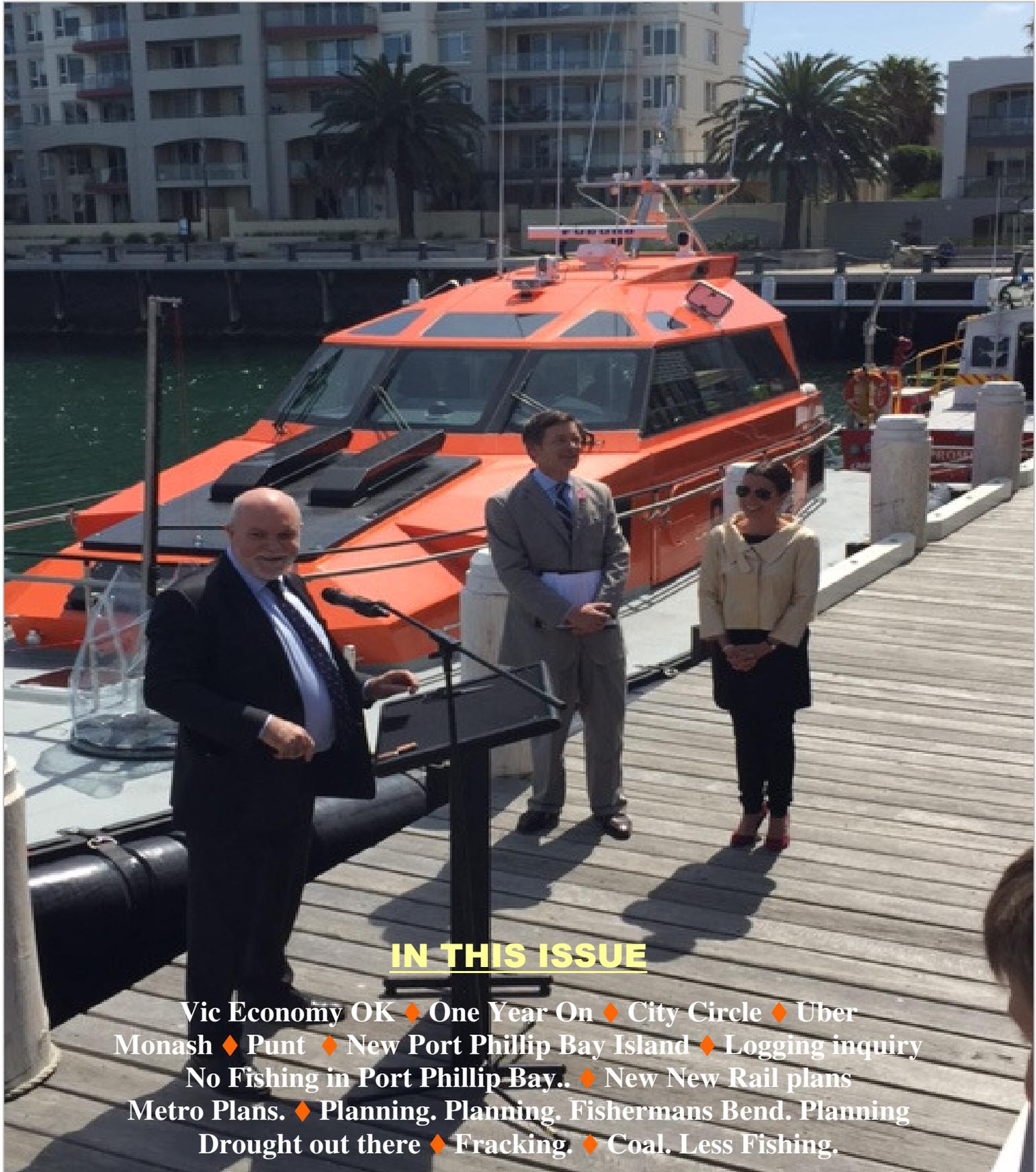


# LETTER FROM MELBOURNE

A monthly public affairs bulletin, a simple précis, distilling and interpreting public policy and government decisions, which effect business opportunities in Victoria and Australia.  
Every month for more than twenty years.

## A Big Issues Edition



### **IN THIS ISSUE**

Vic Economy OK ♦ One Year On ♦ City Circle ♦ Uber  
Monash ♦ Punt ♦ New Port Phillip Bay Island ♦ Logging inquiry  
No Fishing in Port Phillip Bay.. ♦ New New Rail plans  
Metro Plans. ♦ Planning. Planning. Fishermans Bend. Planning  
Drought out there ♦ Fracking. ♦ Coal. Less Fishing.

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Letter From Melbourne is a monthly public affairs bulletin, a simple précis, distilling and interpreting public policy and government decisions, which affect business opportunities in Victoria and Australia.

Written for the regular traveller, or people with meeting-filled days, it's more about business opportunities than politics.

Letter from Melbourne is independent. It's not party political or any other political. It does not have the imprimatur of government at any level. Letter from Melbourne developed a federal and national coverage. This spawned Letter from Canberra (www.letterfromcanberra.com.au) four years ago.

The only communication tool of its type, Letter from Melbourne keeps subscribers abreast of recent developments in the policy arena on a local, state and federal level.

Published by A.B Urquhart & Company Pty Ltd trading as Affairs of State.

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Edited words in this edition: 17,698  
208 editions. 2.45 million words approx.

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# Letter from Melbourne

Since 1994. A monthly public affairs newsletter distilling public policy and government decisions which effect business opportunities in Victoria, Australia and beyond. 2,000,000 words available to search digitally.

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**About the editor**

Alistair Urquhart, BA LLB

Alistair Urquhart graduated from the Australian National University in Canberra, in Law, History and Politics. He may even hold the record for miles rowed on Lake Burley Griffin.

He was admitted as a barrister and solicitor to the Supreme Court of Victoria, and remains a (non-practicing) member of the Law Institute of Victoria. Previously, he graduated from high school in Bethesda, Maryland, and had many opportunities to become aware of the workings of Washington D.C.

For 30 years, he listened every Sunday evening to the late Alistair Cooke and his *Letter from America*. Alistair's early career was mostly in the coal industry, where he became involved with energy, environmental and water issues, and later in the SME finance sector.

He found time to be involved in a range of community activities where he came to understand some of the practical aspects of dealing with government and meeting people across the political spectrum. He now chairs a large disability employment service, including its British operations.

**About the publisher**

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Established in 1993, is an independent Australian public affairs firm with contemporary international connections. Affairs of State provides a matrix of professional tools to multinational businesses, professional and industry associations, government agencies, pressure groups, NGOs and community causes in Australia and abroad.

The firm works with many engineering and information technology firms and other professional association and industry groups on a wide range of issues in Victoria, Canberra and overseas.

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## EDITORIAL

Your Editor has just spent a day down at Jeff's Shed at the AusRail Plus 2015. Apart from many presentations to large audiences over three days, there was some two hundred exhibitions from some of the largest train, rail and parts makers in the world, to some of the specialist parts specialists, some quite small and clever, some from Australia.

What was missing? About a mile away was Parliament House and therein at the time was 120 parliamentarians. All that was needed was a bus or four, and a couple of conductors to load the lot of them on, and bring them down for half a day at AusRail. Safety and Clever and Modern gadgets would be amongst the important things that they would see.



Not just the Rail minister and the Roads minister and the Treasurer. The whole jolly lot of them to go or come and invest their minds in one of the most important things that the State of Victoria needs. And if they were clever as most of them are, they would find a free coffee and someone to brief them on that booth's interesting or fascinating topic whilst he or she drank it.

A long-ago edition of Letter from Melbourne editorialised that your Editor had joined six or so other Victorian parliamentarians on a tram going down Collins Street. During the chat, yours truly broke away from the bunch simply to put in his ticket before he returned to the fold.

As we all descended the tram together, a lady reached out for my arm. 'You are the only honest one amongst them'. I looked myself up and down. 'You are the only one that used your ticket! Had I thought that she had known that I was not a parliamentarian!!@. Having said this, I did regularly bump into Jennings MP as he then was, at the Spring Street Rail ticket counter.

As one once sought to board the Albury train at Southern Cross in a suit and tie, questions were asked as to whether the person in my suit was lost or perhaps a retired doctor. That was even before

that line was downgraded at great engineering expense.

One of our sub-editors tells that Harold Macmillan used to ride on the London Underground long after his retirement. Almost nobody recognised him.

Let us leave rail now.



Topic Number TWO. Ice. A **Chase-the-Facts** article will be in the next edition of this publication to let you be aware of the health and social and legal and community and educational importance of resolving Ice, which has sprung up in Victoria and much of the rest of Australia in recent years. Its not just a few crooked people who should be in charge, which was where my thinking started. No. Listen into your local community, and more widely.

Depending on your personal View, The Victorian Government is doing quite well and is Good, or you might find flaws in it.

The last week of Parliament for the year is finishing as we go to press. There are a couple of messy things in the debates including a union issue or two and the Sail of the Port.

Talking of ports, **the Cover** captures the launch of the Port Phillip Sea Pilots' new pilot boat by Charlotte White, wife of the Minister for Ports, the Hon Luke Donnellan. Every big ship that enters Port Phillip Bay is carefully guided by these pilots. That is Productivity! Happy Reading.

## STATE GOVERNMENT

## One Year On

**Farrah Tomazin**, *The Age's* state political correspondent, reported on November 29 that 'business leaders, community groups and academics have urged **Daniel Andrews** to fire up over the next 12 months. But most have given his government the tick of approval for its efforts so far.'

A *Sunday Age* survey marking the first anniversary of Labor's election victory has found that many believe the government to have made a solid start. Nonetheless, the critics wish to see more progress over the next few years, particularly when it comes to infrastructure and the environment.

As for the Premier's own priorities, 'he nominated tackling violent extremism, pushing ahead with the rest of Labor's election commitments, and responding to the royal commission report into family violence, which will be handed down next year. "That's going to be a real challenge for all of

us in terms of delivering on each and every one of the recommendations they make.'

## State Economy Surges

Victoria has become the fastest-growing economy on the eastern seaboard, overtaking NSW for the first time since 2008. The performance is all the more remarkable because a year ago, in the lead-up to the 2014 state election, Victoria reported anaemic economic growth of 1 per cent.

The biggest contributor to Victoria's economic growth was population growth. In the past year Victoria's population has swelled by 1.7 per cent, more than any other state. NSW grew by a weaker 1.3 per cent. Premier **Daniel Andrews** told the **Committee for Economic Development Australia** on Friday that money for the state's health system had to be the top priority for any funds to come from increasing the goods and services tax.

## Surplus Questioned

The Victorian Government has posted a big surplus of \$1.2 billion for 2014-15 but has been embarrassed by having its accounts queried by the Auditor-General, who said it would have booked a deficit of \$268 million instead. In issuing a rare qualification of the state's accounts, the Auditor-General queried whether the State Government could claim the disputed \$1.5 billion in East West Link funding from the Commonwealth as per *The Australian*.

## Federal Funding Hits Wall

The deal to free up \$1.5 billion in federal funding for infrastructure projects in Victoria has hit a brick wall after Victoria insisted it have sole control of the money. The *Herald Sun* understands Victorian Treasurer **Tim Pallas** wrote to the Federal Government saying he believed the money - provided by Canberra to build the now axed East West Link - should be transferred to Victoria for use on 'non-specific projects.'

## Probity Company to examine Contracts

The Victorian Government has engaged probity company **O'Connor Marsden & Associates** to closely examine billions of dollars worth of state government contracts. The government tenders website reveals the company is being paid more than \$1.1 million including \$500,000 for an 11-year probity services contract for **Melbourne Metro**, a seven-year, \$500,000 contract for the level crossing removal program and \$131,200 for the government's lottery licensing project.

The company's managing director, **Rory O'Connor**, faced scrutiny after concluding in 2010 that Mr Macdonald, in the Sydney ICAC inquiry had done nothing wrong issuing a licence for a 'training' mine to his mate, union boss **John Matiland**, that would turn out to be worth millions of dollars as per *The Age*.

## Helping Out a Mate

The State Government has stacked a series of high-profile government boards with Labor 'mates' after analysis showed one out of every seven directors of the state's water boards has ALP ties. *The Australian* has discovered more than 20 ALP-aligned identities were appointed to the 150 board positions, which carry tens of thousands of dollars a year in director's fees and in the case of chairmanships, up to \$80,000 per annum.

The Labor appointees ranged from ministers and MPs, such as **John Thwaites** and **Elaine Carbinis**, and a string of former staffers and Labor candidates as well as campaign strategists, friends of key Labor identities and even the partners of current and former ministers. Premier **Daniel Andrews** has been a strident critic of the previous Coalition government for stacking government bodies with its allies, but appears to be following in its footsteps. The names of the appointees were not contained in a press release from Environment, Water and Climate Change Minister **Lisa Neville**. Rather, they were listed in a separate document hosted in an obscure corner of the departmental website.

#### Power Struggle

Premier **Daniel Andrews** faces one of his sternest tests next year when the power contract for **Alcoa's** Portland aluminium smelter is up for renegotiation. Ever since the smelter went into production in 1986, the power contracts have been a point of contention with arguments that power was being sold to the smelter too cheaply under a deal that is linked with the price of aluminium.

