

LETTER FROM CANBERRA

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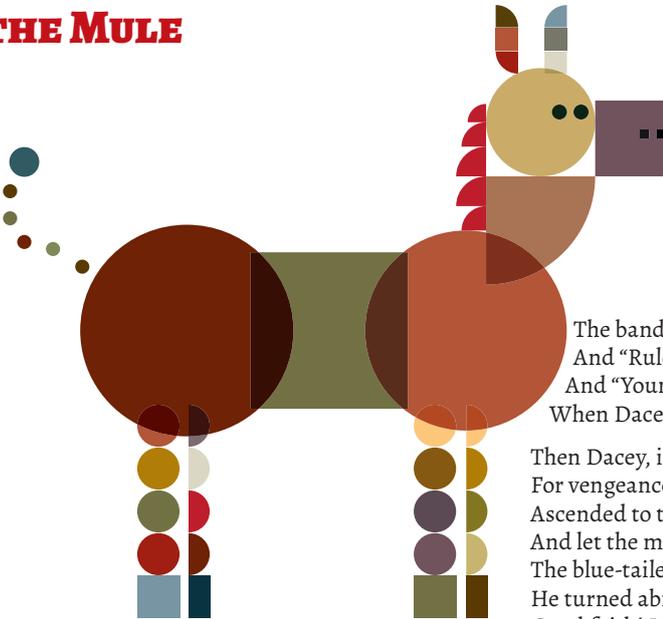
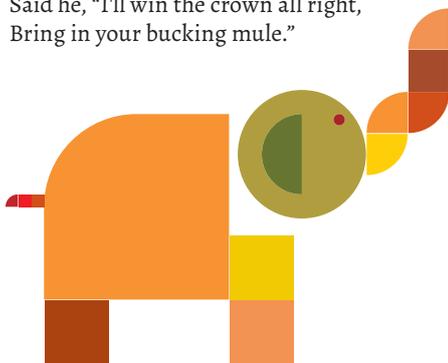
WHEN DACEY RODE THE MULE

BY PATERSON, A. B., 'BANJO'

'Twas to a small, up-country town,
When we were boys at school,
There came a circus with a clown,
Likewise a bucking mule.
The clown announced a scheme they had
Spectators for to bring —
They'd give a crown to any lad
Who'd ride him round the ring.

And, gentle reader, do not scoff
Nor think a man a fool —
To buck a porous-plaster off
Was pastime to that mule.

The boys got on; he bucked like sin;
He threw them in the dirt,
What time the clown would raise a grin
By asking, "Are you hurt?"
But Johnny Dacey came one night,
The crack of all the school;
Said he, "I'll win the crown all right,
Bring in your bucking mule."



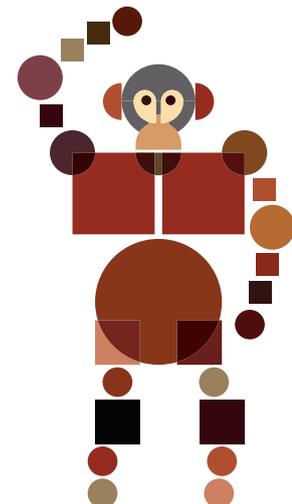
The band struck up with "Killaloe",
And "Rule Britannia, Rule",
And "Young Man from the Country", too,
When Dacey rode the mule.

Then Dacey, in a furious rage,
For vengeance on the show
Ascended to the monkeys' cage
And let the monkeys go;
The blue-tailed ape and chimpanzee
He turned abroad to roam;
Good faith! It was a sight to see
The people step for home.

For big baboons with canine snout
Are spiteful, as a rule —
The people didn't sit it out
When Dacey rode the mule.

And from the beasts that made escape,
The bushmen all declare,
Were born some creatures partly ape
And partly native-bear.
They're rather few and far between,
The race is nearly spent;
But some of them may still be seen
In Sydney Parliament.

And when those legislators fight,
And drink, and act the fool,
Just blame it on that torrid night
When Dacey rode the mule.



The elephant went off his trunk,
The monkey played the fool,
And all the band got blazing drunk
When Dacey rode the mule.

But soon there rose a galling shout
Of laughter, for the clown
From somewhere in his pants drew out
A little paper crown.
He placed the crown on Dacey's head
While Dacey looked a fool;
"Now, there's your crown, my lad," he said,
"For riding of the mule!"

Serious Reflection Edition

IN THIS ISSUE

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- Renewable Energy
- Gas production and prices up
- Water flow need, and happening
- Cattle prices good
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- New ASIO book

LETTER FROM CANBERRA

A monthly digest of news from around Australia.
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ABOUT US

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Letter From Canberra 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 Canberra is independent. It's not party political or any other political. It does not have the imprimatur of government at any level.

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

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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.

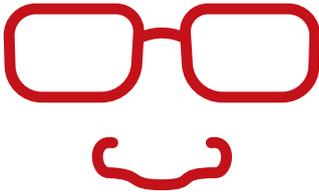
He was admitted as a barrister and solicitor to the Supreme Court of Victoria, and remains a (non-practising) member of the Law Institute of Victoria. Previously, he graduated from high school in Bethesda, Maryland, and had many opportunities to become aware of the workings of Washington D.C.

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.



Editor having Coffee with Family and French Friends at Barwon Heads



EDITORIAL: DEMOCKORY — A WORRYING TIME

It has been a busy six weeks since the last edition. As well as Christmas cheer, Friends and Dog walking, your Editor has been reading deeply and widely, and hopefully wisely. The Media Party has distractingly made the news in this period very intense, on Issues across the Pacific and in the Hills around Canberra. Editor does use Australian lighter literature on the pillow later in the evening. He found a Banjo Paterson favourite, which he has put on the Cover. Perhaps it brings together History, Art, Life, Education, Government, Politics, Parliament, Democracy, Humour, Sadness, Self-Discipline—the new word for 2017 (The new word for 2016 was Progressives).

We all Australians need to know our History. This poem brings together Bush folk and City folk, well before we had a parliament in Canberra. Though both are still relevant.

A very interesting book by English historian and former civil servant Clive Ponting, '1940: Myth and Reality' written in 1990, addresses an England which did not have the money to enter the War in 1940. It challenges what most of us think...we know about Britain and the War in 1940. Dunkirk. Churchill. Both just overblown distractions!!! Ponting is probably wrong more times than he is correct.

He tells an amusing Tale of Bureaucracy/in his context of Spitfires. At an Air Force meeting, in 1940, a question is asked as to why if so many spitfires are being produced, how come there seems to be a shortage of six hundred on the front line coastal air bases. 'Oh! That's because the other 600 have yet to be signed off by various agencies. Though they are ready to fly'. The Air Force administration was divided up the next day, and 600 more spitfires were on the coast waiting for the Germans.

We in Australia are starting the Year without Churchill. Not quite sure where it is going. It is more serious that most people think, if they are Thinking. Turnbull is trying to balance AAA Conservatives as well as other/normal Liberals conservatives and also some progressives within his own Party. Some conservatives are sprinting out in the media or some more practically as is Cordi Bernardi. Parliamentarians are not alone to blame.

People going their own way and leaving their traditional Party. History is being put to the side. As is the future of where energy comes from and where much of our food and technological and manufactured things will come from. Where milk comes from, etc.

Media. Too much emotion especially about climate change' and sex. Their subjectivity is locking out objectivity and Facts. ABC 7.30 journalists Leigh Sales and Q&A and Charlie Pickering do not have as ideological base, a balanced middle of the road approach.

A former Archbishop of Canterbury recently suggested that progressives protest without care for democracy. We have this in Australia. Every group screaming and protesting after they have won or lost their vote at the last state or federal or whatever election. Then out onto the road or Q&A.

Barry Humphries was on TV the other night. He put it another way. Taking the mickey out of people was his focus. Unlike the Australian progressives, who go for the jugular.

To finish on a very sad but Objective note.

The present Paedophilia discussion reminds your Editor a little of the AFL (media) focus on Essendon, rather than other players/Clubs. The Catholics did it all. Well. Most of it. A few other religious folk. What about the police forces and similar agencies around Australia, who and which would have known what was going on in the relevant decade(s)? The Education departments. Social services and agencies? The Royal Australian Navy has a well-documented history in this space, as young sailors were squashed in marine cubicles. Other parts of the armed services and uniforms. The Media(s). The Premiers' Departments in the States and Territories. Rumours and discussions in houses, homes and in the streets. And elsewhere. For one hundred years, and longer. Just grab a few people who are still alive, to be blamed.

An objective discussion on the newer Topic of Violence between males and females will emerge in the next year or so, unlike the present subjective/percentage-oriented bias. In the meantime down here/there in Victoria, the Police are about bound so that they can do almost nothing to contribute to a civil Society.

This is and will be a year for serious reflection. If we have a Love for our Australia.

STOP PRESS

Bernardi Leaves the Liberal Party to form his own conservative Party.

(Independentish) Senator Hinch has changed his mind over Christmas, and supported the more immediate changes to the Industrial relations legislation, to give businesses more freedom rather than needing agree to regulations which would have benefited Unions.

The Victorian Branch of the Liberal Party, at least, will give a priority to One Nation in its next election, as that party now stands for a wider set of values.

President Trump still has not clear regulations or rules on the Muslim immigration policy.

Crackdown on parliamentary expenses. Ho Hum.

NEXT MONTH

Barry Jones' Dictionary of World Biography sets the head humming at sleep time.

INSIDE

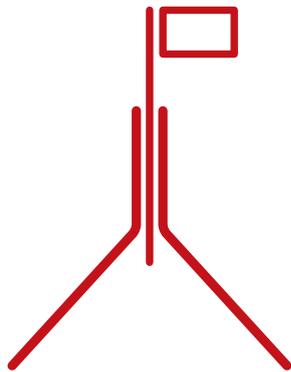
- Post American Election
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GOVERNANCE

ASIC Sale Backtrack

The **Turnbull** government has backed down from its controversial plan to sell the Australian Securities & Investments Commission's companies' registry after bids for the 'public' database were found to fall well short of the current revenue received from gouging users for access.

