



DON CHIPP FOUNDATION
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The Don Chipp Foundation

Newsletter

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

Dear friends and supporters

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2007. We were saddened last year by the passing of the Hon. Don Chipp – a man who lived up to the slogan of 'Keeping the Bastards Honest' and who truly believed in the principles of honesty, tolerance and compassion. His legacy will live on through this Foundation - so we have much to do in the coming months.

I begin by welcoming on to the DCF Board two new directors - Professor Garth Nettheim and Ms Juliet Chipp.



Prof Nettheim is a highly regarded academic and legal expert who has written extensively on local and international human rights issues.



Juliet Chipp, a lawyer, maintains the connection with Don's family and will bring a young person's perspective to the board.

We are most honoured to have both of them involved in our work.

This year promises to be an exciting one for all of us involved in community-based issues. With a Federal election due to be held in October or November all the major stakeholders are busy organising their schedule of events for the year.

Our calendar includes several important events. The Janine Haines lecture series will be held in Perth in May and Brisbane later in the year. I have been informed that the key speaker at the Perth event is to be renowned barrister and activist, Mr Julian Burnside, QC .

We plan to hold a number of main events, including a commemoration of 30 years of progressive politics in Australia's Senate, and highlighting the work of the Australian Democrats and Don's achievements.

Please be alert to our emails and notices on upcoming events.

Best regards,

Dr Nina Burridge
Chairperson

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

INTERVIEW: Juliet Chipp

It was with great sorrow that the Don Chipp Foundation Board learned of Don Chipp's passing last year. Following that sad event the Board extended an invitation to Don Chipp's elder daughter from his second marriage to become a member of the Don Chipp Foundation Board. Juliet accepted that invitation. Below are some of her thoughts about joining the Don Chipp Foundation and her commitment to continuing the legacy her father established.

DCF: You must feel very proud to be carrying on your father's legacy in this way. What contribution would you like to see the Don Chipp Foundation make to the community?

JC: I cannot be more proud of what the Don Chipp Foundation has achieved and will achieve in the future. Even though Dad is no longer around, his spirit of honesty, tolerance and compassion will live on through the Foundation. He will no longer be able to speak out against government, but I know the Foundation will carry on his legacy and continue to contribute through significant and valuable debate on policy.



After Dad passed away, I realised that he would not be around to see any of the major milestones of my life. Being on the Board of the Foundation is one of those milestones of which I know he would have been proud. Knowing that I belong to a group that will achieve so much for Australia in his memory means the world to me.

DCF: The Don Chipp Foundation Board is made up of a diverse range of people. What has been the most interesting aspect for you, since becoming a Board member?

JC: It is an honour to be part of a board of individuals who have such commitment to justice and equality for all Australians. I feel privileged to work with such esteemed and well respected people. Being 24, I'm a bit in awe of the achievements and experience of the board members. It has been great to have access to their opinions and advice.

DCF: You must have been exposed to a great deal of political discussion in your life. What are the issues that are concerning you at present and how would you like to see them progress?

JC: We are so lucky to live in Australia. It disappoints me to hear that some Australians are becoming self-interested and are losing compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. It seems that empathy has been replaced by distrust, selfishness and prejudice. The fear post-September 11 is palpable, and this fear is breeding intolerance. The civil liberties of Australians are being infringed in the name of "national security" and Australians' willingness of to accept this justification is frightfully concerning. I hope we can all pursue an age of equality, compassion and tolerance not just for our fellow Australians but for all human beings.

DCF: On a personal note, what contribution would you like to make to public life over the next five years?

JC: My dad always said there is nothing nobler than helping those who cannot help themselves. I believe through my own personal endeavours and through the Don Chipp Foundation we can draw Australia's attention to the plight of those less fortunate by giving them a real voice in the public arena, not accepting the way things are but arguing for real change to make Australia a country of which we can remain proud.

The members of the Foundation will focus their efforts on making sure that Australians have access to independent and well-researched alternative opinions. Democracy demands that individuals have access to all the facts and opinion which will enable them to make an informed decision. Without this information, public opinion can so easily be manipulated by government.

The most important thing we seek to do is, as an old wrinkly man once said, to "keep the bastards honest".

"Democracy demands that individuals have access to all the facts and opinion which will enable them to make an informed decision."

ARTICLE: James Dunn on East Timor

In 2006, Don Chipp Foundation Director James Dunn travelled to East Timor to lend his support and expertise in the face of the young nation's ongoing political troubles. James has had a long association with East Timor and is also a passionate campaigner for human rights. James spoke to the Don Chipp Foundation about why he believes protecting human rights internationally must be a priority.

DCF: At the end of last year the Foundation hosted a public lecture to commemorate 40 years of international human rights law. You were instrumental in that event. Can you say a few words about why you thought it important to acknowledge that milestone?



JD: It was important to acknowledge the 40th anniversary of the UN's launching of the covenants on civil and political rights, and, economic, social and cultural rights because these enshrine the standards that Don

Chipp stood for, a subject we discussed on several occasions in the seventies.

Most politicians have a loose and imprecise view of what is the substance of democracy. These two covenants, which have been ratified by Australia, set out the rules and standards that provide the substance and measure of a functioning democratic system, from the point of view of ordinary citizens.

The covenants therefore have a special reference in this election year.

DCF: You have a long association with East Timor. You were in East Timor last year and are likely to also visit again this year. What are your thoughts on its future? What do you see as the key to future stability?

