A HUGE range of furniture, timber and building supplies will go to auction this morning through Theodore Bruce Auctions.

More than 230 lots, including estate furniture and new homemakers’ furniture, will be available to buy at 46 First St, Brompton, starting at 10am.

The auction includes timber bedroom furniture in the form of single, double and king size beds, bookcases, drawer units, desks, mattresses and dressing tables and chairs.

Much of the furniture on offer is solid, stained timber but there is also iron, tubular steel and laminated timber furniture as well as leather and upholstered lounges and chairs.

Lounge suites, coffee tables and TV cabinets will also be on offer as well as modern and traditional rugs, hallway runners and dining settings.

A small number of framed artworks – including signed works by June Molan, Chris Evans and Mary Trott – and a range of rare Jack Daniel’s whiskey will also be auctioned.

Jack Daniel’s products on offer include a rare 1995 Swift and Moore bottle, various White Label bottles and an old Australian tin set. Building supplies include sheets of plasterboard, pine flooring and cladding, and bathroom vanities and tiles, including several lots of polished beige natural granite tiles.

Lots can be viewed online at www.theodorebruceauctions.com.au
For further details contact Edward Bruce on 0433 361 275.

A timber cabinet up for auction.
Prize highlights efforts in vocational education

THREE young northsiders are among 500 skilled students nationwide to be recognised for their efforts in vocational education and training in schools.

The three - Lauren Spatuzzo of Bracken Ridge, Nathanael Lane of Burpengary, and Brendan Savage of Griffin - won a 2011 Australian Vocational Student Prize (AVSP), which includes $2000 cash.

All three earned vocational education qualifications last year while completing year 12: Lauren at St Rita’s College, Clayfield, and Nathanael and Brendan at Grace Lutheran College, Rothwell.

Lauren completed a Certificate III in Business at Wet Paint-Ting in Brendale.

She continued working part-time in administration at Wet Paint-Ting this year while starting a commerce degree at university, which she later deferred.

She is currently working as PA to the director, and plans to start a psychology degree next year.

Nathanael completed a Certificate II in Electrotechnology.

He completed work experience with AJC Electrical Service in Northgate and Totally Wired Electrical in Capalaba, before being offered a full-time electrical apprenticeship with AJC Electrical Service upon finishing school.

Brendan Savage completed a Certificate III in Carpentry.

He did work experience with a building contractor and is now seeking an apprenticeship.

His long-term goal is to have the skills to build his own home and to become a sub-contractor.

Acting Minister for School Education, Senator Chris Evans said winners of these national awards had gained a better understanding of the workplace, and had developed industry-specific skills that would help them get work in their chosen career.
Supply company’s centre is built for training

SKILLS Minister Peter Hall has opened a new training facility in Hallam.

Mr Hall congratulated Bowens timber and building supplies on its commitment to promoting training in the building and hardware sectors.

He said Bowens’ investment in its new training facility at its Hallam head office highlighted the company’s commitment to developing a highly trained workforce.

Bowens, a family business established in 1894, employs more than 800 staff across 15 locations in Victoria.

“The opening of the Richard Bowen Training Room, named after the company’s founder, highlights Bowens confidence in the future of the building and hardware industry, and their commitment to developing a skilled workforce capable of delivering outstanding customer service.” Mr Hall said.

Mr Hall said. Bowens will partner with Simonds – House of Learning, a registered training organisation, to deliver a diploma of management, along with certificate IV training in frontline management and customer contact.

“Companies like Bowens that invest in training benefit from increased productivity, innovation and greater staff loyalty,” Mr Hall said.

In this year’s State Budget the Victorian Coalition Government committed an extra $1 billion over the next four years for vocational education and training.

As part of its training reforms the Coalition Government has increased subsidy levels for all apprenticeships and areas of skill shortages and high value to the Victorian economy.
By BRIDGET COOK

A PUBLIC meeting will be held next week to make local schools’ concerns about budget cuts to TAFE funding loud and clear.

The secondary school Education Coalition, for the outer sub-region of the southern metropolitan region, called the meeting after they met last month to discuss the implications of the recent changes to the funding of TAFE, VET, VCAL and related programs.