The scuttling of the proposed sale was welcomed by independent Senator **Nick Xenophon**, the public sector union, accounting body CPA Australia and campaigning group GetUp, which had lobbied against the tender for potentially putting at risk public access to information, already charged at a price more than 100 times what it costs to operate, according to THE AUSTRALIAN.

Lack of Action on Co-Share Practices

Pathologists say they are being driven to the wall as the federal government delays its solution to the rent wars between doctors and pathologist tenants. Hastily announced during the election in a bid to head off a campaign against Medicare cuts, the government promised to address the issue of rising rents in co-share practices, where GP's act as the landlord for pathologists, THE AGE reports.

Turnbull Down in Polls

Controversies over politicians' entitlements and the Centrelink debt recovery system have taken their toll on the **Turnbull** government, polls show. A Reachtel poll – commissioned by activist group GetUp and taken before **Sussan Ley's** resignation and in the midst of ongoing issues – found increased support for the opposition, with Labor leading the **Turnbull** government 54 points to 46, according to THE AGE.

Shortens Lips Sealed on TPP

Labor leader **Bill Shorten** dodged questions about whether the opposition would support laws to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership, leading to a war of words over free trade with Prime Minister **Turnbull**, reports THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Keep Your Eyes on the Skies

Privacy and Information Commissioner **Timothy Pilgrim** has fired a warning over laws to deregulate the commercial operation of remotely piloted aircraft, saying they could lead to an increase in drone-related stalking, harassment and unlawful surveillance, as per THE AUSTRALIAN.

PM Wants to Produce Outcomes

The ANU's *Australian Election Study*, released shortly before Christmas, found voters' faith in the way democracy and politics works in this country had dropped to its lowest level in almost 40 years at the 2016 poll. That reflects a trend seen globally in 2016 with the election of **Donald Trump**, Brexit and a number of European elections.

Voters are disillusioned and disconnected from politics. It's not all **Turnbull's** fault – the trend has been under way since things went pear-shaped with **Kevin Rudd** in 2010. But the Prime Minister has a particular problem – of huge expectations versus crushing disappointment – with the many voters who though he was something other than he has turned out to be.

Most notable among **Turnbull's** earlier positions was his strong advocacy for market-based interventions to reduce carbon emissions: it cost him his leadership in 2009. An emissions trading scheme, for example, might have been the right option in 2009 when the push was on for a global response.

But both climate politics and technology have moved on since. After **Turnbull** emphatically ruled out not just a carbon price but any form of emissions trading system, including a so-called emissions intensity scheme for the electricity sector, after his Environment Minister **Josh Frydenberg** appeared to leave the option open as an outcome of a policy review scheduled for this year.

Getting industrial relations bills and budget measures through the Senate and a probable solution to people still being stuck on Manus and Nauru are just two examples of **Turnbull** getting stuff done that eluded his predecessor. But the ideological and angry divide on which Australian politics has been played is hard to break down.

And virtually everything **Turnbull** does is seen through that prism. His response to the South Australian blackout in September was a classic example. The Prime Minister was talking about energy security, but he was generally seen as attacking renewable energy. 'That is the problem with ideology trumping policy and engineering' he said.

So, how do you deal with that tendency for everything to be turned into an ideological divide? 'You've got to try and focus on the facts' he says. At the end of the day, he says 'what people want is outcomes and our job is to deliver those outcomes', as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Senate Hangs in the Balance

The High Court is considering the eligibility of **Bob Day** to run for the Senate in July last year. The make-up of the Senate hangs on the outcome, with the government requiring the support of eight of the nine remaining crossbenchers to pass legislation if Labor and the Greens combine to oppose them, now that two former senators are being scrutinised by the High Court.

The High Court is also reserving its judgment on the eligibility of former One Nation Senator **Rod Culleton** to run for Senate. If the court decides Mr Day was validly elected before resigned in late last year, his replacement

would be decided by a joint sitting of the South Australian Parliament, which would likely endorse another Family First candidate.

But if he was not eligible to run for the Senate, the High Court could order a recount, which Former Labor Senator **Anne McEwen's** team hopes could open the way for her to return to parliament.

What a Waste of Money

Prime Minister **Turnbull's** public service project, the Digital Transformation Agency, has spent more than \$18 million hiring temporary workers and contractors in its less than 18 months' existence. Other taxpayer-funded spending by the micro-agency includes \$1 million for five months of 'agile coaching' by a private sector company Pragmateam, \$43,000 on whiteboards and hundreds of thousands of dollars on public relations, according to THE AGE.

Australia to Build a Fence... Around Parliament

Australia's leading body for architects has backed down on its opposition to a security fence around Parliament House, just weeks after its own petition against the controversial plan attracted nearly 4000 signatures. In December, the Australian Institute of Architects said it was 'deeply concerned' by a decision to build a fence along the building's sloping lawns, warning it would destroy the character, heritage and symbolism of Parliament.

But the group has backed down after its president, **Ken Maher**, and other representatives were invited to a confidential briefing with Department of Parliamentary Services secretary **Robert Stefanic**. Plans for the 2.6 metre steel fence across the sloping lawns at the front of the building were rushed through Parliament before the Christmas break. The exact location, design and cost are yet to be made public, reports THE AGE.

Will Someone Please Think of the Pollies?

Compared with barristers, surgeons, senior public servants – hell, even the CEOs of local councils – MPs are doing it hard. When the average salary in Australia is about \$80,000 a year, it's hard to sell the public on the idea that \$195,000 – the base salary for a federal MP – is not particularly large amount of money. Double – and then some – the average wage seems plenty.

But consider this: according to one study, between 1992 and 2002, executive pay in this country grew 22 times average weekly earnings to 74 times the average. Every 2½ years they can be turfed out on a whim of the voters and that many of them are effectively unemployable after politics. Add in the long hours they work, the travel away from family, and the scrutiny of their private lives, it is no wonder the parties struggle to find good candidates, writes **James Campbell** for the HERALD SUN

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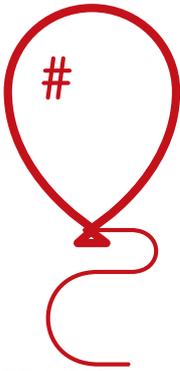
Marriage Equality Bill Discriminatory

The federal government's proposed version of marriage equality would further entrench discrimination by allowing civil celebrants and service providers to refuse to undertake gay weddings, the peak law body says. The Law Council of Australia has told a parliamentary inquiry the proposed laws would allow discrimination against same-sex couples on 'no proper basis' and undermine fundamental principles of the law.

'The current bill that they're looking at doesn't strike the right balance', council president **Fiona McLeod, SC**, said. It went 'too far' in appeasing religious groups and was 'inconsistent with the current federal law', according to THE AGE.

18C Case Handled Poorly By AHRC

The student at the centre of a racial vilification lawsuit that sparked fresh debate about free speech laws has accused the Australian Human Rights Commission of causing chaos and distress in its 'poor' handling of the complaint against him. Queensland University of Technology law student **Calum Thwaites** told a parliamentary inquiry the commission had consistently failed to contact him or the other students accused of causing insult or offence under controversial section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act, reports THE AGE.



PARTY HAPPENINGS

Keating's One Nation

The words One Nation have their own resonance in 2017 but 25 years ago they were chosen by **Paul Keating** as the name of his economic package to repel Fightback!, then opposition leader **John Hewson's** agenda for tax reform and spending cuts.

With its emphasis on micro-economic measures, One Nation was not the easiest 'nation-building' manifesto to sell, and within months it was unravelling, with finance minister **Ralph Willis** advising the cabinet that 'the task of vetting new policy and savings to achieve a result that is consistent with One Nation commitments is indeed most formidable (given) weaker-than-expected' performance in most areas. One Nation's micro-economic reforms inevitably advanced long-term government objectives, as reported in THE AGE.

One Nation Repay Hanson Loan

One Nation used taxpayer money to repay a \$191,000 loan from **Pauline Hanson** for last year's federal election campaign that has been at the centre of internal tension. The man who signed off on the deal, former One Nation president and national treasurer **Ian Nelson**, said he was surprised by Senator Hanson's generosity as it was 'out of character' for her, THE AUSTRALIAN reports.

Rift or No Rift?

Liberal senator **Cory Bernardi** has accused former prime minister **Tony Abbott** of advancing his political self-interest by 'talking up' Coalition divisions

amid fears about the emergence of a breakaway conservative movement. In comments directed at **Bernardi**, amid concerns he is on the brink of splitting to spearhead a new conservative force, **Abbott** warned that a rupture on the Right could deliver government to Labor for at least two terms.

He suggested the Trump insurgency in the US was driving interest in a new political alignment on the Australian Right but said more self-belief was needed in the liberal Party in 2017 rather than a new conservative movement, as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN.

Anti-Establishment Right Wing Movement

Turnbull is facing a difficult balancing act with the conservatives. This is coming on the back of what has been referred to as the emergence of 'Australia's far right', various movements claiming to protect our history, our culture, our Aussie pride, and wanting to 'make Australia great again' – including United Patriots Front, True Blue Crew, Party for Freedom, Australian Liberty Alliance, Reclaim Australia, Halal Choice, Aussie Farmers First, etc. – all anti-Muslim/Islam, anti-immigration, anti-asylum seekers, but some with dashes of anti-politicians, anti-political correctness, anti-welfare cheats, and more.

There are various 'anti-establishment' elements but they are basically mechanisms for racism and bigotry, designed to incite race hate, and to hopefully close our borders to Muslims, writes **John Hewson** for THE AGE.

Post-Truth Politics

Malcolm Turnbull launched a twin offensive against **Bill Shorten** and the ALP for shamelessly and recklessly lying to the public and pursuing populist, anti-business and ideological policies that could damage the economy and force up the cost of living. Expressing a growing 'righteous anger', the Prime Minister said he was prepared to 'call out' the Opposition Leader for 'shameless lies' designed to frighten the old and sick as part of treating politics 'like a game'.

The government is expected to introduce tougher controls on digital political campaigning and keep \$2.5 billion Emissions Reduction Fund to sell carbon credits to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets. **Turnbull** said **Shorten** was not fit to become Prime Minister because of his 'shameless lies' and his determination to run populist campaigns at the lowest level the ALP had reached.

