

FREMANTLE HERALD

Volume 18 N^o 44
Saturday November 3, 2007

Fremantle's own INDEPENDENT newspaper
Letterboxed to Fremantle, Beaconsfield, East Fremantle, Hilton, North Fremantle,
O'Connor, Samson, South Fremantle and White Gum Valley

Project SafeCom's

FREMANTLE ELECTION FORUM

Fremantle Town Hall
Thursday 8th November 2007
7pm Sharp

Admission "by generous donation." Drinks Available

Putting Human Rights on the Agenda

In this Fremantle Town Hall event, we line up the candidates for the federal seat of Fremantle and for the Senate and ask them how they intend to represent a full human rights platform. Let's see what they come up with...

No, we're not dreaming... It is entirely possible to have a society where we, as electors, demand that aspiring politicians and candidates bring social justice policies, grounded in human rights foundations, to our Federal Parliament on behalf of our electorate.

Special Feature

Michael Winterbottom's award winning docu-drama
- The Road to Guantanamo -
Winner of the Silver Bear, Berlin • British Independent Film Award...
and other awards.

More information is available at

www.safecom.org.au/freo-forum07



FREMANTLE
Herald



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Looking down the pork barrel

by BRENDAN FOSTER

REFUGEE advocates Project SafeCom want to put human rights centre stage in the federal election and have organised a local forum involving Fremantle candidates.

"We want to line up the polities for the seat of Freo and for the senate of the major parties and the small parties and ask them how they intend to represent a full human rights forum," SafeCom founder Jack Smit said.

The meeting called Pork Barreling on Human Rights will be held at Fremantle's Town Hall on November 8. Mr Smit said it was possible to have an ethical government that would bring human rights to the centre of politics.

"The Liberal's attitude towards human rights is an absolute disgrace and any discussion with them, they run a mile. I spoke to [Freo seat hopeful] John Jamieson and he said they couldn't make it."

Mr Jamieson said he wasn't able to attend because of other urgent matters.

Mr Smit said the woman who wanted to step into former Freo MP Carmen Lawrence's shoes, Melissa Parke, would be attending but he got the impression she was "reluctant" as Labor could come under Greens' fire for supporting the government's Pacific Solution of detaining refugees offshore.

Greens federal candidate Steven Walker said he'd be attending the pow wow, adding the Libs had failed to meet simple human rights expectations and Labor had "simply fallen into line" on the Pacific Solution.

herald letters

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Political pacifier

IT is regrettable that the *Herald* - a paper Project SafeCom highly respects, supports and endorses - has misquoted me ('Looking down the pork barrel,' *Herald* 3/11/07).

While Project SafeCom has long had serious concern about the Labor party's 'soft or no opposition' to the Coalition government's shocking refugee laws and treatment of asylum seekers, both in and after having been detained, I am fully aware the ALP has ended, completely and radically, its support for the so-called Pacific Solution where asylum seekers on arrival are transported to other countries and held in camps on Nauru or on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, and that the party has given a new commitment to this opposition policy at the 2007 Darling Harbour Policy Convention.

Locking asylum seekers away in prison-like detention camps is always deplorable and runs counter to international law and to what we promise under international conventions, so it remains of extreme concern and great disappointment that Labor has not utterly rejected locking people up in the new \$500 million Christmas Island refugee jail, built over the last couple of years, but instead supports this policy. However, to be fair to Labor and remain

factual, this is not called the Pacific Solution, and I did not suggest in any way to the *Herald* that Labor was supporting this 'solution'.

Jack H Smit

Project SafeCom Inc.

Address supplied, Narrogin

Editor says: Jack, we have checked the journalist's notebook and stand by our story, however we thank you for your amplification.

Policy points

I WAS disappointed to read the article about the Project SafeCom human rights forum ('Looking down the pork barrel,' *Herald* 3/11/07) because it was wrong on two points.

Firstly, I was among the first candidates to say that I would attend the November 8 forum [at the Fremantle town hall] and I never expressed any reluctance about doing so. Indeed, with my background as a UN lawyer I am always happy to discuss these issues. I have attended every forum in the course of this campaign, while the Liberal candidate has attended none.

Secondly, it is utterly wrong to suggest that Labor supports the Pacific Solution. Indeed, the current Labor federal policy platform regarding refugees commits Labor to abolishing the Pacific Solution and to making several other improvements to the government's woeful and inhumane system.

In future I would be happy for the *Herald* to check Labor policy with me before printing statements from [Project SafeCom's] Jack Smit and other candidates which have the potential to mislead voters. Let's have a campaign in Fremantle based on a fair and accurate discussion of policy.

Melissa Parke

Federal ALP candidate for Fremantle
Preston Point Rd,
East Fremantle