

the balmain association

N.S.W. STATE ELECTIONS-76

There are 5 candidates for the Electorate of Balmain in the coming election for the N.S.W. Parliament.

The Association has asked all 5 candidates questions covering three areas of concern to residents of Balmain and Rozelle; Local Government, containers and ferries. All 5 candidates have replied and the questions and replies are given in full below :

Question 1

Local Government.

- (a) Aid to ratepayers on Council rates.
- (b) Legislation to allow residents greater involvement in town planning decisions by local Councils.
- (c) Compulsory voting.

P. COCKCROFT. Communist Party of Aust.

- (a) The question is unclear. Our policy is that rates are far too high and ought to be lowered. The 3 major points of the policy are (i) greater flexibility in payment relief for pensioners, the unemployed and specific low income groups; (ii) a larger proportion of rates to be levied on business premises on a steeply graduated scale; (iii) 10% of Federal revenue to be dispersed to Local Government with positive discrimination to deprived areas.

- (b) Definitely needed. This is a major part of our platform and is mentioned in our leaflets and posters. The actual form of such legislation would be difficult and complex, but it should lead to a situation where the sort of consultation that took place before the 1974 Plan is a necessary pre-condition to the consideration of any planning proposal by the State Planning Commission. This can only be achieved when the people themselves are far more directly involved in the political process as a whole.
- (c) No. Many elections are a farce with no real alternatives. People should not be legally dragged from their homes just to vote informal.

ROGER C. DEGEN, M.L.A. Member for Balmain. A.L.P.

- (a) A Labor Government would aid ratepayers by introducing a new system of valuation for Council rating purposes providing :-
 - (i) fixed valuations have a base year;
 - (ii) such valuations to be constant unless the permissible use of the land is changed by rezoning or other enactment;
 - (iii) require the Valuer General to prove to the satisfaction of an Appeals Tribunal the value he has applied on all property valued when appeals against valuations are made by property owners.

A fixed value for rating purposes would tend to reduce the alarming rate at which rate charges have risen over recent years by creating a situation which would require Councils to increase the rate levied by them to secure the increased income they seek rather than pass the responsibility for increased rate charges to the Valuer General whose revaluations are now every two years. Under this system the wasteful practice of such frequent valuations would no longer be necessary.

Other changes which would benefit ratepayers would be elimination of contributions by Local Government to State Authorities and ad hoc bodies; an indexation system would be established which would peg rate increases to cost of living increases as now applies to wages and salaries.

My personal attitude is that I fully support the Labor Party policy.

- (b) A Labor Government would want to involve the people in these decisions. In environmental matters our basic objective is to make sure that the people of the area immediately concerned and all concerned citizens of N.S.W. can have their say in the decisions which affect the environment before the final and irreversible decision is made.

Labor will provide for appeals by affected citizens against developers' actions, including environmental groups acting on behalf of citizens. They will be provided with legal aid to be able to stand up against the financial resources of the companies. Labor feels that N.S.W. needs a government which will plan for balanced development, not a government for the benefit of the private developer.

I fully support Labor's policy to allow greater resident involvement in town planning decisions by local Councils.

- (c) Yes. Labor would introduce adult franchise, compulsory voting and proportional representation with the principle of votes of equal value between Wards and Ridings within a Municipality or Shire being applied as closely as practicable.

JEFF THOMPSON. Liberal Party.

- (a) Ratepayers have been, and will continue to be, assisted in every possible way by Liberal Governments. Previous Liberal Governments have -

- * Introduced the interest free rate instalment plan (State Government).

- * Introduced full deductibility of rates for income tax purposes (Federal Government). This was, as you may recall, severely reduced by the previous Labor Government.

- * Introduced aid programmes for rate paying pensioners.

The currently announced Liberal policy on Council rates is -

- * To have a 12 month freeze imposed on rates.

The current exorbitant rating factor in our area has been levied by a Labor Council.

- (b) You will note my platform on residential involvement in town planning on my hand bill. The key issues is that residents should be and will be consulted in planning decisions. In addition I believe it is worth noting the preamble to the State Liberal "Environment Protection Bill."

- (c) The State Liberal Government made Council Elections voluntary when it came to power. No change to this position is currently stated although the issue is under review by an expert committee which will report in July of this year.

DON HENDERSON. Socialist Party of Aust.

