

# Vampire fever is biting hard

Jonathan Dart

VAMPIRES have always been popular at Halloween. But there are likely to be more would-be bloodsuckers than ever today amid the vampire fever created by the *Twilight* books and HBO's drama series *True Blood*.

The manager of Carnival and Toy Wholesale in Glebe, James Stringer, said children have been bitten hard by the vampire craze – he has sold about 6000 sets of fangs compared with 3000 last year. "Vampires are always popular – every Halloween vampires, witches and reapers are the most popular items," Mr Stringer said.

"It has picked up since *Twilight* and *True Blood* but they've always been popular – it's hard to know how much it had to do with it. The thing that's picked up the most are the zombies – a lot of people have come in asking for them."

*Twilight* fever is mounting ahead of the release of the second film in the series, *New Moon*, next month, when vampire Edward Cullen and his mortal girlfriend Bella continue their relationship. Fans are already lining up for midnight screenings.

Retailers and Halloween aficionados say zombies are hot this year thanks to their promin-



Halloween aficionados ... Brad Coates and Esther Bailey buy ghoulish outfits. Photo: Brendan Esposito

ence in books such as Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and movies, including *Zombieland*.

Hamish Fraser, a partner at Truman Hoyle law firm, warned people to not get too fired up by Halloween and start copying ideas that might belong to someone else.

It follows a case in Britain where a single mother was sent a warning letter by Warner Bros over potential copyright breaches, after she planned a *Harry Potter* themed dinner.

"What probably went wrong in the United Kingdom in this case was that it might have looked, to Warner Bros, that this woman was trying to earn money rather than having a fun night," Mr Fraser said.

"The problem is that the copyright law is what it is. If you copy the *Harry Potter* logo, for instance, you are almost certainly infringing copyright."

But in a year when vampires are so popular, Mr Fraser said it will be harder for companies to suck the blood out of parties by

protecting copyright – recent *Twilight*-themed parties have been held everywhere from Yass Valley Council Library to the Loft Bar in Darling Harbour.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for Harris Farm Markets, Tristan Harris, said there had been shortages of jacaranda pumpkins as people scramble to get in on the American tradition.

Roy Lappina, a Harris Farm store manager in Baulkham Hills, had to put aside about 30 pumpkins for a pumpkin-carving contest.

## Paradise takes on the rats

From Page 1  
palms, by feeding on the seeds. The problem is so severe that the board spends \$65,000 a year setting poison baits over 10 per cent of the island.

Apart from the cost and the danger of so much poison, there is a real risk the rodents will become immune.

Esven Fenton, a third-generation islander and cattle farmer, has about 20 cattle, which are slaughtered locally. Before the eradication, his herd will be killed or exported because of the risk of his cattle being poisoned. For the same reasons, every chicken will be killed or shipped out.

After the eradication, the board will replace Mr Fenton's herd with animals from the mainland, which he says, will reinvigorate the bloodlines. "I

believe this eradication absolutely has to happen," Mr Fenton says. "Wouldn't you like to be rodent free on the mainland?"

Even so, some such as Clive Wilson, oppose the plan. "There would be no one on the island opposed to getting rid of rats if there was a safe way to do it," he says. "The poison exposes the island, its environment and the people to a great deal of danger. Any statement that the island is plagued by rats is an exaggeration. I think they will do a lot of damage and in the end there will still be rats."

The board's chief executive, Stephen Wills, says rats "destroy the wildlife. The majority of the community want this."

James Woodford travelled as a guest of Lord Howe Island Board.

## Drivers freed to speed

From Page 1  
*Herald* that "each organisation is responsible for the independent operation of their individual speed enforcement programs".

The RTA has offered no explanation for the figures, which were released to Mr Scruby under freedom-of-information laws.

A spokeswoman said, "The RTA sets minor tolerance levels to take into account things such as speedometer variances between vehicles."

She denied that tolerance levels were set at 10 per cent above the designated speed limit.

But asked to explain the lack of penalties in the 100-110km/h category, the authority said it "cannot speculate about why there were no offences in this two-month time frame".

Mr Scruby believes the margin

has been inadvertently exposed by a shift since the end of June to 10km/h increments for lower-level speeding offences.

Previously, lower-level offences were lumped together in a group up to 15km/h over the limit.

A former Victorian assistant police commissioner, Ray Shuey, said "10 per cent has been sort of usual in many jurisdictions", although Victoria had moved to a lower threshold.

He said 10 per cent was based on an outdated Australian Design rule which erroneously assumed a large drift in some car speedometers.

Assistant Commissioner Hartley said the NSW Police Force did not discuss tolerance levels and "any motorist can be fined for exceeding the speed limit by 1km/h".

► Letters – News Review Page 10