

The Daily Telegraph

WE'RE FOR SYDNEY

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SCOOP

SHORTEN ASIO CALL FOR SAM

KYLAR LOUSSIKIAN

BILL Shorten was so concerned by reports of Sam Dastyari's dealings with a billionaire Chinese donor he called ASIO's top officials to determine if the embattled senator was a national security concern.

The Daily Telegraph understands the Labor leader this week called the domestic spy agency after hearing allegations Mr Dastyari warned the property developer he was under surveillance.

Mr Shorten was advised he did not pose a security risk.

➤ FULL REPORT PAGE 8

SCOOP

GAME ON TO SPY ON KIDS

BRUCE MCDUGALL

TEACHERS will be able to spy on students by using a new program to keep tabs on what pupils are up to on their classroom laptops.

The colour-coding program throws up a "red flag" on the teacher's laptop when a student goes "off-task" on their computer. There are also other colours in the system, like green to show they are on-task and orange if they're searching Google or sending an email.

Six Sydney schools are already testing the software.

➤ FULL REPORT PAGE 3

SCOOP

TRASH TALK ON CAN PLAN

ANNA CALDWELL

HUNDREDS of vending machines ordered by the state government for its "shamolic" cash for cans scheme breach standards for disabled access, it can be revealed.

It is the latest blow for the recycling plan which is due to cause prices for drinks in bottles and cans to rise from tomorrow, as senior government MPs seethe about its "botched" rollout.

A case of beer or a box of soft-drink cans will increase by up to \$4.80 from tomorrow.

➤ CONTINUED PAGE 4



KING LEAR

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

Oscar-winner Rush denies 'inappropriate behaviour' during Sydney stage show

JONATHAN MORAN

OSCAR winning Australian actor Geoffrey Rush has been accused of "inappropriate behaviour" during Sydney Theatre Company's recent production of King Lear.

However, Rush — through his lawyers — last night vigorously

denied the claims. The Sydney Theatre Company told The Daily Telegraph it "received a complaint alleging that Mr Geoffrey Rush had engaged in inappropriate behaviour". "The Company received the complaint when Mr Rush's engagement with the Company had ended," it said. "The Company

continues to work with the complainant to minimise the risk of future instances of the alleged behaviour occurring in its workplace."

Mr Rush's lawyers said he had "not been approached by the Sydney Theatre Company, the alleged complainant nor any

representative of either". "Further, he has not been informed by them of the nature of the complaint and what it involves," a statement from HWL Ebsworth Lawyers said.

"If such a statement has been issued by the STC it is both irresponsible and highly damaging."

➤ FULL REPORTS PAGES 4-5

Oscar-winner Geoffrey Rush denies complaint made

STAR'S BARD BEHAVIOUR



EXCLUSIVE
JONATHAN MORAN

OSCAR-winning Australian actor Geoffrey Rush has been accused of "inappropriate behaviour" during the Sydney Theatre Company's recent production of *King Lear*.

But the star vigorously denies the allegations and says the company has never told him of any allegations of wrong doing.

The Daily Telegraph can today reveal that one of the country's most successful actors was the subject of a complaint during the production of *King Lear*.

It is understood the allegations of inappropriate behaviour occurred over several months. The local production of the classic William Shakespeare play ran from November 2015 to January 2016 at the Roslyn Packer Theatre.

There were also several months of rehearsals.

"Sydney Theatre Company received a complaint alleging that Mr Geoffrey Rush had engaged in inappropriate behaviour," a spokeswoman said to The Daily Telegraph.

"The Company received the complaint when Mr Rush's engagement with the Company had ended. The Company continues to work with the complainant to minimise the risk of future instances of the alleged behaviour occurring in its workplace."

"The complainant has requested that their identity be withheld."

"STC respects that request and for privacy reasons, will not be making any further comments."

In a strongly worded legal letter, lawyers for Rush at HWL Ebsworth last night said he had never been involved in any "inappropriate behaviour" and that his "regard, actions and treatment of all the people he has worked with has been impeccable beyond reproach."

"Mr Rush has not been approached by the Sydney Theatre Company and the alleged complainant nor any representative of either of them concerning the matter you have raised," the letter states.

"Further, he has not been informed by them of the nature of the complaint and what it involves."

The letter from the legal firm's partner Nicholas Pullen goes on to say that Rush has not been involved with the Sydney Theatre Company or its representatives for a period of more than 22 months.

"In the circumstances, if such a statement has been issued by the STC it is both irresponsible and highly damaging to say the least."