- (a) My Party's policy and my views are one and the same, i.e. we believe that :

- (i) Pensioners should not have to pay Council rates.

- (ii) Unemployed residents should only pay on a pro rata basis, depending on the period of unemployment.

- (iii) Rates for residents and business people (such as small shopkeepers) should be greatly decreased by subsidy from Government.

- (iv) Higher rates should be levied on factories, workshops, shipyards, etc. These people pollute the local environment and take their profits outside of the municipality. They should be made to pay more rates and taxes or to contribute to local hospitals, schools and youth facilities and cultural centres.
- (b) The Socialist Party of Aust. and myself fully endorse the need for greater involvement of local residents in town planning and all other decisions of Council. We see the need to return to the progressive policies of the 1973-4 Council, when decisions affecting the people of the municipality were discussed by residents and aldermen together. We oppose the present method of so-called Labour Aldermen making decisions in Caucus without regard to the needs and wishes of the great majority of the people.
- (c) We would oppose compulsory voting, but believe that if people were allowed to be involved in decision making as above, this would raise the civic and political consciousness of people. Voting should not be a matter of compulsion, but rather a desire to have the best possible representation. This would come from involvement and understanding.
- JUANITA KEIG. Socialist Workers Party.
- (a) As an immediate measure we would advocate no council rates whatsoever for old-age pensioners and all pensioners. Secondly, we would also advocate the elimination of all rates on homes. We think that local council revenue should come from a levy on industry. Obviously, this would mean the collection and distribution of such funds would need to be administered on a State basis, given the concentration of industrial areas. This would also ensure a more equal distribution of local council funds and remove a situation where poorer areas are penalised in terms of the funds that are available for care of roads, the cleaning of electorate, establishment of parks and gardens, equipping of libraries and provision of all manner of community services for the old, children, etc.
- (b) Firstly, we would like to see a breaking down of existing councils into smaller administrative areas so that there could be increased participation in local decision-making and so that questions of concern to residents of a specific area could be decided more directly.
- We also think there should be a much longer period of notice of any major changes in the development of an area. Decisions affecting changes in residential and industrial use and the nature of residential development should require years not months of planning and decision-making. Surveys and polls should be taken over such major questions and notice of all proposals should be made readily available to all residents over a fairly extended period of time.
- The electorate should have the right to recall local governments or representatives if they are not responding to the sentiments of residents in their area. This could be made possible through the collection of a petition of say, 50% of people voting at the previous election.
- (c) It seems clear that in the longer term interests of the working class active involvement in their own affairs is the central question. This can't be done through compulsion or legislation. It is up to the Labor party and other working class organisations to earn the enthusiasm and support of their constituencies. Our party is therefore not in favor of compulsory voting but we do not think it is the most immediate issue of electoral reform requiring agitation. For example, the question of the principle of one person-one vote is more pressing at the moment.

Question 2

In view of the delay in developing Botany Bay, what remedial action can you offer for Mort Bay and its environment?

P. COCKCROFT.

I will not advocate that a tunnel be built under Balmain, nor will I dig one myself.

I am firmly convinced that the ANL have no intention of leaving Mort Bay. They will not go; they will only be driven out. Having participated in the demonstrations against the Terminal, I am more than ever convinced that only people's action of an even more militant type will see us rid of this menace.

There must be two provisos. The jobs of the people working at Mort Bay must be preserved and we must ensure that we don't allow Balmain's problem to be exported to Botany Bay.

We can immediately demand the re-routing of ships to docks which are presently unused and the barging of the residue of containers to other terminals. The long term demand should then be the re-organisation of port facilities already in existence to handle the load now taken in Mort Bay. Militant people's action can achieve this, as it can also achieve a moratorium on the disastrous plans for Botany Bay.

R. DEGEN.

As a Labor Member I would trust that the incoming Labor Government would re-open the suggestion of moving the containers by barge. A Labor Government would ensure that there was no breaching of the law in regard to the truck movements in the area.

JEFF THOMPSON.

I do not agree that there is delay on developing Botany Bay. This I believe is Labor policy and again I believe the issue is spelt out in my hand bill.

The possibility of barging has been considered but both technical and cost factors have indicated it to be prohibitive.

I therefore support the immediate development of a new ANL location and the conversion of the Mort Bay area into parkland.