Turnbull said because the media had changed so drastically in recent year, Labor had decided 'in this post-truth politics environment where you have so many avenues to get your message across beyond the curated media they believe they can get away with telling lies'. 'This is the 'politics is a game' view of politics; well, politics is not a game' he said. 'It is very serious, it is the prospects, the future of Australia', as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN.

Turnbull Isn't That Bad

Former Liberal Party leader **Andrew Peacock** believes **Malcolm Turnbull** is doing 'a great job' as Prime Minister and deserves more support from his parliamentary party and voters. But he cautioned that the party he led twice in the 1980s was 'more conservative than it was' and it would be wise to reconsider adopting the 'broad church' approach that its founder, **Robert Menzies**, envisioned, as per THE AUSTRALIAN.

Bishop Tells Abbott to Pipe Down

Foreign Minister **Julie Bishop** has dismissed contentious suggestions on Middle East relations from **Tony Abbott**, who called for Australia's embassy in Israel to be relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and for a cut in aid to the Palestinian Authority because of its financial support for 'terrorists and their families'.

While Israel considers Jerusalem its 'eternal' and 'indivisible' capital, other countries maintain embassies in Tel Aviv because the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967 is regarded as illegitimate. Writing for *The Spectator Australia*, **Mr Abbott** said an Australian demonstration of 'unswerving support for Israel, as the Middle East's only liberal, pluralist democracy, might be to join any move by the Trump administration to move its embassy to Jerusalem'.

'And Australia should cut our \$40 million a year in aid to the Palestinian Authority while it keeps paying pensions to terrorists and their families' **Mr Abbott** wrote, referring to Palestinian Authority support payments made to Arab detainees in Israeli prisons, and their relatives.

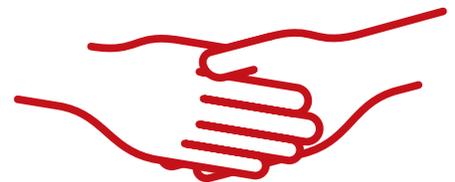
Taxpayer-Funded Joy Ride

Former Health Minister **Susan Ley** charged taxpayers more than \$13,000 to pilot private charter planes along busy capital city routes and is refusing to say why she did not use cheaper commercial options. Travel records reveal the licensed commercial pilot charged \$6300 to fly from Canberra to Melbourne in July 2014 and another \$7000 to travel from Canberra to Adelaide in May 2015, reports THE AGE

Greens Fractured

The factional fight within the Greens is escalating into an all-out public brawl, with a senior member of **Richard Di Natale's** team now openly questioning the party's direction and prospects under his leadership. NSW senator **Lee Rhiannon** has told THE AGE the party is at a 'crossroads' and should channel the radical worker-driven policies of US presidential candidate **Bernie Sanders** to re-energise supporters.

But her comments have drawn fire from party elder **Bob Brown**, who has re-entered the political fray to label her a wrecker and the 'Green version of **Tony Abbott**'. Other Greens figures say they are worried the party is losing votes to Labor and other minor parties under Senator **Di Natale**, as he attempts to steer it away from its protest roots and into the mainstream.



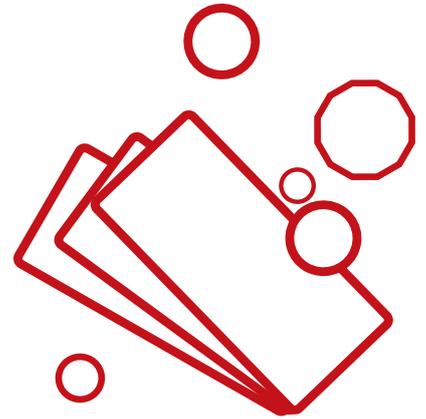
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

ABCC Delay Will Not Affect Effectiveness

Much of the commentary following the passage of the Australian Building and Construction Commission Bill exaggerates the impact of delaying by two years, to November 2018, the requirement for existing enterprise agreements to comply with the building code. The code seeks to improve behaviour in the construction industry by requiring contractors on commonwealth sites to comply with the law and the code.



A WINDOW OF THE HISTORIC BANK OF NSW IN BRAIDWOOD SOUTH OF CANBERRA. AN EXCELLENT PLACE TO VISIT.



**BUSINESS, ECONOMY,
MANUFACTURING, FINANCE**

Ford Investing in the Future

Three months after closing Australia's oldest automotive factory, Ford has announced it will invest \$500 million to secure more than 1,500 jobs to design and engineer cars built overseas. In his first visit to Australia as Ford CEO, **Mark Fields** met the Federal Government to ensure there was enough design and engineering talent coming through local schools and universities to develop the cars of the future, according to the HERALD SUN.

S&G Stocks Continue to Plummet

Shares in besieged law company Slater and Gordon have crashed amid revelations it is under investigation for possible deliberate falsification or manipulation of its books. The share price sank 7.55 cents to 24 cents, valuing the company at \$86 million as it is increasingly engulfed by its \$682 million debt. It has lost \$2.6 billion in value since its peak in April last year, before details of the troubled nature of its purchase of British law firm Quindell was fully known, as per the HERALD SUN.

Woolies to Sell Servos

Woolworths will sell its petrol station portfolio to BP in a \$1.8 billion deal that will help the retail giant fund its ongoing fight to regain market share in the grocery sector, reports THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Tatts For Sale

The consortium of financial heavyweights trying to grab control of lotteries and wagering giant Tatts Group will need to lift its \$8.4 billion bid and find a way to offload Tatts' battling wagering division, industry insiders say. Tatts rejected an \$8.4 billion bid by the Pacific Consortium – which includes Macquarie Group (a 10 per cent stake), private equity firm KKR (a 30 per cent stake), Morgan Stanley's infrastructure wing North Haven Infrastructure Partners (30 per cent) and local superannuation investor First State Super (30 per cent) - and said it would stick with an \$11 billion deal proposed by Tabcorp, reports THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Silicon Bribes CBA Exec

A former Commonwealth Bank executive who pocketed almost \$1 million in bribes from a Silicon Valley tech company will serve jail time in Australia before facing more fraud charges in the US. **Keith Robert Hunter** was a former IT infrastructure and operations chief at the bank, according to THE AUSTRALIAN.

Banks Ought to Pay for Watchdog

The \$400 billion industry-super sector is pushing for the big banks to bear the lion's share

A failure to comply can result in denying a contractor access to commonwealth work. The ABCC in its previous form was effective because it operated under a succinct, well-drafted act, was accessible and was resilient in its administration of the law. The reconstituted ABCC will operate in the same vein. It would have been preferable to have the code in place now. But it is only part of a multifaceted regulatory scheme.

The ABCC is equipped to secure lawful conduct throughout the industry. It will be even more successful in this pursuit when the agreements of all companies applying for government projects have to comply with the Building code, writes former ABCC Commissioner **John Lloyd** for THE AUSTRALIAN.

Doing It For The Boss

Former union boss **Dave Hanna** and two former managers from construction giant Mirvac have been charged with secret commissions offences for allegedly organising \$400,000 in free work to be done on the unionist's luxury home, THE AUSTRALIAN reports.

Watson Walks From 'Politically Compromised' FWC

One of the most senior members of the Fair Work Commission has resigned and launched an extraordinary attack that portrays the national

workplace tribunal as a politically compromised and biased organisation that is hurting jobs and investment. **Graeme Watson** wrote to Governor-General **Peter Cosgrove** formally stepping down as a vice-president of the Fair Work Commission.

An almost unprecedented move that exposes ideological fissures in the tribunal that sets the pay and conditions for millions of workers. 'I have made this decision because it is increasingly clear to me that the operation of the workplace relations system is actually undermining the objects of the Fair Work legislation.'

The fourth-ranked commissioner wrote in a separate letter to Employment Minister **Michaela Cash** 'I do not consider that the system provides a framework for co-operative and productive workplace relations and I do not consider that it promotes economic prosperity or social inclusion'. The resignation of Mr Watson, a former Freehills lawyer who represented Patrick Stevedores in the famous 1998 waterfront dispute, is a result of long-term tensions within the commission, according to THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.



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of funding Australia's corporate watchdog, arguing they cause more problems for the regulators. The federal government wants the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) to move to a self-funding model and closed consultation on how that might work just before Christmas, as per THE AGE.

Downgrade On its Way

Crisis averted, but for how long? It's unlikely the federal government will be able to avoid a downgrade to Australia's coveted AAA credit rating despite giving it their best shot when they released their latest mid-year economic review. Economists were quick to question some of the numbers as well as the wafer-thin projection of such a small surplus by 2020-21 just 0.1 per cent of GDP. Most economists think it's a case of when, not if, there is a credit downgrade, writes **Phillip Baker** for THE AUSTRALIAN.

Big Business Still Lacking Gender Diversity

2016 has ended with 15 companies boards in the ASX 200 with no women on them. In April last year the Australian Institute of Company Directors set a target of 30 per cent female representation on ASX 200 boards by the end of 2018, with the option of quotas for recalcitrants. Institute chairman **Elizabeth Proust** said there was still a fair way to go to achieve gender diversity on Australian boards, as reported in THE AGE.

Need for Bipartisan Economics

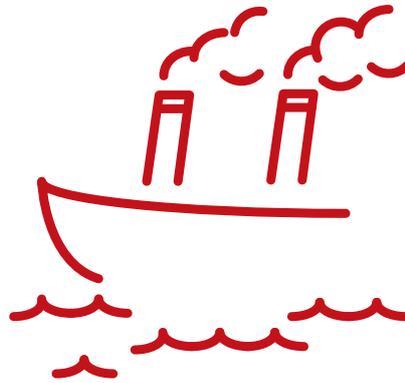
We now face the toughest and most unprecedented global economic environment in memory, where our fate is most heavily dependent on China, where their growth is slowing much faster than they will admit. Add this to the need to achieve 'compromise' with a very short-term focused, opportunistic Senate. The need for an effective national, mostly bipartisan, economic strategy has rarely been greater, but the probability of achieving is rarely less, writes **John Hewson** for THE AGE.

Expanding Supply to End Housing Crisis

Scott Morrison is moving to reshape the political fight over housing affordability by working on radical reform to mobilise more private investment declaring the 'massive issue' will be a key focus this year to fix the waste of taxpayer funds on poor results. The Treasurer is examining overseas programs that have unleashed billions of dollars for rental homes, promising new ways to expand supply in cities just as house prices hit new highs, reports THE AUSTRALIAN.