"Your 'understanding' of what has occurred is, with the greatest respect, simply fishing and unfounded."



Government's recycling scheme is a big load of rubbish

FROM PAGE 1
with families expected to recoup the money by collecting refunds for recycling the bottles.

But despite the government promising to roll out 800 reverse vending machines across the state, last night there were set to be only 236 recycling points in operation when the program begins tomorrow, made up of

vending machines and over-the-counter arrangements.

Based on the government's map, more than 10 electorates across the state had no way to claim recycling refunds. Must-win seats for the government in regional NSW were missing collection points, including Orange, which the nationals spectacularly lost to the Shoot-

ers party in the 2016 by-election.

The Daily Telegraph can reveal that those vending machines that do exist don't meet national standards for disabled access. The chutes (pictured right) are 1470mm high — above the 900-1100mm high required for public access. Physical Disabilities Council CEO Serena Owens said it was "crazy

the government hasn't considered legal access requirements".

A spokesman for the scheme's operator — Tomra Cleanaway — said the height was "within reach of an adult seated in a wheelchair".

One senior government member described the scheme as "shambolic", saying it was embarrassing to botch some-

thing so innocuous as a recycling scheme, and that it would hurt the government in regional seats that could determine the next election.

Small businesses in electorates on the northern border are preparing to lose revenue to shops in Queensland which does not have a container collection surcharge.



in Sydney Theatre Shakespeare production

“
Sydney Theatre Company received a complaint alleging that Mr Geoffrey Rush had engaged in inappropriate behaviour

STC spokeswoman

“
It does not warrant comment except that it is false and untrue

Lawyer for Rush
 Nicholas Pullen



Clockwise from left: Rush and his 1996 Oscar; in *Twelfth Night*; receiving the Order of Australia with Governor-General Peter Cosgrove; in STC's *King Lear*; on location at Sydney Harbour on Tuesday; and (below left) as Einstein in TV series *Genius*. Main picture: Matrix Media Group

"It does not warrant comment except that it is false and untrue."

Rush has worked with the STC many times — both acting and directing productions like *Uncle Vanya*, *Oleanna*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *King Lear* and *The Government Inspector*.

Rush won the Academy Award for Best Actor in 1996 for his role as David Helfgott in the movie *Shine* and was nominated for the best supporting actor role two years later for *Shakespeare in Love*.

His other Oscar nominations include best actor in 2000 film *Quills* and for *The King's Speech* in 2011 in the same category.

He has found fame for becoming one of the few people to have won acting's "Triple Crown" — the Academy Award, the Primetime Emmy Award and the Tony Award.

The 66-year-old married father-of-two and Melbourne resident is also the president of the Australian Academy of Cinema Television and Arts and is expected to attend the annual AACTA Awards at The Star Event Centre next week.



Service to counsel affected Nine staff

CHANNEL Nine has opened an independent counselling service following allegations this week of sexual assault by former TV personality Don Burke as the network's boss Hugh Marks addresses staff for the first time, saying "we cannot rewrite history".

A new phone line was set up yesterday to allow people to report instances of past behaviour they would like addressed.

"Former Nine employees with complaints can provide their personal contact details and HR will follow up directly on a strictly confidential basis," Nine said in an email to staff.

The counselling will be provided at no cost to them, Nine said, and will support the person to "work through any issues that relate to their time" at Nine.

Mr Marks, meanwhile, told staff that allegations of harassment and misconduct by Burke was "appalling", vowing to deal with misconduct, harassment, discrimination and bullying issues "effectively".

Burke returned to Nine's *A Current Affair*, this week where he admitted to behaving like a bullying tyrant, and having "a number of affairs", but cannot remember "exact things I did 20 years ago".

He has been described as a "sexual predator" and "psychotic bully" during the 17-year run of Burke's *Backyard*. Speaking to ACA host Tracy Grimshaw, he claimed to be a victim of a "witch hunt" ignited by the Harvey Weinstein scandal.



Don Burke being interviewed on ACA.

KIDS AWAKE TO FAKE NEWS

OLDER children are becoming increasingly savvy about fake news on social media.

More than half of youngsters aged 12 to 15 use Facebook and Twitter to access news online — often clicking on stories that have been recommended by "friends" in their network or by users they "follow". But even though they like to access news in this way,

they are extremely wary about which articles they can trust.

The majority of those in this age group who read news on social media make an effort to check if it is true. Some 86 per cent make "at least one practical attempt" to check the veracity of an article.

