

LETTER FROM CANBERRA

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In this Edition

Labor has won the election we look at their key policies.

China, next steps.

Ongoing logistics challenges and the impact on our competitive position and long-standing export channels.

The new Labor Ministry.

The NZ economy and the directions taken by NZ's Reserve Bank

Tasmania's investment in ehealth to improve service delivery.

Streaming vs Free to Air.

Tasmania's AFL bid.

What happened at the latest Davos World Economic Forum?

In short, Canberra News and Comments

Economy shapers

Inflation, interest rates, mortgage stress, housing, ongoing skill and staff shortages, Russia in Ukraine, disrupted trade lanes, rising energy prices, market confidence and those that thrive on volatility!



Editorial

The election has been and gone, Labor has a majority government with 77 seats. Labor won, the Coalition did not present a strong enough case to retain government.

The Nationals have a new leadership team, the Liberals have a new leadership team. They both have a long three years ahead to provide clarity and position to make people's lives better.

Prime Minister Albanese, through Quad circumstance, appointed a cabinet within a cabinet. Senior post holders were nominated to cover all portfolios and to enable the PM and new Foreign Minister Penny Wong to attend Quad in Tokyo. Minister Wong also toured the Pacific immediately, in an effort that may have thwarted a Chinese regional agreement.

China's politicking goes on. An improvement in this important relationship is mandatory and it arguably should have been front and centre through the election campaign.

Labour factional politics has kicked in. Labor Left has 14 of the 30 cabinet positrons, Labor Right has 16 post holders. We detail the full ministry list in this Letter from Canberra.

There is little point yet determining opposition direction. Can the "Teals Party" deliver, how much influence will the Greens have in a Senate where they hold the balance of power? Where does the Coalition go? Across the board, many do not care!





China electorate reaction

Electorates with large numbers of voters of Chinese heritage turned against the Coalition on election day, in a sign the Liberal Party's anti-China policies cost it dearly at the election.

Nine of the 10 electorates with the largest Mandarin-speaking populations recorded swings against the Liberal Party that were above the statewide average.

Australia's much more frail relationship with China was a talking point during the election campaign that shaped votes.

Many Chinese Australians, many Australian exporters hope the new government will improve Australia-China relations and increase trade between the two nations.

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Likely the majority government win was the best outcome (red or blue). How we develop socially and economically over this period is critical.

Resilience in the economy saw it overcome widespread flooding, the Omicron variant and supply chain disruptions to grow by 0.8 per cent over in the first three months of the year and, 3.3 per cent annually.

Rising interest rates and falling real incomes pose a problem, as does increases in cost of goods sold and the cost of doing business. The economy is stronger than most but it continues to rely heavily on the export of commodities. Ongoing logistics disruptions are now presenting real risk on long standing export channels and multiple competitive positions.

Covid-19 is still here. We keep hearing about the health system, the inability to visit our GPs when we are sick. The number of people abandoning emergency medical care before they have even been seen has doubled in Victoria in the past year. Doctors warn there could be serious consequences. When does this lunacy end and what is the real cost of broken trust with the health system?

Governments must work hard to deliver a better place to live compared to how they find it at the start of their term. We are at that point now, the electorate will judge both the new government and an effective opposition. The loss of primary vote numbers would suggest that both sides of the political spectrum failed during the last term.

One side just failed a little less!

Hans van Pelt



TAS AFL bid

Tasmania has submitted a \$150 million plan to land the AFL's 19th license. The proposal would see a team based in Hobart, joining the league by 2028 and as early as 2026. Included is a 10-year, \$100 million commitment plus \$50 million in start-up costs.

That would include a highperformance facility close to Hobart's CBD. A new 27,000seat stadium with a retractable roof, was proposed in March. Development plans for Launceston's University of Tasmania stadium are also in the mix.

Talks are still ongoing between the Tasmanian government and the AFL about the yearly financial commitment required, with Caroline Wilson reporting this week the league was after \$20 million a year.

