

MEDIA RELEASE

Sydney Thursday, 8 November 2007

'REBEL SPOKESWOMAN' TO RUN AGAINST THE PM Climate change - greatest human rights issue to face the planet.

Margherita Tracanelli, human rights advocate, law student and media coach will run against Prime Minister John Howard in Bennelong for Patrice Newell's Climate Change Coalition.

The 49 year old, who has been endorsed by Timorese President Jose Ramos Horta and whose website sports a photo gallery of human rights activism dating back to the early nineties, has worked everywhere from deep in the Burmese and Timor jungle to the UN in New York and Geneva, the ABC and the NSW state parliament.

Her website www.margheritatracanelli.com includes references from high ranking politicians to General Cosgrove [ret], an SAS commander as well as some of Australia's top journalists, including the intrepid Evan Williams.

Tracanelli, who was coined 'the rebel spokeswoman' by journalists while working as the Media and Communication Director for the East Timorese Resistance movement (then known as the CNRT) said she is used to tough jobs and big battles.

Renowned for her extraordinary ability to deal with journalists and gain media attention for causes, her work with Jose Ramos Horta placed Timor at the top of the world's media agenda in the early nineties with Jose Ramos Horta securing the 1996 Nobel Prize for Peace.

"I love the big battles - bring it on, my grandfather Laurie McGinty who died only three weeks ago at the age of 94 used to say to me, 'remember love, never ever give up, because the bigger they are the harder they fall'. That always inspired me when I was up against the Indonesian military, the Government of Indonesia and their gigantic multi million dollar PR machine at Hill and Knowlton."

"I had plenty of people tell me I should get a proper job, including a journalist for Vatican radio at the UN in Geneva would you believe, he said what's a nice girl like you mucking around with these guerrillas'. But when you are driven by an idea, by a dream that you know is just and morally right, you can do anything."

"Climate change sceptics remind me of people who would come up with all sorts of negative nonsense about Timor, and look how we proved them wrong - the much desired and hard won independence was won, climate change is an even bigger battle with much more at stake and there are a lot of old men with big business interests against us. The resistance had no money, Jose and I didn't have money but we knew what we did have and that was truth!"

"We at the CCC are John Lennon's dreamers, we dare to believe and to dream that people can change, but have truth on our side, and we will win, you watch, you wait, you will see. We will save this planet, Mr. Howard's Liberal government had 11 years to address this and did nought. We will do a lot, vote for me - I want to fight for an end to coal production and I certainly will not allow a nuclear reactor in Bennelong." she said.

"The thing Jose taught me was that a multi pronged approach is necessary, we need systems in place for this to work - climate change is at that stage now where we need the diplomatic, the political and the media all working together to achieve a goal."

"Climate change has forced me to look at how I can make the best contribution to solving the problem, it is the greatest human rights issue facing the planet today, we have the right to clean water and air. I met Mr. Howard on Melbourne Cup day in Eastwood, and challenged him to a debate but he declined."

Mr. Howard might just be the second PM in our history to lose his seat.

Ms Tracanelli added that tonight she will be 'speaking to the disenfranchised generation Y' at Macquarie Uni at 5pm and then at Citizens for Integrity in Government at 7.30pm.

ENDS

MEDIA ENQUIRIES PATRICE NEWELL 0417 231 822 / ALEXANDRA MORPHET 02 4998 6286