

The Campbell clan take Scotland by storm

SportsDay

COULD PACKER'S PENTHOUSE MAKE HIM \$100 MILLION?

News, Page 3

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“People know Sydney, they know the Opera House, they know the Harbour Bridge and in future they'll know the Cloud.” **CLOVER MOORE** ”



Is the lord mayor's vision an Eiffel or awful tower? The experts have their say. **Pages 10-11**

Australian currency tempts the world Overseas investors flood in

High dollar may force rate cut

Jonathan Shapiro

Home owners could benefit if a tide of foreign money flooding into the country prompts the Reserve Bank to cut interest rates.

Economists and currency experts have noted a torrent of off-shore capital making its way to Australia due to the relatively high interest rates in this country.

This serves to inflate the dollar, and some now predict that the Re-

serve Bank could cut interest rates in an attempt to bring down the value of the currency even if that risks putting further heat into the housing market.

The high dollar is more of a worry for the RBA than a surge in property prices in the major cities, said Phil Moffitt, senior bond portfolio manager for one of the world's largest funds, Goldman Sachs Asset Management.

“They may take the opportunity

later in the year with inflation coming down because of the [repeal of the] carbon tax and the soft domestic economy to cut rates,” he told Fairfax Media on Tuesday.

Mr Moffitt said the confluence of weak domestic growth, an expected fall in inflation as the carbon tax is discarded and the high currency was pointing towards a potential cut in the official rate below its current 2.50 per cent setting before the year's end.

Economists at rival bank UBS have backed the analysis of Australia's attractiveness for foreign cash.

At the same time there are signs that business and consumer confidence is still fragile. A new survey of the top 300 biggest listed companies found chief executives are even more pessimistic about conditions.

“The history of this survey is that in the past, the big guys tend to be better at picking the trend,” Alan Oster, NAB's chief economist, said.

Mr Moffitt said his prediction of an RBA cut before the end of the year was “not that radical” as bond traders are now pricing in about a one in four chance of a rate cut before December.

But the call is not in line with economists' consensus forecast for the RBA to remain on hold. Mr Moffitt said analysts tended to place more emphasis on house prices in the RBA's decisions to

Continued Page 9

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Twitter feed

Caspar the Friendly Art @makiemarsellos; Rubber duck, Rupert H@rpy; Jessica Rabbit, Blake Erickson @blake_Erickson; Kim Kardashian, Jessica @Ms_Mosman; Drawing of lady onto arch, Mat Whitehead @matwhi; Mr Burns, Rob Stott @rob_stott; USB cord @MatthewBevan.



Source: Twitter

Technology

Engineers to make sure Cloud Arch is quake-proof

Stephanie Gardiner

It might resemble a wispy, white cumulus, but *Cloud Arch* is designed to withstand cyclonic winds and even earthquakes.

Using sophisticated technology, engineers will put the design to the test to ensure it can handle even the most extreme and unlikely of weather events.

Harry Partridge, director of Partridge event engineering firm, which will manage the project, said a specialist wind engineer would conduct the tests, either through computerised or physical model building, to make sure the sculpture is unbreakable.

"It will be designed for maximum winds as we've experienced in Sydney," he said. "It will be designed for earthquakes as well. It will move in the wind, but whether you will be able to see that with the naked eye, I don't know yet."

The sculpture will stand up to 75 metres high, weigh up to 70 tonnes and have foundations as wide as 10 metres. The twists and bends of the sculpture, curving in two directions, will be created using computers, which are linked to steel fabrication machinery.

"The computer program and geometry ... is fed straight into the machine and the machine takes that and creates those shapes directly," Mr Partridge said. "We don't have a man on the workshop floor measuring something, looking at drawings, going and measuring a piece of steel. It comes straight from the source to the machine."

"[The technology means] we can do things even five years ago we couldn't sensibly do."