Mint Not So Fresh in 2017

The Royal Australian Mint is bracing for tough times, forecasting a 12 per cent decline in circulating coin revenue this financial year after an unexpected increase in demand in 2015-16. Mint chief executive **Ross MacDiarmid** has warned the 'long-term forecast for Australia is a decline in coin usage' and that the 'environment over the next four years is expected to be especially changing', as per THE AUSTRALIAN.



TRADE

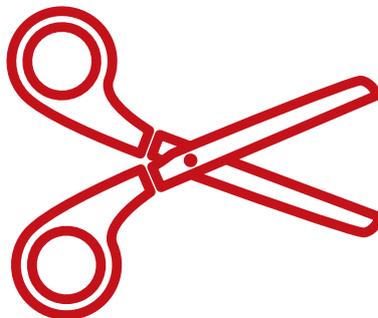
Beef Ban to be Lifted

Fresh and frozen beef from the US and Japan could appear back on Australian supermarkets shelves more than 13 years after trade was suspended due to concerns over mad cow disease, as per THE AGE

New Logo a No Go

The Australian Made Campaign chairman, **Glenn Cooper AM**, has described plans to create another logo to market Australian food in China as 'nonsensical, counterproductive and a complete waste of millions of dollars'. The new logo idea, spearheaded by mining billionaire **Andrew Forrest**, is part of an initiative that aims to establish a 100-year trade pact with China for all food products, following the recently signed China-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

'We support the 100-year initiative, but it makes no sense to develop a new logo as part of what is otherwise a very important proposal for the future of Australia's trade arrangements into China. A proven and highly effective symbol already exists' Cooper says, as per THE AGE.



TAX

ATO Eyes Gas Cash Cow

The Australian Taxation Office has its sights on a \$30 billion-a-year national gas export bonanza expected over the next few years, warning oil and gas giants not to follow the lead of the big miners and 'inappropriately shift profits' by selling through tax haven Singapore, THE AUSTRALIAN reports.

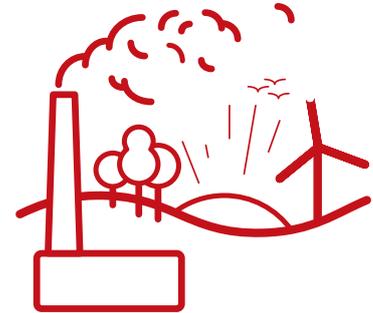
Lean Mean Robo Debt Machine

Families, pensioners and the disabled are next in line to be targeted by the government's controversial Centrelink 'robo-debt' campaign. The moves could bring up to 4 million more Australians into the sights of the data-matching program, which uses an automated system to match information held by Centrelink and the Australian Taxation Office and calculate overpayments, THE AGE reports.

Royalties for Regional Australia

Queensland Liberal-National Party senator **Barry O'Sullivan** is rallying support for an audacious plan to quarantine for the bush a portion of any

extra money raised Petroleum Resources Rent Tax. In November, Treasurer **Scott Morrison** announced a review of the PRRT and other oil and gas royalty arrangements, the results of which will be fed into the budget planning process. Mr Morrison said PRRT receipts had halved since 2012-13, down to \$800 million, while crude oil excise collections had dropped by even more, reports THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.



CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Job Cuts to Blame for SA Power Problems

South Australia's privately owned electricity distributor cut its field workforce by 5 per cent in 2016 and should take the blame for extensive delays in restoring power to thousands of homes, linesman union says. About 580 SA Power Networks powerline workers, half the company's employees, worked around the clock to fix the lines damaged by a storm over the Christmas-New Year period, which cut power to one fifth or 155,000, of the network's customers, as per THE AUSTRALIAN.

Wind Farm Guidelines Complex

NSW wind farm developers are worried about an 'overly complex' and potentially 'suboptimal' approach to assessing the visual impact of wind farms in long-awaited planning guidelines for the state. The guidelines, which have lingered in draft form since 2011, are intended to ensure the interests of local communities are taken into account during the assessment of proposed new wind projects, as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

A Clear view

Companies' lack of engagement in climate change will cost us all. Everything we stand to lose due to climate change, and everything causing the problem has a value of some kind, is owned by somebody and sitting on a balance sheet somewhere.

Business leaders thinking about how they might want to better themselves in 2017 would be well advised to take an intensive course in managing climate risk. The economy needs to move on faster than most of us realise – surely you wouldn't want to be left behind? Writes **Julien Vincent** for THE AGE. Your Editor challenges this ideology, yet it should be considered by any serious business

Manufacturers Concerned

Manufacturers fear nothing can save them from the risk of having gas supplies curtailed come mid-year, amid the looming squeeze in the east coast market that has already seen prices surge. As LNG exports from Queensland ramp up, some local industrial buyers have been forced to agree to 100 per cent prices hikes for their gas in 2017, pushing them to the brink.

But when it comes to the crunch, deliveries to industry may be cut back to preserve supplies for retail customers, some fear. 'Mid-2017 until late 2018 is really the crunch point in supply'

said **Mark Chellew**, chairman of Manufacturing Australia, which has several members struggling to source long-term supplies of gas.

The birth of the LNG export industry in Gladstone is trebling demand for gas sourced from the east coast, but the energy is being shipped to Asia while local deliveries are coming under pressure, especially as access to onshore gas is restricted in states such as Victoria.

Reforms are under way to increase transparency in the east coast gas market and improve pipeline regulation but the fundamental problem of inadequate supplies has not been solved. Meanwhile, AGL Energy's radical plan to examine the potential to import LNG into the eastern states is also only a longer-term option given the \$200-300 million the plant would start up in only 2021 at the earliest.

Industrial buyers complain of a lack of choice on gas supplies that leaves them over a barrel when it comes to pricing. **David Ritchie**, general manager at Victoria Wool Processors in Laverton North in Melbourne's west, said that when he sought to replace a contract from EnergyAustralia expiring at the end of 2016, three out of four retailers could not even make a supply offer. Victorian Wool Processors has been forced to accept a doubling in price for its 100,000 gigajoules a year of gas, as per THE AUSTRALIAN.

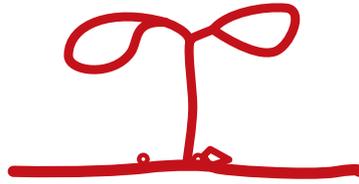
Renewable Target Still in Place

The **Turnbull** government has slapped down **Tony Abbott's** call for it to ditch its renewable energy target for 2020, declaring there are 'no plans' to change the policy that was settled when Mr Abbott was prime minister. Environment and Energy Minister **Josh Frydenberg** told THE AGE the government's intention was to stick with its policy and contrast it with Labor's commitment to a more ambitious target for 2030 that would be a 'reckless hit on family and business electricity bills'.

Manufacturers Expecting Energy Price Rise

State and federal government face fresh pressure to urgently deal with spiralling energy costs as new research suggest the majority of businesses expect to be hit with price rises again this year. An Australian Industry Group survey of chief executive found that 51 per cent expect price hikes in 2017, up from 39 per cent who reported an increase last year.

Among some manufacturers, energy costs had doubled or tripled over the year, 'highlighting that energy prices are again emerging as a threat to Australian manufacturers' AI Group chief executive **Innes Willox** said, as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN.



AGRICULTURE, CATTLE AND WATER

Sad, in more ways than one

A South Australian shearer has pleaded guilty to abusing sheep by twisting their limbs while standing and stomping on them in a Victorian shearing shed. He is one of seven shearers charged following an investigation by Agriculture Victoria inspectors after a series of complaints that sheep were being punched and beaten.

The complaints arose after graphic footage was posted on YouTube by animal welfare organisation PETA documenting the abuse in a Neuarpuir shearing shed in 2013. The Lucindale man was banned from shearing or being in charge of farmed animals for two years and ordered to donate \$5000 to the RSPCA, as per THE AUSTRALIAN.

New CEO for Cattle Council

Duncan Bremmer will take over as chief executive of the Cattle Council of Australia. He has previously been CEO of Animal Medicines Australia, the Australian Road Train Association, and working in senior roles in government advocacy and public relations internationally. 'My upbringing and early working life was based around the cattle industry', according to THE AGE.

Cattle to Mooove at Annual Calf Sales

South Eastern Australia's famed New Year calf sales are expected to deliver a multi-million payday for beef producers. On the back of some of the highest-ever prime values and a season in the eastern states awash with grass, there are predications the sales, could generate about \$100 million for vendors.

About 72,000 weaners (young cattle) will be offered, at Wodonga, in Victoria's North East, and Naracoorte in South Australia. Expert predictions of a \$1,200 a head average would represent a 20 per cent jump on last year. Rain over the Christmas period across much of southern Australia has also added impetus to buying patterns. And with strong prime values through much of last year, experts say producers are ready to reinvest in their industry, reports THE AGE.

State Push to Stop Cuts to Irrigation

The Victorian and NSW governments are desperately trying to curb the volume of water being stripped from irrigation communities to boost the Murray Darling Basin's environmental

flows. THE AGE can reveal NSW and Victoria have battled to gain support from the Murray Darling Basin Authority and federal bureaucrats for eight complementary measures that boost the basin's ecological health without using more water.

The measures include controlling carp using the koi herpes virus, installing fish ladders, restocking streams, screening fish from irrigation pump intakes and modifying large dam outlets to curb cold water pollution along 2500km of the basin's waterways.

Agriculture's 'Golden Era'

Federal Agriculture Minister and Deputy Prime Minister **Barnaby Joyce** tells THE AUSTRALIAN that agriculture is entering a 'golden era' of prosperity and growth that will last at least five years. Farmers are producing \$60 billion of food and rural products a year, with a bigger slice of profits coming back to the producer, he says.

Irrigation dams are full again after record rain last year, bank debts are being paid down, a record \$5bn set aside in special farm saving deposits, while drought-affected Queensland farmers are restocking their rejuvenated properties.

