New Ministry (Last pages) ♦ Significant Departmental restructure
Upper House final numbers (See last pages) ♦ Federal issues wash into state political territory
BUSH FIRE SEASON ♦ Ambulance report ‘uncovered’...? ♦ Victorian Building Code
Unions ♦ TAFE Funding ♦ Five Good Reasons ♦ Firies ♦ NO No No No No
Present and Future Rail Systems ♦ ‘The General’
Letter from Melbourne

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

He was admitted as a barrister and solicitor to the Supreme Court of Victoria, and graduated from high school in Bethesda, Maryland, and had many opportunities to become aware of the workings of Washington D.C.

For 10 years, he listened every Sunday evening to the late Alistair Cooke and his Letter from America. Alistair’s early career was mostly in the coal industry, where he became involved with energy, environmental and water issues, and later in the SME finance sector.

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

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

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

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- Two monthly publications
- Events at our offices and elsewhere
- Charts and specialist directories
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Editorial

Good Governance

A business of any size needs a board of directors, and that is about what Victoria did just 25 days ago. A clear Ministry is set out in this edition. Also, a clear set, quite rearranged, senior Public Service. The Victorian Budget will start to take shape in the coming months. Where all the relevant stakeholders will have their (fair) say, hopefully. Let's seek more transparency out of the Civil Service, the Media and the Unions. Most business, large and small, can be quite well tracked already, for planning matters or elsewise.

Your might be in dreamland, with Hope that Government across Australia can surely not get much worse after one hundred and fifteen years, and yes back to the Rum Rebellion.

What rotten politics and media and now social media we have had in these past few years, to distract good Government from operating well. When and where we need government. Letter From Melbourne is rewriting its Procedures and Writing Manual so we can avoid such subjunctives as 'Andrews Labour' Government.

Let's give this new Victorian government a clear go, an honest go, an ethical go. We do need good government all of the time as appropriate. Where, when and how do micro-parties fit in?

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. And appropriate greetings to those of other Faiths.

State government & politics

VALE Lynne Kosky

Lynne Janice Kosky, died aged 62 of breast cancer. She represented the electoral district of Altona in the Victorian Legislative Assembly for the Australian Labor Party from 1996 to 2010. She held the education and public transport portfolios.

Tuff Start

The new Planning Minister Richard Wynne has been in hospital following a heart attack. Evidently, he will be back in the saddle soon. Best wishes to You.

New boss

According to The Age, Victoria's new premier Daniel Andrews, has insisted that he, and not factions, will choose his new ministry. This is a VERY important point, for us all to watch, for as the Editorial above says, we need the best board of directors with a wide and deep collective wisdom to government the state of Victoria.

The Detail

In The Age, Nicholas Reece, former adviser to Labor premiers: ‘Andrews has flagged three other pre-Christmas policy priorities: the introduction of the Back To Work bill into parliament; action to end the Ambulance Victoria industrial dispute; and an emergency TAFE funding injection. The relationship between unions and the new state government is going to be challenging. The union movement played a decisive role in Labor’s win but the government cannot simply roll over in the myriad of outstanding disputes between the state and various unions.

Energy

The mismatch between union expectations and the state’s capacity to meet them is a recipe for discontent. The changes to government departments announced by Andrews are mostly sensible but will take a lot of work to bed down. With just seven department secretaries servicing 22 ministers, the new ‘super secretaries’ may find their far-reaching responsibilities hard to manage; and their power must be carefully monitored.’

NO NO NO NO NO

In the Herald Sun, ‘I also said I was looking forward to having a very frank chat with the Prime Minister about my priorities for Victoria — hospitals, schools, jobs and transport. I’ve since had that conversation with Mr Abbott. He encouraged me to break my promise not to proceed with the East West Link. That’s old politics and I won’t have a bar of it. I won’t say one thing before an election and another thing after it.

But I was pleased Mr Abbott and I could still talk at length about what we can achieve together. He calls himself an infrastructure Prime Minister and I’ve got a lot of things I want to build.’

Tough choice

According to Tony Walker in the Financial Review before the election: ‘Victorians and Melburnians are dismayed by what is perceived to have been an ineffectual, even a do-nothing, government.’

Editorial

In the Herald Sun, ‘Not since 1992, when we elected a youthful and visionary Jeff Kennett to rescue our state, has there been such a challenge confronting Victorians. Who is better to ensure Victoria overcomes the serious economic challenges we confront, and secure our status as a 21st century super state? The answer from voters must be unequivocal. The new government must have a majority and a mandate for its policies.’ It’s a long editorial. We have a good copy at the office for any students of history.

Julian weighs in

Julian Burnside QC, human rights activist and barrister, wrote to voters in Richmond endorsing Labor candidate Richard Wynne. Mr Burnside: ‘In recent state and federal elections I have supported candidates from different parties based their record and their positions on the issues that I believe are important. Perhaps it is naïve, but I think that the qualities of the individual candidate are very important consideration when voting.’ He ended up winning in a close call with the Greens.

Musing ethically

In The Age, Dr Colleen Lewis from Monash University wrote: ‘One of the dilemmas voters face as they weigh up the pros and cons of the plethora of promises made in relation to the above issues, is whether they can trust MPs and political parties to honour their pre-election commitments post election. In relation to the major political parties in particular, it seems that unless a promise is labelled “non-negotiable”, and is written down not just promised verbally, then it isn’t really a promise.

It is something else, but those making the original promise have not adequately explained what constitutes that something else. The other thing that voters need to be aware of is that specific promises made on a particular issue, must be seen in the context of other promises.’

Down to the wire

According to the Herald Sun, Denis Naphthine faced the fight of his political life over the last week of the campaign. Despite throwing everything but the kitchen sink at the Labor Party, with a negative advertising campaign and highlighting its own infrastructure agenda, expanded hospitals in Ballarat and Monash and more trains, the Liberals failed to gain traction in the past fortnight. A Herald Sun/Galaxy opinion poll shows the two-party-preferred vote has stayed marooned.
at 52-48 in favour of the Daniel Andrews-led Labor. The Liberal primary vote has also remained shackled at 35 per cent while Labor’s primary vote has picked up 1 per cent to 39 since the last poll.

A perfect storm
In The Age, Michael Gordon wrote: ‘The upshot is that Napthine is facing what Ghazarian calls a “perfect storm”: intense hostility to Abbott; disapproval of the state Coalition’s inability to govern itself (and handle the rogue MP Geoff Shaw); and anxiety at the disintegration of the state’s manufacturing base. It doesn’t guarantee defeat, but makes victory a tall order.’

That Labor sees Abbott as its biggest weapon is clear from attack ads nominating a host of reasons for removing the Napthine Coalition, none of which were remotely within its control and all of which relate to Abbott. That image of Abbott’s face morphing into Napthine’s, condensed the message of common culprits into a single frame.’

Musings
In The Age, Farrah Tomazin wrote: ‘Two months before the election, Labor strategists pored over internal research that would redefine Daniel Andrews’ campaign. Pollsters had asked voters to assess the Labor leader against Denis Napthine on a range of criteria.’

Historic loss
According to Josh Gordon in The Age, five reasons for the loss included: ‘First, Baillieu’s first two years were characterised by a palpable sense of inertia. Secondly, switching leaders mid-stream was always going to be difficult. Thirdly, for much of the past two years the Parliament has resembled a circus, largely because the government failed to manage Geoff Shaw, who deserted the Liberal Party to become a balance-of-power independent.

Fourthly, if all wasn’t bad enough, Tony Abbott added further lead to Napthine’s saddlebags. Abbott almost certainly damaged the Liberal brand in Victoria. Finally, Labor ran a far superior campaign. The Liberal campaign lacked coherence.

Vox pop
In the Herald Sun, the opinions as to why the Coalition lost included lack of faith, public transport, healthcare and generally being “no good”.

Micro-parties
Micro-parties’ stay in Victoria’s upper house could be limited to just one term, with the major parties looking to overhaul voting laws that have seen some parties set to win with a tiny vote. According to a report in The Age, the Shooters & Fishers Party, the Democratic Labour Party, Australian Country Alliance and Sex Party are on the cusp of being elected into the Victorian legislative council, despite some scoring less than 3 per cent of primary votes in their regions.

Complex preference swaps have helped the micro-parties. The final outcome of the upper house preference flows was not be revealed until December 17, but the major parties are talking about ways to blunt micro-parties’ chances at the next election. Former Premier Denis Napthine has revealed that he approached Labor Leader Daniel Andrews looking for bipartisan support to reform upper house voting rules earlier this year. Napthine said he pitched the idea that candidates could only elected if they won at least 5 per cent of the first preference vote to Mr Andrews, but he rejected the plan.

Napthine said he only wanted to pursue the idea with bipartisan support and was hopeful the reforms could have been implemented in time for the 2014 election. With Labor on track to only win 13 upper house seats and micro-parties holding the balance of power, Napthine said Labor could have avoided predicted upper house chaos had it agreed to work with him.

Anti-abortion
It appears that Rachel Carling-Jenkins from the socially conservative Democratic Labour Party will secure the last seat in the Western Metropolitan region. According to The Age, she would help form a powerful gaggle of minor and micro-party candidates on the new crossbenches, which could include members of the Sex Party, Shooters and Fishers and Country Alliance.

Dr Carling-Jenkins, 39, said she was not yet claiming victory in the seat, but felt it was “highly likely” she would be elected after joining the DLP just two years ago. The welfare worker and former academic said she was already looking at which parties her policies would align with in the new upper house, ruling out any kind of alliance with the Sex Party. ‘I don’t think you could find two parties that are more opposed,’ she laughed.

Opposition leadership
At least the editor was right about when the (final) result would be known. Thereafter, it was a battle between Matthew Guy and Michael O’Brien.

