Number 12 June 1989

#### INSIDE YOUR MAGAZINE THIS MONTH ..

### Hack beats dangerous driving rap

Page 7



Wizard of the kitchen table...

Page 4, 5



Fenech and more big hit bloopers

Page 4, 5



#### PLUS: ANOTHER MIND-BOGGLING CHAMPAGNE QUIZ - PAGE 6

## TWO AAP executives have delivered a bright assessment of the future for news agencies in speeches to a major European media symposium in Vienna.

COMCO general manager Barney Blundell and AAP editor-in-chief Barry Wheeler both outlined steps AAP had taken to ensure future profitability and said agencies had a

bright future, particularly if they were prepared to take the initiative to diversify into new markets.

They were addressing the Euromedia 89 conference, which attracted representatives from 23 news agencies controlling three quarters of the world's information.

"Despite the gloom of shrinking newspaper markets," said Barney Blundell, "the general information and communications industry is arguably the fastest growing business area in the world."

He said the media groups in Australia came to the conclusion several years ago that major network concessions could not be achieved by negotiation with the monopoly carrier.

The communication users decided they needed to do three things:

- UNITE into a common and powerful user group, the Australian Telecommunications Users Group, representing over 300 companies;
- USE that group to press for new legislation and concessions; and
- ENSURE the federal gov-

# Shaping up to the future



AFTER the Euromedia conference, editor-in-chief Barry Wheeler (right) visited Budapest where he was the guest of the Hungarian national news agency MTI. Barry, pictured here with MTI general director Tomas Palos, discussed the prospects of a co-operative agreement between AAP and MTI similar to that already in place with Tass. Deputy national news editor Colin Burgess and Sydney desk editor Bronwyn Walenkamp are the latest AAP journalists to visit the Soviet Union under an exchange agreement with the Soviet news agency.

ernment appoint an independent regulator for the communications industry.

"All of these objectives have now been achieved."

He said AAP also had decided to position itself as a limited carrier.

"As more deregulation was achieved, we decided to use our agency expertise to provide both value-added and full private network services for other corporate users...

"Our company has diversified into provision of these services by sharing major earth stations and providing network and management services for such corporations as banks, oil companies, legal firms, radio and television uplinking and paging distribution, along with remote area telephone and data networks for mining camps.

"In addition to networks, we have moved into general PC and printer maintenance and the sale, installation and maintenance of a range of communications equipment.

Barry Wheeler presented a similarly positive view.

"I didn't come half way round the world to stand up here and tell everyone it's time to head for the hills – or the beach in my case," he told delegates.

"There seems very little doubt that news agencies will continue to survive and even thrive."

He said the percentage of AAP revenue contributed by the news media sector had decreased from 76 per cent to 18 per cent over the past ten years, despite the fact that AAP has saturation coverage of the Australian, New Zealand and South Pacific media market.

## Why our VAMP's a champ

AAP financial subscribers are enjoying enhanced services – thanks to the office VAMP.

The Value Added Monitor Processor is a device that takes the information in the Monitor system and enables it to be displayed in new, specialised ways.

"It allows us to enhance the types of services we supply to our clients," said financial services product manager Craig McIvor.

"VAMP, for example, made possible the first 'overview' page on Monitor, called OZOV for Australian Overview.

"Using this page it's possible to see, for instance, the 11am cash rate, a futures price, physical bank bills and the Australian dollar rate all on one page, all dynamically updated at the one time.

"This eliminates the need to be constantly flicking between one page and another.

"The user doesn't see any new equipment – he still has the same screen and keyboard – but he certainly notices an improvement in the way information can be displayed."

"It's this increased flexibility and range of options that have enabled us to enhance the service."

"I'VE calculated that I've worked here for 6,614 days – this is the final one," said a farewell message on the Baudrunner system from the Sydney sports desk's Robert Smith, one of the most reliable of employees imaginable. Two minutes later came this rejoiner from editor Peter Brown: "Robert's wrong. He had two days sick leave in 1969."

### Shedding some light

STONE age man, confronted by the need for a wheel but finding none on the market, came up with the most direct solution. He invented one.

