

# LETTER FROM CANBERRA

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## WISHLIST

- Rubik's Cube ☐
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- Crossword Puzzles ☐
- Cashflow, The Game ☐
- Emissions Trading Schemes ☐
- Macquarie Bank Certificates ☐

**NOVEMBER/MID-DECEMBER 2009 Issue No. 20 ETS/Climate Change/Christmas Edition**

*Letter From Canberra* is a sister publication of *Letter From Melbourne*, which was established 16 years ago

## INSIDE

Liberals divided,  
then united, over  
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ascendant

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## WELCOME

*Letter from Canberra* is focused on the interface of business and government, with enough politics and bureaucracy to understand the, or any, relevant business opportunities.

We have been publishing *Letter from Canberra's* sister publication *Letter From Melbourne*, a public policy digest, for 16 years. Commencing with the Kennett era corporatisation and privatisation of energy and other utilities and the other fresh broom approach of a new government, where we focused on business opportunities. Increasingly, we included matters in the other states and adopted a more federal focus.

The recent change in federal government opens up new business opportunities, particularly the government's new emphasis on climate change, carbon trading, water, industrial relations, education, information technology and the traditional sectors.

For many years, our other publications have included the well-known federal government Departmental Wall Chart. (NOW AVAILABLE at 03 96541300 or letterfrommelbourne.com.au) We conduct seminars and informal luncheons and meetings in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney.

Most people have their clipping services and a range of email products/newsletters/etc. At the end of the month, *Letter From Canberra* gives a broad overview of what has been going on, not just in one industry but across all industries and the world of business and government generally. Objective. Independent. Read it on the plane. Or at a coffee shop in New York. And then give it to a friend who is interested in Australia.

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## EDITORIAL: OUR ENERGY FUTURE IN DETAIL

A respected free-marketeer told your editor that the big ETS winner, in Australia, is Macquarie Bank, because it will have to clip ever so many transactions in the ETS 'cap-and-trade' process. We are all starting to really learn some of the detail of an ETS for Australia, and the World, which is/has been hidden from view by both sides of politics, because of politics. Labor has its parliamentary members under control, and hence most of its votership. So much easier to keep control when in government, (the power, etc). The Liberals, on the other hand, have struggled for (any) cohesion. Let alone with their National partners.

It's a pity that the attention to detail by the media and other opinion formers, following the Liberal Party decision to replace Turnbull with Abbott, was not shown towards what the emissions trading scheme actually is. (Exceptions being Kenneth Davidson in *The Age* and some others, like Terry McCrann, who have written interesting, often blunt, critiques of the government's fiscal stimulus, NBN, and CPRS/ETS, etc. And provide contrary scenarios of how things could work).

Copenhagen's 35,000, climate change guest have started talking/debating/negotiating/protesting as we go to press. We will have a detailed update after some of the **postC** slanging matches and your Christmas Dinner have been digested.

A tax versus trading versus financial incentives debate on carbon is set to re/ignite. The challenge for the two main federal parliamentary leaders is 'to take the climate change debate out of the realm of high policy priests and into the world of hard retail politics'. Part of the debate will include a nationally-driven tax on road movements, as mentioned in the Henry tax review.

BIG ISSUES for the new year. Climate change and relative importance of the ETS in it. The National Broadband Network. Refugees, probably/certainly. A federal election. So even more political spin for us all than this past year!

Merry Christmas to our subscribers, advertisers, advisers, and extended readership, and a Happy and Prosperous 2010.



## 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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## CLIMATE CHANGE. ETS. COALITION DOINGS

### Without fanfare

On November 16, the emissions trading bills passed the House of Representatives, with political insiders divided over whether a deal was close to getting it through the Senate. *The Age* reported the Opposition voted against emissions trading legislation in the House of Representatives, even while negotiations on its amendments continued.

### Democracy Politics rules

The Liberal Party began to drop their support for carbon emissions trading after receiving party research showing voters are increasingly skittish about putting a price on carbon. Despite **Malcolm Turnbull's** ongoing attempts to broker a deal with Labor that would clear the way for **Kevin Rudd's** proposed ETS, political hardheads among the Liberals moved closer to the Nationals' view that endorsing carbon trading is political poison. Senior Liberals are now saying the party polling, and public polls, show increasing concern about the cost of an ETS. They believe the best political option is to run a campaign against the Government based on increased costs to households and industry.

An editorial in *The Australian* early in the month felt that Turnbull and Joyce were making the same mistake in arguing over the ETS and needed to make the Government the issue.

On the opinion pages of *The Age*, **Shaun Carney** wrote that the Liberals can't afford to take a party so deeply conflicted on climate change to the next election. The party Senate leader, **Nick Minchin**, has nailed himself securely to the mast as a climate change disbeliever, and has encouraged other MPs to attach themselves to the cause. Liberal moderate **Mal Washer** accused Minchin of using climate change to pursue factional warfare on behalf of the party's conservatives. Nearby, Turnbull took aim at Liberal frontbencher **Tony Abbott's** flip-flopping on emissions trading, as the argument sparked fresh leadership speculation. *The Australian's* editor-at-large, **Paul Kelly**, wrote that a Turnbull victory on climate change is likely to leave a bitterly divided party. See immediately below for what followed.

### The Coalition showdown

**Malcolm Turnbull** came under siege from his opponents in the party after he controversially declared victory in his push to win Opposition support for the emissions trading deal that he and frontbencher **Ian McFarlane** had done with the Government, *The Age* reported. An

editorial in the same paper felt that despite the political risks, the Opposition leader has shown true leadership and deserves praise for his climate change stand. A more thorough report in *The Age* the following day said Turnbull fended off a move for a leadership spill by 48 votes to 35. Victorian Liberal and former Opposition climate change spokesman, **Andrew Robb**, dealt a devastating blow to Turnbull when he turned against doing a deal on emissions trading. In further turmoil, three Liberal Parliamentary secretaries – senators **Mitch Fifield**, **Brett Mason** and **Mathias Cormann** – offered their resignations because they oppose the emissions trading legislation. Twelve Liberals crossed the floor in the Senate during a series of votes related to emissions trading bills, while Liberal Senate leader **Nick Minchin** and his deputy **Eric Abetz** absented themselves from the votes.

Despite all this, Turnbull had the support of enough Liberals to get the Government's scheme passed. In a further embarrassing twist, it was revealed that **Malcolm Turnbull** received an e-mail in June from discredited former Treasury officer **Godwin Grech** advising him to support the emissions trading legislation. A Senate committee cleared Grech of the serious charge of contempt – but shed fresh light on the relationship between the public servant and Turnbull. Turnbull remained defiant in the face of the party falling away beneath him (in all, 10 of Turnbull's frontbenchers quit over the compromised emissions trading deal), believing he could muster the seven Liberal votes that were needed to get the legislation passed in the Senate. However, he wasn't leader long enough to achieve this. *The Australian's* political editor, **Dennis Shanahan**, noted that it was a grassroots revolt by local Liberal branches and members that brought down the leader of the Parliamentary Liberal party. He compared Turnbull to **Meg Lees**, the Liberal leader following the same path as the leader of the Australian Democrats, who sealed a deal with **John Howard** on the GST to get it through the Senate only to be cannibalised by the Democrat party membership. Another senior Liberal to call for Turnbull's resignation was the party's House of Representatives whip, **Michael Johnson**.

### What a month

The emissions trading scheme caused enough friction in the Liberal party to result in a leadership spill, which initially saw pressure come on to shadow treasurer **Joe Hockey** (speeches he gave earlier in the month indicated he saw himself as a potential leader) to assume the leadership with the full backing of the party, but only if he went back on his desire and his word to pass an emissions trading scheme into legislation. His refusal to do this, and his eventual compromise

decision to propose a conscience vote on the ETS in the Senate, led to **Tony Abbott**, who represents the conservative side of the Liberal party and who led a front bench exodus over the Coalition's agreement with the Government about the scheme, throwing his hat in the ring. In an initial three-way ballot between **Malcolm Turnbull**, **Joe Hockey** and **Tony Abbott**, where Hockey was favourite to win, Turnbull received 26 votes; Hockey, 23; and Abbott, 35. In the second vote, Abbott only just defeated Turnbull 42 to 41, with one member reportedly simply writing in 'no' on their ticket. When it became apparent that the Liberal party did not have the numbers to get the climate legislation referred to a Senate inquiry, they voted down the legislation, giving the Government a trigger for a possible early double dissolution election against a Coalition now decisively shifted to the right with Abbott as leader.

On the opinion pages of *The Age*, former treasurer **Peter Costello** wrote a piece on the Liberal leadership saying Turnbull inflicted more damage on his colleagues than **Kevin Rudd** ever did.

### The shadow shuffle

In **Tony Abbott's** shadow cabinet reshuffle, **Nick Minchin** took on responsibility for resources and energy, **Eric Abetz** became shadow employment and workplace minister and **Barnaby Joyce** is finance spokesman. **Sophie Mirabella** takes responsibility for industry and innovation, **Tony Smith** becomes communications spokesman and **Bruce Billson** gets small-business. As mentioned elsewhere **Greg Hunt** becomes climate change spokesman. **Scott Morrison** takes immigration. **Kevin Andrews** is opposition families and human services spokesman, former attorney-general **Phillip Ruddock** became shadow cabinet secretary, and **Bronwyn Bishop** was the third of three former Howard government ministers to receive a promotion, being named shadow minister for seniors, the *Herald Sun* reported. **Christopher Pyne** remains education spokesman and **Michael Ronaldson** stays shadow special minister of state. **Joe Hockey** was confirmed as shadow treasurer. **Cory Bernardi** and **Sharman Stone** were also elevated to the shadow cabinet. **Ian MacFarlane**, after negotiating on climate change with the government, now covers water.

### Try and try again and again

The Government says it will try again in February to get the emissions trading scheme through Parliament, in a move that will put pressure on the Liberals but probably delay any double dissolution election, *The Age* reported. Deputy Prime Minister **Julia Gillard** said that 'the Government believed that over the Christmas period there was time for the calmer heads in the Liberal

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party to consider the question again'. The *Financial Review* reported that the Government is punting on the Copenhagen climate change talks shifting the political debate in its favour and that further consideration of its ever-changing ETS will cause more internal troubles for the Coalition.

## Abbott alignment

Unlike Turnbull who wanted it passed into legislation (as presumably do a lot of Australians who gave the Government a mandate to do so), Abbott was free to attack the emissions trading scheme, calling it an energy taxation scheme that deserves the most rigorous scrutiny by Parliament. He called it a \$120b tax on the Australian public, and that's just for starters. Perversely, in his attack, he has done a better job of summarising the ETS for the Australian people than a couple of years of trying by the Government. What Government, however, would admit that they are increasing taxes on the Australian people. Abbott's comments are nevertheless slightly misleading, as the emissions trading scheme was chosen over a direct carbon tax as a way of linking carbon emissions to the economy, precisely because it is not exactly a tax and is consequently more acceptable to the public, and leaders and governments around the world. **Tony Abbott** has ruled out advocating any form of carbon tax or emissions trading scheme at the next election and is open-minded about a debate on nuclear power. A week or so after the leadership change, **Turnbull** attacked Abbott over his climate change stance, saying it lacks credibility and integrity.

Abbott will target more than \$20b in Government stimulus measures over the next two years to pay for his election commitments, and will also confront Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** on heavy public spending, including waste on the broadband project. Abbott's is a new direction for the Opposition that sharpens the differences with the Rudd government and embraces some of the Howard-era policies that were avoided by the previous leader, **Malcolm Turnbull**. The new Opposition agenda includes an overhaul of federal-state relations, exempting small business from Labor's unfair dismissal rules and returning to the individual contracts in use before Work Choices. *The Australian's* editor-at-large, **Paul Kelly**, wrote that the new Opposition leader has emerged from right field, suddenly, shockingly and swinging hard. Abbott defies the political rule book. No adviser can tell him what to say or how to say it.

In a direct appeal to Labor's working-class constituency, the newly elected opposition leader selected the Bloomfield open-cut coalmine at East Maitland as a backdrop to warn that 16,000 jobs could be lost in the Hunter Valley, should the ETS come into effect. *Letter from Canberra's* editor became familiar with the Hunter Valley and many other coal ventures around the world during his first career as a coal trader.

## Make way for Barnaby

**Helen Coonan** has stepped down from the Coalition front bench, clearing the way for Nationals Senate leader **Barnaby Joyce**, who was instrumental in the leadership spill and Abbott's coming to power, to get her shadow finance job, *The Age* reported.

## The by-elections

*The Age* felt that the results of the by-elections in the two blue-ribbon Liberal party seats of Higgins and Bradfield, won by Liberal Party members **Kelly O'Dwyer** and **Paul Fletcher** respectively, suggested **Tony Abbott** easily passed his first big test as Liberal leader. In Higgins, author and intellectual **Clive Hamilton** stood for the Greens; Labor did not contest either seat. A slight swing towards the Liberals was recorded in both seats, with **Glenn Milne** noting in *The Australian* that Howard's battlers came out for Abbott in the by-elections, covering over any protest votes that may have been posted by the higher income earners in those electorates. The second test for Abbott, not so big, was the inevitable question that politicians receive about drug use. He said he had tried to smoke a joint once but was unsuccessful due to a coughing fit it caused. His second encounter with illicit drugs was when he ordered a Lassie in India, unaware that it was a sort of hemp yoghurt. He said he was away with the fairies for about 12 hours. His drug of choice, now, is exercise.

## Ready John?

Former tennis player and *Gladiator* host **John Alexander**, who unsuccessfully sought Liberal preselection for ex-leader **Brendan Nelson's** North Shore seat of Bradfield seven months ago, is vying for preselection in **John Howard's** old seat of Bennelong. The vote will be held on December 16.

## What should we do father?

**John Howard** was contacted by all three members before they contested the leadership but refused to weigh into the debate over whether the Coalition should

support the Government's emissions trading bill. His refusal to comment came about two weeks after he said Labor's ETS was similar to the scheme the Coalition took the last election, *The Australian* reported.

