



The Don Chipp Foundation

Newsletter

Edition #1, April 2006

The Don Chipp Foundation is an independent research body affiliated with the Australian Democrats. Don Chipp, as the founder of the Australian Democrats, vowed to 'keep the bastards honest'. The Foundation aims to retain that basic premise through the promotion of fiercely independent research and public debate.

Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the first newsletter for the Don Chipp Foundation. The Foundation is an independent research body affiliated with the Australian Democrats. Part of our mission states "Don Chipp, as the founder of the Australian Democrats, vowed to 'Keep the bastards honest'.

The Foundation aims to retain that basic premise through the promotion of fiercely independent research and public debate. We seek to challenge as well as to inform current mainstream views on issues of great importance to the Australian community."

To this end we organise public forums, seminars and provide small grants to organizations and community groups in order to contribute to the public discourse on matters that impact on how Australians live their lives.

Some examples of our work can be found in this newsletter and also on our webpage. We have made contributions to debates on the

treatment of refugees, human rights and mental health, the impact of the 'welfare to work' legislation and many other topics.

We will endeavour to keep the community informed of our activities through this newsletter and through our online access. Should you wish to know more about the association please visit our website or contact our coordinator. All details are contained in this newsletter.

Happy reading,

Dr Nina Burridge
Chairperson

Don Chipp Foundation



THIS EDITION:

- ◆ **Interview with the leader of the Australian Democrats, Senator Lyn Allison**
- ◆ **The National Foundation for Australian Women**
- ◆ **Janine Haines Biographical Project - Dr Jenny Stock**
- ◆ **Small Grants Program 2006 - applications now open**
- ◆ **DCF Public Forum - 'The Role of the Senate' (Melbourne)**
- ◆ **About the Don Chipp Foundation, Mission and History**

The Don Chipp Foundation gratefully acknowledges funding received from the Department of Finance and Administration.

The Don Chipp Foundation

PO Box 407

Gladesville NSW 2111

email: coordinator@donchippfoundation.org.au

web: www.donchippfoundation.org.au

INTERVIEW: Senator Lyn Allison, Leader of the Australian Democrats

Lyn Allison has been a Senator since 1996 and is the Democrat spokesperson on the portfolios of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury, Health & Ageing, Energy and Resources, Transport, Schools and Training and Heritage. Senator Allison is also the Parliamentary leader of the Australian Democrats and a Director of the Don Chipp Foundation. Below she talks to the Don Chipp Foundation about the challenges ahead for the Party in 2006

DCF: *It has already been a dramatic start to the new year. What do you see as the big challenges facing the Australian Democrats in general, and yourself personally, as leader in 2006?*

LA: The more concrete challenges are; electing Democrats to the upper house in the November Victorian State election, boosting our numbers in all divisions so we easily meet state government membership requirements, bringing our Federal polling up several percentage points by the end of 2006 and the very big challenge of raising funds to help us contest the 2007 election.

The Party administration will need to be in better shape, and senators and members more successful in getting the message out that we are still a party to be trusted to be the third political force in this country.

The Federal team's particular challenge is to demonstrate our relevance in the Senate and to deliver on progressive ideas. Only then will we win the positive media coverage necessary to persuade voters of our importance to democracy and accountability!

DCF: *Are there particular issues you would like to focus on in the next year or so, maybe some you haven't had an opportunity to fully address yet?*



“... we are still a party to be trusted to be the third political force in this country.”

LA: Where to start? Mental health - the findings of the inquiry; women's reproductive health, post RU486; greenhouse - renewable energy and alternative transport fuels; water - reuse and conservation; tax - raising the tax free threshold, broadening the tax base, indexing to inflation; infrastructure and technology investment; children - early childhood development protection from abuse and childcare; Indigenous disadvantage; stem cells; family law; bill of rights; multiculturalism; media ownership; separation of church and state

DCF: *Being a Member of Parliament is a notoriously challenging job. Is there someone or something you particularly draw energy and inspiration from?*

LA: No particular person, but I am inspired by many people around me - colleagues, staff, and members who are working to ensure the Party survives.