The new Tassie proposal of \$10 million a year over a decade sits within the proposed amount in Colin Carter's 2021 expansion report, which estimated the state government would contribute \$7 million to \$11 million a year.

Big decisions for the AFL later this year.





Key Labor Policies

Labor have made pledges to deliver on several issues. Here is where they stand on the major ones.

Aged Care - Labor's aged care policy promises to have a registered nurse on site at all times of the day.. Labor will require staff to spend at least three hours and 35 minutes with each resident, in line with the aged care royal commission's recommendation. The government has said it would deliver more staff to the sector and that it would support a push for an increase to aged care workers' wages and that it will fully fund any increase.

Anti-Corruption Commission - Labor says it will create a National Anti-Corruption Commission by the end of 2022. The government has stated that the agency would cover alleged corruption by politicians and public servants. The intent for the new commission would be for it to have the power to start its own investigations and not wait for a matters to be referred to it.

Climate Change - Labor has committed to net zero emissions by 2050 and a 2030 target of 43%. Labor's plan include investment investing in green metal production, metals produced using renewable energy. Labor has committed to making electric cars cheaper, upgrading the electricity grid to allow it to handle more renewable energy and installing community batteries and solar banks around the country.

Defence - The new government and the former government have similar policies on Defence spending. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said a Labor government will not let Defence spending fall below the Coalition's target of 2% of GDP. The new government is expected to detail Defence spending in its upcoming Budget statement. Labor also promised an independent "Defence Posture Review" into Australia's military resources and strategy.





Stream vs Free to Air

I have been pondering this for a while. In a family of three we are subscribed to...I don't know how many streaming services. As I settled onto my Launceston couch last night to watch Series 2 of Tehran on Apple TV I asked myself the question when was the last time I watched anything on free to air?

We tried the Good Doctor for one episode this year, but the ads and interruptions! We streamed!

Free to air nightly news bulletins audience numbers are dropping, Seven's 6pm news dropping 15% and Nine's slipping 17% over the past decade. Ten's 5pm bulletin plummeted 49% over the same period, and the ABC's 7pm bulletin lost 24%. Overall OzTAM figures aren't any better for major shows, like Nine's Married At First Sight, and Seven's The Voice.

Free-to-air providers in 2022 should balance shifting audience appeal across linear and digital channels, the strategies of advertisers and their exclusivity around sporting events and large community interest segments.

Survival time?

Key Labor Policies, continued:

Childcare - Labor promised more generous subsidies pretty much across the board, including a maximum subsidy rate to cap childcare at 90% for the first child in care. Labor's long-term goal is to provide a universal, 90% subsidy to all families. The government has also committed that the family income threshold for childcare subsidies would be lifted to \$530,000 with no annual cap.

Education - Labor promised to create 20,000 new university places in sectors where there are current skills shortages. The government has promised to offer more enrolments for students from regional and remote areas, First Nations students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Labor's committed to cover the cost of 465,000 TAFE spots over the next four years, include 45,000 new places. Labor also promised to fund 10,000 new apprenticeships for people training in renewables energy jobs.

Health - Labor promised to reduce the cost of medicines by \$12.50 to a maximum cost of \$30. Labor promised to fund 50 "urgent care clinics" which it says will take the pressure off hospital emergency departments. The centres will be based at GP surgeries and centres and they will be open seven days a week from 8am to 10pm. The new government also promised to match the Coalition's continuous glucose monitoring device and Seniors Health Card expansion promises. Much more will be required around the country to present a much better health system in every State.

Infrastructure - Labor looks set to proceed with most Coalition infrastructure projects that are underway. Labor's election costings list \$367.2 million in new spending for "Infrastructure Projects" but it pledges far exceed that. For example, Labor promised to put \$500 million in its first budget for high-speed rail on the east coast and spend \$2.2 billion on the Victorian government's suburban rail loop project.

Housing - Labor's main housing policy was a new "shared-equity"scheme, that would see it acquire up to 40% of a property with the owner. That percentage of the property could then be bought off the government by the home owner over time. Labor committed to creating a regional housing scheme with 10,000 places a year and Labor said it would match the Coalition's proposal to lower the age at which people can put money from selling their house into super to incentivise people downsizing.