DON HENDERSON.

My views have been expressed at public meetings and as a member of the Balmain Traffic Improvement Committee.

The continued use of the Mort Bay Terminal with trucks damaging roads and properties and polluting the local environment should not be allowed to continue. The answer does not lie in handing our problems over to the people of Botany and the surrounding areas.

In my view the answer should come from Federal and State Governments co-operating with local councils, importers, exporters, trucking firms' agents and unions.

Money should be spent to alleviate the need for the number of trucks being used in and around the Balmain Peninsula. In spite of the report by the ex-Labor Minister C. Jones, I believe that barging is feasible and I believe that there could be areas other than Mort Bay available. The area directly under Glebe Bridge in Blackwattle Bay is not being used for the storage of steel for Botany Bay (as was claimed by the M.S.B.); areas of Darling Harbour still lie idle and should be utilised; timber imports have dropped dramatically and barges and small tugs lie idle. Waterside workers are having more idle time than has been the case for years.

Obviously containers must come and go through the major ports such as Sydney, but not at the expense of residents for the profits of big business. Proper planning and the acceptance of the rights of people by all the authorities and those associated with containerisation could see a dramatic change in the number of trucks in the Balmain area in the next 12 months. A combination of barging, trucking and diversification of berths would be a starting point for such a project.

I personally support the view that the terminal should be scrapped completely and the area used for Housing Commission homes (low rent) and parklands.

JUANITA KEIG.

On this question we are of the opinion that the problems of one residential area should not be solved at the expense of another, i.e. the problems of Balmain residents being shifted onto the people of Botany Bay area or Greenacre. We think that such terminuses and the accompanying noise, pollution and dangers associated with their functions should not be inflicted on any residential area.

We think in the immediate term there should be far heavier restrictions on the traffic routes and times trucks can operate.

Also there should be far greater use of those existing terminuses in non-residential areas and that, if more shifts are required to operate them, then workers must receive special penalty rates. Also there should be far greater use of more efficient means of transportation such as barge and rail transport. In recent years these have declined in favour of the more destructive and less efficient trucking system. No doubt this is because of the lack of interest on the part of the government and the reluctance of companies like A.N.L. to outlay the necessary capital to develop these other forms of transportation.

In addition, we would stress that we think it will not be possible to finally overcome the irrationality and contradictions of social planning within the framework of the capitalist system. In this system things are chaotic and destructive because they are operated on the principle of profits before human needs.

Question 3

Two-man Small Ferries.

In view of the Government's allocation of \$7m. over the next 5 years to build Harbour ferries, what is your programme to upgrade services?

P. COCKCROFT.

If two-person ferries can be run safely and without jeopardising employment, I would favour them. There must be a return of night services and Sunday services with proper co-ordination with bus services.

R. DEGEN.

Labor intends to introduce a two-man ferry operation. This has the full support of the unions and would reduce the operating costs. It is intended to use this type of vessel particularly during off-peak and evening periods and during weekends.

Labor intends to conduct surveys on the public need for ferries to ascertain the public requirements and to ensure proper timetabling and that adequate bus feeder networks are established.

I personally support this policy and all attempts to improve transport in the Balmain electorate.

JEFF THOMPSON.

In relation to the \$7.9MIL. expenditure, the W.R.T.A.C. Report has recommended a complete survey of passenger needs and a full review of ferry designs. This is currently proceeding and will incorporate the additional ferry facilities for Balmain, details of which are contained in your own publication of April, 1976.

Further I endorse the use of subsidised private operators and the scheduling of bus services to meet all ferries.

DON HENDERSON.

The press statement that \$7m. has been set aside for ferry replacement gives little satisfaction to local residents.

Theoretically what is intended (with no firm decisions as yet) is to replace the "North Head" and the "Baragoola", two Manly ferries, older than this writer. That would cost, on present prices, approximately \$6M. That will not IMPROVE the present Manly service, it simply will perpetuate a useless two ferry peak and off peak service. A minimum of three conventional ferries is essential if the service is to be of any value at all to commuters and visitors.