Cloud Arch will be likely built under dark skies, with small pieces of the sculpture brought to the site at night. Cranes will then help lift and connect those pieces of the white steel structure. The pieces of the sculpture will likely be made in a warehouse in NSW, the location of which will be decided during the design development.

Mr Partridge, whose firm will collaborate with artist and architect Junya Ishigami's engineer in Japan, said he was thrilled to help create such a substantial piece of art.

"The main excitement will be when it's unveiled and when it's working," he said. "It will be something that people get a lot of joy from. Watching it will make a lot of people wonder."

He said public art helps a community grow: "Up until now, Sydney has lagged a bit behind other cities in the world and we're catching up."

City installation

Giant urban sculpture leaves

James Robertson, Andrew Taylor

Sydney Council's plans to adorn the CBD with \$8 million worth of sculptures variously described as "awe-inspiring" and "whimsical" have left few people indifferent.

"I thought, 'wow,'" a beaming lord mayor Clover Moore said recalling her reaction when a panel of experts unveiled the final concept for a 50- to 75-metre-high centre-piece "cloud" arch for George Street from a field of hundreds.

Other reactions were pithy too – but from different emotions.

"Gigantic and stupid" were the kindest words leading sculptor Ron Robertson-Swann had for the three multimillion-dollar artworks. "They're going to bore the pants off us. It's a decorative arch. It could be half that size, and that would be generous. It's not going to be an icon of Sydney."

Architect David Vago was similarly scathing: "Would Michelangelo be turning in his grave if he knew art now was just taking an object and making it giant?"

The \$3.5 million installation, compared by the lord mayor to great world structures such as the Eiffel Tower, was designed by Japanese artist and Harvard critic Junya Ishigami.

The two other artworks include a \$2.5 million three-storey high pavilion shaped like a milk crate for Belmore Park next to Central Station. And for the Kent Street underpass, a \$2.1 million installation featuring 60 handmade bronze birds.

Robertson-Swann called the milk-crate creation "seriously boring". But the choices had plenty of defenders among local critics.

Museum of Contemporary Art head Elizabeth Ann Macgregor, who praised the arch and Ishigami's ephemeral style, said: "It puts us on the international map."

One councillor was heard to compare the metal white ribbon to Casper the Friendly Ghost when it



Defiant: Clover Moore with the cloud sculpture planned for George Street. Photo: Peter Rae

Trio of tricks and treats as artists grapple with

A soaring cloud arch, an outsize milk-crate and a scattering of birds. Will Clover Moore's new city sculptures do the trick? And what is the trick, actually? What – in a post-industrial, post-modern, post-coherence multicultural – is public art supposed to do?

The three sculptures are a small, \$9 million part of the City's contribution to the light rail project. They're also the distillate of a massive public art "call-out", concentrating the creative energies of nearly 700 entries from 25 coun-

Elizabeth Farrelly



tries into this relatively small space and budget.

And they're chosen by one of the most distinguished juries seen in this country, including the brilliant artist Janet Laurence.

So they should be good. Are they? In a word, yes.

Public art is notoriously difficult

for us, now, absent a shared cultural lexicon. Phidias and Michelangelo could rely not just on a common theology and worldview but also on a general grasp of symbolism and numerology.

These days you can't even rely on everyone watching television, much less the same programs. So sculptors must delve deeper, foraging for whatever is universal in human experience and welding it somehow to the local.

This changes the game. No longer is it sufficient for a sculptor to master material, space and com-

position, with a dash of symbolism.

Today's artist must grapple with the psyche. Contemporary urban sculptors must enhance urban space in a way that resonates with us all, stitching our wildly diverse backgrounds into a new view of Sydney – or of life. It's no small thing.

Junya Ishigami's *Cloud Arch* tosses a ribbon into space. Smaller, more earthbound, it would resemble those silly loopy jobs by ARM along the Melbourne Docklands waterfront.