Computer age man, in the form of AAP staff, is responding to similar challenges in the same way.

Applying the sort of ingenuity that carried homo sapiens from stone slab

homo sapiens from stone slab to satellite in a few thousand years, AAP staffers can point to a growing list of inventions that arose from a lack of existing tools to suit a specific need.

Here are a few examples:

- Pinpointing technical faults on services to financial subscribers was taking too long. AAP needed a data analyser able to isolate a problem promptly, but there was no such thing. **ROGER KLIFFEN** invented one. It was part of his thesis for an engineering degree.
  AAP needed a PC-based program to link journalists in
- program to link journalists in remote bureaus with the main Baudrunner video-editing system. No program existed, so **GLENN SMITH** built one. Some say it is even easier to operate than a Coyote terminal.
- The company needed another PC-based system to computerise the operations of the picturegram room. Again, it was a specific AAP need and there was no such product on the market. So **HARRY SUJARDI** designed one. Besides increasing quality and reliability, it includes an automatic diagnostic check of all 3,000 relays and an inbuilt billing system for accounts.
- Several of the company's major computer systems, including MONITOR, SMICS

on AAP's Edisons



#### Launch sparks a gold rush

CHAIRMAN of the London Bullion Exchange Robert Guy (right) pictured launching AAP's Australian Gold Bullion service at a function in Perth.

Mr Guy is also a director of Rothschilds and Sons London, a subscriber to AAP Reuters Economic Services in Australia and internationally.

At left is AAP assistant general manager David Jensen, who reports initial sales of the service are going well, and in the centre is West Australian Deputy Premier David Parker.

and NQRS, were duplicated with back-ups. This often meant twice as much manual intervention by operators. VAN TRAN and JAN KULISIEVICZ came up with a labour-saving "black box". It relieves operators of the need to key in the same information twice.

• AAP has a pioneering his-

tory in Australian communications. Many of the company's services were born out of staff identifying a market for information, and developing a means of delivering it. Examples include NEWSCAN, MEDIANET, NEWSTRAK and CORPO-RATE REPORT.

- AAP, in conjunction with Reuters, introduced STOCK-MASTER into Australia in 1969. It was then the world's first commercially available computerised quote retrieval service for share prices. It was in turn succeeded by the updated VIDEOMASTER, MQT and QRS services, and now MULTIQUOTE.
- AAP moved into satellite communications at the first opportunity, leasing a transponder on the first AUSSAT satellite.
- The company was granted the first multipoint distribution system (MDS) licence in Australia, using it to beam services by microwave.

"There wasn't one on the market so we invented one," has become a familiar throwaway line.



#### AAP a hit in Hong Kong

AAP news is making a daily splash in Hong Kong.

The company's Australian News Report (ANR) forms the basis of a full four-page broadsheet section devoted to Australia in the Hong Kong Standard.

The wall-to-wall AAP seg-

ment, entitled Australia Today, contains general, political and sporting news from AAP bureaus around Australia and overseas.

Bylines are sprinkled liberally throughout in one of the best showings for AAP news in any daily paper.

#### SUBSCRIBERS DRAW ON A NEW SERVICE...



### Graphics in e news.

THE AAP picture network has been enhanced by the addition of domestic and foreign graphics.

The new service, which began in May, contains a minimum of 80 graphics a

These include feature, sport and spot news illustrations, a daily map highlighting regional weather, and a Monday-to-Friday

finance page graphic to show market and other financial indicators.

Overseas graphics are selected from the Associated Press world graphics data base in London, and stored in Sydney for subsequent transmission to Australian newspapers.

Production in Sydney is on a personal computer with a high quality laser printer for distribution over the AAP network to existing receivers.

Newspapers wishing to choose from the complete range of world graphics have also been offered direct access by telephone dial-up to the AP database.

As an extra incentive for newspapers to subscribe to the graphics service, plans have been drawn up to offer illustrations

packages in advance of special events - for example, the 1990 Commonwealth Games set of event logos, medal tables and competitor flags.

Newspapers may request "specials" not for general distribution.

