

LETTER FROM
MELBOURNE

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

Every month for twenty-two years.



AN
Infrastructural
EDITION

IN THIS ISSUE:

Municipal Elections on 22 October • Infrastructure Victoria Plan out
Victorian energy reliability • Energy renewability Debate • CFA Union tiff
Euthanasia • Gambling advert limits • Adoption • Fracking: what is it?
Poor Hazelwood • Unsafe Melbourne streets • SkyRail or Tunnels?

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ABOUT US

Affairs of State
43 Richmond Terrace
Richmond, Melbourne, 3000
Victoria, Australia

P 03 9654 1300
alistair@affairs.com.au
www.affairs.com.au

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

Written for the regular traveller, or people with meeting-filled days, it's more about business opportunities than politics.

Letter from Melbourne is independent. It's not party political or any other political. It does not have the imprimatur of government at any level. Letter from Melbourne developed a federal and national coverage. This spawned Letter from Canberra (www.letterfromcanberra.com.au) four years ago.

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

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STAFF Editor

Alistair Urquhart
alistair@affairs.com.au

Sub-editor

Will Paszyk
will.paszyk@gmail.com

Design

Andrew Morley
me@ajmorley.com

Subscriptions & Advertising

Alistair Urquhart, as above.

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ABOUT THE EDITOR—ALISTAIR URQUHART, BA LLB

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

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

For 30 years, he listened every Sunday evening to the late Alistair Cooke and his Letter from America. Alistair's early career was mostly in the coal industry, where he became involved with energy, environmental and water issues, and later in the SME finance sector.

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

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.

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Photo of Editor Standing at Hellas Coffee shop in Richmond with a staffer and Ron Pinnell, a regular Coffee friend of the Editor and earlier on, an actor and singer in Melbourne in the fifties and sixties etc.



EDITORIAL

The federal government decision/legislation on 11 October, has blasted the Country Fire Authority into the top issues this month. The Editor thought Infrastructure would top the list but Energy rushed ahead, following the South Australian energy 'break-down' and then more as the tempest came across the border into Victoria.

There have been and are many people with a passionate focus on infrastructure, of all kinds. The new Victorian and federal infrastructure agencies have delivered their Recommendations, which is the first part of the dreamful next Chapter.

Not that these will all be followed. For a start, the Victorian Government which established the VIA in the first place has immediately disagreed with the first recommendation that the East West Link should be a top priority.

The Editor has just spent the week at the ITS Transport Conference (Intelligent Transport Systems) at Jeff's Shed (the Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre) down by the Yarra. All sorts of modern technology came together from many countries with their own particular solutions. Engineers from around the world looking for new ideas and promoting their own products, gadgets strategies, themes, solutions.

Incredible! Driverless cars, etc, etc, when, when, !?! The Most Livable City in The World needs a lot more tunnels was one sub-theme at the coffee tables. Especially as Melbourne's population will almost double in the next three decades.

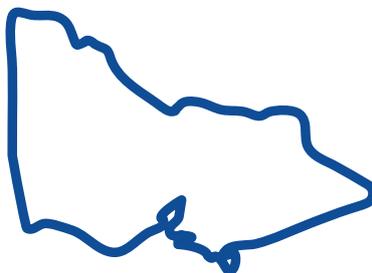
Regrettably, The Parliament—which has been sitting this week—did not close down for a half day and bus these two hundred leaders down to the conference, for some practical realistic, futuristic, education and training.

Some readers know the Editor's career to date which includes some years trading and shipping coal of various types around the world, and as he did so and ever since then, he has reflected on the competitors to our long time favourite energy source.

Cover. Modern infrastructure goes along with the energy that comes from the ground or the ocean or out of the sky. We need careful planning. The South Australian energy problems this past month will hopefully bring much practical reflection. Let us not get rid of coal as an energy source too soon, even at Hazelwood. Our Victorian population is about to double, and we need to remain a competitive people.

Issue Items

- Municipal Elections on 22 October
- Infrastructure Victoria Plan out
- Victorian energy reliability...
- Energy renewability Debate
- CFA Union tiff
- Euthanasia. Adoption.
- Gambling advert limits...
- Fracking. Do you know what this is?
- Poor Hazelwood
- Unsafe Melbourne streets
- SkyRail, or Tunnels



STATE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Too Soon to Jump to Renewables

Premier **Andrews** has declared war on the people and on the businesses of Victoria. And let's not of course forget the birds. In very simple terms, he wants every single individual and every single business in the state to pay Ever-Rising prices for the electricity and for their gas. It is as if he has 'seen the future' – in the disastrous mess that South Australia has got itself into, but trying to move to a 'all-wind future' – and concluded that he wants exactly the same future for Victoria.

Not content with setting out to deprive both present and future Victorians of the cheap, plentiful and reliable electricity that we get from coal-fired power stations in the Latrobe Valley, the Premier has now moved to also rule out the only realistic alternative. Because if you do decide to move away from coal, the only viable alternative as a replacement, as in least 'transitional', base-load power source is lower-emissions gas, writes **Terry McCrann** in the *HERALD SUN*.

Adoption Act Review

Same-sex couples now officially have adoption rights in Victoria after new laws that passed state parliament last December finally come into effect. Until now, gay couples could become foster carers but weren't allowed to jointly adopt the children in their care, nor could they adopt their partner's child from a previous relationship.