No More Raw Prawns to Come

The import of all raw green prawns into Australia has been suspended following an outbreak of deadly white spot disease at five prawn farms south of Brisbane. Agriculture and Water Resources Minister **Barnaby Joyce** announced the temporary ban, designed to protect the \$358 million local prawn industry from the highly contagious virus not previously found in Australia, according to THE AUSTRALIAN

Firestick Ecology

Victor Steffensen is sharing knowledge handed down by the Elders of his people in the far-away Gulf Country. And the men from Snowy River are rapt, nodding in agreement as he explains how firestick ecology has been used to manage and renew the bush for as long as anyone can remember. The cattlemen like what he is saying.

They have been on the warpath since the state Labor government banned grazing in alpine national parks, stopping them from grazing High Country stock on some of the best summer pastures. This had increased the fire risk, they complain, because cattle helped to keep undergrowth in check, reducing fuel loads. The grazing ban came on top of years of crackdowns to limit access to the high plains and to restrict property owners from preventative burn-offs, as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN.

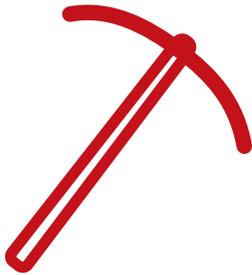
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Water Water Everywhere

Major inflows into the Murray-Darling Basin have already guaranteed irrigators water for next season. New figures reveal a massive 14,500 gigalitres of water flowed into the Murray-Darling system last year, a significant jump on the 3100 gigalitres of inflows in 2015 and the annual average of 9100.

A summer surge of water down the Darling River from Queensland and northern NSW has pushed the Menindee Lakes past the all-important 640-gigalitre-trigger point that ensures Victoria and NSW equally share the inflows according to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. Judging from the volume of unused water in both northern systems, dairy irrigators are set for either a late-season splurge to get crops and pastures off to a good start or may opt to carry over whatever water they can, THE AGE reports.



MINING

Drill Baby Drill

The chance of a big oil find in the Great Australian Bight did not die with BP's 11th-hour decision last year to ditch its drilling program. US multinational Chevron has said it will delay but nevertheless push ahead with \$400 million worth of drilling after 'very promising' results from early studies indicated the potential for a new Bass Strait or North West Shelf, according to THE AUSTRALIAN.



MEDIA

Mistress to Speak to Board

The former mistress of embattled Seven CEO **Tim Worner** wants to front the company's board to dispute his assertion that he never used drugs in a work context. The woman at the centre of the Seven West Media sex-and-drugs scandal, **Amber Harrison**, yesterday volunteered to be grilled by the board to 'explain my truth'. Ms Harrison believed Mr Worner has clung to his job because when board members questioned him, he denied having used drugs in a work setting, the HERALD SUN reports.

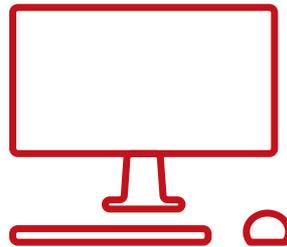
Multiple Affairs

Four women at Channel Seven are named in a complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission as having had affairs with Seven West Media **Tim Worner**. Seven's value plummeted \$98million as shareholders fled the stock following former executive assistant **Amber Harrison's** allegations she was paid more than



THE COURTHOUSE OF BRAIDWOOD, NSW. THE INFAMOUS CLARKE GANG WERE BRAIDWOOD LOCALS, AND IT IS DUE TO THEM THAT THE CONCEPT OF OUTLAWRY WAS INTRODUCED IN AUSTRALIAN LAW.

\$150,000 to keep quiet about an affair with Mr Worner, according to the HERALD SUN.



IT

The Internet Age Labour Force

Internet disruption is changing the workplace, which means we need new ways to measure what's going on. Accurately observing this evolution of the modern labour market is crucial. Mid-way through 2015, **David Gruen**, deputy secretary, economic and G20 SHERPA in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, commissioned the G20 to begin developing a model to capture the growing digital economy, as per THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.



JUSTICE

Extra Funds for AFP

The Australian Federal Police and workplace regulators have been given an extra \$30 million to investigate unions and their representatives over the next four years. The extra funding came as the Fair Work Commission pushed back until early 2017 its decision on whether to cut Sunday penalty rates.

The government said the AFP had been allocated an additional \$21m by 2020 to keep investigating referrals to law enforcement authorities by the trade union royal commission. An extra \$7m will

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also be assigned to the Fair Work Commission to pursue matters from the royal commission until the new Registered Organisations Commission is operating, as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN.



WELFARE

Tales Of Bureaucracy

Taxpayers have footed the bill for an 18-month investigation into housing affordability that failed to come up with any ideas to help first homebuyers break into the market. Despite receiving 86 submissions from economists, property groups and individuals, the bipartisan committee – which included 19 MPs – made no recommendations in its 55-page report, according to the HERALD SUN.

Labor Push for Robo Debt Investigation

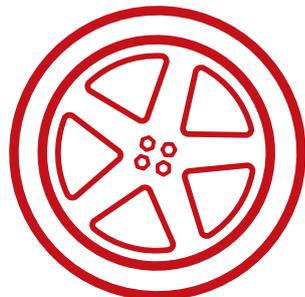
Labor's human services spokeswoman **Linda Burney** has written to the Australian National Audit Office requesting it investigate Centrelink's controversial \$4.5 billion debt clawback amid ongoing accusations that it is unfairly targeting people and miscalculating bills, THE AGE reports.

Debt Recovery Cover Up?

Centrelink public servants who ask too many questions about their agency's controversial 'robo-debt' recovery effort are being 'managed' out of debt recovery units, according to independent MP **Andrew Wilkie**. The Tasmanian independent also alleges public servants are being played against each other by managers, competing for the highest daily quota of debt notices. But Centrelink is unhappy with Mr Wilkie's letter to Ombudsman **Colin Neave**, with the agency saying that the allegations are inaccurate or misleading, as reported in THE AGE.

Investigation Into Debt Recovery Scheme

Pressure is growing on the **Turnbull** government over the Centrelink debt-recovery controversy, after the Commonwealth Ombudsman launched a wide-ranging investigation amid calls for the system to be shut down, THE AGE reports.



TRANSPORT

Uber Reforms T&C's

Uber has warned its unruly passengers they could be slapped with lifetime bans. Damaging drivers' property, physical contact with the driver and having sex in the car are just some of the ways Uber

customers can be barred from the ride-sharing service. Uber has published new guidelines outlining the reasons passengers can be banned, in an effort to stamp out drunken, violent and inappropriate behaviour, the HERALD SUN reports.

Uber to Become Wheelchair Accessible

Wheelchair users will be able to roll directly into an Uber car for the first time as the group steps up competition with the taxi industry by broadening the range of services it offers people with disabilities. Uber has started providing wheelchair vehicles to people living in Newcastle as part of a year-long trial to gauge demand for its services.

Newcastle residents will be able to request Toyota Taragos, which are fitted with lifts for wheelchairs, on the Uber app by selecting the UberWAV option for the same price as an UberX ride, which is about 30 per cent cheaper than the average taxi fare if there is no surge pricing, as per THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Phase Out Regular Unleaded

Regular unleaded petrol – the most popular fuel for Australian motorists – would be phased out under radical government proposals. Banning regular unleaded petrol would improve the quality of Australian fuel, rated the dirtiest in the developed world, but would probably lead to a substantial price rise.

Premium unleaded costs an average of 10.7c more a litre than regular unleaded, which has been the standard fuel in Australia since leaded petrol was phased out by the Howard government. The operators of Australia's four oil refineries – two in Victoria, one in Queensland and one in Western Australia – would also be forced to rebuild their plants, with costs potentially running into the billions.

A government discussion paper argues that reducing the amount of sulphur in the petrol sold in Australia would have strong environmental and health benefits. Australia has the lowest-quality petro, of the 35 countries in the OECD, below Mexico, Turkey and Estonia, according to THE AGE.

Road Safety Rethink

After recording the worst road fatality rate in five years, we need to rethink our approach to road safety, and that begins with each of us taking responsibility for our actions. We should not accept that more than 1200 deaths a year is a price we have to pay for a modern transport system, writes federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport **Darren Chester** for THE AUSTRALIAN.

Petrol Price Hike

The federal consumer watchdog is urging motorists to shop around and grab the cheapest petrol they see, with prices expected to rise in the coming days. Fuel prices have been steadily decreasing in Victoria since mid-November, with the average price for unleaded fuel in Victoria 122.8c a litre, while premium unleaded sits at 134.3c.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission said petrol prices would rise in the wake of an OPEC agreement last month to cut oil production and with the Australian dollar falling against the greenback, its analysis of petrol sales found that demand surges in the lead-up to Christmas and drops significantly afterwards. Demand then picks up again in late January, according to THE AGE.

Tiger Has its Wings Clipped

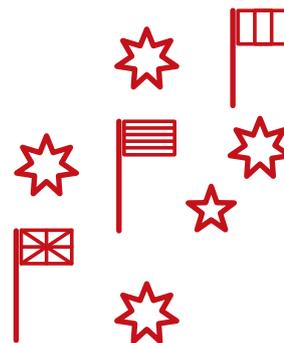
Tigerair has suspended sales of flights to Bali until the airline can overcome a regulatory impasse with the Indonesian government that left thousands of its customers stranded. The Indonesian government granted Tigerair a four-day reprieve to return 2000 stranded customers to Australia after the airline was banned from flying to and from Bali.

Tigerair was forced to suspend all its services between Australia and Bali because of what the airline said were 'new administrative requirements' from Indonesian authorities. A spokesman for the Director General of Air Transport in Indonesia said last week the budget airline has its services suspended for breaching the conditions of its license to fly there, according to THE AUSTRALIAN.

Airport Ultimatum

Australia's biggest airport operator has been given an ultimatum that would force it to spend up to \$6 billion to build Sydney's second airport at Badgerys Creek, amid revelations the **Turnbull** government surprised the company in October by withdrawing an offer of a \$1bn concessional loan.

A brawl over the \$1bn offer, revealed by THE AUSTRALIAN, threatens to drag out a decision on the nation's next major airport as the government vows to go it alone if the Sydney Airport Corporation refuses to submit to the tough new terms on building the mammoth project. The government is demanding a decision by May.