TALE OF TWO SHADOWS

What a difference over an election campaign! Dubbed one of the 'mean girls' Katy Gallagher, former ACT Chief Minister, is now the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Women and the Minister for the Public Service. Minister Gallagher is arguably also one of the 'cabinet within a cabinet' members, having been appointed immediately after the election outcome to enable new PM Albanese and other 'mean girl' Penny Wong (now Foreign Minister) to travel to Japan for scheduled Quad meetings.

There was a third 'mean girl' Kristina Keneally, who has blamed long coronavirus lockdowns in the south-west Sydney seat of Fowler for her spectacular Federal election loss. Keneally, who has lost every Federal election attempted conceded defeat to independent Dai Le, who claimed the electorate from Labor for the first time since its creation in 1984.

Ms Keneally suffered a massive swing of 18.6 per cent against Labor in Fowler, amazing given the overall result in the election. Factional politics aside we can only hope that this is the end of this 'mean girl' in Australia's political life. Hopefully her media career will not be reactivated.

NZ's Economy and Central Bank

Traditionally the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) is a central bank like many others. Led by bureaucrats, speaking the language of finance, and singularly focused on pursuing its single objective: price stability.



All that changed when New Zealand elected a new government in 2017. It tasked the RBNZ with managing house prices and it requested the RBNZ to deliver maximum sustainable employment.

The RBNZ published its own climate change strategy. It told the government about its expectations for infrastructure investment. Not exactly what a conventional central bank would do. How is it working?

Economists will say that central banks cannot choose between inflation and unemployment (at least not in the long run). The wide consensus globally is that central banks should target inflation. The RBNZ had a government employment target, which has made the RBNZ favour stimulus. During Covid the RBNZ adopted one of the most aggressive programs of quantitative easing (money printing) anywhere in the world.

The NZ inflation rate has jumped to 6.9%. It may have been higher had fuel prices not had a temporary fuel levy cut.

As the RBNZ lifts its cash rate to manage inflation it will realise large losses on the assets it purchased with its quantitative easing program. But, the RBNZ has been indemnified against losses (currently more than \$NZ 8.3bn).

The indemnity protects the RBNZ from being in negative equity, estimated at 6% of it's balance sheet. That means taxpayers must now pay for these losses.

NZ has a monetary challenge. Inflationary pressures are being exacerbated by the government's continued increase in expenditures, as shown in last week's NZ Budget. The RBNZ has to maintain price stability and control inflation while also counteracting the government's fiscal stimulus.

Can the RBNZ protect NZ from quick rising inflation? Does it have the right focus, the right intent to protect against the risk of mortgage stress and recessionary pressure to maintain a needed economic and social recovery post pandemic?

The next election in NZ looks likely to be late 2023.



Lets talk Dayos



Last week Davos saw its first inperson

since 2020, in a changed world now dealing with new and the same old challenges.

The Davos World Economic Forum in 2022 was themed "History at a turning point: Government, policies, and business strategies." Many industries have seen dramatic shifts in the last few years, with many suggesting we need even more change coming down the pike to create a sustainable, inclusive future.

The big Davos issues were:

Global cooperation. Amid the war in Ukraine, leaders are looking for ways to remove tensions and help where it's most needed. They asked if globalisation was changing?

Climate Change. Everyone's looking for ways to understand the net-zero transition and protect the planet.

Inflation, the supply chain, and operations. Inflation's rise is an issue, as is minimisation of the impact of ongoing logistics challenges.

Youth and the future. Davos 22 included panel discussions that tackled youth mistrust, growing up in the pandemic, and young people's perspectives on global issues.

A quote from Davos, published by McKinsey, "the energy transition is at a critical inflection point. Are we for real? Will we pull back?"

Get ready for the next supply chain shockwave

Cargo backlogs in Shanghai a precursor to global port congestion as COVID logistics impacts drag on.

Concern is growing that the spread of COVID cases and city lockdowns in China will have massive downstream effects for global supply chains that could dwarf previous disruptions since the start of the pandemic.