## The Doc was up

**John Howard** had a shoe thrown at him after an Australian expatriate hurled a Doc Martens during a speech at Cambridge University in the Cambridge Student Unions debating chamber, *The Australian* reported.

## Judas(es)

*The Australian* reported that **Kevin Rudd** accused the Nationals of betraying the next generation of Australian farmers by deciding to flatly oppose the carbon pollution reduction scheme despite the deal with **Malcolm Turnbull**. 'I cannot reconcile it,' he said. 'If you look at what the CSIRO is saying about the impact of drought and droughtedness into the future, drought intensity, drought duration, look at the problems of water supply already across rural Australia [it doesn't make sense].'

## What did the Abbott say to the Monk...

What did **Tony Abbott** say to the **Dalai Lama**? 'Sorry I'm late,' apparently, after the new opposition leader was late to the meeting with the Dalai Lama in Sydney. Climate change was not discussed, even though earlier in his visit the Dalai Lama had come out strongly in favour of action on climate change. Rudd did not meet the Dalai Lama.

## And the Bishop said to her (former) boss...

Liberal Deputy **Julie Bishop** was accused of ducking an invitation to flank **Malcolm Turnbull** at a crucial press conference as he fought for his political life.

## Meanwhile, while the Coalition argues...

Key climate change measures are tracking near or beyond worst-case scenarios than predicted just two years ago, according to a science update drawing on more than 200 recently published studies. Co-authored by 26 climate scientists, *The Copenhagen Diagnosis* reports the melting of summer Arctic sea ice, loss of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, and projections of rising sea levels have accelerated dramatically since 2007, *The Age* reported.

A report by German-based consultants **Climate Analytics** says wealthy countries will arrive in Denmark with proposals that would lead to a joint cut

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in greenhouse gas emissions of between 13 and 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020. The industrialised world target is well below the 25 to 40 per cent range that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found would be necessary for a 50-50 chance of keeping the temperature rise near 2 degrees.

As the talks at Copenhagen got under way on December 7, Climate Change Minister **Penny Wong** expressed optimism an effective deal to cut greenhouse gas emissions was possible at the conference, despite acknowledging that an unprecedented treaty covering all major emitter was never a realistic goal for this year, *The Age* reported. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the two-week United Nations conference, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change head **Rajendra Pachauri** said the climate science that brought representatives of the 192 governments to Denmark was robust and clear despite claims of data manipulation and suppression of alternative views following the leaking of e-mails from scientists at the University of East Anglia.

## Meanwhile, while the Coalition argues... 2

Australia is set to record its third warmest year on record in 2009, and the world its fifth, according to data collected by the World Meteorological Organisation. The annual analysis found the 2000s were warmer than the 1990s, which were warmer than the 1980s, challenging claims that the globe has cooled in recent years, *The Age* reported.

## Indeed it did

The Government decided to exempt agriculture from its emissions trading scheme, bringing the prospect of a coalition deal closer and increasing pressure on **Malcolm Turnbull's** opposition leadership. The move will mean farmers will not have to buy permits for their carbon emissions, substantially reducing costs. Under previous plans, agriculture was to have been included from 2015, the *Herald Sun* reported.

## For nothing

After 13 intense meetings with Climate Change Minister **Penny Wong**, opposition resources spokesman **Ian McFarlane** said he was inching towards a deal on the emissions trading scheme.

## The deal

In *The Age*, **Tim Colebatch** reported that the deal struck between **Penny Wong** and **Ian McFarlane** proposed a package that was not radically different from the

one the Senate rejected in August. Amongst a series of compromises, an additional \$7b was granted for compensation to industry and \$4 billion more in free permits, with total package reaching \$7.3b over 10 years, was given to coal-fired electricity generators. Nevertheless, TRUenergy managing director **Richard McIndoe** criticised the emissions trading proposal, saying the increased compensation package would still leave coal-fired power stations \$13b out-of-pocket.

## In the Hunt

The Opposition's environment spokesman, **Greg Hunt**, wrote his thesis on whether greenhouse gases were best reduced by taxes, trade or regulation. Hunt admits his work in the late 80s was raw but says he has been driven in public life by policy solutions to global warming. In a speech three years ago, he advocated direct action measures to reduce greenhouse emissions rather than a market-based carbon trading scheme. Hunt is tipped to assume full responsibilities for the role of climate change spokesman on the opposition front bench, *The Australian* reported.

## Still time

The Department of Climate Change failed to decide on specifications for its bid to build a combined auction and settlement platform to run Australia's proposed carbon trading scheme, the *Financial Review* reported.

## As opposed to swift and brutal

The collapse of the Government's emissions trading legislation has saved the nation's electricity industry from a slow and inevitable death, according to Australia's largest privately owned power generator, ERM Power. Its chairman, **Trevor St Baker**, said the good news was that Australia could now start again and find a workable solution. He was speaking in Perth at the opening of ERM's newest gas-fired power station – a \$435m 330 megawatt plant in Neerabup in Perth's northern suburbs. The station is the fourth gas-fired power station ERM has brought into commercial production in the past 13 months. The other three were in Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. The gas-fired stations emit 35 per cent less greenhouse gas than comparable coal-fired generators.

## Moving right along

Britain's new High Commissioner and its first black female Cabinet minister, **Baroness Valerie Amos**, said Australia was well positioned to lead the international

community on climate change but the public debate should move beyond scepticism and negativity to finding solutions, *The Age* reported.

## A get-out clause

Australia has been accused of pushing for a get-out clause on climate change that would grant it unlimited carbon credits from new forestry plantations while pretending that enormous greenhouse gas emissions from bushfires did not exist, *The Age* reported.

## Bind us in time, o seasons clear, and awe

The APEC regional forum in November ended hopes of a new global treaty on climate change in Copenhagen in December, with leaders conceding Copenhagen will deliver only a political framework for future action. At a meeting on the sidelines of the Singapore gathering, attended by the Danish Prime Minister's **Lars Locke Rasmussen** and chaired by Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd**, leaders all but dropped the idea of securing a binding agreement in December. A senior US official quoted by news agencies said the leaders had agreed it was unrealistic to expect a legal agreement to be reached in only 22 days given the state of negotiations. The Copenhagen summit was now to be 'an important step forward' rather than the definitive breakthrough. The APEC summit itself also failed to reach an internal consensus on specific targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions. A plan to include a 50 per cent cut in 1990 level carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 was dropped from the official communiqué because of China's objections, *The Age* reported. *The Australian* reported the world leaders agreed to a political compromise deal, scrapping a 200-page draft agreement. Instead, they have begun work on a plan B document of no more than 15 pages that would not be legally binding, in which nations would agree to embrace emissions reductions conditional upon other nations adopting and meeting their own targets.

## Although

The United States and China have agreed to jointly push a comprehensive, climate change agreement with immediate operational effect at the United Nations conference in Copenhagen in an important breakthrough which could inject new energy into negotiations, the *Financial Review* reported.

## Doubling up

The Prime Minister and more than 70 other world leaders are scheduled to attend the top-level segment of the Copenhagen meeting from December 16-18, but some





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believe that may be **Kevin Rudd's** second trip to the Danish capital within two weeks if he proceeds with plans to visit earlier on to coincide with US President **Barack Obama's** attendance. Despite intensive diplomacy and emission reduction pledges in the lead up by major emitters including the US, China and India, negotiators have not resolved the divisions between rich and poor nations that have blocked a global emissions reduction deal for years.

### The certainty mantra

With the future of the ETS in serious doubt, KPMG's national partner for sustainability, **Jennifer Westacott**, said any delay or rejection of the scheme will create more costly uncertainty for local companies, the *Herald Sun* reported. *The Age* reported the Australian Industry Group, the Business Council of Australia and the Clean Energy Council all called for policy certainty in the wake of the failure of the emissions trading scheme in Parliament.

### Nearby

Australia's energy sector needs the Government's emissions trading scheme be finalised and implemented, with the nation's second-biggest energy retailer warning investment in the sector was stalling. Origin energy managing director **Grant King**, who has openly supported the Government's scheme, said that the legislation was essential to alleviate uncertainty, which was distorting the efficient operation of domestic energy markets, *The Australian* reported.

### Making a Spash

A paper by **Clive Spash**, one of the CSIRO's senior environmental economists, argues the carbon pollution reduction scheme is an ineffective way to cut emissions, and instead direct legislation or a tax on carbon is needed. The paper was accepted for publication by the journal *New Political Economy* after being internationally peer reviewed. Dr Spash told the Australian New Zealand Society for Ecological Economics conference that the CSIRO had since June tried to block its publication. Spash ended up resigning, and calling for a Senate inquiry to investigate claims of censorship at the science body.

### Nearby

On the opinion pages of *The Age*, **Kenneth Davidson** wrote that the current ETS deserves to be rejected and that these schemes are a poor substitute for low carbon technology. The global financial crisis was a crisis causing international banks to seek massive handouts, yet the ETS proposal will place a \$3 trillion market in

the hands of the same people and organisations. **Clive Spash** – (see above) said that 'after all, the reason for emissions trading is that corporations and the technostucture proved too powerful for the political process to establish a tax or direct regulation in the first place'. On the opinion pages of the *Herald Sun*, **Terry McCrann** wrote that the ETS is a devilish scheme that nobody should vote for.

### Interesting words

The Government's former climate change adviser **Ross Garnaut** predicts a substantial global agreement to tackle climate change is now more likely, after unexpectedly strong commitments by China and the United States, *The Age* reported.

### A wise head

**Dick Warburton**, chairman of the Board of Taxation and past chairman of Caltex Australia and a past member of the Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia wrote an interesting article in the *Financial Review* where he made the considered point that Australia would be wise to consider a simpler tax on carbon than an emissions trading scheme. New Opposition leader **Tony Abbott**, it seems, is considering neither.

### Including Rwanda?

The 52 Commonwealth nations will go to Copenhagen united in their determination to forge meaningful agreement to combat climate change. They backed plans for the US\$10b Copenhagen Launch fund, which will be used to assist nations vulnerable to the effects of global warming, *The Age* reported. Rwanda was admitted to the Commonwealth.

### Embarrassing grist for the sceptic mill

Computer hackers broke into Britain's leading climate science research centre network, making public thousands of private e-mails between top climate change scientists and, in the process, laying bare their bitter disagreements about the cause of climate change, *The Australian* reported.

### Hockey sticking (up for God)

Liberal frontbencher **Joe Hockey** gave a speech to the Sydney Institute in which he condemned the literalist interpretation of the Bible and articulated his own faith. The speech was called In Defence of God and was the first of several in which he has tried to broaden his image. The shadow treasurer criticised lying politics, strongly embraced multiculturalism, urged tolerance and understanding of other faiths, and said that to judge Islam based on the actions of extremists and terrorists would be no different than judging Christianity and the

actions of those who have over the centuries committed atrocities in the name of God and Christ, *The Age* reported.

### Disappointing for Malcolm 2

Opposition leader **Malcolm Turnbull's** media minder, **Thomas Tudehope**, quit after he was linked to a spoof YouTube video portraying a Liberal backbencher as Adolf Hitler.

## ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY

### Energy access impact

The Energy Users Association of Australia has commissioned Access Economics to assess the impact of the emissions trading scheme and the 20 per cent renewable energy target, which it warns will lead to power price increases creating serious problems for Australia's international competitiveness, the *Financial Review* reported. *The Australian* reported that, according to the Australian Energy Regulator, power consumers in all states face price rises of up to 50 per cent over the next five years.

### Coal hard facts

A new government survey finds that while burning coal has been the main way Australia has generated electricity for a century, just 6 per cent of new generating capacity recently completed or under construction will burn coal. The survey, by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, finds that nine potential coal projects are on the drawing board, but they are minor compared with the total gas and wind power projects in the pipeline. In the past year, the only projects to progress from drawing board to construction have been seven wind power stations, *The Age* reported.

### Nuclear whispers and shouts

**Ziggy Zwitkowski** says Australia should build 50 nuclear power stations by the middle of the century, doubling the size of the sector he outlined to **John Howard** three years ago. Zwitkowski, chairman of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, told a conference that his 2006 review of the nation's nuclear options was too conservative. Instead of the 25 civil reactors he called for in his report to the former coalition government, to produce one third of the electricity supply by 2050, Australia should build 50 nuclear plants generating up to 90 per cent of based low-power, *The Australian* reported.

### Backing

Resources Minister **Martin Ferguson** backed the a decision by energy ministers to accept a recommendation from the Australian Energy Market Commission for a rule change to enable the linking of more renewable energy generation sites to the power grid.

### A battle for the Coral Sea

In May, the Government marked a section of the Coral Sea, between the Great Barrier Reef and the edge of Australian waters, as a conservation zone, restricting any new fishing licences while it decided whether to create a vast marine park in the region. The US-based Pew Environment Group, a not-for-profit organisation founded with money bequeathed by the children of American oil baron and Sun Oil founder **Joseph Pew**, is funding a campaign for the entire region to be established as a 'no take zone'. But a number of



scientists and environmental groups, such as the WWF, are wary of the Pew proposal, with some warning that the US group's overzealous approach risks derailing the entire process, *The Australian* reported. 'Pew's approach has scared a lot of fishermen but we think sustainable fishing could be a possibility in the Coral Sea,' said WWF spokesman **Jonathon Larkin**.

#### Hmmm

A fifth of the world's known mammals, a third of its amphibians, more than a quarter of its reptiles and up to 70 per cent of its plants are under threat of extinction. That is the finding of the 'Red List', the latest annual survey of threatened species, compiled by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, *The Age* reported.

#### It's so abundant we must burn it

According to an independent report commissioned by the New South Wales Labor government, the abundance and efficiency of coal, along with new technologies for cutting emissions, mean coal will undercut the price of electricity produced by wind or solar for many years. The report, prepared by energy consultant **Richard Hunwick**, was commissioned by the state's Department of Primary Industries but has been withheld from cabinet amid concerns that it would antagonise officials in the New South Wales Department of Climate Change, *The Australian* reported.