Years of discrimination are at last consigned to history's dustbin – which is exactly where it belongs. Single people could also soon find it easier to adopt children as part of the biggest shake-up

to Victoria's adoption laws in decades. More than 30 years after the Adoption Act was introduced, the **Victorian** Government has embarked on a broad-ranging review amid concerns that legislation does not reflect contemporary values and the notion of a 'modern family'.

The review – conducted by the Victorian Law Reform Commission – is expected to lead an overhaul of eligibility requirements, which currently limit adoption to four groups: married couples; couples in traditional aboriginal marriages; registered domestic relationships and couples who are living together in domestic relationships, as per *THE AGE*.

Fire-Fight Continues

The CFA crisis will be dragged through the Supreme Court, with Premier **Andrews** facing the prospect of a bitter dispute raging into the fire season. In a win for the volunteers' association, the court will test the legality of the controversial workplace agreement for 800 paid firefighters in the CFA, which was approved by the government hand-picked board.

The court's decision has further damaged the relationship between the volunteers' association, the firefighters' union and the **Andrews** government. It follows a plea from Emergency Management Commissioner **Craig Lapsley** for all sites in the dispute. 'Have got a war out there; it's almost all between volunteers and career (firefighters). That has got to stop'.

For more than a year the volunteers have argued the deal would undermine their role and management's power to run the CFA by granting the union too much power. Being in has said throughout the dispute, which dates to 2013, but the EBA will improve safety the firefighters and the community.

The Supreme Court will hear volunteers' case that the workplace deal contains clauses that breach state laws. The case is expected to last up to 4 days, with the losing side potentially appealing. The case must conclude before paid CFA firefighters can vote on the deal, as reported in *THE AGE*.

CFA Mud Slinging

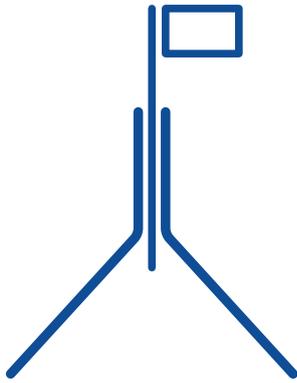
State Labor MP **Jane Garrett** has been accused of trying to orchestrate a leadership coup against controversial firefighters' union boss **Peter Marshall**, in explosive claims that have reignited tensions over the bitter CFA dispute. In a statutory declaration seen by *THE AGE*, Ms **Garrett**, the former emergency services minister, has also been accused of trying to reward a union fire-fighter with a plum post for helping her get re-elected, and of likening Emergency Management Commissioner **Craig Lapsley**, a respected public servant, to 'a prostitute who sells themselves to the highest bidder'. However, Ms **Garrett** has vehemently denied the claims, saying suggestions of an attempted coup against Mr **Marshall** were 'ludicrous on every level'.

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FEDERAL

One Nation Holds Fire Power STOP PRESS

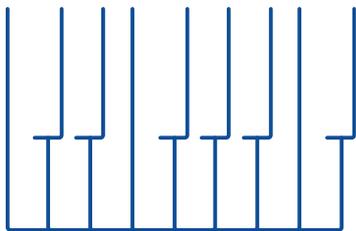
The federal government's oppose legislation targeting Victoria's Country Fire Authority looks set to live or die based on the position of **Pauline Hanson's** One Nation. Prime Minister **Turnbull** announced amendments to the Federal Fair Work Act that hinder 'militant union' influence in the CFA by making any provisions undermining volunteers unlawful.

Crossbenchers **Derryn Hinch** and **Bob Day** have declared their support for the proposal and **Nick Xenophon**, with his three Senate votes, and **David Leyonhjelm** have expressed in-principle support for the position of volunteers. With Labor and the Greens opposed to the legislation, they're sitting on 32 to 36 votes, setting up the four One Nation senators as the key to success, as per *THE AGE*.

The new federal law, passed on 1 October, will limit the Victorian government or any of its agencies from deciding upon any industrial regulations or similar which might limit the capacity of volunteer fire fighters to use their own discretion in relation to fighting a fire.

Standard could be Poor

The parlous state of the federal budget could cost Victoria its coveted AAA credit rating. Top ratings agency Standard & Poors had warned there is a one-in-three chance the state's rating could be downgraded – potentially raising the interest bill on public borrowing needed to pay for big road and rail projects. In a report to investors, S&P said Victoria's economic and financial health remained 'very strong' with 'exceptional liquidity' and moderate debt, according to *THE AGE*.



ARTS

Mural Rediscovered

A little slice of history, long thought gone, has been rediscovered at the former Café Balzac East Melbourne: A mural by **Mirka Mora** herself. Business owner **Gus McAllister** has been renovating the second floor function room of the venue – now a stylish bar and eatery called Tippler & Co – when he uncovered the lost gem, as per *THE*

AGE. Mirka's son has an art gallery in Richmond and she still walks around the local shops .

Lighting Up the Night

The 58,000 lights on the outside of the new Docklands apartment building where Collins and Bourke streets now meet are hard to see during the day. Visit the 15-storey tower at night, though, and it will be a different story. At dusk, developer Lendlease will switch on a new light artwork by **Bruce Ramus**, as per *THE AGE*.



