

## From the President

Welcome to Spring everyone. It certainly felt like Spring over recent days and at the time of writing the doors and windows were open to the warm air for the first time this year.

While some were in the mountains skiing during the school semester break, a walk through the streets in Vienna revealed people preparing their gardens for planting or simply soaking up the sun's rays. And some tasty strawberries are appearing in the supermarkets.

As those of us in Vienna emerged from winter hibernation, our newsletter editor Liz Crawford was interrupting her time on the beach at Perth to drag herself in front of the computer and put this newsletter together for us. Thanks Liz; your sacrifice is appreciated.

In this issue of the newsletter we have some accounts of holiday experiences in the snow, both good and not so good. There are also photos from our members who put on the fineries to attend the IAEA Ball at the Hofburg Palace and from our regular bar night.

There is also the suggestion that we depart from the high society atmospherics of the posh ball to take a look at some rubbish -- particularly to see how our garbage is used to warm our homes and give us hot water for our showers. You can read about a proposed tour of the Spittelau thermal waste treatment plant on page 2. And for those who asked for it, your Board is looking into a wine tasting excursion for the warmer months.

Talking of summer, a word of warning if you are planning some international travel. It might seem too early to think of making plans before the skis and boots have been cleaned and put away, but don't you believe it. I can speak from personal experience as I try and put together international and domestic flights to and in Australia *in August*.

Some days of preferred travel have been ruled out because of full planes and it has taken quite a bit of bickering to pencil in suitable international flights.

The next task is to use frequent flyer points wherever possible on some domestic flights and I'm sure we all know how difficult that can be. Well you may be interested in some changes in the frequent flyer arrangements that are being considered by Qantas.

I read in *The Australian* the other day that Qantas frequent flyers will be able to redeem their points on any seat on any plane later this year - but they are likely to pay more for the privilege. The airline plans to roll out an "enhanced" frequent-flyer scheme by mid-year that will have the new option. The new scheme will also allow members to exchange points for merchandise or shopping vouchers. While executives are reluctant to reveal details, they said the existing system will also be retained.

Lastly, I want to explain that some members might not receive this newsletter when it is first issued. It has been withheld because the membership fee for 2008 has not been received. We began asking for renewals at the beginning of December last year and believe that three months is sufficient notice. We don't have many overheads but we do like to have the accounts settled as a new year begins so that expenses can be weighed up against planned activities. And it is only €20 a year. Once payment is received, the newsletter and any other notices will be delivered as usual.

Ciao,  
Brett

**And finally, there was the person who sent ten different puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh.**

**No pun in ten did.**

## OzCon Events

***Your waste heats your home. Want to see how?***

Most of us know that in Vienna our hot water comes from the burning of the city's household garbage. Who hasn't seen the colourful Hundertwasser – designed thermal waste treatment plant at Spittelau?

But do you know *how* your garbage turns into the hot water that runs through your heating system 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year? It is a fascinating story and you can hear and see it first hand if you wish to join an OzCon tour of the Spittelau plant.



From Monday to Friday between 7 am and 3 pm an average of 250 garbage trucks dump your garbage at the plant which burns 150,000 tonnes of it every year. That is only 25 per cent of Vienna's household garbage and up to 40 per cent of it is organic waste. The more toxic waste which emerges from the burners is transported to Germany where it is buried in old salt mines.

Up to 97 per cent of the city's heat generation is from this waste so imagine how much electricity and gas is saved by this system. In fact, the plant also produces enough of its own electricity to power the whole plant, with some left over to be fed into the city's grid. Water which is drawn from the Danube Canal is cleaned before it is used and what is left over is returned to the canal cleaner than when it was taken out.

But come and see this hi-tech plant for yourself. President Brett Bayly will organize a tour if 10 or more people express an interest. The tour will be with an English guide during normal business hours and takes between one and a half and two hours.

It might be possible to organize a tour before the end of this month in which case everyone will be advised of the details by email. If it is to be in April, details will be in the next newsletter.

If interested, email Brett at either

[ozcon\\_board@yahoo.com](mailto:ozcon_board@yahoo.com) or

[brett\\_bayly@yahoo.com.au](mailto:brett_bayly@yahoo.com.au)

## March Bar Night

Come along and join us on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> March at Flanagan's, Schwarzenbergstr. 1-3, 1010 Vienna from 5pm.



## DER FRÜHLING KOMT

So it is time to celebrate, which seemed to be the intent at the February bar night at Flanagan's. Scott Marshall, just recently arrived from Brisbane to be with his Austrian partner who lives at Krems, was keen to share a few laughs with some fellow Aussies.