DCF: *Besides being leader of the Australian Democrats you are also a Director of the Don Chipp Foundation. What do you see as the role of such think tanks in Australian cultural life and where would you like to see the Foundation headed in the future?*

LA: I would like to see the DCF help us to develop visionary ideas. A progressive agenda can be difficult to develop when you are enmeshed in the day-to-day demands of the parliament. DCF has a role, too, in better linking the party with stimulating, like-minded organisations.

About Don Chipp and the Australian Democrats

In 1977, Don Chipp, a member of the House of Representatives and former Minister, who had resigned from the Liberal Party, was approached by the people of the Australia Party, the New Liberal Movement and by other concerned individuals to hold a series of public meetings across Australia with a view to forming a new party.

The motivating force for this was a desire for a party where ordinary people could have real say on policies and directions. After an overwhelming response to the meetings, a resolution was passed unanimously to form a new reformist party, and the 'Australian Democrats' was officially launched. The same year, Australian Democrats Senators were first elected to the Australian Parliament.

ARTICLE: Marie Coleman, National Foundation for Australian Women

The National Foundation for Australian Women was one of six recipients of a small grant from the Don Chipp Foundation in 2005. Bellow the organisation's chair, Marie Coleman, talks about the events leading up to their project and how the Foundation has used their research to advocate on behalf of women.

During mid- 2005, as many Australian women's organisations became aware of the details of proposals by the Commonwealth Government to make major changes to the income security system (Welfare to Work) and to industrial relations (Workchoices), a consortium of over 60 national bodies formed to explore the implications of these for women.

The National Foundation for Australian Women (www.nfaw.org) became the lead agency for this process. After an initial Canberra workshop where expert presentations were made to organisation delegates, it became clear that without pre-judging issues, or taking politically partisan positions, there was the potential for particular groups of women to experience seriously adverse effects. NFAW, in association with its partner agencies, began to raise funds to allow for some research to be commissioned.

With the first tranche of money raised from women's groups and individuals, we commissioned the National Centre for Economic and Social Modelling (NATSEM) at the University of Canberra (<http://www.natsem.canberra.edu.au/>) to carry out a modelling study of the impact of the proposed changes for sole parents. NATSEM was able to have the University of Canberra provide matching funds to those of the NFAW, which expanded the scope of the study.

We then approached the Don Chipp Foundation for a grant, to enable us to do a similar study for people with a disability.

Pending the decision of the Foundation, and given the increasing urgency to provide independent factual material to parliamentarians and others, we were able to raise a smaller sum of money, and to proceed with a more limited analysis by NATSEM. Once again, the UC matched our funds.

As the parliamentary debate grew even closer, we then approached the Foundation and received approval to use the offered funds instead to have a third NATSEM study, one that analysed possible alternative options to those of the Government, and their distributional impacts. All three NATSEM Reports to the NFAW are on both the NATSEM and NFAW websites.

We did not persuade the Government to change its proposals. However, we did clarify the future impacts of the changes on the incomes of those affected, and raise public critical awareness of the extent to which the effective marginal tax rates on those seeking to move to work from welfare would mean their suffering major losses of income.

The subsequent continuing debate on taxation now always refers to the disincentive effects of the interaction of the Income Tax system and the systems of income and means testing in the welfare system. The gift of the Don Chipp Foundation was important to us in the women's organisations in commissioning research to shed light on a complex subject.

Marie Coleman
Chair, NFAW
Social Policy Committee

About the Don Chipp Foundation

Twenty-five years after the founding of the Australian Democrats it was agreed to establish a research foundation and to name it after the Party's first parliamentary leader Don Chipp.

The Foundation is committed to research and public debate on Australian Democrats principles of fairness, freedom and the future. It will support research on environmental, social, cultural, economic and political policies to enhance the principles of social justice, life-long learning, individual enterprise, participatory democracy with open and responsible government, & honesty, tolerance and compassion.

