

• POLITICAL DEBATE

# Talking heads yet to agree details

**Matt Sun**

Discussion, and confusion, about when and where to hold a political debate continued today between Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott, with separate events mooted tonight and tomorrow.

Labor's national secretary Karl Bitar today wrote to the Libs' national campaign director

Brian Loughnane telling him Gillard would be available to debate at 6.30pm tomorrow.

Bitar said a one-hour debate on the economy would be held in Brisbane, to be followed by a one-hour town hall meeting.

But the Coalition today said Abbott planned to go to the ABC TV studios tonight for a 30-minute debate.

Abbott told Canberra radio he had gone "more than halfway" to

meet the ALP's debate conditions and said Gillard "shouldn't run away from people".

But the ALP accused Abbott of running "from a fair-dinkum debate on the economy" by offering just 30 minutes of time.

It was still unclear at the time mX went to press when the debate would be held.

Meanwhile, an interview with Gillard, conducted by singer Clare Bowditch, will be streamed

by social networking site MySpace at [www.myspace.com/](http://www.myspace.com/) today from 6pm.

The interview covers policy and popular culture, with Gillard revealing she prefers Lady Gaga over Beyonce because the daughter of partner Tim Mathieson once worked on the singer's hair.

Gillard also said she suspected schools visited on the campaign trail were choosing red-headed children to greet her.

• AIMING HIGH

## Climbing back into life

When policewoman Alison Fahey was diagnosed with thyroid cancer as a 27-year-old, she felt like her life was crumbling around her.

Now, at age 32, she is planning to climb Africa's highest peak to raise money for cancer research.

Fahey decided to climb Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania at one of the lowest points of her life, while she was having treatment at Westmead Hospital.

She had surgery to remove her thyroid and lymph nodes, as well as radiation therapy.

It took her 12 months to recover, and at the end of this month she celebrates the fifth anniversary since her diagnosis.

She will still have to take medication for the rest of her life and have regular check-ups to ensure the cancer has not returned.

Fahey said cancer had made her more determined and goal-oriented.

Fahey plans to climb Mt Kilimanjaro in February, backed by Cure for Cancer.

The trip is being organised by travel company Inspired Australians.

Details: [www.cure.org.au](http://www.cure.org.au).

- CATHY MORRIS



From cancer to Kilimanjaro: It's been a five-year journey for Alison Fahey. Picture: CHRIS PAVLICH