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Nationals leadership
According to The Age, Peter Ryan announced recently, after disastrous election results for the Coalition, that he would step down as Nationals leader after 15 years. Mr Ryan said it was time for renewal and the party had struggled to sell their message to rural voters. ‘I started in December 1999 and this next century on, almost 15 years on, I think it’s time to finish. The Nationals performed poorly at the election, losing the ultra-safe seat of Shepparton to an independent, an upper house seat in Western Victoria and are facing a tough fight in Morwell, previously a safe seat. Mr Ryan said he intended to serve a full term as the member for Gippsland South and former water minister Peter Walsh would be a ‘terrific’ successor.

Rookies
First time representatives will make up a quarter of Victorian lower house MPs despite just five sitting politicians being defeated at the polls.

With mass retirements, particularly in the Labor Party before the election, at least 22 MPs will make their debut in the lower house.

Women
According to The Age, Victoria’s female MPs before and after the election: Liberals 15 down to 11, Nationals one up to two, Labor 24 up to 25 and the Greens two up to five, along with three in the minor parties. Overall – up to 46 from 42.

Preferences
In The Age, on the large ballot paper used for the Legislative Council, where 96 per cent of Victorians in 2010 just put a 1 in some party box, there was an alternative. You no longer have to write a number in every square below the line - where there are up to 52 candidates. To cast a valid vote below the line, you just have to fill in five or more squares. Why bother?

It means you get to decide where your preferences go, rather than having them decided for you by party officials. When you write 1 in the box above the line, you have no control over your preferences; they go as the party directs, and they could end up electing someone you would never want to represent you.

Costings
According to The Australian, the Victorian Coalition has slapped down John Howard and Jeff Kennett’s favourite small government advocate, Bob Officer, after the two-time audit commission chairman ratified Labor’s election
costings as conservative and accurate. He was revealed as one of two independent experts who scrutinised Labor’s election costings, which showed surpluses totally $9.1 billion over the forward estimates. The Editor thinks that it’s a bloody good idea to employ experts as appropriate.

**Black hole**

According to a report in the *Herald Sun*, fears that Labor’s election promises would blast a $8 billion black hole in the state budget have prompted former Treasurer Michael O’Brien to write the accountants assessing Labor’s plans. Mr O’Brien has asked Moore Stephens to clarify whether it would be Labor’s assumptions on project costs, or whether it has been asked to just provide ‘a tally of commitments and proposed funding sources.’

Tens of thousands of Victorians who were away on November 29 had already cast their votes without knowing how Labor would pay for its promises.

**Conventional**

According to a report in *The Age*, Labor has balanced its books in much the same way as has the Coalition - by finding savings, raiding the budget’s contingency fund and tapping into funds set up for specific purposes, all the time making sure that their promises fell within the purposes set aside for which those fund.

**Raising money**

According to *The Australian*, the Victorian ALP has raised more money in the last weeks of the campaign than during its entire term in opposition as corporate donations flood in and published opinion polls point to a Labor win. Labor is planning to plough its negative advertising in the race to the November 29 election.

**The bush**

According to Jeff Kennett in the *Herald Sun*, ‘as chairman of beyondblue, I attended a men’s night out at Lismore, a much reduced town and farming community on the Western Highway about 170 kilometres from Melbourne. Lismore today is a proud community of about 300 people but it’s like many rural towns I have visited for beyondblue to speak about suicide and how local communities can deal with depression in a changing world. The night at Lismore was organised by local policeman Scott Simpson, who has seen the corrosive effects of suicide on a small community.

Many farmers’ children went to schools in Ballarat or Melbourne and having witnessed the effort their parents put into the farm — the hours, hard manual labour, often small or no financial returns — had decided not to return. We must start to act and think differently to address the social and economic tsunami that is crippling rural Australia.’

**Bring on the bagpipes**

According to the *Herald Sun*, Daniel Andrews will promised that if he is elected premier he will change the law to introduce random alcohol testing at the state’s courts and at Parliament during sitting times. To show he is serious, should Labor win Mr Andrews intended to cancel a $200,000 victory party in Parliament’s gardens, which includes food and alcohol for 1000 guests.

Sanctions for boozey MPs caught in sitting weeks would be decided by a multi-party parliamentary committee. One proposal is that MPs recording 0.05 to 0.099 be docked a day’s pay; those exceeding that, a week’s pay. Suspensions are also on the cards. Punishment for judges would be worked out in consultation with the judiciary.

**Funding U-turn**

During the campaign, Liberal MP David Southwick was caught out promising funding to Jewish schools and then deleting all evidence of the online announcement.

**Cash cow**

A Victorian public servant was paid almost $1.2 million in bonuses and benefits last year as fat cats at the state’s funds management group, raked in the cash. According to the *Herald Sun*, starting on a base salary of almost $600,000 in 2013-14, Victorian Funds Management Corporation chief investment officer Justin Pascoe took home at least $1.75 million — $450,000 more than his total package the previous year. The former Goldman Sachs managing director earned about four times more than former Premier Denis Napthine, off the back of the VFMC’s strong investment returns.

But the taxpayer-funded gravy train may be about to slow, with the VFMC changing its bonus scheme structure to clamp down on ‘overly generous payments in some cases’. Former Treasurer Michael O’Brien welcomed the change, and said the old scheme set up in 2008 under Labor was ‘out of step with this Government’s expectations’.

**Hidden donors**

Companies contracted to build the Victorian government’s contentious East West toll road are among the many political donors hidden from the view of Victorians as they prepared to vote. According to *The Age*, financiers Capella Capital and Spanish-based energy and infrastructure firm Acciona are key members of the Lend Lease-led East West consortium. Both companies have contributed to Liberal and Labor coffers through attendance at fund-raisers and/or membership of the parties’ fund-raising bodies since the 2010 poll.

**Bad memories**

According to a report in the *Herald Sun*, more than 150 lower house candidates were unable to name the former state Treasurer when quizzed in an election campaign guide.

**Probe sought**

Victoria’s financial watchdog will be asked to investigate a state government grant used to help expand a business run by one of former Premier Denis Napthine’s former racing partners. According to *The Age*, in an election-eve blow for the Coalition, Labor will request the Auditor-General inquiry the regional grants were approved - despite advice that the use of the funds was inappropriate.

**Political donations**

According to Dr Colleen Lewis in *The Age*: ‘However, all note that contributions greater than $11,200 are subject to disclosure under the Commonwealth Electoral Act. What Victorians need to know, from any party fielding candidates in the forthcoming election, is exactly who is donating to them, how much they have given and over what period of time and what, if any, are the donors’ affiliations with corporations/ businesses and so on.

This information is not available because Victoria does not have a donations disclosure policy (although all parties must lodge with the Victorian Election Commission a copy of their Federal annual return, which refers to the $50,000 cap on any donations received from casinos and gambling licensees).’

**Yakkaty**

*The Age* has used Victorian Parliament’s Hansard database to assess the participation of each Victorian MP over the past four years. Hansard records the number of times a politician has spoken in Parliament. These speeches include petitions tabled, debates on legislation, and participation in question time. As a measure
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of performance, speeches recorded in Hansard need to be taken with a grain of salt. As MPs can, many of the important contributions of an MP - work done behind the scenes or in committee - are not recorded by Hansard. However, as speeches in Parliament are among the highest-profile actions undertaken by MPs, an analysis of Hansard is not without value.

The analysis reveals: Victoria’s politicians averaged 461 speeches over the past four years; Nationals reps speak the least on average, with Parliament’s three Greens reps being the most active, according to Hansard data; Of the major parties, Labor reps have averaged almost 180 more speaking involvements than their Liberal colleagues; Victoria’s politicians averaged 461 speeches over the past four years.

Spending controversy
Former Labor state education minister Bronwyn Pike has been drawn into the controversy surrounding her old department, with a confidential briefing revealing a $7.6 million cost blow-out for a teaching institute built in her electorate. According to a report in The Age, the revelation adds further pressure on Victoria’s Education Department to account for its use of public money following Fairfax Media’s expose of a secret $28 million slush fund being operated by high-ranking bureaucrats in which funds meant for needy schools were instead used to pay for overseas travel, cars and boozy conferences.

It is also uncomfortable for the new Andrews government, with the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission’s investigation of the Education Department believed largely to relate to projects and financial transactions completed under the previous Labor government. Fairfax Media was not suggesting Ms Pike has been involved in any corruption.

Department gone
Agriculture has lost its department and its minister, and no kid wants to study it at school. Weren’t we meant to be on the cusp of a food boom that was going to make all farmers millionaires and new-car salesman happy? Just five days was the length of the honeymoon the new Victorian Government enjoyed with farmers. For it was only five days after the election that the Government made the Department of Primary Industries disappear.

‘The General’
Forever busy, and as about transparent as civil life can be, the Victorian Auditor-General publishes regular specific documents on a wide range of his findings. The Annual Report 2013-24 Auditing in the Public Interest is a busy 130 pages. Recent Findings have been on ICT Controls Report, Managing the Environmental Impact of Transport, Heatwave Management; Reducing the Risk to Public Health, Mental Health Strategies for the Justice System. Some very good reading, perhaps to just take your mind for a run.

Federal

Federal impact?
In The Age, Michael Gordon wrote: ‘The federal government is deluding itself if it truly believes what senior ministers are furiously spinning after the Nafphine government was tipped out of office after a single term. If you believe Kevin Andrews, Andrew Robb and Scott Morrison, the performance of their government had virtually nothing to do with the decision of Victorian voters, and Bill Shorten is dreaming when he suggests it did.

We need to hear more of COSBOA
Federal small business minister Bruce Billson has intervened in the state election by demanding a small business lobby group stop campaigning against the former Nafphine Government in marginal seats. According to The Age, the Council of Small Business of Australia (COSBOA) had been involved in a Real Estate Institute of Victoria campaign expressing anger at changes announced by former Consumer Affairs Minister Heidi Victoria allowing unlicensed operators to sell and lease commercial properties.