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Turkey-Russia Relations

Turkish and Russian diplomats declared their intention to halt the civil war in Syria, showing no signs of a rift the day after the Russian ambassador to Turkey was assassinated in Ankara in a brazen shooting, reports THE AGE.

Lone-Wolf But IS-Inspired

Although not directly connected, the shocking attacks in Berlin and Ankara have some important 'lone-wolf' commonalities. The Berlin Christmas market incident with a big truck mowing down shoppers appears to be an IS-inspired terror attack in the pattern of the July 14 attack in Nice, France. IS has been calling for such attack in recent weeks and authorities have been warning that the Christmas-New Year period represents a time of vulnerability and heightened concern.

After he shot the ambassador, and before being gunned down himself, the attacker ranted emotionally, saying 'Allahu Akbar. We are those who have given a pledge of allegiance to Muhammad that we will carry on jihad as long as we live. Allahu Akbar. Don't forget Aleppo. Don't forget Syria. As long as our towns are not secure, you won't have (a) taste of security. Back off. Back off. Only death will take me away from here. Everyone who has contributed to this cruelty will pay one

by one! It was quickly revealed the gunman was a 22-year-old riot police officer stationed in Ankara, writes **Greg Barton** for the HERALD SUN.

China's Incompatible Justice System

Australia is a step closer to ratifying its extradition treaty to China after parliament's joint standing committee on treaties brought down a report recommending it should come into force. The government has made no secret that it is keen to ratify the treaty, which has been lying on the books since it was signed almost 10 years ago, in the dying days of the Howard government.

Reading the committee's report – which its ALP members refused to endorse – it is hard not to laugh at its diplomatic understatement: 'There is a body of evidence,' the authors note, 'suggesting that China's criminal justice system 'does not act in accordance with procedural fairness and rule of law standards in criminal proceedings'.

In 2015 the acquittal rate in China's courts dropped by 34 per cent, leading to my favourite headline of 2016: 'China's criminals conviction rate fell to just 99.92% in 2015'. The numbers are astonishing; that year China's courts found 1.232 million defendants guilty and acquitted 1039. If our government gave a toss about justice, those numbers would have ended any talk about sending anyone to China's courts.

Do our politicians not understand that China's court system is like every other aspect of its political system: an extension of the will of the Communist Party? As depressing as this is to say, I hope that is the case, as the alternatives are worse. Either the government is so morally bankrupt it is prepared to knowingly hand people to a brutal Communist tyranny or it is so stupid as to believe such a political system is capable of evolving.

Reading the report's recommendations, I have to say I suspect the latter. All the visits, treaties of understanding will no doubt be defended as a necessary and welcome deepening and normalising of our relations with our giant trading partner. But the reality is we can never have normal relations with China because China is not a normal country. It is a brutal and capricious tyranny, which believes its time has come, writes **James Campbell** for the HERALD SUN.

Indonesian President **Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo** has confirmed the country has temporarily suspended



AN OFFICE IN THE OUTDOOR ROOM.

some military activities with Australia as Defence Minister **Marise Payne** tried to contain the damage to the bilateral relationship, saying Australia has expressed regret to Indonesia and is dispatching Chief of the Army **Angus Campbell** to Indonesia, as per THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Nile a Threat to International Security

Eight-two-year-old conservative Christian MP the Reverend **Fred Nile** has been called many things in his time in public life, but last week was the first time he was deemed a threat to international security. Mr Nile, the longest-serving member in the NSW Parliament, says both he and his wife, **Silvana Nero**, were denied entry to the United States because they were told they presented an unspecified security threat, reports THE AGE.

Globalisation Elites Alive and Well

It was Harvard professor **Samuel Huntington** who first hurled the epithet 'Davos Man' at the new elites, railing against 'gold-collar workers' with no use for the nation-state, and divorced from organic societies rooted in tradition. He warned of a cosmopolitan superclass of 20 million people, with interests diverging ever further from the anthropology of the parish.

This rootless supra-culture was cornering the gains of the global economy, and capturing ideological power. 'They have little need for national loyalty, view national boundaries as obstacles that thankfully are vanishing, and see national governments as residues from the past whose only function is to facilitate the elite's operations,' he wrote, as per THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Wanted: Rich US Travellers

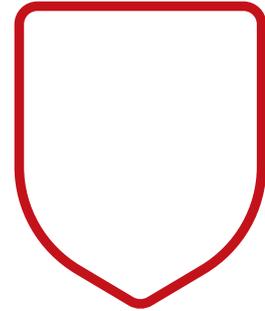
The federal government will target wealthy US tourists through a program to install 500 Australian specialists within North America's biggest luxury travel network as part of a wider tourism push it hopes will inject billions of dollars into the local economy. Tourism Australia and US travel giant Virtuoso will announce the new initiative as part of the government's renewed focus on boosting US visitor numbers to Australia, which are growing at a faster rate than those from China.

Virtuoso chief executive **Matthew Upchurch** said an 'Aussie expert' would be installed in every Virtuoso agency in the US that has 10 or more advisers. They would directly promote Australia to high-end travellers who typically spend up to \$US700 a day, excluding airfares. Mr Upchurch said the interest in Australia was being driven by a stronger US dollar and cheaper airfares as well as changing tastes by high-end travellers who want more than just a 'shrimp on the barbie' but wilderness lodges and cultural events, THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW reports.

UK-AUS Relations

Australia will want easier visas for business people seeking to work in Britain in any post-Brexit trade deal, High Commissioner to the UK **Alexander Downer** says. Treasurer **Scott Morrison** visited Britain to begin 'laying the foundations' for a bilateral free trade deal to come into force once it leaves the European Union.

The UK is Australia's fifth largest two-way trading partner. Mr Downer said a working group had been established and a 'scoping paper' provided to the British government. Business visas are a key point, as per THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.



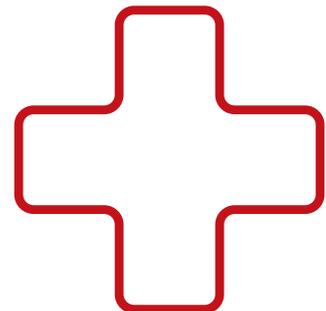
DEFENCE

ASIO Story, One for the History Books

In 2008 the head of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, **Paul O'Sullivan**, decided to initiate an official history of Australia's principal counter-espionage and counter-terrorism organisation. If O'Sullivan aimed to increase public confidence in ASIO and to educate a new generation of its staff in the troubled history of their agency, his bold step must be considered more successful than many of ASIO's operations in its first 40 years.

The Secret Cold War is the third and final volume of this official history. Like its predecessors, it tells us a great deal we did not previously know about ASIO's successes and failures, but it is certainly not the last word. The book ends by raising, but not fully answering, some important and troubling questions. Authors **John Blaxland** and **Rhys Crawley** present ASIO's story from the dismissal of the **Whitlam** government in 1975 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

In this period ASIO gradually moved away from its preoccupation with Australia's communists, recognising – very belatedly, as the authors make it clear – that the fragmentation of the communist movement into small warring factions meant they posed no threat to Australian society. The focus of the organisation shifted from subversions, which was more accurately defined as politically motivated violence, towards espionage and terrorism, reports THE AUSTRALIAN.



HEALTH

Don't Get High on Your Own Supply

Prime Minister **Turnbull** has urged doctors to apply for access to imported medical cannabis for seriously ill patients until Australian-grown versions of the drug become available. Turnbull warned patients against buying cannabis oil from unlicensed suppliers because the drug could cause them serious harm, but advocates say that accessing the drug through legal means is 'extremely difficult and extremely convoluted', as per the HERALD SUN.

Pause on Dr Imports

An oversupply of doctors is expected to emerge in Australia this year after a failed bid by the federal department of health to end the importation

of all overseas medicos. At the same time the health department has forecast a projected shortfall of about 85,000 nurses by 2025 and 123,000 by 2030, with a recommendation that nurses be retained on the national list identifying skills shortages, as reported in THE AGE.

Media Coverage Stigmatises Addicts

Australia must destigmatise illicit drug use, say submissions to a parliamentary inquiry into crystal methamphetamine. The National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University submitted that the routine portrayal of ice users as 'irrational, violent and psychotic' may contribute to stigmatisation and marginalisation and make the users more reluctant to seek or receive effective assistance.

The institute also said there was a risk some media coverage of methamphetamine use could contribute to unnecessary fear and 'inflate the scale of the 'problem'', according to THE AUSTRALIAN.

Chucking Sickies Has FWC Seeing Red

To lose one worker to illness on a given day may be regarded as misfortune, but to lose 180 across a period of weeks looks like a deliberate campaign of industrial disruption. That at least is the verdict of the Fair Work Commission which, as THE AUSTRALIAN reported, found against the CFMEU in a case brought by a company providing labour to a coalmine in Appin, NSW, which complained that almost 200 members of the militant union called in claiming to be sick – something the FWC called 'utterly implausible and fanciful'.

In handing down the judgement, FWC deputy president **Peter Sams** drew parallels with another finding against the union in Queensland, where the CFMEU was found to have orchestrated similar illegal industrial action against Lendlease in September.

Healthcare Simplifier

The **Turnbull** government will consider a plan to streamline thousands of private health insurance policies into simple gold, silver and bronze categories as early as February, amid mounting pressure to help members find a better deal, according to THE AUSTRALIAN.

PGA Laments Over Industry Review

The pharmacy lobby is calling for a boycott of the government's wide-ranging review of the industry, claiming serious conflicts of interest have compromised the independence of the supervising panel and crippled its ability to deliver untainted recommendations.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, which represents more than 5400 pharmacy owners, has raised

concerns about the panel's appointment of Deloitte as a consultant given that the firm, including senior advisor **Ian Harper**, worked with the 300-store Chemist Warehouse chain on its own submission to the review, according to THE AUSTRALIAN.

Childhood Obesity Epidemic

One in five Australian children are overweight or obese before starting school, with about 5 per cent of children aged between two and four years classified as obese. New research published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* estimates the direct public health burden attributed to early childhood obesity to be worth as much as \$17 million, as reported in THE AGE.