#### Riding the wave

Geothermal and wave technologies have been given a boost under the \$235m round of renewable energy grants from the Government. Energy Minister **Martin Ferguson** announced the grant money in Canberra for four commercial scale renewable energy demonstration projects. In an expected decision, two South Australian geothermal projects received significant grants – \$62m for Petrathern's 30-megawatt plant and \$90m for Geodynamics' 25-megawatt multi-well power project, *The Age* reported.

#### Ummm

Total spending since the so-called **Coal21** fund (the coal industry's main vehicle to fund development of clean coal technologies) was announced in 2006 stands at \$36.4m – a fraction of the \$1b commitment to clean coal over 10 years touted by the Australian Coal Association.

#### A number of advertisements

A number of advertisements have appeared in the papers over the last months from energy companies and associations, including the Australian Coal Association, putting their position on climate change, what their industries stand for and what they want to do about it.

#### Unwanted liability 1

The *Financial Review* reported that more than 100 chief executives could be held personally liable for hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines after failing to meet a mandatory deadline to report carbon emissions. By midnight on 2 November, chief executives at more than 600 companies were required to have signed off on their first reports under the new National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act.

#### Unwanted liability 2

In October, **Gerald Maples** won on appeal the right to sue Murphy Oil and about 30 other big oil and coal companies, under the common law of nuisance, trespassing, negligence, for the added ferocity of the 2005 hurricane in New Orleans, that wreaked havoc on his hometown, killed more than 1,800 people and did more than US\$100b damage. It is another sign of the shifting paradigm that will slowly turn hitherto respected energy businesses into corporate pariahs and expose their directors, executives, consultants and lobbyists to increasing scrutiny, finger-pointing and litigation on climate change and its consequences, *The Age* reported.

## IMMIGRATION

#### The policy fabric

**Kevin Rudd** is preparing to double the size of Australia's Christmas Island detention centre; confirmation that his government expects a continuing flow of asylum seekers from Sri Lanka, *The Australian* reported. He has said that his government will unpick the policy fabric on refugees. In the *Herald Sun*, **Andrew Bolt** wrote that the death of 12 asylum seekers brings the total to 54. The Prime Minister says he is tough on boat people, but his policies have led to the spike in fatalities.

#### A one for one swap...

New Zealand rejected an approach from the Government to resettle some of the 78 asylum seekers refusing to leave Australian customs boat Oceanic Viking moored off Indonesia. A top Indonesian military spokesman said the Oceanic Viking was an uninvited guest and that its presence undermined Indonesian sovereignty, *The Age* reported.

#### Saline solution

Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd's** special envoy to Sri Lanka, **John McCarthy**, discussed the Government's strategy to allow more displaced Sri Lankans to emigrate to Australia legally, in a bid to reduce the incentive for them to turn up on boats. The Government is looking at what can be done to use the migration program to

permit the orderly exit of Sri Lankans displaced by the war. The additional migrants would still have to qualify under existing Australian rules. A senior official said care would be taken to ensure the program did not raise expectations that could not be met, *The Age* reported.

The last asylum seekers left the Oceanic Viking on November 18, ending months of wrangling and strained relations between Australia and Indonesia that put Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** under intense pressure. Many of the remaining 56 Sri Lankans smiled and waved as they left the Oceanic Viking to enter immigration detention. Meanwhile, Rudd's personal standing dropped in the month during which he struggled with the stand-off over the Sri Lankan boat people's refusal to leave the ship.

#### Fowl actions

Outspoken Labor MP **Julia Irwin** criticised the party's handling of the Oceanic Viking affair, saying **Kevin Rudd's** Indonesia solution is worse than **John Howard's** Pacific version. The member for the southwestern Sydney seat of Fowler, and supporter of 'Labor for Refugees', said she felt ashamed by the actions of her government, *The Australian* reported.

#### Under another name

**Malcolm Turnbull** put forward a 'safe haven visas' scheme as part of a strategy to deter asylum seekers from sailing to Australia. The plan, which essentially reinstates temporary visas for refugees, was condemned by lawyers, moderates in his own party, the Greens and the Government, *The Age* reported.

#### A tough issue

Australia is divided over how **Kevin Rudd** is handling the asylum seeker issue, an *Age*/Nielsen poll has revealed. His disapproval is up five points and 44 per cent of Australians think current asylum seeker policies are too soft. But Labor's two-party lead fell only one point in a month, *The Age* reported.

#### Bet he wishes the focus was still here

**Malcolm Turnbull** used a report, stating most of the asylum seekers in a stand-off with Australian authorities have lived in Indonesia for years, to attack the Government claim that recent boat arrivals were due to the end of the Sri Lankan civil war rather than changes to Australian policy, *The Age* reported.

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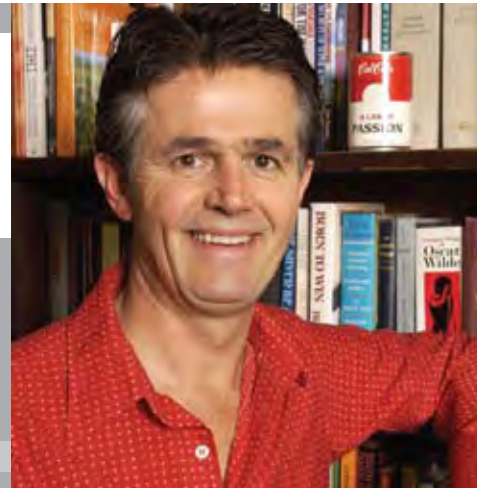
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### Andrews had a busy month

Former Immigration Minister **Kevin Andrews** has drawn the ire of Islamic groups, the Greens and the Rudd government with claims Muslim migrants are not 'dispersing' into the wider community, *The Australian* reported.

### Union compassion

*The Australian* reported that the union movement demanded **Kevin Rudd** adopt a softer approach to asylum seekers and allow 78 people on board the Oceanic Viking to enter Australia for processing. Unions, which contribute millions of dollars to the ALP's election war chest through membership fees, urged Rudd to end the stand-off by ordering the Customs vessel to head for Christmas Island. The Maritime Union of Australia and the Construction Forestry and Energy union donated \$10,000 to the asylum seekers on board the Oceanic Viking. The Australian Council of Trade Unions published a half-page-ad in *The Australian* saying that it was time to show our humanity.

In a failed bid to end the impasse, the Government offered the Sri Lankan asylum seekers resettlement in Australia or another country within a year, but the inducement failed to work, with asylum seekers still firmly refusing to disembark in Indonesia. *The Age* reported that Australian officials halved the processing times for most of the 78 Sri Lankans on the Oceanic Viking during negotiations to convince them to go ashore, contradicting Kevin Rudd's assurance that they did not get a special deal.

### Off the radar a bit

Australian Customs vessel Oceanic Viking, which was at the centre of a month-long standoff with the 78 asylum seekers, picked up another group of asylum seekers a fortnight after the Sri Lankans left the vessel in Indonesia. It intercepted a boat carrying 53 asylum seekers and four crew north of Ashmore Reef's West Islet, *The Age* reported.

### About one a week

Another boat, carrying 16 people, was intercepted 35 nautical miles north of the Tiwi Islands. As we go to press, the 53rd boat to arrive in Australian waters this year was intercepted near Christmas Island.

### Blackmarket in paper work

A cartel of migration agents linked to organised crime is running Melbourne's booming blackmarket in fake foreign student paperwork, an investigation by the Immigration Department and federal police has revealed, *The Age* reported.

### Ready for the midday sun

Figures released show 427,000 people emigrated from Britain in 2008, the highest number ever recorded and up 25 per cent on the previous year. Australia was the preferred country to set up home. The rise was largely driven by a 50 per cent leap in the departure of non-British citizens for foreign shores, including 20,000 Australians who bid farewell to Britain, *The Age* reported.

### Growth spurts endogenous and otherwise

Preliminary Bureau of Statistics figures show that Australia grew by 443,139 people in the year to June, with record numbers of migrants, temporary workers and overseas students coming to Australia. Part of the population rise came from a record crop of babies, as Australian women gave birth to more than 300,000 babies for the first time – lifting the country's fertility rate back to 1.98, almost enough to keep the population steady without any migration. But almost two thirds of our population growth is now coming from net overseas migration, which has trebled in just five years to a record 285,347, *The Age* reported.

### Explicar por favore

Former immigration minister **Amanda Vanstone** has been asked by the Australian Federal Police to explain why she granted a visa to an alleged Italian crime figure. Three serving Liberal MPs are also believed to have been interviewed or contacted, *The Age* reported. The AFP said that its bribery inquiry had found insufficient evidence to support allegations made about Vanstone.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

### Certainty

Private sector employers in all states except Western Australia will have the certainty of consistent workplace laws from January 1, after the Senate passed legislation underpinning the Government's plans for a national industrial relations system. The Australian Industrial Relations Commission said that 122 awards will replace about 1,560 federal and state awards after a process that began with a direction from Deputy Prime

Minister **Julia Gillard** in March 2008. The new system of industrial awards will not be extended to cover white-collar professionals, including employees such as accountants and finance, marketing, legal, human resources, public relations and information technology specialists.

### Happy to intervene

Deputy Prime Minister **Julia Gillard** has again been forced to intervene in the overhaul of workplace awards, stepping in on behalf of airline workers who stood to lose as much as \$300 a week. Her intervention – in a letter to the Industrial Relations Commission – has been welcomed by the Australian Services Union but attacked by the Opposition, which said the process was being botched. The Government has asked the commission to cut the number of awards from 4,300 to about 130 in a bid to simplify Australia's complex system. In her letter, Gillard asked the commission to reconsider its airline ground staff award so it did not disadvantage employees, as well as the award covering cabin crew amid concerns about rostering. ASU assistant national secretary **Linda White** said she was very happy with the intervention, *The Age* reported.

### A change of strategy

Unions are seeking Government support for a new unemployment insurance scheme, as they switch their political strategy ahead of the next federal election from workplace bargaining to the economic security of workers, the *Financial Review* reported.

### Payment public in foyers

Employers could be ordered to produce annual pay audits, and the industrial watchdog granted greater powers to examine women's pay, in a push to close the gender gap, according to a federal parliamentary report. But the committee rejected a push by Sex Discrimination Commissioner **Elizabeth Broderick** for companies to be forced to publish the pay rates of male and female staff in their foyers. It happens in some European countries. Business Council of Australia chief executive officer **Katie Lahey** called for stronger action to improve women's position in the workplace, particularly at the executive level. But the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, backed by the Coalition, is against any moves to compel companies to take more action, *The Age* reported.



## A short fall

Australia faces a potential skills shortfall equivalent to 1.4 million workers by 2025 unless the workforce participation rate increases, according to new research that recommends raising the retirement age and boosting skilled migration. The workplace futures report urges federal and state governments to lift barriers to older workers and disadvantaged groups participating in the workforce, *The Australian* reported.

## Nearby

A plan to bring Pacific Islanders to work on Australian fruit farms has stalled, as red tape entangles a scheme initially hailed as a win-win for labour starved growers and struggling island nations. The harvesting of this summer's crop is already underway – without Pacific workers, more than a year after the Government launched its seasonal worker scheme to allow islanders to come here for up to seven months. Industry bodies fear islanders who arrive now, in the second phase of the three-year pilot scheme, will be too late for this year's harvest. It will be the second harvest in a row to miss out on Pacific labour, *The Age* reported.

## A real sense of movement

The *Financial Review* reported that ACTU president **Shannon Burrow**, who has held the job since 2000, is a leading candidate to take up the general-secretary role at the Brussels-based International Trade Union Confederation, of which she is already president. *The Australian* reported that nurses union chief **Ged Kearney**, 46, has promised to return the focus of the ACTU to public campaigning if she is elected the peak union body's president, declaring 'what we are missing is a real sense of movement'. Kearney, federal secretary of the Australian Nurses Federation, said she would bring a fresh approach as head of a growing union if she succeeded **Sharon Burrow**. She was endorsed in early December, after her rival, **Cath Bowtel**, withdrew. She said key issues for unions in next year's federal election year would be job security, underemployment, income protection, the environment and health reform.

## Swooping

A centenary history of the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, SDA, was launched by former prime minister **Bob Hawke**, who turned 80 in December. With more than 200,000 members nationally, the SDA is a large union affiliated with the ACTU and is among the most influential. Created in 1907, it fought its early battles targeting annual and sick leave, a 65-hour working week and unfair dismissals, *The Age* reported.

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Follow me...

At an APEC gathering in November **Kevin Rudd** pushed to put global people movement firmly on the political agenda, and to convince leaders to throw open their

borders. The business delegation commissioned new research pointing to looming labour shortages in APEC economies if migration laws are not liberalised. The paper acknowledges the political sensitivities that surround immigration, *The Age* reported.

## Dodgy

Securency, which is half owned and supervised by the Reserve Bank of Australia, makes polymer material used to print money in Australia and 28 other countries. The Australian Federal Police has been investigating the company since May for allegedly bribing foreign government officials to secure banknote supply contracts in countries such as Vietnam, Nigeria and Malaysia. Securancy's board has ordered the company to immediately suspend all overseas marketing activities involving foreign agents and has asked external auditor KPMG to conduct a case-by-case review of the company's agreements with agents, *The Age* reported. The payment of millions of dollars to offshore tax haven bank accounts by Securency could expose the company to investigation by US authorities.

## Ruddelusion

**Rupert Murdoch** said **Kevin Rudd** is delusional if he thinks Australia can lead the world or act as a bridge between the US and China. Murdoch said Rudd is very intelligent and very interesting but he is kidding himself with the G20, the *Herald Sun* reported. 'President Obama actually wants to cut the even more exclusive G8 to a G4 – and really, to a G2; just the US and China,' Murdoch said in an interview in Melbourne. He also felt that **Hillary Clinton** would have been a tougher president than **Barack Obama** and spoke on other topics, including the media and missed opportunities.