And they will have access to a library of standard graphics in AAP's Sydney database.

#### Intro of the month

Everything but the kitchen sink is in this offering from Brisbane: "A former prostitute with a broken leg has testified in Brisbane's Magistrates Court against a paraplegic horsetrainer she alleged was her pimp."

US			TERRY ANDERSON
Britain			ALEC COLLETT
US			THOMAS SUTHERLAND
Italy			ALBERTO MOLINARI
Ireland			BRIAN KEENAN
Britain			JOHN McCARTHY
	US		FRANK REED
	US		JOSEPH CICIPPIO
		Britain	TERRY WAITE
		US	EDWARD TRACY
1.51		US	ROBERT POLHILL
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T 💊 ' ( 🛮 🔍  🖂		India/US <b>MITHILESI</b>	HWAR SINGH Freed
		??	Unidentified
J.S. and Other Non-Lebanese		??	Unidentified
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1985 1986		1987	1988

Information as of October 3, 1988

#### The AAP stakes

THE company has continued the campaign to promote its expanding racing services through race sponsorships. For the second year running, AAP joined with Sydney radio station 2KY in a sponsorship at Warwick Farm. Racing services manager Ken Boman sashed the unbeaten twoyear-old Show County, winner of the AAP Kindergarten Stakes, a lead-up race to the rich Golden Slipper. The sponsorship included radio advertisements, race book and on-course displays.

### Pin pickers out-tip turf pros

"WHO - me? I dunno one end of a horse from another."

That's the traditional reply to invitations to join in AAP's weekly tipping contest on Saturday's Sydney races.

But the records show that knowing the mane from the tail is no prerequisite for taking the weekly prize of \$70 or so.

Victors have included staffers from all departments, from journalists to switchboard operators to copytakers to systems controllers to secretaries, plus members of their families.

Contest organiser Shrimpton says: "Results show that a young damsel who picks a horse because of its pretty name is more likely to succeed that a track-hardened pro whose tips are based on form, track conditions and undercover information.'

The weekly competition began about five years ago. Entries have reached as many

A winner earns 10 points, a second placing five and a third two. One point is awarded if a selection is scratched and doesn't run.

The entry with the most points is the winner and takes the kitty, less 10 per cent for second prize and \$2 towards end-of-year prizes.

To win "best average score for the year" a contestant has

to have entered at least 25 times during the year.

The 1988 leader Mark Lever was so keen to win this honour that while in Seoul for the Olympic Games he left instructions for entries by proxy.

"The averages are worked out by Bruce Montgomerie,' said Jim, "and are followed closely by those who believe his ability at arithmetic may not match that of his authorship of racing books.

"We have to twist a few arms, metaphorically speaking, as the Friday 5pm deadline approaches.

"One entrant gets his own back by including two cent pieces in his \$2 - but if it's legal tender, it's acceptable.'

#### Racing review's rave reviews!

AAP's glossy racing annual Class Racehorses has won rave reviews from the prominent UK magazine Pacemaker.

Pacemaker said Racehorses "far and away outstrips" the efforts of British publications in illustrating the major horses of the past racing season, and detailing Group results with matching in-depth pedigrees going back five generations.

"This classy publication is as good a reference book on Antipodean racing as is possible to produce, and indeed it makes one pause to think why there isn't an equivalent in Europe," it commented.

Pacemaker described as a "rare understatement" another critic's description of the AAP book as "a classic production ... easy to read ... more than a must ... an annual epic to be enjoyed and shared in the same way as one treats a vintage wine."

It added: "It's not just a book for those with an interest in Antipodean racing, but also for those who could choose to purchase an interest in an industry that is becoming far more lucrative than its equivalent in the northern hemisphere.

"In short, a truly superb publication."

In case you think the British magazine is particularly prone to printing glowing reports, a review of another racing annual on the same page is headlined: "Don't waste your time or your money".

Said AAP racing services editor Ken Boman: "We almost blushed when reading this review."

> AIR-India has written to congratulate AAP's coverage during "our recent run of bad publicity". "We were particularly appreciative of your accurate, mature and non-sensational approach to the touchy issues regarding Air-India," the airline said in its letter.

