

LETTER FROM MELBOURNE

Saving you time. A monthly newsletter distilling public policy and government decisions which affect business opportunities in Victoria and beyond.

Issue 166 Another Winter Edition

28 June to 2 August 2011



PLUS: Latest Roy Morgan findings on Unemployment, Media Channel Importance and the Reactor - Pages 13 - 16

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Some planning approvals

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

Written for the regular traveller, or people with meeting-filled days, you only have to miss reading *The Age* or *The Herald Sun* twice a week to need *Letter from Melbourne*. It's more about business opportunities (or lack of them) than politics. It's not Crikey.com. We keep words to a minimum.

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

For context. It includes events and people and society, and the weather if that is important.

Letter from Melbourne developed a federal and national coverage. This spawned *Letter from Canberra* (www.letterfromcanberra.com.au) four years ago.

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

You can read it on a flight from Melbourne once a month, or with a good cup of coffee.

Edited words in this edition: 17,923

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EDITORIAL

Government heads down. Less media in Victorian government.

As the editor looked through the 18,000 words of this edition, a few more words than in recent editions and following our normal methodology of summarising the massive amount of print media, not many items stood out as being 'big' or controversial. Perhaps, this is because the Victorian parliament has not been sitting since the last edition. Signals of more important planning changes are on the horizon.

The feature items in the Melbourne papers have been the launch of the nationally-oriented carbon tax details/ legislation, and the international media/privacy/Murdoch coverage.

The slow Victorian newsfront probably explains why Christine Nixon has had such extensive coverage, with massive print/other media and photo coverage in metropolitan and national papers.

Melbourne remains bloody cold. The editor had a few days in Darwin. Not a bad place to do business, certainly at this time of the year. Last chances for you to join the editor in Manchester in early October, to find out how the other side of the world debates public policy and government.

Watch out. Bike City Melbourne. Cadel. People in yellow singlets. Keep your dog on a short lead. Look out Copenhagen. The debate rages as to whether all bike riders need wear helmets. Maybe everyone should.

STOP PRESS: Victorian Human Rights Commission off to Canberra.

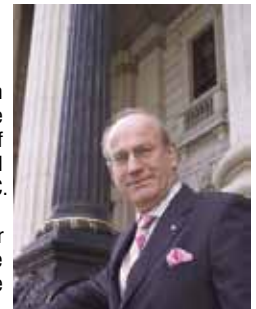
ABOUT THE EDITOR

ALISTAIR URQUHART

Alistair Urquhart graduated from the Australian National University in Canberra, in Law, History and Politics, was admitted as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria, and remains a (non-practicing) member of the Law Institute of Victoria. Before that, he graduated from high school in Bethesda, Maryland, and had many opportunities to become aware of the workings of Washington DC.

For 30 years, he listened every Sunday evening to the late Alistair Cooke and his *Letter From America*. His 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.

His public affairs firm works with many engineering and information technology firms, other professional association and industry groups, on a wide range of issues, in Victoria, Canberra and overseas. Urquhart visits Canberra regularly. He may hold the record for miles rowed on Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin.



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STATE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Human rights charter

The Age reported that the Victorian Human Rights Commissioner **Helen Szoke** called for the state's human rights charter to be expanded, despite the Coalition strongly criticising it while in opposition. The review committee is led by upper house Liberal MP **Edward O'Donohue**. He previously labeled the charter 'undemocratic' in 2007 while future Premier **Ted Baillieu** and future Attorney-General **Robert Clark** strongly criticised it when it was introduced the previous year. *The Age* later reported that leaked government documents have given the strongest indication yet that the human rights charter will be retained - possibly with only minor reforms - when the Coalition makes a decision on its fate later this year. That news came despite some Liberal MPs maintaining that it is ill-conceived, undemocratic, or a waste of money. The Liberal MP heading the parliamentary inquiry, **Ed O'Donohue**, had also been a vocal critic, once describing it as 'nebulous, ill-defined and undemocratic'. O'Donohue rejected suggestions that the committee - which is made up of four Coalition MPs and three Labor MPs - had a predetermined outcome on the charter's future.

No fair

The Financial Review reported that Queensland Premier **Anna Bligh** demanded the Gillard government give her state a better deal on the carbon tax, saying Queenslanders won't 'sit by' while Victorian power generators win all the compensation. As Bligh stepped up the pressure, Victorian Premier **Ted Baillieu** was on the attack, claiming the carbon plan would cost the state's hospitals about \$13.5 million a year in extra energy bills, rising to more than \$20 million by 2020.

Hindsight is tinted green

The Age reported that the Victorian Labor Party would rethink doing preference deals with the Greens in the future, after a review

of the **Brumby** government election defeat questioned their value. Seven months after **Ted Baillieu** won government, an internal review cast fresh light on what went wrong in Labor's campaign. Headed by federal MP **Alan Griffin**, the review looks at a range of issues, such as marginal suburban electorates Labor neglected, the party's campaign strategies, and problems in electorates on the Frankston railway line where several seats were lost.

What's in the box?

The Age state political editor **Josh Gordon** wrote that premier **Ted Baillieu** isn't opposed to the idea of a carbon tax. 'On the contrary, he just doesn't agree with the model presented by the Gillard government. In opposition, he went to pains to differentiate himself from interstate Liberal colleagues, backing the science of climate change and **Kevin Rudd's** now-defunct emissions trading scheme, and signing up to legislation introduced by the Brumby government aspiring to cut Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions 20 per cent by 2020.'

Watermelons

The Herald Sun reported that some Victorian politicians had branded the Greens a party of radical communists or 'watermelons'. The term is used to describe something that is green on the outside and 'red' on the inside. As of July, the Greens hold the balance of power in the Senate, allowing them to make or break some reform laws if the main parties don't agree. In federal parliament, Melbourne Ports Labor MP **Michael Danby** warned the 'watermelon' faction of the Greens that it must reject extremism. Victorian Liberal senator **Helen Kroger**, also speaking in Parliament, went a step further. 'There's a stale smell wafting at the Senate doors - it's called radical communism'.

Fundraising breach

The Age reported that a Liberal Party fund raising group breached federal electoral laws by failing to declare donations to candidates in the lead-up to last year's state election. Business First, based in Melbourne's southern suburbs, raised money for Liberal

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candidates in a group of bayside seats. *The Age* said the group involving former Liberal MP **Geoff Leigh**, operated beyond the reach of Australian electoral law, public scrutiny and, it seems, Liberal Party discipline. Related to this, *The Age* reported that planning minister **Matthew Guy** attended a \$75-a-head function at Parliament House in May. Premier **Baillieu** said that a code of conduct was to be drafted and released by the end of the year to give ministers and staff clear rules around fund raising, gifts and hospitality. After days of inquiries by *The Age*, the Liberal Party lodged its first disclosures for Business First with the Australian Electoral Commission for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.

Funds running dry

The Age reported that the Victorian branch of the Liberal Party has not received hundreds of thousands of dollars because Premier **Baillieu** has not delivered a long-awaited code of conduct for ministerial fund raising. *The Age* claimed that state ministers have raised virtually no money since the Coalition was elected in November, with the burden falling entirely on increasingly frustrated federal Liberal MPs from Victoria.

Brumby's advertising bolt

The Age reported that the Brumby government spent more than \$100 million on advertising in the financial year leading up to the 2010 election. Figures show Labor spent more taxpayer dollars selling its water plans and promoting public education than it did on bushfire awareness and the Quit smoking campaign in 2009-10. The report on the Brumby government's advertising - obtained by *The Age* under freedom of information - found campaign advertising increased by almost 15 per cent to \$100.8 million. Overall advertising on campaigns, government tenders and recruitment jumped from \$114.6 million in 2008-09 to \$124.3 million, sparking accusations from the Baillieu government that Labor had abused taxpayer

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funds for self-promotion when in power.

An also ran

The Age reported that South Australian education minister **Jay Weatherill**, a lawyer, has been lined up by Labor power brokers to replace the deposed **Mike Rann** as premier. As of 1 August, it is unclear when the leadership transition will occur.

ARTS

Old Melbourne on display

The Age noted the opening of an exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria at Federation Square. This Wondrous Land: Colonial Art on Paper, 'Part Two' is running concurrently with 'Part One' at NGV International in St Kilda Road, which shows art from early settlement in New South Wales and Tasmania. The National Gallery of Victoria prints and drawings curator **Alisa Bunbury** said that light sensitivity limits the gallery's ability to display works on paper but these works are being shown to mark the NGV's 150th anniversary.

Report hits a sad note

The Age reported that the future of **Orchestra Victoria** is in doubt, according to a study by the national funding body, the Australia Council. Melbourne's major opera and ballet orchestra had an operating loss last year of \$605,000. It struck a deal with the musicians to shrink the number of players by about 10 (from 69) and to halve their instrument allowances in 2011, saving an estimated \$350,000. The confidential study by the Anzarts Institute suggested that the best chance would be for OV to merge with the Australian Ballet and remove what it describes as restrictive work practices. This would involve the abolition of full-time players and allowances, with only a core ensemble of leading musicians. The study was prepared for the federal, Victorian and New South Wales governments after they

ruled out increased grants to any of the major performing arts companies, including Orchestra Victoria and its Sydney counterpart, the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra. Opera Australia last year wrote off a \$5.5 million debt from the AOBO, which continues to lose about \$800,000 a year.

ENVIRONMENT

CONSERVATION

Ambitious target

The Australian reported that the Victorian government came under pressure to explain how it would deliver a 20 per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions, after the state adopted Australia's most ambitious climate change legislation without introducing new policies to meet it.

Under your feet

The Age reported that a south-western Victorian community objected to a mining company's proposal to search for brown coal over 500 square kilometres that includes the town of Deans Marsh. In the latest bid to develop a Victorian brown coal export industry, Mantle Mining applied to the state government for an exploratory licence for a region near the Otway Ranges, centred about 50 kilometres west of Geelong and 10 kilometres from the Great Ocean Road. If granted, the licence would allow the company to explore coal reserves beneath private land. Land owners could negotiate for compensation for any property damage. A separate commercial licence would be needed before a mine was developed. Stop the press. This proposal is evidently not going ahead.

Playing possum

The Age reported that logging began in native forest north-east of Melbourne. Environmentalists allege that this particular forest is home to the endangered Leadbeater's possum. VicForests, the Victorian government's commercial forestry arm, began logging 19 hectares of forest at Sylvia Creek Road in the Toolangi State Forest. The Department of Sustainability and Environment has been 'rechecking' the logging coupe, following protests by anti-logging groups, to see that it is not home to the Leadbeater's possum. The small marsupial is endemic to Victoria's central highlands, and is believed to number fewer than 1,000. Surveys of the coupe by the department and VicForests found no Leadbeater's possum habitat or old-growth mountain ash forest, but VicForests will leave alone an extra three hectares as a 'habitat island' in answer to 'concerns raised by conservationists'. On 26 June, *The Age* reported that conservationists had entered the area and forced work to halt.

Sea change

The *Herald Sun* reported that a fire destroyed part of the **Jirrahlinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary** at Barwon Heads. Two baby koalas and four adults, rescued and in rehabilitation after road trauma or illness, died as a result. The shelter's founder, **Tehree Gordon**, rescued her first koala 52 years ago.

Possum pill

The brushtail possum population in Carlton North's Curtain Square is held responsible for damaging the area's trees. The *Herald Sun* reported that Yarra Council plans a two-year hormone implant trial to stop possums breeding in the square. Greens Mayor **Alison Clarke** said the square's trees were in poor condition because of possum numbers, but culling was not the answer. 'We could potentially cull the possums, but that would mean a lot of people would be very upset. We don't want to just kill all the possums. We want to have wildlife in the city and we have to learn to co-exist with it.'



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VECCI appoints new Chief Executive

Earlier this year VECCI President Peter McMullin announced the appointment of Mark Stone as the new VECCI Chief Executive: “Mr Stone is an experienced and successful Chief Executive who has specialised in public sector management as well as collaborative private sector and business engagement – he will be a great asset to VECCI and will continue the development and transformation of the organisation achieved by our outgoing Chief Executive Wayne Kayler-Thomson. I congratulate Wayne on a first-class job as CEO – he has taken the organisation forward a long way. The organisation is on the right path and Mr Stone will continue this journey.”

Until this appointment Mr Stone was Chief Executive of Tourism Victoria and was previously Chief Executive of Parks Victoria. He is enthused by the opportunity to lead Victoria’s most influential business organisation and to contribute to Victoria’s future as a great state for business investment and development. “In succeeding Wayne, I am well aware and appreciative of the fact that I have the opportunity to lead an organisation which is in great shape, and I am excited by the challenge to further develop its strength and performance,” Mr Stone said.

Outgoing Chief Executive Wayne Kayler-Thomson said that he was delighted with Mr Stone’s appointment and looked forward working with VECCI in the future. “The Chamber is providing excellent services to its members, customers and clients and is developing and advocating good public policy for Victoria. It has been immensely rewarding to have had the opportunity to contribute to its continued success,” Mr Kayler-Thomson said.

Mr Stone took up the role in mid-June. On 1 July, Mr Kayler-Thomson took up his new role as Chief Executive of the Australian Chamber Alliance Pty Ltd – a joint venture company owned by Australia’s State and Territory Chambers of Commerce and Industry - as well as pursuing other interests.



Mark Stone, the new Chief Executive of VECCI

Small Businesses Neglected in Carbon Tax Announcement

While a minority of small businesses, particularly in the green technology sector, will benefit, the Federal Government’s carbon price announcement will leave a sour taste in the mouths of most Victorian small businesses.