## Another piece of eggplant on the barbie

Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** was embarrassed by the withdrawal of a press release promising barbecues for Indian students, moments before a press conference in Delhi over criminal attacks in Australia. The release unveiled a new program – to be run by Rotary Australia – in which Indian students would be invited to barbecues with Australian families as a gesture of inclusion. Rudd claims the barbecues were a Rotary idea, while the organisation said the plan came from Rudd's office.

## Trade reduction

The Government's mid-year economic and financial statement confirms that it will reduce the Department of Foreign Affairs and Austrade budget by \$105m over four years. The cuts will be made by losing seven diplomat positions from some of the larger overseas missions, scaling back the cost of accommodation upgrades at some missions (including an upgrade of the consulate-general office in Lima, Peru) and addressing the number of Austrade offices within Australia. The Opposition criticised the cuts saying they were buried in a financial report and were not mentioned at a Senate Estimates hearing, the *Financial Review* reported.

## Palm forest stoked

Chinese vice premier **Li Kenqing** told a room filled with business people that the two countries needed to reduce mistrust and work out their differences. Seated next to former prime minister **Bob Hawke**, Li told an audience including mining magnates **Clive Palmer**, **Andrew Forrest** and **Ryan Stokes** that the purpose of his visit was to look to the future of the Australia-China relationship, *The Age* reported.

## In. Our new Man

The U.S. Senate has confirmed lawyer **Jeffrey Bleich** as ambassador to Australia. Bleich has known **Barack Obama** since the 1980s, was co-chairman of his campaign in California and served as special counsel to the White House since March. He drew plaudits for his work as a litigation partner and has taught international human rights at the University of California, Berkeley's law school, *The Age* reported.

## Out!

The Government formally expelled Fiji's acting high commissioner to Australia after Fiji's self appointed Prime Minister ordered the high commissioners of Australia and New Zealand out of his country, *The Age* reported.

## Join something for once...

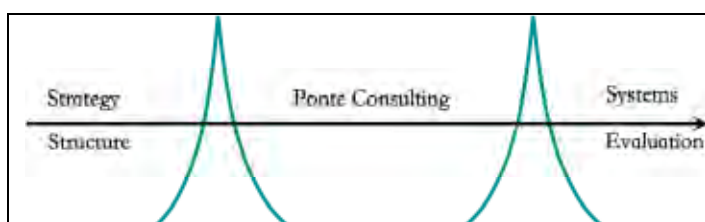
Representatives from more than 100 nations gathered in Colombia to review a UN treaty, the 1997 Ottawa Treaty, banning anti-personnel mines, which killed more than 5,000 people in 2008 alone. The summit in Cartagena was the second conference reviewing the treaty which came into force in March 1999 after pressure from victims of the weaponry. The treaty – which bans the use, stockpiling, production and transferring of anti-personnel mines, and orders their destruction – has 156 signatory nations. But the US, China and Russia have declined to join, *The Age* reported.

## Zzzzz

Photos of Victorian MP **Fran Bailey** having a nap on the last day of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Edinburgh were published in all the papers. The assembly saw the defence alliance promise substantially more forces for Afghanistan. She defended her snooze, saying she only shut her eyes for a few minutes.

## The centre is right

Centre-right Dutch-speaking Christian Democrat and Belgian Prime Minister, **Herman van Rompuy**, 62, was elected first President of the European Council, beating former British Prime Minister **Tony Blair**, who had pushed hard for the post but had little backing from other leaders, with smaller EU nations loathing the idea of being led by Blair, whose strong support of the Iraq war angered many. They also expressed the desire for a president from a country using the euro and participating in the EU's passport free travel zone. Britain's EU Trade Commissioner, **Catherine Ashton**, became Foreign Minister, *The Age* reported.



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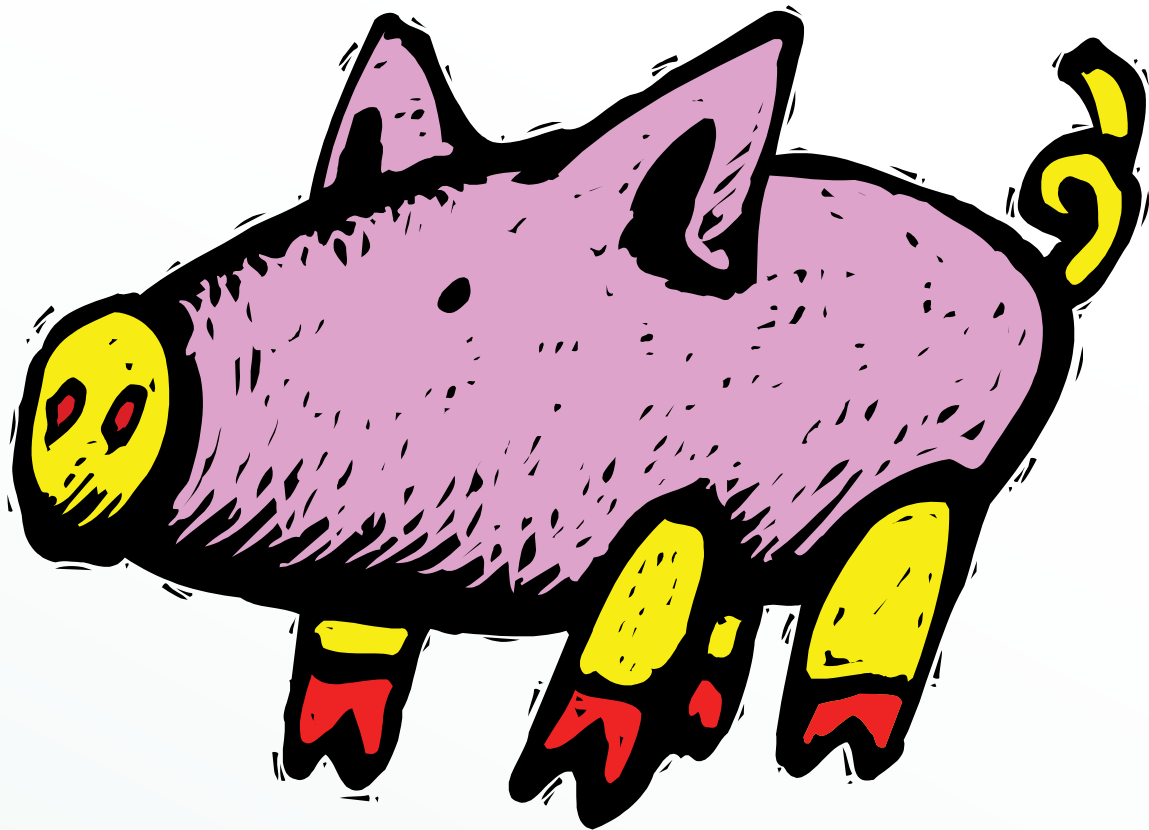

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Through the tripartite Readership Research Forums, Roy Morgan Research is working closely with the newspaper and magazine publishers and media agencies on a range of issues including, among other things, topics of interest in newspapers and how online is emerging and transforming media.

**Newspaper Topic Involvement** is a new suite of metrics measuring the extent of readers' involvement in 22 different newspaper topics, ie whether they 'especially choose to read' the topic, are 'interested and read when have time', 'only read if something grabs attention' or 'never read the topic'. An additional measure is 'really enjoy this topic'.

Roy Morgan Research has been working on Newspaper Topic Involvement for some time.

Newspaper publishers received the data earlier this year; all media agencies received the data in ASTEROID software last week.

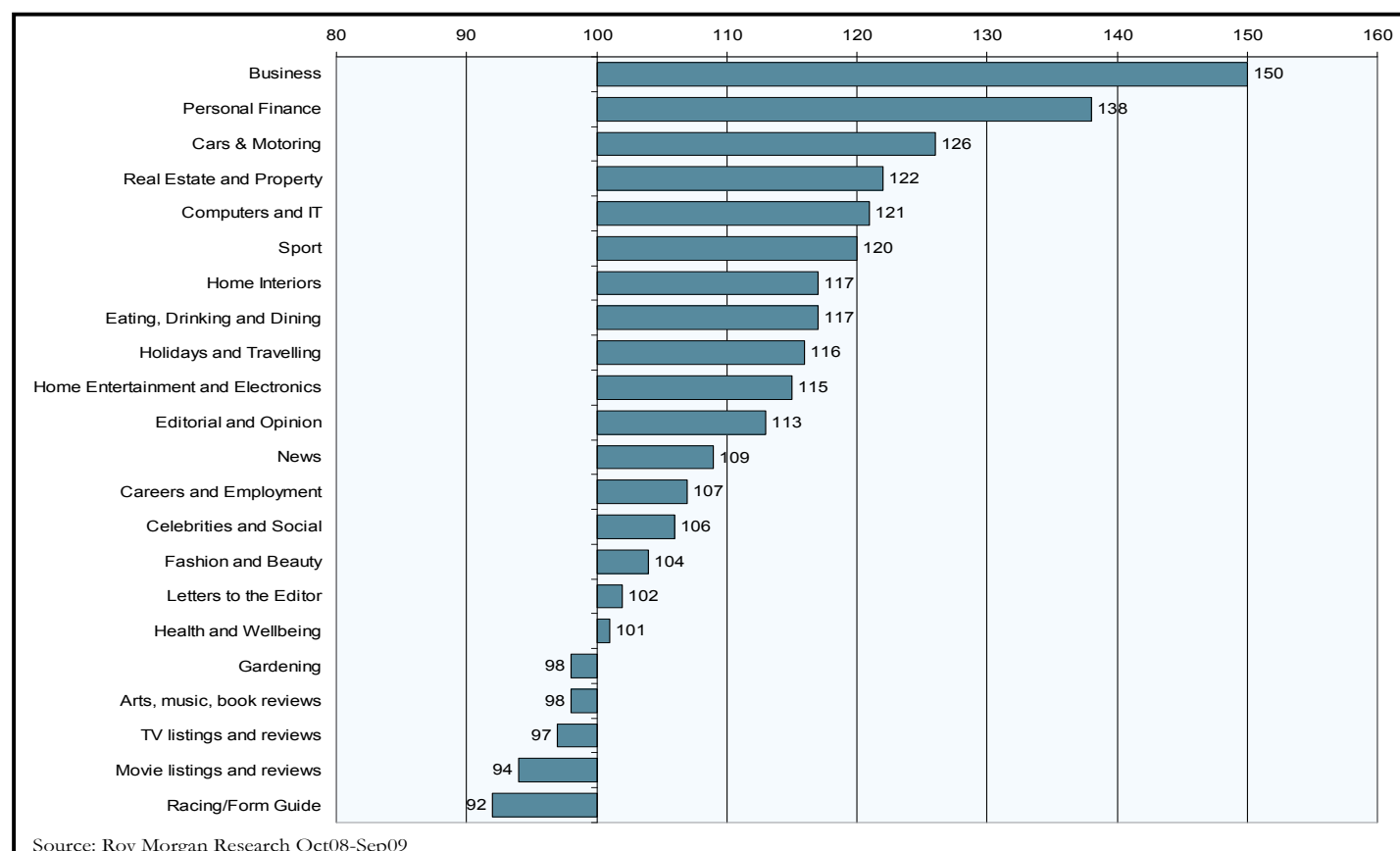
Combining 'especially choose to read' with 'interested and read when have time' produces Usual Readers — shown in the charts below: WebScheduler (released in September) is another new initiative designed to ensure the data is relevant to today's changing media scene (ie including on-line).

**WebScheduler** allows websites to be scheduled with other media — newspapers, magazines, TV and cinema (as part of the Roy Morgan ASTEROID multimedia scheduling system).

***Chart 1: Usual topic readers by male/female split:***



**Chart 2: Newspaper topics that New Motor Vehicle Intenders are more likely to usually read (average = 100):**



Source: Roy Morgan Research Oct08-Sep09

*Other areas Roy Morgan is working on with the publishers and media agencies include a cross-channel review of media imperatives; and a detailed articulation of the detail of what is already available in Roy Morgan Single Source, eg ‘Source of copy’ data, time spent with different media and other activities, the use of mobile as well as traditional computers for media and other internet activities, movie titles and more.*

**CAPI:** Roy Morgan Research has already begun the major development of *Computer Assisted Personal Interview* (CAPI) technology, and a move to multimode data collection. The Roy Morgan media research future will be a totally integrated data collection platform - comprising face-to-face, online, mobile, and telephone data collection methods.

CAPI combines the best of face-to-face interviewing of people in their own homes (highest response rates) and adds speed (answers are entered daily into the computer at the time of the interview so data is available for verification in near real time), flexibility (questions can be changed in near real time and more complex questioning is possible) and accuracy (data can be logic-checked in the field).

We have already undertaken two major Government CAPI projects, and after a full-scale pilot in February, the full CAPI service could be up and running as early as July 2010.

The second element of this major development is ‘Plus online.’ We emphasise ‘plus.’ Online alone is unable to achieve an adequately representative sample. Additional detailed data will also be collected using other methods, eg mobile — all operating from the same integrated platform.

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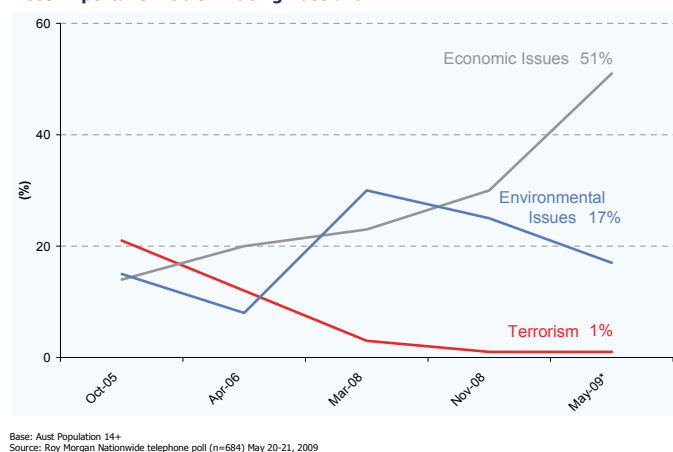
# State of the Nation Report

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\*Roy Morgan Values Segments devised by Michele Levine of Roy Morgan Research and Colin Benjamin of the Horizons Network.