Last May, the huge Yantian container terminal at the Port of Shenzhen throttled down to 30% of normal productivity for a month to stamp out a handful of positive cases there. Hundreds of thousands of shipments that couldn't enter the port accumulated in factories and warehouses, and many vessels skipped the port to avoid waiting seven days or more at anchor. It took weeks after the port reopened to clear the cargo backlog. The effects cascaded to the U.S. and Europe, resulting in port traffic jams, transit times triple the norm and missed retail deliveries for the holidays.

The difference this time is that an entire city – and highly interconnected global trade centre – has essentially been shut down. Freight is piling up.

Ocean networks are under severe pressure due to disrupted operations in Asian and European ports. Vessels are incurring delays in North Europe, which affect the schedule back to Asia Pacific. Missed sailings, freight being taken to different destination ports continues to be the norm.

New, further increasing freight rates are hitting the market as we produce this Letter from Canberra. Affairs of State is engaged to help companies in Tasmania manage the impact from ongoing logistics challenges.

Cotton harvest in Australia is underway, leading to strong capacity demand to South East Asia. Shipments to the Americas are strong and 40' reefer and 20' dry export containers continue to be in short supply for Australian shippers.

Long standing advice to forward plan, to consolidate, aggregate and maximise utilisation of existing capacity remains as valid as ever, particularly as prices continue to increase and the passing on of costs to customers down the supply chain is becoming harder and harder.

Are export sectors and channels now at long term risk?



28 Days to Go

You have been working so hard, so don't miss out on Tax Deductions you're eligible for.

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To keep businesses on the move, the Government budgets have recently and since 6 October 2020 provided the SME sector with a number of financial business incentives to support growth and expansion.

Inducements such as 100% Depreciation Allowance for new & used business equipment, including vehicles used for business purposes, which are purchased and installed by June 2021, June this year and next.

To achieve maximum advantage from this business inducement package as well as historical low interest rates, your business needs to work with professionals to ensure the best solution.

SME Finance Group are recommending their clients have their finance approved and ready for opportunities, if they are considering purchasing with a settlement this Financial Year, pre-June 30.

Government links:

Depreciation and capital expenses and allowances

Loss carry back tax offset

Maximise your Tax Deductions this Financial Year by contacting

Michael Pratt - Harry Walker - Ken McLean - Michael Johns

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New Head of the Public Service

Anthony Albanese has named Glyn Davis as secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Mr Albanese said the former academic academic had "a deep understanding of public policy and will work with my government in bringing about positive change for the Australian people".

Delivering last year's Jim Carlton Integrity Lecture at Melbourne University Mr Davis targeted former PM Morrison for rejecting key recommendations of an inquiry into the public service to halt departmental restructures, strengthen the independence of senior public servants and "bring accountability" to ministerial advisers.

Professor Davis has been a mentor to leading Labor figures including Treasurer Jim Chalmers, to whom he gave his first job in 1999 while directorgeneral of the QLD Department of Premier and Cabinet.

CEO of the Group of Eight universities Vicki Thomson, who has long worked with Professor Davis, said his appointment "augurs well for the future of the government and for public policy, in which he has deep expertise".



