

INSIDE TODAY



IN the Oscar-nominated *Up In The Air*, George Clooney plays a high-flying businessman whose job it is to fire people. Find out what our reviewer Megan Lewis thought of the latest flick on Page 19.

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Draw 2981  
13-2-10

Dividends

Div 1	\$1,818,181.82
Div 2	\$14,725.85
Div 3	\$1431.40
Div 4	\$49.25
Div 5	\$30.60

SUPER 66

0 2 5 1 3 8  
Div 1 - No winner



Results Draw 1281

15 19 21  
24 32 35  
SUPP 33

The Morning Bulletin

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# Children's book by ex-pat is bestseller

By SHARYN O'NEILL  
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A CHILDREN'S fiction novel inspired by a dream and her childhood in Rockhampton has reached bestseller lists for author Leigh K Cunningham.

*The Glass Table* is described as an eco-fantasy thriller, written for eight to 12-year-olds, where 12 children disappear while swimming at the fictional Lake Como during the summer holidays.

Leigh, who now lives in Singapore with her husband Steve, has named characters in the book after her nephews and nieces living in this region, including two primary characters, Jack and Jordan.

Other features of the book, including the location, are drawn from her memories growing up.

"When we were kids, it was a treat to go down to 'the beach' (Lammermoor Beach, Yeppoon or The Causeway) for the weekend," Leigh said.

"That's basically how Lake Como and Rumpole emerged in the book - the characters all live in Rumpole (Rocky) and when it's hot or school holidays, they head up to Lake Como (the beach/Causeway) to get away, although the places have been fictionalised



IN PRINT: Leigh K Cunningham's book *The Glass Table* (right) has been named among Amazon.com bestsellers for children's fiction.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

quite a bit - Lake Como is not a beach, but a lake."

## Writing for children is a lot of fun

Other parts draw from her childhood school holidays spent in North Queensland at Babinda, while the initial story was developed from a dream Steve had while they were sailing in the Whitsundays.

Leigh (nee Rycan) was born in Rockhampton and went to primary school in Frenchville and The Rockhampton Girls'

Grammar.

In other books she has written, Leigh also pays tribute to her former Girls' Grammar history teacher Mrs Mulder and English teacher Ms Jenkins by naming characters after them.

Her fondest memories of growing up in Rocky were being able to ride her bike to school and of how the rivers flowed during the summer school holidays because it rained so much.

"We used to go down to Moores Creek with tyre tubes and ride the rapids," she said.

"Back in those days, the local corner store

reigned supreme and on pocket money days we used to ride around to Bruin's store and get our supplies of lollies and chocolate."

She also met her husband Steve Cunningham in Rockhampton at just 18.

Leigh met Steve, a soccer player with the Capricorn Rams, through her brother who played on the same team.

They married in 1983 and still make regular trips back to Rockhampton from Singapore to visit family.

Before writing, Leigh worked as a lawyer and spent most of her career as a senior executive. It wasn't until moving to Singapore that she had the opportunity to write full time.

*The Glass Table*, her first book published, was the second book she had written.

The sequel to *The Glass Table*, called *Shards*, is due for release in March. Leigh admits she had no intention to write an environmental theme novel initially.

"This happened organically as it is impossible to create a

world where children are living in a river without considering what threats there might be to the ecosystem that is their new home."

Fond of reading as a child, citing Enid Blyton and *The Borrowers* by Mary Norton as her favourites, Leigh remembers spending many hours frequenting the Northside Library.

"So I returned the favour and donated a copy of *The Glass Table*."

The book has been listed in the top 10 best-sellers for Time Bookstores in Singapore

for children's fiction.

It has also been named in the Amazon.com bestsellers for children's fiction: action/adventure, and Amazon.com bestsellers children's fiction: science fiction/fantasy/mystery/horror.

"Writing for children is a lot of fun, and a lot of what they find amusing, I do too."

*The Glass Table* is available in Australia through Angus & Robertson bookstores and ebooks are available at Smashwords and Barnes & Noble.



WEATHER: today 25-31° tomorrow 30-24° see full weather details page 31

# I was surprised: Heenan

FROM PAGE 1

wasn't perfect, he didn't agree with his friend's new beliefs or his thoughts that the Catholic Church would disappear.

"I know him very well, he's a lifetime and dear friend of mine," Bishop Heenan said.

"Reading the article in the paper I was a little surprised.

"They are very strong statements.

"While I respect him, I do not agree with his position because these are the very foundations on which my life

is built."

He said he had always admired Peter's strong commitment to help marginalised people, before going on to point out the many Catholic and Christian groups, such as the Sisters of Mercy, St Vincent de Paul, Centacare and Anglicare, who also help the disadvantaged.

"Good friends are allowed to differ and we differ very much now in our beliefs," said Bishop Heenan, who didn't get a chance to see Mr Kennedy on the weekend because of commit-

ments in Bundaberg and the mining towns.

## I know him very well, he's a lifetime and dear friend of mine

Meanwhile, Bishop Heenan also said the church was in the process of organising visas for three Indian priests who he hoped would move to Central Queensland to help make up for a shortage of local clergy.

Having recently

returned to Australia from India, he said the new priests would be welcomed across the region.

"One of the challenges now is getting visas, even temporary visas, and this could take most of the rest of the year," Bishop Heenan said.

"We are happy to go through that process."

He said priests in India underwent a longer training period than in Australia, with many studying for more than 10 years.

While the new priests speak fluent

English, the church will support them with speech classes to help overcome any accent barriers.

"I think our parishioners will be very welcoming; they have supported me in going down this path," Bishop Heenan said.

Asked if he felt under pressure from the challenges facing the church, Bishop Heenan said he felt blessed to serve, for many years, the people of Central Queensland, whose faith was alive and hope-filled.

- Adam Wratten



STRONG STATEMENTS: Father Peter Kennedy during a prayer service in Brisbane last year.

PHOTO: AAP IMAGE/DALE DE LA REY