JD: On the subject of East Timor, our obligations are clear. East Timor is a neighbouring state, a reality that carries moral obligations in any circumstances.

But an even more serious responsibility stems from the fact that Australia, in effect, encouraged Indonesia to annex the colony, ignoring the people's right to self determination.

Our governments then turned their faces away while tens of thousands of Timorese were killed by the TNI.

Indeed, we encouraged other UN members to do likewise, and to accept Indonesia's illegal occupation, regardless of its catastrophic humanitarian cost. East Timor has, in the circumstances, a claim to a special obligation.

Australia's support - material, political and in understanding - is central to the new nation's future. The current crisis, though serious, can be overcome with external assistance of the kind former colonies have in the past received.



The country may still be experiencing unrest, but the unsettled situation is of the kind that is common to new states that have experienced repression. Such unrest is more serious in parts of neighbouring Indonesia, e.g. in West Papua and Sulawesi.

DCF: You have been involved with the Foundation for some years now. What do you see as Don Chipp's legacy?

JD: Don Chipp's legacy is very important at this time, for we are all at something of a watershed in our experience of democracy. In a sense his vision exposes a fundamental weakness. His 'keep the bastards honest' slogan goes beyond those more recent jargon words, 'transparency' and 'accountability'.

The underlying message is a call for more effective and democratic representation in the Parliament, a message that, among other things, implicitly calls for an overhaul of the machinery of party politics in this country.

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40 Years of International Human Rights Law

At the end of 2006 the Don Chipp Foundation hosted a free public forum to commemorate 40 years of international human rights law, posing the question: 'How well is Australia meeting its international human rights obligations?'

The event was held on 16 December which is the 40th anniversary of the day the UN General Assembly adopted and opened for signature the two primary instruments of international human rights law – the International Conventions on Civil, and the International Convention on Political Rights, Social Economic and Cultural Rights.

The first speaker at the event was James Dunn. James is a Director of the Don Chipp Foundation and was a government official specialising in international relations for more than 30 years. From 1970 to 1986, he was Director of the Foreign Affairs Group of the Parliament's Legislative Research Service.

After being involved in overseas missions to Timor, James returned to Timor as adviser to the newly established UNTAET mission leaders. In October 2001, he was commissioned by the United Nations as an expert on Crimes Against Humanity in East Timor and, with a retired New Zealand Ambassador, was also appointed to conduct in Dili a course for Timorese who were to become members of the new nation's diplomatic service.

The keynote speaker was John Pace. John recently completed an assignment as Human Rights Chief for the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq, and more recently as Senior Adviser to the Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon following the recent hostilities. Prior to that, he served for 16 years as Secretary to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. In 1991-1993, he was the Coordinator of the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in June 1993. Previously he was responsible for Special Procedures and the UN Technical Cooperation Programme in Human Rights. A native of Malta, he currently resides in Australia, where he is associated with the Australian Human Rights Centre at the University of New South Wales Faculty of Law.

To read John Pace's speech please visit the Don Chipp Foundation's web site. A copy of the speech has been placed in the 'forums' section of the site at www.donchippfoundation.org.au.

The event was held at the NSW State Library. It was very well attended and a lengthy discussion followed the formal presentations. The Don Chipp Foundation Board would like that thank everyone involved in making the forum a success and we look forward to many more such events in 2007.

Website

The Don Chipp Foundation's long time volunteer, Yulia Onsman, left the Foundation in 2006 after many years maintaining the Foundation's web site. Yulia's work was entirely voluntary and the Board is very grateful for all the support she gave the Foundation over many years.

Since Yulia's departure Ricky Onsman has taken over management of the Don Chipp Foundation's web site. Ricky is a professional web designer. However, he has been very generous in his support for the Foundation. Ricky has put a lot of energy into creating a professional and informative site. If you have not visited the Don Chipp Foundation's web site in a while, now is a good time to re-visit it. Go to: www.donchippfoundation.org.au

Upcoming Events

Each year the **Janine Haines Memorial Lecture** is held in memory of Australia's first female political leader. The lectures take place throughout Australia, addressing contemporary issues of national significance. This year's Janine Haines Memorial Lecture will be held in Western Australia on May 16th in the Social Sciences Lecture Theatre at the University of Western Australia. The keynote speaker is Dr. Julian Burnside, who will be speaking about 'Human Rights and Democracy in Australia'. Other speakers are Senator Lyn Allison, leader of the Australian Democrats and Erica Lewin, President of the Western Australian Division of the Australian Democrats. The talk begins at 6:30pm. This free community event is co-sponsored by the University of Western Australia's Institute of Advanced Studies.

The **Don Chipp Foundation Small Grants Program** is running over May and June. The Foundation provides up to four small grants each year for projects that advance the Foundation's objectives. Applications close on Wednesday July 25th. For more information visit the Don Chipp Foundation website at www.donchippfoundation.org.au and follow the links to the 2007 Small Grants Program.

In June the Don Chipp Foundation will present a **free public forum** featuring Dr. Sarah Maddison, author of the influential book *Silencing Dissent*. The event will take place in Sydney. Visit the Don Chipp Foundation web site in June for event details.

On Friday June 15th the Queensland Division of the Australian Democrats will celebrate the **30th anniversary** of the party's formation. The event will feature a keynote address by former Senator, Professor Michael Macklin. To be part of the celebrations visit the Queensland Democrats' web site at: <http://qld.democrats.org.au/index.htm> or contact the office by e-mailing: contact@qld.democrats.org.au.

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