#### 'POLICE STONED AT CONCERT'... AN

### Blooper archives -the dig goes on

SYDNEY journalists aren't the only ones obsessed and delighted by the mistakes of others.

Recent extracts in AAP TODAY from the notorious Sydney "Bloopers Book" prompted mad Melbourne malapropist Mike White to delve into his own archives.

This is the result.

Most are from newspapers in his home patch of Victoria.

Some – not many, but some – have their origins in AAP reports. None, Mike asserts, are his.

"A keeper at Sydney's Taronga Zoo has survived death after being bitten by a snake."

From a Melbourne stringer writing about a leading soccer coach: "Docherty jumped off the bench and threw his head in

the air.' "All week Ray Ruffels, the national coach, has been walking round Festival Hall with a satisfied smile. He is the man notes, providing the following evidence:

Trying to tell the House of Commons about a decision not to press certain rape charges, then Solicitor-General for Scotland Nicholas Fairbairn once said: "Rape is particularly difficult. I have long experience of it.'

A Diabetes Foundation of Australia news release noted: "The aim of the unified body is to become as strong and influential as



#### assigned to breed Australian champions..." "The man's eight month old pregnant wife died in the attack." Foot in mouth syndrome is "Reagan on insanity plea". not confined to journalists, Mike the National Hard Foundation.'

### Having a ball – the kitch

STEVE Dettre of the Sydney newsroom spends many an off-duty hour in competition, hunched over a table chancing his skill luck under bright and liahts.

His unusual passion is not snooker or gambling but Subbuteo table soccer, a game invented in the 1940s in England and played worldwide by an estimated five million people.

Played on a board the size of an average dining room table, players control miniature figures

across a cloth pitch, flicking them at a small ball with the ultimate aim of getting the ball past the opposing keeper.

Sounds simple? Yes. But don't fooled by appearances. "We always have people saying to us that it's a basic game, that it's a kids' game," Steve said.

"But like chess or backgammon, or even table tennis or real soccer, if you want to, you can take the game to unbelieveable levels ... or you can play it as a bit of a muckaround.'

Steve helped form a New

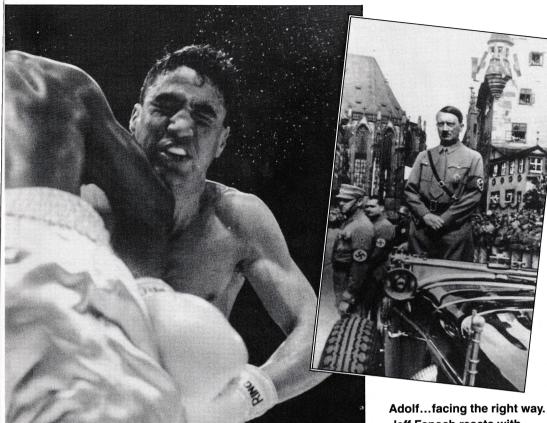
South Wales association in the late 1970s, then the national association in 1985.

"I sent at least 100 letters out last year to players alone, and who knows how many phone calls I've made or press releases I've sent.

"But it was all worthwhile when we managed to get clubs started up in Melbourne, Hobart, Brisbane and Perth,"

His greatest satisfaction was publicising the visit to Australia of world table soccer champion

#### D OTHER GEMS FROM MIKE'S FILES



An Australian Athletic Union report in 1982 listed "honorary life members", with a footnote saying some of them were dead.

A Confederation of Australian Motor Sport newsletter said: "World championship drivers Jacques Laffite and Alain Prost—who won the Australian Grand Prix next year..."

Advertisers have their problems, too.

A full-page colour advertisement in a Melbourne newspaper

in 1979 for Du Maurier cigarettes – tagged "Isn't that Du Maurier?" – showed its star male model beside an ice cream machine on which lay a packet of cigarettes. Du Maurier? No – Marlboro.

Now for some headlines to conjure with: "Mordey warns of potential violence in Fenech fight."

"\$10,000 for rape 'in-adequate'."