*Lynda and Eden Sarelius and friend*



*Jacquie Montanato-Punzengruber and husband with Brett Bayly and Scott Marshall*



*Gottfried Steiner and Libby McBride*

### **Immigration Package to Ease Skills Shortage**

On 17 February 2008 the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, issued a media release announcing a package of migration measures designed to address Australia's skills and labour shortages. They include:

- An increase in the number of skilled migration places.
- Negotiations with other countries to expand the reciprocal Working Holiday visa program for young people.
- Changes to the Working Holiday visa program to enable people who undertake at least three months work in the construction sector in regional Australia to extend their 12 month working holiday visa by another year. (A similar arrangement already applies to those who work in primary industry in regional Australia).
- The appointment of an industry experts reference group to advise the Minister. The construction, major infrastructure, tourism and the resources sectors will be the focus of the External Reference Group.

Source: The Southern Cross Group newsletter. 25 February 2008.

## **IAEA Ball- 9<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2008**

OzCon organized tickets for members to attend the International Atomic Energy Agency Ball at the Hofburg Palace.



*Shall we dance?*



*Simon and Jeanette Hannaford with Rosalie Toomey*



*Carolyn Forbes and Gabrielle Costigan*

## An Essay on Manners

Manners: The prevailing customs, social conduct, and norms of a specific society, period, or group,

Growing up in Australia in the 50s, I learnt many things totally unsuited to life on “the Continent,” and to life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in general.

I learned to wait patiently in a queue.

I learned not to celebrate a victory in public, but to recognize your opponents’ good play.

I learned to understate one’s achievements.

I learned that children should be seen and not heard.

I learned to walk on the street side of a lady, to open the door for her and remain standing until she was seated.

Last week my wife Marianne and I went skiing in Lech in the Arlberg.

I learned hesitation is suicidal. It seemed to me that either the last person on the gondola would be eaten by dogs, or there was a huge prize for the first 20 people to load. I have been in more genteel rugby mauls.

I learned that in the lift lines unless you were in physical contact with the person in front, two or three twelve year olds would wedge themselves into any space in front of you, trampling your skis in the process. Fortunately keeping close contact was usually no problem, as the person behind you is usually pushing the middle of your back.

I learned queue jumping is an Olympic sport here. People would knock you down rather than say “excuse me”. While walking to the lifts, Marianne slipped and fell. Winded and in pain she lay there unable to move. The other skiers, annoyed at having their path blocked, pushed past, not one bothering to find out the seriousness of the fall.

I learned, on the slopes, that American Football style padding and helmet would be a more suitable than a chic ski suit.

I learned all Austrians think they ski like Hermann Meier. We skied with some friends from Vienna. They skied more like windscreen wipers than Hermann Meier. I guess carving has not made it to Vienna. They were psychotic, however, about not waiting. Heaven forbid we should lose our place in the lift line.

--By David Watson

## A week in Heiligenblut

Our semester holidays were spent skiing in perfect weather and great snow at Heiligenblut in sight of Grossglockner, Austria’s highest mountain.

As someone who gets tired of the unfriendliness of the Viennese, it was a welcome surprise to be reminded how nice and jovial other Austrians can be.

Although it was one of the busiest ski weeks of the year, the place never felt crowded and is highly recommended.

The picturesque church is one of the focal points of the village and, as my husband pointed out, better known for appearing in calendars and on jigsaw puzzles.

Heiligenblut is about 5 ½ hours from Vienna, in Kärnten and almost to Tyrol and Salzburg. We had a three bedroom apartment, which was great as it isn’t always easy to find and at €800 for the week, we thought was very reasonable. We had a kitchen and could cook our own meals, and there was a bakery delivery service each day.

The lift ticket was €160 for the six days and with each paying adult we got a free kids ticket (there may be an age restriction on that, but it worked for our two youngest).  
--By Amanda Grant



*Amanda and family*



*Heiligenblut with Grossglockner in the distance*

## Call for new Labor Government to look after Australians overseas

--By Brett Bayly

The Southern Cross Group (SCG) has called on the new Australian Labor Government to establish a special office within government to look after the interests of Australians living overseas.

In response to the government's invitation to Australians to make submissions for the 2008-09 Federal Budget, the SCG has called for the establishment in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet of a unit to be called The Australian Expatriate and Diaspora Office.

The submission says at any point in time there are about one million Australians living overseas. "They are Australia's global face and contribute each day to Australia's economic prosperity in a myriad of ways," the SCG says.

The SCG is a volunteer-run non-profit advocacy and support organization based in Brussels. It says previous Australian governments had failed to place any coordinated strategy across government policy areas to meet the needs and concerns of this special section of the Australian community.

The submission says that perhaps the greatest single issue facing Australia's overseas-based citizenry today is that of disenfranchisement from the Australian electoral system. The SCG estimates that as many as half a million adult Australian citizens based abroad have no right to vote in Australian federal elections or referenda because of a section of the Commonwealth Electoral Act which prevents them enrolling from abroad "if it is more than three years since they left Australia to live overseas."

