

# Gay smear adds to dirt

BOTH major parties have pledged to keep the election campaign clean, as fresh claims emerged about political rivals spreading dirt about one another.

The accusations followed last week's fiery scenes in Federal Parliament, when Opposition MPs alleged the Government had dug up Labor leader Kevin Rudd's private medical records, prompting furious denials from Prime Minister John Howard.

Former prime minister Bob Hawke predicted yesterday the Coalition would run one of the worst smear campaigns in years at this election because it was so worried about losing.

The dirt controversy took on a different hue yesterday when veteran journalist Laurie Oakes revealed the Liberals were behind a document being circulated about an unnamed Government minister.

The minister, who is married with children, has allegedly been seen

## 'No shame' in ad blunder

THE Federal Government says it is not embarrassed by revelations a pro-WorkChoices advertisement featured two actors with criminal records.

The advertisement was pulled off air after it was revealed two men featured in it as "union thugs" had been convicted of serious drug and dishonesty charges. The withdrawal came as the Workplace Ombudsman said

yesterday he would prosecute another actor in a Government-funded WorkChoices commercial for allegedly underpaying workers.

Also yesterday, it was revealed a Transport Workers Union "training fund" would be scrutinised by an independent auditor amid allegations the union sold out its workers for millions of dollars in secret kickbacks.

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TEE OFF: Golfers Liam Gibbons, Michael Smyth and Henry Egerton tee off from the Commonwealth Hotel in Hamilton to take part in World Urban Golf Day on Saturday. — Picture by Ryan Osland

## Gutters for greens as golf goes urban

By MICHELLE HARRIS

A CITYSCAPE with street hazards replaced greens with sand bunkers as the setting of choice for a group of Newcastle "urban" golfers intent on taking part in a global game on Saturday.

About 38 registered players, and a few afternoon stragglers, took part in the game, which was planned as Newcastle's part in World Urban Golf Day.

Golfers in more than 30 cities

around the world had planned to hold events for the day to promote the sport, with courses winding through city and suburban streets.

In Newcastle, players teed off at the Commonwealth Hotel at about 10am, and made their way to the Oriental Hotel and back.

Aside from the reactions of a few disgruntled onlookers, who did not at first realise the players were using specially-made soft balls, the day was

proclaimed a success.

"We got a really good response," co-organiser Alexander Masterson said.

"We even had a 67-year-old man turn up to play.

"He said he loved golf but can't afford the green fees, so he thought it was a great idea."

Mr Masterson said urban golf was a "pretty new thing".

"It's probably only been played for the last five years or so," he said.

## Island dingo fence

THE Queensland Government will spend \$750,000 erecting fences on Fraser Island to separate dingoes and humans.

Premier Anna Bligh said yesterday the two-metre-high fences would be in place for summer.

Clinton Gage, 9, was mauled to death by dingoes on the World Heritage-listed island in 2001. Since then, there have been 2000 incidents involving dingoes.

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## Fire destroys historic Myer store



GUTTED: The Myer building yesterday.

HOBART'S historic Myer building gutted by fire will be demolished as its remaining walls threaten to collapse.

The fire, which broke out about 3pm on Saturday, destroyed the inner-city department store, causing an esti-

mated \$50 million damage.

The Tasmania Fire Service said yesterday all four walls, including the Liverpool Street facade of the store that dates back to 1836, would be knocked down. The cause is being investigated.

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## Brain operation 'first'

DOCTORS at Canberra Hospital have removed a life-threatening aneurysm from a man's brain while he was awake, in what doctors say is world-first surgery.

The 77-year-old, who had an aneurysm on a major vein behind his right eye, is expected to tell today about his experience of being conscious during the operation.

Surgeons operated through a 1.5-centimetre hole in the man's skull.

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