As a consequence of the State Government’s cuts, funding has been reduced to 80 per cent of courses across the TAFE sector, with training in hospitality, business, sport, retail and process manufacturing all affected at Chisholm.

Hampton Park Secondary College principal David Finnerty said the group discussed the implications the TAFE funding cuts would have for students’ pathways and sense of well-being.

“While there was general recognition of the quite demanding economic environment currently facing Victoria, there was equally expressed a grave concern as to the potential, long-term impact for our children, of the recently announced drastic reduction to TAFE funding,” he said.

In the outer south region, 33 per cent of Year 12 completers go on to vocational training.

Mr Finnerty said the reduced number of courses due to budget cuts would markedly limit pathways and opportunities from school to TAFE, university and into positive economic participation.

“Often students from lower socio-economic areas make effective use of these pathways,” he said. “Fewer courses and site closures will increase student disengagement. This will result in poor outcomes for the individual, as well as having long-term negative implications for the state economy.”

Mr Finnerty said they also feared the TAFE funding cuts would affect VET (Vocational Education and Training) provisions in schools.

VET in the VCE or VCAL allows students to include vocational studies within their senior secondary certificate.

“VET provision is compulsory in VCAL to comply with the Industry Specific strand,” Mr Finnerty said. “Our information is that there will now be reduced access to courses and at significantly higher cost.

“There is significant concern that access to a variety of certificates and an increased pressure on available spaces will further marginalise students who would otherwise benefit from the VCAL option.”

A spokesman for the Higher Education and Skills Minister Peter Hall said rather than cutting funding, the government announced in May’s state budget an extra $1 billion over the next four years for the state’s training system.

“Much of this money will go to better support courses that provide higher level training such as apprenticeships, areas of skills shortages or areas that make an important contribution to the Victorian economy and Victorians’ chances of gaining meaningful employment,” he said. “The government is increasing subsidies in these important areas, in which TAFEs traditionally have a very strong market share, while reducing subsidies in areas of oversupply or that don’t necessarily lead to positive employment outcomes, such as fitness training and many lifestyle courses.”

The Education Coalition has called the public meeting 23 August at 7pm at River Gum Performing Arts Centre, Hampton Park Secondary College.

Mr Finnerty encouraged interested people to attend the meeting.
Uni fees spent on cupcakes, nightclub

By Megan Doherty
City Reporter

The Australian National University Students’ Association says it has done nothing wrong by spending student fees on cupcakes, a jumping castle and party at nightclub Mooseheads.

It also confirms it spent $4000 on jelly beans to give to students during exams but says they were funded by means other than the student services and amenities fee, such as its own corporate sponsorship.

Tasmanian Liberal Senator Eric Abetz has put questions on notice to Tertiary Education Minister Chris Evans asking whether the ANU Students’ Association was making appropriate use of the controversial fee and “what avenues are available to students who feel that their funds are being misspent”.

ANU Liberal Club president David Howard alerted Senator Abetz because he believed the association was frittering away funds.

He said as well as the jelly beans, the association had given away mulled wine and cupcakes to students and hired a jumping castle for them.

Mr Howard suggested the association now had more money than it knew what to do with.

After changes to laws last year which brought an end to the Howard government’s voluntary student unionism, universities can now charge students $263 a year for services and amenities of a “non-academic nature” such as sport and recreation, career advice, child care, financial advice and food services.

The association has posted its mid-year financial report on the student services and amenities fee saying it used the money to pay for items such as emergency grants for grocery vouchers and legal services for students and the Save the School of Music campaign as well as an end-of-semester party at Mooseheads and “the biggest O Week ever”.

Continued Page 2
Students’ Association defends spending fees on cupcakes, Mooseheads

From Page 1

There were also plans to buy a minibus to ferry students to their accommodation at night.

Association president Dallas Proctor said many of the items were “cost-neutral” as while the association had spent money on events such as the orientation week concert that featured singer Kimbra and Mooseheads party, it recouped those costs through ticket sales and sponsorship.

