



Aussies for Obama

Kate Carr

IT SEEMS if Newtown and Glebe were states in the US, about 80 per cent of voters would have cast their ballots for Barack Obama.

In a recent survey conducted by Sydney University's US Studies Department, four out of five Australians said they supported Democrat Obama over Republican candidate John McCain.

"Australians were more or less in keeping with people around the world in their support for Obama," Prof Geoffrey Garrett, CEO of the US Studies Department said. "This is a global phenomenon."

There is no doubt the rest of the world had grown increasingly disenchanted with the US under the presidency of George Bush and, like most US citizens, were looking to Obama for change, according to Prof Garrett.

"I think he's up to the challenge," he said. "The good news is that he enters office with enormous political support in the US and enormous global good will."

Prof Garrett said the historic election of Barack Obama was "the exclamation point" at the end of a long period of self-reflection and self-correction in American society.

Alex Hitch, a native of Virginia who now re-



Professor Geoffrey Garrett.

Photo: SIMON CHILLINGWORTH

sides in the Inner West, said he was ecstatic. "I was in tears on election day. It's a relief after eight years of hardship in American society."

His home state of Virginia voted for a Democrat for the first time since 1964.

"It's incredible, Virginia is often thought of the capital of the American South," Mr Hitch said.

While never ashamed of his heritage, he said he felt 10 feet tall on election day. "I was strutting around all day because I was even more proud to be from the States."