SPORTS

Don't Forget Your Speedos

Swimming Australia has ended its official relationship with swimwear manufacturer Speedo and has announced Italy-based manufacturer Arena as its new swimwear sponsor. Speedo, which was founded in Australia but is now a subsidiary of British company the Pentland Group and is based in Nottingham, has been the official sponsor of the national swimming team since the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and supplied suits to Australia's Olympic swimmers going back to the 1920s.

But it was the splash the Australian team made at the 1956 Games, where **Dawn Fraser**, **Murray Rose** and their teammates won every freestyle event, that turned Speedo into a global brand. Speedo will remain the official swimwear sponsor to the Australian Olympic team until at least 2028 after signing a 12-year extension last year. However, for the first time, the Australian Dolphins will wear a different brand at this year's world championships in Budapest.

The Australian Commonwealth Games Association has yet to announce a swimwear provider for the 2018 games on the Gold Coast. Speedo has signed up many of Australia's most promising teenage swimmers this year, including world junior champions **Minna Atherton** and **Clyde Lewis**, THE AUSTRALIAN reports.

Adelaide Oval – The Fortress

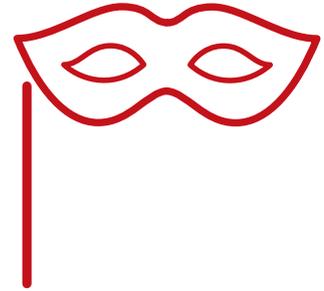
Adelaide Oval has implemented new security measures to protect patrons from vehicle attacks, after similar terror incidents overseas. Sixteen concrete blocks have been placed around the famous venue to stop vehicles getting too close to the stadium, as reported in THE AGE.

AOC Stoush

The simmering feud between the two most powerful men in Australian Olympic sport, Australian Sports Commission chairman **John Wylie** and Australian Olympic Committee president **John Coates**, has exploded after an incendiary exchange of correspondence over the holidays.

'This, is more than anything else you are proposing, impinges on the independence and autonomy of the AOC' said Mr Coates. Mr Coates also pointed to the Olympic Charter, which enshrines the autonomy of Olympic organisations, and highlighted a section that said they had 'the right of elections free from any outside influence'.

Mr Coates accused Mr Wylie of disregarding 'the independence and autonomy of sport generally' and completely rejected Mr Wylie's bid for a say in Olympic team appointments, as per THE AUSTRALIAN



SOCIETY

Gender Theory

American psychologist **Roy Baumeister** is known for ruffling feathers. One of the most highly cited psychology researchers in the world, Baumeister has recently moved from Florida State University to take up a professorship at the University of Queensland. The gender warriors should be on notice because Baumeister has a long history of using research evidence to take their arguments.

Some of his biggest successes have come from challenging current thinking in areas where the prevailing view is actually nonsensical. Like gender differences in sex drive. The researchers examined more than 150 studies and concluded

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ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC PRESBYTERY WAS ESTABLISHED IN BRAIDWOOD IN 1858 AND HAS BEEN GOING STRONG EVER SINCE. THIS IS JUST AN OUTBUILDING — THE CHURCH PROPER IS AROUND THE CORNER.

there was overwhelming evidence that men have more frequent sexual desires than women.

The findings: men think about sex more often, desire more partners, masturbate more, want sex sooner, are less able or willing to live without sexual gratification, initiate more and refuse less sex, expend more resources and make more sacrifices for sex, desire and enjoy a broader variety of sexual practices, and have fewer complaints about low sex drive.

He concluded that most people who write about gender are 'too intimidated by the feminist establishment to conduct an open-minded consideration of the relative advantages and disadvantages of both genders. The basic feminist dogma is that women are equal to or better than men at everything, and that all women's problems and failures must be blamed on men', writes **Bettina Arndt** for THE AUSTRALIAN.

Possum Stew?

Possums could soon be on the menu in South Australia if changes to the state's food code to expand the definition of game meat are approved. While goat, rabbit, hare, kangaroo and wallaby are huntable and legally edible already, South Australians could soon be buying cuts of buffalo, camel, deer, donkey, horse, pig and possum.

Tasmanian chef **Sharon Cameron**, who runs the Bracknell Hotel 30km outside Launceston, said possum was a delicacy for the adventurous. She serves possum meat chipolatas on a menu that aims to expand her customers' culinary experiences. Unorthodox meats were best served as bite-sized entrees because people would sample something new but usually would not risk an unknown main course, as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN.

Not Quite a Bon Voyage

In an extraordinary show of seamanship, French solo around-the-world sailor **Stephane Le Diraison** limped into Melbourne in his battered 18m yacht 14 days after losing his mast overboard in the far Southern Ocean. After managing to turn his 7m boom and a tiny triangle of torn sail into a makeshift jury rig, the Vendee Globe race competitor has spent the past fortnight inching his way unassisted towards the Australian coast, more than 1600km to his north.

Le Diraison was too far south in the 'Roaring 50s' when his deck supports 'exploded' at night during heavy winds, pitching his mast and main sail into the ocean, for helicopter rescue. The proud French sailor said he was disinclined to ask for help anyway, despite being distraught at having to abandon the non-stop yacht race described as the Everest of the ocean racing and the supreme test of human endurance. Le Diraison, 40, was in 10th place in the gruelling race when he was dismasted on December 17, 40 days after leaving France, as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN.

Separation of Church and State

The church headed by controversial Victorian pastor **Daniel 'Danny' Nalliah** has been stripped of its charity status — and could face a bill for back taxes — after its congregation was asked to make election donations to an anti-Islamic politician party he also leads. The Catch the Fire Ministries had its registration revoked by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission, THE AGE reports.

Right time of the year

You're never too old to learn and it may just save your life. Take my word for it. Your kids should be able to swim 25 metres confidently by the time they've turned seven. So should you. Yes, you over

18s, you should also be having regular lessons. The last time you went to a swimming lesson was when you were about 10 and that was at the local pool. You were a lot skinnier and fitter then. Now whatever skills you had in the water have drained away. I know mine have, writes **Jenna Price** for THE AGE.

Liz to Take it Easy

Queen Elizabeth will stand down as patron of 25 bodies — including the Wimbledon tennis championships and Rugby Football Union where she has been patron since 1952. Other bodies to be handed to other royals include children's charity Barnardo's, the British Cycling Federation and the Royal Geographical Society.

At the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Wimbledon, she will be replaced by Prince William's wife, Catherine. Prince Harry will take her place at the Rugby Football Union. A Buckingham Palace spokesman said the charities concerned represented less than 5 per cent of the 600 organisations of which the Queen is a patron, the HERALD SUN reports.

Republic Lacking Popular Support

While still the anthem of Britain, *God Save the Queen* ceased being Australia's in 1984, replaced by 'Advance Australia Fair'. The grand imperial tune does remain Australia's 'Royal Anthem', played at ceremonies attended by a member of the royal family. In December, it was revealed a majority of Australia's federal MPs support Australia becoming a republic. However, the proposal struggled to attract popular support in recent years, as reported in THE AGE.

Australian of the Year

Biomedical scientist **Alan Mackay-Sim**, whose research helped achieve a feat described as 'more impressive than man walking on the moon', has been named the 2017 Australian of the Year for his pioneering stem cell research.

Professor Mackay-Sim's work was central to the 2014 surgery that allowed **Darek Fidyka**, a Polish firefighter, to walk again and even ride a custom-built bicycle. This made him the first paraplegic in the world to recover mobility after the complete severing of the spinal nerves, THE AGE reports. Some Polish medical scientists have been challenging his contribution.

Dutton Supports Hijab Billboard

Immigration Minister **Peter Dutton** has praised an Australia Day billboard featuring two Muslim Australian girls in hijabs, and backed the wearing of Islamic dress in public. The billboard, promoting a government-funded Australia Day event in Melbourne, was controversially taken down after threats were made to advertising company QMS.

In another incident likely to offend Muslim Australians, Western Australian Premier **Colin Barnett** said he would encourage Muslims not to wear the burqa face covering in public because 'it's not a part of our culture', as reported in THE AGE.

Joyce Not Joyous Over Date Change Talk

Deputy Prime Minister **Barnaby Joyce** has lashed out at people who want to change the date of Australia Day, labelling them 'miserable gutted' and arguing the idea was 'political correctness gone mad'. 'This is Australia Day and if you don't like it, I don't know mate, go to work, do something else' he said, reports THE AGE.

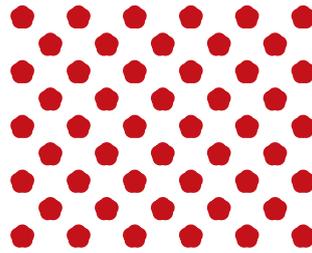
Invasion Day Protest Turns Ugly

A young woman was knocked unconscious and a police officer injured after an 'Invasion Day' protest march in Sydney turned violent after police arrested a man as protestors tried to set fire to an Australian flag. Indigenous elders who helped organised the march condemned the violence, which they said, had marred an otherwise peaceful protest, with radicals hijacking the rally.

The protest march was organised by the Fighting In Resistance Equally network, which includes a number of indigenous organisations as well as representatives from the Greens NSW, Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association, Maritime Union of Australia Sydney branch, Socialist Alliance and the National Tertiary Education Union NSW.

Fighting In Resistance Equally co-organiser **Laura Lyons** said she was 'saddened' the rally turned violent. The young man who was arrested after an Australian flag was set alight at the rally was granted bail and released from Redfern police station charged with assault police, resisting arrest and malicious damage to property. It is not illegal to burn a flag but

police can charge someone with lighting a fire in public, as reported in the HERALD SUN.



THE AMERICAN ELECTION:

Toyota Tax

Shares of Toyota Motor Corp fell more than 3 per cent after US President **Donald Trump** threatened to impose heavy taxes on the automaker if it builds its Corolla cars for the US market at a plant in Mexico, reports THE AGE.

Trump for Israeli's

US President **Donald Trump** has called on Israel to 'stay strong', amid a diplomatic spat between Israel Prime Minister and former US Secretary of State **John Kerry**, who sharply criticised Israel's settlements policy in a speech, THE AUSTRALIAN reports.