For example, they might double check it with mainstream news sources.



Mount Agung in action.

Bali tourist relief as airport reopens

BALI'S airport reopened late yesterday and flights resumed as the amount of volcanic ash from the erupting Mt Agung volcano decreased.

After three days of closure, a decision was made late yesterday for the airport to open.

The decision brought relief to the 150,000 tourists stranded in Bali as a result of the volcano,

which began erupting last week. Yesterday almost 58,000 passengers, on 430 flights, had faced cancellations.

Authorities said while the volcanic ash plume was still reaching 1500-2000m, it had decreased compared to the previous day.

The Volcanology and Geological Hazards Mitigation Cen-

tre chief, Kasbani, said everyone living inside the exclusion zone 8-10km from the crater had been told to leave.

An eruption on Tuesday, which hurled volcanic ash more than 4000m into the air had been the biggest so far, prompting warnings that a large-scale eruption was just hours away. But that has not yet happened.

UNSCRIPTED DRAMA: THE OSCAR STAR SCANDAL

I was in the show. I believe (her)

STC actor Meyne Wyatt

WE'RE WITH YOU

Theatre cast back accuser as Rush denies 'touching'

JONATHAN MORAN

TWO Sydney Theatre Company actors yesterday spoke out in support of the actress who has accused Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush of touching her inappropriately during the stage production of *King Lear*.

Rush — one of Australia's biggest stars — was yesterday continuing to vehemently deny the claims.

Meyne Raoul Wyatt, who also appeared in *King Lear*, said he believed the allegations. "I believe (the person who) has come forward. It's time for Sydney Theatre Company and the industry in Australia and worldwide as a whole to make a stand," Wyatt said.

And Brandon McClelland, who has

worked alongside the actress, urged others to believe the complaints. "It wasn't a misunderstanding," he said.

Two STC sources said the company stood by her claims. Both said the company wouldn't work with Rush again. Despite denials, Rush was told who made the claims in a phone call with executive director Patrick McIntyre weeks ago. Mr McIntyre last night said the STC had "reviewed policies" about "inappropriate behaviour".

► FULL REPORTS P4-5



SCOOP

THE BANK BUST

SHARRI MARKSON & KYLAR LOUSSIKIAN

FORMER premier Mike Baird played a key role in convincing the Turnbull government to agree to a royal commission into the

big banks. As Mr Baird and his new boss NAB chair Ken Henry got the banks onside, Treasurer Scott Morrison also had a call with Reserve Bank governor Philip Lowe that reversed his position.

► FULL REPORTS PAGE 9

REVEALED

TOP KIDS GO BUSH

ANNA CALDWELL

HIGH-achieving students will be given free university degrees and a \$7500-a-year payment in exchange for spending three years teaching in the NSW bush.

Sixty free degrees will be offered from next year as part of a radical push to get better teachers in rural areas as the government fights to maintain a political grip on crucial country electorates.

► FULL REPORT PAGE 1

REVEALED

WHAT A SHOCKER

ANNA CALDWELL

ONE of the state's power fat cats has sparked uproar after it was revealed he has pocketed a whopping \$17,000 pay rise as rocketing bills leave families struggling to keep the lights on.

Essential Energy chief executive John Cleland has taken home \$882,076 even as his own company described its patchy service reliability as "unfavourable".

► FULL REPORT PAGE 7



The Old Vic Theatre on The Cut in London.

HR overhaul to lift curtain on bad deeds

EXCLUSIVE
JONATHAN MORAN

THE Sydney Theatre Company has revised its HR policies in a bid to ensure it maintains a safe environment for staff.

Executive director of the STC Patrick McIntyre (below) said it was important actors feel safe to speak up and believes maintenance of confidentiality to be key.

"We have reviewed policies and procedures in place and that includes educating actors when they come in to the company about our intolerance of inappropriate behaviour, who they should speak to and encouraging them to speak up," Mr McIntyre said.

Mr McIntyre's comments come after the STC confirmed it had received a complaint by a staff member over allegations of "inappropriate behaviour" by Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush. Rush vehemently denies any wrongdoing.

Mr McIntyre stressed that he and the executive team at the theatre company have a duty of care to ensure all staff feel safe and respected in the workplace.

"This isn't about creating drama and blame but if everyone holds each other accountable, we create the kind of workplace we

all want to be in," he said. More broadly, Mr McIntyre suggested it is a wideranging issue for the industry to address in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal.