The other \$1M. is supposedly for three small ferries for the Parramatta River and Balmain services. These vessels have not yet reached the drawing board stage, but consideration is being given to vessels under 60 ft., manned by 2-men crews and to carry approximately 250 passengers. A Catamaran two-hull type similar in design to vessels operating in Japanese waters have been talked about. It is my considered opinion that it is essential that not less than 3 conventional ferries should be built for the Manly service, with a carrying capacity of at least 1200 people and a speed of not less than 15 knots. The Hydro-foil services should be extended to Middle Harbour, Rose Bay, Watsons Bay, Clifton Gardens etc. Sixty foot shallow draft vessels capable of 12 to 15 knots and 250 to 300 passengers should be built without delay. The older ferries now operating in the Harbour service should be replaced and all services restored. The facilities at all wharves should be updated and new services introduced. The neglect of the Liberal Government in not utilising the best waterways in the world is to be deplored.

JUANITA KEIG.

We are completely in favor of making use of this form of transport where it is possible. However, \$7M. is not a terribly large sum of money given the costs of building ferries, staffing them and making efforts to extend the services by building new wharves, etc. In fact it is nowhere near adequate. We are in favor of reconstructing new wharves and building new ones to better service the suburb. We are also in favor of a diversity of craft, staffed by however many is deemed safe by those working on these craft. We think two-person ferries as well as larger ones could best cater for the changing demands during each day. They should also be as efficient and non-polluting as possible.

council report

YEEND STREET WHARF.

The April News Sheet reported that Leichhardt Council had agreed to pay two-thirds of the cost of repairs to Yeend Street Wharf if A.N.L. would pay the remainder. A.N.L. have now replied accepting the offer and have also included two tenders for the necessary repair work.

The April 22 Council meeting accepted the tender by Lechalt Constructions Pty. Ltd. for a total of \$10,203. We guess that the wharf will be re-opened for ferry services within the next six weeks.

Following the completion of this work, Council will accept full responsibility for the wharf so the stalemate situation between A.N.L. and L.M.C. which has resulted in the wharf being closed for the past two years will not re-occur.

It is expected that this service to Yeend St. Wharf will be the same as that to Thames Street, that is, two calls in the morning peak and two calls in the evening peak period.

TOWN PLANNING.

The 1976 amendments to the 1974 Draft Statutory Town Plan continue to dominate local issues.

The petition opposing the amendments was canvassed over the whole of Leichhardt Municipality and it collected more than 16,000 names in less than three weeks. This is a record for Leichhardt. It compares interestingly with the total number of about 11,000 votes cast in the 1974 local elections of which only 6,100 votes went to the aldermen who now support the amendments. (The stock reply by aldermen that they have a clear mandate to do what they like has been shot to pieces on this issue.)

The amendments are with the State Planning and Environment Commission at present and so is the petition.

A deputation of eight saw Mr. Fuller, the Minister for Planning and Environment, early in April and put in straightforward terms the residents objections to the amendments. Although there were no startling announcements, the Minister was receptive and friendly and the amendments were promised priority consideration.

The next meeting of the Leichhardt Planning Forum will be at 8.00 p.m. on Monday, May 3, at the Presbyterian Church Hall, Campbell Street, Balmain. At this meeting a report will be made on progress of the amendments through S.P.E.C.

MAYORAL GAMES.

In the local press, Mayor Rodwell has regularly branded those who object to the controversial Town Plan amendments as being led by unwashed Communists coming mainly from outside the Municipality.

The response of more than 16,000 residents to the petition opposing the 1976 Town Plan amendments flattened that argument but there is another angle.

Who does Council think is going to benefit most from acceptance of the 1976 amendments -- residents or the big developers?

Wholesale flat and unit building throughout the Municipality will benefit the big developers none of whom lives within coo-ee of Leichhardt. They just make their money here. So much for outside interests and lobby groups!

USELESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT.

At April 22, 1976, there were 2,630 dogs registered in the Municipality of Leichhardt.

WARDS STOVES SITE.

Council recently acquired the property in Wallace Street, Balmain, known locally as "Wards Stoves". The site is to be used for open space and most of the ramshackle outhouses on the site have already been demolished. But there remains an old stone building and it is threatened with demolition.

