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PUSH TO BRING BACK MATTY GATHERS PACE

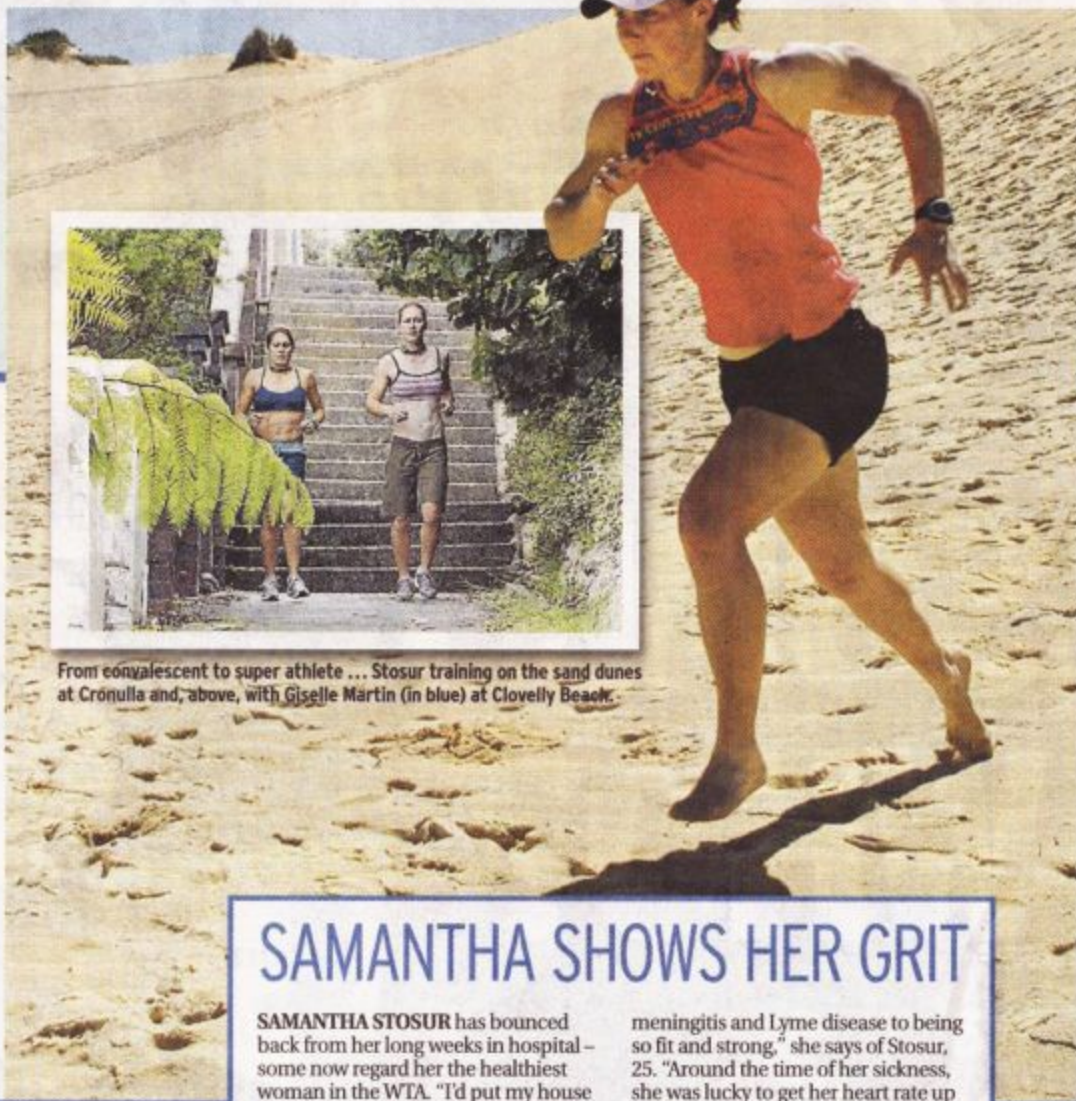
THE whispers are growing louder by the day that **Matthew Johns** will make a return to the Channel Nine commentary team by the time of the NRL finals. There are two points of view doing the rounds. Some are pushing to have Johns back on television screens as a commentator by the start of the finals, others say he should make it back for the grand final. There is no doubt, though, that he will be back as a commentator at some stage – if he feels he is up to it. It's my understanding that Johns's situation will be clearer by the end of this month. His manager, **John Fordham**, said he received his strongest show of support this week when **Paul Gallen**, then the Sharks'

skipper, broke his silence on *Nine News*, labelling the *Four Corners* report which resulted in Johns's sacking as "biased". Gallen's view was that the girl, **Clare**, was not "interrogated" by the interviewer and that "a good man's life was ruined". When I asked him about details of the night and whether the sex had been consensual, he said he did not want to go into details. Johns's main concern has been re-building his family life and working on his relationship with his wife, **Trish**. It's clear Johns is keen to find work. He has been linked to a return to Triple M radio and is said to be keen to host its breakfast show. There have been no formal discussions.

CAPTAIN CONTENTIOUS

CRONULLA don't need another problem but they've got one – **Paul Gallen's** relationship with club boss **Tony Zappia** is strained, to say the least. Gallen won't mind the break from the Sharks' captaincy because he's sick of dealing with issues away from the field. That might explain why he disconnected his mobile phone on Tuesday. Gallen has stuffed

MICHAEL CLARKE'S fiancée, **Lara Bingle**, has come under attack for not taking part in the WAGS "bootcamp" a week ago. The reason? She was filming an ad for bowel cancer awareness. Her dad, **Graham**, died from the disease recently.



From convalescent to super athlete ... Stosur training on the sand dunes at Cronulla and, above, with Giselle Martin (in blue) at Clovelly Beach.

SAMANTHA SHOWS HER GRIT

SAMANTHA STOSUR has bounced back from her long weeks in hospital – some now regard her the healthiest woman in the WTA. "I'd put my house on her being the fittest girl on the tour," said her trainer, **Giselle Martin**, whose husband, **Nathan**, trains **Lleyton Hewitt**. "I think, along with her mental toughness, her fitness is now her strength." Martin, a former national touch football representative, has previously trained **Martina Navratilova** and **Arantxa Sanchez Vicario**. "She has come back from lying in a hospital bed in America with

meningitis and Lyme disease to being so fit and strong," she says of Stosur, 25. "Around the time of her sickness, she was lucky to get her heart rate up to 130 or 140 beats a minute when we trained. Now she can get it up to 180 or 190 and still be going strong. We've done everything from sand hills to swimming, surfing and strength work." I've seen her myself pulling a sleigh carrying a massive tractor tyre around a gym. "That work gave her mental toughness," Martin said. "She has the self-belief to be a top 10 player in the world, and that's what she will be."