Mr Proctor said the association regularly gave away food and drink to students as an enticement to also provide them with information about various student welfare and other campaigns. He said the jumping castle could be classed as “sport and recreation” under the fee regulations but “the purpose is to get students there so we can give them material that they need”.

The jelly beans were to promote a student evaluation survey which were completed after exams.

Mr Proctor said the association had to provide a range of services to students from social to activism to providing representation to the university.

He was confident its use of the student fee was appropriate.

“We don’t think we should have to justify each thing that we spend under a particular criteria as long as what we do over the whole of the year meets the legislation broadly,” he said. A spokeswoman for the ANU said the students’ association reported to the university twice yearly on its financial transactions “against broad, allowable categories”.

“The detail of the spending is a matter for the Student Association,” she said.

“ANU takes its obligations under the student services and amenities fee legislation very seriously, and have negotiated a 13-page contract with ANUSA regarding spending and accountability of SSAF funds.”

Mr Howard, meanwhile, said he was in favour of voluntary student unionism and the association had been “fantastic” under the previous regime.
Industry driven system to tackle Australia’s skills challenges

The Federal Government has passed legislation to create the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA) which it believes will strengthen Australia’s response to the nation’s skills challenge and boost productivity.

The Government says that the agency marks a fundamental reform in the Australian training system, putting industry in the driving seat of the training effort. The agency will be led by industry representatives and will have a key role in the allocation of a $700m industry training fund.

Minister for Skills, Senator Chris Evans said the new Agency marks a significant development in the partnership between industry and government.

“The Agency is an extension of Skills Australia and will improve long-term workforce planning and development, address skills and labour shortages and contribute to improved industry and workplace productivity,” Senator Evans said.

A key role of the Agency will be to set priorities for, and provide oversight of the $700m National Workforce Development Fund which has been established to support industry to develop and improve the skills of their employees. The NWDF is providing $700m over five years to support businesses who want to up-skill and re-skill new and existing staff in priority industries and occupations.

“Putting industry at the heart of the system means we are not training people for training sake – we are training people for jobs. This is a fundamental difference from the traditional supply side system where an individual selects the training package they want,” Senator Evans said.

“This fundamental reform ensures that the Government is training people in the skills that employers and economy needs. With industry co-investment, the NWDF will deliver training to 250,000 Australian workers. The Agency will be recognised as an authority on workforce development policy, research, advice and will direct skills funding to industry needs.”

The Government will provide $25m over three years to establish the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency. This is in addition to the current Skills Australia budget.
Job-skills week to focus on training

OPPORTUNITIES, achievements and the excellence of our country’s Vocational Education & Training (VET) sector will be highlighted during National Skills Week from August 27-September 2.

Given the job losses across various industries from automotive to print, raising the profile of skilled careers could not be more timely.

First held last year, the week is to be officially launched by federal Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research Minister Chris Evans in Sydney tonight.

MC for the night will be SkillsOne chief executive Brian Wexham, who said VET had been the foundation of Australia’s strong and vibrant economy.

“It has produced industry leaders, it offers great diversity, new and exciting career paths, supports our resources’ boom, builds our cities, our monuments, our heritage,” he said.
Focus on skills for careers

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“It has produced industry leaders, it offers great diversity, new and exciting career paths, supports our resources boom, builds our cities, our monuments, our heritage,” he said.

Next week: Celebrating skills and vocational learning.
ASYLUM seekers sent from their initial housing in an Australian detention centre to Nauru and Manus Island are in for a shock.

News Limited has been told as many as 2100 people sent to the offshore processing centres can expect a no-frills existence, while their refugee claims are processed.

Yoga, beauty therapy classes, pilates and movie nights at Christmas Island detention centres are likely to be a distant memory for those sent thousands of kilometres from Australia to humid outposts.

Instead, asylum seekers face dilapidated demountable buildings, weeds, sapping heat and at Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, buildings overrun with termites.

And in the remote PNG location asylum seekers face the threat of malaria. A spokesman for Immigration Minister Chris Bowen yesterday said the Government planned to prevent asylum seekers from becoming ill.

A first look inside the camp yesterday, eight years after it was mothballed by the Howard government, showed it was in appalling condition.