In a strongly worded statement released last week, COSBOA executive director Peter Strong claimed the state government had “made a mistake by supporting the biggest landlords in Australia against the interests of small businesses and consumers.” But in apparent about-face, the organisation’s newly appointed chairman Paul Nielsen released a statement saying the COSBOA logo had been used on the ads without the authority of the board.

Determined
According to The Age, Tony Abbott is determined to deliver the defeated Nafphine government’s signature East West Link project, despite the victorious Labor Party’s pledge to dump the road.

NSW’s bid
The NSW government wants $3 billion of federal road funding that Victoria will have to forgo if Labor wins the election and repudiates contracts to build the East West toll road. According to the Financial Review, NSW Roads Minister Duncan Gay has written to federal Assistant Minister for Infrastructure Jamie Briggs to spook what the state could do with the funds.

Car industry
According to The Australian, the collapse of Australia’s car industry has emerged as a defining factor in Labor’s win in Victoria. As such, Tony Abbott will face a critical challenge over industry assistance in the run-up to the 2016 federal election.

Agriculture

Drought relief
Victorian farmers battling severe drought conditions described by some as the worst in decades will be eligible for concessional loans of up to $1 million, under a $30 million package announced by the Commonwealth and the Victorian governments.

Arts

Palais
Labor has promised $13.4 million to save the crumbling Palais Theatre if it wins the state election. Daniel Andrews vowed to work with Port Phillip Council and the theatre’s operators to undertake a much-needed $26.7 million restoration of the Art Deco building-but council says the repair bill could cost up to $40 million.

Education

Crash coming
Victorian Auditor-General John Doyle said that some Australian universities will fail in the new environment of reduced government funding. According to the Financial Review, in a Higher Education Reform Summit, Mr Doyle said he believed “the current funding reductions are quite profound and they are going to impact every university in Australia”. “I think the operating models for some universities need to be revisited”.

Doyle has statutory responsibilities for auditing Victorian universities and is a former chief financial officer of Edith Cowan University and was also once head of the School of Accounting and Finance at the University of Notre Dame.

Principals threatened
According to a report in The Age, the number of principals being threatened with violence by parents has risen by a third in the past twelve months, a nationwide survey has found. A quarter of principals reported receiving threats from angry parents, up from 19 per cent in 2013, and a quarter also said they had been physically abused, mostly by children.

Slush fund
High-ranking Victorian education officials operated a secret $28 million slush fund that used money designated for needy schools instead pay for unauthorised overseas travel, cars and boozy conferences. In what is shaping as a major public-sector scandal, a confidential audit seen by The Age reveals Education Department officials directed millions of dollars into the accounts of select schools only to later withdraw money to spend as they wished.

Abandoned schools
According to The Age, state schools are set for a shake-up, with the Victorian government vowing to wind back the previous government’s ‘autonomy agenda’, saying it had left principals feeling abandoned and struggling to cope with growing demands.

NAPLAN results
Students from Victoria have outperformed those from all states - except the largely metropolitan Australian Capital Territory - in the latest round of National Assessment Program Numeracy and Literacy testing. According to The Age, measured against five areas including numeracy, reading, spelling, persuasive writing and grammar and punctuation, local students ranked highly across years 3, 5, 7 and 9 according to the NAPLAN 2014 national report.

Released by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting on Authority, the report highlighted relatively stable achievement nationally from 2008 onwards, as well as moderate increases in reading achievement for years 3 and 5.

Doctors in schools
Students in the 100 most disadvantaged secondary schools in Victoria will be given access to doctors under Labor’s plans to improve the physical and mental health of people in poor areas. According to The Australian, Labor leader Daniel Andrews promised to spend $43 million on the strategy, with doctors given the power to prescribe, among other things, the contraceptive pill. Mr Andrews said the doctors, who would
have weekly access to the campuses, would be able to treat the children in the same way as any local GP clinic treats patients.

According to The Age, the Australian Medication Association said it was not consulted, and were concerned Labor’s proposal could lead to disjointed and fragmented care.

**TAFEs**

According to *The Age*, Labor has unveiled further details of its TAFE policy, promising funding for campuses in Moorabbin, Frankston, Ballarat and Lilydale as part of a $100 million package to rebuild facilities and reopen sites.

**Law school**

Swinburne University will start to enrol students in a new law course next year, adding to a crowded market for law degrees in Victoria. According to *The Age*, Dean of Swinburne Law School Dan Hunter said the university’s undergraduate course would focus on commercial law and would have an emphasis on students gaining practical experience in the field, something he said was lacking at other Victorian law schools.

**Missing**

According to the *Herald Sun*, the proportion of male teachers registered in Victoria has hit its lowest level in more than a decade. The situation is worse in primary schools, where one in five teachers is male. Education department spokesman Stuart Seidler said the proportion of male teachers in Victoria was similar to that throughout Australia and internationally.

**Renaming**

According to a report in the *Herald Sun*, a major Victorian TAFE provider will rename and shift focus in a bid to improve. NMIT – which recently posted a $31.7 million deficit – has been handed $19 million from the Victorian government to help carry out the overhaul.

**Coalition promises**

According to the *Herald Sun*, primary and secondary school students will share in a $5.4 billion education funding boost if the Coalition is re-elected.

**Results**

Every year Dandenong High loses about 30 students to select-entry schools including Nossal High, MacRobertson Girls’ and Melbourne High. At the same time, they enrol large numbers of students from the Noble Park English Language School, who rarely speak English when they start at Dandenong High.

It is little wonder that although some Dandenong High students excel academically in VCE, the school performs below the state average. But the raw data and league tables don’t tell some of the extraordinary success stories that come out of the school.

**Donation**

Tourism entrepreneur Peter Wade has given $10 million to the University of Melbourne’s Ormond College for a new institute. According to the *Financial Review*, the gift will fund a new building for the Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship, which will train graduate students in the skills required to be successful entrepreneurs.

**Melbourne 2nd**

According to rankings released by QS Top Universities, Melbourne is second only to Paris as the best place to study, leapfrogging three places and pushing London into third.

**TAFE strikes**

The start of the school year could be thrown into disarray as teachers at some of Victoria’s biggest TAFE institutions prepare to strike to wage negotiations stall. According to *The Age*, any incoming state government will have to face industrial action by the sector after more than 12 months of negotiating for enterprise bargaining agreements. NMIT, William Angliss, Bendigo Kangan, Gordon TAFE and Victoria University has reached an impasse.

**Asbestos**

Asbestos in 1200 Victorian state schools would be removed by 2020 under an “ambitious” $100 million Labor Party plan, according to *The Age*.

**Energy**

**Quantum shifts**

Quantum Shifts in the energy supply chain – how is the industry adapting to the rapid changes it is facing, with reduced demand, increased renewable generation, new and disruptive technology, uncertainty on policy and hence investment, financing and public concern on increases in retail tariffs. Join the Australian Institute of Energy for more information, regular monthly meetings and site visits, etc.

**Price rejig**

Power hungry households using inefficient airconditioners and other appliances at peak times are set to be slapped hundreds of dollars a year more for electricity. But most customers are expected to be rewarded with average annual savings of $28 to $145 under a major “user pays” pricing overhaul.

Small businesses that agree to use less power in peak periods for 20 hours a year to ease system congestion could also potentially save $623 to $2118 in network charges. According to the *Herald Sun*, by 2017, distributors will have to phase in “cost-reflective” prices under the Australian Energy Market Commission rule change.

**Bill jump**

According to a report in the *Herald Sun*, annual household gas and electricity bills are set to surge by up to $250 from January 1. Victorian homes and small businesses will be slapped with average price rises at least twice the inflation rate, and some almost five times the CPI.

**Action**

The new Victorian Government is acting quickly to protect jobs and help Victorians reduce energy bills by saving a key energy efficiency scheme that the former Liberal Government planned to terminate.

Energy and Resources Minister Lily D’Ambrosio has announced that the Victorian Government will retain the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (VEET) scheme and save 2000 jobs.

The VEET scheme helps participating households and businesses save money by improving energy efficiency.

**Environment & conservation**

**Bushfire plan**

Victoria does not have a clear enough statewide plan to protect people from catastrophic heatwaves despite two heat disasters causing more than 500 deaths, according to a report in *The Age*.

*The Age*, in a damning report on Victoria’s preparedness for extreme heat, Auditor-General John Doyle revealed that Victorians were receiving mixed messages about preventing heat-related illnesses this year and that at least four hospitals lost power during the heatwave in January, which killed about 167 people.

**Hard decisions**

According to a report in *The Age*, ‘hard decisions’ about living in Victoria’s fire prone regions will have to be made, a new report on bushfires and climate change from the Climate Council warns, as parts of the state become more fire-prone and dangerous places to live.

**Scorecard**

Environment Victoria, who your editor had always thought had some balance, at least until the election eve promotion which scored the political parties on three categories: cleaning up our power supply, protecting beaches, rivers, forests and natural places and making Victorian homes sustainable.

**VicForests**

The former Victorian government quietly handed control of Victoria’s western forests to the state’s commercial logging business in one of its final acts before the election campaign. According to *The Age*, just days before the caretaker period began on November 4, former Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh transferred all commercial timber harvesting west of the Hume Highway to VicForests. That means it will no longer be managed by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI). The ramifications of the move are unclear, although the Victorian National Parks Association claims it represents a secret attempt to introduce industrial-scale logging in high-conservation-value areas previously off limits.

**Silent on renewables**

Labor will hand the fate of the state’s endangered animal emblem, Leadbeater’s possum, and a proposed new national park to protect it, to a panel of unionists, the timber industry and conservationists. According to *The Age*, Labor’s full environmental election pledge also reveals plans to scrap the Naphine government’s cattle grazing trial in the Alpine National Park if it wins office, and also includes a promise to review legislation and programs “to commit to an achievable carbon emissions reduction target”.