Canberra news and comments in short

- * With regard to Teal candidate success. The Liberals said they were 'Securing the Recovery'. That meant nothing to many of the voters in the now-teal seats. They had nothing to recover from! As professionals and public servants many of them were to a large extent unaffected by the lockdowns. They worked from home might still be working from home their wages likely went up!
- * Energy Minister Chris Bowen insists voters have given Labor a mandate to deliver its climate plan without negotiating an end to coal and gas. He said he deliberately designed the Powering Australia climate policies to be implemented without requiring new legislation, therefore bypassing the Senate where the Greens hold the balance of power.
- * Pauline Hanson looks likely to see off Legalise Cannabis Australia's challenge for her Queensland senate seat.
- * A Liberal Party review of the election will examine the loss of blue-ribbon seats to independents and the late pre-selection of candidates. To save time; it is obvious why the Liberals lost. A tired message, a mistrusted PM, lack of effective policies, positions and vision. Being a three-term government, asking for another three years in office without real conviction. Barring another "miracle" the Liberals were always going to lose, exactly what the polls had been showing for at least the last two years.
- * Labor frontbencher Tanya Plibersek apologised for comparing presumptive Liberal leader Peter Dutton to Voldemort. It was an interesting interlude, especially now that we can ask what happened to Tanya's position inside Labor? Very quiet during the campaign a further surprise has come with the loss of the high profile Eduction portfolio in the new Cabinet structure.
- * Nuclear energy is something we should be talking about. It should be part of an Australian strategy for energy self-sufficiency. Notably, Finland's Green Party has just adopted a fully pro-nuclear stance! Had the Coalition adopted the same policy, the party could have had a substantial response to the teal independents' demand for climate action.
- * express.co.uk reports Australia has moved a step closer to ditching the Queen as head of state with the creation of an "assistant minister for the republic". Anthony Albanese, Australia's prime minister and long-time republican, announced the creation of the role on Tuesday just two days before celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee begin. The post will be taken up by Sydney MP Matt Thistlethwaite. This one is under the radar, in our opinion. What does it mean, and when?

Global Recession?

Is a global recession likely in the next two years?

Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong recently said: "Global growth will be weaker, and there may be a recession within the next two years."

With three of the world's largest economies slowing down at the same time, the risks of a global recession have risen, say analysts.

With inflation at record levels in the euro zone and 40-year high in the US, both are staring at the undesirable option of risking a renewed recession by raising the cost of borrowing to counteract soaring prices.

Inflation may be less dramatic than a stock market crash, it can be more devastating to your portfolio.

Some of the best stocks to own during inflation would be in companies that can increase their prices naturally during inflationary periods.. Products like oil, grains, and metals enjoy pricing power during periods of inflation.



An outlook...our economy

Jim Chalmers and Katy Gallagher have started their new roles as the managers of Australia's \$626b forecasted, FY23 government spend budget (the number detailed in the Frydenberg Budget).

Was the last Budget reflective of a changing economy and world? The budget forecast growth in Australia would be 4.75%; interestingly, exactly the same in China, our most important economic 'partner'; 3.5 per cent in the US; and the same in Europe.

Australia needs to trade with the world to generate the wealth we need to grow, a world with many risks. The Ukraine war is driving fuel prices higher. That brings more inflationary pressure, already on the rise from disruption to global supply chains, stemming from two years of pandemic-induced lockdowns and changes in people's spending patterns. China's slowdown is impacting key commodity markets important to Australia, adding a growing source of risk over the past couple of months as major Chinese cities ease out of lockdown.

An increase in cost of living and the likelihood of a series of interest rate hikes to offset inflation forecasts grey skies ahead. We do have resilience; record low unemployment, less inflation pressure compared to key nations and strong terms-of-trade. However, we need the global economy to stay on track for growth to ensure there remains strong demand for the products Australia sells to the world. We also need to get products to export markets effectively, retaining our competitive positions.

Even with an annual inflation rate to 5.1% there remains many reasons for optimism about the economic outlook. Prices for key commodities remain high and our exports have increased which have direct benefits to the economy. The increase in key export commodities boosts Australia's income and growth. GDP is expected to grow by 4.25% in 2021-22 and by 3.5% in 2022-23 in real terms (inflation-adjusted), according to ABS data.

Our economy remains resilient and has performed well compared to most other developed countries. Strong labour market and less extreme levels of inflation have put Australia in a good position from a monetary policy point of view. The full re-opening of the economy and international borders could be a positive catalyst for Australia, as migrant inflows could accelerate working-age population growth and increase domestic demand.







Skilled Migration

The Albanese government must prioritise attracting skilled and unskilled workers to Australia or risk acute labour shortages further curtailing the economic recovery, banking leaders say.

A lack of workers across almost all sectors is forcing labour costs higher, resulting in a business reporting increased turnover without positive impact on the bottom line.