### Some of the trends outlined in the State of the Nation Report include:

- Ageing Population
- Increased education
- Increased workforce participation
- Increased wealth, debt & discretionary spending
- High and generally increasing Consumer Confidence
- Increasingly progressive attitudes and attraction to new ideas
- Australians' concern about the environment now being translated into action
- Change in leisure activities away from organised sport and family outings to more individual pursuits and online activities
- Increased international focus and interest in health and wellness is being played out in the food area.
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The Government is preparing to fight next year's election campaign, seeking a mandate for a ten-year program of tax reform. **Wayne Swan** warned that some of the proposals from the Henry tax review would be unpopular, *The Australian* reported. *The Age* reported that then Opposition leader **Malcolm Turnbull** distanced himself from the Henry tax review, warning that it could give the Government the means to increase taxes to pay for \$67b of stimulus spending.

**Keating's monthly advice**

**Paul Keating** accused **Kevin Rudd** of disloyalty to Labor in appointing **Peter Costello** to an \$87,000 a year job on the Future Funds board of guardians. The Keating attack reflects, in stronger form, what many in Labor think about Rudd choosing former coalition politicians, who include **Tim Fischer**, **Brendan Nelson**, **Bruce Baird** and **Robert Hill**, for government jobs. Treasurer **Wayne Swan** and Finance Minister **Lindsay Tanner** said the former Treasurer would provide the board with unique expertise in governance, international finance and macro economic conditions. Keating said Costello was a policy bum of the first order who squandered 11 years of economic opportunity, *The Age* reported. Keating also called for a rewriting of Australia's privacy laws with a proposal which would require media organisations to gain a person's permission before publishing a photograph or a story deemed to involve their private life. He was speaking after an article published in the *Sunday Telegraph* alleged that his daughter, Katherine, had kicked one of the newspaper's photographers at a social event at the State Theatre and said to the photographer: 'Do you want me to throw you down the stairs and kill you?'

**Our leader**

An article in *The Australian* said **Kevin Rudd's** public persona is in stark contrast to the acid mouth tyrant he can be away from the spotlight. Another article in the same section of the same paper on a different day said that **Kevin Rudd** is unapologetic of demanding much of his public servants. It was indeed a busy week of articles in *The Australian*, detailing and explaining the busy people in Rudd's office, including a sometimes-irate press. Another instalment noted that the Prime Minister is an adept performer in the international arena but has little time for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where, in December, **Kenneth Richardson** started as head after undergoing heart surgery in Washington.

**Next chapter**

The *Financial Review* reported that the Rudd government has come under attack for welching on major reforms, as former regulators said its decision to restrict book imports showed signs of a trend to protect industry and fail consumers. Former Prices Surveillance Authority chairman **David Cousins** said the Government should take stronger action on consumer rights, and former competition commissioner **Stephen King** described the decision as a victory for vested interests with 'their

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snouts in the trough'. Critics said Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** should use his political capital to make tougher decisions, but opinions differed on what they should be.

**A Machiavellian politician**

The *Herald Sun* reported that **Kevin Rudd** abstained from voting in a cabinet meeting on the removal of parallel importation restrictions on books, allegedly because his daughter, **Jessica**, is writing a novel. It was revealed the Prime Minister absented himself from the meeting, which rejected the proposal, leaving his deputy, **Julia Gillard**, in the chair. Jessica Rudd's debut novel is believed to be about a Machiavellian politician. The book is expected to be the first of a three-book deal with Text Publishing.

**Hello Costello**

**Peter Costello** has a new job with Sydney-based corporate advisory firm BKK Partners (it will open a Melbourne office next year), a role expected to raise questions of conflicts of interests partly because of his role with the Future Fund, which has shares in a number of companies which could be potential clients of BKK. Costello said he would advise Australian companies on how to invest, merge and raise capital and offer advice on investment and corporate opportunities, but ruled out lobbying. Former senator and Labor Party president **Stephen Loosely**, has also joined BKK as advisory director. Costello also sits on an advisory board for the World Bank.

**Bureaucrats trailing**

**Kevin Rudd** has called on the Australian Public Service to improve its service delivery, policy development and recruitment planning after a KPMG report into Australia's bureaucrats found they trail their international colleagues in key performance areas, *The Australian* reported.

**The linguists of officialdom**

In the Government Business section, which appears every Friday in the *Financial Review*, **Verona Burgess** wrote that the language of officialdom does little to clarify and project the message of COAG's Reform Council, which is based in Sydney and funded by all nine governments. It is independent of any individual governments, reports to COAG and is chaired by former federal cabinet secretary in the Howard government, **Paul McClintock**. The deputy chairman is former West Australian premier **Geoff Gallop**. The council has, among other tasks, the unenviable job of putting the meat on the bones of the agreements reached in November last year by the nine governments in six areas: health care, education, skills and workplace development, affordable housing, indigenous disadvantage, which have gained extra special-purpose payments to the tune of \$7.1b. But as soon as anyone starts talking about mutually agreed objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance benchmarks, eyes rapidly glaze over.

**Outside the box**

*The Australian* reported that the Government spent \$454m on consultants in 2008-09, an annual increase of 5.6 per cent during a time of supposed public-sector austerity, as a new administration increasingly turned to outside experts for policy advice, market research and data.

**Tough talk shrouds political fear**

*The Sunday Age's* national political reporter, **Josh Gordon**, wrote that Rudd has certainly shown a willingness to talk tough, yet one of the few things he is yet to show is political courage.

**Sorries all round**

**Kevin Rudd** apologised to about 500,000 people who suffered abuse in state run institutions mainly between the 1930s and the 1960s. The Government paid for 200 of them to make the journey from all around Australia to Canberra for the apology that they have long waited for. In Britain, Prime Minister **Gordon Brown** is planning to apologise for his nation's role in sending thousands of its children to former colonies in the 20th century, *The Age* reported. On the opinion pages of the same paper, **Hugh Mackay**, a social researcher and author, wrote that the apology to the Forgotten Australians is just the first step. Forgiveness is a far more liberating experience than a mere apology can ever be. The paper published Rudd's 700 word apology. Britain's High Commissioner to Australia, Baroness **Valerie Amos**, said Australian plans for an apology had received a lot of publicity in Britain.

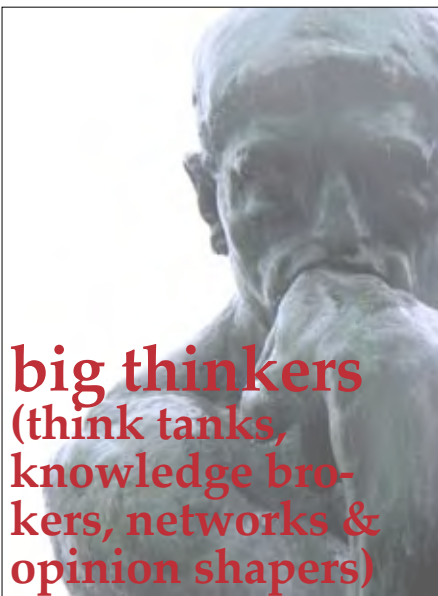
*The Age* reported that Melbourne University apologised to the Forgotten Australians – in particular the children in orphanages its researchers used as human guinea pigs in medical research trials. The apology, which comes with an offer of counselling, puts on the public record the university's involvement in the practice of using orphans in experimental medical research. A 2004 Senate enquiry identifies Melbourne organisations such as the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research as using children from institutions, including babies, for medical trials – but not Melbourne University.

**A follow-up**

The Government will set up a national service to help the Forgotten Australians find their families, **Kevin Rudd** announced. He said a 'find and connect service' would help people locate their personal and family history files, through a national database that would collate and index existing state records, *The Age* reported.

**Open Sesame**

The register of federal politicians interests could soon be available online, after a committee recommended Parliament move into the electronic age to enhance accountability and transparency. At present members'



## big thinkers (think tanks, knowledge brokers, networks & opinion shapers)

The 2009 edition of Affairs of State's latest publication Big Thinkers (thing tanks, knowledge brokers, networks & opinion shapers) has just been launched by historian Geoffrey Blainey.

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declarations are available only by accessing a hard copy kept at Parliament house in Canberra, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Nice state bureaucracy

Liberal Senator for New South Wales, **Marise Payne**, sent a slightly provocative message about the new laws implemented by the Rudd government about the use of the Commonwealth Printing Allowance. Certain words on the front page of the newsletter were blacked out because some words – such as dreadful, inept, mismanagement, reckless, incompetence, irresponsible – which denigrate or disparage the Government in any document created using the Commonwealth Printing Allowance are not permitted to be used.

#### Public combat in park avoided

The *Herald Sun* reported that **Greg Combet** and West Australian MP **Melissa Parke** have had to go public with their relationship to quash an Opposition whispering campaign suggesting they were expecting a baby. Combet, the Minister for Defence Personnel, split from his second wife, **Petra Hilsen**, last year. The relationship between Parke and the former ACTU secretary, who is credited with aiding Labor's 2007 election win, first came to notice within the ALP at the party's national conference in July.

#### Granted and removed

Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** has formally deleted from the parliamentary register of members interests the ute his car dealer friend **John Grant** gave him for free. Rudd returned the second-hand vehicle, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Gonski

**David Gonski**, the chairman of the Australian Securities Exchange, Coca-Cola Amatil, Investec Bank, and a director of Westfield Group, Singapore Airlines, Sunraysia and many other boards, has replaced **Therese Rein's** long-time friend and former senior Canberra public servant, Mike Codd, as chair of her employment services company Ingeus.

#### Pearson partnership

The Queensland Teachers Union is keen to discuss any partnership options involved in establishing an Aboriginal Australian Academy proposed by **Noel Pearson**. The establishment of the academy, headquartered in Cairns, would see children fast-tracked through private schools in the hope of closing the gap in our education standards as compared with all other Australian children. In Cape York at the moment, more than 60 per cent – 1000 – of high-school age students are not enrolled in a school, *The Australian* reported.

#### Coates' tale of woe

The long-awaited Crawford report, by businessman **David Crawford** into sports funding, said Australia should stop trying to overachieve in world sport and instead educate the public to be satisfied with a realistic aim being a top-10 Olympics nation. The report said obtaining Olympic success has being expensive and the money would be better spent on big professional sports and others that are part of the national psyche. It urges a review of public funding for Olympic sports in which comparatively few Australians participate, such as archery, water polo, taekwondo and wrestling. The report also proposes a shakeup of how sport is administered, saying the Australian Institute of Sport should be merged with the

state institutes. The proposals drew a furious response from Australian Olympic Committee president **John Coates**. He said he was 'pissed off', and that Crawford and his panel, which included members with strong AFL links, were not qualified to comment on elite and international sport. The comments came after Crawford rejected a plea from Olympic and Paralympic sports for an injection of \$100m to arrest the funding decline of the past few years, *The Australian* reported. The AFL has denied it will gain financially from the Crawford report. The league maintained that it had not asked for a single additional cent from the Government when it appeared before the Crawford panel last year.

On the opinion pages of the *Financial Review*, **Geoffrey Barker**, a visiting fellow at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University, wrote that Crawford is right and Coates is wrong. Crawford is concerned with maximising the broad, long-term well-being of the Australian population; Coates wants to preserve the privilege of the few whose lives revolve around the quadrennial pursuit of Olympic medals, the expensive pursuit of which reflects the national cultural cringe.

Coates took a further swipe at the Crawford report saying that 'to say that some sports are part of the national ethos and some are not is almost going back to the White Australia days. We have got sports that are evolving and are of interest to a new population, particularly those coming from Asia who are very keen on sports such as table tennis and badminton', the *Herald Sun* reported.

#### Phew! Steve Hooker lives to jump again

Australia's elite sporting bodies will not suffer a funding cut that has hovered over their heads for a year, with Sports Minister **Kate Ellis** ruling out any across-the-board reductions. The Government last year commissioned a broad ranging review of sports funding – carried out by an independent panel. The much-delayed report has left many elite sporting bodies that depend on the Government for funding in limbo as its release has been repeatedly pushed back. There had been rumours about plans to cut funding to elite-level Olympic sports by as much as 15 per cent and to reorient spending towards grass-roots sport and public health campaigns, *The Age* reported.

#### Welfare control for all

Welfare recipients of all races will be forced to have their money managed by Centrelink unless they can demonstrate personal responsibility, under changes proposed by Families Minister **Jenny Macklin**. The move is a sweeping extension of rules applied to indigenous people in the Northern Territory as part of the Howard Government's emergency intervention of 2007, *The Age* reported.

#### Imagine if it crashed

Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd's** plane apparently broke down for second time in two days, the *Herald Sun* reported. The first time the plane was forced back to Washington DC because of a mechanical fault, the next time it was stranded in Honolulu.



### Great Scott

ABC chief **Mark Scott** argued for a massive expansion in the broadcaster's overseas services in an effort to rival the BBC, CNN and the emerging Chinese media offensive, *The Age* reported.

### Nearby

**Janet Albrechtsen** is stepping down from the ABC board. The Sydney lawyer and columnist confirmed she was not seeking a second five-year term after the Government announced it was hunting for new board member to replace her. Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** has committed himself to de-politicising ABC and SBS appointments, through a committee detached from politics to vet applicants and present a shortlist to Communications Minister **Stephen Conroy**, *The Age* reported.

### On the dry side

The Institute of Public Affairs weekly online newsletter points to a number of interesting opinions and the latest research drawn from its members and staff, [www.ipa.org.au](http://www.ipa.org.au).

### Changed community expectations

The Institute of Public Administration, Australia, held its annual national conference in Brisbane on November 19 and 20. The Garran Oration was given by Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd**. The topic was 'The future for public administration as the nation responds to global developments and changed community expectations'.

### Down there

Tasmanian Labor MP **Jodie Campbell** will quit her seat of Bass at the next election.