The quiet release of Labor’s full environment plan came less than four days before Victorians went to the polls. The Coalition had not yet released a full environment policy document.

**Always learning**

Environment Victoria’s website is one of many that the editor reads regularly. Their Balanced Scorecard on Election Eve was more biased than he had expected.

**Events**

**Fore sure**

According to *The Age*, if you’re hoping to enjoy
a beer or a glass of wine as the sun sets over
the St Kilda foreshore you could find yourself
in trouble with the law this summer under a
contentious proposal to ban alcohol by the local
council. The plan by Port Phillip Council would
prohibit alcohol between 5pm and 9am in some
of the suburb’s most popular parks stretching
almost two kilometres along St Kilda foreshore.

White Night
White Night Melbourne organisers have again
expanded the footprint of the event and moved
projections from key bottleneck areas in a bid
to ease congestion during the city’s all-night
party in 2015. Announcing the program, artistic
director Andrew Walsh said the precincts to the
event’s north, near Melbourne Museum, and the
south, around the Yarra River, would be bigger
again next year for the 7pm to 7am event on
Saturday, February 21.

Dinosaurs
The monster production from Global Creatures,
Walking with Dinosaurs, will begin a five city
tour – including a stop in Melbourne from
March 25-29.

Vital visit
The Immigration Museum is celebrating the role
of the Scottish community with an exhibition
‘Scots wha hae: 200 years of Scottish Influence’
from 15 November to 31 May 2015.

Food and Wine
A 16 page flier in The Age outlined the 2015
Guide for the Melbourne Food and Wine
Festival, running from 27th February to 15th of
March.

Night race
Formula One star Daniel Ricciardo has reignited
the prospect of the Melbourne Grand Prix being
staged as a night race at Albert Park. According
to the Herald Sun, the Aussie driver, 25, has
suggested a shake-up of the current 5pm start
time and believes a race under lights could offer
and exciting alternative.

Gaming

Councillors call
The social and economic damage poker machines
do to communities, especially in disadvantaged
areas, must be given greater consideration when
assessing new pokies, local councils are urging
both sides of politics. According to The Age, in
the lead-up to the November 29 state election
nearly 30 councils, the Municipal Association
of Victoria and church groups are calling
on whoever wins government to bolster the
gambling commission’s rules around assessing
the impact of new poker machines.

Violence
The rapidly changing nature of gambling in
Australia has some troubling consequences with
new research warning of a violent impact on some
families and the vulnerability of Australians to
unregulated overseas gambling sites. According
to The Age, four new discussion papers released
today by the federal government’s Australian
Gambling Research Centre examine the impact
of gambling problems on families, the rise of
gambling online, the growth in sports betting
and advertising and the impact of gambling on
indigenous Australians.

Compo
According to the Herald Sun, taxpayers
have been stuck with a half-billion dollar
compensation bill after the Victorian
government lost an appeal against it had duded
the pokies giant, TattsGroup.

Health
Fearing cuts
According to a report in The Age, Victoria’s
new Health Minister Jill Hennessy, has warned
that federal budget cuts to hospitals will be
‘severe’ in coming years and that working with
the federal government on health funding will
be ‘challenging’.

Sick parking
The city’s 12 key medical facilities collected
$70 million from charging patients and their
often traumatised families to park in 2013-14,
lifting the state’s unofficial annual hospital
co-payment by $7.2 million. Hospital carpark
revenues have now risen a staggering 55 per
cent in just four years, with the city’s major
hospitals boasting some of Melbourne’s most
expensive car spaces.

According to the Herald Sun, the Chronic Illness
Alliance wants a review of the administration of
parking at hospitals, the level of support given
to patients and how hospitals are funded to
‘curtail the exploitation of unavoidable parking
costs’.

Cams warding off danger
Hospital security guards are wearing tiny video
Newspaper polls predicting a landslide to Labor in the Victorian elections (e.g. Newspoll predicting a 55/45 two-party preferred vote for Labor and an Age poll predicting a 56/44 two-party preferred vote for Labor) were always fanciful.

The prevailing mood in Victoria was one of apathy and apathy is not a recipe for landslides. Rather it is an indicator of a 51/49 two-party preferred outcome.

Regardless of the re-writing of history, a couple of days before polling day, Labor was not confident. On Thursday, telephone workers were identifying Green voters and asking for their second preferences – hardly the actions of a party bristling with confidence in the outcome – and on polling day some Labor people were rehearsing their lines for a narrow loss.

In the end Labor has won four southern suburban Melbourne seats, a couple by margins of one per cent or less and another by less than two per cent.

Labor also picked up another seat because two Coalition seats were abolished in a re-distribution prior to the election, the loss of one of which was negated by the Liberals winning a rural seat from Labor.

The Nationals lost Shepparton to an Independent.

To put this result in perspective: in 2010 the Liberals won 12 Melbourne seats from Labor and the Nationals won a seat from an Independent. Labor has regained four of those seats and the Greens have finished a short head in front of the Liberals and Labor in Prahran which is always volatile because of the size of the voter turnover between one election and the next.

The election result is hardly an overwhelming endorsement of Labor. Not only was result close, but Labor’s primary vote, while up by just under two per cent was barely 38 per cent.

The Liberals primary vote was down by about 1½ per cent to 36.5 per cent of the vote and the Nationals down by just over one per cent to 5.5 cent.

Still the Coalition primary vote was 42 per cent.

What these statistics demonstrate is Labor’s dependence on Green preferences.

Nevertheless, the question is why the Coalition lost given that history indicates that voters give first term governments the benefit of the doubt, and that there did not appear to be compelling reasons to vote against the government.

The Liberals closed the gap between Labor and themselves during the election campaign, and may be the result could have been closer. If the swing to the Liberals was continuing during the last week of the campaign it may have stalled two days before polling day when Victorians, like all other Australians, became consumed with the tragic and extraordinary death of cricketer Phillip Hughes.

Still, as Professor Julius Sumner Miller used to ask, why is it so?

Why did undecided voters largely voted for the Coalition in 2010 and this time vote for Labor?

One of the differences between the Liberals’ 2014 election campaign and their 2010 campaign is that they acted to move the undecided vote by putting the Greens last on their how-to-vote cards in 2010 and made an issue of it.

This time they relied solely on their campaign both to make up ground and to move the undecided voters.

The fact that the Liberals did not make an issue this time of their decision to put the Greens last by talking up the possibility of a Labor/Green government, especially given the dependence of Labor on Green preferences, is a reminder that they were dragged kicking and screaming into making the decision in 2010.

While everything makes a difference in a close result, there are probably significant reasons which lie directly at the feet of Denis Napthine for the Liberals’ not receiving the benefit of history.

From a political perspective there five or six critical portfolios –Premier, Treasury, Health, Education and Transport and arguably Attorney General and Police.

A government needs its best people in these ministries. Under Ted Baillieu that was not always the case.

Further Ted Baillieu was becoming a reason for people to vote against the government. Partly it was due to his style and approach and partly due to policies such as TAFE cuts which revived memories of the Kennett years.

It is interesting that, during the election campaign, the Electrical Trades Union ran an expensive television campaign focusing on the TAFE cuts and that the ALP also made the TAFE cuts a major focus of their advertising campaign.

Then there was the dispute with paramedics which began during Mr. Baillieu’s stewardship and continued on under his successor. Ambulance vehicles were used as mobile billboards, much to the consternation of the backbench who could not understand why nobody in the Government apparently had the wit to settle the dispute and to have political messages removed from the vehicles, and why, at the 11th hour when it was all too late, the Government seemingly capitulated.

Of course it would be convenient to blame Tony Abbott for the result. That would absolve everybody at a state level of responsibility, thus enabling them to keep their jobs.

Tony Abbott may have been a factor, but not a decisive one. It is interesting that the ALP ran their anti-Abbott television advertisement only in the last couple of days of the campaign.

Blaming the state director, in this case Damien Mantach, also has its pluses since that limits responsibility for the results to one individual.

Regardless of the fact that the Liberal vote improved during the
Rick Brown has a reputation across the political divide for being a first-rate analyst, thinker and communicator. He’s been everywhere, man!

For example, in the middle of the year, when the Government needed all the clean air it could get, Mr. Mantach participated in a witch hunt which might have benefited the personal careers of a couple of Liberal politicians but not the Government.

He authorised an investigation into the source of the distribution of a tape of an Age journalist which had been stolen by the ALP revealing (shock, horror) that Ted Baillieu did not like a few Liberal, pro-life politicians.

Despite rumours and innuendo, nothing came of the investigation and it withered on the vine. Meanwhile, however, stories about the inquiry and the suspects occupied the pages of The Age for a week.

The pre-selection of candidates, for which the state director is not responsible, also will be in the minds of some.

Many believe that the candidate for Frankston, which Labor won narrowly, should have been the mayor and that a reason the Liberals did not perform as well in Yan Yean as they hoped, despite allocating substantial resources to the campaign for that seat, is pre-selecting the wrong candidate for that seat.

The Nationals were big losers in these elections before which they had 13 members. Now they have ten. They lost one seat in the redistribution and did not retain the third Coalition Upper House position in Western Victoria which was always problematic.

Most importantly, they were blind-sided by a well-funded Independent in Shepparton. Worst of all they shot themselves in the foot.

The retiring member Janette Powell and her predecessor Don Kilgour supported a staff member of Mrs. Powell’s over a candidate supported by the leadership of the Party.

Had the other candidate been pre-selected, the Nationals would have retained the seat.

This is the second time the local Nationals have defied the Party leadership with disastrous consequences. In 1996 the result was the loss of the federal seat, Murray, which is based on Shepparton, to the Liberals.