NAB chief executive Ross McEwan pointed to pressures created by negative migration last year and 400,000 job vacancies, the highest level on record.

"Restoring migration is critical to easing labour and skills shortages as well as contributing to economic growth," Mr McEwan told attendees, highlighting that NAB had 700 technology vacancies alone.

Business leaders around the country are well aware of the difficulty to attract new staff and the difficulty and cost to retain key employees that impact heavily when they secure moves to other opportunities.

Skilled migration must increase.

The new Labor Cabinet

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has unveiled his front-bench and Cabinet after Labor secured a majority government.

- * Anthony Albanese Prime Minister
- + Jim Chalmers Treasurer
- + Penny Wong Foreign Affairs Minister
- * Richard Marles Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister
- * Mark Dreyfus Attorney-General, Cabinet Secretary
- Katy Gallagher Finance, Public Service and Women Minister
- *Clare O'Neil Home Affairs Minister, Cyber Security Minister
- Don Farrell Trade and Tourism Minister, Special Minister of State
- Tony Burke Employment and Workplace Relations Minister, Arts Minister
- Mark Butler Health and Aged Care Minister
- * *Jason Clare Education Minister
- * *Murray Watt Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Emergency Management Minister
- * *Tanya Plibersek Environment and Water Minister
- + Chris Bowen Climate Change and Energy Minister
- * *Amanda Rishworth Social Services Minister
- * *Julie Collins Housing, Homelessness and Small Business Minister
- + Catherine King Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Minister
- Linda Burney Minister for Indigenous Australians
- Bill Shorten Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Government Services Minister
- Brendan O'Connor Skills and Training Minister
- + Michelle Rowland Communications Minister
- Madeleine King Resources Minister, Minister for Northern Australia
- * Ed Husic Industry and Science Minister
- * indicates a change from shadow ministry portfolios





The Outer Ministry

In addition to the Cabinet, Labor under PM Albanese has the folding Outer Ministry:

Matt Keogh - Veterans' Affairs Minister, Minister for Defence Personnel

Pat Conroy - Defence Industry Minister, Minister for International Development and the Pacific

Stephen Jones - Assistant Treasurer, Financial Services Minister

Andrew Giles - Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Minister

Anne Aly - Early Childhood Education Minister, Youth Minister

Anika Wells - Aged Care Minister, Sport Minister

Kristy McBain - Regional Development, Local Government and Territories Minister

Thank you for reading

Reach out for a chat, the coffee is on us in Melbourne, Canberra or Tasmania.

Lets take care of each other,

Hans, Michael and Alistair



Tasmanian Digital Health Strategy

In the days leading up to the Tasmanian State Budget the Department of Health released Tasmania's Digital Health Transformation - Improving Patient Outcomes strategy.

This comes with a significant investment of \$476 million to be allocated over the next 10 years. Noting Tasmania's population and the desire to be the first Australian State to deliver a fully integrated health care system this will be a step change from the traditional health infrastructure investment.

As we have heard from other states; ageing population, increases in chronic disease management and workforce challenges are all impacting on health delivery with the problems to grow over the next 20 years.

In reviewing the Tasmanian strategy there is notable similarity to the ACT Digital Health Strategy 2019-2029. The Tasmanian approach factors an early investment in access to patient clinical information; leverage of the state based eReferral application and support to First Responders.

The Tasmanian digital health investment involves a strategic angle prioritising a patient centred approach, to be integrated from the outset with a focus on proven solutions. It has stepped back from the traditional hospital driven approach to drive investment for future solutions with future health requirements.

For next time

Two small energy retailers are urging their customers to switch to other retailers without delay to lock in better deals in the face of 'incredible' volatility in the energy market.

ReAmped Energy, which has managed to attract 70,000 customers since launching in Australia in 2019, has encouraged customers to switch to retailers "ASAP" while there were still good deals available.

The company said it had no choice but to double its prices for customers in the face of skyrocketing wholesale energy costs.

We all need to keep an eye on this!

Affairs of State, contact us
Hans: hans@affairs.com.au
Michael: michael@affairs.com.au