## BROADBAND & IT

### They're unified now

Communications Minister **Stephen Conroy** will exploit Coalition divisions over the \$43b broadband network, by holding talks with the Nationals to try to gain their support for a restructure of Telstra. Conroy said he was willing to consider the National's call for greater safeguards in the bush, vowing to improve regional phone services and impose tougher sanctions on Telstra if the Senate passed his reforms, the *Financial Review* reported. *The Australian* reported that the Government is running out of time to get the bill for the structural separation of Telstra passed. It could be delayed indefinitely unless the Senate can speed through debate on the party dividing emissions trading scheme that comes before Parliament. The telecommunications regulatory reforms, which are aimed at providing a level playing field ahead of construction of the \$43b national broadband network, were due to be debated before the end of November. The Law Council of Australia has warned that the Government's proposed legislation to break up Telstra hands too much power to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and to Communications Minister **Stephen Conroy**, the *Financial Review* reported.

### A side effect of a \$43b spend...

In *The Australian*, **Jennifer Hewett** wrote that **Stephen Conroy** knows most people don't want super-fast internet speeds; the Government's logic is that their new national broadband network will provide more competition to keep pressure on broadband prices.

### The Kaiser chief

Melbourne has been selected as the home for the technology team building a national broadband network (see Jobs). Nearby, **Mike Kaiser**, chief of staff to Queensland Premier **Anna Bligh** and a former chief of staff to the then New South Wales Premier **Morris Iemma**, will take up the role of government relations chief for the NBN Co. Kaiser, 46, left the Queensland Parliament in 2001 after admitting during the Shepherdson inquiry to involvement in vote rigging in Labor Party ballots in the 1980s, but no charges were laid. After leaving Parliament, Kaiser made a name for himself as a powerful lobbyist with close links to state Labor governments before taking on the senior staff roles.

### No transaction

The fledgling National Broadband Network Company has rebuffed approaches by telecommunications company TransACT about selling its infrastructure to the \$43b enterprise. Like many other telcos, TransACT, Canberra's main provider of broadband and pay TV, is eager to sell all or some of its infrastructure to NBN Co. Buying infrastructure will make it easier and quicker to build the NBN and also means existing networks will not be 'stranded' by the new network, *The Age* reported. Nearby, TransACT activated a gateway for its fibre-to-the-premises network that serves several suburbs in the nation's capital. TransACT said the upgrade will enable it to deliver 100 megabits per second of data – an upgrade that could compete with the Government's broadband network.

### No influence on Future

Finance Minister **Lindsay Tanner** says the Government will not use its \$86b Future Fund to influence the proposed structural separation of Telstra.

### More costs

The *Financial Review* reported that property developers are demanding subsidies for the cost of installing fibre-optic infrastructure in new commercial and residential projects for the Government's \$43b broadband network. The Government is under pressure to keep down the cost of the network and has been criticised by the Business Council of Australia and the Productivity Commission for failing to release a detailed cost benefit analysis of the project. Some developers, who expect the Government will compel them to install fibre to the

premises infrastructure in greenfield property estates, say the plan is plagued by uncertainty, particularly about the costs associated with the rollout.

### A viable question

Telstra boss **David Thodey** has left a question mark hanging over the financial viability of the national broadband network, by wondering whether there is enough demand for high-speed internet among consumers and business users, *The Australian* reported. Nearby, Thodey plans to streamline his management structure. He has 15 executives who report to him and is believed to be working on a plan that could rationalise the telecommunications company's executive structure.

### Not programmed to change

The *Financial Review* reported that an Australian National Audit Office review of the Change Program confirmed that the bulk of Tax Office computer system changes in the third phase of overhaul will not be ready until the end of the 2010 calendar year, or 12 months after the Henry review of the tax system is delivered. Cost blowouts and delays surrounding the Australian Taxation Office's \$879m seven-year-long Change Program put the revenue agencies technology overhaul on a collision course with the release of recommendations from the Henry review, due by the end of the year. Project costs are now \$434m, or 50 per cent, more than originally forecast. The report said that the original timetable to fully implement the new ICT system was ambitious and in hindsight too optimistic. Second Commissioner of Taxation **David Butler** said the revenue agency was looking at how its technology operations may be hit by changes flowing from the Henry tax review, including a revamp of Business Activity Statement systems due next year and he has made contingency plans to suspend or drop part of its change program technology overhaul.

### Not a minute

Commercial television's digital multi-channels will not need to show a minute of Australian content after Communications Minister **Stephen Conroy** declared rules requiring main channels to show local material would not apply. The minister stated the challenge of launching the new digital channels – so far, Seven's 7Two, Nine's Go! and Ten's One HD – meant local content requirements were not appropriate, *The Age* reported.

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#### Interesting

**Medicare Australia** has become the key supplier of information and payment services from other government agencies. Chief executive **Lynelle Briggs** said the nature of the services Medicare provided was shifting as the Government leverages its relationship with the community, such as its delivery of ceiling insulation stimulus programs on behalf of the Department of the Environment. They are continuing to focus on information and communication technology as a key business enabler, said Briggs. Other initiatives included the Defence Force Family Health Care and Teenage Dental programs, and a purpose-built combined Medicare and Centrelink office at Narooma on the New South Wales south coast. Medicare's technology capabilities are based on its high availability business processing systems, secure messaging over the internet using public key infrastructure and transaction connections with the health sector, banks and government agencies. According to its 2008-09 annual report, more than 80 per cent of Medicare's business is conducted electronically.

The *Financial Review* reported that Medicare Australia will be the government's new superannuation clearinghouse to process – at no charge – super payments made by 1.6 million small businesses on behalf of their employees. Superannuation Minister **Chris Bowen** unveiled details of the \$16m scheme. It will streamline super and cut costs for business owners, but will begin from July 2010, a year later than planned.

#### Similar problems with change

Thousands of information technology jobs at the Department of Defence are likely to be moved out of the department's Canberra headquarters. The ICT Strategy, issued in November, reveals the department is concerned about difficulties finding skilled people in Canberra and is preparing to relocate technology operations, including project delivery and maintenance, in order to find staff. The centre's difficulty finding skilled people is similar to problems that dogged the Australian Taxation Office's

\$879m Change Program. Competition between agencies for scarce IT staff caused delays and inflated contract rates. Former ATO second Commissioner **Greg Farr** responded by opening software development operations in Wollongong and Melbourne. Farr is now Defence's chief information officer. Moving the jobs will lower costs to the suppliers, who are likely to support the decision, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Nearby

The Department of Defence could cut more than two thirds of its 4,500 applications as part of a \$940m overhaul. Over the next four years, defence and standardised technology operations, under a plan called the Defence integrated environment, will improve its technology capabilities through to 2030. Defence chief information officer **Greg Farr** said there could be fewer than 1000 applications after the rationalisation. Details of how this would be achieved would be explained by the end of the year in a document that describes the new reference architecture for defence, *The Australian* reported.

#### HP cut

The Australian Taxation Office has cut \$60m from its long-standing technology contracts it has held with outsourcing firm EDS. Recently rebranded as HP Enterprise Services, the outsourcer has been cut from a shortlist of five service providers to provide desktop services, under the Tax Office's End User Computing service bundle. HP is still in the running for a \$160m agreement for centralised computing services, which is due to be awarded in mid 2010, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Invisibility cloak innovated

**Terry Cutler**, deputy chairman of the CSIRO and a former Telstra chief executive, who wrote the Government's innovation green paper, says that the word 'innovation' has vanished from the political debate with potentially negative consequences for productivity growth. In recent speeches Cutler has been increasingly critical of the Government's response to his green paper, *Venturous Australia*, which was published last year and recommended a boost to business innovation and links between the creators and consumers of knowledge, skills and technology. His report was overtaken by the global financial crisis and the Rudd government's response to it, including this year's budget, focused on public sector research – or what Cutler calls the supply side of innovation, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Letter from Canberra suffered at their hands

An escalating number of cyber attacks against Australian companies and public sector assets has lead Canberra to substantially centralise its security policy response across Government agencies as it tries to counter the tide of hostile electronic threats. The Attorney-General's Department will lead a new whole-of-government push to get state and federal agencies to work together following the release of the **Cyber Security Strategy** document, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Immortal dreaming

Extending the life of desktops and laptops was among a list of 250 cost-cutting initiatives to be introduced between next year and 2013 as part of the second phase of the Government's plan to cut more than \$1b from technology and communications costs over the

next four years, *The Australian* reported. Initiatives that yielded the highest savings in the first phase of the program included changes to infrastructure, such as desktop computers, servers and laptops.

#### E-waste

Manufacturers and importers of computers and televisions will be forced to join accredited recycling schemes after the Environment Protection and Heritage Council approved a national legislative framework for the management of e-waste. The schemes are expected to be up and running by 2011, within a decade of which, it is expected 80 per cent of TVs and computers will be recycled. Last year, only about 10 per cent of Australia's e-waste was recycled, the *Financial Review* reported. Sims Recycling Solutions senior vice president **Kumar Radhakrishnan** welcomed the decision but warned significant new investment would be needed to ensure appropriate handling of collected material.

#### A WiFi warning

The IT section of *The Australian* warns readers to think carefully before accessing internet banking via a smart phone, especially if you're connecting via WiFi. The data you exchange with your bank is flowing through thin air and – so a new report claims – can be relatively easily captured. That includes your username and password. The report comes from SMOBILE Systems, a US vendor of mobile security software. It tested a number of smart-phones, including the Nokia N95, an android phone (the HTC G1), another HTC model running Windows Mobile and an iPhone. Using easily available software tools, the authors of the study managed to intercept and clearly read the data flowing from all these mobiles – including username/password combinations.

## BUSINESS, ECONOMY, TAX

#### Rate rise

The Reserve Bank of Australia raised interest rates in early December by .25 of a percentage point. Westpac incurred the wrath of consumer groups and some political leaders for taking the opportunity to increase their interest rates by .45 per cent, allowing them to earn an extra \$400m a year, the *Herald Sun* reported. The rate rise also drew a strong public reaction from the paper's readers, with Werribee mum Heather O'Brien and son Adam, an aspiring writer, stand-up comic and musician, struggling to find the extra money to pay the bank.

#### Banks looking out for productivity

Productivity Commission chairman **Gary Banks** said at an economic conference at Melbourne University that spending on infrastructure must be re-calibrated, but Rudd and Swan are hesitant to do so. He warned that the Government should be taking advantage of the improved economy to defer school spending on major infrastructure programs to get a better productivity gain. He said more ambitious economic reform was needed if the heavy debt burden left by the financial crisis was to be paid off, *The Australian* reported.

#### Nearby

*The Age's* associate editor **Shaun Carney** wrote an interesting article when he asserted that the Productivity Commission is shouting, but no one is listening, as the Rudd Government pursues a different path. **Kevin Rudd** sees it as just one source of advice among many. Rudd has locked himself into big-ticket assistance programs

to some industry sectors, in particular the automotive industry. Commission chairman **Gary Banks** and his cohort detest that sort of spending. In short, Banks believes the Government's \$6.2b car industry assistance package is bad policy that more likely than not will hurt the country. Although the commission keeps itself in work, it's not the central economic advisory body it was in the Howard era.

#### Take a cold shower

Treasurer **Wayne Swan** hosed down speculation that the Australian economy has recovered and is now heading into a long boom, warning optimists to take a cold shower and acknowledge the fragile state of the global recovery, *The Age* reported.

#### Push on

Business Council of Australia president **Graham Bradley** urged the Government to use the economic recovery to push ahead with its reform agenda, in particular those programs that require the states to get on board, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Trade to Treasury!

Economist and businessmen **David Trebeck** has argued that trade should be moved from Foreign Affairs to Treasury, the *Financial Review* reported. Treasury can better judge the real gains from trade reform than the negotiators.

#### The taste for yellow-cake

Canada's decision to resume uranium sales to India signals a huge lost opportunity for Australia, according to deputy opposition leader **Julie Bishop**, *The Age* reported.

#### Dubai rocking

*The Age* reported that the Dubai Government has rocked the investment world with news it will seek an extension on debt repayments on its key holding company, Dubai World, which owns strategic global assets, including running half of Australia's ports through DP World. Dubai World has US\$60b in debt and if DP Ports were to be sold, the immediate beneficiary would be **Mark Rowsthorn** at Asciano given he and DP have duopolies around Australia. East coast port authorities are keen to add new competitors, but if you were a potential entrant,

like Hong Kong-based Hutchison, you would rather spend \$1.5b buying DP's Australian arm than build your own facilities.

#### Signature pin

The *Herald Sun* reported that millions of Australian credit cardholders will be forced to switch from signature to PIN at store counters and supermarket checkouts as companies battle a fraud blowout. All Visa customers will have to carry cards embedded with smart chips and use personal identification numbers instead of signing at store counters and supermarkets checkouts by April 2013. Rival card provider American Express is considering a similar security upgrade. Visa, which has more than 14 million cards circulating nationwide, unveiled deadlines for the conversion amid growing concerns Australia is viewed as a soft target by overseas criminals running counterfeit card skimming rackets.

#### Battle in the isles

Consumer Affairs Minister **Craig Emerson** criticised Coles and Woolworths, after the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development data found our grocery prices had risen 41.3 per cent since 2000 – much faster than both Britain's and America's. But the industry said the past five years of data indicated Australian prices have risen less than the US and UK, the *Financial Review* reported. Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Chairman **Graeme Samuel** has a different view.

#### No qualms

On the opinion pages of the *Herald Sun*, **Terry McCrann** wrote that he could hardly object to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's rejection of Caltex's acquisition of Mobil's retail petrol network. Coles with Shell and Woolworths with Caltex now have more than 40 per cent of sales at the pump between them, growing from nothing in barely a dozen years. ACCC chairman **Graeme Samuel** said if the deal had gone through it was likely to lead to stable pricing where motorists paid more for fuel. *The Australian* reported that Caltex's proposed acquisition of 302 Mobil service stations has prompted a regulatory review of the entire fuel retailing sector and of information sharing between petrol companies to coordinate price hikes.

#### Big cash splash

The *Bankwest Cash Report 2009*, which analysed data gathered by the Reserve Bank, the Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Payments Clearing Association found the amount of cash in our society has risen 71 per cent over the past 10 years, the *Herald Sun* reported.

