

# Park filled with faces of those failed by the system

By Ashlee Betteridge

Annandale painter, sculptor and printmaker Susan Dorothea White is using pencils and paintbrushes in the fight against the State Government's closure of Rozelle Hospital.

Ms White's works have adorned galleries around Australia and in New York, Amsterdam and Cologne.

But her sketches lampooning the State Government's treatment of the mentally ill have been doing the rounds of the peninsula on post-cards, urging the public to oppose the closure of Rozelle Hospital and the draft land use plan which would see Sydney University increase its campus at Callan Park.

Ms White is also putting together a sculptural assemblage work, which was on display during April's Callan Park protests, to highlight the failings of the mental health system.

The Faces in the Park work consists of white plates on stakes. Community members can draw a face or write a name on the plates to represent a person who has been failed by the mental health system.

"This project is to draw attention to the number of people who have



suffered neglect and have lost their lives unnecessarily," Ms White said.

Ms White said that she wanted to move the work around to different locations, similar to the way cut-outs of hands were used to promote

reconciliation.

"Anyone can colour a plate and get involved, it's a collaborative community work," she said.

For more information visit [www.susandwhite.com.au](http://www.susandwhite.com.au).

**Brian Freeman and Susan Dorothea White with part of a sculptural memorial in Callan Park which is dedicated to those who have lost their lives due to a lack of mental health support.**

## Gift of blood puts Vanessa on the road to a better quality of life



**Vanessa Rowland with the bike she is planning to ride to work.**

By Katie Hoskins

Vanessa Rowland is proudly showing off her new bicycle which she plans to ride to work in the city from her Lilyfield home.

Fitness kicks like this are common to many of us but for Vanessa, the simple activity of gripping the handlebars of her bike would not be achievable without the Red Cross Blood Service.

Vanessa, a human resources professional, suffers from a rare condition called Multifocal Motor Neuropathy, which is thought to occur as a result of the body's immune system attacking its nerve cells.

The disease leads the muscles to become progressively weak, sometimes wasting completely. The symptoms began to manifest for Vanessa almost 20 years ago.

"My thumb just wouldn't work," she said.

"I couldn't extend it, and noticed I had difficulty doing up buttons and putting a cassette in the tape player."

By the time her condition was diagnosed in 1995, the muscle weakness was worsening and had spread to her entire left hand, leaving it with little capability.

She began intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) blood product treatment, which calms the over-activity of the immune system.

"I got short term function back in my left hand immediately," she said. "The impact was quite dramatic."

Because Vanessa receives the blood treatment every six weeks, the muscle deterioration that she would otherwise suffer has signifi-

cantly lessened, enabling her to live life to the full.

It takes approximately 850 blood donations each year to allow Vanessa to have her life-altering treatments. "I am very appreciative of the people who donate blood," she said.

Prior to her diagnosis, Vanessa was a blood donor herself.

"I donated for the same reason that most blood donors do, I was one of the healthy non-risk people.

"Most people are aware of the need to give blood but get caught in the day-to-day stuff. If you have the ability to give blood and can make the time, make time."

• Australia needs 21,000 blood donations per week and in the next ten years this figure is predicted to double. To give blood go to [www.donateblood.com.au](http://www.donateblood.com.au) or call 13 14 95.