Most of the 30-40 demountable buildings are termite ridden, trees and debris cover the ground while surrounding roads running through jungle are potholed.

Chicken wire rims the camp and even the toilets are not connected to plumbing.

Nauru and Manus Island will be classed as processing centres, not detention facilities, meaning the activities provided are set to be nothing like those offered to detainees in Australia, government sources have said.

The first asylum seekers to arrive will be housed in tents and temporary structures.

A Nauru Government spokesman said the community was looking forward to welcoming asylum seekers again, four years after Labor closed the Howard government processing centre.

At the time then immigration minister Chris Evans said: “The Pacific Solution was a cynical, costly and ultimately unsuccessful exercise introduced on the eve of a federal election by the Howard government.”

Nauru’s school was ready to welcome asylum seeker children again while the community would benefit from volunteer programs, he said.

in the past, asylum seekers worked in construction and other areas.

Asylum seekers are again expected to be free to roam the tiny phosphate island in the Pacific, which is near the equator and 20sq km in size.

The children went to schools, the women went to activities, some of the men worked in a voluntary capacity, the Nauru Government spokesman said.

They could do anything as long as they weren’t taking the job of a Nauruan. Accommodation is scarce in Nauru and the influx of government and processing officials is expected to put a greater burden on the island, which may get two air services a week instead of the present one.
Enrolment numbers

DEMOGRAPHIC changes from suburb to suburb and from city to city mean that school populations are bound to change over time. But for half a century or more, the Australian education system has been characterised by a clear move toward private education at the expense of government schools.

The general reasons for this shift are well known. Parental concern over falling standards in the public system, combined with an increasing acceptance of the value of paying for private education, have led many families to seek out private schools.

Census figures show that 75 per cent of Australia’s public school students are in the public sector. Government schools account for about 60 per cent of the nation’s 1.5 million high school pupils.

The national trend toward Catholic and independent private schools is also evident in this region.

State enrolments have fallen by more than 2 per cent in six years, while numbers in the Catholic system has risen by a similar percentage.

It is unclear, at this stage, if the federal government’s My School website is contributing to the trend, but the ability to construct detailed comparisons between schools allows parents to easily see the sometimes dramatic differences between classroom outcomes.

As the chairman of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, Professor Barry McGaw has repeatedly pointed out, the links between social advantage and educational advantage are clear.

At least some of the Hunter shifts will be the result of parents voting with their feet by moving their children in search of better school environments.

This is how a free society works.

But not everyone has the means or inclination to seek alternatives. Despite the growing popularity of private schooling, the public system remains the bedrock of Australian education. Politicians of all persuasions must ensure it is amply funded in a fast-changing world.
TAFE protesters rally against cuts

TEACHERS AND STAFF TAKE TO STREETS TO SLAM $300 MILLION CUT

MELBOURNE: Thousands of Victorians have clogged central Melbourne to rally against the Baillieu Government’s $300 million in cuts to the TAFE sector.

TAFE teachers, students and support staff from across Victoria waved banners denouncing “Ted Failyou” and chanted “save TAFE, sack Ted”, as they marched from the State Library to Parliament House yesterday.

Boos and cries of “shame” rippled through the crowd — which police estimated at 2000 people — as the Australian Education Union’s state president Mary Bluett described the cuts as “an act of economic vandalism”.

Ms Bluett said their message was clear: “Don’t touch our TAFE, don’t deny our students the future they deserve”.

The union estimates 2000 staff will be made redundant as a result of the funding cuts to TAFE programs, in which 365 000 Victorians are currently enrolled.

But National Tertiary Education Union state secretary Colin Long told the crowd up to 10 000 jobs could go once support and contract staff were accounted for.

Victorian Opposition leader Daniel Andrews collected a petition bearing more than 7000 signatures from the protesters, and vowed to hand it to Premier Ted Baillieu.

“At a time of unemployment being a real challenge . . . now’s not the time to be abandoning the skills and the vocational education and training that really is such an important key to a productive future for so many Victorians,” Mr Andrews said.

Swinburne University of Technology and RMIT University have said they’ll have to cut hundreds of jobs and axe courses after losing tens of millions from their TAFE budgets.