The controversy over global warming and in particular the use of brown coal power from Victoria's Latrobe Valley has only intensified that debate given that in industrial terms aluminium is effectively congealed electricity. It is far from a one-way argument though, given that the Portland smelter is one of Victoria's biggest export earners and provides 600 direct jobs in western Victoria with a multiplier effect that takes that into many thousands of indirect and contracting jobs.

Around 358,000 tonnes of shining aluminium ingots leave Portland every year, most of them by ship to a variety of customers in Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong and Malaysia according to an opinion piece in the *Herald Sun*.

#### Upper House Deadlock

Legislation to lease the Port of Melbourne could stall in the Upper House after the Opposition said it would not support the Bill. The Bill is to be debated in the last sitting week of Parliament after an Upper House inquiry hands down its review on the proposed 50-year lease on November 30.

If Labor is unable to find a compromise, the Bill will be delayed until the next year, when the Government was hoping to start the sale. The sale is needed to fund the Government's \$6-\$9 billion election promise to fix 50 dangerous level crossings.

Opposition port spokesman **David Hodgett** said the inquiry had unearthed concerns, including the issue of capacity, and vowed not to support the Bill until amendments were made.

#### Liberal Donors Land Bonanza

Victorian senior Liberal Party figures and donors, including the party's federal treasurer, have reaped significant windfalls from the previous government's urban renewal project in inner Melbourne. In July 2012, then planning minister **Matthew Guy** rezoned 250 hectares of low-rise industrial land in South Melbourne and Port Melbourne to capital city, effectively doubling the size of Melbourne's CBD.

It was the most contentious plan by a Victorian planning minister for decades. The widely

criticised move triggered a massive increase in land values and a development frenzy of 46 apartment towers, some of more than 60 storeys, that have been proposed or approved in the precinct since January 2014. In October 2014, **CBRE** commercial property director **Mark Wizel** estimated land values had increased up to 500 per cent since the rezoning.

Confidential briefings to **Guy** obtained by *The Age* reveal the proposed boundaries for the precinct were drawn up behind closed doors as early as March 2011, shortly after the minister made a broad statement about future redevelopment of an unspecified area he called Fishermans Bend. The biggest winners from the rezoning were those who already owned property, or were in the process of buying into Fishermans Bend.

#### Frustration Over Inquiry Overlap

The Legislative Council president has accused the State Government of undermining Parliament by deciding to produce a discussion paper on end of life choices, despite the Upper House's own inquiry. The Council's **Legal and Social Issues Committee** has already visited regional centres including Ballarat and Shepparton, holding public hearings for the dying, their doctors and carers.

More than 1000 submissions have been received as a cost of \$300,000. Scores of experts, including palliative care workers and representatives of the **Council on the Ageing Victoria** and **Victoria Police** have also been interviewed by the panel. Legislative Council president **Bruce Atkinson** said the move to 'usurp' the multi-party committee was a waste of taxpayer's money and belittled the committee process. Up to 16 public forums will be held as part of the discussion paper, which is expected to close by the end of the year according to the *Herald Sun*.

#### Winning Big Contracts

The **Civic Group** is a communications, research and lobbying company owned and directed by former ALP assistant state secretary **Andrew Puig**, former aspiring Liberal candidate and ex-**Crosby Textor** strategist **Jason Aldworth**, and property developer **Marco Gattino**.

The company gained notoriety in 2010 when it was exposed as the mastermind behind a tobacco company-funded group called the **Alliance of Australian Retailers** which was established to front a public campaign against the Gillard government's plain cigarette packaging laws.

**Puig** was a consultant to Labor in the lead-up to last year's state election and was an influential

backroom adviser to **Andrews** office. He also provided media training to Labor MPs. In 2010, he ran Treasurer **Tim Pallas**' state election campaign.

The **Civic Group** has won a big communications and research contract from the Department of Treasury and Finance for the proposed sale of the Port of Melbourne. Another contract with the Department of Education and Training for \$92,400 for work on the **Footscray Learning Precinct** was awarded to **The Civic Group** in August according to *The Age*.

A department spokesman said contracts under \$100,000 did not need to be published and **The Civic Group** was selected from companies on the government's marketing services panel. In addition to its government work, **The Civic Group** appears to be on **Victoria's Register of Lobbyists** as a representative for several big property developers. It also represented ride-sharing company **Uber** last year.

#### Another New Commissioner

**Gerard Mansour** is Australia's first Commissioner for Senior Victorians. In 2015, the Victorian Government asked **Gerard** to investigate the issue of isolation and loneliness, and keeping Victorian seniors linked with their communities so that they are able to age in healthy, dignified and positive ways according to the *RACV magazine*.

#### Rebranded as New

Victorian Labor's promise in opposition to create hundreds of millions of dollars worth of new road maintenance funding is under question, after a leaked cabinet submission showed Roads Minister **Luke Donnellan** is preparing to simply repackage an existing \$900 million fund and relaunch it. The leaked advice to cabinet obtained by *Fairfax Media* shows a government fund set up in 1979 and into which all speeding fines, registration and petrol levies are still paid is to be rebranded as a new **Better Roads** fund in December.

However, the leaked cabinet submission shows most of the money for the fund to be created for regional and metropolitan roads will come from existing vehicle registrations, speeding-fine revenue and petrol levies that are already directed straight into road funding. The submission notes that putting through legislation that renames the existing **Better Roads Victoria Trust Account** and streamlines the act's operation 'is likely to be positively received by outer suburban, interface, regional and rural communities and councils.'

**Ryan Smith**, the opposition's roads and infrastructure spokesman, said pre-election

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pledges made to residents of the bush, in particular of 'new roads funding', were now clearly a broken promise by the State Government.

#### Good CEO Job

The Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, CCCLM, comprises the Lord Mayors of City Councils in seven Australian Capital Cities and the Chief Minister of the ACT. Leading contemporary debates and issues and promoting the importance of Australia's capital cities, CCCLM is an advocate at all levels of Government on issues of strategic importance to Capital Cities.

#### Denied

Victorian MP **Cesar Melhem** denied the **Australian Workers Union** issued bogus invoices under his leadership, and claims \$300,000 in payments it received from a construction company was for genuine services delivered. **Melhem**, who was agitated and at times aggressive in his responses during cross examination at the royal commission into union corruption, gave evidence that at times appeared contradictory. According to **Ben Schneiders**, **Melhem's** career should now be hanging by the finest of threads after a contradictory and unconvincing performance at the royal commission into trade union corruption as per *The Age*.

#### FEDERAL

##### Victorian Solar Grants in Doubt

Premier **Daniel Andrews** and Prime Minister **Malcolm Turnbull** appear to be in conflict over renewable energy funding, with Victoria claiming solar projects in its state are likely to miss out on \$100 million in grants in favour of sunnier places such as NSW and Queensland. **The Australian Renewable Energy Agency** - also known as **ARENA** - has set up the \$100 million program with the aim of driving down the costs of large-scale solar projects.

#### AGRICULTURE. WATER

##### Desalination Plant handed responsibility

The job of drought-proofing Melbourne is being passed wholeheartedly to the desalination plant in Wonthaggi, with the State Government promising that water in Lake Eildon will be used for the north of the state for as long as drought conditions persist there. Alongside \$27 million in drought support announced yesterday, Water Minister **Lisa Neville** promised that an allocation of 75 gigalitres in Lake Eildon belonging to Melbourne's water retailers would be kept in the north of the state to help areas already experiencing drought.

Previously, the annual allocation was earmarked for use as an emergency drought supply to the city and the lake could be tapped when Melbourne's supply fell below 30 percent. **Neville** said Melbourne's emergency supply would be sourced from the desalination plant under the new plan.

##### Rain support

Drought-hit farmers battling the devastating effects of failed crops and financial losses will now be able to apply for a share in \$30 million in loans. Severe dry conditions have crippled grain growers in north-west Victoria this season, some properties having no meaningful rainfall for months on end as reported in *The Age*.



Many crops have failed in the Wimmera and the Mallee, and will not produce any grain, while others have been cut for hay because the likely grain production was severely compromised.

Other farmers have written off their crops and let livestock in to graze on the plants.

##### Modern Water Connections

It is 'unclear' how much water a massive \$1.1 billion irrigation project in northern Victoria will save, experts say. A new independent report on the project, touted as 'the most significant irrigation upgrade' in the state's history, also warns it is not expected to be delivered on time or on budget, based on progress. 'It is appropriate to rest the project ... decisions on the way forward are urgent.'

The **GMW Connections Project Stage 2** involves the modernisation of the irrigation network in the **Goulburn Murray Irrigation District**, an area that generates a vast amount of irrigated agricultural production each year. The area includes a large proportion of Victoria's dairy farms and horticulture producers. The project involves the closure of 'inefficient' spur channels carrying water, the construction of new irrigation connections to some properties, new metering and the reconfiguration of the irrigation backbone. Water savings from the project are to be returned to the environment.

Most of the project money, \$953 million, is coming from the Federal Government and the Victorian Government is contributing \$106 million. The project, which is being delivered by rural water corporation **Goulburn-Murray Water**, is being overseen by the state Environment Department. **Ian Rodgers** from **Goulburn-Murray Water** said assumptions underpinning the project were no longer appropriate. Earlier, it had been assumed that about 3000 landowners would choose to leave irrigated agriculture and terminate their water delivery share. However, it was expected that the number leaving would be much lower, he said as per *The Age*.

##### Probe Into Logging Industry

A forthcoming review of Victoria's logging industry, *The Age* revealed on November 21, will examine the potential for new national parks in

the state's east. Nonetheless, logging in native forests is expected to continue.

The Andrews Government publicised the preceding day its long-awaited terms of reference for an industry taskforce, which it has established in the hope of subduing potentially bitter battles between loggers and environmentalists over Victoria's native forests. This taskforce will look into such issues as the protection of threatened species, including the Leadbeater's Possum; how to protect existing jobs in the field; and wider economic activity. One option being considered is that of developing new forest plantations.

##### Net Fishing Ban To Go Ahead

Within a decade, netting fish will be banned in Corio Bay and Port Phillip. This is thanks to new laws that the Andrews Government passed on November 24, and that the *Herald Sun* announced the following day. In accordance with those laws, netting will be prohibited in Corio Bay by 2018, and in Port Phillip in 2022, with compensation for those thus affected amounting to \$27 million. A limited non-net commercial fishery will continue after 2022.

##### Review of Melbourne Water Price Submission 2016-21

The **Essential Services Commission** is the economic regulator of Victoria's water industry. **Melbourne Water** has provided its price submission to the **Commission**, [www.esc.vic.gov.au](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au). **Melbourne Water** is a wholesaler of water, sewerage treatment and recycled water for Melbourne. It also has responsibilities for waterway health and stormwater management for greater Melbourne.

##### Frack Off

A senior state government MP has sought a permanent ban on the controversial practice of fracking, paving the way for a potential

showdown with the powerful resources industry. For the past five months, a parliamentary committee has been examining the risks and benefits of developing coal seam gas in Victoria, to help the State Government determine if or when the current moratorium should be lifted. Labor MP and parliamentary secretary **Shaun Leane** says 'the committee did not receive a body of indisputable evidence' to convince them that an onshore unconventional gas industry should be allowed to operate in Victoria.

The recommendations could also cause a split within Cabinet ranks, where some ministers are of the view that permitting unconventional gas could be economically beneficial, while others are more sympathetic to those who fear that fracking, the process of extracting gas by injecting water and chemicals underground, could not only harm agriculture but also health as per *The Age*.

#### Kangaroo Pain

Victorian farmers have called for kangaroos to be culled in greater numbers because of the hazards they pose to motorists, as well as the damage they inflict on pastures, crops, fences and earnings. A kangaroo was involved in a fatal crash at Glenablbyn in September, when a motorist swerved to avoid it. The vehicle ran off the road and hit a tree, killing a male passenger.

One farmer told *The Age* he regularly saw large numbers of kangaroos on his property and that he was running about 10 per cent fewer sheep than he would otherwise be able to do. This meant a 10 per cent drop in profit in a year when earnings were already hit by the severe drought conditions.

#### Water on Table

Dairy producer **Murray Goulburn** has bought water to help Victorian dairy farmers through the dry spell and warns the year ahead could be difficult if the drought continues according to the *Herald Sun*.

Managing director **Gary Helou** says the co-operative has secured about 9000 megalitres of water from a couple of superannuation funds that

had invested in water rights. 'We're making that available to our northern Victorian farmers and suppliers on the basis of an offer price. We have a menu of prices.'

### EDUCATION

#### Tales of Bureaucracy

Under recently issued state government guidelines, students at state schools would be permitted to sing Christmas carols, make Christmas decorations, and learn about Jesus, but they would not be permitted to sing hymns or display crucifixes. Teachers, according to a *Herald Sun* report on November 25 concerning these guidelines, would be allowed to make provision in class for instruction on world religions. But these could involve Diwali, Eid, and Hanukkah as much as Christmas. Principals have been given a list of scenarios covering the differences between an SRI (Special Religious Instruction) and a non-SRI activity.