While we now know the carbon price and the exemptions, Victoria’s 500,000 small businesses were effectively ignored in Prime Minister Gillard’s announcement. Most households and some large businesses will receive compensation but small business will not receive anything meaningful and will have to absorb flow-through power costs. Small business risks being left as ‘the forgotten sector’, while already operating on low margins in the wake of soft consumer sentiment, interest rate rises and a high Australian dollar.

The Government has also drip-fed announcements through the media without talking to the small business sector, leaving small businesses to work it out for themselves.

There has been little modelling of the impacts on small business – the sector that employs the bulk of Victorians. Victorian State Government modelling shows a cost to the State economy of around \$2.5 billion and of up to \$1,000 for the average small business such as the hairdresser, bakery and pizza shop via increased power costs. According to this modelling, the cost to the average dairy farm will be \$1,500, impacting heavily on regional Victoria.

We are also disappointed that there is a lot of stick and little carrot for small business. One is struck by the lack of incentives to cut carbon intensity.

This package will mean small businesses, besides the impact already referred to, will need to take further energy efficiency measures in their day-to-day business operations just to keep costs within reason.

To follow reader reaction to the carbon tax debate go to: www.vecci.org.au/news/Pages/Chief_Executive_Update_Small_business_neglected_in_carbon_tax_announcement.aspx

ENERGY

Off the grid

A special in *The Age* explored properties across central Victoria that are testing out life with no mains electricity in order to reduce the risk of bushfires sparked by power-line failure. Bushfire Safety Taskforce chairman **Tim Orton** said the group's work is producing crucial information. 'If we get this right, we can make a very substantial change to bushfire risk in a more proactive way than we've been able to do in the past'.

Outcomes of the Bushfire Royal Commission on the relationship between electricity and bushfires was also discussed.

The commission found that the 'failure of electricity assets was responsible for five fires, at Kilmore East, Beechworth-Mudgegonga, Horsham, Coleraine and Pomboneit-Weerite. Now is the time to start replacing the aging electricity infrastructure and to make major changes to its operation and management.' The commission's recommendations to reduce the risk of fires caused by electricity include the progressive replacement of all single-wire earth-return power lines in Victoria with aerial bundled cable, underground cabling or technology that greatly reduces bushfire risk.

Station's future is hazy

The Age wrote, prior to the carbon price deal brokered by Canberra's multi-party climate committee, that the deal would include a plan to pay for the closure or conversion to gas of at least one of the nation's greenhouse gas-intensive coal plants over an extended transition period. The paper speculated that Australia's 'dirtiest' large coal-fired power station, Hazelwood in the Latrobe Valley, could be bought out and shut down under a carbon price package. Federal Energy Minister **Martin Ferguson** reportedly flagged the possibility of the government paying to retire Hazelwood, or the smaller Playford plant in South Australia. The owners of another Victorian plant, Yallourn, indicated they would be open to a buyout for the right price.

Heart of darkness

The Australian reported on Julia Gillard's visit to the heart of the nation's coal sector in the Latrobe Valley to meet workers who are probably the most vulnerable to the carbon tax. Hazelwood, targeted by green groups as the nation's dirtiest coal power station, produces 25 per cent of Victoria's electricity. It is regarded as the most likely coal station to be closed or converted to gas by either side of politics. In an event closed to the media, Gillard met 120 workers at the Hazelwood power station. She took questions on her plan to shut down 2,000 megawatts of energy from coal-fired power stations and replace it with cleaner energy generation.

Power shortages possible

The Age reported that in the wake of the prime minister's Carbon Tax announcement, the Victorian government warned the state to brace for more frequent power outages in summer in years ahead, because of the likely closure of the Hazelwood power plant. Acting Premier **Peter Ryan** warned the federal government's carbon tax would drive a 'stake through the heart' of the power generation sector, threatening widespread job losses in the Latrobe Valley.

Disconnected

The Age reported that there has been a large increase in Victorians having utility services disconnected or restricted. Consumers are apparently struggling to cope with steep rises in electricity, gas and water prices. Complaints and inquiries to the state Energy and Water Ombudsman from people who have had essential services cut have risen to 916 in the first six months of the year - up 56 per cent on the same period in 2009. The figures provided to *The Age* show a 200 per cent increase in cases of people facing imminent cuts because of unpaid bills, up to 1419. Energy and Water Ombudsman **Fiona McLeod** said affordability was a growing concern. 'I think the real need is for companies to recognise that.'

Smart meter held back

The *Herald Sun* reported that the **Australian Energy Regulator** has moved to block a bid by CitiPower, Jemena, Powercor, SP AusNet and United Energy Distribution to charge \$1.24 billion to build and run the smart meter system from 2012-15. The regulator said the cost should be \$760 million. The decision has been hailed a major win for Victorians struggling with soaring electricity costs.

WATER

Back from the brink

The Age reported comments from **Mark Bailey** from **Goulburn-Murray Water**, where he is acting manager of water resources saying that Lake Eildon is 87.8 per cent full. The mass of water meant that vast areas were available for recreation, while towns and irrigators had improved water security. Recent inflows and long-term inflow records suggested the water would keep rising strongly over coming months. 'We are 95 per cent confident we will fill the storage'. **David Roff**, chief executive of Mansfield Shire, said a full Lake Eildon generated a lot of economic activity. In May 2007 the lake fell as low as 7 per cent capacity.

Catchment head

Mildura Councillor **Sharyon Peart** is the Mallee Catchment Authority board's new chair.

Do us a favour

Senior columnist at *The Age*, **Kenneth Davidson**, wrote that the Baillieu government should do everyone a favour and cancel the Wonthaggi plant deal. 'Premier **Ted Baillieu** describes the Wonthaggi water desalination plant as a white elephant. It would be more accurate to say it is half an elephant, and a dangerous one to boot. The public-private partnership contract for the plant agreed to by the previous Labor government was so notoriously generous that the unions on site easily obtained a fabulous pay agreement. Who could blame them for getting in for their chop too? Former premier **John Brumby** said it didn't matter - the government had a fixed-price contract with AquaSure. What Baillieu knows now, and what Brumby should have known, is that this has set the benchmark for site agreements for infrastructure throughout Victoria. The cost blowout will flow on to every major construction project in the state. Victoria is saddled with an onerous \$24 billion contract that will impoverish every Victorian, either directly or indirectly, for 30 years. And it's for water that the state doesn't need.'

HEALTH

Only the best

The Royal Children's Hospital chief executive **Christine Kilpatrick** told the *Herald Sun* that the world-leading facility would open on 30 November. The daylight-flooded hospital will be able to treat 35,000 more patients a year than the current facility, which opened in 1963, and has 353 beds, 46 more. And 85 per cent of the rooms in the new hospital are single rooms with ensuite bathrooms, allowing children and families extra space and privacy.

Bar in the Children's Hospital

A blueprint seen by *The Age* showed a large 264-square-metre area for a 'restaurant/bistro/bar' in the retail zone of the new Royal Children's Hospital paediatric centre on Flemington Road. A spokeswoman for Health Minister **David Davis** denied there was room for a public bar in the project, but said alcohol would be permitted in the hotel's restaurant and lounge area, and through room service and mini-bars for guests. **John Fitzgerald**, the acting chief executive of VicHealth and founding member of the Alcohol Policy Coalition, said alcohol should not be served to people attending the hospital, including staff.

Another tick for the PM

The Age reported that the long-awaited agreement, worth an estimated \$175 billion to the states in extra funding up to 2030, promises to provide millions of extra inpatient, emergency and outpatient services in public

hospitals. Prime minister The deal came after years of wrangling between the **Kevin Rudd** and **Julia Gillard** governments and the states - to the signing of the asylum seeker arrangement with Malaysia, the unveiling of the carbon price details and the Tasmanian forestry agreement.

Victoria's share of the \$175 billion in extra funding would probably be about \$44 billion. The agreement is supposed to start on July 1, but has been delayed by battles with Victoria and Western Australia. These have been over the new structures for pricing services and monitoring results, and how funds will be paid. The states have wanted to retain as much control as possible, while getting more money, but there has been a series of compromises, with both levels of government giving ground.

Where are the beds?

The *Herald Sun* reported that Victorian opposition leader **Daniel Andrews** pressured Health Minister **David Davis** to explain when and how the Baillieu government intended to deliver an election commitment of 800 new hospital beds for sick Victorians. The government later responded, saying that 100 beds would be allocated 'in the next 12 months' according to 'clinical need'. The new beds would include six intensive-care beds, three neo-natal intensive-care cots, 20 palliative-care beds, more than 45 sub-acute beds and 46 mental health beds. But they would not be allocated until the government came up with 'funding guidelines'. The government will then start to negotiate with each of the 21 public health services across the state to achieve the best outcome for Victorians. A spokesperson said 'We want additional beds to be operational as soon as possible, but new beds will be based on need and capacity of health services to deliver additional services'.

Council appointments

The Victorian Department of Health is seeking expressions of interest for positions to the newly established Health Innovation and Reform Council. HIRC was established under

part 6A of the Health Services Act and will provide advice to, and report to, the Minister for Health and the Department of Health on the efficient delivery of quality health services.

Quick to quit

The *Herald Sun* reported that Victorians wanting to quit smoking are signing up 'in droves' for government-subsidised nicotine patches. The subsidies have been in place since February and more than 100,000 scripts have been filled across Australia. More than 26,000 of those were filled in Victoria. **Quit Victoria** applauded the news, saying that the initiative it campaigned for was helping more people give up a deadly habit. Quit executive director **Fiona Sharkie** said the subsidy was important and would lead to fewer smoking-related deaths. The government subsidies for patches have reduced costs for a 12-week patches course for pensioners from \$480 to as low as \$16.80. Other Australians pay about \$100 for the 12-week course. Health Minister **Nicola Roxon** said that since nicotine replacements were put on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme, people had been trying to kick the habit 'in droves'.

The unbridged gap

The Australian covered the results of a report into the plight of Victoria's indigenous population, finding that the situation had barely improved in the past five years. *The Indigenous Affairs Report* - released in June with little public scrutiny or attention - showed indigenous Victorians can expect to live a decade less, are nine times as likely to be in jail, almost three times more likely to be unemployed and are more than twice as likely to self-harm than non-indigenous Victorians. The story was printed as National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee Week kicked off on 4 July and Prime Minister **Julia Gillard** considered the federal government's next moves to improve the living standards of indigenous Australians in the north of the country.

Care imbalance

The Age used its Focus Section to highlight an alarming trend in community care. The paper noted a quickly growing number of disabled people in residential care in Victoria, at the same time as a shrinking pool of volunteers. **Michelle Griffin** wrote that it was a crisis where the most vulnerable have a lot to lose.

Victoria lights the way

The Age reported that Victoria was chosen to test a \$6 billion national disability insurance scheme that its backers claim will be the biggest social reform since Medicare. The scheme, which is among recommendations from the Productivity Commission to the government, will provide high-quality long-term support to anyone who acquires a significant disability, regardless of whether it was related to work and regardless of the state in which it took place. The result of an 18-month investigation, the recommendations are expected to be stronger and more specific than those in an interim report delivered in February. Funded out of Commonwealth revenue at an estimated cost of \$6.3 billion per year, the scheme would provide support services to about 360,000 Australians under strict guidelines. Whereas Medicare is funded by a levy paid by all taxpayers, the Productivity Commission has made no such recommendation on the disability insurance scheme, saying that the government should fund the scheme out of general revenue. The paper said that the trial would begin in 2014 and the scheme would go national in 2015, gradually expanding in scope. The scheme would be managed by an independent National Disability Insurance Agency, whose board would be appointed by state, Commonwealth and territory governments. Federal Coalition disabilities spokesman **Mitch Fifield** backed the scheme on the release of the interim report, offering bipartisan support on the question of funding.

Top Dog Day

Member-Zone magazine announced that Top Dog Day, Guide Dogs Victoria's annual major fundraising event, would take place on Friday

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29 July. Guide Dogs Victoria CEO **Dr Graeme White** said that the aim of the event was to raise funds to support blind and vision impaired Victorians, as well as recognise the vital role guide dogs play in the community. Visit topdogday.com.au

Call for submissions

A government advertisement in *The Age* requested submissions to an inquiry into Access to and Interaction with the Justice System by People with an Intellectual Disability and Their Families and Carers. The Victorian Parliament's Law Reform Committee will inquire into, consider and report no later than 30 March 2012 on access to and interaction with the justice system by people with an intellectual disability and their families and carers, including: key issues and themes, including but not limited to: participants' knowledge of their rights; availability of appropriate services and supports; dealings with the police; and the operation of the courts. Submissions should be made by Friday 9 September 2011.

EDUCATION

System overhaul

The Age reported that Victoria's education department is to be overhauled and turned into a 'super bureaucracy', in a state government move that has prompted fears about job losses and cuts to school services. About 2,600 public servants will be affected by the restructure, some programs will go, and a number of divisions will be shut down or subsumed in one of the biggest shake-ups to the department in years. Education Minister **Martin Dixon** insisted 'no ongoing jobs will be lost' as part of the planned revamp, but some staff in fixed-term contracts would not have their positions renewed.

National curriculum

The Australian reported that the Baillieu government has rebelled against the national curriculum, with state Education Minister **Martin Dixon** vowing Victoria will not relinquish control over 'critical areas' such as languages. Dixon said the 'current draft' of the national curriculum for languages would 'drive down the standards of languages education in Victoria' if it was implemented. The national curriculum for languages is being developed on the assumption that only 300 to 400 hours would be spent studying a second language between prep and year 6 - about half the hours recommended by the Victorian Education Department. A national curriculum is also being developed for the arts, geography and languages. They are to be rolled out after the first four subjects are implemented.

