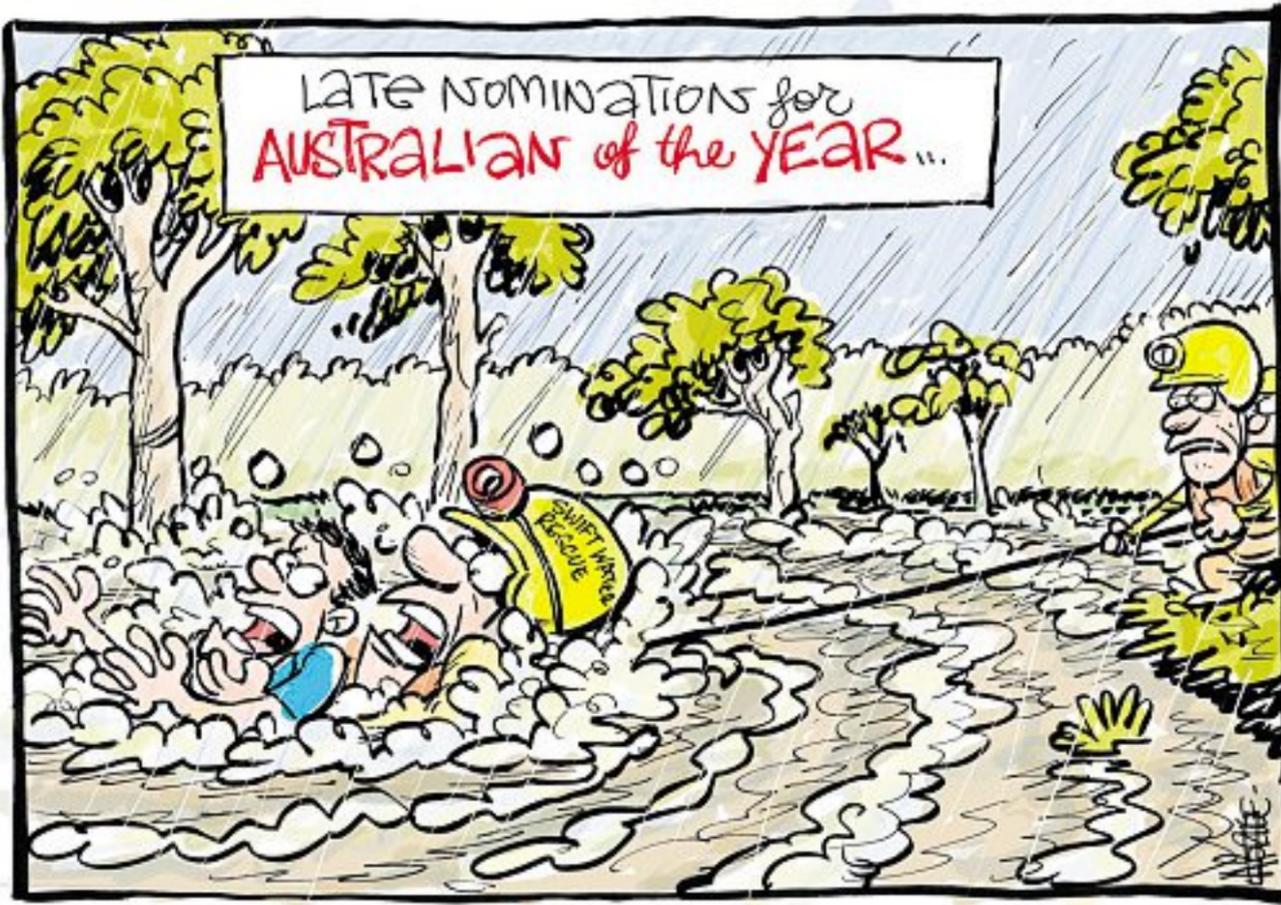


local voice



Fraser Island is a place of discovery of self yet again

SYDNEY and Fraser Island are at polar extremes in terms of destinations, and I love them both, but perhaps unusually for me, it was the interpersonal observations that are going to stick from my short Christmas breaks.