#### State Schools Want to Row

An inner city public school is trying to keep up with elite private schools by building a \$1 million rowing shed by the Yarra River. **Melbourne High** will kick off fundraising with a concert by the three male members of 1960s super group **The Seekers**, who all went to the school.

Principal **Jeremy Ludowyke** said **Melbourne Girls' College** was the only Melbourne public school with its own Yarra-side rowing shed, and a boys' public school should have one too. **Melbourne High** currently rents space at **Power House** rowing club in South Yarra, so as *The Age* reports the news that the school successfully tendered to lease the Crown land next to **Wesley College's** rowing shed in South Yarra along with a town planning permit application has been welcomed.

#### Expensive laptops

Victoria's **Education Department** looks set to repay millions of dollars to teachers and principals who have had their salaries deducted to pay for laptops under a controversial government program. The Federal Court ruled that the

department unlawfully forced teachers to lease their laptops, under the **Notebooks for Teachers and Principals** program.

From July 2009 to November 2013, the government made fortnightly deductions of up to \$17 from the salaries of 40,000 teachers and principals, amounting to more than \$20 million in total as reported in *The Age*.

#### Principals ordered to refuse gifts

Principals have been instructed to reject gifts from school suppliers and quit hiring relatives under a crackdown on widespread conflicts of interest in the state education system. The **Australian Principals Federation** crackdown follows reports of conflicts of interest and sloppy procurement practices on a 'constant basis' in Victorian schools according to *The Age*.

#### Melbourne Uni Australia's best

**Melbourne University** has again been named Australia's best university, topping a list of six local institutions named in the top 100 of an influential international ranking. Melbourne was placed at 33, the same as last year, on the **Times Higher Education World University Ranking**, followed by ANU (52), **Sydney** (56), **University of Queensland** (60), **Monash** (73) and **UNSW** (82).

#### Defeatist University

Prime Minister **Malcolm Turnbull** has labelled the head of one of Australia's most prestigious universities 'defeatist' after they clashed over the viability of commercialising university research in Australia. **Melbourne University** vice-chancellor **Glyn Davis** drew a rebuke from **Turnbull** after he was asked what could be done to address the fact that Australia ranked either last or second last in the **OECD** in terms of collaboration between researchers and business as reported in *The Australian*.

#### Big School Gets Bigger

**Haileybury**, Australia's largest independent school, won approval to convert a 10-storey former office building on King Street, opposite

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the Flagstaff Gardens, into a fifth campus for the school which already has a strong presence in Melbourne's south east. With the redevelopment plans approved, an early learning centre will open in 2016, with prep to year 10 to follow in 2017. By 2018, there will be classes to year 12, with an overall capacity of 774 students according to the *Financial Review*.

#### Norty State School

A Victorian state funded school has been caught out asking parents to pay hundreds of dollars to secure an enrolment spot for their child. The *Herald Sun* reports that the **Education Department** has issued a warning to **Northcote High School** after it was found charging parents a \$170 deposit to enrol their child at the school.

### ENERGY

#### Coal Worry for Latrobe

Three government-funded coal projects have been abandoned this year, sparking another major review of the industry. Some major energy companies have already signalled they will downsize or phase out coal-fired power stations, leaving questions over the Latrobe Valley, which relies heavily on the industry for employment as reported in the *Herald Sun*.

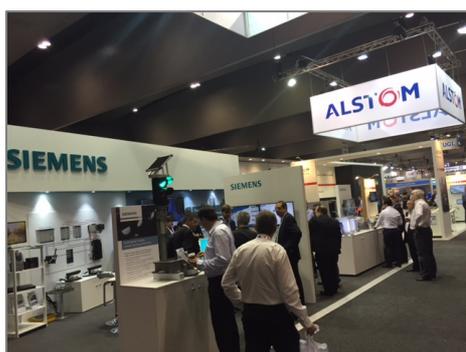
#### Expressions of Interest

Analysis of the **Victorian Electricity Distribution and Transmission Network**. Victoria is unique in Australia for having no regulation of the technical standards for the age or condition of electricity network assets. Victoria also stands alone for consistently providing higher returns to private network owners than equivalent investments with low risk, and guaranteed profits. According to the *Herald Sun*, the **Electrical Trades Union**, Victoria Branch is seeking analysis and advice from the available public and/or proprietary information that identifies the scale and trend of these issues.

#### Not Green Enough

**Daniel Andrews's** environmentalist credentials have been censured by a new report, dealing with his government's first year. This report – analysed by *The Age* on November 22 – accused the Premier and the ALP of having moved too slowly to deliver proper outcomes for the environment.

Environment Victoria, one of the state's leading conservation groups, issued a detailed audit which deplored the fact that whilst eight of the government's election promises had been implemented, 17 had not been, and in certain areas Victoria had actually deteriorated since 2014. Generating special censure was the government's approval of new coal mining exploration licences in Gippsland.



*The AusRAIL conference in November had some 200 exhibitors. Wow.*

During December, a parliamentary committee will release a highly anticipated report into coal seam gas exploration. The study will determine if, or when, the government should lift the moratorium

on the controversial practice known as fracking. But while the survey praises the government for having wound back Coalition policies – such as restrictions on wind farms, the commercialisation of national parks, and plans to scrap the Victorian energy efficiency target – it also highlights several concerns.

Various examples of these concerns are listed by *The Age*. The survey argues that the ALP's 20 per cent renewable energy and efficiency target is too modest, and may involve little extra investment in renewables. Little has been done to ensure that rivers get enough water and are not further damaged by livestock. Besides, there remains no plan to carry out any sort of transition from dirty coal to clean energy.

### ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION

#### Possum park Plan Delayed

A plan for a new national park to protect the endangered Leadbeater's possum has been dealt a blow with revelations **VicForests** locked in millions of dollars of new logging contracts. The State Government ducked a proposal to create a Great Forest national park stretching from Kinglake to Mt Baw Baw and north-east up to Eildon in the recent state election, instead announcing a taskforce made up of environment groups, scientists, the union and the forestry industry.

#### Feral Deer in Sight

A deer shooting program is about to start in a 'critical' wildlife corridor near the edge of Melbourne in order to prevent wild deer destroying young trees and other seedlings planted since **Black Saturday**. According to *The Age*, deer numbers have increased in the area in recent years and the animals have killed or damaged trees and seedlings in the Watsons Creek habitat link, part of a wildlife corridor that connects bushland around the Yarra River in Warrandyte to the Kinglake plateau.

#### Knuckle Down Boys

Some 23 aircraft fleet were operating, including a large orange crane stationed at Albury to cover southern NSW and Victoria in preparation for the

fire season according to *The Age*. The rates of arson have also increased in recent years, which has been captured due to better reporting. **Craig Lapsley**, the state's emergency management commissioner, called on Victorians to be watchful for suspicious behaviour 'Arson is one key issue we will deal with in the state maturely.'

**Joe Buffone** was announced as the new chief fire officer of the **Country Fire Authority**, moving from **Emergency Management Victoria**, where his focus is to be preparing the authority for the 'tough' summer ahead. Emergency Services Minister **Jane Garrett** has been in talks with the SA and Federal Governments about the allocation of two large fire tanker aircraft for the two fire prone states. The two states of NSW and Victoria are pushing for special aircraft on the Victorian-South Australian border for extended periods.

#### Start Fires, Save Lives

Chief officer of the **CFA Euan Ferguson** has defended the state's fuel reduction burning program, saying it saved lives, could reduce bushfire intensity and made them safer for fire fighting. More fuel reduction burns are listed to be conducted this spring, but fire authorities say prescribed burns to reduce fuel loads would only be lit if conditions were safe according to *The Age*.

#### Keep Nets in the Bay

Melbourne's global food reputation could take a dive if commercial fishing with nets in Port Phillip Bay is banned according to top chefs in the *Herald Sun*. **Neil Perry** of **Rockpool**, **Guy Grossi** of **Grossi Florentino** and the **Flower Drum's Anthony Lui** are among a group campaigning for the State Government to overturn the decision to bring in the ban within a decade.

Restaurants could be forced to import King George Whiting, garfish, silver trevally and red mullet from Adelaide, instead of using fish that had been caught in the bay that could be served up

on the same night. **Perry**, an award-winning chef, said up to 90 per cent of the seafood served in his Melbourne-based restaurants came from Port Phillip Bay.

#### Wily Intruder Kills 14

A fox on the loose killed 14 penguins at Melbourne Zoo, according to the *Herald Sun*.

#### Halim's Helping Hand

The **Halim family** has launched a fresh attempt to rescue its \$330 million redevelopment of Melbourne's **Hotel Windsor** with a commitment to begin the first stages of the project within 12 months of a planning permit extension being granted as reported in the *Financial Review*.

The compromise offer was made by the **Halim Group** director and **Hotel Windsor** manager **Adipoetra Halim** before a compulsory mediation conference with the State Government on December 2 and follows a decade-long battle with various State Governments and heritage organisations to redevelop the crumbling building, the last of Australia's grand Victorian-era hotels.

#### Big Upgrade Coming

The **State Library of Victoria**, has embarked on a major multimillion dollar facelift with a call for expressions of Interest in restoring and transforming the gracious old structure. The redevelopment, due to start next year and scheduled for completion by 2020, will be funded by \$55.4 million from the Victorian Government and \$28 million in philanthropic contributions.

According to *The Age*, the project includes the restoration of Queen's Hall, reopening the Library's Russell Street entrance, an '**e-Town Hall**' that will connect regional public libraries, and new spaces for early learning, digital media, entrepreneurship and exhibitions.

#### Fished Out

Commercial net fishing in Port Phillip Bay will cease by April 2022, under a \$27 million compensation package unveiled by the State Government that has been blasted by the commercial fishing industry. Forty-three licence holders will be affected by the move, some of whom have been fishing in the bay for decades, and who have followed in the wake of their fathers and grand-fathers.

One long-term commercial fisherman slammed the government, accusing it of 'running 43 small businesses' that provided freshly caught seafood and generated jobs. But the body representing

recreational anglers, **VRFish**, welcomed the government's package, saying it had long opposed commercial netting in bays and inlets.

Recreational fishing in Victoria was valued at \$2.3 billion and 'provides thousands of jobs,' according to chairman Russell Conway as per *The Age*.

### EVENTS

#### Pleasure and Payne

Against the odds, **Michelle Payne** has become the first female jockey to win the **Melbourne Cup** after she guided 100-1 outsider **Prince of Penzance** to a stunning victory at Flemington. 'Women can do anything and we can beat the world' she said afterwards, thanking trainer **Darren Weir** for sticking with her when others lacked faith as per *The Age*.

#### More Control, Less Deaths

Safety changes were made to this year's **Melbourne Cup** to try to prevent a repeat of the tragedy last year when a horse died after being spooked by a spectator. Alterations to the way horses return to the mounting yard and are paraded to the crowd will change **Melbourne Cup** conventions after 2014 Cup runner **Araldo** was injured and had to be destroyed.

Strict crowd behaviour guidelines and bans on objects such as large flags will also be enforced at Flemington with enhanced security to monitor the situation before, during and after the races. Messages will be posted in racebooks and on big screens, and signage will ask racegoers to behave in an appropriate manner when in the vicinity of horses after a safety review by the **Victorian Racing Club**.

#### Have Your Say

**Melbourne Metro** will deliver two new rail tunnels between South Kensington and South Yarra and five new underground stations at Arden, Parkville, CBD North, CBD South and Domain. Drop into a **Melbourne Metro** information session to meet the project team, view tunnel and station designs and provide feedback on project plans from 24 October to 20 November. [yoursay.mmrailproject.vic.gov.au](http://yoursay.mmrailproject.vic.gov.au)

#### F1 Racing for Loss

Again the losses for the **Australian Formula One Grand Prix** mount up. This year Victorian taxpayers subsidised the event by a record \$61.7 million. The **Australian Grand Prix Corporation's** annual report outlined the state's

financial burden for the motor racing spectacle, the opening round of the **F1** season.

The glamorous event attracts about 300,000 motorsport fans to the track, and millions of eyeballs around the globe during the four days in March. Premier **Daniel Andrews** has again backed the race, saying it showcases Melbourne and Victoria to a worldwide audience as reported in *The Age*.

The **Australian Grand Prix** is guaranteed to be held in Melbourne until 2023, despite recent overtures from New South Wales Premier **Mike Baird**. Perhaps now is the time to revisit the issue of a night race. After all, it could be commercially decisive.

**F1** supremo **Bernie Ecclestone** wants an evening start in Melbourne to appeal to overseas markets, especially in Melbourne to appeal to overseas markets, especially in Europe. If it has a direct impact on the bottom line, the night-time switch could be a game-changer.

### GAMING

#### Lawyers, Players Quit Gaming

Poker machines are illegal because their design is deceptive, lawyers will argue in a landmark legal action against the multibillion dollar pokies industry. **Maurice Blackburn** lawyers will argue in a state or federal court that poker machines are in breach of consumer law relating to misleading and deceptive conduct. The pro bono action will also consider suing the industry for a breach of negligence laws according to *The Age*.