Schools in demand

A confidential report into the demand for new schools in Melbourne's booming inner suburbs was published by *The Age*. The report found that Port Melbourne would need a second primary school within five to 10 years. However, the report also said that there was insufficient demand for another high school, despite projected growth in the number of secondary-school-aged students in the Port Phillip area.

Winning design

The Age reported that **Woods Bagot** won the Public Architecture Award in Alterations and Additions for Deakin University's new lecture theatre at the annual **Australian Institute of Architects Awards**. Located at the university's Burwood campus, the new building has a 256-seat lecture theatre, foyer, two tutorial rooms and student lounge and amenities.

Printing money

The Age reported that the Education Department has launched an investigation of three Victorian government school employees after an Ombudsman's report on the corrupt purchase of print cartridges at massively inflated prices.

Quantity weakens quality

The Age reported that reform to vocational education in Victoria has caused a surge in enrolments across the sector, but that TAFE teachers say the new system is driving down the quality of education as students turn to cheaper courses at private providers. Certainly the data showed that the bulk of the increase has gone to private providers, and a survey by the **Australian Education Union** shows there is little support among TAFE teachers for the reforms, with the majority of respondents saying the changes have put more pressure on the system. Over 77 per cent of teachers surveyed thought the quality of education had dropped. Over half of the teachers surveyed also said they felt pressure to pass students who might not be competent.

Closing the book

The Age reported that the Christian group that teaches the controversial religious education program in Victorian government schools, announced a five-year 'mission' to extend its reach into independent schools. **Access Ministries** chief executive **Evonne Paddison** said more and more parents were choosing to send their children to independent schools. **However**, bodies representing independent schools and teachers said religious education was already taught in the schools, most of which were faith-based. 'This shows a lack of understanding of what is already existing in individual independent schools,' said Independent Schools Victoria chief executive **Michelle Green**.

Principles powerless

The Age reported that Victoria's school principals are powerless to expel or suspend students who use social media websites or their mobile phones to bully classmates outside school hours. With cyber-bullying on the rise, government principals are concerned that when students use home-based social media tools to vilify or harass classmates, teachers lack the legal artillery to enforce serious disciplinary procedures. Lawyers warn the Education Department could be exposed to legal action if its schools do not act forcefully enough to protect victims from bullying classmates at home on sites such as Facebook.

INVESTMENT

BUSINESS

Closing the book

The Age reported that after nearly 20 years, the final chapter of the bookshop **Reader's Feast**, is approaching. The iconic bookshop



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was located in the basement on the corner of Swanston and Bourke streets. Its demise represents another casualty of the collapse of the REDGroup, which also owned Angus & Robertson and Borders. All Borders and company-owned A&R shops are closing. Pearson Australia has bought REDGroup Retails' online business, including the Borders and Angus & Robertson websites. Reader's Feast Owner **Mary Dalmau** envisages her own sequel, and is determined to open another bookshop. 'I have 22 booksellers here, three of whom have been with me for 30 years, and the average tenure is 17 years,'

Paper offer too thin

Victoria's Small Business festival from August 1 to 31. A booklet in the *Herald Sun* summarised the festival in a 55 page official guide to 400 events around Melbourne and the state with an introductory messages from premier **Ted Baillieu** and minister for innovation, services and small business, **Louise Asher**.

Paper offer too thin

The Australian reported that a syndicate of wealthy Melbourne families, led by **Ron Walker**, approached Fairfax Media about buying its key Melbourne assets, *The Age* newspaper and the talk radio station 3AW. However, the informal discussions were cut short by the company's board.

Glass maker retrenches

The *Herald Sun* reported that more than 100 workers at glass manufacturer Viridian's Victorian plant in Clayton were facing redundancies within the year. In a letter to the union, Viridian blamed 'declining house construction', the high Australian dollar and increased manufacturing costs for a restructure that had prompted the redundancies.

Estate agent regulations

The Age reported that the Victorian government is proposing laws that would reduce regulation of real estate agents. However, the agents' representative body is arguing for more regulation - specifically to stop agents' family members from buying vendors' houses. The laws, regulating when and how estate agents can buy a property

which they are meant to be selling, changed at the start of this year. But other revisions now being considered by State Parliament would further whittle away at protection for vendors. Vendors selling a property to their agent are now required to get independent advice about the transaction from a lawyer or accountant. Before January, the laws were even tougher, requiring approval from Consumer Affairs Victoria for a sale to occur. Under the new law, agents will still be barred from gaining a beneficial interest in a property they are commissioned to sell. But there will be exemptions and those sales will not have third-party oversight, the policy director of the Consumer Action Law Centre, **Gerard Brody**, said.

Holding back

The Age reported that Melbourne real estate agents and vendors are increasingly withholding or manipulating data provided to the Real Estate Institute of Victoria, prompting calls for the mandatory reporting of all property sales to protect consumers. Nearly one in five properties sold at auction are now reported to the REIV with the price marked 'undisclosed' - a significant increase from last year's property boom, up from 11 per cent then to 18 per cent now. The investigation also revealed that 43 per cent of properties scheduled for auction in June had no published quote range, further frustrating buyers' attempts to obtain basic information.

Real data control

The Age reported that a powerful consortium of real estate agents backed by the Real Estate Institute of Victoria is planning to seize control of all private sale and auction results, which could reduce consumer access to important market information or force people to buy the data. The move follows a sharp decline in reporting of auction results by agents, who are concerned that the valuable consumer information is being intercepted by rival property websites. The REIV, which claims to collect 90 per cent of all Melbourne auction results, recently told *The Age* buyers must attend public auctions to be guaranteed of knowing the result. The industry faces a major upheaval, with Liberal Party powerbroker **Michael**

Kroger and the agency-backed *The Weekly Review* magazine involved in separate bids to establish websites that would challenge the dominant advertising site realestate.com.au, which is owned by News Ltd's REA Group. These moves come amid growing industry concerns about the market power of REA Group, which is currently being investigated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission over allegations of price gouging. Melbourne's largest agencies met at the REIV's head office in May to devise a strategy to counter the power of REA, which was recently valued at \$1.6 billion.

The carbon cost in Victoria

The Australian reported government figures that reveal that one in six of the nation's 500 largest polluters that will pay the carbon tax operate solely in Victoria. **The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission** possesses substantial powers to crack down on any attempts by companies to link falsely their price hikes to the carbon tax. A breakdown of the polluters in the \$23-a-tonne tax's firing line, shows 85 operate only in Victoria, 135 in NSW and the ACT, 110 in Queensland, 75 in Western Australia, 25 in South Australia, 20 in Tasmania and five in the Northern Territory. A further 45 operate in multiple states. Opposition climate spokesman **Greg Hunt** called on the government to name the companies, but a spokesman for Climate Change Minister **Greg Combet** said the information was collected under Howard government legislation that required confidentiality. Most of the 500 companies have large facilities emitting more than 25,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases a year.

Fine lines

The Age reported that gentlemen's clubs with scantily dressed waitresses are being investigated by Victoria's liquor licensing authority. Some clubs are accused of flouting liquor licensing laws that impose a \$30,000 fee on strip clubs. The fee, introduced by the Brumby government in 2010, is about 10 times more than a standard liquor licence. The Director of Liquor Licensing is expected to examine restaurants and gentlemen's clubs that employ waitresses dressed in lingerie,

schoolgirl outfits, French maid uniforms or similar attire.

Provincial or just parochial?

The Age revealed the contents of a leaked document from Westpac, relating to Westpac's re-launch of the 'Bank of Melbourne' brand to replace St George's Bank, describing Melbourne as a 'provincial' community. The internal document carried a warning to exercise caution, as 'Melbourne is a provincial global community and many feel that they own the brand'. By way of clarification, the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, concedes that when it comes to sport, culture and entertainment Victorians are proudly parochial and differentiate themselves from Sydney. But, it insists, that doesn't mean Melbourne is any less a global city than Sydney, and it cites the range of cultures it hosts, the famed cosmopolitan choice of restaurants and the major international events Melbourne stages every year. VECCI welcomes the undoubted economic boost the revival of the Bank of Melbourne brings with it: some 800 jobs, 100 branches, local management (including a Melbourne-based CEO, COO board), more small business lending opportunities and more customer services.

Unbelievable

The Financial Review reported that with the reopening of the Bank of Melbourne, Saturday banking could return to the city. Customers will have the chance to speak to staff in branches at weekends, with even Sunday banking being possibly on the table if there is significant demand in a local area. And after a decade of branch closures and staff cuts across the banking sector, the Bank of Melbourne will open an extra 85 branches, in a victory for customers demanding better service. The Bank of Melbourne's flexible hours are expected to pressure the major banks to follow suit and offer more choice to customers.

ICT

Internet pricing

The Financial Review reported that consumers will face higher prices to use the National Broadband Network than initially promised, if the first retail prices released are an accurate guide. Mid-size internet provider Internode yesterday became the first company to announce how much it will charge Australians for access to the NBN. While its prices will be comparable to what people pay today for broadband on the existing copper wire network, they will be significantly higher than those predicted last December by NBN Co, the company set up by the government to build the new network. Internode's prices will start at \$60 per month - including line rental,

some phone calls and 30 gigabytes of data - and will go as high as \$190 per month for a premium package with the highest speeds and a large 1000-gigabyte download limit.

Hooking up here

The Australian reported that the first Melbourne site in the government's national broadband project is to be launched in August. A handful of selected households in the inner-northern suburb of Brunswick will start testing services to test network speeds and connections. About 1,300 properties have been fitted with fibre-optic cable connections and commercial services will be available to all connected households in October.

Its only rail

The Australian reported that states will lose \$1.5 billion worth of rail infrastructure savings within five years of losing control of 1800MHz spectrum licences if they're auctioned to carriers, the federal government has been told. Melbourne and Sydney's passenger rail networks could also lose \$400,000 an hour in potential benefits from more frequent urban train services, according to the report that Deloitte Access Economics prepared for the Australasian Railway Association. The report also identified a huge lost opportunity to derive social benefits from reduced congestion and pollution if the licences are re-farmed. The ARA bought the licences from One.Tel liquidators for less than \$20m in the late 1990s and over the past 10 years it has invested \$500m in a new unified national rail safety and signalling system that relies on them. But the communication regulator is under pressure from carriers starved of mobile broadband spectrum to re-auction the licences. They give access to a band earmarked by international telecommunications standards bodies for next generation LTE services and could fetch more than \$1bn at auction.

eServices exclusive panel

The Financial Review reported the dissatisfaction of omitted companies at the selection process for the Victorian eServices Panel. Only companies listed on the panel are permitted to bid for work related to technology management, strategy and analysis, architecture and design, systems and solutions, and support and training. A significant number of well-respected members of the Australian IT industry were reportedly stunned to receive brief letters saying they had been unsuccessful. Australian Information Industry association CEO **Ian Birks** said he was pleased by IT minister **Gordon Rich-Phillips'** decision to discuss adverse industry reaction. The paper understands that the AIIA is lobbying to have the old list retained for an interim period while the new panel is re-evaluated.

ICT survey fact sheet

The Department of Business and Innovation's latest information and communication technology industry survey indicated that the Victorian ICT industry continues to grow, despite uncertain global economic conditions. The Victorian ICT industry employs around 87,400 people - approximately 29 per cent of total Australian ICT industry employment. 93 per cent of employing Victorian ICT companies have less than 20 employees.

AGRICULTURE

At last

The Age reported that the controversial relocation of Melbourne's fruit and vegetable market to Epping had been confirmed. The multimillion-dollar project has been in doubt since January when the Baillieu government said it had concerns over its commercial viability and ordered a review. However, Major Events Minister **Denis Napthine** said the review had found the project should proceed and would start operating in the financial year 2014-15, at least four years behind schedule. The announcement means that hundreds of traders will move from their West Melbourne base to the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Market in the outer north, and was met with concern from the fresh produce industry. Epping's surrounding network of freeways and its proximity to the airport were cited as reasons for the relocation when it was first announced in 2005. Napthine said the government had adjusted Labor's funding model to avoid traders' rent more than doubling when they moved to the new site. He could not say what the final cost of the relocation would be to taxpayers, but said that about \$200 million had already been spent. He said the Department of Treasury and Finance had found the cost of Labor's model would ultimately reach \$670 million, almost \$400 million more than first anticipated. He conceded that the building cost was not over budget. 'it's a blowout because [Labor] totally under-costed this project'.

Highlander

The Australian reported that Victorian premier **Ted Baillieu** attacked the federal plan to gain greater control of national parks to derail the state's attempt to reintroduce cattle grazing to the Alpine National Park. He said the federal government had been unable to do anything 'other than show their incompetence'. In a related development, the Victorian government has launched a covert plan to reintroduce cattle grazing to Victoria's Alpine National Park in an attempt to bypass federal laws that derailed last summer's controversial trial.

The Age said that the move is so shrouded in secrecy that the Department of Sustainability and Environment has hired auditing firm Deloitte to comb through the emails of Parks Victoria staff to trace any leaks. Department of Sustainability and Environment spokeswoman Cathy Heycock confirmed to *The Age* that a new trial was being planned. 'We are working through the design of the longer-term research trial, informed by the outcomes of year one of the trial.'

To market, to market

The Age reported that new farmers' markets are set to be established across country Victoria and on Melbourne's fringe under a \$2 million program. Victoria's 48 rural councils and nine Melbourne fringe councils will share \$1.4 million to establish new markets, expand existing ones and undertake feasibility studies on proposed markets. The \$2 million Farmers' Market Support Program announced by Agriculture and Food Security Minister **Peter Walsh**. A recent parliamentary report found that Victoria's 90-odd farmers' markets contributed an estimated \$227 million to the state's economy each year.