"Many still view that speaking up comes with adverse repercussions," he explained.

"This is a trust issue that the industry needs to work towards resolving and the observance of confidentiality is key to this. If people don't trust us with their stories, they won't speak up."

The HR overhaul follows preliminary findings of an Actors Equity survey aimed at theatre actors which found that 40 per cent of respondents claimed they had directly experienced sexual harassment, bullying or misconduct.

Oscar winner Kevin Spacey became embroiled in the ongoing controversy rocking the entertainment industry with numerous victims coming forward — including 20 complaints from his time as artistic director at London's Old Vic Theatre between 2004 and 2015.

A law firm's investigation into allegations about Spacey stated: "Despite having the appropriate escalation processes in place, it was claimed that those affected felt unable to raise concerns and that Spacey operated without sufficient accountability."



ACTS OF



Meyne Raoul Wyatt

I was in the show. I believe whoever has come forward. It's time for Sydney Theatre Company and the industry in Australia and worldwide as a whole to make a stand on this behaviour!!!



Rush denies claim of 'inappropriate behaviour'

Geoffrey Rush, 66, is the subject of a complaint by a staff member over allegations of "inappropriate behaviour" by Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush. Rush vehemently denies any wrongdoing.



MEYNE WYATT

» Nominated for 2014 Logie for Most Outstanding Newcomer for Redfern Now

» Appeared on Neighbours from 2014 to 2016 as Nate Kinski and became the first indigenous actor to be part of the main cast since the soapie began

» Appeared in STC production of King Lear alongside Rush from 2015 to 2016



Brandon McClelland

BRANDON MCCLELLAND

» Appeared in 2014 television miniseries ANZAC Girls as Pat Dooley

» Also played Robert Donnelly in Love Child from 2014-2015

» Appeared in Sydney Theatre Company productions such as A Midsummer Night's Dream in 2016

Sydney Theatre Company actors support

EXCLUSIVE
JONATHAN MORAN

TWO actors who work with the Sydney Theatre Company yesterday publicly threw their support behind the actress who has accused Oscar-winner Geoffrey Rush of touching her inappropriately during the stage production of King Lear.

It comes as Rush — one of the country's most successful actors — was yesterday continuing to vehemently deny claims he inappropriately

touched a cast member of the local production of the classic William Shakespeare play.

Rising young actor Meyne Raoul Wyatt, who appeared in King Lear, said he believed his castmate's version of events.

"I was in the show," Wyatt, who has also starred in Neighbours and Redfern Now, wrote on Facebook yesterday after The Daily Telegraph broke the story.

"I believe (the person who) has come forward. It's

time for Sydney Theatre Company and the industry in Australia and worldwide as a whole to make a stand on this behaviour!!!"

And Brandon McClelland, who has worked alongside the woman at the centre of the alleged complaint and is in the company's current production of Three Sisters, urged others on Twitter to believe the actress.

"It wasn't a misunderstanding. It wasn't a joke," he posted.

McClelland's tweet was

also reposted by several other Sydney theatre actors as the story dominated social media yesterday.

The STC production of King Lear ran from November 2015 to January 2016.

The 66-year-old acting legend yesterday said he "immediately phoned and spoke to senior management" at the STC when he became aware of rumours there was a complaint.

But he said the STC refused to give him any details.

"They refused to illumi-

Statement for acting veteran blasts STC 'smear'

MANAGEMENT for Oscar-winning actor Geoffrey Rush issued a comprehensive statement yesterday denying allegations of "inappropriate behaviour" during the 66-year-old veteran actor's time with the Sydney Theatre Company's production of King Lear.

The statement, following The Daily Telegraph's exclusive report yesterday, took aim at the Sydney Theatre Company, alleging that it

had "chosen to smear his name and unjustifiably damage his reputation".

It also claimed that: "His treatment of fellow colleagues and everyone he has worked with is always conducted with respect and the utmost propriety."

"The allegation made against Mr Rush comes from a statement provided by the Sydney Theatre Company," it reads.

The widely released document

says it is understood that the STC's own statement concerns a complaint made to it more than 21 months ago.

"To date, Mr Rush or any of his representatives have not received any representations from the STC or the complainant."

"In other words, there has been no provision of any details, circumstances, allegations or events that can be meaningfully responded to."

It goes on to quote Mr Rush:

"The moment I became aware of rumours of a complaint I immediately phoned and spoke to senior management at the Sydney Theatre Company asking for clarification about the details of the statement."

"They refused to illuminate me with the details."