**St Kilda, Western Bulldogs** and **Essendon** have committed to reduce the influence of sports betting on football fans, signing a charter that will remove the promotion of betting at their clubs and matches.

### HEALTH

#### Dandenong Emergency Praised

In its November 2015 issue, *Health Victoria* singled out Dandenong Hospital's ED (Emergency Department) as the best not only in Australia but in Australasia. This announcement was to mark the award bestowed on the department by the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia (CENA), and the award recognises what *Health Victoria* has called 'the transformational journey from late 2013 with the introduction of a new model of care, ensuring patients and carers remain at the forefront of care.'

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**Telstra Prize**

**Jerril Rechter**, Chief Executive Officer of VicHealth, has won Telstra's Victorian Businesswoman of the Year prize, given to her on the strength of her extensive leadership across government and the not-for-profit sector. She has been VicHealth's CEO since 2012, and serves at present on the Liquor Control Advisory Council as well as the Advisory Panel for the Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport.

**Combat Melanoma**

VicHealth has launched a \$10 million Community Shade Grants Program, by which it seeks applications for initiatives to provide shade in public areas such as sports clubs, parks and playgrounds. *Health Victoria's* November edition reports that at present, Australia has some of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Of every three Australians, two are likely to be diagnosed before the age of 70 with some kind of skin cancer. Melanoma was the fifth most common sort of cancer in Victoria during 2014, what with 2,466 new cases, and 279 deaths.

**Good bye**

The entire board has been sacked at the Bacchus Marsh hospital where seven avoidable baby deaths in two years have been identified. The eight board members of the **Djerriwarrh Health Services** were given until early in October to plead their case as reported in *The Age*.

**Cuts Equal to Closing Two Hospitals**

Multibillion dollar federal funding cuts to Victoria's health system over the next decade equate to closing down two major institutions, like the **Royal Melbourne Hospital** which employs more than 9000 people, as reported in *The Age*. The cuts would also slash the equivalent of 23,000 elective surgery procedures every two years in Victoria according to a Federal Government inquiry into Australia's health system.

**Game Over for Medics**

**St John Ambulance** has lost the right to provide emergency medical assistance at the MCG after almost a century of voluntary service. The **Melbourne Cricket Club** moved to a commercial contract for emergency health services in 2011 and **St John**, which has helped thousands of patrons at the ground since 1922, was awarded the first contract and continued to provide first aid staff until the agreement lapsed this month according to the *Herald Sun*.

The **MCC** has since told **St John**, which provides

up to 90 staff at each event depending on requirements, their services are no longer required after another tenderer, **Event Aid**, was chosen for the contract. **St John** chief executive **Stephen Horton**, in a written message to staff, described the decision as a 'huge loss' and expressed 'disappointment' at losing the **MCG** contract.

**Vote Yes for Gay Marijuana**

**Richard Di Natale** is forging ahead with his bid to legalise medical marijuana and warns the Federal Government would be foolish to stand in the way. The Greens leader laid down his challenge just days after Victoria announced it wants to legalise marijuana cultivation for the treatment of serious conditions like cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/ AIDS.

Senator **Di Natale** says Victoria cannot proceed with its plan without Commonwealth legislation. His bill would set up a new medical marijuana regulator to oversee the production, distribution and use of the drug. A Senate committee strongly backed the bill in August, despite concerns from the Health Department and the **Therapeutic Goods Administration** as reported in *The Age*.

**Abortion Obstacles Still Remain**

Seven years after abortion was decriminalised in Victoria, doctors say about a third of pregnant women are being cared for in Catholic hospitals in Victoria that will not perform terminations, and that there is a need for a coordinated system to ensure equitable access to abortion across the state. Doctors who did not want to be named said that even some public hospitals that are not Catholic remained 'squeamish' about the medical procedure, with health professionals viewing it as 'dirty work' that they would prefer to send elsewhere as reported in *The Age*.

**BUSINESS & INVESTMENT**

**Listen in**

**Dr Pradeep Phillip**, formerly hSecretary of the Department of Health & Human services, is the new CEO of LaunchVic, which will provide the right environment for entrepreneurs to develop, incubate and grow early-stage innovative businesses, backed by a Victorian Government's \$60 million startup fund.

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

**Cesar Melham Breaches Duties**

Embattled Upper House MP **Cesar Melham** may have breached duties to **Australian Workers' Union** members by allegedly securing more than \$300,000 in 'paid education leave' without their

consent. The royal commission into union corruption has found funds given to the **AWU** by glass manufacturer **ACI** for 'paid education leave' were actually used to finance the renovation of the union's Victorian office.

The Opposition called on Premier **Daniel Andrews** to demand **Melhem's** resignation, or for Labor to suspend or expel him. Hundreds of pages of documents released by the royal commission detail 'education' payments by **ACI** to the union were 'not in any way' earmarked for use for that purpose.

**Public Sector in Wages blowout**

**Bureau of Statistics** figures released on Wednesday reveal Victoria now has the strongest combined public and private sector wage growth in the nation, with hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses up 2.6 per cent over the year to September. *The Age* reports that the strong result was driven entirely by public sector wages growth as hourly rates of pay for Victorian-based public servants leapt by 3.8 per cent over the past year, well above the national average of 2.7 per cent.

The strong result comes before even factoring in union pay agreements, with police, health workers, public servants, firefighters, nurses and teachers limbering p for looming pay battles this year and next. Most recently, the union representing Victoria's 30,000 public servants asked the State Government for a 20 per cent pay rise over four years, five weeks' leave and automatic salary progression.

The state budget already appears to be under pressure over wages. A final tally of the 2014-15 financial year reveals the actualy 2014-15 public sector wage bill was a whopping \$357 million higher than expected.

**Union Cops \$150,000 Fine**

The **CFMEU** has been fined more than \$150,000 over illegal blockades at a series of Melbourne building sites with several key union figures fined for misconduct. The Federal Court handed its judgement last night on the union's actions during the dispute with **Grocon** in 2012 when it blockaded the site of the **Emporium** centre as reported in *The Herald Sun*.

**EnergyAustralia Axes Jobs**

**EnergyAustralia** is set to axe up to 300 jobs as it moves one of its three call centres to the Philippines and seeks further gains in efficiency and costs. The electricity and gas supplier, owned by Hong Kong-listed **CLP Group**, advised staff

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on Thursday that it would close its site at Mill Park in Melbourne's outer suburbs next September as per *The Age*.

**\$2 Billion Firefight**

Firefighters have upped the ante in their bitter pay dispute with the State Government and are sticking to demands that would cost taxpayers \$2 billion. Talks have broken down between the militant **United Firefighters Union**, which campaigned hard for Labor at last year's state election, and the State Government over a log of claims that would see paid CFA firefighters receive increases of nearly 60 per cent by 2018.

The pay claim includes a backdated 9.7 per cent a year boost over five years, and would see middle-ranking senior firefighters earning \$1643 a week today earn more \$2610 a week by the middle of 2018 before any allowances are added. Illustrating how poisonous relations have become between the **UFU** and the State Government, union secretary **Peter Marshall** has denounced a five per cent pay increase recently given to members as a sweetener.

A firefighter with more than 20 years experience, who spoke to the *Herald Sun* on the proviso of anonymity said he was surprised by his union's demands. 'I believe a large number of the membership haven't been told the truth.'

**Airservices Chief Executive Officer**

**Airservices Australia** is a corporate Commonwealth entity proving safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible air navigation and aviation rescue and firefighting services to the aviation industry. A Commonwealth Corporation with annual revenue of approximately A\$1billion, it was formed in July 1995 when the Civil Aviation Authority was split into two separate government bodies: **Airservices Australia** and the **Civil Aviation Safety Authority**. Contact Spencer Stuart at [melb@spencerstuart.com](mailto:melb@spencerstuart.com).

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**Big Carrot, Little Stick**

Businesses hiring long-term unemployed people will be able to claim \$12,000 incentive payments from the Victorian Government under a dramatically expanded jobs scheme. The huge expansion of Labor's flagship **Back to Work Scheme** follows concern that the state economy has been failing to create full-time positions according to *The Age*.

**JUSTICE & POLICE**

**CRIME.**

**Police Under Attack**

A front-page story in *The Age* noted a spate of violent attacks against members of Victoria Police. This development has fuelled concerns that young criminals are increasingly targeting

officers and exploiting policies which were originally introduced to protect the public. Notably worrying is the increase in ice-generated crime, not to mention a growth in sales of illegal firearms and now a series of direct threats to officers, through shootings or hit-and-runs. All this has done nothing to ease the plight of a force already suffering from the sustained pressures appertaining to heightened threats of terrorism.

**\$2M Payout For Ex-Police Boss?**

*The Age* announced on November 13 that **Paul Mullett**, who used to be boss of the Police Association, is negotiating with Victoria Police over a financial settlement that is expected to exceed \$2 million. Mr Mullett alleges that he was the victim of a 'malicious' campaign by some of the state's most prominent police officers.

Already Mr Mullett has rejected a financial offer from the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office on behalf of Victoria Police, in what appears to be an attempt to avoid a Supreme Court trial next year. If that trial went ahead, it could further embarrass the force.

Along with erstwhile Assistant Commissioner **Noel Ashby**, Mr Mullett was charged over allegedly providing false evidence under oath to the Office of Police Integrity in 2007. Both men were also accused of having perverted the course of justice by the tipping-off of a suspect in a high-profile murder investigation. Whilst the case against Messrs Mullett and Ashby collapsed, the former never returned to his previous role.

**Power Plus**

Victoria's anti-corruption watchdog, the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission, will benefit from increased power to probe politicians, judges, and bureaucrats. This news was reported by *The Age* in a front-page item on November 29, and is part of a long-awaited shake-up regarding the state's integrity laws.

Your editor has been a member (non-practising) of the Law Institute of Victoria for 25 years. He is puzzled why judges are included in the new powers.

**Daniel Andrews's** government unveiled reforms which it hopes will strengthen Victoria's integrity system, described by experts as being among Australia's weakest. Under the new rules, if they come into law, the Auditor-General would get the power to 'follow the dollar' on public-private



*Time moves on. Many will miss Egon's Cafe in the New Year.*

partnerships, and would thereby be enabled to put under the microscope future infrastructure plans such as the Metro Rail Project. Similarly the Ombudsman's office would be redesigned so as to give members of the public more avenues to lodge complaints.

**Sad**

**Mark Davis**, who used to be manager at Australia Post Geelong – at an annual salary of \$87,000 – as well as having been head of the city's Chamber of Commerce, was recently found guilty of embezzling a total of \$357,363.12 over an 11-year period. The *Geelong Advertiser* stated on November 20 that Mr Davis diverted no fewer than 130 cheque payments from local businesses into his personal credit accounts.

Prosecutor **Stephen Young** informed the court that the defendant, not content with manipulating over-the-counter cheques addressed to Australia Post, had mailed out fraudulent invoices to companies, advising them to post payments to his own Post Office Box. Not till an employee found shredded documents in a bin was the scale of Mr Davis's deceit uncovered.

**Charles Morgan**, Mr Davis's own barrister, said that his client had been endeavouring to impress 'high-flyers' of the local business community, with whom he regularly mixed. 'He was trying to keep up with the Joneses, which is essentially what came out of his role.'

**Former Auditor-General made Unwelcome Advances**

The recently resigned head of Victoria's financial watchdog has been found to have sexually harassed a staff member, running his hands over



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her body and breasts, while kissing her neck. **Auditor-General John Doyle** stood down in September after a complaint by the staff member led to the Parliament's public accounts and estimates committee investigation by former High Court judge **Kenneth Hayne** into his conduct. The report, which was tabled in State Parliament on Tuesday, found it was 'more probable than not' that **Mr Doyle** made unwelcome sexual advances towards the staff member and bullied her after she rejected them as reported in *The Australian Financial Review*.

#### Ex-Police Chief Could Be Grilled

Former Victoria Police chief commissioner **Christine Nixon** faces an attempt to have her questioned under oath about her allegedly malicious pursuit of one of the state's most decorated detectives. Lawyers for former senior sergeant **Paul Mullett**, who led the **Police Association** before being charged with serious criminal offences, are stepping up a legal action against **Nixon** and others.

The Supreme Court action seeks redress for the destruction of **Mullett's** career in an alleged witch-hunt by the heads of **Victoria Police** and the now disbanded anti-corruption agency the Office of Police Integrity. The case against **Mullett**, the recipient of two valour awards, collapsed because of a lack of evidence. He was unable to return to his job and now works part-time as a firefighter's union official according to *The Australian*.

#### Guns on the Streets

A person has been injured or killed by gunfire on average every nine days in Victoria so far this year. At least half of the eight fatal shooting this year were drug-related, the victims suspected or convicted traffickers, or linked to some of Melbourne's most notorious criminal networks according to *The Age*.

#### Politicalisation of the Force

**Daniel Andrews** plunged **Victoria Police** deeper into a political quagmire when he castigated critics of police Chief Commissioner **Graham Ashton** for questioning his integrity. The Premier's intervention has further exposed **Ashton's** office to claims of politicalisation just months after being sworn into the position. **Andrews** defended **Ashton's** honour after *The Australian* revealed the Premier's former chief of staff had been seconded to take the same role in the Chief Commissioner's office.