By the droves

The Herald Sun reported that the Sheepvention in Hamilton would open at the start of August. At this event one can learn about farming techniques and fashion trends in the industry. Last year, 25,000 people flocked to the two-day event, which includes a ram sale, wool fashion parade, workshops, farm dog and inventors competitions.

Core of the issue

The Age reported that Victorian apple and pear growers have gathered at a mass rally in Shepparton, warning that their industry will be crippled if apples from New Zealand are imported into Australia, because they would introduce fire blight disease. The federal government is due to lift long-held import restrictions on New Zealand apples on 17 August, with a number of conditions.

Look into it

The Education and Training Committee, a Joint Investigatory Committee of the Parliament of

Victoria, requests submissions for an inquiry into agricultural education and training. Submissions by 30 September.

JUSTICE

Arsonist theory up in smoke

The Age reported that the bushfire that razed Marysville on Black Saturday may have been sparked by electrical faults. Victoria police had for two and-a-half years pursued the theory of a lone arsonist, which they then dumped without explanation.

Justice is blind

The Age reported that the state government spent \$90 million on the Bushfires Royal Commission, but now wants to prevent the judge who is hearing a class action over the most deadly of the fires from seeing the commissioners' findings. Justice **Terry Forrest** told lawyers in a case conference in June that he felt he was 'going down a mine without a light,' because the government lawyers had not allowed him to read the findings and legal arguments from the royal commission. He is trying to prepare himself to hear a complex class action against power company SP AusNet, its contractor Utility Services Corporation, and the Country Fire Authority and others, for alleged negligence over the Kilmore-Kinglake fire on Black Saturday.

Parole politics

The Age reported that the Baillieu government was on a 'collision course' with the criminal justice system over its plan to introduce legislation to keep mass murderer **Julian Knight** in jail beyond his first parole date. Corrections Minister **Andrew McIntosh** told *The Age* 'no Victorians want to see Knight released'.

Police behaviour

The Age reported that Victoria Police was accused of failing to properly investigate alleged assaults by officers on members

of the public, in breach of its own rules for handling complaints. Principal solicitor at the Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre, **Tamar Hopkins**, said police were not being held to account. 'We have a complaints system that is inherently biased and lacking in independence and effectiveness.' Victoria Police had recently launched a program to educate officers on racial hate crimes, amid claims police are targeting young men of African descent in Melbourne's inner west.

Oh dear

The Age reported that a protest on the steps of State Parliament against the Baillieu government's controversial anti-swearing laws drew a maximum crowd of just 15. In June, Victoria Police were given powers to issue on-the-spot fines of up to \$240 to punish people caught using language deemed to be indecent, disorderly, offensive or threatening. The move, part of the government's extensive law-and-order agenda, outraged civil libertarians, who accuse the Coalition of eroding fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, and of granting police excessive powers to make value judgements about decency and morality.

Freedom

The Herald Sun published the concerns of a prominent lawyer who described as alarming the number of Victorian prisoners who die from drug overdoses within weeks of release. Department of Justice figures obtained by the paper showed that 29 inmates died of drug overdoses within a month of being freed in the past decade.

Bikies access secrets

Victoria's Office of Police Integrity and the Police Integrity Commission in New South Wales are conducting separate probes into allegations of serious security breaches involving bikie gangs. *The Age* reported that highly sensitive police intelligence was leaked to outlaw motorbike gangs in Victoria and New South Wales, undermining organised-crime probes and potentially endangering the lives of informers.

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James Moody (CSIRO)
Dr Rufus Black (Thought leader, ethicist)
Hugh Mackay (Social researcher)
Dr Amantha Imber (Inventium)
Deborah Cheetham (Indigenous opera singer)
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Finding No. 4692
July 2011 Figures
Available on Website: www.roymorgan.com
On August 3, 2011

Australian Employment drops by record number in July to 10,802,000 (down 418,000) as Australian workforce shrinks, and Unemployment rate is up 0.6% to 7.6%

- In July 2011 Australia's total **unemployment** as measured by Roy Morgan was 885,000 (7.6%), up 40,000 (0.6%) from June 2011, and up 148,000 (up 1.3%) since July 2010.
- The Roy Morgan July 2011 '**underemployed**'* estimate was virtually unchanged at 859,000 (7.3%), down 3,000 (but up 0.2% as the workforce shrunk) from June 2011 and down 81,000 (0.8%) since July 2010.
- In total in July 2011 an estimated 1,743,000 (14.9%) of Australians were **unemployed** or '**underemployed**,' up 36,000 (up 0.8%) on June 2011 and up 66,000 (0.5%) since July 2010.
- As stated, there was a **large drop in the Australian workforce in July**, down 378,000 to 11,687,000 which is virtually unchanged from a year ago (up 42,000) and slightly higher than in March 2011 (up 23,000).
- Overall full-time employment in Australia for July is 7,421,000 (down 219,000 since June 2011 but up 30,000 since July 2010) and part-time employment is 3,381,000 (down 199,000 since June 2011 and down 136,000 since July 2010).
- There are now 495,000 Australians looking for **full-time work** (up 28,000 on June 2011 and up 128,000 since July 2010). An additional 390,000 Australians are looking for **part-time work** (up 12,000 on June 2011, and up 20,000 since July 2010).
- The latest Roy Morgan unemployment estimate is 2.7% above the 4.9% **currently quoted by the ABS** for June 2011.

Roy Morgan Unemployed and 'Underemployed'* Estimate

	Unemployed or 'Underemployed'*		Unemployed		Unemployed looking for		'Underemployed'*	
	'000	%	'000	%	Full-time '000	Part-time '000	'000	%
2010								
Jan-Mar 2010	1,688	14.7	873	7.6	491	382	815	7.1
Apr-June 2010	1,592	13.8	748	6.5	437	311	844	7.3
July-Sep 2010	1,603	13.7	737	6.3	400	337	866	7.4
Oct-Dec 2010	1,741	14.7	826	7.0	442	384	915	7.7
2011								
Jan-Mar 2011	1,715	14.5	913	7.7	484	429	802	6.8
Apr-June 2011	1,728	14.5	837	7.0	465	372	891	7.5
Months								
July 2010	1,677	14.4	737	6.3	367	370	940	8.1
August 2010	1,612	13.7	718	6.1	448	270	894	7.6
September 2010	1,520	13.1	756	6.5	384	372	764	6.6
October 2010	1,664	14.0	760	6.4	360	400	904	7.6
November 2010	1,627	13.7	815	6.9	465	350	812	6.8
December 2010	1,931	16.5	903	7.7	502	401	1,028	8.8
January 2011	1,818	15.1	948	7.9	459	489	870	7.2
February 2011	1,596	13.6	927	7.9	524	403	669	5.7
March 2011	1,729	14.8	863	7.4	468	395	866	7.4
April 2011	1,796	15.2	847	7.2	485	362	949	8.0
May 2011	1,682	14.2	818	6.9	442	376	864	7.3
June 2011	1,707	14.1	845	7.0	467	378	862	7.1
July 2011	1,743	14.9	885	7.6	495	390	859	7.3

The Gillard Government's 'Fair Work Australia' Act was implemented on January 1, 2010, replacing the Howard Government's 'Work Choices' Legislation.

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- Results: Synchronised, interactive video report with three selectable sets of graphs: All Respondents, Males/Females and three Age splits plus complete Metrics. (Available in two working days for orders before 2pm.) Additional analysis from questionnaire available within one week

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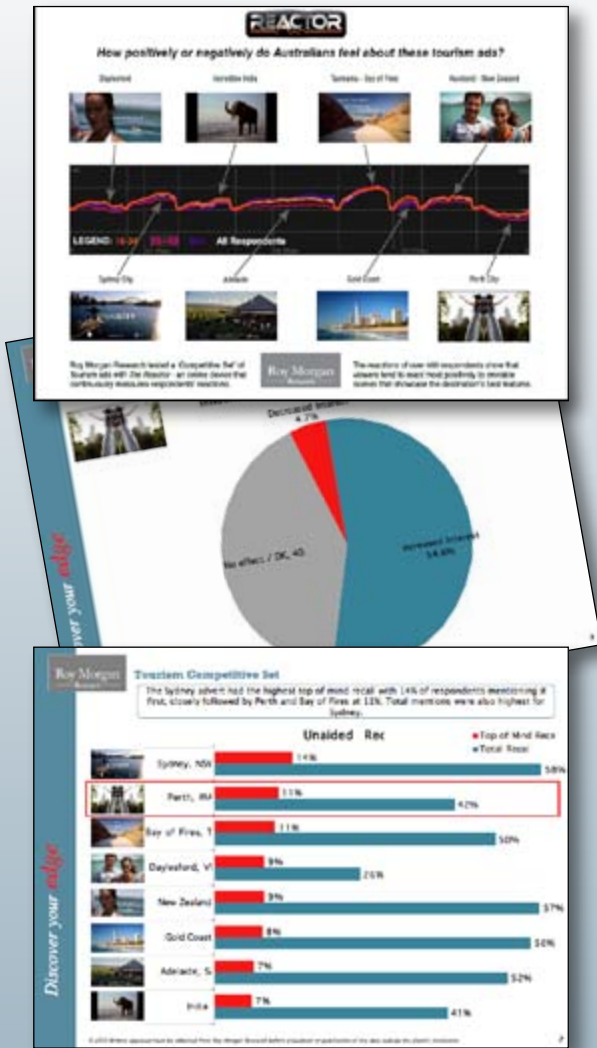
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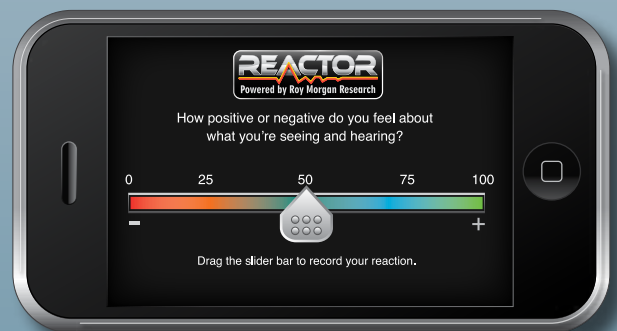
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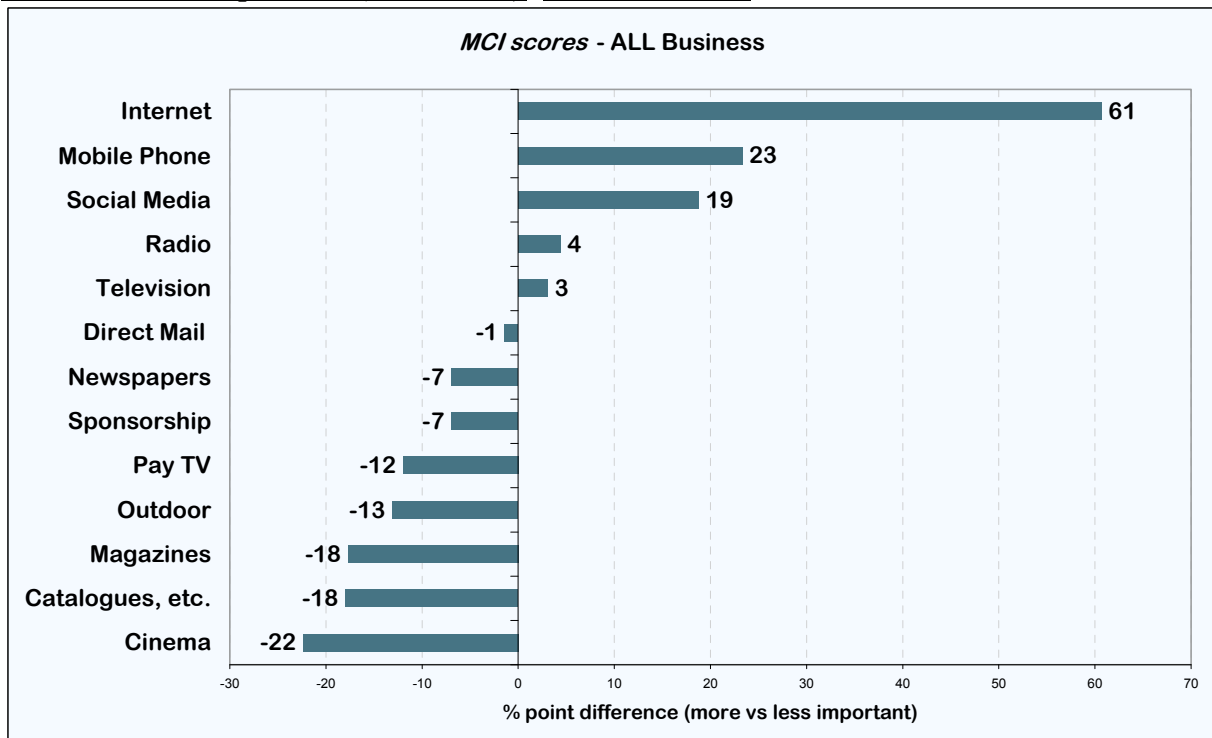
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New media attracts growing importance for all yet traditional media still valuable for large businesses

Australian businesses expect new media (Internet, Mobile Phones and Social Media) to be more important in their media spend in the coming year, and traditional media to be less important, according to the latest *Roy Morgan Business Single Source* survey - a nation-wide survey of 13,381 businesses.

Analysis by business size shows important differences, notably that the biggest spenders, Large Businesses with annual turnover of \$50 million or more, are much more buoyant in their belief in greater importance for traditional media like television, radio and newspapers than are Smaller Businesses.

Media Channel Importance (MCI scores)¹ - All businesses



Source: Roy Morgan Business Single Source, 12 months to June 2011, n = 13,381.