This time the consequence is that the National Party has lost party status and the resources that go with it because they now have fewer than 11 members.

As for the Greens, they finally have won the state seat Melbourne and fell over the line in Prahran.

However, as stated earlier, despite these victories, their vote was static—a fact also disguised by the number of seats they delivered to Labor because of Labor’s low primary vote.

The real disappointment for the Greens is that they will not have the balance of power in the Upper House.

To add salt to the wound, the balance of power will be shared by three members representing pro-shooter parties.

Turning to the future, there are those who think that excessive public service union influence over this Government could be its Achilles’ heel, especially if, as predicted, the unemployment rate increases as the economy deteriorates.

From that perspective, the early signs are unnerving. Those who have examined the deal that Labor did with the firefighters’ union say that it is under-costed and that the degree of influence the union will have over the operations of the Country Fire Authority is excessive.

Apart from the financial cost, a political problem is that the firefighters union have an agenda dating back to the days of the Bracks government to reduce substantially the number of volunteer firefighters, who are not union members, and to increase the number of full-time firefighters who are more likely to become union members.

Then there is the fact that Gavin Jennings who is the minister responsible for overseeing government transparency, integrity, accountability and the public sector reform, called the Community and Public Sector Union before the announcement of his appointment.

Liberal supporters will be hoping that this situation eventuates.

However, Labor supporters will be hoping that, in four years time, history will be on its side, and not just because it is a first term government.

When former premier and Victorian Liberal legend Henry Bolte retired as premier in 1972 he told his successor Rupert Hamer that the Liberals would have a further ten years in government, and so it turned out to be.

Since then they have won two elections. One was in 1992 when Jeff Kennett won government by defeating a totally discredited Labor Government led by Joan Kirner but managed to lose office after the second term.

The other was in 2010 when the Liberals fell over the line in an election in which the major issues were all running against Labor, but have now become part of history for the wrong reason.

Labor also has won twice. It won the elections in 1982 and retained power for 11 years. In 1999 Steve Bracks formed a minority government and Labor went on to govern for 11 years.

In the front-line of Australia’s top political strategists, Rick Brown has a reputation across the political divide for being a first-rate analyst, thinker and communicator.

He’s been everywhere, man!
Victoria report also reveals that paramedics in Melbourne’s northern and western suburbs are taking significantly longer to reach urgent “code 1” cases compared with the wealthier eastern and south-eastern suburbs.

**Getting longer**

More than 86,000 critically ill people, including those having heart attacks and strokes, waited longer than 15 minutes for an ambulance last year – almost double the number who suffered the same fate in 2010, damning new data shows. According to *The Age*, depending on where you live, the average response time to an urgent “code one” case in 2013 ranged from 10 minutes in the City of Melbourne to 26 minutes in Mansfield near Mount Buller.

When asked whether this funding would target the worst-served areas, Victoria’s new Minister for Health and Ambulances Services Jill Hennessy said: ‘We will consult with paramedics and AV, who will provide clinical advice on how to improve response times across Victoria as well as in the areas that we now know are struggling the most.’ Acting chief executive of Ambulance Victoria Andrew Way said although the response times were not as good as they should be, AV was recording excellent clinical outcomes for the most time-critical patients.

**Heat impact**

According to the *Herald Sun*, heat related illness soared more than 500 per cent and an extra 167 Victorians died during Victoria’s record heatwave in January. Ambulance calls for heat related attacks also doubled, according to an official report into the impact of the state’s hottest four-day period which shows a heavy toll among those over 75 and a flood of patients needing emergency departments and help from health advice lines.

**Ambos campaigning**

Paramedics campaigning against the Victorian government, including one pictured on the side of Daniel Andrews’ election campaign bus, are facing disciplinary action. According to *The Age*, in what the paramedics’ union has described as a “program of intimidation” one week out from the election, Ambulance Victoria managers have started questioning paramedics who feature in union posters and leaflets that criticise the government, or who are distributing the material while dressed in their uniforms.

One paramedic who appears in posters attacking former Premier Denis Naphthine over the “ambulance crisis” has been issued a formal warning and four others have been asked to meet managers to discuss potential misconduct.

**AmbosGo**

Premier Daniel Andrews has sent the issue of paramedics’ pay rates to the independent umpire, only hours after being sworn in as Premier.

Before the election, Andrews promised to refer the issue to the Fair Work Commission for consent arbitration, to bring Victorian paramedics’ pay in line with that in other states.

Andrews wrote to the Fair Work Commission to advise that he had instructed the interim CEO of Ambulance Victoria to meet with the ambulance union and arrange a joint application. The Premier’s actions are an immediate step towards resolving the long-running dispute between paramedics and Ambulance Victoria over their workplace pay and conditions.

Paramedics are the lowest paid in Australia. The Government is hopeful that the matter can be resolved quickly and fairly so our hardworking paramedics get the support they deserve.

**Bionic Eye**

The quest to build a bionic eye in Australia has received a $3 million boost, allowing the ambitious project to reach human trials next year. According to *The Age*, Monash Vision Group announced recently the respective foundations of businessman Marc Benen and the university’s Chancellor Alan Finkel had each given $1 million. The university matched the commitment, promising another $1 million for the project. Professor Arthur Lowery, who also heads Monash’s electrical and computer systems engineering, said to date the project had run at a cost of about $2.5 million a year.

**Business & investment**

**Eve call**

In a half page ad, the VACC said: ‘Time for the next Victorian government to shift its automotive industry focus.’

**Under fire**

According to *The Age*, former Premier Denis Naphthine faced a $1 million anti-government advertising campaign from small business groups and real estate agents that could undermine the lead up to the election. The Council of Small Business of Australia and the Real Estate Institute of Victoria placed anti-Liberal advertisements in newspapers in every marginal seat in the state.

**Industrial relations**

**Bolt’s musings**

Discussing the election win by Daniel Andrews, *Herald Sun*, columnist Andrew Bolt wrote: ‘His campaign rallies alone tell the picture. At the Collingwood Town Hall last week, Andrews addressed impressive ranks of uniformed fire-fighters in pictures that played powerfully for him on the TV news.

But we’ll pay for those pictures. To get that visual support of the far-Left United Fire fighters Union, Andrews had to promise another 450 fire fighters. Yes, more members for a grateful union. It’s the same pattern with ambulance paramedics, likewise paid by the state — which means you.

Paramedics have for many months scrawled anti-Naphthine Government slogans over their state-owned ambulances, and some now wear their uniforms at Labor rallies and in Labor posters. One ambulance in her taxpayer-supplied uniform next to a fire fighter, a nurse and Andrews for the huge picture on the side of the Labor campaign bus. In exchange for their hard-Left union’s support, Andrews has not only promised a $3000 sign-on bonus and 6 per cent pay rise to paramedics who already get around $93,000 and 10 weeks’ leave, but he’s also ticking off on generous conditions which include paying some ambos to do union work.

Remember, all this generosity to unionists comes out of the wages of other taxpayers, many of whom are earning much less. Then there’s the Construction, Forestry Mining and Energy Union, which the counsel assisting the royal commission into union corruption said this month had senior officials involved in thuggery, intimidation, death threats, repeated defiance of court orders and links to organised crime.'

**CFMEU links**

Questions have been raised over links to the CFMEU, and auditing failures, of the accounting firm hired by Labor to work out the costs of its election policies. According to the *Herald Sun*, private global accounting firm Moore Stephens’ costing of Labor’s policies will finally be released — just two days before the election and after more than half a million voters have already cast their ballot. Labor chose Moore Stephens after refusing to submit its policies for scrutiny by Treasury.

Former Treasurer Michael O’Brien has hit out at the firm, highlighting how the accountants audited the discredited CFMEU’s WA branch. ‘The Cole royal commission heard evidence that Moore Stephens failed to act on a CFMEU slush fund despite having information that so-called ‘administration fees’ which went into the slush fund were nothing of the sort.’

**Job cuts**

According to the *Herald Sun*, Victoria’s Country Fire Authority is slashing 164 jobs as the state prepares for a potentially catastrophic bushfire season. The huge restructure, internally called Creating Our Future Together, will save the CFA $16 million.

**Ambos board**

Sacking the board of Ambulance Victoria is a political stunt that could stall its progress for up to two years, outgoing directors say. As Premier-elect Daniel Andrews pushed on with his promise to dismiss the board this week and ‘end the war’ on paramedics over their pay and conditions, current directors said the new government was losing valuable ‘corporate memory’ at Ambulance Victoria, which faces complex challenges to improve its performance. ‘They will just waste a year or two reworking what has already been done,’ said one board member who did not want to be named.

‘The board was actually making good progress on improving response times, making it financially sustainable and improving the culture.’ According to *The Age*, the overhaul comes after veteran paramedic Greg Sassella resigned as CEO last month while his team was executing a new strategy of focusing more on urgent medical emergencies and referring less acute cases to other health services such as GPs. While the Alfred hospital’s chief executive, Andrew Way, has been appointed interim chief executive for six months, Ambulance Victoria’s general manager of specialist services, Mark Rogers, and general manager of regional services, Tony Walker, are both considered likely candidates for the role.

**Pyne’s warning**

According to Fleur Anderson in the *Financial Review*, ‘Liberal minister Christopher Pyne told Parliament the biggest risk to Victoria was
a Labor government, because, ‘a vote for Labor is a vote the CFMEU (construction union) and (its controversial official) John Setka.

**Gatto**
According to the *Herald Sun*, Mick Gatto has become an unlikely ally of building company bosses, fighting against fixed rostered days off in the construction industry.