EDUCATION

Monash and Federation Top Employment

Monash and Federation University graduates are the most likely in the state to land a job soon after leaving the classroom, a new survey of tertiary institutions has revealed. Seventy per cent of graduate from those universities found full-time work within four months, according to Good Education Group's *The Good Universities Guide 2017*.

They were followed by Deakin, La Trobe and Melbourne universities, all with 67 per cent employment, Swinburne with 64 per cent, RMIT with 62 per cent and Victoria University with 59 per cent.

High School GPs

Doctors in government schools will be able to prescribe the contraceptive Pill to girls as young as 12 from next year. A \$43.8 million program will see GPs working one day a week in 100 high schools to provide standard medical consultations for any student wanting a check-up. The State Government has not decided if parents will have to give consent for their children to use the new service.

Children Reprimanded for Mental Disabilities

Desperate parents are turning to the Human Rights (watchdog) Commissioner to see justice for children removed from school for mental health conditions. In the past three years there have been 18 complaints of children being expelled, suspended or removed from classes for a psychiatric or psychological disability to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. It is understood some allegations have come after suspensions were forced for incidents of children self-harming or attempting suicide, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Almost one in five Victorian childcare centres fall short of quality standards, despite the state topping national rankings. The latest report on the early childhood system shows Victoria has the nation's highest rate of centres either meeting or exceeding benchmarks. But more than 700 still lag behind in at least one of seven key areas, and nine have been warned



'significant improvement is required'. Eight achieved a maximum 'excellent' rating.

The new data from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, shows Victorian Centre trump most states centres on several measures including the proportion meeting all standards (80 per cent, compared with a national average of 70 per cent). The National Quality Standard, introduced in 2012 by education ministers, makes mandatory a 'quality rating' for all centres that provide family daycare, long daycare, kindergarten and outside-school-hours care, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Paedophile Relocated to Other Schools

The Victorian Education Department is facing lawsuits that could cost it millions of dollars over allegations a paedophile teacher was shuffled from school to school despite reports to police, principals and a senior department official. The reports ranged from molestation disclosed to parents by their sons to concerns about inappropriate behaviour witnessed by other teachers, such as **Robert Morris** getting boys to sit on his lap on school bus rides, as per *THE AGE*.

PHOTO CONFERENCES IN MELBOURNE. OCTOBER BROUGHT HUGE CONFERENCES TO THE CONVENTION CENTRE INCLUDING ENERGY, WASTE MANAGEMENT INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS AND HOME AND GARDEN. A BUSY CITY, FOR BUSY PEOPLE.



ENERGY

Fears of Gas Price Hike

Tripling gas prices loom on the eastern seaboard following the Victorian government's decision to lock-up onshore natural gas reserves, starting a storm of condemnation by industry, energy policy experts, the oil and gas sector and unions, reports *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Fracking Ban Infuriates Industry

Lakes Oil Chief Executive **Roland Sleeman** said well the group could live with the ban on fracking, the decision to extend a moratorium any onshore exploration or development activity was 'genuinely disturbing' and unprecedented

globally. **Sleeman** said onshore gas deposits in the Otways could potentially rival the Bass Strait fields and deliver the government hundreds of millions of dollars in royalties.

State government said it would permanently ban fracking and unconventional onshore gas development. More controversially, it extended a moratorium on the exploration and development of conventional onshore gas, which does not need to use fracking, until the middle of 2020.

The bands, welcomed by farming bodies and environmental groups, thank Victoria the first day in Australia to permanently outlaw fracking. Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, involves injecting water, sand and chemical additives at high-pressure underground to break up rocks and release trapped oil and gas, as reported in the *HERALD SUN*.

Union's Fight Against Andrews Gas Ban

Victorian manufacturing will suffer and jobs could be lost if the **Andrews** government maintains ban on conventional gas exploration, a Labor-aligned union says. Victorian secretary of the Australian Workers' Union **Ben Davis** said the government should lift its moratorium because of looming gas price pressures that could rock industries relying on supplies.

Mr **Davis** said he understood unconventional gas drilling – such as fracking – was a 'bridge too far' for the government to allow, that checking for conventional gas reserves onshore was something the industry had 'been doing for 50 years', according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Victoria's Renewables Target Under Attack

Business has hit out at the Victorian government's plans for ambitious new renewable energy targets, warning that it could drive up the cost of renewable projects under the national scheme and further distort the electricity market. The Business Council of Australia has warned that Victoria's target for renewable energy generation of 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025 could simply add to the cost of the federal renewable energy target.

In a submission on a proposed scheme, the group raises concerns about the impact on existing electricity generation in the state, which relies heavily on burning brown coal in the Latrobe Valley. The warnings have been echoed by the Australian Energy Council, which represents 21 electricity and downstream gas businesses, and the Minerals Council.

Victoria's Energy, Environment and Climate Change Minister **Lily D'Ambrosio** dismiss the criticisms as 'simply not true'. 'Unlike **Malcolm Turnbull**, we recognise that the transition to renewable energy will deliver thousands of sustainable jobs and \$9 billion dollars in new capital expenditure,' Ms **D'Ambrosio** said, as reported in *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Latrobe Fears over Hazelwood Shut Down

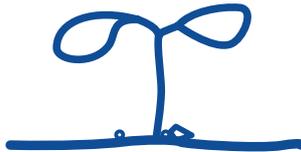
The State Government has rushed to allay fears in the wake of news that Hazelwood Power Station is likely to close as early as April, a move that could cost the Latrobe Valley up to 1000 jobs. Energy Minister **Lily D'Ambrosio** spoke to locals about new job opportunities after *The Age* reported a meeting of the station's French owner, energy giant Engie, to be held next month would almost certainly decide to close the nation's dirtiest coal-fired power station.