Student Ben Lawson said he doesn’t know how he’ll finish his accounting and management course at Swinburne’s Lilydale campus, which is closing next year in the wake of the cuts.

Despite holding a banner reading “RIP Lilydale Education”, Mr Lawson believes the government could bow to pressure, rethink its TAFE funding and save the campus.

Mr Baillieu did not back down, saying the vocational education system the government had inherited from Labor was unsustainable.

“Enrolments exploded in courses that were cheap to deliver, profitable for providers but did not deliver on jobs,” he said.

“The rest of Australia is looking to Victoria to get the vocational training system right here so they get it right as well.”
Out in force: About 2000 people came together yesterday to express their opposition to TAFE funding cuts
Thousands protest against TAFE cuts

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– AAP
Rally against TAFE cuts

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“Enrolments exploded in courses that were cheap to deliver, profitable for providers but did not deliver on jobs,” he told parliament yesterday.
The onus is on moral posturers to say why they persist with their disingenuous myths

Most insulting in Labor’s U-turn is the view that support for strong borders is based on xenophobia

CHRIS KENNY

THE report of the expert panel on asylum-seekers has exposed some long-denied realities, not only demolishing arguments used against tough border control measures but dispelling myths that have been patronising to mainstream Australians.

This week’s policy reversal might slow the boats — given time and a resolve not seen to this point — but because of the about-face on what has been framed as a moral stand, it is impossible to envisage Labor escaping a political reckoning.

Ineptitude, leading to needless trauma, tragedy and expense, will play a role in public assessments, but so will the way the progressive political class has insulted voters over this for more than a decade.

One of the myths exploded by the expert panel is the fanciful notion that there is no queue. The commonsense claim that asylum-seekers arriving by boat win residency ahead of those applying through orderly processes has been haughtily rejected by the moral progressives. “Political leaders used arguments against asylum-seekers which were mean, petty and false,” former Liberal prime minister Malcolm Fraser said. “How can you join a queue when there is no queue?”

Yet the panel’s report recognises the preference for orderly processes over irregular arrivals and it recommends measures to stop the flow of boats: “They are needed to reinforce a basic principle of fairness — that those who continue to choose irregular maritime voyages to Australia to claim asylum should not be advantaged for doing so over those who pursue regular mechanisms.”

In other words, we must remove the advantage for queue jumpers. This has been obvious for years and has appealed to Australians’ innate sense of a fair go. None of us could blame the asylum-seekers for wanting to come here but their good fortune forces others, who don’t have the money or chance to pay a people-smuggler, to wait even longer.

Another truth, plain to the mainstream but persistently denied by activists and Labor, is that Nauru worked as a deterrent. It is one thing to decry Nauru as unfair or expensive, but the government has used blatant spin to argue it was ineffective.

When the Rudd government abandoned Nauru, it was empty — a clue to its success. Instead of quietly leaving well enough alone, Labor trumpeted the end of the Pacific Solution and foolishly trashed the outcomes. The immigration minister at the time, Chris Evans, released and misused statistics to claim Nauru had failed as a deterrent. It became a mantra and was accepted without question by many commentators.

“Over 90 per cent of the people regarded as refugees on Nauru last time were resettled in Australia or New Zealand.” Immigration Minister Chris Bowen said last year. “Now the people-smugglers know that, the asylum-seekers know that.” Julia Gillard repeated the line: “I will maintain my objection to Nauru, it’s costly and it won’t work.”

But given the main reason for offshore processing is to assess refugee claims away from domestic appeals and court processes — to remove the certainty of gaining residency — the relevant number must be how many of all the arrivals were resettled in Australia. It was less than half. About 30 per cent of the asylum-seekers failed in their refugee applications and were sent home, another 30 per cent were resettled in other countries, including New Zealand. So
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with just more than 40 per cent making it to our shores, there was a stark disincentive, amplified by the time taken for processing.

So like it or abhor it, Nauru worked. The public has understood this because boat arrivals fell away dramatically after the Pacific Solution was implemented. In 1999, 3721 people arrived on 86 boats, the following year 2939 arrived on 51 boats, and in 2000 there were 9516 people crammed on to 43 vessels. Then, with Nauru operational, no boats arrived in 2001, one with 53 passengers in 2003 and none again in 2004. The numbers didn't pick up substantially until Labor's softening of the border regime in late 2008.

