

Leaders must do more than iron shirts

Women's issues crucial: poll

Australia's political leaders will have to do more than iron their own shirts to win the women's vote at the next federal election, a women's economics group warned yesterday.

The Women's Economic Think Tank senior associate Eva Cox said women are looking for a sense of optimism and a vision of a more just society.

"My particular view is that the women's vote is not there for simply buying," Ms Cox said.

"It's not a case of a little bit of this or a little bit of that or a bit extra." Women did want more government money spent on child care and health services but the polls showed they were disillusioned with both major parties, she said.

Ms Cox was speaking during a break in a three-day conference being held at the ANU on the public influences which shape private lives.

She said there had been gains under Labor but there also had been losses, including cuts to the public service — a big employer of women — which put pressure on schools and hospitals.

And the Opposition was offering further cuts.

"What [the Opposition leader John] Hewson is trying to do is give an image of a new Australia but I don't think it's an image women feel



Eva Cox: women looking for a more just and equitable society.

very comfortable with," Ms Cox said. "It's an image which is about cutting back government expenditure, being tough on the unemployed, tough on sole parents and increasing the costs of shopping."

She said the Opposition may be about decreasing taxes but that won't be as good for women, especially women out of the workforce.

"I think women are looking for a more just and equitable society that

gives them a sense of purpose and a sense of direction," Ms Cox said.

"There's not a sense of hope and optimism. There's a sense of pessimism and I think what [the Prime Minister Paul] Keating has to create is a sense of optimism within a fairer society."

Dr Hewson and Mr Keating traded insults last week as each sought to portray himself as more sensitive than the other to women's issues.

Ms Cox said unemployment was a major issue for women as they watched their husbands and children lose their jobs or not find one, or lost their own jobs or had their hours cut.

She said women also would be worried about how they would fare under the Opposition's proposed enterprise bargaining as women generally were not good advocates on their own behalf.

They also feared maternity leave provisions might be threatened by a non-centralised wages system.

"I think any government that tampers with the very minimal maternity leave provisions we've got now needs their head read," Ms Cox said.

"If women have to make choices about hanging on to their jobs or having children the evidence is fairly clear that in many cases they will hang on to their jobs."

Slashing of funding an option

HOBART: Sports groups could have their funding slashed or even scrapped if they failed to do more for women, the federal Minister for Arts, Sport and Environment, Ros Kelly, said in Hobart yesterday.

Mrs Kelly said withholding federal funding was a definite option to force sports groups to ensure women could have equal involvement in sport as players, coaches, administrators and officials.

(The Federal Government gives more than \$30 million a year to sporting groups and associations.)

Mrs Kelly made the comments after launching the Australian Women in Sport and Recreation Strategy 1992-94, an initiative established by the federal, state and territory governments.

"The key thing is directed at national [sporting] organisations to ensure that they do have a policy to give women a fair go," Mrs Kelly said.

"And obviously we would look at

funding sports groups to ensure they include that in their development plans."

Mrs Kelly admitted there were only a few sports groups which had a negative attitude to women and she declined to name them.

But she warned that the Government would not hesitate to stop their funding if attitudes remained unchanged.

"Of course you can't be stupid about that," Mrs Kelly said.

"There are some sports like rugby league where there's not a big pressure to develop a women's component."

"And I don't want some of the bizarre radio announcers to go off about me making rugby league or rugby union support, women in sport."

Mrs Kelly said the strategy was directed at trying to give young girls the same opportunities as boys, particularly teenagers.

The policy was long-term and all

sporting groups were being advised of the guidelines, she said.

Among the plans outlined in the strategy was an expansion of government programs to get more women into top-level jobs in sports administration, coaching, journalism, sports science and sports medicine.

Another was to establish childcare facilities at sporting venues and launch more promotional campaigns to encourage girls to keep on playing sport after their teenage years.

The strategy said women from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders would be encouraged to play sport by educational groups which would implement participation programs.

Providing work-based sporting opportunities, particularly for migrant women, also would be encouraged.

A major focus would be ensuring the future quality and quantity of media coverage of women in sport.



Mouse trappers, at Lascelles, Victoria, stand proudly behind their catch during the 1917 mouse plague.