"Dead man seen alive last Sunday."

"Paisley bent on US trip."

Adolf...facing the right way. Jeff Fenech reacts with some surprise as "potential violence" becomes a reality.

"Police stoned at concert."

"Winners won't lose."

From a report about a court decision to jail a strip show promoter: "Magistrate acts on lewd shows."

And from a story on presidential comments about a would-be assassin in 1982: "Reagan on insanity plea."

Finally, a couple of Second World War headlines:

"Hitler flies back to front."

"Fifth Army push bottles up Germans."

## How to stay In Touch

GOT a fishing rod or a car to sell? A record album or some stamps to swap? Looking to buy a second-hand lawn mower?

Transferring interstate and seeking a flat to rent or a house to buy?

Thinking of forming an office sporting, social or common interest club and looking for new members?

Organising a company raffle, charity, function or special event and need some publicity?

Then contact AAP TODAY's new "In Touch" column.

The AAP group has grown to considerable size and represents a vast and often untapped market for its own staff.

"In Touch" could help put that right by bringing together employees with common interests whether they are stationed in Australia or overseas.

Staff wishing to avail themselves of this service should write to: "In Touch Column", AAP TODAY, 2nd floor, 364 Sussex Street, Sydney.

Make sure your message is clear and concise and include your name, department and contact number.

The editor's discretion is final.

Instruction to journalists from an AAP style guide of yesteryear: "Avoid cliches like the plague."

### en table wizard

Willy Hofmann, a 27-year-old Swiss.

"We managed to lure an ABC news crew to the international between Willy and our champion, Gary Hosie.

"We made the ABC news that night with a film story, and we also had a small feature story on SBS Sports Report hosted by former AAP staffer Jeanette Fulford ... well, you have to use your contacts."

Steve's behind the scenes organising has not affected his skill on the pitch, as he is one

half of the reigning Australian doubles champion pair, and was a quarter-finalist in the national cup.

Some 250 players around the country are now registered with the Australian Table Soccer Association, but Steve wants more.

"I want to find more players in places like Newcastle, Wollongong and Adelaide who are keen to play competitively, and I also want to see two Australian representatives play at the World Cup in Italy in 1990."



AAP's Subbuteo wizard defends his goal.

#### STEVE DEVELOPS A NEW ROLE...

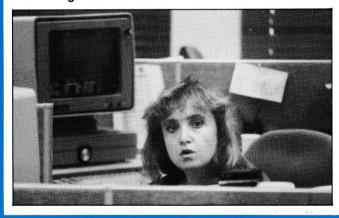


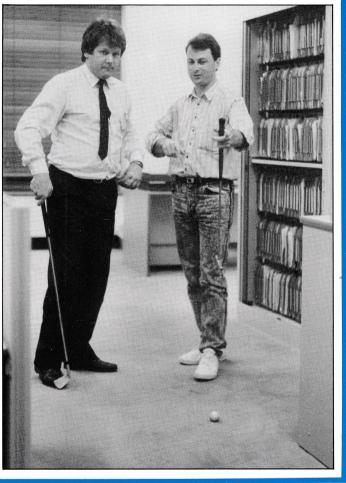




## A look at life in the lock-up

STUDIES IN CONCENTRATION: Federal Treasurer Paul Keating's April economic statement was the occasion for another concentrated effort from AAP's news team. Above left: Newly appointed EIC Phil Dickson discusses the implications. Above centre: Sydney-based finance news editor lan Pemberton grapples with an intro. Above right: Systems manager Mark Ferrett tries to safeguard against technological hitches. Below: Canberra's Helen Corcoran ponders what it's all about. And right: Reporters Craig Skehan (left) and Chris Falvey relax in true executive style after it's all over. Photos by office shutterbug Steve Dettre.





### Test your knowledge – and win champagne!

THIS month's quiz:

- **1 GEOGRAPHY.** If you sailed due east from Sydney, which country would be your first landfall?
- **2 YOUNG LOVE.** What were the family names of Romeo and Juliet?
- **3 MUSIC.** Before a concert, which instrument in a symphony orchestra do all other instruments tune to?
- **4 SEA DOGS.** The dogwatch, in nautical parlance, occurs between which hours?