**Unemployment**
According to a report in *The Age*, Victoria’s unemployment rate is at its highest level in thirteen years. Both the Coalition and Labor placed job creation as a frontline issue leading into the election. Labor moved first, pledging $1 billion to create 100,000 jobs over two years and giving payroll tax relief to companies that employ the long term jobless and young people. The Coalition promised to create 200,000 jobs over five years, with a price tag of $33.4 billion – most of which are the big infrastructure projects. More than $100 million would go to skills and job schemes.

**Musings**
In the *Herald Sun*, Andrew Bolt wrote: ‘Most importantly, though, the Victorian Liberals came to power with unemployment at 4.9 per cent. It’s now 6.8 per cent, and growth dangerously weak.

It really is the economy, stupid. The Victorian Liberals could boast that the books balanced, but that didn’t matter that much while factories kept closing and the dole queues kept growing. Yet what did the Victorian Liberals do? For the first two years almost nothing. And under shy Baillieu they said almost nothing, too.

They did not pin Labor’s disasters — especially the desal plant — around Labor’s neck and did not explain the future they were building. Again, does all this sound familiar to the Abbott Government, which let Labor off the hook and struggles to explain what it’s about — the sunny purpose to the pain it’s having to cause? Unemployment meanwhile edges upwards.

**Booze buses**
The *Herald Sun* revealed recently that Victoria Police sought advice on introducing double demerit points similar to other states, but was advised against the move. Assistant Commissioner Bob Hill has flagged he wants an overhaul of the booze and drug bus fleet that would see them reconfigured and made smaller, allowing them to be deployed more quickly and to smaller inner-city streets. The new Victorian Government said it would meet with the state’s top traffic cop to discuss the proposal.

**Empower IBAC**
In *The Age*, Ian Killey, former general counsel to the Victorian Ombudsman wrote: ‘Until the Victorian ombudsman changes tack or IBAC is improved, Victoria no longer has an agency that can seriously fight corruption. When the Liberal National Coalition came to government in 2010, it came with a well-developed anti-corruption policy, the central objective of which was to create an Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) closely modelled on the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).’

**PSO to police**
Protective Services Officers will be fast-tracked to become fully fledged police members in a pilot scheme to be launched. According to the *Herald Sun*, the condensed course will see 26 serving PSOs embark on recruit training before they are sworn in as police officers after five weeks. Victoria Police has said there are no plans for the 17-week “transition” course to replace normal police entry processes. Non-PSO recruits have to undertake a 33-week course at the Victoria Police Academy and get sworn in as officers after 12 weeks.

**Justice & police**

**Thievery**
Residential burglaries have fallen across Victoria over the past five years, but a spate of growth suburbs in Melbourne’s north and outer-west continue to be prime targets for thieves. According to *The Age*, exclusive data obtained from Victoria Police reveals Williams Landing, Ardeer and Heidelberg West hold the unwelcome mantle of suburbs with Melbourne’s highest burglary rates, with about one in thirty homes being hit in each last year.

And in terms of total break-ins, Hoppers Crossing is Melbourne’s most burgled suburb, with about twelve homes being hit every week. Instead, some of the city’s leafy inner suburbs have become increasingly targeted by burglars. Ivanhoe, Clifton Hill, Abbotsford, Carlton North and Fitzroy appeared in the top 20 most burgled suburbs based on the number of dwellings.

**Crown ban**
Police Chief Commissioner Ken Lay has banned the alleged head of Melbourne’s mafia, Antonio Madafferi, from Crown Casino. The ban has been made on ‘public interest’ grounds due to the deep organised crime associations of Mr Madafferi, who *The Age* previously revealed has been a long-time Liberal Party donor and supporter.

**Abuse cases**
Victoria’s largest disability provider bungled the handling of rape and sexual harassment cases while some of its facilities have been riddled with corruption and mismanagement, according to leaked documents and whistleblowers. According to *The Age*, the most serious cases involve Yooralla continuing to employ abusive or corrupt staff despite clear warnings they were preying on disabled clients.

**Quits**
The chief executive of Yooralla has resigned...
amid new revelations that the State Coroner is investigating whether negligence caused the recent death of a 44-year-old disabled man in one of the organisation’s group homes. According to The Age, the family of a woman killed in a crash, where the driver responsible had the drug ice in his system but refused a blood test, called for a law change after being disappointed by the sentence a County Court judge imposed.

**Drug test loophole**

Victoria’s new government will close a loophole allowing drivers involved in fatal crashes to legally refuse a blood test if they are uninjured. According to The Age, the family of a woman killed in a crash, where the driver responsible had the drug ice in his system but refused a blood test, called for a law change after being disappointed by the sentence a County Court judge imposed.

**Fire authorities**

CFA volunteers will increasingly join fire crews from the Department of Environment and Primary Industries to conduct planned burns across Victoria, under a new partnership to be announced. Under the partnership, which follows a pilot program involving more than 30 burns on public land over the past two years, the two fire agencies will work together conducting burns on public land and private land.

Former Bushfire Response Minister Kim Wells said the new arrangement would cut the risk of bushfires across the state, as well as significantly improve co-ordination between the two fire fighting authorities.

**Mobile coverage**

Mobile-phone black spots in areas savaged by bushfire remain a worry, despite lobbying by the state government and the emergency services commissioner for federal government funding. Towns in western Victoria and far East Gippsland are among those waiting for better mobile coverage.

**Melways**

Firefighters have to use the Melway street directory to locate fires and other life-threatening incidents since budget cuts and bureaucratic wrangling left the Metropolitan Fire Brigade without promised GPS navigation technology. According to The Age, senior firefighters fear the fact the entire MFB fleet still relies on the $63 map book for directions during emergency call-outs is contributing to a blow-out in response times and could endanger lives and property.

**Safe homes**

According to the Herald Sun, family violence services will get $22.7 million to help women and children while a Royal Commission will examine the devastating issue in detail.

**Library case**

According to a report in the Herald Sun, a law student upset over noise in the university library has gone to court to fight his exclusion from campus. Paul Dunwey went to the Supreme Court in a vain bid to obtain an injunction restraining Deakin University from banning him from its grounds. The banning followed a series of incidents at the university’s Burwood campus.

**Insolvency**

According to The Age, former St Kilda football club President Greg Westaway is under investigation for insolvent trading after his national transport company collapsed.

**Local government**

**People power**

In Melbourne, the “People’s Panel” was coordinated by the new Democracy Foundation, a not-for-profit research organisation that says it’s aiming to move our democracy out of “the continuous campaign cycle”. Citizens’ juries, such as this one, are being used increasingly often around the world.

They’re another kind of representative democracy, one that steers policy making away from the entrenched positions of political parties, lobbyists and squeaky wheels, and towards the considered voices of ordinary, well-informed citizens. The panelists were posed this question: “How can we remain one of the most liveable cities in the world while addressing our future financial challenges?”

**Melbourne**

**Free Parking**

The city’s newest shopping centre is giving away 500 parking spaces a day to lure shoppers back into the CBD. According to the Herald Sun, as late-night trading begins, those parking after 3pm on weekdays can snare a free spot. Emporium centre manager Steve Edgerton said shoppers did not have to spend a cent, saying they only had to reserve a space online in advance.

**No cars**

According to the Herald Sun, a plan aims to reduce congestion in the city, with an estimated 1.2 million people expected to pass through the CBD every day by 2030, up from 840,000 now. Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said traffic congestion costs Melbourne $3 billion a year. “Walking trips are critical to our economy. Walking is the primary mode of transport for shopping, tourism and city visitors,” Cr Doyle said.

**Melbourne Awards**

In its 12th year, the Melbourne Awards announced its winners. Contribution to Profile by an Individual – Glenn Elston, Australian Shakespeare Company.

**Media, multimedia & IT**

**Domain name**

According to the Herald Sun, Melbourne’s own internet domain name will be launched – and the Flower Drum restaurant, the Melbourne Festival and the Bank of Melbourne have been among the first to adopt it. They have all secured .melbourne addresses.

**Twitter**

According to The Age, a total of 88 of Victoria’s 128 parliamentarians are on Twitter, and between them they have 155,564 followers. Denis Napthine is the most followed, with 12651 followers.

**Press Club**

The Melbourne Press Club has defended its induction of Wilfred Burchett to its Hall of Fame, citing his groundbreaking reporting from Hiroshima. Burchett’s name drew a smattering of boos and tepid applause as the MPC concluded its introduction of its foundation Hall of Fame members at a gala dinner with the induction of 31 new members. According to The Australian, Burchett was deemed a Communist sympathiser for his reporting of the Korean and Vietnam wars and later his exaltation of Pol Pot.

**Zip**

Seven Victorian film and television projects have received Government funding, generating more than 300 job opportunities in our creative industries and adding $18 million to Victoria’s economy. Minister for Creative Industries, Martin Foley, has announced the seven projects that will share $1.18 million in funding from Film Victoria’s Assigned Production Investment program.

**Planning**

**Building code**

The Victorian Labor Party will stand by its plan to abolish the state’s construction code even though the militant construction union faces legal action over harassment and an alleged boycott of Boral. According to The Age, Victorian Labor industrial relations spokeswoman Natalie Hutchins said the code was not needed as there were other ways to control illegal behaviour by building unions.

Under the code, contracts for government-funded projects would be awarded only if construction companies complied with strict rules aimed at limiting the influence of unions on building sites. The Productivity Commission endorsed the code and suggested a similar approach be used by other states.

**Darker**

Melbourne’s cherished liveability is under threat from too many skyscrapers clogging up the CBD, says the city’s top bureaucrat. According to the Herald Sun, outgoing Melbourne City Council boss Cr Kathy Alexander said unchecked high-rise development was making the inner city too dark.

**At risk**

According to a report in The Age, high-rise towers in inner Melbourne may be at risk of damage by fire and the residents could face other safety concerns, an audit of Victoria’s building permit system found.