CSIRO out to eradicate house mice

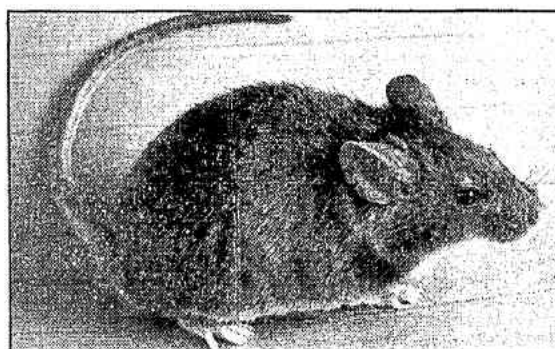
By IAN WARDEN

The house mouse, *Mus musculus*, having enjoyed a charmed existence in Australia since its arrival from Europe (probably with the hapless human vermin of the First Fleet) is about to be subjected to CSIRO experiments designed to limit its plague-producing fecundity.

Dr Grant Singleton, of the CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology's Rodent Pest Control research program, said yesterday that a roundworm had been released on the Darling Downs with the expectation that it would infect house mice and inhibit the amazing breeding performances of the species.

If it works it will be only the second successful biological control of mammals; the first was the use of the myxoma virus to control rabbits.

And if it works it will be a godsend. In Australia, and especially in the bush, house mice have been known, in major outbreaks, to do between \$50 million and \$100 million in damage to crops, and, by chewing through electrical wiring, to farm machinery.



The typical grey mouse that inhabits Australian homes.

Their wholesale invasions of homes can also cause what Dr Singleton calls "social stress" which is impossible to quantify in dollar terms but which is known to drive harassed people from their infested homes.

Myxomatosis is caused by a virus but the biological agent being used on the mice is a species of roundworm found, when it infests the liv-

ers of mice and is transferred from animal to animal in the burrows, to reduce the number of litters a female will have in a year.

Females may normally have four litters a year but when infested with the worms might have only two, or even die.

But the roundworms do not seem to pose any threat to Australia's 50 species of native mice. They are known to have been alive and well in Australia for a very long time and research seems to show that our native mice are not vulnerable to them.

Dr Singleton said the roundworm presented no threat to native animals that eat house mice, such as the black-shouldered kites that are a feature of ACT skies and that dine almost exclusively on mice.

The eggs of the roundworm, laid in the liver of the mice, will just sit there unless they are galvanised into action by the humidity of the mice burrows where there are maddening crowds of mice. A black shouldered kite that digests the liver of a mouse will void the eggs of the roundworm and suffer no ill-effects.

The Darling Downs experiments

will take two years to evaluate.

Dr Singleton could offer no prospect that Australia would ever be wiped entirely clean of *Mus musculus* but hoped that the use of the roundworms, perhaps eventually in conjunction with computer models which will enable the prediction of potential mouse plagues, will reduce the ranks and ravages of the species.

'Forgetful' divers duck \$3m taxes

MELBOURNE: The Australian Taxation Office has uncovered a new "bottom of the harbour" tax dodge during an audit of the abalone fishing industry.

The just-completed audit covered 45 divers and netted \$3.2 million in unpaid tax and \$2.4 million in penalties, Melbourne Taxation Office deputy commissioner Ken Collins said.

Mr Collins said the audit found divers failed to include in their annual tax returns cash cheque payments totalling \$5.4 million for the sale of abalone.

Business audits spokesman Andrew Lowe said other omissions brought the total to almost \$7 million, with three divers each "forgetting" to declare more than \$500,000 in taxable income between 1983 and 1989.

Mr Lowe said the tax office made adjustments averaging \$170,000 a diver and sent the divers average tax bills of \$79,000 for the six-year period.

Fines averaging \$61,000 were also imposed on the fishermen.

Mr Collins said he hoped the project, begun in 1988 after a similar operation in Tasmania, would improve the abalone industry's compliance with taxation laws.

The clothing and superannuation industries are currently under audit by the office.

Confidence unchanged

The level of consumer confidence barely changed between March and June, according to a poll published in the latest *Bulletin* magazine.

The AGB Australia poll shows 21 per cent of those surveyed in June felt they were better off than a year ago, the same figure as March.

Those who felt they were worse off than a year before dropped two points from March to 36 per cent in June while 43 per cent — up two points — said they were in the same position.

The number of people who felt they would be better off in the next three months rose from 20 per cent in March to 22 per cent in June, but those who felt they would be worse off also rose, from 16 to 17 per cent.

