

# yoursay

## Two bad examples with water, the Steiner debate continues and we a

### LETTER OF THE MONTH

#### Time, ladies!

Hang on, last time I checked, we were in the middle of a drought. So why do I find myself reading about Virginia Feldtman's designer bathroom with not one, but two of those outrageously huge, wasteful showerheads (Homes, June)? And if that wasn't bad enough, turn to the last page and Terry Bracks (Melbourne Quiz, June) is bemoaning the fact that it's too difficult to enforce time limits on showers in her household because they have teenage children. If the rest of us can do our part, so can you, ladies.  
**Lisa Claiborne, Brunswick**

#### Steiner is religious

Thank you, David Rood, for your article (Blackboard Jungle, June) attempting to bring some rational argument to the Steiner versus state education debate.

This is a flagship issue for those interested in maintaining the integrity of state schools. The article indicated that one of the major objections of the Parents for State Education group is that Steiner education is based in a religious philosophy and this erodes the secular nature of state education. The breakout headed "True or false" gave the Steiner group voice to answer a number of questions, including whether Steiner education is religious. The answer "no" by Steiner teacher John Davidson is disingenuous. Rood describes the day at East Benteigh Primary School beginning with the recitation of a clearly religious verse, the class holding hands and candles burning. I read the verse a number of times in astonishment because I could not believe that the pro-Steiner camp could so blatantly

contradict their own claims that the philosophy is not religious.

**Cheryl Jakab, Maldon**

#### Steiner a let-down

Your article on Steiner schools (Blackboard Jungle, June) brings to mind things both wonderful and cruel that I have encountered from the Steiner system. I eagerly attended an information session at a very well-regarded Steiner kinder and was immediately impressed and excited about the possibilities for our son – until I happened to mention that he is autistic. The teachers, in a very kind and gentle way, made it very clear that my son would be seen as a problem and that it was going to be difficult for them to "fit him in". Professor Bernie Neville "observed a sense of exclusivity and preciousness" – I observed discrimination. The only lesson

Steiner taught us is that our son is going to be unfairly judged by people who believe that he is not good enough for them.

**Fiona Bottcher, Brunswick West**

#### A Melbourne story

I was most interested to read Peter Barrett's article about people with the surname Melbourne (Meet the Melbournes, June). My mother, who is 90, was born Mary Ellen Melbourne in Avenel, about 100 kilometres north of Melbourne. She used to tell me about being teased when she lived in Melbourne. She maintained that several other families who claimed the surname Melbourne had changed to it from other names when they migrated here. When she was younger, she thought that her family were the only "real" Melbournes.  
**Valda Hackwill, via email**