

NEWSLOCAL

Hills Shire Times

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Legacy lost

Vladimir Tichy's greatest artwork - a 30-metre long mosaic - will be reduced to rubble when the Hills Centre is demolished in coming months.

Full report, page 7

Picture: SUE GRAHAM

NEWS

Rail link not only winner in Budget

THE North West Rail Link and M2-F3 link dominated local spending in this year's State Budget but they certainly were not the only winners.

PAGE 5

REALESTATE

Tropical retreat in West Pennant Hills

LOOKING every bit the tropical resort as well as a family home, this West Pennant Hills house is inviting to visitors of the human and feathered varieties.

LIFTOUT



LIFESTYLE

Tickets to best live show in town

THE world-famous Blue Man Group is heading to Sydney and we have tickets to give away to the amazing stage show.

PAGE 49

SPORT

Smooth sailing for siblings

IT would be difficult to find enough water in Kenthurst to get a boat up to full sail but that is not stopping siblings Rebecca and Stephen Hancock.

PAGE 68



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CASTLE HILL

Mural's sad end

EFFORTS TO SAVE WORK FAIL

Evan Sieff

WHEN The Hills Centre is demolished in the coming weeks to make way for the North West Rail Link, the greatest work of Vladimir Tichy's colourful artistic career will lie broken in the rubble.

Tichy, 86, is the creator of the epic 30m long mural which spans an entire wall on the ground floor of the performing arts venue.

The mural, which depicts vivid scenes of ballet, music and theatre, took Tichy more than 12 months to design, sculpt and install.

It is one of hundreds of sculptures, murals and mosaics Tichy has installed around the country since defecting from Czechoslovakia in 1968, but it is also his proudest achievement.

"This mural is the biggest and the best that I have ever done," he said.

"It means a lot to me and I am not happy about losing it but what can I do?"

Investigations by The Hills Shire Council found there was no cost-effective way of saving the mural, with the artwork simply crumbling when removed from the wall.

It is not the first time Tichy will have watched his work demolished in the name of progress.

A giant mural at the base of Centrepont Tower was pulled down during redevelopment in 2009, while other significant works were lost at Queanbeyan RSL and St George Sailing Club.

Tichy said he had lost track of how many of his one-of-a-kind creations had been destroyed. "It's sad but that's just how it is," he said.

VLADIMIR TICHY

- Born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1926
- Worked in porcelain factories, studied art and was soon one of Czechoslovakia's premier ceramists
- Arrived in Australia as a political refugee in 1968
- Opened ceramic architectural studio, Studio Dybka Tichy, with Rudolph Dybka in Parramatta in 1969
- Commissioned for hundreds of murals and tiling projects
- Some of Tichy's work is held in public collections in Russia, Italy and the Czech Republic
- Tichy's work can still be found at 26 Foveaux St in Surry Hills, St Pauls Anglican Church in Albion Park and the Elizabeth St entrance to Museum Station

His body of work is shrinking fast, with Tichy laying down his tools upon the death of his wife Jirina in 2009.

Having been married for 46 years, Tichy said there was no way he could continue making art without Jirina in his life.

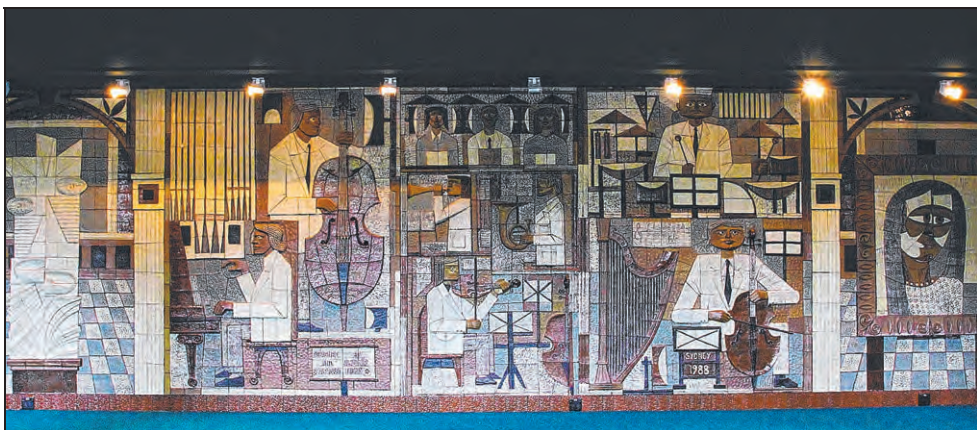
"I stopped working completely when my wife passed away," he said.

"My work was for her and from that moment I lost inspiration.

"I can't work any more."

Tichy's last creation was a lovingly handcrafted urn, which occupies pride of place in his Hornsby home, cradling the ashes of his muse Jirina.

The Hills Shire Council has taken some steps to preserve the memory of Tichy's Hills Centre mural, commissioning a set of professional photos and recording an in-depth interview with the artist.



Vladimir Tichy at his Hornsby home (top) and The Hills Centre mural.

Picture: SUE GRAHAM

CASTLE HILL

Police search for two men



POLICE have released these images of two men they wish to speak to in relation to alleged standover tactics being used on Castle Hill businessmen.

North Sydney detectives have been investigating several reports of money allegedly being demanded with menace in Castle Hill and Fairfield.

The incidents date back to April last year.

Anyone who knows the men, or may recognise tattoos depicted in the images, are asked to call North Sydney Police or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

THE HILLS

Officer targets drugs, scams

HILLS Local Area Commander Superintendent Philip Flogel (pictured) is on the move and protecting consumers from scams in a major part of his new beat at Fair Trading NSW.

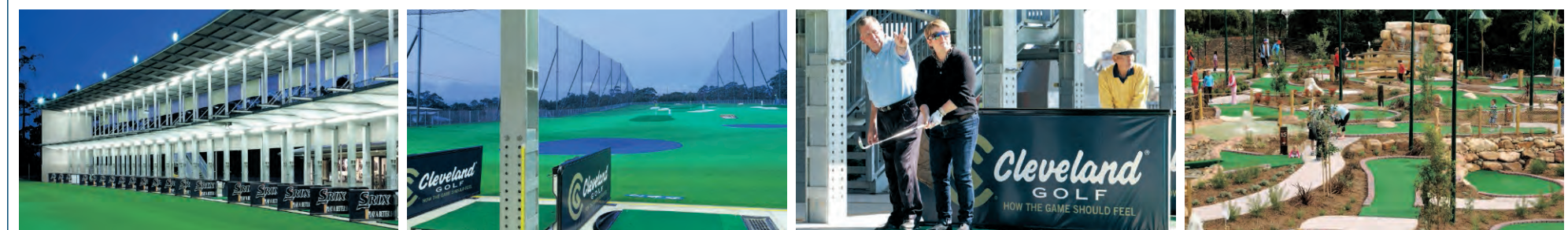


Supt Flogel started his new role as Assistant Commissioner in the compliance and enforcement division yesterday after 26 months as police chief at Castle Hill.

Supt Flogel said the 12 month secondment was a "great opportunity".

"I have spent 33 years inside the organisation (Police Force) and this is a great opportunity to look from outside the organisation."

Part of his duties will be overseeing the ban on synthetic drugs and cracking down on travelling con men.



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