The DCF Board members are: Dr Nina Burrige (Chair), James S Dunn, Dr Michael Macklin, Dr Jenis Stock, Senator Andrew Bartlett, Senator Lyn Allison, Jason Grossman

Dr Jenny Stock is a Director of the Don Chipp Foundation. Below she writes about her plans to document the life of Australia's first female leader of a political party – Janine Haines. Dr. Stock also invites anyone with a memory or anecdote about how Janine Haines touched their life, to contact her with their story.



The Democrats' second leader, Janine Haines, died in November 2004 aged 59. Although extremely well known in the 1980s in South Australia especially, she faded somewhat from the public mind after 1990, and

her death came as a shock to those unaware of her debilitating final illness. Although in due course she is sure to be the subject of a scholarly and definitive biography, this project is a start.

My reasons for beginning a biography at this time are two-fold. First, her death is recent enough for there to be many people about with memories of her in all phases of her life. Secondly, as a recently retired academic still occupied with editing and biographical research on South Australian politicians, I was offered the opportunity and took it. In response to promptings from colleagues at the University of Adelaide where I am a Visiting Research Fellow, I applied in 2005 for a small grant from the recently revived Fred Jones Scholarship for Biography to start work on a biography of Janine Haines.

For some years one of my major research interests has been the Australian Democrats, and I am well aware of Janine's importance as a Democrat leader and as an inspiration for so many other women observing and involved in public and political life. The grant-making body, the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, thought it a worthy project, bearing in mind no doubt that one of her positions after leaving the Senate was as a colourful member of the Council of the University of Adelaide.

I intend taking a year's leave from editing the *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia* in 2007 to give myself more unbroken time. In the meantime, an appeal through the Democrats' *National Journal* has resulted in several key people responding and expressing a willingness to be interviewed. My husband, Dr Herbert Stock, is assisting me to compile an extensive archive of material relating to Janine, and in using the advance voice-recording equipment purchased with the grant. All contributions to the project – audio, written,

documentation etc – will be logged for use in the final manuscript. A book is the aim. Anyone with anecdotes and insights is invited to contact me. It helps to have hard copy to file, so emails, email attachments, letters, faxes, copies of speeches and interviews etc are most welcome. As well as Janine's character and personality, I am particularly interested in the formative influences that made her the person she was. In turn, and even more significant, is the influence she had on people, institutions and events.

Dr Jenny Tilby Stock

jenny.stock@adelaide.edu.au
ph: (08) 8303 5755 fax (08) 370 3713
School of Politics & History,
University of Adelaide, SA 5005.

Upcoming Events

Small Grants Program 2005

In 2005 the Don Chipp Foundation awarded \$25,000 in small grants to community groups and researchers. For a full list of grant recipients and details of their research project please visit the Don Chipp Foundation web site at <http://www.donchippfoundation.org.au/dcf-grants.htm>

2005 grant recipients will be presenting progress reports and research findings at a one-day seminar to be held in Melbourne on Friday September 29. The forum is a free community event and interested parties are welcome to participate. The seminar venue is yet to be confirmed; however, further information about the day will be available on the Foundation's web site and also in forthcoming newsletters.

Small Grants Program 2006

The 2006 small grants program has been launched and applications are now being received. The grants program supports researchers and community groups with funding of up to \$5,000. For information about the program and application forms go to the Don Chipp Foundation web site. Applications close on Friday May 12th.

Public Forums

The first Don Chipp Foundation public forum for 2006 will be held in Melbourne on Saturday May 20th between 2:30 and 3:30pm.

The forum is being held in conjunction with the Australian Democrats national conference. The forum will focus on the role of the Senate and the speakers are Dr. Jenny Stock, Senator Andrew Bartlett and Dr. Nic Economou. The forum is being held at 9 Darling Street, South Yarra, Melbourne. This is a free community event and everyone is welcome.