'What is absolutely important here of course is to understand that our government is absolutely committed to working with the people of the Latrobe

Valley, to plan ahead to ensure their future is a prosperous one, and is a future that is sustainable.'

D'Ambrosio. Latrobe Valley Community group Voices of the Valley President **Wendy Farmer** said the government needed to commit the \$40million promised in this year's budget for the region to provide education and support for start-ups, co-ops, manufacturing and new technologies.

'Labor first slated closure of Hazelwood in 2010 – they're got their wish, so it would be a show of absolute ignorance for Labor to sit on their hands until Latrobe Valley workers are left without jobs', said Nationals MP **Russell Northe**, as reported in *THE AGE*.

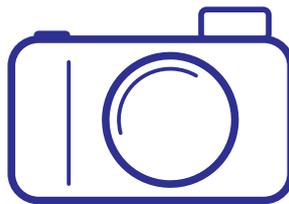


ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION

Brumby Cull on the Cards

'Brumbies in the Victorian Alps are a vital part of Australian bush culture and should not be culled,' advocates for the wild horses say. 'Brumbies have strong links with our heritage and our sense of nationhood...we should be managing for their future preservation, not extinction,' Victorian Brumby Association president **Colleen O'Brien** said.

Deakin University terrestrial ecology professor **Don Driscoll** has called on the State Government to cull the entire Victorian Brumby population, which he said threatens the Alpine ecosystem, three native skink and rodent species and fragile vegetation. Population controls are currently being considered by the Victorian Government and Environment Minister **D'Ambrosio** told the *HERALD SUN* brumbies were degrading some areas.

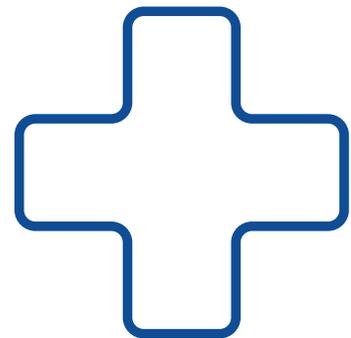


TOURISM

Arthurs Seat Returns

Tourists will fly over the Mornington Peninsula this summer, thanks to December reopening of the famous Arthurs Seat chairlift. The ride, which first opened in 1960 and drew about 100,000 visitors a year in its heyday, has been reimaged and redubbed the Arthurs Seat Eagle. The building project, which included 120 tons of steel and more than 10,000 metres of electrical cable, began last October, and finishing touches on now being put into place.

The chairlift was closed and decommissioned in 2006 after a series of mishaps. In 2003, a pylon collapsed, in 2004, one carriage slid into another injuring an elderly woman; and in 2006, eight people were trapped after a mechanical failure. Eagle boss **Hans Brugman** said the \$5 million restoration had grown into \$20 million one, as reported in the *HERALD SUN*.



HEALTH

Euthanasia on THE AGENDA

Voluntary euthanasia laws could be put before the Victorian parliament this term after the **Andrews** government left the door open to the controversial practice. Health Minister **Jill Hennessy** said the government would respond by December to an inquiry that recommended assisted dying, and sources said this could include new laws backing the inquiry plan. If the government pushed ahead with involuntary euthanasia, it would be put in parliament for each MP to vote with their conscience, reports the *HERALD SUN*.

Cancer Centre Fraud

A Melbourne cancer clinic is being investigated for alleged Medicare fraud and potentially ripping



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off state government hospital funding. The state Department of Health and the Royal Melbourne hospital have commissioned independent reviews of the a PCR Australia prostate cancer centre, a private clinic for men with prostate concerns and other urological conditions, as per *THE AGE*.

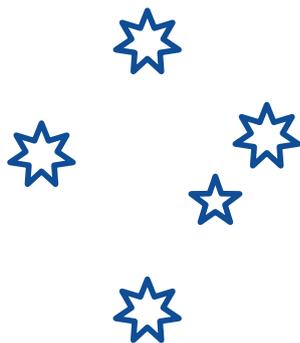
Greater Safety Measures for Metro

Frightened Metro staff want to man stations ticket barriers only in pairs and are demanding that panic buttons be installed at myki gates. The behaviour of gangs, drug addicts, drunks and the homeless have left staff members fearing for their safety and insisting on prompt action. Four assaults have occurred at Flinders St station in recent months.

Victoria's Crematorium Regulations Keeps Prices High

An apparent turf war has erupted over the right to cremate the state's bodies, with some private funeral operators wanting Victoria to follow other states and allow them to build and operate crematoriums. In Victoria only non-profit cemetery trusts, which are government regulated, can conduct cremations, meaning a cremation can cost more than double the amount charged in other states and funeral homes have been sending bodies interstate to be cremated.

Want funeral company director said the lowest cost of a cremation in Melbourne was about \$800, while there were options in South Australia for less than \$400, according to *THE AGE*.



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Unions Pursue Exemption

The major Labor right-affiliated union is seeking to exempt itself from anti-bullying laws in a bid to counter internal bullying and harassment claims made against a senior official. The test case brought by Communications Electrical Plumbing Union, representing electricians, plumbers, postal and telecommunications workers, potentially could exclude major unions from the workplace laws which otherwise cover most employers.