The long-term outlook was more optimistic. Those who felt they would be better off in 12 months' time increased from 34 per cent in March to 36 per cent in June.

Victoria had the highest percentage of people who felt their position had worsened.

Aussie feet too big for their boots: expert

SYDNEY: Australians should be more thoughtful about their feet and stop jamming them into shoes which don't fit.

US footwear expert Tom Brunick also says women should give high-heeled shoes a big miss.

"I realise women have to wear them because of fashion and maybe because of expectations in the business world, but you are really doing yourself no favour," he said in Sydney yesterday.

If women must persist with high-heeled shoes they should wear them only on special occasions, as regular use could cause spraying of the forefoot, inflammation, corns and deformities of the toes.

Mr Brunick, former running coach and now director of a shoe testing centre for The Athlete's Foot chain of stores, said surveys had shown 90 per cent of people wore their shoes too small.

This was because most people assumed their foot size had not changed since they were 18, although feet tended to elongate and spread with age. People became used to a snug fit which did not leave room for feet to spread under pressure of walking or running.

"I have always said that if everybody had to show their feet to their fiancée there might not be many marriages. People don't take very good care of their feet," he said.

ACT building laws tightened up

By HUGH LAMBERTON

Significant changes to building design and siting approvals will come into effect next week, requiring public notification of some projects and allowing third-party appeals.

Residential applications which do not comply with existing guidelines and all commercial applications will also have to pay a processing fee.

Although most of the changes were passed by the Legislative Assembly in December as part of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act, the new requirements come into effect next Thursday.

Legislation allowing the Government to charge fees for the processing of building design and siting applications was passed last month.

The fees will be based on the

Govt introduces processing fees

value of a project and set at two levels depending on whether public notification is required.

For example, a \$100,000 commercial or residential project requiring public notification will attract a fee of \$100 plus \$2 for each extra \$1000 in value.

Projects valued at between \$100,000 and \$500,000 requiring notification will cost \$300 plus \$1.25 for each \$1000 above \$100,000. Projects worth more than \$100 million will attract a fee of \$54,000.

Fees for commercial projects which do not involve public notification will be half the above rates.

Applications which do not comply with existing guidelines will have to be made public.

Proponents will have to ad-

vertise the proposal in *The Canberra Times*, notify neighbours by letter and place a sign on the site.

Pamphlets issued by the ACT Planning Authority say a fee of \$200 will be charged for signs where public notification is required.

Where applications have been subject to public notification, and objections have been received, approval by the authority can be subsequently appealed against by objectors to the original application.

The final point for appeals will be the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Applicants will continue to be able to appeal against refusals and conditional approvals. All applications will be put on a reg-

ister which is available for public inspection.

If applications were submitted under the old rules and have not been finalised, they will need to be resubmitted in accordance with the new legislation.

Applications for the building of single houses, garages and outbuildings currently lodged at building controller offices in Tuggeranong and Civic can still be lodged there but must be accompanied by a design and siting application and an extra copy of the drawings.

Applications for all other development proposals, such as commercial, industrial and medium-density housing, should be lodged at the Department of Environment, Land and Planning shopfront, 220 Northbourne Avenue, Braddon.

Witness says he may have made mistake

ADELAIDE: A Ukrainian witness at the criminal hearing of alleged war criminal Mikolay Berezowsky admitted yesterday that he could have made a mistake when he said Berezowsky had helped the SS round up several Jews in 1942.

Witness Kazimir Lipinskiy, 77, told the Adelaide Magistrates Court he saw Berezowsky and two Nazi SS soldiers leading the Jews on to the street in the village of Gnivan.

But under cross-examination yesterday from defence lawyer Michael David, QC, he said he could have been mistaken.

The court also heard that in the past year Mr Lipinskiy had given several different accounts of events to Australian war crimes investigators.

On Tuesday, Mr Lipinskiy identified Berezowsky in court as the head of police in Gnivan during World War II, and said he lived on the same street as the accused.

But in Ukraine last year, Mr Lipinskiy failed to identify Berezowsky from a group of 12 different photographs taken from Australian immigration records in 1949.

Berezowsky, a 78-year-old Adelaide

pensioner, is charged with being involved in the murder of 102 Jews near Gnivan between March and July, 1942.

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