The winner of the second quiz was Rosemary Bridge of the Economic Support Unit (ESU) in Sydney, with an honourable mention to copytaker Sherree Chambers.

The correct answers were: 1 – Impressions, by Claude Monet. 2 – 35 kms, at Jervis Bay. 3 – All died in 1988. 4 – Pu Yi. 5 – "The Year Zero" and "Heroes". 6 – Better than a poke in the eye with a burnt stick. 7 – Happy Birthday. 8 – Viv Richards. 9 – Isaac Newton. 10 – 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington.

**5 – FORMS OF ADDRESS.** What was Sherlock Holmes' address?

**6 - LITERATURE.** Who wrote the 1852 novel sub-titled

Life Amongst The Lowly which was influential in the movement against slavery in the USA?

7 - ENTERTAINMENT. What

was Orson Welles' dying word in Citizen Kane?

- **8 CURRENT AFFAIRS.** In 1975 who survived two assassination attempts in California within 17 days?
- **9 HISTORY.** The World War I armistice agreement was signed in woodlands near the French-Belgian border, in what conveyance?
- 10 AUSTRALIANA. Translate the following into Australian: "There is an optimal situational prognosis that the female is dextrous."



Steve Connolly shows how it's done, watched by Tony Vermeer (left) and lan Williams.

## Golfer warned for dangerous driving!

JOURNALIST Steve Connolly was red-faced when police warned him for dangerous driving in Adelaide's northern parklands.

The incident didn't happen on the winding roads through the parklands, but on the seventh hole of the north course of North Adelaide golf links.

Partnering bureau chief Tony Vermeer and former boss lan Williams, Steve hit a wayward tee shot on the 295-metre par four which whizzed past a traffic policeman and on into the Sunday morning traffic.

But before the dazed officer could whip out his notebook, the golf ball struck the wheel of a passing car, bounced along the bitumen road, then rolled back in bounds and to the back of the seventh

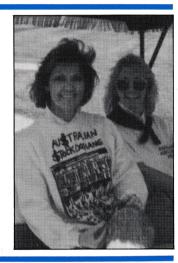
THE inaugural AAP-Adelaide Stock Exchange charity golf tournament raised \$27,000 for the South Australian Schizophrenic Society through corporate sponsorships of \$1,500 per hole.

A field of 99 players took part at the Kooyonga golf course and 150 attended the tournament dinner at the Adelaide convention centre.

Pictured here are South Australian manager Liz Cornelissen (right) and Jane Crabbe, secretary to the managing director of the Adelaide Stock Exchange.

green.

Steve completed the hole with a chip and two putts for a "regulation" par, clearly taking to heart the example of Seve Ballesteros, who once landed in a car park on his way to winning the British Open.



The classic case of rub of the green comes as the Adelaide bureau, which once boasted five SCUBA diving enthusiasts, turns its attention to golf.

Four of the bureau's five journos have taken up the game.

## A case of give and take

Sydney sales executive John Johnstone has engaged in plenty of give and take with the social golf club.

Since taking out the 1988 club championship, John has left the company – but not before donating a handsome perpetual trophy to be contested by the various departments.

John, a stalwart club member, presented the trophy at the March outing to Katoomba in the Blue Mountains.

His departure means his ground-breaking championship win came in the nick of time.

John struck a blow for the low handicappers when he won last year's annual title at Long Reef.

Playing off nine, he amassed 43 Stableford points and became the first single figure handicapper to win.

Runner-up was Glen Blundell, son of COMCO general manager Barney Blundell, who scored 41 points playing off eight.

Newsdesk staffer Richard Pullin (27) gave the handicappers reason to start honing their machetes when he scored an astonishing 51 points.

Richard was ineligible for the title as he had not played in the required three club tournaments during the year.

He got his reward, however, when he won the Katoomba event with 40 points off a 22 handicap.

The four new golf club committeemen elected for this year were EIC's David Eskell and John Radovan, Bob Gleeson of COMCO and Bill Aylmer of Accounts.