CEPU Communications division Victorian organiser and national council member **Val Butler** is accusing divisional assistant secretary **John O'Donnell** of bullying and harassing her three phone calls and emails, including allegedly saying 'I'm going to get you c—t', according to *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

JUSTICE & POLICE

Andrews Advert Ban

Gambling advertising on Victorian trains, trams, buses and taxis will be banned under a new plan from the **Andrews** government. Bookmakers would also be prevented from promoting betting near schools and a train stations, as reported in *THE AGE*.



Rising Attacks on Ambos

Victorian paramedics are set to wear digital body cameras to record the rising tide of drug-and alcohol-related assaults against them and aid in prosecutions. With up to half of its operational offices-1600 members-unable to work at any one time because of employment-related injuries, assault, trauma or stress, Ambulance Victoria has asked for a uniform-mounted body-cam trial. The *Sunday HERALD SUN* understands Minister for Ambulance Services **Jill Hennessy** is likely to announce a decision on funding allocation in October.

Bendigo Hospital Construction Fraud

Victorian corruption investigators have laid more than two dozen fraud charges against the former construction manager of the \$630 million Bendigo Hospital project. Bendigo Health's former construction manager **Adam Hardinge** has been charged by the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission two years after Fairfax Media first reveal corruption allegations involving Victoria's largest regional hospital development, as reported in *THE AGE*.

Victoria: Australia's Home of Fraud

Victorians have committed more frauds and stolen more money in gambling-driven crime than any other state in Australia, a study reveals. The report evaluated criminal convictions for gambling-motivated fraud across the country over the past 5½ years, finding 76 Victorian offenders stole more than \$42 million. Warfield & Associates also found the offender's workplace was most popular target, the poker machines the favourite mode of gambling, as reported in the *HERALD SUN*.

Car Thieves 'Migrating' to Victoria

Victoria stolen car crisis is at risk of worsening because the government is 'twiddling its thumbs', the state's peak automotive business group says. Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce fears a 'migration' of car thieves from New South Wales because of the state's very to match the NSW government moves to stop scrap-metal dealers payment cash for vehicles, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Gun Amnesty Proposed

The Federal government is poised to announce a national gun amnesty following an unprecedented wave of violence firearm-related crime in Melbourne. State and federal ministers and attorneys-general requested an amnesty be considered by senior officials in the National Justice and Policing Senior Officials Group last year.

A Fairfax Media investigation revealed shootings are now a weekly occurrence in Melbourne and gun-related crime has doubled since 2011. There are more legally acquired firearms in the country

than before the 1996 Port Arthur massacre, which sparked the original national amnesty and buyback. A new Amnesty has been backed by the prominent children safety charity **The Alana and Madeline Foundation**, which was founded in honour of two young sisters, aged six and three, who are murdered at Port Arthur, as per *THE AGE*.

Youth Detention Riot

Terrified staff barricaded themselves inside an office as armed teenage inmates rioted at the state's main youth jail. The rampage—the latest in a succession of such frightening incidents—prompted calls for an inquiry. And the union of the youth justice centres workers cleaned the juvenile detention system was in crisis, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Street Party Turns Violent

A man has died after being stabbed in Central Victoria. Ambulance Victoria was called to a house in Energetic St, Ironbark, a suburb west of Bendigo city. One witness said a fight had broken out at a party in the street. The man, believed to be in his 20s, was stabbed in his upper body, as per the *HERALD SUN*.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

All Victorian Councils will have their Elections on Saturday 22 October. Evidently, because of the increasing use of postal votes, results will be announced about seven days later. Though some contestants will know THEIR result sooner than that!

No How-to-Vote Cards for Elections

A bid to crack down on dummy candidates has thrown council election strategies into disarray. With voters going to the polls in October, the Legislative Council has outlawed the inclusion of how-to-vote cards in postal ballot packs. The Victorian Electoral Commission has issued an urgent notice to candidates meaning they will no longer be able to indicate the preferences in the official posted-out packs.

Ratepayers Money not to be used for Elections

Local councils have been warned not to use ratepayers' money for a proposed campaign to boost their image. Councils behind the push said the campaign is needed because the state government is undermining them over policy such as rate capping. It would involve the Municipal Association of Victoria countering 'inaccurate and biased commentary' about council actions, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Melbourne Lord Mayor **Robert Doyle** vowed to refuse developer donations as he launched his campaign for a third term in office. Cr **Doyle**

has been criticised for accepting election funds from city developers during his eight-year reign at Town Hall. 'That's resulted this time in us stepping out (of decisions) because of conflict of interests, I think, on a number like 13 occasions out of few hundred.' He said.

'I want this to be clean and clear and that not to be an issue in this election campaign.' Cr **Doyle's** deputy candidate is current councillor **Arron Wood**, a former Young Australian of the Year and Prime Minister's Environmentalist of the Year. The Seven-person councillor ticket is headed by **Kevin Louey**, a councillor since 2008 and former lord mayor John So's Chief of Staff. He's followed by former Labor advisor **Nicholas Reece**, who described Cr Doyle as a 'likeable Liberal'.