The statement then says Mr Rush can only reiterate that he denies being involved in any "inappropriate behaviour" whatsoever.



Geoffrey Rush in King Lear rehearsals.

DEFIANCE

STATEMENT FROM GEOFFREY RUSH

"The moment I became aware of rumours of a complaint I immediately phoned and spoke to senior management at the Sydney Theatre Company asking for clarification about the details of the statement. They refused to illuminate me with the details ... I also asked why this information was being withheld, and why, according to standard theatre practice the issue had not been raised with me during the production via stage management, the director, my fellow actors or anyone at management level. However, no response was forthcoming."

STC STATEMENT

Sydney Theatre Company was asked by a News Corp journalist earlier this month whether it had received a complaint alleging inappropriate behaviour by Mr Rush while he was employed by the company. STC responded truthfully that it had received such a complaint.

Geoffrey Rush in the lead up to the Sydney Theatre Company's production of *King Lear* in late 2015.

complainant's claims against megastar Rush

nate me," he said through a statement.

"I also asked why this information was being withheld, and why, according to standard theatre practice, the issue had not been raised with me during the production via stage management, the director, my fellow actors or anyone at management level.

"However, no response was forthcoming."

Rush's lawyer Nicholas Pullen said it was a "great disappointment" that the STC had "chosen to smear his

name and unjustifiably damage his reputation".

"Not to afford a person their right to know what has been alleged against them, let alone not inform them of it but release such information to the public, is both a denial of natural justice and is not how our society operates," he said.

The actor's lawyer, a partner in legal firm HWL Ebsworth, said Rush "abhorred any form of maltreatment of any person".

"Until there is the decency

afforded to Mr Rush of what the 'inappropriate behaviour' actually is then there is nothing more that can be said at this stage," Mr Pullen said.

Two sources who spoke to The Daily Telegraph yesterday said Rush was made aware who made the claims in a conversation with executive director Patrick McIntyre three weeks ago. The sources said they believed the woman's claims.

And they said the STC would not be working with

Rush again. That's despite the veteran actor having worked with the company both acting and directing productions such as *Uncle Vanya*, *Oleanna*, *The Importance Of Being Ernest* and *The Government Inspector*.

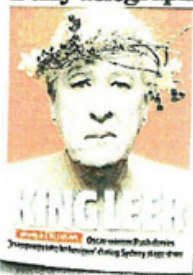
A new statement from the STC yesterday said that it had responded "truthfully" after being approached by The Daily Telegraph earlier this week.

It also clarified the anonymous nature of the alleged complainant, who had "re-

quested the matter be dealt with confidentially, and did not want Mr Rush notified".

"STC complied, acting in the interest of the complainant's health and welfare," Mr McIntyre last night said the STC had "reviewed policies and procedures" including "educating actors when they come in to the company about our intolerance of inappropriate behaviour, who they should speak to and encouraging them to speak up".

Daily Telegraph



How we broke the story yesterday.

THEATRE'S FIRM STATE OF PLAY

THE Sydney Theatre Company yesterday confirmed it responded "truthfully" when asked if it had received a complaint alleging inappropriate behaviour by leading Australian actor Geoffrey Rush.

In an updated statement, the STC said it "was asked by a News Ltd journalist earlier this month whether it had received a complaint alleging inappropriate behaviour by Mr Rush while he was employed by the company. STC

responded truthfully that it had received such a complaint."

It also clarified the alleged complainant had "requested the matter be dealt with confidentially, and did not want Mr Rush notified or involved" in any inquiry.

"STC complied, acting in the interest of the complainant's health and welfare. As already stated, the Company received the complaint after Mr Rush's engagement had ended."



Rush in *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

Execs' exile for star

EXECUTIVES at the Sydney Theatre Company yesterday came forward in support of the woman at the heart of the Geoffrey Rush scandal, saying they wholeheartedly believe her claims.

They also said due to the seriousness of the allegations, the award-winning theatre company would not work with the *Pirates of the Caribbean* star again. "There is no chance," the source told The

Daily Telegraph. "How could we work with him again? That question doesn't even need an answer."

The executive added: "Another actor backed what she said ... we've taken this very seriously."

The source also defended not naming the woman, saying: "It is not our story to tell."

A high-profile actor, who did not want to be named, came forward to support the woman.

The Daily Telegraph

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

GEOFFREY RUSH IN SCANDAL CLAIMS

**THEATRE COMPANY CONFIRMS
'INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR'**