

# TE WAHA NUI

FREE

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**Freedom award**  
Otago mechanic is a humble winner at PIMA  
**P14**



**Let's dance**  
Backstage at the Auckland Tempo dance festival  
**P12**



**The Whale Rider**  
Joylene Davis talks about taking over from Keisha Castle-Hughes  
**P16**



PHOTO: NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE

ON THE STREET: Lieutenant Keri Anderson and Chief of Defence Air Marshal Bruce Ferguson with children in Iraq.

## Zaoui back in politics with AUSA appointment

by Edward Gay

Algerian politician and refugee Ahmed Zaoui has re-entered politics from behind bars.

He was elected honorary Algerian spokesperson for the Auckland University Students' Association at a 200 strong meeting last week.

And next Tuesday Professor Andrew Sharp will deliver a public lecture written by the political detainee.

"Mr Zaoui's incarceration is only a temporary impediment to his regular attendance at AUSA meetings," says Eamonn Deverall, who chaired the meeting.

Deverall held a quiz on Algerian politics and offered \$40 music vouchers to anyone who denounced a fellow student as a member of the SIS.

Chris Knox, the icon of New Zealand noise-pop, played a song about catching malaria and Algeria not being inferior.

AUSA President Kate Sutton was pleased with the large turnout at the meeting.

"He'll now be able to issue press releases on behalf of AUSA," says Sutton.

Deverall visited Zaoui in prison on Sunday.

"Mr Zaoui said: 'I hope it wasn't a Gaddafi situation where 98% of the people voted in favour.' And I had to tell him it was even worse — there was no opposition," says Deverall.

He says Zaoui was delighted with his appointment as Algerian spokesperson.

"Every campus should have one," says Deverall.

The Crown is appealing the Court of Appeal's decision that found in favour of Zaoui.

The Court of Appeal ruled that the Inspector General had to consider Zaoui's right not to be deported to a country where he could face torture or death, when he reviews Zaoui's security risk certificate.

Zaoui remains in Mt Eden's remand prison, despite the Refugee Status Appeals Authority declaring him a refugee over a year ago. He has been in prison for 22 months.

A date for the Supreme Court hearing will be set next week.

# 'Run down' troops not ready for bigger Iraq role, says Act

by Jonathan Dow

The Government would struggle to maintain combat troops in Iraq because of their "run down" capacity, claims Act leader Rodney Hide.

"We haven't done anything in Iraq to fight terrorism. The only contribution we have made is the 61 engineers helping with infrastructure — not fighting," he says.

"We need to enhance our military capacity first. We spend less than 1% of GDP on our military. No disrespect to our troops, but we just don't have the physical capacity and preparedness."

Hide says there are security risks for any non-combatant personnel in Iraq.

"You'd be loathe to send a group of policemen because they might end up on TV that night, being held hostage," he says.

Hide was reacting to the return of New Zealand's engineers last month and an appeal

by Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi for New Zealand to send combat troops.

In a *Sunday Star-Times* article, Allawi was quoted as saying the insurgents "will go back to New York, they'll go to London, and they'll go to New Zealand. Frankly we are defending you in New Zealand."

Allawi said New Zealand could join the multinational force, offer technical support and help train the Iraq police and national guard.

Keith Locke, Green Party spokesperson for defence and foreign affairs, says the Government's approach to reconstruction in Iraq should be through civilian aid — not a military solution.

"The army engineers did some good work but they were essentially part of the occupational force."

"The US claimed they supported the coalition but they



Rodney Hide



Keith Locke

were used more for PR in an ongoing war where thousands of Iraqis have been killed," says Locke.

Prime Minister Helen Clark's press secretary Mike Munro says New Zealand would not provide combat troops.

"The answer is 'no' to any question to do with assistance of combat troops," he says.

Dr Paul Buchanan, a senior lecturer in international relations at Auckland University, says Allawi is "desperate" as more countries defect from the US-led coalition.

"Even Poland is downsizing its commitment. From the US

and Allawi's point of view, a lot of what he says is scripted by the Pentagon. It makes sense to appeal for more assistance," says Buchanan.

Buchanan, who is a former consultant for the CIA and policy analyst for the Secretary of State, says sending in more troops will not solve the problem.

"The solution is a political one, involving the Iraqi and international elite."

"The New Zealand Government would be wise not to listen too closely to the appeal, although I suspect that New Zealand will send more non-combatant personnel in the future," says Buchanan.

Meanwhile, Fiji announced this week it is sending 155 soldiers to Iraq to provide security for the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. *Additional reporting by Edward Gay.*

Journalism in the line of fire — page 24