Contact us (enquiries@roymorganonlinestore.com) to purchase more detail behind the *Media Channel Importance (MCI scores)* and view our extensive range of media profiles, across print, Internet, radio, television, and more. These profiles provide a broad understanding of the target audience, in terms of demographics, attitudes, activities and media usage in Australia at the

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¹ How we calculate *Media Channel Importance (MCI scores)*:

Respondents are asked to consider - in terms of their business's marketing (advertising, sponsorship, direct marketing) - which channels they think will be more or less important in the next 12 months. Respondents are given 13 different media channels to evaluate as shown in the charts. The *MCI score* subtracts the 'less important' percentage from the 'more important' percentage and is expressed in percentage points of difference.

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MELBOURNE

Our Derryn

The Age reported that magistrate **Charlie Rozencwajg** sentenced **Derryn Hinch** to five months of home detention for breaching a suppression order by revealing the names of sex offenders. The order was imposed with conditions preventing him from working, using social media including Twitter and Facebook, publishing material or being interviewed. He also must not cause others to contravene the conditions. The radio 3AW afternoon drive-time program host may have preferred prison, say some of his supporters. He has experienced life on the inside, serving 12 days in jail over a similar charge in 1986. Hinch, 67, shuffled into court, weakened by recent liver transplant surgery that saved his life.

Perpetrators protected

The Herald Sun reported that laws intended to protect victims are being used to shield dozens of Victoria's worst sex offenders. Rapists' and paedophiles' identities and whereabouts are routinely being shrouded in secrecy as courts decide if they should be freed. More than half of 62 offenders under post-sentence supervision orders are living anonymously among us rather than in a purpose-built compound outside Ararat Jail. The names of 28 of 30 put under supervision orders by the County Court in the past 18 months have been suppressed.

No justice like mob justice

The Age reported that a Victorian government law and order survey has been criticised by legal experts for allowing respondents to complete the online poll multiple times. The sentencing survey went live on 27 July, with Attorney-General **Robert Clark** saying it would shape decisions on changes to sentencing. But there are no restrictions on how many times the survey can be filled out. Law Institute of Victoria president **Caroline**

Counsel said the online survey was an extraordinary move by the government made even more extraordinary if the survey can be completed more than once.

Judged inadequate

The Age reported that one of Victoria's most senior judges attacked the state government's controversial new sentencing survey as deficient and open to abuse, and says it is unlikely to accurately reflect public opinion on punishing offenders. Supreme Court Judge **David Harper**, president of the Judicial Conference of Australia, also accused tabloid media of peddling grossly inaccurate myths that courts are soft on crime. He warned that such misconceptions could discourage victims from reporting crimes and prompt politicians to make bad decisions on sentencing.

More detail 1

The Age reported at the end of June that deputy premier **Peter Ryan** was linked to the resignation of Director of Public Prosecutions **Jeremy Rapke QC**. Ryan told parliament that he attended secret meetings last year with the former Brumby government and a senior state solicitor to discuss the QC's conduct.

More detail 2

Police Association boss **Greg Davies** became the latest high-profile Victorian to be caught up in the controversial Office of Police Integrity probe into departing deputy commissioner **Sir Ken Jones**. The Age confirmed that the OPI examined the extent of Davies's discussions with Sir Ken and former state government adviser **Tristan Weston**, as part of its investigation into whether the trio were engaged in moves to undermine former chief commissioner **Simon Overland** and relay information about problems with force command to the media.

Electric parking

The Age reported that in a Victorian first, charging stations for electric cars are likely to be installed at 12 on-street parking spaces in Melbourne's city centre, as part of a program being introduced by the Department of Transport. Melbourne City councillors voted for a plan to work with the department, to alter a dozen metered parking spaces in the CBD to make way for electric car recharging devices. Each metered parking space earns the city \$10,000 a year in parking fees. But the council will not lose money as a result of installation of the electric vehicle recharging spaces. A report presented to the council's Future Melbourne committee said the loss of parking revenue 'will be compensated by the conversion of other on-street spaces ... to metered parking'. The 12 parking spaces will either be 30-minute 'fast-charging' spots, or two-hour standard recharging locations. The new on-street parking spaces are expected to be installed by January. The Department of Transport is running a five-year trial of electric cars. Earlier this year, 60 households were given electric cars from one of five manufacturers, to drive for three months and report back on their experiences.

No free parking

The Herald Sun reported that the daily median parking rate in Melbourne is more than many of the world's biggest cities including London, Paris and New York. At \$66, Only Copenhagen and Oslo were more expensive, while Sydney ranked a close fourth. Wilson Parking at 416 Flinders Lane is Melbourne's most expensive for casual all-day parking, according to comparison website CarParking.info. It charges \$80 for any weekday stay of more than five hours. The survey, conducted by real estate consulting firm Colliers International, found parking costs had increased globally in the past 12 months, with the US being the only exception.

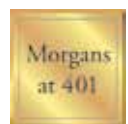
The tallest tree

The Herald Sun reported that the City of Melbourne had defended the cost of a hi-tech Christmas tree that will be the centrepiece of more than \$2 million worth of decorations across the CBD. In a departure from the traditional green tree that usually graces the City Square, the new tree has 10,000 LED lights and will have images beamed on to it from 6am to midnight. Lord Mayor **Robert Doyle** announced the plan for the new tree. The 18 meter tree will cost \$285,000, but a spokeswoman for the City of Melbourne said it would be cheaper to maintain than its predecessor.

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Melbourne News

The bi-monthly *Melbourne News* July/August edition included the lord mayor **Robert Doyle** focusing on the city's budget. Also that focus not just be on the 4-year term of mayor, but looking further ahead than that with planning projects etc. A new Southbank Library also mentioned, as well as new parking technology where one can pay by mobile phone, instead of small change or notes.

Run, run, as fast as you can

The Run Melbourne fun run was held on Sunday 17 July. More than 20,000 people took part in the event.

Taxi rank and file

The Age reported that a major part of Melbourne's central business district could be closed to traffic and turned into a giant taxi rank on weekend nights, under a radical proposal from Lord Mayor **Robert Doyle**. Under the plan, the road between Collins and Bourke Street would shut down to all cars, except taxis, every Friday and Saturday night, in a bid to create a safe and central location to hail one.

Split a cab

The *Herald Sun* reported that late-night revellers could share taxi rides home in mini-van taxis operating from the city on Friday and Saturday nights. In a submission to the **Allan Fels** taxi inquiry, the Victorian Taxi Directorate said the service would operate from supervised taxi ranks in the city.

Felt the earth move

The Age reported that earthquakes began rumbling through south-east Victoria on 5 July as the area released pressure generated by the squeezing of the Australian tectonic plate. The earthquakes which prompted hundreds of calls to **Geoscience Australia** were centred west of **Korumburra**, in the state's mid-south. The biggest quake was the first, a 4.4 magnitude earthquake which struck just after 11.30am and was felt about 120 kilometres away in Melbourne.

Victorian volcanos

The Age reported that Victoria's volcanoes are overdue for an eruption, according to research that has dated the age of the cones, craters and lava flows in the state's west with increased precision. Using the latest dating techniques, scientists at the **University of Melbourne** established that, on average, the small volcanoes dotted from western Victoria to South Australia erupted every 2,000 years. The last eruption at Mount Gambier was more than 5,000 years ago and **Bernie Joyce**, of

the university's school of earth sciences, said that, statistically speaking, we were due for another. Presenting his findings at the International Congress of Geodesy and Geophysics in Melbourne yesterday, Professor Joyce said the most likely places for eruptions would be around Colac, Port Fairy, Portland and Mount Gambier. He said eruptions close to Melbourne or Geelong were not out of the question either, as the Australian tectonic plate continued to move north at five centimetres a year. The volcanoes that dot the landscape between Melbourne and Mount Gambier are monogenetic volcanoes - once-off volcanoes that deliver relatively small eruptions. There are 40 alone between Melbourne and Bacchus Marsh, with the last volcano to erupt in Victoria being Mount Napier, south of Hamilton.

Speculative vacancies

The Financial Review reported that according to the housing campaign group Earthsharing Australia, property speculators have locked up 46,220 empty homes in metropolitan Melbourne. The group released a document, *Real Estate 4 Ransom*, which claims 4.95 per cent of the city's potential housing stock is unoccupied. That figure is double the rental vacancy rate of 2.4 per cent published last week by the Real Estate Institute of Victoria. The group's *Speculative Vacancy Report* said that in Docklands, almost a quarter of residential properties there, 23.32 per cent, are vacant. The official vacancy rate for Docklands is 3.62 per cent.

DOCKLANDS

The eagle has landed

The Age reported that four developers will present proposals to the state government by October to develop the two-hectare site between Collins Street and Flinders Street, including the 'air rights over Wurundjeri Way'. Planners have long considered Wurundjeri Way a planning disaster in Docklands, and a major obstacle blocking pedestrian flow between Southbank and Docklands. The development plans could see buildings and decking span the busy thoroughfare. The formidable 25-metre eagle, designed by renowned Melbourne sculptor **Bruce Armstrong** is presently located in the median strip of Wurundjeri Way and the centre of the proposed development site.

Giant cop shop

The *Herald Sun* reported that a \$220 million police super-complex housing more than 1,600 officers is to be built in the Docklands. The state-of-the-art centre will mean the closure and merging of the longstanding St Kilda Road station, intelligence department offices in Flinders Street, and the Melbourne

West Police Station in the World Trade Centre.

Wheel of fortune

The *Herald Sun* reported that Melbourne's Southern Star Observation Wheel was entering the final stage of its rebuild, almost three years after it stopped spinning. The wheel's owner, ING Corporation, has not released a completion date. However, a Melbourne City Council source told the paper that the company had indicated it was on track to be turning by Christmas.

PLANNING & BUILDING

Watch this space

The Age reported that Victorian planning minister **Matthew Guy** confirmed he intends to write to councils across the city, inviting them to submit wish lists of changes in their green wedge areas. He would not rule out more commercial and residential development in the corridors, dubbed 'Melbourne's lungs' by their champion, former Liberal premier **Sir Rupert Hamer**. Hamer legislated to make green wedges integral to the city's much-vaunted liveability.

Coastal rezoning

The Age reported that Victorian Planning Minister **Matthew Guy** was planning to rezone about 240 hectares of farmland west of Torquay for housing. The local council estimates the land near Spring Creek could provide 1,900 new homes, with an expected population of 4,500 people. Guy told the Surf Coast Shire Council that 'ministerial amendment' to planning controls for the land is warranted to 'respond to the urgent need to address housing affordability, facilitate the establishment of new schools, and proactively manage growth for Torquay-Jan Juc'. He called for the council's views by 4 August. He also asked his department to consult with landowners and developers on new planning controls for the land. Since assuming office in November, the minister has also taken over planning control for coastal land near Portland and approved an ecovillage development at Cape Paterson.

Rezone rethink

The Age reported that the Baillieu government will not proceed with controversial plans to rezone hundreds of hectares of farmland at Spring Creek in Torquay for new housing after a community backlash. Surf Coast Council mayor **Dean Webster** welcomed the Planning Minister's decision. Torquay is in the key marginal seat of South Barwon.

Newest suburb announced

The Age covered Planning Minister **Matthew Guy's** announcement that he was opening Truganina South for residential development. The suburb is 19km southwest of the CBD

in an area bounded by Leakes and Palmers roads. The new suburb will have 2,500 dwellings and is expected to accommodate up to 7,000 people. Truganina is believed to be named after Truganini, the last full-blooded Tasmanian Aborigine thought to have lived in the area. The minister said the government planned to release 50,000 new housing lots this year. In January he announced two new suburbs - Greenvale North and Greenvale West - which will house about 7,000 people in 1,570 houses on 363ha about 20km from the CBD near Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park.

Race of the lap

The Age reported that in July the Moonee Valley Racing Club held a public consultation into its plans to build 2,000 apartments and townhouses - including high-rise towers of up to 25 storeys - that will house 6,000 people. But local residents, who have formed a Save Moonee Ponds group, say the club's master plan is a 'severe case of overdevelopment'. Former planning minister **Justin Madden**, who opposes the plan, said there were discussions about a 'far more modest' proposal of two or three storeys when he was planning minister, which did not come to fruition. All of Melbourne's major racecourses are planning residential developments as the value of inner-city land soars. Moonee Valley and Flemington racecourses are working on major residential plans, while a \$1 billion development at Caulfield was recently approved by planning minister **Matthew Guy**.

Northern expansion

The Age reported that Melbourne City Council had released major draft plans for North Melbourne and the northern end of the CBD that propose a high-density residential hub at Arden Street, with buildings of between 30 and 60 metres high, and the upgrade of the degraded Moonee Ponds Creek into a recreational park. The paper said that according to local residents, plans to make part of North Melbourne an extension of the central city are 'destined to become a disaster'. The industrial landscape - home to the Weston Milling silos, the Allied Mills complex and the Younghusband Wool Stores - will make way for population growth of 3000 to 25,000, while the northern city's population will soar from 5500 to 19,000, the council said. The plans rely on the proposed metro train service as a 'catalyst' to development in the area, but locals reportedly say the train line will not be built for many years, if at all.

Supply and demand

The Australian warned that the apartment market in Melbourne is marching towards a period of oversupply at a time when the national one continues to weaken. 'There is a risk of oversupply, particularly rental oversupply, given that the majority of these apartments are owned by private investors,' said **Angie Zigomanis**, senior manager of residential property at BIS Shrapnel.

Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows Victoria is charging ahead with construction, despite clear signs of thinning demand. According to the ABS, commencements on private-sector units and apartments shot up from 3,000 at the start of the 2010 calendar year to more than 5,000 units in the September quarter.

