

New Zealand sport's ugly post-script

EDITORIAL

The mid-chain feeders of test cricket, New Zealand, have just completed a 2-0 drubbing of the game's sprats, Zimbabwe.

The tour to Zimbabwe faced strong opposition in New Zealand but it eventually continued. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) argued that it made the decision on financial grounds. It was contractually obliged to tour or the International Cricket Council (ICC) would slap NZC with a \$2 million fine.

So let's treat the Zimbabwean test series like a business deal – what did the various parties gain out of this transaction?

Good sport is loved and watched because it's based on the premise of a fair fight between opponents. The cricket tests in Zimbabwe were not a clash between worthy competitors – the first test was the second-shortest in history. On Thursday New Zealand achieved the second highest one-day total ever – off 44 overs. End result: sport lost.

Our cricketers have been forced to play in a country where they face fickle competition. Former test cricketer Chris Cairns, who has joined the Black Caps for the one-day series,

labeled the Zimbabweans' efforts in the test series as "dreadful". How much fun can shooting fish in a barrel be? End result: the New Zealand cricketers lost.

New Zealand Cricket has avoided the \$2 million fine but has lost its credibility. The New Zealand Government has blocked the Zimbabwean team touring in December, which will mean more financial losses for the NZC. End result: NZC lost.

The Zimbabwean cricket team have been demolished, their morale smashed and their coach, former West Indian test bats-

man, Phil Simmons has been sacked. End result: the Zimbabwean cricket team lost.

The numbers of Zimbabwean fans at the tests have struggled to

reach double figures. In comparison, 700,000 Zimbabweans have had their homes and livelihoods demolished in Operation Murambatsvina – 'Operation Restore Order'. They have more important things to worry about than cricket. End result: the Zimbabwean fans lost.

If sport didn't benefit, NZC are being vilified for the decision, and the Zimbabwean population don't care, who's the winner in this misguided clash?

Mugabe.

You can see the parallels between today's Zimbabwe and



IT NEVER WAS CRICKET: Phil Goff is "no-balled" by anti-tour protesters in June this year.

Ancient Rome. Power-maddened leader (Mugabe) keeps caged exotic animals (the New Zealand cricket team) until he calls the start of the games and throws the hapless locals (the Zimbabwean cricket team) to the lions – delighting in his temporary power over the situation.

Mugabe is patron of the Zimbabwean Cricket Union and his inner circle are known fans. Chris Laidlaw, high commissioner to Zimbabwe (1986-89) and election monitor in 2002, said in a *Listener* article in May that a boycott of the tour wouldn't have

had any impact on the lives of Zimbabwe's oppressed population. However it would have been a real slap in the face for the President.

New Zealand should have taken that opportunity.

The results in the test series show how ridiculous the decision to tour was. It was not sport but a rort – unbalanced teams playing for unbalanced reasons.

By association, New Zealand has lost credibility as a moral force – one that had been so well-built by our anti-nuclear stance.

Where 20 years ago the public

might have pretended they weren't aware of the conditions in apartheid South Africa, today we have no excuse.

New Zealand's tour to Zimbabwe is an ugly post-script to an era we hoped had passed. The Government should have done more to help New Zealand Cricket out of its tough position.

It is gratifying that the Government has declined to issue visas for the Zimbabwean team's summer tour thus averting the prospect of dragging New Zealand's humanitarian record through the dust again.

Letters to the Editor

Quality paper

I just wanted to send you a short note to congratulate your students on the quality of the June *Te Waha Nui*. For what it is worth I have spent longer reading *Te Waha Nui* today than I have the *Herald*. That probably suggests that your students have much to teach the *Herald*.

Kind regards,

Associate Professor Pare Keiha,
Pro Vice Chancellor for Maori
Advancement AUT

That magic feeling

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the June 2005 version of *Te Waha Nui*. It brought back some happy memories from last year.

Congratulations to all of you involved in an excellent paper. I know more than anyone what goes into producing such a professional newspaper and I hope you all enjoyed that magic feeling when the finished product arrived in the news room.

I especially enjoyed the group project stories and found the content interesting and rewarding to read. Good to see some well written sports stories too.

The editing and design work was very impressive, as was the photo reproduction.

In David and Allan you have

the best in the business guiding you, so learn as much as you can! I look forward to receiving future editions.

Well done!

Peter White,
Editor, *Te Waha Nui*, 2004

Shameless!

