



● **Rex Gardner**

■ **Australian** newsman **Rex Gardner** was last week deported by the **Fiji** military government, touchy over a critical letter published in **The Fiji Times**, of which he was Acting Publisher for a six-month stint that was due to finish last Saturday anyway. **Gardner**, a former boss of **Melbourne's Leader Newspapers** group, had replaced **Evan Hannah**, who last year was also deported from the **Pacific** nation.

### In Court

■ **St Frances Xavier Cabrini Hospital** is alleging that it is owed money by **Olga Stankovic** for work and labour done and material supplied. The allegation is scheduled to begin to be tested on Wednesday next week (Feb. 11). A Registrars' Hearing is timed for 2.15pm at **Dandenong Magistrates' Court**.