

● PR PRACTICE

Running for spin class

GAFFES always feature in election campaigns, but a group of university students are trying to help politicians stay on message.

About 70 postgraduate University of Sydney students have hit the campaign trail to help local candidates as part of their political PR course.

The students offered support to candidates from across the political spectrum.

They've been handing out flyers, critiquing public performances and devising electoral PR campaigns and strategies.

● TAKEN FOR RYDE

Unlicensed to build

AN unlicensed Castle Hill builder has been fined more than \$15,000 for offences including demanding excessive deposits and carrying out uninsured work.

Joe Michael Tadrosse, a former company director of Lloyd Parker Construction Pty Ltd, was found to have used his brother's licence in a written quote for a job in Ryde last year.

NSW Fair Trading Commissioner Rod Stowe urged anyone planning home renovations to check the validity of their builder's licence on fairtrading.nsw.gov.au.

● MESSAGE HORROR

Relax, it's a baseball bat

A WOMAN working at a massage parlour was threatened with a baseball bat during a robbery yesterday.

Two men wielding bats allegedly assaulted a receptionist when they entered the North Ryde establishment about 5pm and demanded cash.

The receptionist fled to call for help and they escaped with cash and a mobile phone.

Police are looking for two Middle Eastern men, about 180cm tall and aged in their 20s.

● HI-TECH DOWNSIDE

Planet pays for update

IN the race to upgrade our smartphones, many of us are losing sight of the real cost of technology, a visiting US academic has argued.

Technology may seem like a green way to consume media or help us in our daily life, but the environmental footprint is huge, University of California professor Toby Miller told mX on a visit on a visit to Sydney last week.

Miller said 15 per cent of the world's residential energy is currently devoted to powering digital technology.

And when added to the energy required to make and distribute these goods, it translates into carbon emissions to rival the aviation industry.

Miller said many consumers had very little knowledge about the conditions in which their

latest gadgets were made.

"Much of the production of these items is undertaken by people in really dreadful conditions not only in manufacturing, but in mineral extraction," he said.

Technology becoming obsolete very quickly and needing to be disposed of is another part of the problem.

Miller said the developing world

often ended up as the dumping ground for unwanted products, with companies choosing these places because governments were less likely to impose restrictions.

"Many of them, phones, laptops, television sets go to extremely poor countries where they're recycled under very dangerous conditions," he said.

"As a consumer when I'm buying things or thinking about

things, I think of myself in two other roles, as a worker and as a citizen (of the world)," he said.

"Ask questions about where a product comes from and where a product will go after me."

■ How often do you replace your phone?

Go to the mX app to cast YOUR VOTE



Grace De Morgan, Maya Sebestyen and Lucas Connolly are ready to help adults feel like kids again.

Picture: CHRIS PAVLICH

● FRINGE ROMP

Having fun is just kids' stuff

REMEMBER the good old days when fairybread was a staple of every celebration?

Well, turn back the clock and romp through childhood again courtesy of Maya Sebestyen's *Camp Super Happy Sunshine*.

The Sydney Fringe Festival show, at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre from Friday, will see camp counsellors Doug (Lucas Connolly) and Sally (Grace De Morgan) involve the crowd in a host of classic school camp activities, with everything from tunnel ball to making a pirate hat on the agenda.

Sebestyen got the idea for the show after working at a kids' summer camp in the US and wondering why adults didn't get into something that was so much fun.

"This is really aimed at people in their 20s, that is the Fringe audience, but I am hoping to attract some older people as well," she said. "I think people get to experience what it's like to be a kid again."

Sebestyen is keen to take her creation to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival next year.

Camp Super Happy Sunshine is on this Friday, and September 20-21 and 27-28. Tickets are \$15. Visit 2013.sydneymfringe.com.

— DENNIS CLOUGH

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