But *Cloud Arch*'s immense

Nominate a nickname

All good landmarks deserve a good nickname. We asked our readers what they thought locals should call the new white steel arch sculpture to be erected on George Street and received a range of responses. We've collected some of our favourites in a poll below, where you can add your vote.

A homage to String Theory @PigsFlyBackward, Twitter; **The Princess Beatrice Hat**, @BecAr-

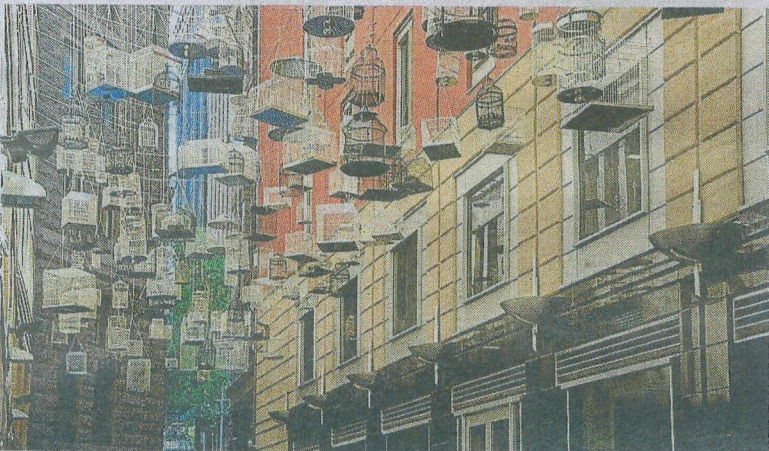
mitage, Twitter; **The Dental Floss**, @Steph_Coombes, Twitter; **Arc De Triomphe of Australia**, Helen Heap, Facebook; **Casper**, Gandalf, smh.com.au; **The Kraken**, @therawbucket, Twitter; **The Sydney Arch**, @zalman44, Twitter; **Mr Stay Puft** (the marshmallow man from Ghostbusters), Rowena Faenza, Facebook; **The Ribbon or The Cookie Cutter**, @ms_tigertale, Twitter; **The Bog Roll**, @Jakejnelson; **Air Ribbon**, Michelle H, smh.com.au; **The Big Floss**, David, smh.com.au;

The Monorail Reborn, Oliver Townshend, Facebook; **The Mae West**, @clarkey1963, Instagram; **Jelly Baby**, @DonnaSBJ, Twitter; **Clasped Love** WPG, smh.com.au; **The Wisp**, @alkemmi, Twitter; **The Cloud**, Michael Gormly, Facebook; **The Tapeworm** @lauren_nissen on Instagram; **The Tall Poppy** Chris Clark on Facebook: 'Because Aussies love to tear it down.'; And on Twitter, @tfswebb's early nomination for **Space Noodle**, our own Seattle's Space Needle.



On web and mobile
See the video animation of the new sculpture for Sydney's George Street at smh.com.au/video

critics and public split



The Pavilion (top) planned for Belmore Park, and two existing installations in Sydney - Rush (top right) and Forgotten Songs in Angel Place.

was privately unveiled weeks ago. Other leading nickname contenders include the skipping rope and the dental floss.

But it was unclear what could be done if Sydneysiders simply hated the ideas. The question of how democratic and transparent the selection of public art ought to be has marred debate about the new installations, which were meant to be secret until Tuesday morning.

Liberal councillor Edward Mandla called for the public to see and comment on the finalists.

But other councillors argued that making losing designs public would discourage entrants who would no longer be able to enter them into other competitions.

The pieces will be completed in three to seven years, and will serve as a centrepiece for George Street in time for its transformation into a

'Would Michelangelo be turning in his grave if he knew that art now was just taking an object and making it giant?'

Architect David Vago

pedestrian boulevard and light-rail line later this decade. The final height of the arch will be decided after further technical analysis.

Cr Moore, sensitive to such criticisms, said that today was simply the beginning of a conversation about the artworks.

