

18 JAN 1997

Anti-Asian

ANTI-ASIAN SHOP OPENS IN MELBOURNE

By: Neville D'Cruz

MELBOURNE, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- A shop, selling T-shirts with anti-Asian and other racist slogans, opened this week in the Melbourne suburb of Fawkner.

Operated by the racist organisation National Action, the walls of the shop in Tyson Street, are covered with posters calling for the shooting of "human trash."

National Action chairman Michael Brander told the "Herald Sun" newspaper that he hoped the shop would get the group's anti-Asian immigration message across to mainstream Australians.

T-shirts, stickers and mugs are featured with slogans such as "Stop the Asian Invasion" and "Land Rights for Whites."

The racist shop has already met with disapproval from nearby shop owners who said the anti-Asian shop had no place in the peaceful suburb.

"We are a community with harmony. They're not welcome here," one shopkeeper is quoted as saying.

Two local residents, Zoubaida Elhajje, 17, and Michelle Mifsud, 15, told the newspaper a benefit of living in Fawkner was the different cultures living in peace devoid of racist feelings.

"Everyone is nice to each other here," Zoubaida said.

Meanwhile Independent MP Pauline Hanson has a good chance of being voted "1996 Australian of the Year", in the process beating such luminaries as Prime Minister John Howard, Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett, Olympic sprint silver medallist Cathy Freeman and noted scientist Dr Tim Flannery.

Conducted by the prestigious newspaper "The Australian", the search for the recipient has narrowed from more than 300 nominees to seven finalists.

The other finalists are National Gallery director Betty Churcher and highly-respected aborigine leader Lois O'Donoghue.

About 6,500 readers, some from Asia -- thanks to the newspaper's Web site -- nominated Australians who made outstanding contributions to the nation last year.

According to a report in "The Australian" today, Hanson and Dr Flannery have so far received the most votes.

The readers nominated Hanson for her impact on politics, saying that the maverick MP from Brisbane, whom Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad described as "moronic", often "says what she believes, not like other damn politicians".

Another reader said: "Right or wrong she (Hanson) has shown it is possible to be heard if you believe."

A committee headed by the new editor-in-chief of "The Australian", David Armstrong (formerly from Hong Kong), will decide the winner. The announcement will be made in next Saturday's edition of the paper. --

BERNAMA

NDC RM