On the up-and-up

The *Herald Sun* published opinions of prominent figures who believe Melbourne should build its first 100-storey skyscraper as soon as possible. The Melbourne City Council wants the CBD transformed, with a clean-up of the 'ugly' Flinders and Elizabeth Street corner to be tackled in its next budget. Planning minister **Matthew Guy** said 'Melbourne should not be afraid to build taller in our CBD - I'd love to see our first 100-storey skyscraper sooner rather than later.' Currently, the city's biggest skyscraper is the 91-storey Eureka tower. According to the paper, the building is a favourite of Guy, who loves the way 'its blue glass curtain complements the colours of the Rialto, and its distinctive design changes from every angle'. Proponents include Lord Mayor **Robert Doyle** and VECCI chief executive **Mark Stone**.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Councillors in court

The Age reported that some councillors and council candidates across Victoria are being taken to court for not declaring conflicts of interest and not revealing who bankrolled election campaigns. In June, former Latrobe City councillor **Lisa Price** was barred from acting as a councillor for seven years, and fined \$9,000, for failing to disclose a conflict of interest. The charges related to votes in which Price participated at council meetings, considering a municipal electoral hearing and a newsletter distributed by council in which she was found to have at minimum 'an indirect interest'. Ararat Rural City council mayor **Andrea Marian** and Nillumbik Shire councillor **Belinda**

Clarkson faced charges in July regarding conflict of interest laws. A Shepparton City councillor escaped conviction, but received a \$500 fine from a conflict of interest charge in the past year. Former Brimbank City councillor **Tran Siu** faces charges related to distributing unregistered election material and providing false and misleading information under oath. Five unsuccessful candidates for local council have also been charged with failing to disclose campaign donations - four cases have been proven and fines of up to \$250 issued. The charges against councillors are outlined in a list of prosecution matters produced by the Local Government Investigations and Compliance Inspectorate. Municipal Association of Victoria president **Bill McArthur** said new conflict of interest regulations which had been introduced during this term of local council administration were complex.

Library funding

The Age reported that Victoria's public libraries could face shorter opening hours and cuts to internet services and other projects, after a Baillieu government decision to cut funding. The **Municipal Association of Victoria** said the revelation came as a shock. The association said it would leave councils with around \$5.7 million less to spend on libraries over the next four years.

Councillor under scrutiny

The state government is probing whether Geelong councillor **Jan Farrell** broke the law when she defended a family friend who 'glasses' a bar patron in a pub fight. She reportedly used a council letterhead in a character reference in the County Court.

Green land sale

The Age reported that the City of Brimbank proposes to sell a large block of open space on Patterson Avenue in Keilor, and 13 other open spaces in the city, to developers. Money from the sale of the 14 spaces will go to a \$40 million program to buy or improve 'more appropriate' open space elsewhere in the city. But locals say the parks are perfectly viable now and some are informal community meeting places. The city's administrators came to power after the former Brumby



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Police and the Media make for a messy message

Tony McAdam

Christine Nixon's spray of accusations against News Limited and the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission encapsulates in one story a number of issues that have haunted the Victorian political stage for a large part of the last decade, and reflects issues which have more recently flared up on the national stage in response to the News of the World hacking scandal in the UK. Christine Nixon was an appointment of Victoria's Labor government and while in office she could do little wrong. During that time the police department was increasingly seen as dysfunctional even giving us the bizarre spectacle whereby the very office charged with guarding the service's integrity had its own integrity challenged.

There can be little doubt that whatever damage has been done to Christine Nixon's reputation is primarily a consequence of her own actions or lack of action. Similarly, the forced resignation of her chosen successor, Simon Overland, was a reflection of his performance and his perceived politicisation.

The elements that have constituted the Nixon saga, and its continuing relevance, are the very same that have made the News of the World hacking affair one of the most wrenching and dramatic crises to afflict modern British politics: the politics of the media and the Machiavellian ways of Rupert Murdoch, the alleged improper

collusion of journalists and police, and the question of what can be done to protect a proper regard for the privacy of ordinary citizens while avoiding a move towards media regulation at the expense of open democratic debate.

The simplest part of this increasingly messy maze of mendacity and public policy is the need to reaffirm the illegality of phone hacking and other acts of journalistic impropriety and attendant police involvement.

If there is one enduring lesson to be learnt from the Nixon/Overland controversies it is the urgent requirement that the appointment of the next Chief Commissioner of Police should be as free of a perceptible political/cultural bias as is humanly possible.

What is more difficult is the need to put the question of media ownership in a liberal democratic state into its proper perspective. Our system, the envy of the world, needs a vibrant press. It also has an obligation to protect the right to privacy of the ordinary citizen. And, above all, it is important that both politicians and the media accept that they need each other and, while their roles are different, they share many aspirations in common.

To the extent that Rupert Murdoch has become an all purpose target for abuse, it should be remembered that this single Australian, probably the most globally influential in history, is also responsible for saving at great expense to himself some of the most reputable, readable and interesting newspapers of the English speaking world.

government sacked the Brimbank council in 2009. They posted about 700 letters in June to residents, telling them of their intention to sell the parks and seeking community feedback. People have until 8 August to make written submissions about the mooted sales. 'We're going to the local community and saying, 'Can you tell use how you use the land?', then we'll be in a position to decide if it's to be sold or not,' said Brimbank's general manager for infrastructure and environment, **Paul Younis**.

GAMING

Tabcorp plays on

The Age reported that gaming giant Tabcorp retained its monopoly over the Victorian tote, paying \$410 million for a 12-year exclusive wagering licence. As part of a complex arrangement with the Baillieu government, Tabcorp will also benefit from a cut in gambling tax designed to shore up racing industry revenue. *The Financial Review* reported that Tabcorp shares surged more than five per cent on the news.

States loses big on pokies

The Age said that a report by Auditor-General **Des Pearson** found that the Victorian government's auctioning of pokies licences was bungled, costing the taxpayer \$3 billion. The sale of 10-year entitlements for the bulk of the state's 27,500 pokies yielded \$981 million at an average price of about \$37,000 a machine. That price is well below what industry analysts believed was the market value. Some clubs paid just \$5,500 each on machines that on average generate about \$100,000 a year. *The Age* reported that Pearson's 12-month study found the sale process failed to realise the government's aim of increasing its take of the industry's super profits, with the real total market value of the machines closer to \$4 billion. Gaming businessman **Bruce Mathieson**, in partnership with Woolworths, was the big winner from the auction, sweeping up one third of the pokies available to pubs at an average price of about \$39,000. The auction of machine licences to pubs and clubs followed the Brumby government decision to end the Tattersalls and Tabcorp duopoly on machines from 2012. The auditor's report stated that the sale process was undermined by:

- Weak demand and lack of competitive tension at the auction of machine entitlements.
- Excessively low reserve prices.

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- Insufficient information and training for potential bidders.
- Poor handling of the auction.
- Timelines that were too tight.

Revenue exaggeration

The Age published **Ian Dunn's** opinion that 'having read the Auditor-General's report on the auction of electronic gaming machines, I think the suggestion that the state lost \$3 billion is way over the top. Prospective applicants for gaming machines were aware

that Victorians' interest in poker machines was waning.' Dunn was chairman of the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation from 2004 to 2009. He is adjunct professor of law at La Trobe University. He had no involvement in the auction process.

Gaming discussions

The Age reported that the Baillieu government held confidential discussions with gambling king **James Packer** about plans for gamblers to limit their potential losses before beginning to play poker machines in Victoria. A spokesman for gaming minister **Michael O'Brien** said: 'The minister has met with many parties interested in gambling regulation in the seven months since the election and will continue to do so. Discussions regarding the Victorian government's pre-commitment policies have occurred with various groups including Clubs Victoria, the Interchurch Gambling Taskforce and Crown Ltd, including its chairman, James Packer.' The Reverend **Tim Costello**, national campaigner for action to reduce problem gambling, said he had been waiting six months for a meeting with Baillieu.

Generation One

The Age reported that Crown Casino is set to become one of the largest employers of indigenous people in Victoria, under a plan partly created by mining magnate **Andrew Forrest**. Crown Limited executive chairman **James Packer** told a discussion at Melbourne University that the casino and its Perth stablemate Burswood plan to employ 2,000 indigenous Australians by 2021. The discussion, organised by Forrest's charity Generation One, centred on career training for indigenous Australians.

Casino death

The Age reported that Crown Casino security guards involved in a gaming-room incident with a man who later died in hospital have been interviewed by homicide detectives. **Anthony Dunning**, aged 40, was in the casino's Velvet Room on 3 July when he was pushed to the ground and pinned to the floor by up to six casino bouncers for six minutes. Dunning fell unconscious while he was pinned to the ground and is believed to have suffered a cardiac arrest. He died at the Alfred hospital

several days later.

Betting scandal

The *Herald Sun* reported that Collingwood player **Heath Shaw** has been suspended for eight matches and fined \$20,000 after being embroiled in a betting scandal also involving captain **Nick Maxwell**. Shaw and a friend bet \$10 each on Maxwell kicking the first goal of the Round 10 game against Adelaide, knowing his teammate was to start in the forward line, giving odds at over 100 to one. It was also revealed that three of his family members placed bets.

Online debt cleared

The Age reported that a prominent online betting agency agreed to cancel more than \$80,000 in debts run up by a Melbourne man who claimed he was lured into trouble by the agency's offer of \$5,000 in free bets. In a case that has prompted calls for a crackdown on betting agencies offering credit, the man, who has a mental illness, faced losing his house after a betting binge he said began with an approach from Sportsbet.com.au to open an account.

TOURISM

Ride the wave

The Age said Victorian Tourism Minister **Louise Asher** unveiled the state's four-year plan to snare a bigger share of Australia's burgeoning international cycling tourism market, and named Melbourne the nation's first 'bike city'. The **Union Cycliste Internationale** - the world governing body for sports cycling - had named Melbourne as only the second nominated 'bike city' in the world, after Copenhagen in 2007. The Switzerland-based union's criteria for the designation include the city's international reputation, and its plan to develop cycling.

Oprah's Victorian vacation

The *Herald Sun* said that Tourism Victoria paid \$650,000 for **Oprah Winfrey** and 92 of her 'mates' from the US to sample three

days of the state's finest dining, wining and touring during her 'Oprah's Ultimate Australian Adventure' event in 2010.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Don't miss out

The Australian reported that Victoria is at risk of losing billions of dollars of federal infrastructure funding because the Baillieu government has not delivered any major project proposals to Australia's independent infrastructure umpire. **Infrastructure Australia** is the publicly funded but independent think tank, which makes recommendations to the federal government about funding of major projects. It has received 59 submissions so far this year, with proposals from every state and territory except Victoria. A report from the body said the Baillieu government told Infrastructure Australia soon after the state election last November that it would assess the former Brumby government's infrastructure plans and then submit proposals. But according to the report 'as at 6 June 2011, no new or revised project submissions have been presented by the Victorian government.' Infrastructure Australia chairman **Sir Rod Eddington** said government reforms to infrastructure planning and delivery had been 'frustratingly slow', dragging Australia's productivity below the average level for the developed world.

Asleep at the wheel

State political editor at *The Age*, **Josh Gordon**, wrote an opinion piece accusing Victoria of being 'asleep at the wheel on infrastructure projects.' He pointed out that the relevant federal authority had received 59 submissions from all states and territories except Victoria. He continues 'Fair or not, the news, buried in an appendix of Infrastructure Australia's annual report to state and federal governments, seemed to reinforce claims that the Baillieu government has been asleep at the wheel for the past seven months.' Defending his government against

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such charges, acting Premier **Peter Ryan** suggested there was little point submitting Victoria's policy proposals because the major projects 'didn't have any money.' 'We haven't snubbed the Infrastructure Australia process,' Ryan said. 'In fact, there is no money in Infrastructure Australia at the present time. They've run out of dough.' Infrastructure Australia's **Michael Deegan** notes that his organisation has no control over federal government finances. 'We advise, governments decide,' Deegan told *The Age*. Nevertheless, the Baillieu government now has just months to get its act together or Infrastructure Australia will be unable to assess its projects until 2013.'

Prices move like a freight train

The Financial Review reported that Metro Trains Melbourne was trying to double the price for freight access to its rail network, triggering a struggle with freight group Asciano. The paper anticipates that higher rail freight access prices could drive up retail prices and cause more freight to go by road. Asciano accused MTM of discouraging the use of rail network by freight operators. Under the changes, a 900-meter long train would pay \$738 to travel 60 kilometres, more than double the existing price, which is confidential. MTM controls the rail network and levies the fees to help pay for maintenance. The rise is intended to fund much higher levels of track repairs. Metro wants to spend \$634 million on track and signals maintenance between 2011 and 2015, compared with \$197 million spent by previous operator Connex between 2006 and 2010.

Freight charge dropped

The Victorian government announced that after extensive consultations with the transport industry and other business groups, Minister for Ports **Denis Napthine** announced that Labor's unpopular 'truck tax' would be replaced by a fairer, cheaper and more efficient licence levy that would be applied to the Port of Melbourne Corporation. 'Labor's Freight Infrastructure Charge would have forced every truck operator in the state who entered the port to pay a tax for each

load they carried,' Dr Napthine said. 'This would have ruined Victoria's competitive advantage when it comes to freight and put many of our smaller, family-run operators at risk. Labor's unfair truck tax would have significantly disadvantaged exporters and transport operators in rural and regional Victoria.' Dr Napthine also said Labor's truck tax would have cost over \$100 million to set up and administer, and was completely out of proportion to the revenue raised.