The decision by **Ashton** to second **Brett Curran**

to the post has staggered Coalition MPs in the wake of the **Simon Overland** affair, which led to his resignation after the force released misleading crime statistics. The opposition has attacked the **Curran** appointment and sent a thinly veiled warning to **Ashton** about the need for political independence as reported in *The Australian*.

#### New Appointment to Bar

The **Victorian Bar** announced the appointment of a new CEO, **Sarah Fregon**, who replaces the outgoing CEO of seven years, **Stephen Hare**. **Fregon** is currently General Counsel and Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at **PZ Cussons** and is also the Chair of the **Victorian Liquor Control Advisory Council**. She has worked in private practice and as corporate counsel, including eight years at the Victorian Bar according to a *Medianet Release*.

#### Statistics Don't Reveal All

Victoria's new Chief Commissioner, **Graham Ashton** says real policing cannot be judged simply on a set of figures. Which is why he is loath to close tiny one-officer country stations, even if the police who work there rarely lock up a crook. But the lone police provide community leadership in small towns where the bank and post offices have long gone. They may be the mayor or help sell the footy club raffle tickets, but their very existence is a comfort to residents as per *The Age*.

#### Lockout Claims

The **CFMEU's** Victorian president, **Ralph Edwards**, and vice-president **Derek Christopher** have been accused of locking a company out of a Melbourne Building site, Federal Court documents claim. Industry watchdog **Fair Work Building and Construction** has alleged the pair were responsible for restricting access to the company, which does specialist abseiling work.

**Edwards** was accused of ignoring requests from the company to meet to negotiate a new union pay deal, according to the **FWBC** statement of claim lodged in the Federal Court in late October. Two employees were allegedly told they were not allowed entry on November 20, 2013 because they had not paid their union dues that month according to the *Herald Sun*.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

##### In a Huff For a Puff

A Melbourne City Councillor has hit out at a \$30,000 ratepayer-funded spend on an anti-smoking project in a sign of growing divisions

within **Town Hall**. Councillor **Richard Foster**, whose portfolio covers smoking issues, questioned the need for street performers to serenade city workers with poetry about the evils of smoking. Costing \$6000 a day, performers also sang, improvised and mimed on the sidewalks and through laneways per the *Herald Sun*.

##### Last Puff in a Huff

Smoking is soon to be banned along two of Melbourne's main jogging tracks, creating the city's largest smoke-free zones. Princes Park in Carlton and the Tan Track, spanning 3.8km around King's Domain and the Botanic Gardens have also been highlighted for a ban that could begin as soon as April.

According to the *Herald Sun*, City councillor **Richard Foster** said the move would help make Melbourne one of the healthiest cities in the world. Feedback will be obtained from along the tracks from November 4.

##### Council Snaps Bargain

A private block of land in West Melbourne has been snapped up by the **Melbourne City Council** in a historic acquisition to create more parks and gardens. The former mechanics workshop at 104 Hawke Street was bought by the council for \$1.7 million in September.

The purchase is the first made by the council from its \$18.6 million open space fund, which has grown from just \$3.7 million since 2011 because of the ferocious rate of property development in the central city according to the *Herald Sun*.

#### GEELONG

##### Geelong Library Developments

The new Geelong Library, opened to the public on November 21, is part of a big plan to raise local literacy levels. Costing \$45 million in municipal, state, and federal funding, the library was described by the city's mayor **Darryn Lyons** as 'Geelong's huge brain overlooking Silicon Bay.' Less flatteringly, the building has also been called 'ugly,' 'a waste of money,' and – in view of its unorthodox shape – 'an eggshell.'

##### Less Representation for Geelong

Geelong will have one less councillor after a **Victorian Electoral Commission** review began in early November. The electoral representation review wants submissions on the number of councillors but state laws require one fewer at next year's municipal council elections, from Geelong's existing 12, excluding the mayor, to 11. The review follows a State Government





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examination of Geelong's directly elected mayoral model. A discussion paper released as part of the Local Government Act Review questioned the effectiveness of directly electing Geelong's mayor. South Barwon Liberal MP **Andrew Katos** feared the review indicated the State Government wanted to axe Geelong's public vote for the mayor according to the *Geelong Star*.

#### Casino A Joke

The family of Geelong's most prominent businessman has 'laughed off' reports of his involvement in a bid to build a second Victorian casino in the *Herald Sun*. **Frank Costa**, owns waterfront land in Geelong while a spokesman for Mayor **Darryn Lyons** said he would like to see the details of any proposal.

### MELBOURNE

#### Banking On The Yarra

Work is meant to be starting in 2016 on a key redevelopment of the Yarra River's north bank. Expected to cost \$110 million, the redevelopment was discussed in the *Herald Sun*'s November 25 edition. The Government has approved more than \$4 billion of major construction in the CBD this year, construction of which the Yarra project forms a part.

Called North Wharf, the forthcoming plan is the missing link between Docklands and the often-neglected north bank of the river. It is expected to include a waterfront residential and retail development, including refurbishment of the historic wharf and goods shed between Jim Stynes Bridge and the Mission to Seafarers building. A heritage crane will be restored on the site, and a new park created.

#### Garden City Up Above

Property giant Lend Lease has released a bold new plan – discussed in the *Herald Sun* on November 21 – to build a sky park 10 metres above ground level. The park would be open to businesses and to members of the public. It would form part of a \$1.9 billion redevelopment, consisting of seven commercial and residential towers in an area that stretches between Collins and Flinders streets.

#### Greening up the City

High-density precincts like Southbank will eventually have leafy streets and lane-ways under a plan for a greener inner city. Skyscraper developers will be encouraged to grow foliage on walls and roofs to help keep summer temperatures down by reducing the 'urban heat island' effect.

The **City of Melbourne's** 'urban forest' strategy will see more than 30,000 trees planted in a bid to increase the green canopy from 22 per cent to 40 per cent by 2040. Ten 'urban forest precinct' plans have been approved by the city council, with the final three - Southbank, Parkville and Fishermans Bend - signed off by the **Future Melbourne Committee** as reported in the *Herald Sun*.

#### Cars blocked from CBD

Cars will be blocked from entering the CBD for the first time under a radical proposal to be considered by **Melbourne City Council**. Under the plan, motor vehicles, including motorcycles, would be illegal anywhere in the Hoddle grid bound by Flinders Street, Spencer Street, Spring Street and the Queen Victoria Market for one day under a car-free experiment. Councillor **Richard**

**Foster** told the *Herald Sun* that 'it's inevitable as all major cities become congested that something has to give, and that give is going to be the motor car in the end.'

#### Council Pay Queried

Victoria's most highly paid council boss, **Ben Rimmer**, earns nearly \$500,000, while several suburban CEOs command salaries of \$380,000. The base salary of Prime Minister **Malcolm Turnbull** is about \$507,000. The *Herald Sun* reported that in 21 Victorian councils 681 senior staff earn at least \$136,000 a year, including 157 managers at Melbourne. A State Government discussion paper on municipal reform said the way new and reappointed CEO contracts were negotiated had become problematic.

#### Lord Mayor Robert Doyle Seeking Third Term

**Robert Doyle** is seeking a third term in the city's top job. **Robert Doyle**, 62, announced his campaign 12 months before the elections due in October. he is expected to run on a platform of needing to deal with unfinished business, such as the \$250 million redevelopment of **Queen Victoria Market**. A city ferry proposal, job creation and the further development of **Docklands** are also high on his agenda.

#### Greening Up Our Streets

The **Melbourne City Council** is asking people to nominate the CBD laneways they would most like to see overhauled with trees climbers, edibles and other forms of greenery as part of a wider push to introduce more plants into the city. The council, which says it will transform up to four laneways at this stage, has developed online maps that specify the greening potential of more than 200 city lanes according to the *Herald Sun*.

**Cr Arron Wood** says the council has been inspired by small green spaces overseas, such as Paley Park, which was established on less than 400 square metres in New York. 'We know that around 80 per cent of **City of Melbourne** residents live in apartments with limited or no space for greenery so a green laneway can provide a social space as well as offering environmental benefits.'

#### New Vision....

Melbourne is the world's most liveable city because of its people, drawn as they are from every continent. Our diversity and relative harmony are the envy of the world. It is also the world's most liveable city because of two great waves of planning that laid out our inner and outer cities. Nearly two centuries ago, **Batman, Fawkner** and **Hoddle** set down the city grid, grand boulevards and great open spaces at the heart of our inner city.

Almost half a century ago, then premier **Dick Hamer** and his ministers, **Bill Borthwick** and **Alan Hunt**, planned out the next great expansion of Melbourne from two to four million people by reserving the green wedges, preserving the Mornington Peninsula and creating the corridors for the future road and rail needs. Melbourne is, however, at a crossroad, where we need a new vision for the year 2200 as we face the challenge of our third great era.

#### Tensions Run Hot on Bicycle Plan

A backlash against further advances towards Melbourne becoming more bicycle friendly was felt when Melbourne councillors discussed a new



*Canny' Cake. Geeing accountant Stan Canny celebrates only 55 years as an accountant with the next Generation*

draft bicycle plan. In a direct reflection of polarised community views about cyclists, some councillors expressed thinly veiled resentment that cyclists were again being given non-deserved privileges. Councillors unanimously adopted for public consultation a **Draft Bicycle Plan 2016-2020** according to a *CBD publication*.

#### Tick of Approval

**Haileybury College** will open a CBD-based campus, after Melbourne councillors unanimously approved its proposal for a vertical school. The private school will open an early learning centre at the campus as early as next year and will cater for prep to year 12 students from 2017 and 2018. The school will be a first for the city and comes as great relief to inner-city families lacking local school options. The approval is particularly impressive considering the school proposal was initially met with 62 objections relating primarily to traffic and congestion concerns. However, following a consultation session with objectors, by the time councillors considered the proposal at the September 6 **Future Melbourne Committee Meeting** not one objection remained. A KPMG study commissioned by the school supported the long-term trends over the next 30 years according to a *CBD publication*.

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## **AFFAIRS OF STATE ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION**

This competition presents an opportunity for students and amateur policy nerds alike to be recognised for their ability to produce a short essay on an issue of contemporary importance.

The competition seeks to promote critical policy thinking and recognise those who are able to clearly articulate the facts as they stand without an apparent political agenda.

The winner will be given the opportunity to intern with our company for a two week period and have their piece published in our respected Letters From Melbourne or Letters From Canberra publications.

Shortlisted applicants may also be given the opportunity to publish their pieces elsewhere at the discretion of the Editor.

Affairs of State is a well-established independent public affairs firm that provides a range of professional services to Australian and international businesses, professional associations, government agencies, lobby groups, non-government organisations and community causes in Australia and abroad.

Our firm focuses on providing knowledge, contact and practical advice to ensure tailored and expedient solutions to challenges and opportunities facing government, business and the not for profit sector. We value good public policy, regulation and governance and are seeking entrants who can write with precision and insight in line with the company's values.

The judge of the 2015 competition includes Alistair Urquhart, Managing director of Affairs of State. Alistair has developed a core expertise over thirty years in business, law and government, both in Australia and overseas, building a reputation as a respected networker in the Melbourne community.

Submissions OPEN from date of advertisement until **29 January 2015**. Winners will be contacted by phone within two weeks while other applicants will be notified by email when the winner has been chosen and notified.

To enter, read the competition guidelines and email your submission to [josh@affairs.com](mailto:josh@affairs.com).

### **Competition Guidelines**

- The submission must be of contemporary importance to Victorian or Federal issues.
- The submission will only be accepted by email to [josh@affairs.com.au](mailto:josh@affairs.com.au).
- Write "AOS ESSAY COMPETITION\_YOUR NAME\_ESSAY TITLE" in the subject heading and a paragraph in the email stating why you applied (no more than 250 words)
- Format the text in twelve-point font, single spaced text, numbered pages in .doc or .docx format with no spelling or grammatical errors.
- The submission should not exceed a word count of 750 words.
- An email will be sent to applicants notifying when the winner has been chosen.

## MEDIA, MULTIMEDIA & IT

### An Alternative Voice

A 16 page publication, not seen before by your editor, has reached its 38th edition. **An Alternative Voice** is a free, independent, community newsletter, edited by **Lesley Williams**. The Contents for the 38th edition include articles on aromatherapy, astrology, changing the flow, quantum consciousness, the art of intuition, reading tea leaves and taking ownership, action & belief.

## PLANNING

### Go. Go. Value

*The Age* observed on November 9: 'Jacana, Frankston North and Sunshine may not be high on everyone's shopping list, but they are among Melbourne's best value-for-money suburbs. They don't have wide, tree-lined boulevards, the houses don't command million-dollar price-tags, nor are they known for their café culture – yet they are highly "liveable."

'A liveability survey commissioned by Fairfax Media and undertaken by Deloitte / Tract ranked every suburb according to a set of criteria. While the top-ranking areas are also the most expensive, there are dozens of bargain suburbs that punch above their weight. The suburb with the most bang for buck is a small pocket between Glenroy and Broadmeadows.