The SCG says that prior to each federal election it hears from hundreds of disgruntled overseas Australians who are disenfranchised.

The role of the new government unit should be to:

- act as a focal point and coordinating body within government concerning various disparate policy areas of relevance to overseas Australians;
- develop and lead the implementation of the nation's first Australian Expatriate and Diaspora Policy;
- represent the interests of Australian citizens living overseas, and the broader Australian Diaspora to governments at the federal, state and territory level, and to the broad Australian community generally;
- to provide the Commonwealth Government and parliamentary committees with an expatriate impact statement on proposed legislation and/or administrative changes as appropriate; and

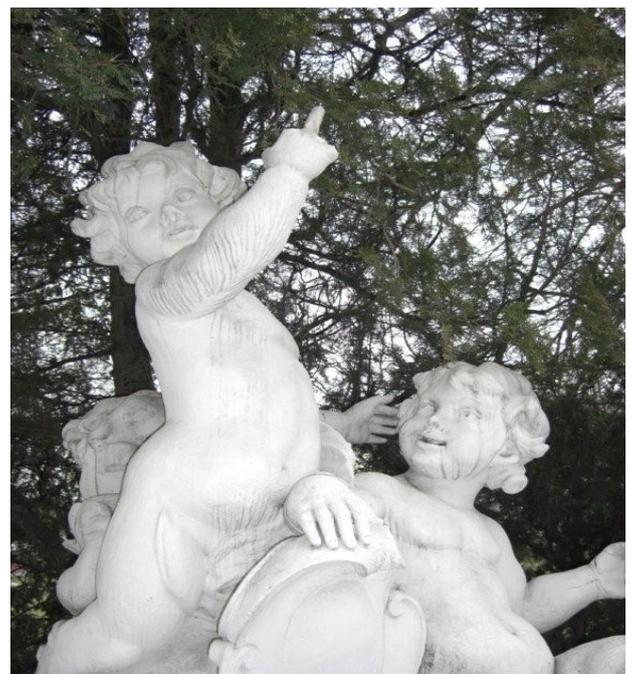
- as appropriate, to provide parliamentary committees and other entities established to review or examine matters of public interest, with input which reflects the interests of the Australian Diaspora.

You can contact the Southern Cross Group at [info@southern-cross-group.org](mailto:info@southern-cross-group.org)

Vandalism of Vienna's striking statues is not common and so this example of vandalism in the grounds of the Burggarten behind the Hofburg is somewhat striking.



*As is should be*



*Vandalism with clear intent*

## Aussie News Briefs

26 Feb - **CATE Blanchett** will join the former deputy prime minister Tim Fischer and the vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Glyn Davis, on the steering committee of the Federal Government's Australia 2020 Summit. The summit, to be held in Canberra on April 19 and 20, will be attended by 1000 people who will propose and discuss ideas about the challenges facing the nation. Professor Davis will chair the summit. Blanchett and nine others will each head a group of 100 people. Each group will have a field to discuss. Blanchett's group will have the theme "towards a creative Australia". (Sydney Morning Herald)

25 Feb - **THE timing could not have been worse** for residents of Rockhampton, in Central Queensland, with 200mm lashing the city just as its flooded Fitzroy River hit its peak. The storm cell hit Rockhampton at about 2am and continued dumping heavy rain for the next two to three hours, with some areas receiving up to 257mm, according to the Bureau of Meteorology. (Farm Weekly)

24 Feb - THE Australian Government will today officially launch its bid for the world's biggest party — **the 2018 soccer World Cup**. The cup is the largest event in world sport, attracting an audience of roughly half the world's population — and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd believes Australia can win it. "Winning the right to host the 2018 FIFA World Cup is a herculean task, but overcoming tough odds is what Australian football does best," Mr Rudd said yesterday. Australia's chances will be enhanced by the scrapping of FIFA's controversial "hosting rotation policy" after the 2014 tournament. (Age)

22 Feb - **AUSTRALIA may need to slash its greenhouse gas emissions** by as much as 90% by 2050 as part of a massive global effort to avert the most devastating effects of climate change, the Rudd Government has been warned. In an alarmingly pessimistic assessment of what is happening to the world, Canberra's chief adviser on climate change, Ross Garnaut, has declared that time is running out faster than almost anyone predicted. (Age)



*Vapor trails at sunset*

19 Feb - **BELGRADE is expected to recall the Serbian ambassador** to Australia, Milivoje Glisic, after Canberra became one of the first governments to recognize the independence of Kosovo. The federal government formally recognized Kosovo as an independent state, promising to soon consider the establishment of diplomatic relations. (AAP)

19 Feb - **KEVIN Rudd** has been swept to record-high personal approval ratings for a prime minister, outstripping Bob Hawke and John Howard, as an overwhelming majority of Australians come to support his apology to the Stolen Generations. According to the latest Newspoll, conducted exclusively for The Australian at the weekend, 69 per cent of voters said they supported the apology, including 46 per cent of Coalition supporters. (Australian)