TRANSPORT

RAIL

Change in the air

The Age reported that the company which manages Southern Cross railway station agreed to install extraction fans to improve air quality. Diesel fumes from V/Line trains idling in the station circulate beneath the station's wavy roof. After a protracted campaign by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, the station's private manager, AssetCo, agreed to install massive extraction fans. However, the Victorian government is likely to foot the bill for work at the station, which was built under a public-private partnership.

Western developments

The *Herald Sun* reported that tens of thousands of commuters faced a longer journey to work from 4 July owing to the closure of one of Melbourne's busiest railway lines. Trains on the Sydenham, Ballarat and Bendigo lines were disrupted until 18 July, because of work on the Regional Rail Link. A trip into the city would take up to 45 minutes longer than usual. Delays were also experienced on Ballarat Rd, where special lanes for replacement buses operated between Anderson Rd and Ashley St. The RRL authority had said there would be significant delays, and advised motorists to seek alternative routes where possible. Trains will still run on the Sydenham line between Watergardens and Albion. Express buses went from Albion and Sunshine stations to Flemington Racecourse. A replacement bus also ran from Sunshine, stopping at all stations to Footscray. Metro organised 230 buses to ferry 18,000 commuters a day to Flemington Racecourse and Footscray stations. About 8,000 Ballarat and Bendigo V/Line commuters had to take replacement coaches.

No soliciting

The Age reported that Metro Trains staff threatened to report a Labor MP to police unless she stopped handing out leaflets

criticising the Baillieu government's two-week shutdown of the Sydenham line. Member for Keilor **Natalie Hutchins** went to Albion station in Sunshine to distribute a petition. It condemned the government's decision to close the line for two weeks, for works on the Regional Rail Link project. This work could have been done at night and on weekends, it said. Hutchins said that, after she had handed out leaflets, an 'aggressive' Metro staff member instructed her to leave. Under the 2005 Transport Conduct Regulations, distributing any leaflet on a suburban railway station without Metro's permission is banned!

Patchy coverage, patchy performance

The Age reported that in 2006 the Victorian government granted \$135 million to the Department of Transport, to oversee installation of a new digital radio system on the train fleet. Now, internal departmental briefing papers show that the project will eventually cost taxpayers \$166 million. The paper said that more than five years after the government committed to replacing the badly outdated radios on Melbourne's trains, work installing a new system is only due to begin next in August. Transport Minister **Terry Mulder** acknowledged the blowout, and blamed the increased cost of the project on his predecessors.

Mulder pointed out that the delays came on top of a \$1 billion blowout on the \$5.3 billion Regional Rail Link project, and the \$350 million extra, which the former government had committed itself to spending on myki. The same Department of Transport officers who were in charge of the project under Labor remain in place. Melbourne's existing train radio system regularly drops out on drivers in 'black spots' across the network. This is recognised as a serious safety issue, as train controllers do not know the location of rail services. It also stops Metro from providing real-time information about when its trains will arrive - as Yarra Trams does with its tramTRACKER service. Replacing the old train radio system with a digital one will also allow passengers to use 3G mobile devices at all times when travelling through the City Loop.

Rail cop plan defended

The Age reported that Acting Chief Commissioner **Ken Lay** defended the deployment of protective services officers as an effective use of resources, despite criticism that most stations see virtually no serious crimes committed. Victoria Police are holding information sessions for people wishing to participate in the rollout of armed guards at Melbourne train stations.

Smart money on metro

The Age reported that Metro is testing a new revenue stream. The rail operator began selling advertisements on the side of Melbourne's trains in a trial that state

WANTED

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Transport Minister **Terry Mulder** has approved. Since 1 July, Metro has been running advertisements on the outside of three trains, for superannuation fund VicSuper.

Arriving on time

The *Herald Sun* reported that Melbourne's train operator Metro posted its best performance results since it took over the service in 2009. The latest performance targets show marked improvements across metropolitan rail lines with the Sandringham line achieving the best result - 98.62 per cent of services maintaining punctuality and delivery. The least successful train line is Belgrave, which has only managed a score of 82.3 per cent. Overall Metro claimed a 91.69 per cent success rate for punctuality and delivery across the 16 main rail lines that make up the metropolitan system.

Get the memo

The Age reported that Metro's 300 station staff have been warned in a memo that it was unprofessional to have a radio or reading material on public view at any of the city's 90 booking offices.

Council on hold

The Age reported that Hobsons Bay City Council wrote to Transport Minister **Terry Mulder** in May asking that he investigate rebuilding Paisley and Galvin stations on the Werribee line. However the Baillieu government has now told the council that while it understood the demand for more railway stations on that line, it had no plans to reopen those stations. Hobsons Bay deputy mayor **Tony Briffa** said soaring patronage on Melbourne's rail network had created chronic car park shortages around major western suburbs stations such as Newport and Laverton.

One at a time

The Age reported that concerns over the soundness of a 127-year-old bridge spanning the Yarra River between Kew and Richmond have led VicRoads to warn that only one tram can cross it at any time. The heritage-listed Victoria Bridge links Victoria Street in Richmond to Barkers Road in Kew. Built in 1884, the steel bridge carries 21,000 cars and hundreds of trams daily on the busy route from Port Melbourne to Box Hill.

Out of steam

The *Herald Sun* reported that rail operator V/Line would investigate how a diesel locomotive was allowed to run out of fuel, delaying thousands of commuters in Melbourne's west. The passenger train was on its way to the city from Marshall, on the Geelong line, when it came to a halt at Footscray about 5.45am on 27 July. Evidently the locomotive does not have a fuel gauge for the driver to check.

Across the tracks

The Victorian shadow minister for transport, **Fiona Richardson**, and her team have been handing out pamphlets at Parliament station criticising the Baillieu governments approach to public transport. It reads: 'Over the next 12 months Melbourne's trains, trams and busses will carry an additional 30.5 million commuters. Despite this, the Baillieu Liberal government has failed to provide any extra train services, new trams, or new buses. Instead, the Baillieu government has introduced a new timetable that has cut city loop services and increased travel times. It's no wonder public transport is getting worse.'

ROAD

Anti-hoon laws

VicRoads ran advertisements alerting the public to the introduction of strict new anti-hoon laws. The laws came into effect on 1 July and mean harsher penalties for dangerous and reckless drivers. More information is available at the VicRoads website.

Where, oh where

The *Herald Sun* continues to publish the publicly available Victoria Police roster for mobile speed camera locations. A secret report by senior police that was supposed to detail how to publicise speed camera locations instead focused on the success of covert cameras. The *Herald Sun* revealed that Victoria Police advised the Coalition against releasing secret mobile speed camera locations in the weeks before it was forced to implement the new State Government's policy of greater transparency. More than 30 pages of briefing notes and emails between police command and Department of Justice officials show strong support for Victoria's 'cover' mobile speed cameras as Police Minister **Peter Ryan** pressed ahead with an election commitment to reveal locations.

Confidence fixed?

The Age reported that confidence remained strong in Victoria's fixed speed cameras despite the New South Wales government shutting down more than a quarter of the devices across that state. New South Wales Roads Minister **Duncan Gay** ordered the cameras switched off after the New South Wales Auditor-General found 38 of the state's 141 cameras had no real safety benefit. While the Auditor-General found no evidence that revenue was a factor in their placement, Mr Gay said the cameras were primarily revenue raisers and he pledged to dismantle them in August. Victoria's Auditor-General is currently auditing the state's speed cameras, at the request of Police Minister **Peter Ryan**.

The road figures

The *Herald Sun* reported that more than 70 deaths were excluded from Victoria's road toll last year before declaring it a record low. Victoria Police did not tell the State Government it had not included 72 other deaths, amounting to 25 per cent of its claimed record low toll of 287 fatalities. Road safety strategies - including saturation use of speed cameras - were credited with helping to achieve the milestone. Analysis by the *Herald Sun* showed a change in how decisions are made about which deaths are included in the toll meant that substantially more deaths were written off last year than in previous years. The paper discovered the review panel excluded 30 deaths after deciding the crashes had resulted from natural causes - mainly heart attacks. Police wiped off another 17 fatalities on the grounds they were intentional deaths, such as suicides. And 25 more were excluded after being declared off-road crashes. Police Association secretary **Greg Davies** expressed concern about the big number of exclusions.

Tyranny of motorcyclists

The Age reported accusations that Victoria's motorcycle licensing system is inadequate. **Mark Collins**, national manager for Honda Australia Rider Training, which trains 20,000 riders annually, said 'the learner test only tests three skills: the ability to ride slowly, the ability to corner at 10km/h and the ability to stop.' VicRoads director of road user safety **James Holgate** said novice riders made up almost one in three of all rider fatalities and serious injuries. Pre-learner training is not compulsory for motorcyclists in Victoria, but Holgate said evidence from providers was that most learners had some training before taking the test. He said one option under consideration was mandatory pre-learner training. **Mark Davidson**, a rider trainer and tester with 12 years' experience, said: 'We are sending people out underprepared. I sometimes feel like I am signing someone's death warrant.' He said he didn't believe any trainer in the state agreed with the current system.

Last bus to Kinglake

The Age reported that a bus service linking bushfire-devastated Kinglake with Whittlesea has been cancelled. The free service was established after the devastating Black Saturday fires to give transport to families that had lost cars in the blaze. Kinglake is now connected to other towns by just two bus services a day. The Labor government's service, which travelled via Kinglake West, included at least nine shuttle bus services on weekdays and Saturday and eight on Sundays, with the same number of return services. The Department of Transport said that the service was shut down on 10 July as each service was averaging about one passenger per trip.

AIR

Low flying tiger

The head of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau told *The Age* that a low-flying Tiger Airways aircraft at Avalon Airport did not represent a serious threat to the plane or passengers. The Bureau found that Tiger flight 6207 aborted a landing, due to higher than expected tailwind. The ground controller then advised the pilots to climb to 3,000 feet, which they did, and then the pilots advised controllers they would make a U-turn for the second landing approach, which the controller approved. Afterwards, the plane descended to 1600 feet, which was below the minimum safe altitude for that area, the investigators found. The incident triggered the airline's grounding. However, the Bureau board's chief commissioner, **Martin Dolan**, said that 'There's a substantial safety buffer built into the minimum safe altitude arrangements, which means there was no serious threat to the safety of the aircraft.'

Avalon tiger endangered

The Age reported that Airways was expected to pull out of the **Lindsay Fox**-owned Avalon Airport near Geelong after the airline resumes services on 6 August. Its main base in Australia is at Melbourne Airport.

Still on track

The Age reported that planning for the Baillieu government's rail link to Avalon will continue despite reports troubled cut-price airline Tiger is to pull out of the airport. Premier **Ted Baillieu** said the reports had no long-term implications for the rail link.

THE WORKPLACE. IR

Building union fined

The Age reported that Victoria's construction union had \$415,000 in fines levied against it as a result of a blockade and strikes that disrupted work at the new Royal Children's Hospital and at six other building sites around Melbourne. The Victorian branch of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union has now been fined nearly \$1 million in the past month and ordered to pay about \$2.5 million in the 2010-11 financial year - record fines against a union under the controversial building laws. The latest fines, imposed by the Federal Court, are mostly for 'unlawful' industrial action by the union and its senior officials.

Workers back pay deal

The Age reported that a wages deal, which will cover more than 30,000 building workers

across the state, was unanimously supported, with a labourer in 2012 to get an annual rate of \$123,000 for a 56-hour week while a carpenter will get \$130,000 for the same hours. That will affect big projects where the 56-hour week and overtime are most common and it is estimated about two-thirds of the industry work a 56-hour week at least some time during a year. For smaller builders on a 36-hour week the rates are more digestible with a labourer to get nearly \$70,000 a year in 2012 and a carpenter slightly more than that. Premier **Ted Baillieu** expressed 'significant concern' about rising labour costs in the construction industry, and in particular the pay at the Wonthaggi desalination project. The government is now working on a building code, modelled on one introduced by the Howard government, that would require bidders for state projects to respect freedom of association and stamp out 'unlawful or undesirable' workplace practices.

Graphic union protest

The Age reported that the Baillieu government warned unions they will need to agree to dramatic workplace changes if they want better pay deals, as the police union ramps up its pay campaign by unveiling a graphic mobile billboard showing bloodied and beaten police assaulted on the job. In a departure from past practice, the Coalition has told government departments and agencies to develop detailed proposals to fund pay increases above the 2.5 per cent minimum.

Public servants pay

The Age reported that the Victoria's public sector union was preparing to launch a tough pay campaign against the Baillieu government amid claims the state's public servants are the worst-paid in the nation. Wage agreements covering 36,000 public servants expired on 30 June, with the state government insisting it will grant increases above 2.5 per cent only if unions accept major workplace changes and government departments offer proposals to fund them.

Community and Public Sector Union

Victorian secretary **Karen Batt** said a report in *The Age*, revealing that the government was preparing to demand such changes, showed it was 'walking away' from promises to improve services.

Workplace bullying

The Age reported that the number of Victorians claiming to have been bullied at work has increased greatly, with complaints to WorkSafe Victoria more than doubling to 6,000 in the past year. However, no action was taken on the vast majority of complaints, as most fell well short of what constitutes workplace bullying under the law. People complained of bullying after being sacked for assaulting a manager, missing out on a pay rise or not being invited to a work party.

Public pay a gender issue?