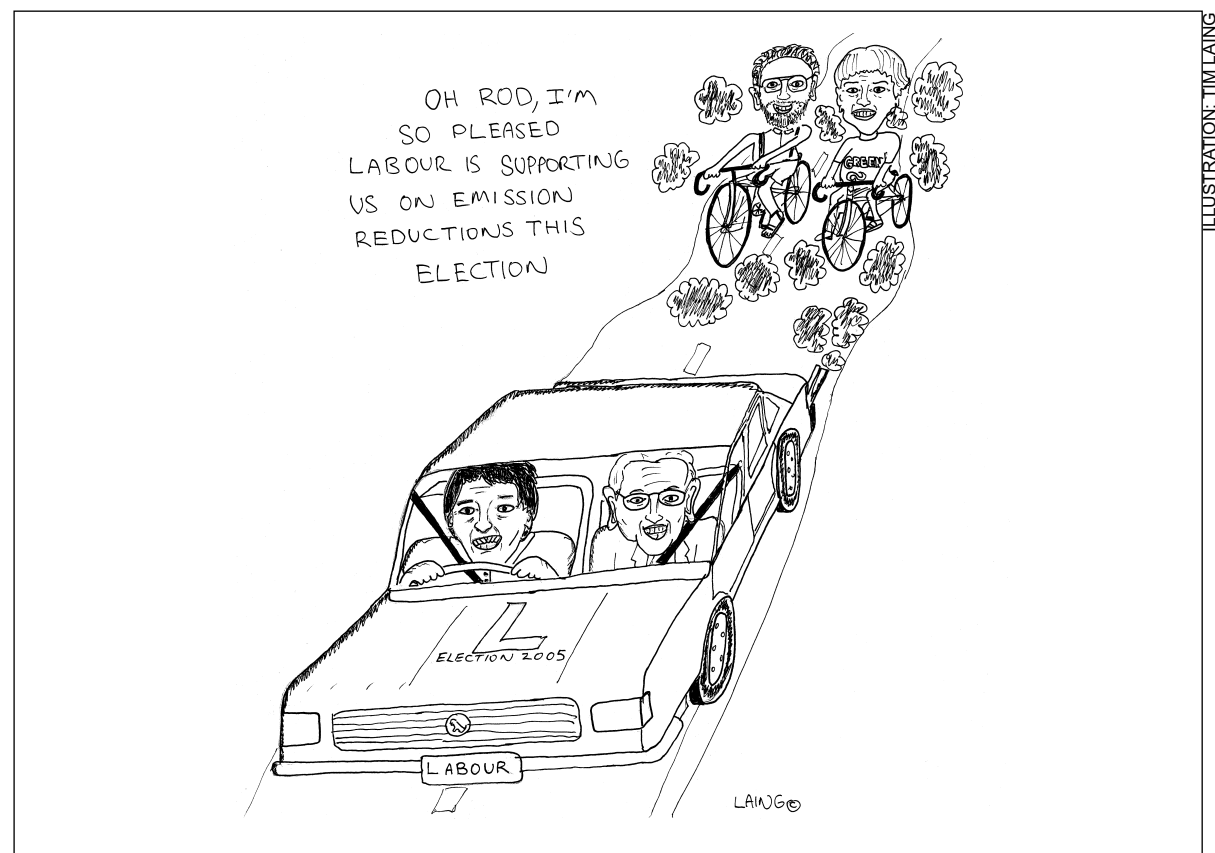
Good on the Big Mouths of AUT journo for penning a publication with more variety than a Foodtown pick n' mix, more panache than the Trump Towers and more credibility than current party policy.

Unlike the feeble attempts at student journalism I have been using as toilet paper ever since high school, this gem of a read shall remain stench free.

The news is stimulating, relevant and engaging – definitely a breath of fresh air to the seemingly unbreakable rugby-crime-rugby-deviant politician-rugby-B-grade celebrity gossip-rugby-methamphetamine-rugby-more rugby format.

And good on you for dedicating so much space to Maori and Pacific issues. These people deserve to have a voice in print, not just on *New Zealand Idol*.

Keep up the good work team. I give *Te Waha Nui* a Peter Jackson for creativity, and a Paris Hilton for overall appear-



ance. Don't ever let anyone tell you it's the other way around!

Big Mouth fan,
North Shore

Lighten up, please

Te Waha Nui was an interesting read, but I was quite disappointed by the quality of the photos. The front cover was effective and colourful, but the photos were from the *Herald*. With a

few exceptions, the rest were dull and did not add much to the quality of the text, which was superb.

I hope the next issue is more colourful and brings out the talent that is obviously brewing in the writers.

I also thought that there was a very serious tone, so some lightning up would go down a treat.

Jo Williams,
Grey Lynn

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