19 Feb - **BRENDAN Nelson** risks death by opinion poll following figures showing the Opposition Leader is rating 9% as preferred prime minister. The single-digit figure will give heart to his opponents in the party, who want to replace Dr Nelson with Malcolm Turnbull. The looming nightmare for Dr Nelson is the string of by-elections that will follow the expected resignations of Peter Costello, Alexander Downer and the Nationals' Peter McGauran. (Age)

15 Feb - **MACKAY has been declared a disaster zone** after a record-breaking 625mm of rain fell in one day, swamping the north Queensland city. The 24-hour downpour to 9am (AEST) today was twice the average for the entire month for the city. Residents have been warned to watch for crocodiles after several sightings today. (Courier Mail)

13 Feb - **AUSTRALIA has offered a historic apology to the Stolen Generations**, with Kevin Rudd proposing a bipartisan 'war cabinet' to improve the lives of indigenous families. The new commission's first task will be to improve Aboriginal housing and, if successful, it will move on to the symbolic act of recognition of Aboriginal Australians in the Constitution. A packed Parliament House erupted in applause today at the end of the Prime Minister's speech pledging to "turn a new page" in history. Some Aboriginal leaders, including Lowitja O'Donoghue, wept as the apology was offered. (Australian)

11 Feb - **TORRENTIAL rain across eastern Australia** as well as in the west has delivered large parts of the country from the drought. While the rewards are yet to flow into farmers' pockets, some are experiencing their best season in decades. NSW Premier Morris Iemma said yesterday that January's drenching rains would have the two-pronged benefit of easing pressure on farmers and stabilising grocery prices. (Australian)



The  
Double  
Bass  
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### Performances with Australian Artists

From the Australian Events Calendar as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Australian Embassy Vienna

<p><b>5 March</b> 8:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Oliver Bolch - Australia</b></p>	<p>Hofsteigsaal 6923 Lauterach Ph: 02236 48803-15 Email: <a href="mailto:bolch@oliver-bolch.at">bolch@oliver-bolch.at</a> <a href="http://www.oliver-bolch.at">www.oliver-bolch.at</a></p>	<p>Join photographer Oliver Bolch on his tour through the Australian wilderness.</p>
<p><b>11, 12, 13 March</b> 8:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Lantana</b></p>	<p>Kasino am Schwarzenbergplatz Am Schwarzenbergplatz 1 1030 Wien Ph: 01 - 51444-4830 <a href="http://www.burgtheater.at">www.burgtheater.at</a></p>	<p>Australian author Andrew Bovell's acclaimed drama in a new adaption for the Austrian stage at the Kasino am Schwarzenbergplatz.</p>
<p><b>12 March</b> 7:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Public Reading by Elliot Perlman</b></p>	<p>Oesterreichische Gesellschaft fuer Literatur Herrengasse 5 1010 Wien Ph: 01-533 8159 or 533 0864 Email: <a href="mailto:office@ogl.at">office@ogl.at</a> <a href="http://www.ogl.at">www.ogl.at</a></p>	<p>Australian author Elliot Perlman from Melbourne will be reading from his book "Seven Types of Ambiguity" which was shortlisted for Australia's most prestigious literary award, the Miles Franklin Literary Award, in 2004.</p>
<p><b>20 March</b> 7:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Gerhard Eggenhofer – "Australien"</b></p>	<p>Urania Mittlerer Saal Uraniastrasse 1 1010 Wien Ph: 712 6191-0 Email: <a href="mailto:office@urania-wien.at">office@urania-wien.at</a> <a href="http://www.urania.vhs.at">www.urania.vhs.at</a></p>	<p>From Sydney to Darwin and from Kakadu National Park to Fraser Island: Join Gerhard Eggenhofer on his visual tour through Australia.</p>

Unless otherwise specified, all telephone numbers are in Vienna

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[www.australien-lifestyle.de](http://www.australien-lifestyle.de)

[www.virtualvienna.net](http://www.virtualvienna.net)

[www.australian-embassy.at](http://www.australian-embassy.at)

[www.ninemsn.com.au](http://www.ninemsn.com.au)

[www.kids-days.com/Wien/index\\_wien.html](http://www.kids-days.com/Wien/index_wien.html)

[www.expatsconsulting.com](http://www.expatsconsulting.com)

[www.homesick.com.au](http://www.homesick.com.au)

[www.viennababiesclub.com](http://www.viennababiesclub.com)

<http://www.abc.net.au/vod/news/>

[www.australianaonline.com.au](http://www.australianaonline.com.au)

[www.news.com.au](http://www.news.com.au)

[www.expatriates.com](http://www.expatriates.com)

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