

Australian Rationalist

Journal of the Rationalist Society of Australia

Number 67 • Winter 2004

Editor

Elise Jones

Editor Emeritus

Ian Robinson

Editorial Assistants

Martin Sellevold

Julie Marlow

Business Manager

David McKenzie

Contributions in the form of articles, letters, etc are welcome and should be sent to:

The Editor

Australian Rationalist

c/- 277 Punt Road

Richmond Victoria 3121

email: misselise@iprimus.com.au

Subscriptions and other business matters should be sent to:

Lois Sweet

RSA Secretary

42 Ruskin Avenue

Croydon Victoria 3136

Tel: (03) 9723 2792

Fax: (03) 9725 8577

email: rationalist@bigpond.com

Membership application form is enclosed.

Copyright restrictions apply unless otherwise stated. Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the RSA.

Publication details:

Australian Rationalist

(ISSN 1036-8191)

is published by the Rationalist Association of Australia Ltd on behalf of the Rationalist Society of Australia.

ACN 004 121 117

Registered office:

42 Ruskin Avenue

Croydon Victoria 3136

Australia

Printed by IPP ☎ (03) 9428 2958.

Distributed by Gordon & Gotch.

Print Post approved 349069/00042.

Editorial

2

OPINION

**On the spot report:
Port Hedland Detention Centre**
Edwina Howell

9

**Speech to parliament on the
Migration Amendment
(Duration of Detention) Bill 2004**
Lindsay Tanner MP

11

**Bring the troops home now, Mr Howard,
Christmas is too late!**
Dr Jocelyne A Scutt

15

**Fifth World Atheist Conference, 2005:
'Atheism and social progress'**
Indian Atheist Centre

17

So polemically rational
Bruce Cotton

21

What is wrong with capitalism?
Anthony Writer

25

FEATURES

**What atheists believe and what agnostics
don't believe**
Graeme Lindenmayer

30

**Ice cubes in rockets: a future history
of human folly**
Robert Lee

34

BOOKS

***The President of Good and Evil*
by Peter Singer**
Reviewed by James Gerrand

44

Letters

46

Cover and illustrations by Waldemar Buczynski. Cartoons by Simon Kneebone.

*The Rationalist Society of Australia prefers
reason to prejudice, science to superstition,
evidence to faith; promotes secular ethics and
education; holds lectures, conferences and
social activities.*