John Johnstone

### It's RAAF man and Robin!



THE RAAF has written to thank COMCO for its continued support of the Air Force's radio apprentice here, course. **Pictured** southern states manager Robin Strathdee presents the AAP Reuters Communications Pty Ltd prize to flight sergeant apprentice Darren Jones of the RAAF school of radio at Laverton, Victoria. "Your company's donation of the prize for the greatest practical ability was greatly appreciated," the RAAF said.

#### PANPA puts them in the picture

PICTURE editors gathered at the Canberra Times recently to discuss technological developments in picture transmissions. conference The organised by the Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers Association (PANPA). Pictured from left are Adam Conrad of News Ltd, AAP picture supervisor Mark Anning and Wally Parr of media marketing.



### **Marathon victor Hugo!**

SOME people say that Hugo Uribe runs in Sydney's annual Anzac Day marathon just to get his picture in the staff magazine.

But the doughty newsdesk copytaster denies it all.

It's about challenges and personal goals, he says, about Mount Everests, conquests, brick walls, insuperable odds, guts, determination, the club's 100th anniversary, and other things that coaches talk of at half time.

For miler Roger Bannister the magic barrier was four minutes. For marathon man Hugo it was four hours.

"I knew I could run under four hours, so I had to prove myself," Hugo said.

"Distance running is a lot of pain and requires a lot of discipline."

Hugo's first goal was simply



Hugo Uribe crosses the marathon finish line in a personal best time of three hours 46 minutes.

to complete a marathon, a feat he accomplished last year in a time of four hours and five minutes.

His second goal was to break four hours, and he did it this year.

He slashed almost 20

minutes off his time by running the 42 kilometres from Hensley field to suburban Sans Souci and back in three hours 46 minutes.

His third goal, to get under three and a half hours, may not be so easy. "To run a marathon you have to put a lot of work in preparing yourself," Hugo explains.

"After running for three hours you're tired and you don't feel like doing anything, but the kids want to play soccer or the family wants to go out.

"They don't want me to run in the marathon again."

He has several explanations for his improved time this year. "Last year I over-trained in the weeks just before the race, which led to shin soreness and injured me at the 32 kms mark".

"This time I took it easier beforehand, and in the race I had the experience to start slower instead of going too hard early.

"Also the people I was pacing with were experienced, and knew how to run a good rhythm, and it wasn't as hot as last year.

"Even so, I had to stop after 35 kms and walk for 20 minutes because my legs were really hurting."

Hugo thought he must have been hallucinating at one stage, as he was running alongside a woman who was the spitting image of Seoul Olympic champion Rosa Mota of Portugal.

"We ran together for about two kms, then she suddenly took off and I never saw her again.

"So maybe she was Rosa Mota."

As the 700 entrants started the race, Hugo waved to attract the attention of colleague Mike Koslowski, who covered the event for AAP, "to prove that I was for real".

"But I didn't see him at the finish – he probably couldn't wait that long."

#### From our marriage bureau

AAP has been cast in the role of a lonely hearts club by a hopeful suitor pressing his claims for the ideal woman all the way from Beijing.

A letter addressed simply "Australian Associated Press, Australia" found its way to Sussex Street.

It said "Dear reader: I'm a young man, no marriage, I wish to marry a foreign wife who is different from me, different face, language and different habit.

"We have more to learn each other. To produce the love is better than marry a local girl.

"MYSELF Age 33, Chinese, 170 cms, no any marriage, single, only myself in my home.

"I'm a warm person, my job is English

interpreter. Good wage, no crime.

"THE GIRL SHOULD BE 25-35 years old, beauty, high nose, good temper, respect the man, speaks English.

"However, I cannot find in my country. I wish you to help me to find, I have friendly feelings toward your people, I hope to marry a good foreign wife under your support. Warm thanks."

High-nosed AAP beauties who respect warm, single, multi-lingual and extremely optimistic Chinese men are assured of discretion should they wish to get the writer's forwarding address.

At press time it was understood the position was still vacant.

What wasn't understood was why he picked AAP to advertise his requirements.