The Age reported that the Baillieu government rejected claims that gender plays a big role in the low wages of Victorian community sector workers. The government also attacked a union equal pay push that would deliver the biggest gains to higher paid workers, claiming in a submission to a landmark equal pay case, that the Australian Services Union claim would result in a rise of up to 79 per cent for the best-paid workers and managers in the community sector. By contrast, those who do most of the 'caring', such as lower classification youth or social workers, would receive rises of as little as 16 per cent. The submission, from state Industrial Relations Minister **Richard Dalla-Riva**, said 'significant non-gender' factors explained much of the pay gap, such as the role governments play in funding services, and superior bargaining outcomes in the public sector. His submission dismissed the union's argument that the gap in pay between workers in the community sector and those in the public sector was entirely due to gender. 'How this proposition operates in light of the fact that the unions' own submission is that workers in the public sector perform comparable caring work and are themselves predominantly women, is left unexplained.' Australian Services Union assistant branch secretary **Lisa Darmanin** said that the union was disappointed by the government's position and said it was 'predictable' if its main aim was to minimise costs.

TALES OF BUREAUCRACY

Big projects, little success

The Age reported on a study's findings that implicitly criticised the former Victorian government's approach to decision-making. Economic consultant ACIL Tasman concluded in a report, *Victoria's Productivity, Competitiveness and Participation*, that the headline-grabbing big road projects in Victoria have barely paid their way, returning benefits no bigger than the costs. ACIL Tasman prepared the report for the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, the state's equivalent to the Productivity Commission, which has been asked by Treasurer **Kim Wells** to prepare a state-based reform agenda.

By contrast, evaluations published by the industry's research arm, Austroads, show that smaller road projects in Victoria typically deliver benefits worth two to four times the cost of the project. The report said the decision to build Australia's biggest desalination plant in one hit, rather than adopt a staged approach, has been 'quite costly' for the state. It also finds that too much emphasis was put on water restrictions, when raising

COMMUNITY

the price of water would have done the job more simply. Tackling a wide range of topics, the report also suggests that the Baillieu government should:

- Consider a historic tradeoff to cut stamp duties, such as those on property sales, and raise more revenue from land tax, by overhauling the exemptions that mean most land goes untaxed.
- Introduce congestion pricing on Melbourne's roads, and earmark the money to pay for improving roads and public transport.
- Allow private operators to run Manila-style jeepneys, minibuses or group taxis on routes poorly served by public transport, or at times when trams, trains or buses are rare.

Without a trace

About 35,000 people go missing each year in Australia and in the past year 7280 Victorians have disappeared. That's according to Victoria Police figures released for National Missing Persons week, beginning on 1 August.

Euthanasia

The Age reported that **Ted Baillieu** rejected a dying man's plea for voluntary euthanasia to be put back on the agenda in Victoria, saying it should be dealt with at a national level. Melbourne lawyer **Alan Rosendorff**, 58, who is dying of cancer, wrote a letter to the Premier in the last week of June, and requested the premier refer the matter to the Victorian Law Reform Commission.

Behind the veil

The Age reported that the Victorian government would consider laws being adopted in other states that give police the power to force Muslim women wearing a full veil to reveal their faces. The Police Association also has supported the need for more clarity for its members. However, the *Herald Sun* reported that Victorian Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Minister **Nick Kotsiras** stated that he was comfortable with Muslim women wearing the burqa and full-face veil niqab.

Child protection surge

The Age reported that more Victorian child protection workers will be moved to the front line, and will receive extra pay and training in a bid to improve conditions and stop one in four workers quitting each year. Under the changes, the percentage of workers who deal directly with children will increase from 63 per cent to 75 per cent. The government would aim for a less bureaucratic environment by giving front-line staff more decision-making power around families that they deal with.

Red dog run

The Age ran a story on **Luke Hura**, a showbiz animal trainer for 30 years. He said an

expressive face landed **Koko** the kelpie the title role in the Australian movie *Red Dog*, the story of a beloved 1970s outback stray, which had its Melbourne premiere at the Jam Factory in South Yarra on 31 July. Hura said Koko's work ethic got him through the nine-week shoot in Adelaide and the Pilbara in Western Australia, although after too many film takes in a day he would refuse to go on!

PM launches Nixon

The Australian reported that prime minister **Julia Gillard** would launch the biography of controversial former Victorian police chief commissioner **Christine Nixon**. Melbourne University Publishing approached Gillard to launch the biography *A Fair Cop*, co-written by *The Age's* Jo Chandler. Gillard faced criticism over her decision to support Nixon's memoirs, with a number of Labor MPs questioning the former chief commissioner's criticism of the bushfire royal commission. Extracts from the book later appeared in *The Age*.

Nixon claims persecution

The Age reported that former Victorian chief police commissioner **Christine Nixon** accused **Rupert Murdoch's** News Ltd newspapers of being instrumental in bringing down her successor in the job, **Simon Overland**. She also said she believed she had been subject to a relentless campaign by News Ltd papers, particularly the *Herald Sun*, to force her from public life since she retired following the Black Saturday bushfires on 7 February 2009. 'In the 2½ years since retiring, they have run a vendetta against me. They have published articles and beat up stories saying I am not supposed to teach courses, shouldn't be allowed to sit on boards, not allowed to do leadership lectures, should have quit my job as chair of the Bushfire Recovery Authority, should not mentor people, and the final one is I am not allowed to write a book.'

Choosing sides

The Australian reported that state Labor frontbencher **James Merlino** strongly backed the royal commission, rejecting **Christine Nixon's** accusation that it was more a witch-hunt than a search for the truth. In her attack on the integrity of the Victorian bushfires royal commission, which condemned the quality of her evidence, Nixon likened it to the 'worst kind of kangaroo court'. Merlino told *The Australian* that Labor continued to endorse the commission's work, as it had in government, and rejected claims by Nixon of a News Limited-led media conspiracy. *The Age* reported that the royal commission was defended across the political spectrum, with premier **Ted Baillieu** flatly rejecting the comparison to a kangaroo court.

Nixon cops flack

A number of commentators have turned on former Victorian chief police commissioner **Christine Nixon** since the release of her book. The *Herald Sun* editorial read: 'Nixon's bizarre

accusation that the media pursued a 'fattist' agenda is a slur. It also reveals the depths she is prepared to sink as she attempts to repair her tattered reputation.' Former premier **Jeff Kennett** wrote: 'the former top cop's book was a final chance to apologies for her faults. But by pointing the finger elsewhere, she has taken the path of no return.' Police Association Secretary, **Greg Davies**, lamented that she 'could have been remembered as Australia's first female police commissioner – lauded for her achievement in reaching the pinnacle of what was a traditionally male, conservative profession. Instead she will be remembered as a woman out of her depth.' Even Melbourne University Press, which is publishing the book has come under pressure with former Liberal MP **Fran Bailey** whose electorate was devastated by the fires said the University should not be subsidising non academic books that benefit individuals.

Victory tour

The Age reported that state cabinet are discussing plans to recognise local cycling hero **Cadel Evans'** victory in the Tour de France. Premier **Ted Baillieu** suggested people 'wear a bit of yellow' on Monday 25 July to celebrate.

Double take

Interestingly, and to be careful with the headlines, because occasionally the age has a different front page for a later edition on the same day, which for the scanner of the news can leave front page news item onto a subsequent page.

That's using your head

In 1990 Victoria broke new ground by forcing cyclists to wear crash helmets. *The Age* reported that on 30 July at Federation Square, a small band of cyclists used Melbourne's troubled shared bike scheme to rail against those laws. The bike scheme has been hampered by the inconvenience of carrying a helmet in order to use the bikes. Some argue that the laws have led to an exaggeration of the dangers of cycling, and deprived people of their right to choose. However, a University of New South Wales study released in June showed cyclist head injuries had fallen by almost a third since compulsory helmet laws began. VicRoads also cites several studies supporting the helmet law.

Burke and Wills

The Royal Society of Victoria conducted the **Burke and Wills** hearing as a mock inquiry into the tragic death of the famous colonial duo. The inquest was open to the public, held at the Legislative Assembly chamber of State Parliament in July on the 150th anniversary of their death in 1861 in remote western New South Wales.

Vale

Robert Molesworth Hobill Cole, accountant, farmer, friend to very many people, a wonderful man. **George Rowan Nicks, AO**,

surgeon, educator, philanthropist, involved in the first case of open heart surgery in New South Wales in 1957. **David John Austin.** **Michael Joseph Callaghan.** **Jean Mary Henderson, MBE.** **Johanna Edith Shearer.** **Kaele Dian Way, AM,** City of Whitehorse Councillor. **John Bruce Bingeman, QC.** **Sir Edward Cohen,** aged 98. **Lorna Ashton.** **David Austin.** **James Harvey Pettifer,** Brighton Grammar School staff member. **Sean Wight,** Melbourne Football Club player, lost his battle with lung cancer at age 47. **Natalie Wood,** lay dead in her Sydney home in Surry Hills for eight years. **John Norman Myers.** **Brian Douglas Clendinnen, AM.** **Carly Hibberd,** professional cyclist struck and killed by a car while she was riding on a road north of Milan, Italy, just three months from her wedding day. **Dr Peter Tisdall,** aged 71, after 45 years of service to the community of Kyabram. **Dr Anthony Roseman,** of the Alfred Hospital. **Allan Jeans,** AFL coach, player, legend, three time Hawthorn premiership player, '66 St Kilda premiership coach. **Googie Withers,** aged 94, stage and screen actress, raised in Britain and moved to Australia in 1958 with her Australian actor husband John McCallum, who died last year. **Dr. Gerald Duff.** **Dr Kevin Thomas Spillane.** **Ian Frederick Harvey Wilson,** age 76, political scientist. **Charles Napier Bucknall,** VX108451. **John Frederick Filmer,** aged 77, community volunteer for Vietnamese refugees, former Springvale councillor. **Tom Hungerford,** aged 96, novelist, poet, playwright and autobiographer. **John Stevens,** aged 81, author of the *Marvellous Melbourne* column in *The Age* from the 1960's through to the late 1990's. **Phillip Sydney Hunt,**

surgeon, teacher, Monash Medical Centre. **John Robert McCreedy, OAM.** **Dr Leslie Markman,** Epworth Freemasons Maternity Unit. **Margaret Olley,** aged 88, artist, won the Archibald Prize in 1948 and 2011, represented in major state and national collections, including four works at the National Gallery of Victoria, Order of Australia 2006. **Warren Mann HC.** **Judge Gordon Just,** WWII veteran. **Francis Xavier Murphy, AM.** **Charles John Stevens,** journalist, first chief sub-editor at *The Australian.* **Rob Chalmers,** aged 82, former President of the National Press Club, 60 years as a gallery journalist, published the weekly newsletter *Inside Canberra,* journalist Alan Ramsey reflected on Rob's career in a tribute to mark his retirement (inside.org.au/sixty-years-in-the-gallery). **Veronica Mary Duncan, BEM,** aged 102, campaign manager, community volunteer, a pillar and founding member of the Liberal Party with her husband, joined the Gardenvale branch in 1974. **Pauline Neura Reilly, OAM,** ornithologist, author. **Marina Berezowsky, AM,** dancer, one of the four founding teachers of The Australian Ballet School. **Roddy Meagher, QC,** age 79, a Judge of Appeal of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, latterly, he has also become an inadvertent alpaca breeder. **Jim Thynne,** Allens Arthur Robinson partner of 30 years. **Kenneth Harold McMahon,** aged 84, founder of Mineral Securities Australia. **Dr Ida Bell Matthews, OAM,** aged 91, a pioneering medical officer with Melbourne City Council for 29 years, infant welfare.

Otto von Habsburg, politician. His father Charles was emperor of Austria and King of Hungary and his great-uncle was Archduke

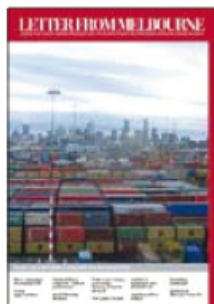
Franz Ferdinand, he married the German Princess Regina of Saxe-Meiningen in 1951; she died in 2010; they had lived near Lake Starnberg in Bavaria, and had five daughters and two sons, who survive him. The eldest, Karl, has now become head of the house of Habsburg, who had been dispossessed by Austria in 1919 but kept its private fortune.

Letter from Melbourne scans *The Age* obituaries, among others, as the basis for our own vale section.

Woof, woof, woof

The Age reported that businessman **Frank Samways,** aged 82, left Melbourne's Lost Dogs Home \$3 million - the largest bequest in its 100-year history. Managing director, **Dr Graeme Smith,** said Samways 'never set foot inside the shelter because he thought it would be too disturbing for him. He didn't want to see any dog or cat incarcerated.' Samways was a single man with no children, and was a furniture factory owner in Strathmore. The home has used the funds to buy a factory, 50 metres from the Gracie Street complex, to be converted into a vet clinic. The home, founded by a group of animal lovers in 1911, gets no government funding. However, Dr Smith revealed that in the past year - apart from Samways's gift - it had received more than \$6 million in bequests and donations. The windfalls have led to a frenzy of development, including a \$2 million sick and injured animal shelter, and a \$2 million training and education centre.

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"There is nothing more difficult to carry out nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things"

– Machiavelli in THE PRINCE (1513)

THE LOBBYIST Alistair Urquhart

Alistair Urquhart is a respected and independent public affairs professional with over 20 years experience both in Australia and overseas.

THE BUREAUCRAT Doug Connell

Doug Connell is a project management and logistics expert who has held senior positions in Industry, the Port of Melbourne, The Department of Transport and Australia Post.

THE DEPARTMENTAL HEAD David Wilson

David Wilson has held executive positions in government in Victoria (Director of the Ministry of Transport) and a Logistics Manager for WillowWare Australia. He is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Infrastructure Engineering at the University of Melbourne.

THE MINISTER Robert Maclellan

The Honourable Robert Maclellan AM has had a distinguished career in State Government as a cabinet minister with portfolios in transport, industrial relations and planning.