**New park**

A park would connect Docklands and West Melbourne under a bold plan to revitalise the western edge of the city. According to the Herald Sun, a radical redesign of the planned E-Gate urban redevelopment on Footscray Rd is at the centre of the proposal by a local group Western Connection.

**Vue of the world**

The government authority that was overseeing the dumped East West Link project has been criticised by the Victorian Public Service Commission for accepting gifts from companies bidding for work. According to The Age, the Linking Melbourne Authority manages the Peninsula Link freeway contract. It would have also overseen construction of the East West Link. But its future is now unclear.
In September the East West Connect consortium, led by construction giant Lend Lease, won the $5.3-billion tender to build the road. In October it shouted the Linking Melbourne Authority’s top public servants to a lavish dinner at Melbourne’s Vue de Monde. A member of the public complained to the Public Sector Commission over the gifts, alleging the authority had breached the public servants’ code of conduct in accepting them.

Lunching
The fate of Victoria’s spare $3 billion worth of Commonwealth infrastructure money has been hanging on a power pub lunch in South Melbourne – attended by Prime Minister Tony Abbott, federal Treasurer Joe Hockey, new Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, his Treasurer Tim Pallas and Victorian Opposition Leader Matthew Guy.

Oops. Pass the lawyer
Millions of dollars in deposits from hundreds of apartment owners in Melbourne’s most controversial skyscraper might need to be repaid if a rival developer succeeds in getting the super high-rise’s planning permit cancelled. According to The Age, Singapore-based investor-developer is seeking to cancel a neighbouring developer’s permit for a soaring CBD skyscraper called Tower Melbourne, set to rise 71 storeys from the corner of Queen and Bourke streets.

The rival alleges it was approved by the former Victorian government on the basis of “misstatements or concealments of fact”. The Chow family’s Colonial Range company is fighting another development by multi-pocketed Singaporean developer, CEL Australia, over the proposal.

Geelong
Where all roads meet
The new Government has wasted no time in announcing the next step in the transformation of Simonds Stadium. Minister for Sport, John Eren, announced the Government was calling for project managers to deliver the $90 million project. At the election, Labor committed $70 million towards the transformation of Simonds Stadium. Minister for Sport, John Eren, announced the Government was calling for project managers to deliver the $90 million project. At the election, Labor committed $70 million towards the transformation of Simonds Stadium into a world class stadium.

Sport
Crackdown
According to the Herald Sun, Labor will launch a crackdown on horse racing corruption, promising to work with national and state authorities to give the industry watchdog access to calls recording on police phone taps.

MCC moves
According to the Herald Sun, the Melbourne Cricket Club is considering relaxing its strict membership rules to make it easier to join after the waiting list for new applicants hit 41 years.

Transport – ports
Piers
Four of Melbourne’s most popular bayside piers and boat ramps are in disrepair, with frustrated fishermen ignoring warning signs, despite safety concerns. Half Moon Bay pier, Black Rock jetty and the boat ramp and jetty on North Road, Brighton, have been closed since July after they were damaged by a storm.

Transport – air
Moorabbin
A suburban aerodrome has come under fire after it was revealed to be the site of 745 reported accidents and incidents in the past five years alone. Moorabbin Airport has had a staggering 245 more “occurrences” than Avalon, Ballarat, Bendigo, Echuca, Horsham, Mildura, Point Cook, Portland, Shepparton, Stawell, Swan Hill, Wangaratta and Warrnambool combined. Recently, pilot John Stephenson, 77, tragically died after his amateur-built plane crashed into a house three minutes after taking off from Moorabbin Airport.

Transport – rail
Already changing
The new government has admitted one of its signature transport policies – the metro rail link – will be difficult to deliver in the current economic environment. According to The Age, in his first interview since becoming Treasurer, Tim Pallas appeared to dose down expectations for the capacity-boosting rail link, warning the high cost and a refusal by the federal government to fund commuter rail would make the project ‘difficult to put away’. ‘It’s a very large capital item. It’s a federal government who have no interest in making a contribution to rail.’

Labor put the project firmly on its agenda in its “Project 10,000” transport blueprint released in November last year, promising to spend $300 million to begin planning the $9 billion cross-city rail tunnel, which was seen as vital to boosting the capacity of the City Loop. Mr Pallas: ‘Quite frankly it is disappointing for rational transport infrastructure delivery if the federal government distorts its investment into only one form of infrastructure such as roads.’

Track maintenance
Australia’s rail safety watchdog is looking into allegations raised in parliament by a federal MP that Metro’s track maintenance standards are so shoddy it is putting public safety at risk. According to The Age, Western Australian Labor MP Alannah MacTiernan alleged that Melbourne’s rail operator had let the city’s railway tracks fall into such a dangerous state of disrepair a train could run off the rails.

She told parliament she had called on the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator to investigate, and had supplied the watchdog with images of degraded rails around the Melbourne network. A spokeswoman for the regulator confirmed late on Monday it was investigating claims put to it by Ms MacTiernan, who was WA Transport Minister for eight years before being elected federal member for Perth last year.

Deemed safe
According to a report in The Age, Australia’s rail safety watchdog has found that Melbourne’s railway tracks are being safely maintained, after a federal MP raised allegations in Parliament that shoddy maintenance by rail operator Metro was putting public safety at risk. Inspectors from the National Rail Safety Regulator visited parts of the Melbourne rail network and found the tracks were safe. However, they are continuing further detailed analysis of Metro’s maintenance procedures.

Fare rises
Public transport fares will rise by almost five per cent next month when the new government brings in an increase first announced by the former Napthine government twelve months ago. According to The Age, the free ride for under 18 and 65 commuters who get on off before 7am could also go by year’s end, with the new government set to decide on its fate in coming days. The 4.8 per cent fare rise will only hit those travelling in a single zone.

Zone one-and-two fares will drop on January 1 when they are capped at the zone one rate, under a promise first made by the Coalition and instantly matched by Labor. The zone one-and-two cap will cost the public transport system $100 million a year and will mean the shortest trip will in many cases cost no less than a trip across greater Melbourne.

But zone one travellers will get one consolation: they will no longer have to wait off the end of the day to avoid paying a bigger zone one-and-two fare, meaning long queues at exit gates at suburban stations in the evening should become a thing of the past.

Better deal
The Victorian government’s most senior transport planners detailed the superior economic return a rail tunnel under the city would bring to Melbourne compared with the East West Link, emails obtained by The Age reveal. The emails show the planners calculated the rail tunnel would return $1.90 for every $1 invested compared with $1.40 for the road tunnel.

Trams
Melbourne’s tram passengers will be forced to walk up to 250m farther to stops, in a radical plan to speed up the network that is among the slowest in the world. Yarra Trams has approached Melbourne City Council over the plan. Lord Mayor Robert Doyle wants changes to go further, pushing for trams on shared roads to have right of way and lights designed to allow trams to go through first.

Melbourne’s tram network, the world’s largest, shares 80 per cent of road space with motorists. Yarra Trams spokesman Simon Murphy said patronage, links with other transport services and places of interest were considered in deciding new stops and spacing.

Crossings plan
According to The Age, commuters in marginal seats will be big winners from Labor’s policy to remove 56 railway level crossings after winning the state election.

Breaking point
According to the Herald Sun, Melbourne’s congested train system will lose the capacity within three years and needs a significant overhaul to cope with population growth, a study has found.
Influential city lobby group, the Committee for Melbourne, has issued a dire warning that if action is not taken, commuters face chaos in the years to come.

**Transport – road**

*Release costs*

Infrastructure experts called on the former Naphine government to release the cost to taxpayers of the first stage of the East West link, dismissing government claims the figures would jeopardise competition for the second stage of the controversial toll road. Former Treasurer Michael O’Brien refused to release details of the government’s payments to the East West Connect consortium after a group of ten transport academics estimated the total cost of the first stage of the road to Victorian taxpayers at up to $17.8 billion.

*Gridlock musings*

According to Peter O’Brien, director of Airshuttle Commuter Express and former Victorian and Australian Chamber of Commerce President in the **Herald Sun**: ‘Melbourne is heading for a population of over eight million and needs something to prevent gridlock. Both sides of politics have to be asked: What’s the plan? New rolling stock and fewer rail crossings just won’t cut it.

We think government needs to look out 30-50 years and include all modes of transport: trains, light rail, trams, buses, taxis and cars. We challenge both sides of politics to look at a single network solution and charge the bureaucracy to plan properly for the next half-century. Without vision we will have gridlock. We must develop an integrated one-network plan for road, heavy rail, light rail, trams and buses, with long term mode choice based on demand, eg, no early need for Doncaster rail if buses can cope.

Build the East West Link as soon as possible or we will lose a fortune and have nothing to show for it — roads are a key part of the one-network solution. Toll the Western Ring Road, at least for heavy vehicles, and use the revenue from the first complete widening of it and then the Melbourne Metro Tunnel project.’

**Compo dodge**

According to The Age, Victoria may not be up for $1.5 billion of compensation for scrapping the East West Link after all. New Premier Daniel Andrews has pointed out there will be no shortage of construction work as the government sets about removing 50 level crossings and building the West Gate Distributor road. The lure of contracts might be enough to appease construction giants Lend Lease and Acciona – but financier Capella Capital may still put its hand out.

**Bridge Road real mess**

A VicRoads report also noted that since the stops were installed, a higher proportion of pedestrians were giving up and returning to the footpath when trying to cross the road, or spending more time standing in the road. Herschel Landes said the stops had made it more difficult to cross Bridge Road, a once-thriving retail strip that has fallen on hard times.

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*Myki charges*

Bus passengers in Melbourne are still being overcharged because of a myki glitch first identified by the public transport ombudsman more than three years ago. The glitch causes some travellers to be incorrectly charged for travelling in zones one and two when they should be charged only for one zone. According to The Age, the total amount of money passengers have been overcharged since myki was switched on will never be known because instances of overcharging are only recorded when a member of the public tries to get their money back.