While the holiday in Sydney with the children created a new and rewarding dynamic (them relying on me rather than their mum who was sunning herself at the other end of the country), I want to tell you about Fraser Island where four families brought 11 kids together, two of whom are textbook adolescents.

Shortly before we left, I ran into an old friend who, on reflection, I realised I had known for more than 30 years. Attractive and outgoing, few ignored her, but she turned me into a life-long friend, perhaps without knowing the impact she, and others left.

You see, contrary to common macho perceptions, I always felt that finding a wife/soulmate was very important. Rockhampton didn't offer one up, and so I moved to Sydney. That and the separation of my parents were prime motivating factors in me going to university, and the career that followed.

How was I going to find a wife I could relate to if I was not formally educated, and how would I help support mum as she got older alone? Looking back at it, these motivations were immense. Doing economics as a mature-age student who had only completed part of grade 11, was no walk in



the park and neither was finding that "right person".

Now, not only am I proud of my degree and what so far has been my career, but even more of my wife and family, through whom I eventually got not only what I wanted, but what I needed too.

Back on Fraser, a teenage boy for whom not even the surf and young beauty of the Gold Coast could lure from his bedroom, is showered, dressed and walking the dishes to the communal washing-up area - all before 8am. On the hammock he, with skill, strums his guitar. He is interacting with everyone as a young man, and not a competing sibling. Mother and father, previously fretting over the reclusive teenager, lighten up considerably. Shirt off, the younger kids tease him for becoming the "alpha male".

Cause of the transformation? A smart, model-gorgeous teen of the same age. Perhaps we have something in common.



SMS ON NURSING HOMES

SD. Dont the aged population of Rockhampton deserve to be respected with more dignity than Qld Gov are providing. Fancy selling these facilities in CQHHS. Disgracefully sad.

TM. Good on Queensland gov, putting \$\$ before our elderly society.

RD. Shame on you QLD Health, nurses like us have lost our loyalty to your services and now our profession is a waste of time served!

JL. Shame on our gov't for closing our nursing homes. Very unAustralian. They made this country for



Us. Where is the respect and thanks they deserve.

MJH. How gutless is Gillard and Swan in not coming forward admitting they are the reason for our nursing

home closing. So much for Aussie spirit when our elderly get treated badly. Gillard and Swan u are jellyfish. Let's get together Rocky and save our residents.

doing a lot more for the community; well done young Man, a big thank you.

N, SPIVEY. Apparently Gracemere residents think the street sweeper may have fallen down a culvert because it has not been seen since amalgamation. Still looking.

SANTA. Obviously S. Thompson had a deprived childhood or he/she is a miserable person.

With the world in the state it is today y should children b deprived of the joys of Santa. I'm just glad my family is not related 2 u, u sound like a grouch.

JS, PARK AVE. Name and shame the 14 year old swim-

powerful woman deal with aggressive questions and accusations from men without resorting to shrieking 'sexist' or 'misogynist' to escape it. What a contrast! What a great role model for young women! Well done Hilary Clinton!

ANON. A big thank you to the Rockhampton Regional Council for not - maintaining gutters, & culverts in Gracemere.

I am 62 year old lady who met a 15 year old student from Rocky high school who was cleaning debris from the gutters for the neighbours because he likes doing things for the community; with a council like yours he will be

QUICK QUIZ

1. "Moonface" is the nickname of which Australian TV star?
2. The major ingredient of frittata is (a) carrots (b) eggs (c) sardines?
3. Which Russian last year broke her own record for the loudest Wimbledon grunt?
4. Dying recently at the age of 83 was which star of the TV show Columbo?
5. Which planet is named after the Roman god of the sea?

1. Bert Newton.
2. (b) Eggs.
3. Maria Sharapova.
4. Peter Falk.
5. Neptune.



have stirred the locals ... so Ms Strelow and posse ... word of advice, don't poke the bear with the stick.

RM, ST LAWRENCE. Tennis appears to be as morally dysfunctional, if not defunct, as some other "elite" sports. The farce yesterday with Azarenka is the same as what was done to Stosur; take a "medical" break when the opponent is "on a roll", leave them sitting cooling their heels then come back fresh. Maybe within rules but totally unprincipled. How could u take pleasure in "winning" like that?

PD, RTON. How good it is to see a capable, intelligent and