'Jacana, 16 kilometres north of the CBD, is more liveable than two-thirds of Melbourne's suburbs and has a median house price of \$370,000. It outranked Murrumbena, Eaglemont and Doncaster ... Ranked 136 is Frankston north, which is considered liveable because it's near the coastline with lots of public open space and schools. Local agent Shaun Walker, of Biggin and Scott, said Frankston North – with a house median of \$810,000 – remained affordable over the years because it was considered a lower socio-economic area.'

### Rental \$\$\$

The costs of renting property in Melbourne are all too well known, but a recent report on rental affordability has shone new light on how steep they can be. This remains true even if they still have a way to go before they reach Sydney, or even Adelaide, rental levels.

Discussed by the *Herald Sun* on November 25, the report reveals that the city's costliest suburbs for renters are Albert Park, Beaumaris, and Brighton. The least expensive are Melton, Albion Park, and Seville East. Outside Melbourne but still within Victoria, Portsea was even harder for renters to afford.

Based as it is on rental costs as a percentage of personal income, the Rental Affordability Index aims to broaden the focus on housing stress from the ballooning price of home ownership. It has defined 'housing stress' as what happens when a person pays towards accommodation more than 30 per cent of his or her earnings.

Typically, those individuals struggling the most are the renters who work in the retail, hospitality, and cleaning sectors. The problem is particularly severe at Portsea, where rent swallows up 46 per cent of a typical renter's income.

### Secret Bonanza

Staff at the **State Library of Victoria** are jubilant about a \$10 million private donation that will

enable the restoration of its dilapidated Queen's Hall. The **Ian Potter Foundation** has come to the rescue, with the State Government making a \$20 million contribution to the project. A rooftop terrace is being considered as the site of a cafe, and a row of spectacular fish-scale pattern skylights, blotted out in 1968 to prevent storm damage, will be uncovered as per *The Age*.

### Guy Lashes Out

Victorian Opposition Leader **Matthew Guy** has launched a scathing attack on the planning outcomes pursued by the Labor government since it won office last year, arguing that Planning Minister **Richard Wynne** has 'very little idea of the portfolio.' '**Dick Wynne** is being led by a group of academics who are giving him a 1970s view of planning in the city,' **Guy** told *The Australian*.

'Melbourne is not a city of two million people anymore; it is an international centre and I think **Dick Wynne** is tantamount to economic vandalism for some of the decisions he has made... Melbourne has the ability to be the greatest international city in Australia, a jobs hub, a population hub, something that is pumping 24 hours a day. This government is doing all they can to wreck that, to stifle that, to turn us into a backwater.'

**Guy**, the planning minister under the former Liberal Government, was especially critical of the decision to introduce planning controls in the CBD without consulting the industry. The government last month introduced 12-month planning controls for CBD sites that have not submitted a development implication, limiting the amount of stock that can be built on a site while a long-term policy is considered.

### The Debate About Density

With CBD planning under review for the next 12 months, we can expect to see public arguments develop both for and against mandatory density controls. Speaking at separate forums in late September, influential planner **Leanne Hodyl** outlined a strong case for CBD density controls while Lord Mayor **Robert Doyle** spoke in favour of a more discretionary regime. As a side note, motorcycles parked on CBD footpaths will remain legal following investigation by the City of Melbourne according to a *CBD publication*.

### Paper Surprise

Hundreds of homes in Alphington will have a new six-lane highway run along their property line under a **VicRoads** preferred design option to upgrade the Chandler Highway, which is ranked among the city's worst for congestion. Many nearby homeowners are surprised as they thought the new lanes would be paved on the other side of the road, where the former **Amcor** paper mill sits as vacant land earmarked for infill development according to *The Age*.

### VCAT Wants Car parks

If you're developing an apartment block in a narrow, dead-end street next to a railway station, bike path, car share service, bus route and tram line, should you be required to provide a private car park as well? Yes, according to the state planning tribunal, which has overturned a council's approval for a 'deep green' apartment development on Florence Street in Brunswick after a neighbouring developer objected.

The proposed \$5 million project called Nightingale, was designed with no car parking, and **Moreland Council's** approval for it was overturned because it lacked parking. The ruling has led to a key advisor to Planning Minister **Richard Wynne** labelling the **Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal** 'out of touch.'

The project is a fascinating attempt by a group of Melbourne architects and ethical investors to create a more sustainable and affordable model for building apartments. Hundreds registered to buy one of the 20 apartments when they went on the market this year as reported in *The Age*.

### Ditch Your Car

Higher density living in suburbia and reduced car use are key goals of the State Government's revised blueprint for the city's development to 2050. With Melbourne racing to a population of nearly 8 million by mid-century, the report urged moving from 'bland car-dominated centres' to thriving '20-minute neighbourhoods'.

'They encourage local living, walking and active transport over car travel ... lead to more connected social relationships and build local character and identity' according to the *Herald Sun*. **Plan Melbourne Refresh** updates the former government's strategy given the new **Melbourne Metro Rail** project and dumping of **East West Link**. It also includes a focus on climate change effects and affordable housing.

## SPORT

### UFC knocks out Melbourne

Female **UFC** took centre stage at **Etihad Stadium** as the first title event held in Australia occurred after the overturning of a state ban on cage matches. 56,000 spectators attended to view the growing sport of mixed martial arts, observing **Holly Holm** defeat international sensation **Ronda Rousey** in a surprise upset, with a knockout blow less than a minute into the second round as reported in *The Age*.

### Rod Laver Arena Refurbished

A massive refurbishment of Rod Laver Arena will include a new eastern entrance 'pod', a new footbridge to link the sports centre more effectively to the CBD, and a revamped loading bay that will drastically reduce the down-times between concerts and events at the stadium as per *The Age*.

## TRANSPORT – PORTS

### New Bay Island?

A front-page article in *The Age* on November 23 proclaimed that a giant industrial island could be built in Port Phillip Bay as part of a secret plan commissioned by government insiders to extract maximum value from the privatisation of Melbourne's port. Were the plan to go ahead, the island would be built by reclaiming land in the shallow waters of Hobsons Bay, just south of the Yarra River mouth between Williamstown and Port Melbourne. It would be big enough for three hulking container vessels to berth at. Should the plan go ahead, a new laneway would also be created, one which would connect Collins Street to Flinders Street, as part of the wider Melbourne Quarter project.

Details of 'Project Phillip,' leaked to *The Age*, reveal the extraordinary steps that the government has contemplated to expand the port in the coming decades. State Treasurer **Tim Pallas** said,

nonetheless, that it was not government policy to build the container island.

Pallas also stated that plans to such an end had actually begun before the last election, when **Denis Naphine** remained Premier. 'It does not form any part of the Port of Melbourne lease area,' the Treasurer insisted, 'and is not included in the capacity estimate for the lease transaction.'

A draft transport planning assessment for Project Phillip notes that the port is scheduled to reach its capacity within just 20 years, but that it could grow for 40 years if the island was built, which would ultimately ensure room to expand till 2055. That having been said, CH2M Hill, the consultancy responsible for the assessment, contemplates no undue haste.

The man-made island is proposed as the final part of a four-stage expansion process. At the most conservative estimate, it would be at least three decades in the future, although if it did go ahead it could succeed in postponing the need to develop a second container port at Hastings or Bay West, Labor's mooted alternative between Werribee and Geelong.

### Part of the Port

*The Age* announced that vast sections of Port Phillip Bay, including the heads between Point Nepean and Queenscliff, are likely to be transferred into private hands during 2016, when the Port of Melbourne is leased to pay for the Andrews Government's signature level-crossings project. Legislation to be debated in the State Parliament during December would clear the way for the long-term lease of 'the whole, or a part ... of the Port of Melbourne seabed,' an area that covers almost half of the bay.

The port waters extend from the feet of the Bolte Bridge to more than three kilometres out into Bass Strait, and they include sections of the environmentally sensitive Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park. **Rod Nairn**, chief executive of Shipping Australia, has voiced concern: 'They [the lease-holder] can control the anchorage fees and there is no regulatory oversight, which means it's an area of potential price gouging in the future.'

Earlier in 2015, shipping companies were stung when the Port of Newcastle, having been privatised, increased its own shipping channel access fees by a whopping 60 per cent. This made such companies wary about a similar outcome prevailing in Melbourne.

### Tidal Wave of Visitors

**P&O Cruises' Pacific Dawn** is one of four big boats steaming to Melbourne for the Cup, bringing more than 8000 nautical punters to town. Three of the four ships are P&O vessels, with the line's **Pacific Jewel** and **Pacific Pearl** duo in dock too. **Carnival Cruise Line's Carnival Spirit** is scheduled to arrive before sunrise each Monday. Between the four largest ships, 8000 passengers will contribute about 8 per cent of the total Melbourne Cup crowd at Flemington.

Three ships will be sailing from Sydney and one from Brisbane. Last year, three cruise ships sailed to Melbourne for the Cup, bringing 6000 guests to the races. Some of the ships are arranging fascinator-making workshops while others are promising an onboard milliner to get racegoers

looking their finest when Cup day rolls around according to *The Age*.

### A Fraud on the West

'The proposal to lease out the current **Port of Melbourne** for 50 years to fund rail and road infrastructure in the east and south-east of Melbourne is the greatest fraud ever conducted on the people of the west of Melbourne. It locks the west of Melbourne into guaranteed congestion and pollution for half a century', **Michael Dowling** in a submission to the Victorian upper house inquiry into the proposed 50 year lease of the **Port of Melbourne**.

**Michael Dowling** served with the state of Victoria (including governments of both persuasions) over 12 years, as deputy chairman of the **Victorian Channels Authority** and chairman of the **Victorian Regional Channels Authority** as well as directing some shipping companies. **Kenneth Davidson** says that the State Government is creating quite a list of abandoned promises. Hence, Victoria is facing an infrastructure fiasco rivaling the desalination plant and **East West Link**.

### Melbourne Ferry Services Eyed

**BRW** Rich Lister **Paul Little** is working closely with ASX-listed **SeaLink Travel Group** on plans to run passenger ferry services into Melbourne's Docklands precinct from the Victorian coastal town of Portarlington and two western Melbourne locations. We are interested in running a ferry service from Wyndham, Portarlington and Williamstown into Collins landing as per the *Financial Review*.

### Fantastic-Five-Revamp

Melbourne's port would be transformed into a residential area, the city's rail lines buried and large parts of the city given over to public open space and parklands under a vision for the city's future outlined by Environment Minister **Greg Hunt**. Victoria-based **Hunt** has identified five major projects that would transform Melbourne in coming decades and ease pressure caused by the population boom according to *The Age*.

## TRANSPORT. ROADS. TRAMS

### Bad quiz?

'Melbourne's iconic City Circle tram could be on track for the scrap-heap.' That's the warning which begins the *Herald Sun's* coverage of a Public Transport Victoria online survey. The survey 'quizzes punters on whether they know what a W-class tram is, the impact they have on the network, and how passengers would feel if they were taken off tracks and replaced with modern trams.'

Indubitably the State Opposition is concerned. Shadow Public Transport Minister **David Hodgett** accused the Andrews Government of 'laying the ground-work' to remove the W-class trams, of which there are 15, from central Melbourne's network.

### Uber Revs Up

It just won't leave the headlines: Uber, the ride-sharing service, banned in France but increasingly popular in Australia, and described by State Opposition Leader **Matthew Guy** as 'here to stay.' A *Herald Sun* editorial on November 23 opined: 'Victoria's taxi industry is facing its greatest challenge in Uber, the ride-sharing service that has revolutionised the way people

travel. Simply put, the taxi industry has created its own problem and technology has provided the answer.

'Uber, which is accessed through an app on your smartphone, brings a clean car driven by an owner-driver at up to a 30 per cent saving on a cab. New South Wales is about to license Uber and the ACT has already moved to allow Uber drivers to pick up passengers.'

Meanwhile, the same newspaper quoted Victoria's Public Transport Minister **Jacinta Allan** as recommending that commuters 'think carefully before using services such as Uber.' And pressure is mounting on the State Government, not least from taxi-drivers, to tighten regulations of such ride-sharing outfits. Even NSW Premier **Mike Baird** has insisted, an *Age* article stated on November 24, that reports of his government preparing to legalise Uber 'were premature.'

### Monash Freeway's \$400m Fix

According to *The Age*, **Daniel Andrews** announced that one of Melbourne's busiest arterial roads, namely the Monash Freeway, will be widened under a \$400 million plan to ease congestion. Sections of the freeway will be increased to 10 lanes, in the hope of thereby reducing bottle-necks. Under the Premier's new scheme, the freeway would have five lanes running each way between EastLink and the South Gippsland Highway, and three lanes each way further south-east to Clyde Road.

### Punt Plans Worry Council

VicRoads, as mentioned by the *Sunday Age* on November 29, has proposed seven different possible plans for freeing up space on Melbourne's key north-south arterial road, namely Punt Road. Two such plans would involve demolishing homes that for 61 years have had a public acquisition option on them.