The rest of the team comprises lawyer **Susan Riley**, councillor **Beverley Pinder-Mortimer**, fitness expert **Sue Stanley** and **Hope Wei**, who ran on Cr **Doyle's** ticket last election. Cr **Riley** has offered to step aside from the deputy role but to continue serving the people of Melbourne, Cr **Doyle** said. Other mayoral candidates declared for the poll include former Brotherhood of St Laurence head **Nic Frances Gilley**, the Greens' Dr **Olivia Ball** and pollster **Gary Morgan**, as per the **HERALD SUN**.

- **Sue Stanley:** Three-time world aerobics champion and health advocate.
- **Beverley Pinder-Mortimer:** Councillor since 2012, council's Marketing Melbourne chair, former Miss Universe Australia.
- **Susan Riley:** Current deputy lord mayor, councillor since 2004, owns a publishing company.
- **Robert Doyle:** Two-term Lord Mayor, former Victorian Liberal Opposition leader.
- **Nicholas Reece:** Academic, was advisor to former PM Julia Gillard and premiers Steve Bracks and John Brumby.
- **Kevin Louey:** Councillor since 2008, Chief of Staff for former lord mayor John So.
- **Hope Wei:** Born in China, business-woman, law and business graduate.
- **Arron Wood:** Councillor since 2012, former Young Australian of the Year.
- **Tessa Sullivan:** Born in Thailand lawyer, studied molecular biology.

Tales of Bureaucracy

A real estate agent is headed to court after refusing to pay Knox Council-issued fines for putting open-for-inspection signs up on the side of a main road. Harcourts Boronia director **John Garnett** said he put up a sign on the piece of land between Boronia Rd and a service lane in Bayswater on April 27. He said a council officer driving past saw the sign and, after an exchange of words, took it, as reported in the **HERALD SUN**.

Council Mergers a Possibility

Local Government Minister **Natalie Hutchins** says she's open to amalgamating some of Victoria's 79 councils if the community wants it. Ms **Hutchins** said the possibility of council amalgamations could especially appeal to regional and rural councils who could share services at a lower cost to ratepayers. The government is currently reviewing the Local Government Act, as per the **HERALD SUN**.

Tradition Owners

A suburban council is planning to strip the name of Melbourne's founder from a park in the name of reconciliation. Darebin City Council wants to rename Batman Park in Northcote to acknowledge that the Wurundjeri people were the area's 'first inhabitants and traditional owners'. A decision on the new name will not be made until after Victoria's council elections on October 22, as reported in the **HERALD SUN**.

Tales of Bureaucracy

Victorians enjoying the Melbourne Zoo have been issued with thousands of fine is trying to wrangle a park. Ticket inspectors dished out more than 6700 fines in two Melbourne City Council-run car parks at the zoo in 2015-16. The Poplar Rd car park was the top spot the tickets when citywide fines were analysed by location and time. Motorists were hit with 307 tickets on Saturdays between 1pm-2pm – averaging one every 10 minutes – and 293 the following hour, according to the **HERALD SUN**.



MELBOURNE

Population Boom

Victoria's population growth continues to top the nation as the State Government urges more settlement in regional areas. The state had about 6 million residents in June 2015 – an increase of almost 500,000 over five years, according to a new Australian Bureau of Statistics report. Greater Melbourne grew to 4.53 million people, according to the **HERALD SUN**.

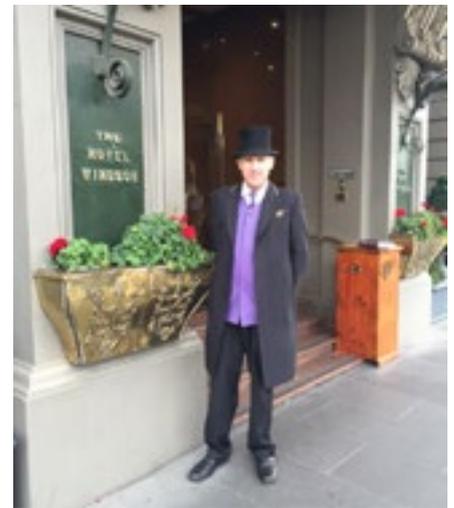


PHOTO RUSSELL AT THE WINDSOR. AS FIRM AND AS GOOD AS THE STATUES ACROSS THE ROAD IN GORDAN PARK.

Caulfield Racecourse Revamp

A powerful board that manages the Caulfield Racecourse faces being sacked after years of 'unworkable' governance, paving the way for one of Melbourne's best kept secrets to be opened up for greater public use. In a move likely to be welcomed by residents, the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve – equivalent of about 15 MCGs of open space – could soon be used for more recreation, local sport and parkland in the heart of inner-city suburbia.

The reserve is home to premier racing events such as the Caulfield Cup and the Blue Diamond Stakes, but the land was put aside a century ago for broader community use, as reported in **THE AGE**.

Homeless Crisis Solution

In response to the worsening homelessness crisis, Melbourne City Council has been scouring the city for surplus land and buildings that could be used for desperately needed accommodation. It found four sites, including a 1300-square-metre public car park tucked behind Queensberry Street. Two of the organisations most likely to run the shelter have advanced plans for their own facilities in Melbourne, requiring only a fraction more funding.

VincentCare has received \$10 million dollars from the state government for its \$43 million redevelopment of its Flemington Road facility into 134 units for homeless men and women. Despite 50 objections from local residents, the 11-storey project received planning approval last month, and needs just another \$2 million to begin, as reported in **THE AGE**.