#### Franchisor and franchisee

The *Financial Review* reported that franchisors who bullied their small business partners will be named and shamed and face random audits under new powers to be handed to the competition regulator. Amongst reforms, the Government will amend the Franchising Code to stop franchisors from ending agreements without giving advance notice to the franchisee.

#### Moving on

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has given **Woolworth's** the green light to acquire hardware distributor **Danks**, setting the scene for a showdown with home improvement giant **Bunnings**, *The Australian* reported.

#### A red tape suggestion

Not-for-profit organisations and some small businesses will no longer have to prepare detailed annual reports, under draft reforms aimed at cutting red tape. Companies will also be able to change the year-end dates to ease the burden on auditors during peak reporting periods, and allow related entities to bring their reporting into line. Under existing laws, all companies limited by guarantee are required to prepare an audited financial report. But the Government intends to introduce a three-tiered system to ease reporting requirements for community organisations and charities, *The Australian* reported.

#### Under a new banner

Law firm **Deacons** will relaunch itself by the end of the year under the banner of London-based firm **Norton Rose** after more than three years of planning and negotiations. Chief executive partner **Don Boyd**, will become deputy global chief executive of the merged firm on January 1. Deacon's 145 partners and 415 other fee earners are fully behind the merger, the *Financial Review* reported.

## JUSTICE

#### Can only be a good thing

Federal and state governments and key public sector agencies are overhauling their use of legal services by cutting the number of firms on the public payroll and insisting on changes to traditional billing practices to reduce costs. The Australian Taxation Office and the Fair Work Ombudsman are shedding firms from their legal panels, while other federal departments and agencies are reviewing their panel arrangements, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Contestable no doubt

Draft rules for a new national code of practice for barristers, which could change the way they deal with guilty clients and the media in some jurisdictions, were finalised by the council of the Australian Bar Association in November before being sent to each bar association for consultation with members. The new chairman of the Victorian Bar Association, **Michael Colbran**, QC, has been working on the draft rules for the past 12 months, the *Financial Review* reported.



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## A bit rich

The long-running case against **Jodee Rich** over the billion-dollar collapse of his telecommunications company One.Tel has been thrown out. Eight years after the Australian Securities and Investments Commission launched its case against Rich and One.Tel finance director **Mark Silbermann**, a New South Wales Supreme Court judge found against the regulator. 'I've reached the conclusion that ASIC has failed to prove any aspect of its pleaded case against either defendant,' Justice **Robert Austin** said. The ruling is a blow to ASIC, which has spent millions of dollars of public money running the case and could now face millions more in costs, *The Age* reported. In the *Herald Sun*, **Terry McCrann** wrote that the failure of ASIC's case against the One.Tel founder is a monumental, utterly unqualified catastrophe. An editorial in *The Age* felt that the nation loses when a corporate watchdog fails so badly and whilst cases will be lost, ASIC's One.Tel follies give cause for real concern.

ASIC suffered another blow in a separate case when Justice **Ross Robson** found it would be an abuse of process for ASIC to open a second front over bribes allegedly paid by the Australian Wheat Board to the regime of **Saddam Hussein**. The blow in the AWB case, which has been running for four years, follows the embarrassing collapse of the One.Tel case mentioned above. The ruling may delay the existing trial, in which ASIC alleges former AWB chief executive **Andrew Lindberg** knew or ought to have known of bribes paid to the now deposed Hussein regime.

## Nearby

**James Packer** dared former business partner **Jodee Rich** and the special-purpose liquidator of One.Tel to proceed with a threatened damages suit against Consolidated Press Holdings. Consolidated Press promised that it would be able to succeed where the corporate regulator failed and prove in court 'the true financial position' of One.Tel, *The Age* reported.

## Orwell turns in grave

*The Australian's* **Peter van Onselen** wrote that the proposal to give police unlimited powers to stop and search citizens will compromise civil rights in the name of protecting them. He noted that the West Australian Legislative Assembly passed a bill to give police the powers to stop and search citizens at will, with no requirement of reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing. Civil libertarians have described it as the stuff of a police state, and are not far wrong.

## A whiff of something not quite right

Supporters of Australian **Jock Palfreeman**, 23, who is facing a 20-year-jail term in Bulgaria for murder, say he did not receive a fair trial and will appeal against the verdict. He was convicted and sentenced in early December for the stabbing murder of the son of a prominent psychologist in Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, in 2007. **Kay Danes**, of the foreign businesses support service, said there appeared to be several violations of Palfreeman's judicial rights, *The Age* reported.

# DEFENCE

## A curious absurdity

The Government is spending \$87.5m on a new Middle East military base. Defence did not say where the base is because of security considerations and host national sensitivities. *The Age* reported that the secrecy leads to a curious absurdity: details and images of most of the bases are on the internet, in the Middle East press and even on Australian Defence Force websites. Australian ambassadors have openly said where they are. They are mentioned in Hansard. Australia's Middle East bases have mushroomed since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

## What a trooper

Trooper **Mark Donaldson** became the first Australian in 40 years to be awarded the Victoria Cross, the military's highest honour, for rescuing an Afghan interpreter while under heavy gunfire from the Taliban last year. He received his medal from Governor-General **Quentin Bryce** in January, prompting an invitation to a private audience with the Queen and to Remembrance Day ceremonies in London. Trooper Donaldson, who was born in Waratah, near Newcastle, and lives in Perth, enjoyed a 15 minute chat with the Queen in Windsor Castle's white drawing room in mid-November, *The Age* reported. In the same battle where he won his medal, the defence forces black Labrador **Sabi** was thought killed when a rocket exploded near her patrol vehicle. However, a US soldier found the 10-year-old dog wandering in an Afghanistan province, after being given up for dead 14 months ago, the *Herald Sun* reported. Defence is working with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and others to ensure Sabi's eventual return to Australia. Watch for another chapter in *Tales of Bureaucracy*.

## The little commandants

Australia has increased the pressure on the Netherlands to keep its troops engaged in Afghanistan, with Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** making a personal appeal to his Dutch counterpart after a flying visit to Australian troops, *The Age* reported. The Australian Federal Police Association criticised a commitment by Rudd to send extra police to Afghanistan in lieu of fighting troops, saying Australia's top police risked morphing into a quasi military force.

## Not yet built

The Government approved an initial purchase of up to 14-US built F-35 joint strike fighters at a cost of \$3.2b. The Cabinet's National Security committee has backed the fifth generation fighter as Australia's main future combat aircraft, but the F-35 will be bought in batches with the next major acquisition to be considered by the Government in 2012. It intends to buy at least 72 F-35s, *The Australian* reported.

## Family friendly war

Female defence recruits will get new family friendly conditions and social fitness training under a plan to boost the number of women in all areas of the Australian Defence Force. Childcare and generous maternity leave will be offered, along with job sharing and part-time work when women return after having a baby. Physical training programs will be offered to prospective female candidates before they sign up, to overcome poor initial

fitness levels. The Government wants to dramatically lift the number of women in the ADF. They now make up to 13 per cent of personnel, the *Herald Sun* reported.

## Tales of unbelievable bureaucracy

Defence has overpaid war zone allowances to combat engineers responsible for mine clearing and diffusing deadly roadside bombs in Afghanistan. They want the money repaid, which has angered diggers and their families. In the third Australian Defence Force payment bungle this year, repayment demands are being issued to 54 soldiers based in Oruzgan province who will each have to reimburse between \$250 and \$1100, a defence spokeswoman said. The mistake involves payment of the unpredictable explosive allowance, worth \$109.67 a day, for diffusing roadside bombs and mines, or \$54.84 a day for mine sweeping and searching. About \$38,000 was paid in error, *The Australian* reported.

## Less training days

Budget cuts ordered by the Government have seen army reserve officers warned that total training days next year could be cut from as many as 48 to 24, which would severely reduce operational readiness and probably result in mass resignations from the ranks, *The Australian* reported.

## Closures and expansions

Defence Minister **John Faulkner** has ordered an exhaustive review of the \$12b defence estate, with some bases likely to face closure and others to be expanded. However, he will have his work cut out if experience is anything to go by. Government MPs in marginal seats often lobby against unpopular plans to close military bases where defence is a substantial employer, the *Financial Review* reported.

## Major trade-offs

Off-the-shelf military purchases offer big savings and reduced risks to taxpayers compared with do-it-yourself, but come with a major trade-off – a potential sacrifice of the nation's defence self-sufficiency, a Government backed security think tank (the **Australian Strategic Policy Institute**) warned.

## No Luddite

**Steve Ludlam**, president of the Rolls-Royce submarine division and effective head of submarine maintenance of the Royal Navy in Britain, is expected to be named as chief executive of government-owned ASC Shipbuilding to replace **Greg Tunney**, who left six months ago. Ludlam is a nuclear submarine propulsion specialist with little experience in surface ship building or in working in Australia. The changeover comes as ASC has embarked on the construction of three air warfare destroyers at a total cost of \$8b. He will also be charged with the maintenance of Australia's six trouble plagued Collins-class submarines and the design of 12 new submarines to be assembled at the ASC facility, the *Financial Review* reported.

## Well done

The Government bestowed on US General **David Petraeus** the Order of Australia for his service against terrorism as coalition commander in Iraq, where he oversaw the surge strategy that brought major fighting to a close. Defence Minister **John Faulkner** gave the honour, creating an awkward situation for the Senator, who six years ago opposed the war and challenged claims that Iraq posed a terrorist threat.



### After the event

A British inquiry into the invasion of Iraq in 2003 began in late November. The panel's five members, chaired by former top civil servant **Sir John Chilcot**, will hear evidence from members of Britain's intelligence agencies and government departments as well as from the Prime Minister at the time, **Tony Blair**, *The Age* reported.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Singularity

A national deal to unify transport regulation is in sight after state governments signalled their willingness to agree on reforms that would cut billions of dollars in business costs. State and federal transport ministers appear likely to settle on changes to rail, road and maritime rules that will remove overlapping red tape and in some cases lead to the creation of a single national regulator. Some observers cautioned that Victoria could stymie a plan to replace seven rail safety laws with a single regime, and that Western Australia rejected details of plans to unify road freight rules. The Productivity Commission has strongly backed the reform effort, which Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** is hoping to complete at the next Council of Australian Governments meeting. The Australian Logistics Council chief executive **Michael Kilgariff** stepped up industry calls for reform by writing to state and federal transport ministers to urge them to reach an agreement, the *Financial Review* reported.

### Outflanked

The debt of Australia's six state governments could soon outflank the \$136b owed by the Commonwealth as the state administrations fund an ambitious infrastructure program in a bid to boost the economy. States are expected to be forced to issue an extra \$28b worth of debt in the next seven months, *The Australian* reported.

### Spending up to cut costs

The Government is allocating up to \$80m in the second round of its \$512m program aimed at cutting the planning and infrastructure costs of housing developments. The proposal will be considered by the Council of Australian governments in December, with federal infrastructure funding to be linked to a new national plan for major cities, using planning benchmarks. Developers have warned that hefty infrastructure charges, along with planning bottlenecks, are slowing down the release of land and contributing to the housing shortage. Housing Minister **Tanya Pilbersek** said \$120m had already been allocated to 37 projects under the first round of the program, which will form a key plank in the Rudd plan.

### Revealing

Building owners will be forced to reveal the energy efficiency of their properties when they sell office space. The National Disclosure Scheme, starting next year, will mean thousands of commercial property owners face fines if they fail to provide an up-to-date building energy efficiency certificate. Commercial properties larger than 2000 square metres will be affected.

### One year on

The *Financial Review* reported that more than \$16b of mining projects shelved in the global financial crisis are back on the agenda as sentiment improves.

### Capital competition

An interesting six-page Infrastructure Special Report appeared in *The Australian*, which included an article that noted that Sydney and Brisbane are spending billions of dollars expanding their port facilities to challenge Melbourne.

### Corruption disruption

In the *Financial Review*, **Alan Anderson**, who was a senior adviser to former treasurer **Peter Costello** and former attorney-general **Philip Ruddock**, wrote that local government power over property is a recipe for corruption, and corruption is a symptom of excessive regulation. Systems that make basic economic activity subject to the approval of minor local officials will inherently drive both real and perceived corruption. A sensible system of development regulation would operate by exception, not permission. The burden of proof of disruption should be put on the neighbours.

### Taking the credit

*The Australian* reported that Transport Minister **Anthony Albanese** faced fresh Opposition attacks for claiming infrastructure projects initiated by **John Howard** as Labor achievements. National's leader **Warren Truss** said that more than half of a list of 60 ongoing rail and road projects claimed by Albanese as initiated by Labor had been announced and funded by the Howard government. But Albanese rejected the attack, disputing Truss's figures and insisting that regardless of what the National's claim to have planned while they were in government: 'They didn't build it.'

### Getting in the way

Greedy state governments and local councils were partly responsible for the shortage of affordable first homes, Housing Minister **Tanya Pilbersek** said. She said big infrastructure levies were strangling land development and pricing first-time buyers out of the market. High state and local government charges meant the nation was not producing enough new housing blocks to meet

population growth. The Urban Development Institute of Australia backed Pilbersek's concerns, warning that Government charges were making land development unprofitable, *The Australian* reported.

### Size matters

A report on housing sizes identified Australia as having the world's largest homes, outsizing the United States, which has traditionally had more spacious homes. According to the research, gathered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Commissioned by Commsec, the average floor area of new homes in Australia hit a record 214 square metres last financial year. While Australian home sizes have risen 10 per cent over the past decade, research shows sizes of new American homes has fallen from a peak of 212 square metres to 201.5 square metres. In Europe, Denmark has the biggest homes followed by Greece and the Netherlands. Homes in Britain are the smallest in Europe with an average size of 76 square metres, *The Age* reported.

## HEALTH

### Did not know that

Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** became the first member of a new organisation to encourage families to discuss the issue of organ donations. The Donate Life public awareness program, backed by group of medical specialists called the Donate Life Network, will encourage Australians to discover the facts about organ and tissue donation, to make an informed decision and discuss their wishes with their families. About 40 per cent of Australians are not aware that even if they are registered as an organ donor, their family will be asked to give consent for organ donation to proceed after their death, the *Herald Sun* reported.