The options which have been floated by VicRoads to help the 40,000 vehicles that use Punt Road every day include: removing all parking and permanent clear-ways; introducing reversible lanes similar to those which already exist along Queens Road, Melbourne, and Johnston Street, Collingwood; and widening part of Punt Road – from the Yarra to St Kilda Junction – by knocking down more than 130 homes, putting in permanent bus lanes, and building a new one-way bridge next to the heritage-listed Morrell Bridge by the Botanic Gardens.

A recent Melbourne City Council report says that property owners who live on Punt Road are being refused planning permits by VicRoads. The report cautions that the street could ultimately have many 'un-maintained buildings and degraded street frontages.' Not only that, but the council has expressed extreme concern about the plan to take land in the Yarra River precinct to build a new road bridge alongside the existing Morrell Bridge, which was closed to traffic years ago.

## TRANSPORT. RAIL

### An Age view

In its main editorial on November 22, *The Age* complained: 'Fishermans Bend is the largest urban renewal project in Australia. It will double the size of the city of Melbourne. It could have been a template for how a vast space can be transformed into a model of regeneration that serves all interests. We say could have been

because the possibility of its potential being realised now seems gone.

'Laissez-faire, the approach favoured by **Matthew Guy**, the Planning Minister at the time, has led to a rush of development applications for apartments that makes a compelling case for market forces to generate profits, but no case for restrained planning that involves the welfare of the community. Lamentably, laissez-faire in this instance also means no direction.

'Surely, the lessons of Docklands would have been heeded. Projects of this size cannot be left to the market. Dozens of applications have been submitted for high-rise apartment blocks and if they were to be awarded, more than 17,000 apartments would be built ...

'There is little about this project that can be praised. The most positive thing that can be said, and perversely the most damning, is that Planning Minister **Richard Wynne** has said he is looking into new plans for the project. Given that approvals have already been made, this may prove problematic.'

#### More On Fishermans Bend

The *Herald Sun's* coverage of the concept was substantially more sympathetic than *The Age's* editorial. According to that newspaper: 'A blueprint for Melbourne's future rail network raises the need for a fourth tunnel under the Yarra River to provide a second rail link from the west to the CBD. The public transport vision suggests that an east-west rail tunnel under the CBD to Fishermans Bend – dubbed the Metro2 and [let us hope] complete within 18 years – could link into yet another tunnel under the Yarra.

'That tunnel would emerge at a Newport super-hub, providing a second route for Sunbury and Werribee lines into the CBD. Public Transport Victoria's Network Development Plan – Metropolitan Rail, states: "The new extension (Metro2) also foreshadows the longer-term requirement to provide a new connection to Newport to enable more capacity to be delivered from Sunbury and Werribee."

'The plan does not detail any time-scale for the Fishermans-Bend / Newport tunnel, but says new lines to Melbourne Airport, Rowville, and Doncaster, and the Metro2 – which would be expected to cost a total of more than \$20 billion – should be completed by the early 2030s. Labor sources have indicated to the *Herald Sun* that public transport infrastructure spending should continue at the same rate as the \$9 - \$11 billion Metro investment after that is finished, in order to complete the priority projects in the plan as soon as possible.

'The blueprint's detailed targets include: a new service to splinter off the Cranbourne Line just after Oakleigh, stopping at Monash University and then Rowville, in 13 years (2028); the airport link, built off the Sunbury line at Albion by 2028; a Doncaster line linking off the Hurstbridge service between Collingwood and Victoria Park in 15 years; lines electrified to Geelong, Melton, and Wallan; and the Frankston service electrified to Baxter within 13 years.'

## TRANSPORT - AIR

### An Alternative

Jetstar has opened the new Terminal 4 at **Melbourne Airport**, allowing the airline to triple the number of boarding gates and increase services to popular holiday destinations. No bussing from the terminal to aircraft, reduced delays and improved arrival times are also being trumpeted by the airline as reported in the *Herald Sun*.

#### Parking Soar Point

The airport, which already collects \$345,000 a day from parking charges, this week lifted several fees at its terminal carpark. A stay of 10 to 15 minutes jumped from \$6 to \$10, a 67 per cent increase. The cost for parking for one to two hours increased from \$24 to \$29.

**Melbourne Airport** spokeswoman **Anna Gillett** defended the changes. 'What we are trying to do is manage the demand across the airport... Customers can choose from a number of carparks, all with different locations, convenience and prices' as per the *Herald Sun*.

#### Easier access to Airport

Getting to the airport by public transport will soon become a touch easier for travellers, with moves under way to connect the 25-minute **SkyBus** service to **Myki** according to *The Age*.

## TRANSPORT - RAIL

### \$70m in rail Deals Sealed Despite Doubt

More than \$70 million of contracts have been handed out for the **Melbourne Metro Rail Project** so far, despite uncertainty over how it will be paid for and the lack of a recent business case. Victoria's official tender website reveals the State Government is moving rapidly with the project, engaging consultants, engineers, project managers, lawyers, planning advisers and financial experts to thrash out key technical, legal and business details. So far, 16 contracts totalling \$70.3 million have been awarded. By far the biggest, \$54.6 million, went to a joint venture between specialist technical consultants **Aurecon** Californian engineering company **Jacobs** and engineering and management consultants **Mott MacDonald** as reported in *The Age*.

#### On-spot Fines questioned

Cheaper penalties for on-the-spot payments of fare evasion fines need to be improved if they are retained, Victoria's **Public Transport Ombudsman** warns. The watchdog's annual report, released today, reveals passengers inquiring about fines soared by 90 per cent and questions about the appeals process jumped by 43 per cent.

Cut price fare evasion penalties - where ticket dodgers pay a \$75 fine immediately by credit or debit card, rather than the full \$223 - were introduced in August last year as reported in the *Herald Sun*.

#### Gridlock Crossings to Remain

Ten of Melbourne's 19 most congested rail crossings as identified in a **VicRoads** analysis have been left off Labor's list of 50 for removal, likely condemning some neighbourhoods to traffic gridlock in the years ahead. In the worst case, at Glen Huntly Road in Melbourne's inner south-east, **VicRoads** projects that boom gates will drop for a nightmarish 82 per cent of the morning peak between 7am and 9am within seven years, rendering the crossing virtually impassable.

The Glen Huntly Road level crossing is also traversed by trams on route 67 between **Melbourne University** and Carnegie, raising the risk that the gridlock will make it impossible for trams to run on time. According to *The Age*, **VicRoads** analysed all of Melbourne's rail crossings and prioritised them for removal based on state planning strategies, congestion, cost and safety.

#### Busy Streets Face a Three-Year

The construction of five new subway stations in inner Melbourne will take five years and force the shutdown of some busy streets for more than half that time, as 1.7 million tonnes of rock and soil is dug up and trucked away. Parts of Grattan Street in Carlton and Domain Road in South Yarra face closure for up to three years when work starts on the \$11 billion **Melbourne Metro** rail tunnel from 2018. The Domain tram interchange in St Kilda Road is also set to be demolished and rebuilt, even though it was built just two years ago at a cost of \$10.2 million as reported in *The Age*.

#### Take Your Battle Stations

If a \$1 billion station was built at South Yarra as part of the **Melbourne Metro** project, more than 100,000 passengers a day would be worse off according to Cabinet documents reports the *Herald Sun*. Only 14,000 passengers a day would benefit from the station at the cost of demolishing up to 82 homes, 32 businesses and part of the **Jam factory**.

The **Melbourne Metro** rail project will create two new 9km tunnels through the city between South Kensington and South Yarra. Five underground stations will be built, at Arden, Parkville, CBD North, CBD South and Domain. However, the Coalition argues South Yarra is one of the fastest growing areas in Melbourne and the new station is necessary for it to remain viable for jobs, residential and entertainment living.

A South Yarra interchange would give passengers a direct rail line to Parkville, Domain and Arden making their train times quicker than by tram. The editor notes that there are so many different views on this proposal from engineers, construction hands, politicians, public servants and the media.

#### South Yarra Key to Funding

Federal cash for the **Melbourne Metro Rail** tunnel is under a cloud because the State Government is refusing to include a \$1 billion new station at South Yarra. Prime Minister **Malcolm Turnbull** is being lobbied by senior colleagues over the decision to bypass the station by just metres to avoid a claimed \$970 million cost blowout and more than 100 extra property acquisitions.

Although **Turnbull** is steering clear of the stoush, he is believed to be carefully considering pleas for the new interchange. Assistant Treasurer **Kelly O'Dwyer**, whose federal electorate of Higgins covers the station, said an interchange at South Yarra 'must be included' as reported in *The Age*.

Opposition Leader **Matthew Guy** has also been lobbying **Turnbull**, claiming the rail link without the interchange would be like building a house without doors. As it is, the project is likely to cost at least \$11 billion, with Labor suggesting this should be shared between Victoria, the Commonwealth and the private sector. A report

by the **Metro Rail Authority** concludes the economic case for the new station is 'very poor.'

## TRANSPORT - ROAD

### Road prioritised over Trees

A dangerous intersection 20 minutes south of Bendigo on the Calder Highway has experienced six serious crashes, two of them fatal, in the past six months. An \$86 million circular interchange unique to Victoria is being implemented to make the intersection safer.

However, **VicRoads** has come under fire about its environmental management of the project, after it again seriously underestimated the number of native trees it will have to fell. Almost 1900 native trees will be cleared to make way for the new interchange.

This is a common complaint for **VicRoads** as they were widely condemned this year when admitting to destroying almost 900 towering old trees to widen a 41-kilometre stretch of the Western Highway as reported in *The Age*.

### Uber creates own zones

Divisive ride-sharing app **Uber** is setting up pseudo taxi ranks across Melbourne as its demand continues to rise. The *Herald Sun* revealed that 'Uber zones' will be created throughout Melbourne for important events. In its bold bid to create more pick-up zones, **Uber** is expected to aim at events including the **Australian Open**, **Boxing Day Test**, the **AFL** season and major concerts. But the rogue ride-sharing company isn't always wanted, with the **Victoria Racing Club** refusing it permission to operate during the **Spring Racing Carnival**.

### Don't Forget Us

A spat has erupted within the Coalition over the \$1.5 billion in Victorian roads funding released by Prime Minister **Malcolm Turnbull**, with country MPs demanding a slice of the money. Five Victorian Liberal and Nationals MPs spoke out after **Turnbull** agreed to release the money which had been held in limbo in the State Government's accounts since last May after Premier **Daniel Andrews** axed the **East West Link** toll road project.

The money looks set to be spent on urban projects, including a widening of the Monash Freeway, the \$5.5 billion Western Distributor toll road, and the \$11 billion **Melbourne Metro** rail tunnel. The rebellion from country MPs reflects a growing concern that the new cities agenda of the Federal Government could come at the expense of rural and regional Australians per the *Herald Sun*.

### Easy Squeezey Lanes

**Peninsula Link** is another example of built-in road obsolescence. When it first opened, the freeway offered a real alternative to people traveling to and from the Mornington Peninsula. Weekend trips to the beach became less of a chore. Living in picturesque hamlets like Red Hill while working from the city became a viable alternative.

For reasons best known to themselves, however, **Peninsula Link's** designer's condemned long sections of the road to just two lanes in each direction. Any accident in these areas means traffic is squeezed into just one viable lane. And the nature of such bottlenecks is that overall

speed on the road is that overall speed on the road is usually governed by its slowest point.

Within a decade **Peninsula Link** will also need widening, at great cost to the state's transport budget. To avoid repeating these road-building mistakes, a few simple planning changes are required. First, we need to grasp the reality that in 40 years Melbourne's population will almost double from its present 4.5 million people. However bad congestion is now, if we don't build more roads it'll become hugely worse by mid-century. Second, freeways aren't built just to service existing communities. Soon after opening, such roads become a magnet for new families and businesses according to **Tom Elliott** in the *Herald Sun*.

### Revamp Needed

A \$200 million plan to free up a notorious bottleneck on the Monash Freeway will kickstart a Federal Government blueprint to revamp Victoria's overburdened road and rail system. Environment Minister **Greg Hunt** has revealed to the *Herald Sun* the Government is considering what it can do to get Melbourne's traffic flowing after the State Government axed the **East West Link** tunnel and toll road.

**Hunt**, the lead minister for the new cities portfolio, outlined the six major projects he said could be developed to revolutionise Melbourne's road and rail systems. These include the **East West Link** and **Melbourne Metro** rail tunnels, under-grounding the city's the city's metropolitan train lines, building the so-called 'missing link' between **East West Link** and the **Metropolitan Ring Road** at Greensborough, and relocating Melbourne's container port to Geelong and Hastings.

A plan to add a third lane in each direction to the Monash Freeway at the Hallam Bypass between Warrigal Road at Chadstone and Clyde Road at Berwick will now be brokered between the state and federal governments.

### Punt into the Future

Building a bridge over the Yarra and off-ramps connecting Batman Ave to CityLink is among seven ideas that have been suggested to the State Government to relieve gridlock on Punt Road. An independent report to be considered by **VicRoads** says some of the changes suggested could lead to 12 per cent faster car travel times. The report was compiled by engineering consultants Arup and reported in the *Herald Sun*.