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City Council Election Bi-Partisanship

Melbourne Lord Mayor **Robert Doyle** has said he will no longer accept donations from property developers. In a bid to broaden the appeal of the **Doyle** team, Labor candidate **Nicholas Reece** has been handed a prime second position on the ticket. Mr **Reece** said he had consulted Labor mentors and previous bosses **Julia Gillard** and formal Victorian Premier **Steve Bracks** before making the decision to join forces with Cr **Doyle**. Victorian council elections will be held on October 22, as reported in [THE AGE](#).

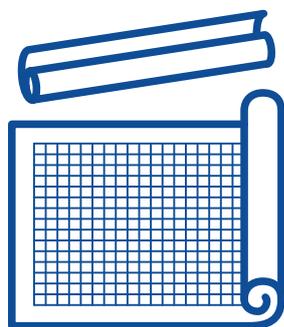
Melbourne: the Allergy Capital

The world's most liveable city also has the world's highest reported rate of food allergies. Australia Centre for Food & Allergy Research guidelines for infant feeding now advocates for the gradual introduction of peanut paste, eggs and milk shortly after solids at about six months of age but not before four months. And the US In Europe are taking our lead, with an international consensus imminent, said Professor **Katie Allen** from Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

'We are leading the way because we have a massive problem,' Professor **Allen** said. 'Australia does appear to be the food allergy capital of the world'. 'Children from a very low age need to be exposed to certain environmental triggers' says Professor **Hamida Hammad** from Belgium, as per [THE AGE](#).

Hosier Lane CCTV Prospect

City council CCTV cameras may be placed in Hosier Lane after a [HERALD SUN](#) investigation exposed widespread drug abuse and anti-social behaviour in the famous Street-art attraction in the CBD.



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PLANNING

Our Skipper

Important views of the Yarra River corridor will be ruined by a VCAT ruling upholding a developer's proposed nine-story apartment building at Abbotsford, the River Yarra's advocate says. The National Trust Planning Minister **Richard Wynne** has hailed VCAT's direction that the views of the famous Skipping Girl Vinegar sign be preserved by reducing the size of the podium of 647-649 Victoria Street, as reported in [THE AGE](#).

Forum Refurbishment Scraped

The latest effort to save controversial \$70 million redevelopment of the Forum Theatre has failed. Developer **David Marriner's** refurbishment plans for the Flinders St Theatre had included a 107m-high, 32-level hotel and retail site behind the theatre. The plans had been signed off by former Coalition government planning minister **Matthew Guy**.

But it was blocked when the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal ruled that Melbourne City Council, rather than the minister, should have approval authority, as reported in the [HERALD SUN](#).

Fishermans Bend Innovation Hub

Motoring giant Holden has sold its massive Fishermans Bend car manufacturing plant to the Victorian government in \$130 million deal which will see it transformed into an innovation and employment hub. Property insiders said the deal may be a precursor to further zoning changes, particularly as nearby areas transformed into residential suburbs. Any further rezoning will provide the state, rather than private land speculators, with a multi-million dollar windfall.

Holden said in December 2013 it would in manufacturing in Australia in 2017 following the then-**Abbott** government's refusal to maintain subsidies to keep the company manufacturing local vehicles beyond 2020. The iconic carmaker will keep selling cars locally but all production will shift off shore, mainly to Thailand and Korea.

Holden's decision was quickly followed by Toyota, which announced it would close its Australian factories in the same year. The closure coupled with Ford's exit from local manufacturing, will cost

thousands of jobs in Victoria and South Australia and shatter local supply chains, as per [THE AGE](#).

Swan Street Bridge Makeover

BKK Architects has won the contract for the \$30 million upgrade of the Swan Street bridge. The bridge, on one of Melbourne's busiest thoroughfares, will include an extra traffic lane. It will also gain paths for cyclists and pedestrians on both sides. The bridge is used by Melbournians to reach some of the city's most-loved venues, including the MCG, Royal Botanic Gardens and the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

Road Minister **Luke Donnellan** said the state government had listened to the community about how the bridge should look. 'This design will give Swan Street Bridge a modern makeover without losing its existing charm,' he said, as per [THE AGE](#).

Tales of Bureaucracy

In 2013, the Wyndham City Council charged reident Mr **Grima** with several planning breaches over the alleged installation of a gate, earth moving works and laying of concrete without a permit. He was initially issued with an infringement notice, which was later withdrawn when the council and its lawyers, Maddocks, opted to take enforcement action in court.

Grima has leased a boat shed on the secluded beach for the past few years. His supporters, who include World War II veteran **Cliffy Elliott**, claim he fixed an access road that was full of potholes, while the gate was fitted to stop hooners dumping stolen cars in Port Phillip Bay. Mr **Elliott** reckons the council should be giving Mr **Grima** a 'key to the city of Wyndham' rather than prosecuting him.

But it is difficult to fathom how a minor planning dispute has escalated into a trial that could impose a massive financial burden on **Grima** or the ratepayers of Wyndham. The bizarre case has piqued the interest of eminent Barrister **Julian Burnside QC**, and Melbourne law firm Corrs Chambers Westgarth, who have agreed to represent Mr **Grima** on a pro bono basis.