These facts have always spoken for themselves but the Left and the elites have argued in the face of them. They have attempted to play mainstream voters for fools. Clearly it didn't work. Remarkably, however, their spin seemed to convince or provide cover for many in the press gallery and commentariat. Surely the jig is up now that the expert panel wants Nauru reopened immediately.

The argument over push and pull factors has a similar history. After Labor abandoned the Pacific Solution and temporary protection visas, the boat arrivals increased. Washing its hands of the issue, it blamed push factors, that is, the number of displaced international people, factors beyond its control. Repeatedly it denied domestic policies were having an impact. "We believe there are push factors around the world," said the Prime Minister, "things that get people on the move."

This flew in the face of the nation's recent experience and it was even decried by Indonesian and Sri Lankan calls for Australia to "take the sugar off the table". Again, the public seems to have understood this. The government argued against common sense until it suddenly changed its mind, without explanation, in 2010 and started talking about an East Timor solution, a regional solution and then the Malaysia Solution. The expert panel again provides clarity on this point. "Australian policy settings do influence the flows of irregular migration to Australia," it declares. "Those settings need to address the factors 'pushing' as well as 'pulling' the trend toward greater numbers of dangerous irregular maritime ventures to Australia." It recommends our domestic policy "needs to implement more effective disincentives to irregular and dangerous maritime voyages".

To be fair to Gillard, Bowen and others (despite previous warnings and tragedies) the horror of Christmas Island on December 15, 2010, finally pushed them to a firm response. But the public was on this long before their government. And now they must wonder why cabinet needed an expert panel to be honest about the self-evident. Most insulting of all has been the constant presumption from the Left and the elites that support for strong borders is based on xenophobia or racism. Barrister and human rights activist Julian Burnside often speaks on these issues. "I think there are some Australians that are racist, but I would put them in a small minority," he said in 2010. "On the other hand, xenophobia, which is a fear of outsiders, a fear of unknowns, I think that is a very, very common streak in the Australian psyche." Asked if he thought Australians understood human rights, he said: "No, I do not. I think our attitude to human rights is very primitive."

Former prime minister Paul Keating has highlighted what he says is the role of racism in the border protection issue. "Racism is a form of sickness and when a country starts building policies on race or racial undertones, then you know you don't have much of a future," he said in March — exhibiting considerable chutzpah for the man who oversaw the introduction of mandatory detention.

Across the past decade Labor has been bitterly divided on these issues. Back in 2001, then union leader (now senator) Doug Cameron slammed Kim Beazley's tacit support for the Pacific Solution, saying it betrayed the party's principles and "pandered to racism, populism and xenophobia". Remember, every reference to dog-whistle politics has repeated this slurs — the idea of a dog-whistle is predicated on evil manipulators and a racist, gullible public.

Fair-minded Australians, immigrants and refugees among them, have bristled at the suggestion their concerns about queue-jumping, people-smuggling, maritime safety and the gaming of our immigration system by self-selection have been maliciously miscast as racist. This moral condescension has come from Labor, the Greens and some Liberal dissenters, as well as many activists.

Perhaps now some will see that not only is this wrong but counterproductive. Because this moral grandstanding only hardens attitudes and deepens the political disconnect. Some, predictably, will continue this procession, making it more difficult for the government to show the necessary strength. The reinstated policies will not work without tough and uncompromising enforcement.

After years of ineptitude and posturing, Labor is adopting central elements of the Pacific Solution. Most assuredly this is not to whip up racist sentiment but to save lives, protect our immigration system, control our borders and preserve fairness. On that basis many MPs owe their opponents and their constituents an apology.

Now the onus must be on the remaining moral posturers to explain why their preference is for an open borders arrangement that will see overseas refugees deluded out of humanitarian places, our intake selected by people-smugglers and countless more lives lost at sea.
The commonsense claim that asylum-seekers arriving by boat win residency ahead of those applying through orderly processes has been haughtily rejected by the moral progressives.