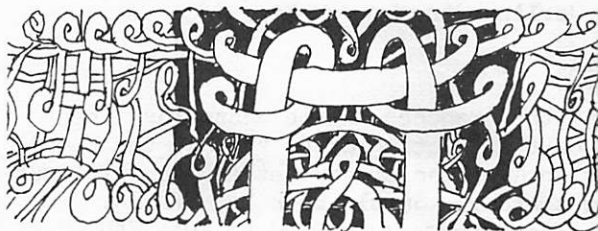
The building is known as "Clontarf" and it dates from 1844. It is regarded by the National Trust as worthy of preservation. The building is in a state of disrepair but the Trust has written to L.M.C. expressing concern that it might be demolished without an assessment being made of the possibility of it being preserved and used by the community.

The Council Engineer has reported that restoration would be expensive and L.M.C. could not afford to do it at this time. The Engineer continues that the building should be demolished and when funds are available a new building erected for community use.

The Association feels that it would be shameful if Council was to allow such an important building to be demolished with such little investigation.

To this end, the Association is now investigating the possibility of offering to Council to make the building weatherproof and vandalproof. If in five or ten years time circumstances have changed, the building will then be available for restoration, not lost forever.

The Association can claim part of the satisfaction at seeing the reintroduction of this service since this was one of the priority actions urged by the Association in its Ferry Report of July, 1975. This report was discussed with the Minister for Transport at that time. Fife, and the subject was brought up at subsequent meetings with Ministers Ruddock and Bruxner. Once again we hope that this improved service remains a permanent feature and is not just election tactic.



ART SHOW

ferries

QUAY - BALMAIN - HUNTER'S HILL FERRIES.

Evening ferries to Balmain have been recommenced after an eighteen month break. After the present 7.30 p.m. departure, the ferries will leave the Quay at 8.40, 9.30, 10.30 and 11.30 p.m. and will call at Darling Street, Long Nose Point, Greenwich and Valentia Street, Hunter's Hill. The service will operate Monday to Saturday; there will continue to be no Sunday service.

This change of heart by the Public Transport Commission is the result of continued agitation by Hunter's Hill residents led by Mrs. Joan Croll. Hunter's Hill is particularly poorly serviced by public transport and, although buses have been tried, ferries have proved to be the best method of providing such a link with the City.

One hundred drawings and paintings by Peter McRuvie will be on show at 8 White Street, Balmain on Sunday 6th June from 2 pm until 8 pm.

The exhibition ranges from still lifes of cornucopias to such topics as Corinthian Column Suffering, Acanthus Fever, The Washerwomen's Suicide and Headmaster and the Cleaning Lady. In between there are Balmainscapes, watercolour landscapes, line drawings and lots of leaves, flowing garlands, palaces, pipes, cupids, rabbits, faces, pubescent long noses. Something, perhaps, for everyone. Prices start at a very reasonable \$20 and stretch to \$65. The Balmain Theatre Group will receive a commission on all sales.

Admission will be 50¢ and includes wine and a catalogue. Members and their friends are free to wander around the house and garden (house is listed by the National Trust).

miscellaneous

BALMAIN THEATRE GROUP

Balmain Theatre Group is presenting MINNIE-THE POOH, a dramatised version of the A.A. Milne stories with original songs composed by group members. The play will be performed at the Presbyterian Church Hall, Campbell Street, Balmain on Saturday 18th, Sunday 16th, Wednesday 17th, Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd May. Saturdays and Sundays at 2 pm, Wednesday at 7 pm. Adults \$2, children \$1. Bookings - phone 82 1512, 82 5204 (a.h.) or book at Bray's Darling Street Balmain or Rudolf Steiner Bookstore, Darling Street, Rozelle.

Auditions

"Wind in the Branches of the Sassafrass Tree" is the next production after "Minnie the Pooh". This is an American comedy set in the wild west of last century. Should be a lot of fun. Performance dates - July 23rd to Aug. 7th. Auditions: Tues. May 18th and Thurs. May 20th at 8 pm. Presbyterian Hall, Campbell Street, Balmain.

membership form

I wish to open/renew my membership with the Balmain Association and enclose \$.....* subscription.

Name.....

Address.....

.....Telephone.....

Send to:
The Hon. Secretary, The Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain, 2041.

*Subscription rates:	Single membership	\$2.00
	Family	\$4.00
	Pensioner / Junior	\$0.20

next general meeting

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 8.00 pm

WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING ST., BALMAIN

ALL MEMBERS PLEASE ATTEND

FRIENDS ALSO WELCOME

TEA and COFFEE PROVIDED