But asked whether there was any conceivable way in which these plans would be changed, she dodged the question. Just as with the public reaction to an expert panel's choice of design for the Opera House in 1957, the public would learn to love the artworks, she said: "People know Sydney, they know the Opera House, they know the Harbour Bridge and in future they'll know the Cloud."

public psyche in city's creative call-out

height sets it always against air, white on blue, so that it seems languidly to lasso the sky itself. Straddling the new light rail out-

Your Heart seems to align with the empty birdcages and forgotten birdsongs that float over Angel Place, as though the birds have

Contemporary urban sculptors must enhance urban space in a way that resonates with us all ... It's no small thing.

side the Town Hall on George Street, it marks the top of the hill; watershed, landmark, meeting point and exhilarator.

Tracey Emin's The Distance of

flown without their voices. Meant as a salve for the homesick, it recognises distance but celebrates stillness within the mayhem.

The giant blue milk crate - Hany

Armanious' Pavilion - is to my mind the least enchanting of the three.

We've seen outsize common objects ever since Oldenburg and, frankly, blue fibreglass has a way to go before it becomes the promised Gothic cathedral or Greek temple, which do genuinely master material, composition and light.

Still, the proof is in the building. Hoping here to eat my hat.

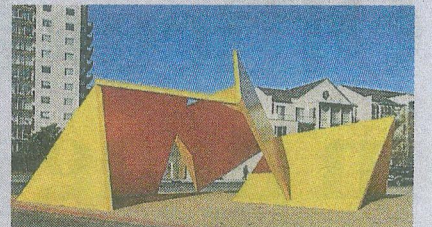
Elizabeth Farrelly is a Herald columnist, author, architecture critic and essayist.

Duds: Controversial public sculptures

Sculpture Vault, Ron Robertson-Swann, 1978
Nickname Yellow Peril, Steel Henge

Then The \$70,000 sculpture never stood a chance, pilloried even before it was installed in the then Melbourne City Square for not "fitting in" to the environment. It was opened in May 1980 but moved in December and relocated to Batman Park out of everyone's way.

Now The sculpture has been rehabilitated and since 2002 has lived at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art.



Sculpture William Dobell Memorial Sculpture, Bert Flugelman, 1979
Nickname Silver shish kebab

Then Flugelman's "pyramid tower" was installed smack-bang in the middle of Martin Place but moved in 1993 as part of an upgrade to the thoroughfare. Then Lord Mayor Frank Sartor suggested they might relocate it - in the Harbour Tunnel.

Now The sculpture now stands at the corner of Pitt and Bond Streets, where it attracts far less attention and criticism. Ron Robertson-Swann says: "The setting of it [now] reinforces what the sculpture is doing ... it sends the eye right up the sculpture."



Sculpture Stones Against The Sky, Ken Unsworth, 1998
Nickname Poo on Sticks

Then Unsworth designed Sydney's most controversial sculpture, which stands outside the Elan Building in Kings Cross, to show huge artificial rocks atop very slim poles. Compromises were made resulting in a look that ... reflects the nickname. Art critic Bruce Bruce James said: "Pole sitters and seagulls will be pleased ... but it won't bring tears of joy or bring tour buses to a halt."

Now Views haven't changed much. Associate professor Michael Goldbert recently described it as "literally crap ... badly conceived and ill-sited. All power to those who painted it black."



Sculpture Almost Once, Brett Whiteley, 1991
Nickname Matchsticks or Redhead, Blackhead

Then Unveiled a year before his death, Whiteley's piece has long been considered ill-placed (behind the Art Gallery, it's hidden from all except those on the Cahill Expressway) but is a favourite of the people. Aussies love big matchsticks as much as big prawns.

Now Most Sydneysiders love it - especially the cockatoos who sharpen their beaks on it - but art historian Dr Chris McAuliffe told Fairfax Media "given the sentimental theme of the sculpture it probably belongs outside Star City casino or the Gap."