### Can see again but can't walk again

The halving of the Medicare rebate for cataracts is expected to mean patients will face an extra \$300 in out-of-pocket costs, while the abolition of a \$20 rebate for injections into inflamed joints, which many arthritis sufferers need routinely to relieve crippling pain, has caused outrage. The vice president of the Australian Rheumatology Association, **Dr Lou McGuigan**, said the decision flew in the face of medical evidence, particularly when it came to the treatment of children with juvenile arthritis, *The Age* reported.

### Hmmm...

Leading mental health advocate **Ian Hickie** has called on the Prime Minister to push for the drinking age to be raised to 19 to break the connection between school

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leaving and drinking. The call has the backing of the chairman of the Australian National Council on Drugs, **John Herron**, who said the council would discuss the proposal at its next meeting. Hickie has proposed that **Kevin Rudd** seek a national agreement with the states and territories to lift it to 19 as an initial step. Rudd, who has condemned binge drinking by young people, has put the issue on the agenda of December's meeting with premiers, *The Age* reported.

#### Nearby 1

Half of Australian adults say 15 to 17-year-olds should be allowed to consume alcohol at home, despite official guidelines warning young people to delay drinking for as long as possible. A survey of 1,200 adults by health insurer MBF also found that the more people earn, the more likely they were to agree to underage drinking, *The Age* reported.

#### Nearby 2

The Australian liquor industry has warned that raising taxes on alcohol and imposing tight restrictions on sales will not change the national drinking culture or solve the problem of youth binge drinking. The president of the Australian Liquor Stores Association, **Mal Higgs**, said raising alcohol taxes was a flawed strategy and would not be accepted by the public. The Government was responding to calls from the preventative health task force strategy to reform alcohol taxes and pricing, and which concluded that policies that raise the price of alcoholic beverages are an effective means of reducing alcohol consumption. The liquor industry is losing its influence in Canberra as the government considers changes to the taxation system and new ways to control consumption of spirits, beer and wine, *The Australian* reported.

#### Round numbers of babies

*The Age* reported that Australia has just had its biggest baby boom with a record 293,600 babies born last year, up 4 per cent or 11,400 babies on the year before. Almost one quarter – 71,175 – were born in Victoria.

#### An idea

The Productivity Commission is considering whether Australia should introduce a Medicare-style national insurance scheme to provide lifetime medical treatment and care for people with serious disabilities such as brain damage or spinal cord injuries.

#### They work hard

The Australian Nursing Federation has called on the Government to introduce minimum nurse-to-resident resident ratios after two surveys of 541 nurses and personal carers in 2007 and this year found their workload had increased significantly. The surveys, by Melbourne University, found that in 2007, ratios ranged between 1 to 6 and 1 to 39, *The Age* reported.

#### Needed

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is proposing to grant authorisation for five years to Medicines Australia's 16th edition of its code of conduct. The code sets standards for the marketing and promotion of prescription pharmaceutical products in Australia. It provides, among other things, a standard to address potential conflicts of interest from unrestricted relationships between pharmaceutical companies and health-care professionals.

#### Seducing the doctors

Pens, coffee mugs and notepads provided for doctors surgeries will no longer be able to carry the brand names of drugs under changes to the pharmaceutical code of conduct coming from the start of next year. But while the names of the products will be banned, drug companies will still be able to put their names on a steady supply of marketing freebies given to win over doctors, *The Age* reported.

#### Bend over

The **Department of Health and Ageing's** National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme has resumed, [www.cancerscreening.gov.au](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au).

## AGRICULTURE & WATER

#### A first time

Environment Minister **Peter Garrett's** decision to reject the \$1.8b Traveston Crossing Dam north of Brisbane has been hailed as a win for conservationists and residents of the Mary Valley. It is also the first significant pro-environment ruling Garrett has made in his portfolio. However, it has highlighted the challenge of balancing environmental concerns against the needs of a growing population and raised the bar any future dam proposed for south-east Australia must clear, *The Age* reported.

#### Free trade of food to avoid famine

The threat climate change poses to agriculture makes the free trade of food crucial if the world hunger crisis is to be effectively tackled, Agriculture Minister **Tony Burke** said, a week after he returned from the UN food Summit in Rome. He said productivity improvements in farming would not deal with climate-change-driven extreme weather events that would wipe out entire crops. Burke said the increased threat of natural disasters meant the free trade of food across the globe would become critical to ensure the supply of food to the world's 6 billion people, *The Age* reported.

#### The funds

The Productivity Commission will review the \$460m spent on rural research and development corporations, after Agriculture Minister **Tony Burke** accused some of wasting taxpayers' and farmers' funds. The 16 corporations, known as RDCs, receive a combined \$200m each year from government plus \$260m in contributions from farmers, who are levied according to their production levels. Burke said the model of the RDCs – giving farmers a direct say in the research – was good, but he was concerned that in some cases funds were not spent on research, the *Financial Review* reported.

## MANUFACTURING

#### After all the hoo-hah

A year after the Government announced its \$2b back up to help car dealerships secure finance, only one chain, Ford, has been granted access to the OzCar scheme. Ford Credit will use OzCar financing to lend to more than 90 Ford and Volvo dealers. The Government has downgraded the size of the OzCar scheme to \$450m – less than a quarter of its planned cost. The Government has also quietly dropped the \$4b Australian Business Investment Partnership – dubbed the Rudd Bank – which was designed to prop up shaky commercial property projects, *The Australian* reported.

#### Zoom

Car sales are growing at their fastest rate in more than a year, a sign the confidence in the economic recovery is encouraging households and businesses to lift their spending, the *Financial Review* reported.

#### Nearby

November sales of luxury off-road cars jumped more than 75 per cent, large four-wheel drives rose by 36.5 per cent, mid-sized SUVs were up 51.2 per cent and sports cars by 47.8 per cent, compared with the same month last year, *The Age* reported.

#### Tuff stuff

Industry executive **Cyril Benjamin** has been appointed by the Government as 'steel supplier advocate', working with the **Steel Innovation Council**, to help the steel industry win a greater share of major projects after complaints that developers were turning to Asian suppliers. Manufacturing industry leader **Bruce Griffiths** has been appointed to champion Australian rail suppliers as the Rudd government's first **Rail Supplies advocate**. Through the \$8.2m Supplier Advocate program, a number of respected industry figures will be appointed to provide leadership to other specific sectors. Griffiths will also help coordinate support from the Industry Capability Network, Enterprise Connect, Austrade and other programs. Additional supplier advocates will be appointed in the coming months, including steel and textiles, clothing and footwear.

## EDUCATION

#### Spread the judgement

Following a two-day conference with 150 principals in Canberra, Education Minister **Julia Gillard** signalled the Government's My School report card – which enables comparisons between schools based on literacy and numeracy tests – could be refined next year to allow schools to be judged by a broader range of measures, *The Age* reported.

#### Frankincense and myrrh

**Kevin Rudd** will make a pre-election offering to the Christian lobby, extending the school chaplains program until after next year's federal poll. It was thought the Government would wind up the program, but it will instead be funded for another two years at a cost of \$48m, the *Herald Sun* reported. About 2,700 schools have hired chaplains under the scheme, introduced by former prime minister **John Howard**.

## SOCIETY

#### Parliamentary and religious privilege

In a speech to the Senate, Independent Senator **Nick Xenophon** accused the Church of Scientology of being a criminal organisation. He said correspondence given to him by several former Scientologists implicated the organisation in a range of crimes, including forced imprisonment, coerced abortions, embezzlement of church funds, physical violence, intimidation and blackmail, *The Age* reported. Eight letters from former members of the organisation were tabled in Parliament. The head of the Church of Scientology in Australia, **Vicki Dunstan**, said Xenophon's comments were an outrageous abuse of Parliamentary Privilege. A Senate inquiry into Scientology will not go ahead after the

Government told the church the Tax Office and police were the most appropriate authorities to investigate any complaints, *The Age* reported.

### Peter's pessimism

In a broad-ranging ABC Boyer lecture series (given last year by **Rupert Murdoch**) former defence force chief **Peter Cosgrove** expressed pessimism about the course of the Afghanistan war and said the combination of growing economic, social and resource pressures in Australia's region is our biggest long-term national security challenge. In the 50th anniversary Boyer lectures, Cosgrove said if Australia is serious about tackling climate change it should move to embrace nuclear power.

### An art lesson

The Australian National Gallery's curator, **Christine Dixon**, currently living in Paris, has arranged for the Canberra gallery to host *Masterpieces from Paris: Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cezanne and Beyond* from December to April. The gallery's director, **Ron Radford**, has been awarded the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government for his contribution to the arts.

### A history lesson

The Ten Network telemovie, *Hawke*, dramatises the Kirribilli agreement between Prime Minister **Bob Hawke** and his Treasurer and Deputy leader **Paul Keating** for a leadership handover. **Richard Roxburgh** plays Hawke opposite **Felix Williamson's** Keating in a dramatised history produced by **Richard Keddie**, the man who forged the memorable 'Tracey' anti-Work Choices television ad campaign for the ACTU.

### The schoolies boat

Cruiseship operators say they are prepared to defy a Human Rights Commission ruling preventing them from banning schoolies from their vessels over binge drinking concerns. They applied for exemption from discrimination law so they could ban end-of-school revellers due to an exponential increase in alcohol related security incidents, *The Australian* reported.

### Worth a look

The National Trust's *Trust News* is a 36-page colour publication detailing heritage concerns across the nation, [www.nattrust.com.au](http://www.nattrust.com.au).

### Not too hard

Paralympian marathon gold medallist both Athens and Beijing, **Kurt Fearnley**, 28, dragged himself by his hands along the Kokoda Trail, finishing and 96 kilometre track in 10 days.

## APPOINTMENTS. JOBS. TENDERS

### Appointments

Former *Age* and *Financial Review* journalist **James Chessell** joined *The Australian* as a senior business journalist, writing for the business, media and general sections of the newspaper. **John Price** will be the new general insurance ombudsman for the Financial Ombudsman Service, which was formed last year through an amalgamation of the Banking & Financial Services Ombudsman, the Financial Industry Complaints Service and the Insurance Ombudsman Service, the *Financial Review* reported. Price is a Melbourne-based lawyer who served as a director of State Trustees as well as chairman of State Trustees.

Former Westpac boss and recent BHP Billiton director **David Morgan** was appointed managing director of JC Flower in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, and will relocate to London soon. He has been the Australian chairman of JCF since leaving Westpac almost 2 years ago after nine years at the helm. The chairman of Sydney Airport Corporation Limited, **Max Moore-Wilton**, has been appointed the first Australian chairman of the Airports Council International governing board, an organisation representing 1,670 airports in 177 countries and territories. **Peter Sherrie** is the new national president of the Urban Development Institute of Australia, having been involved in the industry for 17 years. **Gareth Evans** will replace **Kim Beazley** as Chancellor of Australian National University in the New Year.

### Jobs

The **Australian Government Solicitor** seeks a chief executive officer, [ses@ewki.com](mailto:ses@ewki.com).

**Australia's Open Garden Scheme**, a national not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to promote the knowledge and pleasure of gardens and gardening by opening Australia's most inspiring private gardens to the public, seeks a chief executive officer, [execrec@kpmg.com.au](mailto:execrec@kpmg.com.au).

The **National Broadband Company** is seeking technology specialists, [www.jobs.nbnco.com.au](http://www.jobs.nbnco.com.au).

The **Australian Hotels Association** seeks a chief executive officer, [recruitment@aha.org.au](mailto:recruitment@aha.org.au).

**Diabetes Australia** seeks chairperson, [admin@diabetesaustralia.com.au](mailto:admin@diabetesaustralia.com.au).

The **National Museum of Australia** seeks a director, [www.sladegroup.com.au](http://www.sladegroup.com.au).

The **Office of the Australian Civilian Corps** within **AusAID** is seeking several managers and policy offices to assist in the implementation of the Australian Civilian Corps, [www.ausaid.gov.au/recruit](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/recruit).

### Tenders

The **Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs** requests submissions for its *Kids in Focus – Family Drug Support* program, [www.fahcsia.gov.au/funding](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/funding).

*The Australian's* Department of the Senate advertisement brought a couple of things to our attention. The **Economics Committee** is inquiring into competition and pricing in the Australian dairy industry; the **Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee** is inquiring into the possible impact and consequences for public health, trade and agriculture of the Government's decision to relax import restrictions on beef, [www.aph.gov.au/senate](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate).

The **Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts** is seeking comments on the National Water Initiative Pricing Principles, [www.environment.gov.au/water](http://www.environment.gov.au/water).

The **National Women's Alliances** requests applications for funding, [www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women).

The **Department of Health and Ageing** is advertising Commonwealth Rural Medical Scholarships, [www.health.gov.au/workforce](http://www.health.gov.au/workforce).

The **National youth violence survey** seeks answers. More than 600 young Australians have already responded to a recently launched national survey on youth violence. Targeted at 12 to 24-year-olds, the

survey seeks young people's views on, and experiences with, youth violence to help find solutions to the problem, [www.aph.gov.au/youthviolence](http://www.aph.gov.au/youthviolence).

The **New South Wales Government's Office of Water** invites comments on proposed variations to the Snowy Water Licence, [www.water.nsw.gov.au](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au).

The **Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts** has opened the second round of funding for its Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse projects as part of the \$1b *National Urban Water and Desalination Plan*, [www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/urban/stormwater-harvesting.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/urban/stormwater-harvesting.html).

The **Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts** released a draft feral camel action plan, [www.environment.gov.au/feralcamels](http://www.environment.gov.au/feralcamels).

The **Department of Innovation Industry, Science and Research** has committed \$196m over the next four years to 2013 for the Commercialisation Australia initiative, the aim of which is to turn Australian ideas into internationally competitive commercial realities and to create high skill, high wage jobs, [www.innovation.gov.au](http://www.innovation.gov.au).



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