Defence Stock on the Rise

Five of the world's six biggest defence companies are based in the US. 'Defence spending is expected to rise considerably as a share of the US economy under a **Trump** presidency,' Baillieu Holst chief economist **Darryl Gobbett** said. When Mr Trump recently tweeted that the F-35 jet fighter program was costing too much, shares in Lockheed Martin slumped 4 per cent. Several global defence giants are already on a roll. Lockheed Martin's share price has climbed 15 per cent in the past year while Britain's BAE Systems is up 18 per cent, as per the HERALD SUN.

Buttigieg Puts His Hand Up for DNC Chair

The 34-year-old mayor of South Bend, Indiana – namechecked (that he is an American citizen) recently by then-President **Barack Obama** – has entered the contest for chairman of the Democratic party. Warning that beleaguered Democrats can ill afford a replay of their contentious presidential primary in the race to lead the Democratic National Committee, **Pete Buttigieg** said 'this is not a time to relitigate an old battle'.

He is the two-term mayor of a Rust Belt city, a Harvard University graduate and a Rhodes Scholar. He is also an openly gay former US naval officer who served in Afghanistan, reports THE AGE.

Trump-Russia Relations

A central promise of President **Donald Trump's** foreign policy is that he will forge a working partnership with Russia, turning an old adversary into an ally in combating terrorist networks overseas and the other global threats that bedevilled former President **Barack Obama**. Now, that vision of an enduring détente will be sorely tested as Trump comes to office amid one of the worst diplomatic crises between the two nations since the end of the Cold War, as per THE AUSTRALIAN.

LaborTrumpClash

Labor MP **Michael Danby** has ridiculed former foreign minister **Bob Carr** for saying that **Donald Trump's** election could result in Israel expanding its settlements or annexing the West Bank and destroying the prospect of a two-state solution. Sharp divisions between the former **Obama** administration and Trump have emerged after the US abstained from the UN vote demanding an end to Israeli settlements 'in the occupied Palestinian territory', as reported in THE AUSTRALIAN.

Trump Continues to Tweet

President **Trump** has taken on **Bill Clinton** in a Twitter war, after the former president questioned his intelligence. In an impromptu discussion at a bookstore in upstate New York, Mr Clinton said: 'He doesn't know much. One thing he does know is how to get angry, white men to vote for him'. Mr Clinton also said Trump called him after the election and sounded surprisingly cordial. Trump fired back on Twitter: 'Bill Clinton stated that I called him after the election. Wrong, he called me... He doesn't know much', the HERALD SUN reports.

Bastian of Democratic Values No More?

In 1941, a few months before the US entered World War II, magazine publisher **Henry Luce** called on Americans to establish 'the first great American century'. Luce believed America had to commit itself to promoting democratic internationalism. In the years that followed, as the US helped found the United Nations, joined security alliances like NATO and ANZUS, and pushed free trade agreements across the globe, Luce's dream war largely realised.

And now we stand on the cusp of a new global order, one whose contours have not yet come into sharp relief, but whose rough edges we can see. For those who believe in open societies, the portent is grim. The 21st century may yet be an American century, but if it is, it will not be as the champion of democratic internationalism as Luce had once hoped, writes **Nicole Hemmer** for THE AGE.

Trump to Save Aussie Defence Spending?

Australia could save hundreds of millions of dollars on its new F-35 Joint Strike Fighters as a result

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of US President **Donald Trump's** push to drive down the cost of the troubled program. Defence Industry Minister **Christopher Pyne** has reaffirmed Australia's strong commitment to the program and said he would welcome any reduction in cost following threats by Mr Trump to consider buying the rival Boeing fighter, the Super Hornet because of the cost overruns on the F-35 program.

Mr Trump's comments on the F-35 program, the most expensive defence project in the US, has rattled the American military establishment and forced F-35 maker Lockheed Martin to promise to cut the costs of the stealth fighter, as per *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

The Donald is Big on Environment

He lied – again. US President **Donald Trump** had car manufacturers in, giving them the rounds of the kitchen for locating their factories abroad, but assuring them he'd reduce 'out of control' environmental regulations. 'I'm a very big person when it comes to the environment' he told them. 'I've received awards on the environment'. When reporters asked for a list of the awards, the White House referred them to a book.

Instead of listing what the President had won, it listed what the author, Trump's long-time environmental consultant, thought he should of have won. The White House website that showcased the Obama administration's climate change policies disappeared into the ether, and was replaced with a statement on Trump's energy policy, which promises to reduce 'burdensome regulation on our energy industry'.

Trump has vowed to cancel the Paris global accord to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 28 per cent by 2025. He is committed to opening swathes of federal land to oil, gas and coal drilling and production. He thinks the Environmental Protection Agency should be all but neutered, as per *THE AGE*.

BHP Trump Meet Up

BHP Billiton were among the first of the world's corporate elite to meet with **Donald Trump** after the US election, with chairman **Jac Nasser** and chief executive **Andrew Mackenzie** making their way to Trump tower in New York, reports *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Protectionist Policy Threatens Aussie Gas Exports

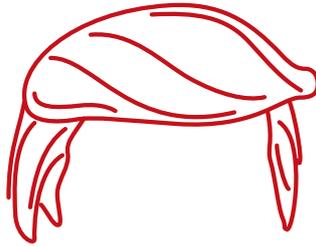
The prospect of the most petroleum-friendly US policy setting for decades has revived worries about a potential flood of natural gas exports posing a competitive threat to Australian producers in Asia, the biggest market. In the 'America First Energy Plan' posted on the White House website, the new administration pledges to 'embrace the shale oil and gas revolution' and take advantage of 'the estimated \$US50 trillion in untapped, shale, oil and natural gas reserves', according to *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW*.

Master of His Own Destiny

The contours of the **Trump** presidency have so far been defined by Trump's aggressive tweets and his much-repeated commitment to transform Washington. His Inauguration speech didn't soften that message or in any way seek to lower expectations about the degree of change possible under his leadership. 'Now arrives the hour of action' he said.

He wasted no time in issuing an executive order to start to dismantle the Obama healthcare act, although just how this will be done in practice in government is far less clear. The unpredictable nature of the Trump administration means

in security terms is most likely to be most evident in the Asia Pacific region if the new administration proceeds with the threat by the new Secretary of State, **Rex Tillerson**, to deny China's access to the islands it has created in the South China Sea, writes **Jennifer Hewett** for *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW*.



Get With The Program

I will start my first column for 2017 with a statement of the bleeding obvious: for at least the next four years – hopefully, for eight – we will be living in a world made by **Donald Trump**. I will then immediately qualify it: we will be living in a world by Trump and China's **Xi Jinping**. And also, by Germany's **Angela Merkel** and the United Kingdom's **Theresa May**. Although in Merkel's case the 'making' might be indirect.

It's no longer the case that the US economy can drive the global economy. But as we saw in 2008 it clearly is the dominant influence on global capital markets. And that means *your* investments; *your* home loan rate. Thus, whether or not the UK leaves the European Union, when it does and on what terms, is essentially irrelevant to the global economy and indeed even to use; but the dynamics of the process and even more the way capital flows and stock markets move will have a huge impact.

On the very day that Trump won, **Turnbull** rushed to ratify the Paris climate agreement, bizarrely hoping to persuade Trump to walk away from abandoning it. And right now the government is still pushing the TPP trade deal, despite the fact that one absolute post-Trump certainty we have is that it is 'dead, buried and cremated'.

We are still fighting over cutting the rate of company tax to 25 per cent, and over 10 years; actually, with precious little hope of shifting it from 30 per cent. Trump wants to take the US down to 15 per cent. Even if he doesn't get there, and he probably won't, for goodness sake, Canberra – both sides and the bureaucrats too – are living in a pre-Trump universe or a President Hillary one. In sum and in short, Canberra – and everyone else has to 'get with the reality' – whatever it turns out to be, and be prepared to get with it flexibly and fast, writes **Terry McCrann** for the *HERALD SUN*.

Tough on Immigration

America will reclaim its borders, build a wall and decide who comes into the country as part of a historic shift in US immigration policy and national security unveiled by **Donald Trump**. In a series of sweeping decisions, the new president has pledged to begin work on building a wall 'immediately' along the Mexican border and moved to crack down on the 11 million illegal immigrants in the US with tougher laws and a beefed-up border force, *THE AUSTRALIAN* reports.

Swamp-Draining 'Cute' Rhetoric

One of **Donald Trump's** advisers says the US president is no longer interested in his rallying cry 'drain the swamp'. 'I'm told he now just disclaims

that. He now says it was cute, but he doesn't want to use it anymore,' former House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** said in an interview with NPR. Mr Gingrich, a vice chairman of the transition team, also predicted there would be 'constant fighting' over Mr Trump's efforts to reduce the influence of lobbyists and Washington insiders.

Mr Trump's aides say he remains committed to his underlying swamp-draining policies, such as banning outgoing Trump transition and administration members from lobbying for five years. Mr Trump also prohibits any lobbyists from joining his transition team or administration unless they deregister, according to *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Alternative Facts

President **Donald Trump's** top spokesman and new attack dog was put to immediate work after the inauguration, savaging US mainstream media with claims it was irresponsible, reckless and was spreading false information about the President's inauguration. **Sean Spicer** previously worked in the George W Bush administration before serving as communications director for the Republican National Committee, as per *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Energy First

US President **Donald Trump** has pledged to unlock a \$66 trillion shale oil and gas revolution and boost development of low emissions coal technology for electricity. The Energy First plan was outlined as the top priority in President Trump's first action statement after being sworn into office. The statement committed Trump to scrapping the Obama government's Climate Action Plan but did not mention renewable energy or whether the US would remain in the Paris agreement, as reported in *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Big Brother Coming Down Under?

A firm credited with helping **Donald Trump** with the US presidency by using unprecedented volumes of personal data to 'determine the personality of every single adult' is contemplating an expansion into the Australian political arena. The subject of fascination, scepticism and concern in the 2016 US election, Cambridge Analytica was paid millions of dollars to create comprehensive 'psychographic' profiles of Americans based on their basic details, consumer habits, social media activity and psychological traits.

PERHAPS NEXT EDITION

One of those themes will be the need to curb union excesses and thuggish behaviour while emphasising the costs of that continuing to the economy. That's not the easy message to sell as it once was in the days when strikes over electricity, transport and even beer deliveries were relatively regular events that directly affected people's lives, as per *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW*.

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