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## FUNDING ROW

### Arts in council's sights?

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### Tip saved from ruin?

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## SPORT

### Local takes racing flag

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## Customers put the bite on a monster of a job

ARTIST Chris Job is facing a supply and demand problem.

Glebe market shoppers just can't get enough of his paper-mache critters.

Chris, pictured with some of his creations, says many are sold before he has even finished them and on any given weekend you can see him patting the final touches on dogs, pigs, cats, crocodiles or caterpillars.

The screen printer's T-shirts depicting "fox", "roach" and "cruc", among others, have been spotted all over Sydney but a few months ago he decided to adapt them to the 3-dimensional.

Inspired by wood carvings from Mexico and images from Bali, he set about mixing

paper pulp and glue then adding acrylic paint and inquer.

Chris's problem is that the process takes so long that he is now trying to build up a collection of smaller animals.

"I can't make enough of them," he said. "People want to buy them straight away, even if I haven't completed them."

Chris's critters cost from \$15 to \$80 for the larger ones.

And he has visions for bigger and better things — he hopes to find time to create large paper-mache sculptures which may on show in restaurants and hotel lobbies.

— ROBIN AINSWORTH

Picture: PAUL MELVILLE

# APIA'S \$4m DEBT

THE APIA Club at Leichhardt has placed itself in the hands of provisional liquidators with debts of more than \$4 million.

Accounting firm Widin and Company was appointed as provisional liquidator on Thursday after the club's board of directors asked the Federal Court to appoint a liquidator last week.

John Mann, a partner with Widin and Co, said the action was forced because the company known as The Apia Club Limited is insolvent.

"It can't pay its debts as they fall," Mr Mann said.

He said the club has accumulated losses of more than \$4 million and the appointment of provisional liquidators is to "give them some breathing space".

The club's two major debtors are the State Bank and Italian Bank Monte dei Paschi (Australia).

Mr Mann said his firm's job was to establish the reasons for the club's financial problems and try to "put the club back on an even keel and ensure its future".

He said the firm had until the end of May to report back to the court over the club's future and would also address a

meeting of club members with their findings.

Mr Mann would not say how he rated the club's chances of survival, but said he received the club accounts for \$1.5 million last week.

He said asking members to contribute the money appeared the only possible source of the funds.

Mr Mann said the members had pledged more than \$700,000 in the past to help the club out of its financial

problems. He said the club's board had previously consulted Widin and Co about its finances to see what options were open to it.

Club president Ron Orsatti said he would give it "his best shot" to ensure the club's survival, which he believes is possible only if it changes.

"The club has lost money because it is run down — it has to change direction," Mr Orsatti said.

"We have to sell this club and the game (soccer) not just as an Italian club, but as an Australian club."



APIA president Ron Orsatti

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Premier launches Homebush program for Olympic bid: Page 10

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# Fees paint bleak picture for group

by CHERIE MARRIOTT

A BITTER row has erupted between Drummoyne Council and the local art society over council's plans to charge hiring fees for the civic centre.

Drummoyne Art Society president Neville Bendall accused council of "thwarting" the group's cultural role by proposing fees which would send them bankrupt.

Mr Bendall said the society had been singled out to pay for using the civic hall while other community groups would continue to have free access.

The society uses the hall to hold four week-long exhibitions each year.

"It is unlikely council will save any money by making us pay but it is very possible they will force us to close down," Mr Bendall said.

He said the exhibitions cost payers less than 25 cents each a year.

"The Drummoyne Municipal Art Society holds some of the most highly regarded art exhibitions in the country and artists come from overseas to enter their work," Mr Bendall said.

"If council did begin to charge us to use the hall we would survive for maybe two years and then we would have to fold up."

Mr Bendall also accused council's

finance committee of deliberately delaying the payment of a \$1000 assistance grant to the society.

He said the new council was "anti-art" and "anti-culture" and had dramatically reduced the annual grant.

Two years ago, the society received \$2350 a year.

"In the past council has been very friendly — it didn't matter which color politicians were in office, they were always very supportive."

Drummoyne Mayor Michael Megna said he was not aware the grant had been stopped by the finance committee.

"We budgeted for the \$1000 sum last December — it should have been paid to the society by the due date," Mr Megna said.

A member of the finance committee, the mayor said he would investigate the grant's progress at the next meeting.

He agreed there were a few "Johnny Come Lately" aldermen who did not appreciate the society's historic and cultural role in the area.

Mr Megna said the push to impose



Drummoyne Mayor Michael Megna ... to investigate

hiring fees was the work of only "one or two" aldermen and he was confident council would vote against the proposal.

"There has been some problem with a few aldermen who think the society shouldn't be funded," he said.

"But, council has always given its support and I don't think this is about to change — I will be urging all the aldermen to vote against any charges."

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Mr. McLeay ... "a great improvement"

## Drop in youth jobless: McLeay

YOUTH unemployment has dropped despite a rise in the number of job recipients in the area.

In announcing the latest unemployment figures, Federal Minister for Employment, Leo McLeay, said the number of jobless, aged between 15 and 19 years fell from 1290 to 900 in the past three months.

This represents a drop of 3.7 per cent in youth unemployment in the Leichhardt and Marrickville areas.

"The figures are excellent economic indicators for the area as they go against the national trend which saw an increase by almost eight per cent," Mr McLeay said.

He said the total proportion of young people out of work was at 5.8 per cent while the national average was 10.2 per cent.

"When you take into account these figures over the Christmas break, this is a great improvement."

## Apia has \$4 mil. in debts Burwood Council under scrutiny

by BEDE CARMODY

● FROM Page 1  
"The longer we go as we are the further in debt we get."

"At this moment we have to fight back and get the members involved," he said. Mr Orsatti believes the members are willing to help — as shown six weeks ago when club members pledged \$726,000 to help refurbish the club.

For this reason he was against the board's decision of calling for provisional liquidators before they consulted with the members but was defeated because he did not have the numbers.

Mr Orsatti said the club's board is split as to what they should be doing about the club's financial problems.

He said running clubs was a big business, and a job which could not be done on an honorary capacity.

"You can't run a business like this on an honorary capacity," he said.

LOCAL Government Department officers are reviewing Burwood Council's performance after council returned a 25-page questionnaire last week.

Burwood is one of 40 councils undergoing a performance review by the department this year.

When council was told of the review in March a spokeswoman for Local Government Minister, Gerry Peacocke, said Burwood had been included for review after the department "became aware of certain financial and management problems at the council".

The review is in the form of a 25-page questionnaire which examines every aspect of council operations, including its financial status, funding position, budgeting practices and management policies.

Council discussed the answers before the questionnaire was submitted to the department in a 45-minute special session of council before the ordinary council meeting.

The session gave aldermen a chance to quiz town clerk Greg Harragon, who filled in the questionnaire.

Officers from the department are now analysing council's responses for a draft



Burwood town clerk Greg Harragon ... quizzed

report which will be returned to council for comment.

Council's comments on the draft report will then be taken into consideration by the department when they make a final report on council's performance.

The report will make recommendations on how council can, if necessary, improve its performance.

The final report from the department is expected in six weeks.

*The Globe*

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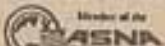
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CIRCULATION: 96,784  
PUBLISHED: Wednesday

SUBURBS:

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