*Rusted cameras*

West Gate Freeway speed cameras quietly switched off almost ten years ago because vibration and poor maintenance made the rusted cameras unreliable. A VicRoads report also noted that since the West Gate Distributor road was opened, 84 of the 114 cameras in the corridor are unmonitored. According to a report in The Age, the state’s most influential motoring group is lobbying for the cameras on the westbound and eastbound lanes of the bridge, which were installed in 2005 and switched off the following year, to either be fixed or removed. Two other fixed speed cameras on the freeway, on the outbound Millers Road off-ramp and at Grieve Parade, were also switched off indefinitely last year.

*Variable pricing*

Motorists will eventually have to pay a premium to drive on toll roads in peak periods or use special ‘express’ lanes, the operator of CityLink says. According to the **Herald Sun**, the variable pricing would be used to pay for road upgrades and to manage demand, including by promoting the alternative of public transport, Transurban chief executive Scott Charlton said.

**Canberra compo**

The federal government would have to pay compensation if a state Labor government cancelled the East West Link, under an agreement Prime Minister Tony Abbott signed with Premier Denis Naphine. According to The Age, a deal signed between Canberra and the states and territories on October 10 says: ‘In the event that a project has been cancelled, contractual obligations will be shared by the Commonwealth and states in proportion to their funding.’

**Car ban**

Cyclists want cars banned from part of Melbourne’s famous Chapel St shopping and entertainment strip. The Bicycle Network has proposed a ‘zone out’ of concern over the growing number of riders being hit on the road, which is congested with cars, trams, and bikes. According to the **Herald Sun**, BN spokesman Garry Brennan there was enough street parking and paid parking around Chapel St to take cars off the road.

Monash University’s civil engineering department has developed an online map showing bicycle crashes in Melbourne, using VicRoads data from 2008-13. It showed 6219 cycle crashes in that time. Beach Rd tops the list, followed by Nepean Highway, St Kilda Rd and Sydney Rd. Chapel St was sixth on the list, with 91 accidents.

**UberX**

Drivers using a smartphone app to operate unlicensed taxi services around Victoria say they will not be deterred by a recent crackdown by the state’s taxi regulator. According to The Age, twelve UberX drivers appeared in the Melbourne Magistrates Court charged with operating a commercial vehicle without a licence, following a sting by the Victorian Taxi Services Commission.

**110km/h**

According to the **Herald Sun**, there are plans to increase the speed limit to 110km/h on the Princes Highway in a move that has divided the Victorian government and senior police.

**Trucks**

According to a report in The Age, residents of Melbourne’s inner west have had a win in their long fight to curb truck traffic on neighbourhood roads, with new heavy vehicle bans set to be imposed on a street frequently used by schoolchildren.

**Bus routes**

Some of Melbourne’s busiest bus routes will be cut back as much as 50 per cent next year so that other services can run more frequently in a big shake-up of bus services proposed by Public Transport Victoria. According to a report in The Age, many suburban routes that cover long distances will be broken up into smaller runs in a bid to improve punctuality. Some passengers will win as services are boosted, but at the direct expense of other routes where waiting times will blow out.

**Utilities**

The scandal (over-worked word in these circumstances) plagued Office of Living Victoria has been abolished by the new Victorian Government. The move to shut down OLV fulfils a promise made by the Premier before the election. The decision will take effect immediately. OLV was set up and overseen by former Water Minister and new leader of the National to develop ways of using and recycling water in both suburban and regional Victoria.

**Society**

**Still going strong**

A special edition of the **Herald Sun** in November had featured 25 of Victoria’s living treasures that have made the state and city great.

**Homophobia watchdog**

Victoria will get a dedicated watchdog to challenge homophobia if Labor won the state election. According to The Age, Daniel Andrews has pledged to create a new commissioner for gender and sexuality to tackle discrimination faced by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) communities. Homophobia is the term used to describe the irrational fear, hatred, aversion or rejection against people who are homosexual, or same-sex attracted, or who are perceived to be homosexual or same-sex attracted.
Worse off
A new report, The Wealth of Generations, shows how older Australians are capturing a growing share of the nation’s wealth, while the wealth of younger Australians has stagnated. ‘The generational bargain, under which each generation of working Australians supports retirees while still improving its own standard of living, is at risk,’ Grattan Institute CEO John Daley said.

The report finds that the housing boom plus rapid increases in government payments on pensions and services for older people risks creating a generation of young Australians with a lower standard of living than that of their parents at a similar age.

Ethnic issues
According to The Age, new VicHealth research into Victorian attitudes to race and culture diversity show two in five believe there are groups that do not ‘fit in’, and eight of ten people agree that people from minority ethnic groups benefit Australia. Nine of ten say it is important to treat people from racial and ethnic minorities fairly.

Vale
Lynne Kosky, former Victorian government Minister
Reg Withers, 90. Former Coalition government minister.
Lady Mary Isobel Downer, wife of federal MP and high commissioner Sir Alexander Downer, and mother of former federal minister for foreign affairs and now Australian High Commissioner to Britain, Alexander Downer
Dr Helen Andersen. Ronald Anstey.
Dr John Bartram.
Gwennie Garnsworthy. Rev George Grant OAM.
Alison Hamilton. Frank Hands, 95. Jeweller, WW2 veteran. Prof Em Francis Hird.
PD James, 94. Crime writer. Dr John Jeremic, 76.
Elizabeth Lea, 98.
Les O’Callaghan. Susan O’Reilly AM.
Prof Harry Reicher. Dr Alan Rembach, 39.
Gaynor Turnbull, 88.
Stella Young, 32. Comedian, writer and leading disability advocate.
Daniel Andrews became the 48th Premier of Victoria, with the Government consisting of a 22-strong Ministry.

The Ministry features nine women, which is a record for an Australian government, together with new portfolios including Special Minister of State, Minister for Equality and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence.

- Hon Daniel Andrews MP - Premier
- Hon James Merlino MP - Deputy Premier and Minister for Education
- Hon Tim Pallas MP - Treasurer
- Hon Martin Pakula MP - Attorney-General and Minister for Racing
- Hon Jacinta Allan MP - Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Employment
- Hon Lily D’Ambrosio MP - Minister for Industry and Minister for Energy & Resources
- Hon Luke Donnellan MP - Minister for Roads & Road Safety and Minister for Ports
- Hon John Eren MP - Minister for Tourism & Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans
- Hon Martin Foley MP - Minister for Housing, Disability & Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries
- Hon Jane Garrett MP - Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Consumer Affairs & Liquor Regulation
- Hon Jill Hennessy MP - Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services
- Hon Steve Herbert MLC - Minister for Training & Skills
- Hon Natalie Hutchins MP - Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations
- Hon Gavin Jennings MLC - Special Minister of State, Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
- Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC - Minister for Families & Children and Minister for Youth Affairs
- Hon Lisa Neville MP - Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Water
- Hon Wade Noonan MP - Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections
- Hon Jaala Pulford MLC - Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development
- Hon Fiona Richardson MP - Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
- Hon Robin Scott MP - Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs
- Hon Adem Somyurek MLC - Minister for Small Business, Innovation & Trade
- Hon Richard Wynne MP - Minister for Planning
- Ms Marlene Kairouz MP - Cabinet Secretary

The upper house

The Victorian Legislative Council has five seats in each of eight Regions, five Metropolitan and three Regional

- Eastern Metropolitan Region
  3 Lib 1 Lab 1 Green
- Eastern Victoria Region
  1 Lib 1 Nat 2 ALP 1 Shooter
- Northern Metropolitan Region
  1 Lib 2 ALP 1 Green 1 Sex
- Northern Victoria Region
  1 Lib 2 ALP 1 Green 1 Shooter

- South Eastern Metropolitan Region
  2 Lib 2 ALP 1 Green
- Southern Metropolitan Region
  3 Lib 1 ALP 1 Green
- Western Metropolitan Region
  1 Lib 2 ALP 1 Green 1 DLP
- Western Victoria Region
  2 Lib 2 ALP 1 Local Jobs

TOTAL
14 Libs 13 Labs 6 Greens 2 Shooters

Plus 3

The restructured victorian civil service

Letter From Melbourne will be pleased to again publish our Victorian Departmental Chart

In the mean-time, these are the main changes

Department of Premier and Cabinet
Mr Chris Eccles
- Deputy Premier
- Special Minister of State
- Aboriginal Affairs
- Equality
- Multicultural Affairs
- The Prevention of Family Violence
- Women

Also Support for Auditor-General, Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection, The Freedom of Information Commissioner, IBAC, Local Government Investigations and Compliance Inspectorate, the Public Interest Monitor, the Victorian Electoral Commission, the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission and the Victorian Inspectorate. More on some of these next edition

Department of Economic Development
Mr Richard Bolt
• Public Transport
• Agriculture
• Creative Industries
• Employment
• Energy and Resources
• Industry
• Ports
• Regional Development
• Roads and Road Safety
• Small Business, Innovation and Trade
• Tourism and Major Events (including major sporting events)

Department of Education and Training
Ms Gill Callister
• Education
• Training and skills
• Families and Children (in respect of children and early years responsibilities)

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Mr Adam Fennessy
• Environment, Climate Change and Water
• Local Government
• Planning

Department of Health and Human Services
Dr Pradeep Phillip
• Health
• Ambulance Services
• Families and Children

• Mental Health
• Sport except Major Events
• Youth Affairs

Department of Justice and Regulation
Mr Greg Wilson
• Attorney-General
• Consumer Affairs Gaming and Liquor Regulation
• Corrections
• Emergency Services
• Police
• Racing

Department of Treasury and Finance
Mr David Martine
• Treasurer
• Finance
• Roads and Road Safety (in respect of Transport Accident Commission)
• Also CenITex
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