

History in the making

Actions speak

Aussies on the spot



DAVID BUTLER, 24
Financial consultant
Drummoyne
He spent \$10,000 especially to see the inauguration

“I wanted to be there at this massive moment in history. I’m so excited.

I’m getting up at 5am because I’ve got standing tickets at the mall so I’m leaving early to get through the security.

It will be cold but I’ve got my thermals and everything ready to go.

My Mum was saying ‘I wish I had thought about coming with you’ and my Dad’s like ‘I can’t believe you have spent all that money on it’.

Some friends think I’m a bit sad, others think it’s a great thing and will be an awesome experience.”



ROBERT HARRINGTON, 24
Engineering student from Brisbane
is sleeping on a friend’s couch in Washington

“I’m buying as much bling, as much memorabilia as I can because it’s cheap and it’s fun and it’s so tacky - it’s awful. He’s a fantastic orator, incredibly intelligent.

He’s a statesman and he brings some grace and class to the office.”

CHRIS SAMPSON
IT executive from Tasmania on a two-week business trip to America

“It’s clearly a hugely significant opportunity to change the US psyche. There’s massive support for the values Barack Obama espouses.

The train (from New York) was packed and everyone was really positive.

I get the feeling the train was full of people who normally wouldn’t travel.

They feel it’s a historic moment.”

IAN McDONALD
Chris Sampson’s business partner

“It’s possibly the biggest event that I’ve known about or witnessed.

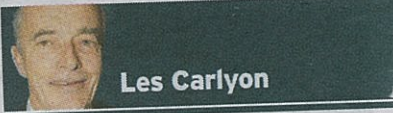
There is no other event in time that’s bigger.

It’s got such gravity.”



Spreading the word: President Obama has captivated voters with his masterful oratory style

Picture: AP



Les Carlyon

CLIVE James knows about George Bush and Paul Keating wrote the book on Barack Obama.

James said a few years ago that when Bush searched for a word he felt fear on his face showed it. When he found one he felt triumph and his face showed that too.

Almost always, the word he finds is the wrong one but his look of relief arouses sympathy in the audience, as when a child sent to fetch a spoon from the kitchen drawer, comes back with a fork.

Words baffled Bush. They jumped on him and ambushed him.

When he said more and more of our imports were coming from overseas, I knew what he meant, just as Lord Raglan knew what he meant when he told the Light Brigade to advance on the guns, a why didn’t those berks on the horizon realise that he meant the guns on the hill not those in the valley?

Bush seemed forever puzzled that people could be so prissy about something as trifling as language.

He had no rhythm. His delivery reminded you of the kid forced to read an essay to the class: no pauses or schisms, lots of concentration but no joy.

Folksiness came naturally to Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan. When Bush tried it, he seemed corny. Machismo came naturally to Churchill. When Bush tried he sounded like an extra in a Chazelle film.

Words held no magic. They were things to be got rid of quickly.

The Bush era has been damned for mistakes in war and commerce and contempt for legal niceties that have become the touchstone of American democracy.

Bush never seemed to understand what he had inherited. Habeas corpus was one of those funny foreign phrases, possibly coined by a Grecian dude. It didn’t occur to Bush that by tossing out the Geneva Conventions he was opening the way for a future enemy to mislead American prisoners of war.

But then history didn’t interest him much either. When it came to working a response to Islamic terrorism he couldn’t seem to line up the new tactics against old ones, such as Hitler’s many or the risk of a nuclear hold during the Cold War.

He couldn’t strike a balance because he didn’t have points of reference.

For him it was all happening for the first time.

Goodbye Bush



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