



**Abercrombie**  
The forgotten street  
Story – Page 5



**The Audreys**  
Albums re-released on vinyl  
The Review – Pages 11-14

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# the South Sydney Herald



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ALEXANDRIA BEACONSFIELD CHIPPENDALE DARLINGTON ERSKINEVILLE GLEBE KINGS CROSS NEWTOWN REDFERN SURRY HILLS WATERLOO WOOLLOOMOOLOO ZETLAND

## New train station for Newtown



Vision for Newtown Station Artist's Impression: Supplied

SSH

Member for Marrickville, Carmel Tebbutt, has announced that RailCorp recently lodged an application with the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning outlining its proposal to upgrade Newtown Station.

Ms Tebbutt said the concept plans include the construction of a new concourse over the station with lift and stair access, new ticket office, extended platform canopies and a new public entrance to the station.

"The new entrance will feature a protective canopy from King Street to the concourse, refurbished heritage buildings and retail to create a pleasant open public forecourt in the centre of Newtown," Ms Tebbutt said. "We made a commitment to upgrade Newtown Station and I am pleased that we are moving forward and delivering on it. The Newtown Station precinct contains significant state heritage items that will be refurbished and adaptively reused as part of the upgrade."

"RailCorp plans to commence works at the site in May 2010, with expected completion in 2012. The upgrade highlights the State Government's continued commitment to improving station facilities across the CityRail network and providing safe, clean and equitable transport for the people of New South Wales," she said.

The Newtown Neighbourhood Centre has been running a long campaign calling for disabled access to the station. Lisa Burns, Coordinator, told the SSH: "It's a win for the whole of Newtown, which really is an inner hub for so many activities and services including hospitals, medical, educational, shopping and restaurants. Transport plays a vital part for the elderly, the disabled and parents with prams and young children to participate in their community. A big thank you to the community for supporting this really important issue."

Councillor Fiona Byrne commented: "The Greens are pleased to see the plans for the Easy Access upgrade of Newtown Station. It is a testament to community agitation, by local organisations like the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and the Newtown Precinct Business Association, that this project is still moving forward and will give us our first accessible train station in the area. Using the old tram sheds site to achieve this outcome is sensible and we urge everyone to take the opportunity to comment on the plans. Improvements in our local public transport infrastructure benefit the whole community and also entice people to use it as their first option. The timeframe of completion in 2011 has been delayed by an extra year but I would hope that the original deadline could be met so that our community can finally have commuter facilities that other areas take for granted."

SSH

## Critique of school league tables

KELLY LANE

**The State Government will reintroduce legislation to parliament in September, attempting to overturn an amendment that penalises the print publication of tables comparing NSW schools.**

NSW Minister for Education, Verity Firth, has maintained that the Government does not support the publication of what those opposed believe will become "simplistic" league tables. A spokesperson for the Minister said: "The bill will allow us to provide the NSW school information required by the Federal Government, and make it available for publication in a responsible way."

The Federal Government's transparency policy intends to use the data, which will be based on literacy and numeracy test results, as well as the School Certificate and HSC, to compile lists that compare schools with similar backgrounds.

"If two schools with similar students achieve vastly different results, then we can take a closer look to work out why it's the case. It will allow us to identify underperforming schools and target resources so we can improve outcomes," the spokesperson for Minister Firth said.

If NSW does not comply with the Federal Government's policy it will miss out on \$4.8 billion in funding.

However, opposition to the new bill has been voiced across the education sector, with the NSW Teacher's Federation, NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens' Association, Secondary Principals' Council, Primary Principals' Association and Independent Education Union all against the legislation.

Michelle Rosicky, Organiser for the Inner City Teachers Association (ICTA), said: "We're opposed to league tables in any form whatsoever. We don't want schools compared with one another."

He said that parents send their child to a school for a variety of reasons, not just for performance in literacy and numeracy.

Dianne Giblin, President of the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens' Association, agreed that the data used to group schools would be too simplistic. "We're not taking into consideration all the other things that a school has to offer," Ms Giblin said. "If we're basing the success of a school on its literacy and numeracy results, then we're extremely narrow in what we believe is success in life. What we don't want to see happen with the league tables, and these particular tests, is that so much of the school image would be based

on the results of the NAPLAN test that we may find that the curriculum becomes distorted to ensure that the children are successful, or to ensure that they have the highest possible results."

The Government has said that the publication of data will provide parents with a more comprehensive picture of the school their child attends, with information about its socio-economic status, Indigenous population, student's language backgrounds, disabilities, attendance and sources of income.

"We believe currently that parents receive mounds of information about their child's progress and about the way the school is performing via the Annual Report, and via school reports, and we are totally opposed to comparing schools with schools when it's not contextual," Ms Giblin said.

Mr John Gauci, a teacher at Taverners Hill Infants School and the secretary of the ICTA, agreed that the publication of tables would sacrifice parts of the primary school curriculum. "Schools then start to teach to tests and so you have schools essentially dropping other areas," Mr Gauci said. "The first thing to be dropped often is the arts and languages. A lot of the schools around the inner-city teach Italian, and

- continued on page 4