## WELFARE

### Big Boys Cut Off

Charges power giants had sought to impose on Victorians over the next five years were almost \$2.3 billion too high according to the **Australian Energy Regulator**. Its draft decision is expected to save an average household a total of \$27 to \$75 in network charges over 2016 to 2020. Next year's will drop \$22 to \$53, depending on where you live and assuming that power retailers pass on the lower costs as per the *Herald Sun*.

## SOCIETY

### National Academy of Music Uncertain Future

The **Australian National Academy of Music** is facing an uncertain future and might be forced to leave Melbourne where it has been located for the past 20 years, training the country's best young classical musicians. It has always been based in

the South Melbourne Town Hall but now its lease with the City of Port Phillip is up for renewal, with costs expected to more than double to nearly \$300,000 a year as reported in *The Age*.

### Coast Guard Calling

**Australian Volunteer Coast Guard** could be your nautical calling. The *Bellarine and Surf Coast Echo* reported that the Bellarine base, located at the Queenscliff boat ramp north of Hesse Street, covers an area from Portarlington to Rye and can attend up to 60 jobs a year, assisting marine rescue with various incidents including search and rescue and Medivac responses. About 30 members currently volunteer their time to the Queenscliff Flotilla, and the Coast Guard offers courses for general seamanship skills as well as advanced training opportunities for the position of coxswain, with public relations work also on offer.

### Give Me More Porn

Students have been banned from accessing pornography at the **University of Melbourne's** largest residential college, sparking a fiery campus debate on sexual freedoms and censorship. **Ormond College** has blocked access to adult sites on its Wi-Fi network, stating pornography does not allow people at a 'formative stage of life' to develop a 'healthy sexuality'.

But, as reported in *The Age*, some students have reacted angrily to the move, arguing they pay \$200 a semester for college Wi-Fi, and in the privacy of their own rooms they should be allowed to access legal adult sites.

## SOCIETY

### Man's Best Friend

Founded in 1910, the Lost Dogs Home might be a Melbourne landmark, but it is an increasingly troubled and notorious one. 'A year after a government inquiry prompted resignations at the Lost Dogs Home,' *The Age* told readers on November 29, 'current and former staff and former board members paint a harrowing picture of conditions inside the 105-year-old institution for strays.

'They say dogs are routinely given high doses of drugs for anxiety, depression and other problems, despite questionable testing for mental health. Many dogs are adopted out to new owners while still drug-dependent ... [Whistle-blower] Nicole Beasley, an animal trainer who has worked at the Lost Dogs Home for more than 10 years, said dogs were being medicated for normal behaviour such as barking at birds and mild anxiety, and were being euthanised due to lack of space in the pens.'

A social media campaign earlier in 2015, protesting against high euthanasia rates at the home, led to a state government investigation. This resulted in several workers being dismissed from their jobs, and in a number of resignations. But things have not improved notably since then. Watch this space.

### No More Anonymous

The Andrews Government has announced that the identities of men who donated sperm in the 1970s and 1980s, and who did so anonymously, would be made available to the donors' offspring. An *Age* report published on November 22 said that

some donors have described the decision as 'staggering.'

### Parking in the Livable City

A quarter of Melburnians who live in apartments do not own cars, despite the city's building laws demanding developers provide at least one parking space per dwelling. But the State Government will be reluctant to change the laws, which are often the source of angry debates among residents pushed out of on-street parking by new developments according to *The Age*.

### Records Set in Portsea

A historic Portsea beach box is one of Australia's most expensive plots of real estate, selling for a record price of \$615,000 as per *The Age*.

## SPORT

### PBloodyC

In the *Herald Sun* on November 23, *Footy Show* star **Sam Newman**, formerly ruckman for the Geelong Football Club, lashed out at what he called a 'critique industry,' a manifestation of Political Correctness 'gone mad.' To judge by the newspaper's letters pages the very next day, readers liked what they read, making such comments as these:

'I rarely watch Sam any more but he nailed it. ... Aussies were renowned for calling a spade a spade. Now it's a "digging implement".' 'Something I find really hard to say, but Sam Newman is right.' 'We have become one of the most insipid, soft, and weak PC-loving countries in the world. I'm embarrassed by what this country has become and the manner in which we bow to PC drivel, it really is pathetic.'

## VALE

**Aitken**, James Ray. Former Magistrate for 43 years. **Alfonso**, Vincent, aged 59. Member of Dragonair Pilots Association. **Baer**, Herbert, aged 91. **Bardenhagen**, Dr Finoa Jane.

**Barr Smith**, Jenny. A great friend of the Editor. **Baer**, Herbert. Stockbroker.

**Bell**, Patrick Andrew aged 99. **Boltin**, Joe. **Boileau**, Andrew Langdon. **Bugge Bay**, Ulla Marie. **Buchwald**, Wendy. **Clarkson**, Paul, aged 72. Arts bureaucrat who was the director of the Victorian Ministry for the Arts from 1980 to 1994.

**Clements**, Barbara Elise, aged 84. **Condell**, Phillip David Macartney. **Cullen**, Jack, aged 102. **Cunningham**, Lesley Ella, aged 90. **Deutsher**, Mervyn Charles. **Dennis**, Edwin Robert, aged 85. **Docking**, Gilbert Charles, aged 96.

**Dower**, Geoffrey Thomas, aged 79. **Eddy**, Graeme Leonard, aged 76. **English**, Ron, aged 94. **Francis**, Susan Dorothy. **Glucksmann**, Andre,

aged 78. French philosopher and former Maoist who later veered to the Right and a campaigner for Vietnamese boat people.

**Goold**, Phyllis Esme. **Hardie**, Andrew Thomas, aged 91. **Harford**, Alan Bruce. **Hargreaves**, Lorna. **Hassall**, Charles Dennis. **Hobson**, Betty Margaret. **Hynes**, Barry Kevin. **Jones**, Constance Lalla, aged 94. **King**, John Ronaldson, aged 79

**Howe**, Geoffrey, aged 88. Served as **Margaret Thatcher's** faithful and apparently docile lieutenant for 15 years, 11 of them as chancellor and foreign secretary, before astonishing the Commons with a resignation speech of such bitterness that it triggered the prime minister's downfall.

**Lancaster**, Diana Maria Lesley. **Luscombe**, Sr. Mary RSJ. **Kline**, Lindsay, aged 81. Cricketer. **Magee**, Michael Fintan David **Matheson**, Sandra, aged 67. A school secretary who gave four decades of service to St Michaels Grammar in St Kilda.

**Masterton**, Professor John, Head of the Victorian Adult Burns Service at The Alfred Hospital 1967-1996. **McArthur**, Robert Peter, aged 94. **Mitchell**, Warren, aged 89. British actor best known for starring as Alf Garnett. **Monk**, Keith William.

**Monkhouse**, Ralph Henry, aged 93. **Moorehouse**, Rae Winsome, aged 90. **Moroney**, Archdeacon John Burbury, aged 96. **Mullen**, June Marjorie. **O'Hara**, Maureen, aged 95. An actor. **Parr**, Jack. Member of **Manningham Rotary Club**.

**Sayers**, Andrew, aged 58. Director of the National Museum of Australia. **Priestly**, Max.

**Rankin**, Dusty, aged 91. One of Australia's most popular country and western singers. Inducted into the Tamworth 'Hands of Fame' in 1980 and elevated to the 'Roll of Renown' in January 1996. There is a plaque in his honour in Birchip's main street.

**Rice**, Eric Williams, aged 86. **Roberts**, John Fraser. Well known and respected member of the Victorian Bar. **Schmidt**, Helmut, aged 96. Former West German Chancellor. **Seccul**, John Malcolm. **Selak**, Rachael **Sercombe**, Christopher, aged 61.

**Sligo**, Charles Edsall Alexander, the headmaster of Ivanhoe Grammar from 1975 to 1995.

**Smith**, Ron, aged 70. A teacher and author. **Steele**, Priscilla Ann Hebden.

**Sweatman**, Elizabeth Carter **Syme**, Doctor Veronica, youngest daughter of the late Sir Geoffrey and Lady Violet Syme.

**Webb**, Naomi Blanche. **Williams**, Margaret. **Thomson**, J W F (Bill). **Tippett**, Doris Annie.

**Varigos**, Andrew, aged 100. General physician and pharmacist. **Waters**, Maurice Hughes **Webb**, Dr Graham Charles. **Webster**, Jean Mary.

**Davidson**, Rosemary. **Davis**, Robert Douglas. **Edwards**, Terrence James. Aged 70. **Equid**, Nancy Beryl. Aged 80. **Hancock**, Keith Alexander. Aged 77.

**Nicholls**, Jack. Aged 94. Research scientist, undefeated CSIRO chess champion, former Spitfire pilot, winemaker, and gardener. *The Age's* obituary for him on November 24 observed that he 'seemed able to grow any sort of plant ... including the notoriously difficult Meconopsis poppy.'

**Thomson**, Lloyd, aged 96. A career diplomat who lived in Strathmore for more than 30 years after his retirement from the Department of Foreign Affairs. Following the outbreak of war in 1939, Lloyd enlisted in the AIF in October of that year as a private in the Field Ambulance Corps. He saw action in Egypt, Libya, Papua, New Guinea and by then promoted to sergeant in the Celebes (Indonesia). As an ex-serviceman, he attended **Melbourne University** studying an Arts (economics) degree. Lloyd served as Australia's permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva for several years from 1978 and then as ambassador to Ireland and concurrently ambassador to the Holy See again from 1980-83 during the papacy of **John Paul II**.

**Red Cadeaux**. Aged 10. The racehorse credited by *The Australian's* **Tony Arnold** with having 'proper claims to be in the lead as racing's over-achiever over the same period [the last seven years]. While averaging just one win a year in those seven years, Red Cadeaux earned the equivalent of \$8,108,208 in prize money around the world – an all-time record by a British-trained thoroughbred. And as a constant global traveller, he logged more air kilometres than any racehorse in history to compete in 21 races in seven countries, in addition to racing 33 times on 13 tracks at home.

'These benchmarks belong to a colt which fetched a modest sum of \$57,750 as a yearling at public auction – much due to the fact he was born a rig with an undescended testicle surgically removed at the end of his first season of racing ... Red Cadeaux had undergone surgery for a fracture to the remedial sesamoid of his near fore-leg, an injury received in the final stages of the Group 1 Melbourne Cup at Flemington on November 3.'

He was euthanised 18 days afterwards. His owner **Ron Arculli** requested that the horse be buried at Flemington.



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**Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**  
***“Working for business. Working for Victoria.”***

**19 November 2015**

### **A new era of Victorian business leadership with a new corporate identity**

Victoria's largest business organisation, VECCI, has marked a new chapter in its 160 year history - and will be known as the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, sharing a common identity with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

“VECCI has been working for several years to grow the Chamber of Commerce movement in Australia under a common national brand, with a shared visual identity and increased resources. This is now occurring and we are delighted to be leading the way,” said Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Mark Birrell.

“The Victorian Chamber is a dynamic, innovative and future focused organisation, just like the thousands of Victorian businesses we represent. Our new name, along with the unveiling of our new logo, symbolises our enhanced focus on national issues of importance to Victorian business and stronger alignment with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

“We are the voice of business in Victoria and our members will benefit from our enhanced federal advocacy position.”

The new logo is built around the Federation Star - a distinctly Australian design that brings together all parts of the country and illustrates the Victorian Chamber’s place in the united chamber movement.

Within the star sits a two-tone arrow pointing upwards to the future, representing leadership, purpose and targeted action.

The new brand will be adopted by the other state and territory chambers progressively.

A united approach will also be clearly demonstrated through close work between all the major chambers on many policy issues.

In recent years the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has actively strengthened or increased its services to meet the needs of businesses, of all sizes, across the state, with unified advocacy being a strong theme. Significantly, we have played a stronger role at a national policy level through key positions on the Australian Chamber’s Board and General Council.

The Victorian Chamber has achieved significant wins through partnering with other chambers, including during the successful multi-chamber tender for a new, expanded Federal Government contract to deliver apprentice services through Apprenticeship Support Australia.

Another notable example is the national “Small Business – Too Big to Ignore” 2013 federal election campaign, which resulted in several pro-business initiatives such as a \$1 billion red tape reduction program.

Other examples include:

- Input to the Federal Government’s tax white paper
- Submission to the Federal Competition Policy Review (the Harper Review)
- Input to the Productivity Commission inquiry into business set-up, transfer and closure
- Recommendations to the four-yearly review of the modern awards system
- Collaboration on the Australian Chamber’s 2015-16 Federal Budget submission
- Submission to the Fair Work Commission’s annual wage review
- Input to the Australian Chamber’s landmark Productivity, Education and Training Program.

“The Victorian Chamber has a long history of being the leading advocate for Victorian business and we are proud of our solid track record of securing real and tangible wins for industry,” said Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chief Executive Mark Stone.

“An ever-strengthening chamber movement, with its unifying new brand, will play a key role in securing the Victorian Chamber’s future success. We will continue to serve our Victorian member base while benefitting from a stronger national identity.

“The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Working for business. Working for Victoria.”

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