When the trial begins, Mr **Grima** high-powered legal team will draw attention to the conduct of the council, and its lawyers Maddocks, who are understood to have racked up legal fees of more than \$200,000, according to [THE AGE](#).

Our Lindrum

The Hotel Lindrum, one of Melbourne's most famous boutique hotels, could have a 30-storey residential tower built on top of it under plan before city council. The 116-year-old building would include 77 apartments, a pool, a car-stacking system and partial demolition of the existing building. The five-storey facade that faces Flinders St would be retained.

The building was constructed at the turn of the twentieth century when Melbourne tea merchant Griffiths Brothers commissioned it for its store and sales room. From the 1960s, it was owned by the Herald and Weekly Times, publisher of the [HERALD SUN](#), and used as a billiards and snooker centre, leased until 1988 by **Dolly Lindrum**, niece of world billiards champion **Walter Lindrum**. The 59-room Hotel Lindrum opened in 1999.

Lifesaving Club needs Refurbishment

Bayside Council says Brighton Lifesaving Club, built before Melbourne's 1956 Olympic Games, needs a complete rebuild. But local argue the ageing clubrooms next to Brighton's

iconic beach boxes need a revamp, not a knock-down redevelopment, as per *THE AGE*.

Tales of Bureaucracy

All across Melbourne, new apartments riddled with faults have been sold to investors and residents. Some of the problems are so costly to fix that it would be cheaper to build the apartments again. Many people involved in the strata industry say faults in Melbourne's proliferating apartment buildings are common, blaming poor enforcement of construction standards and an influx of cheap materials.

Almost 3000 complaints about defective and unsatisfactory workmanship were made to Consumer Affairs Victoria during the past financial years, an annual increase of 13 per cent. Strata Community Australia (which represents Victoria's body corporate managers) is aware of at least 58 apartment buildings in Melbourne with defects, valued at a total of about \$49million, as per *THE AGE*.



SPORT

For the Record

The Western Bulldogs won the Grand Final. For the first time in fifty-one years!

The editor had originally requested rather a raunchy picture for this segment. However, it was vetoed by the designer, who opted for iconography instead.

AFL Takes a Stand

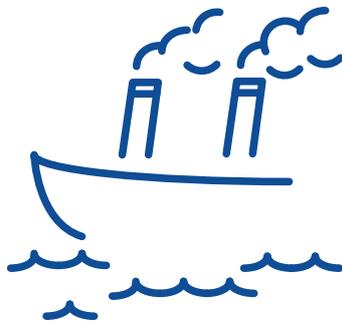
Gillon McLachlan withdrew from this year's Carbine Club Grand Final Week lunch after the club failed to meet an AFL-imposed deadline to introduce women into its membership ranks, as reported in *THE AGE*.

Greyhound Racing OK down here

Victoria will not follow NSW in banning greyhound racing, and the **Andrews** government has declared its full support for the sport. The move came after a 'chilling' Report found overwhelming evidence of systematic animal cruelty within the industry. The Special Commission of Inquiry report, overseen by former High Court judge **Michael McHugh**, found between 48,000 and 68,000 greyhounds were killed in the past 12 years because they were deemed uncompetitive.

The 800-page report, which was handed to the government in June, found up to 20 per cent of trainers in Live Meeting and 180 hundred and 80 greyhounds are you suffered catastrophic injuries during races, such as skull fractures and broken backs. Greyhound Racing Victoria chairman **Bernie Carolan** said the circumstances in NSW were different to Victoria. 'the closure of the NSW industry will put immense... pressures on the other states, especially Victoria.' Mr **Carolan** said.

He added that greyhound racing Victoria employed more than 3000 people and generated many indirect jobs in regional areas of the state, and added more than \$315 million to the economy, as reported in *THE AGE*.



TRANSPORT – PORTS

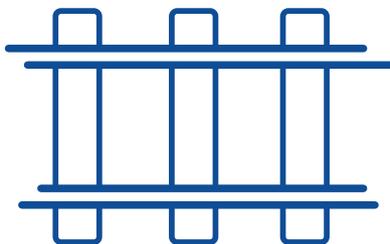
Wow!

Four towering container cranes were shipped in to Melbourne's port, drawing a crowd of curious onlookers. The giant 'post-Panamax' cranes are destined for the Webb Dock container terminal in Port Melbourne, due to become operational at the end of the year. The cranes were shipped from China on the deck of Zhen Hua 21, a St Vincent and Grenadines-flagged vessel that specialises in transporting heavy container cranes.

Part of a \$1.6 billion expansion of capacity for the Port of Melbourne, the redevelopment of Webb Dock will see Philippine port operator ICTSI become the port's third stevedoring company, as reported in *THE AGE*.

Wattle Returns

Early next year the Wattle steam tug will resume work as a tourist craft around Port Phillip for the first time in 13 years. The Wattle was open to the public at Shed 2 on North Wharf (the western extension of Collins Street), as part of the Melbourne Regatta boating festival at Docklands. The National Trust—classified Wattle was built on Sydney's Cockatoo Island in 1933 and was a Navy tug for 36 years, as per *THE AGE*.



TRANSPORT – RAIL

Sky Rail Outrage from Local Residents

In Carnegie, the Level Crossing Removal Authority has been accused of cutting down historic trees under the cover of darkness. 'This is a travesty,' resident **Gaye Guest** said. 'you can't replace 200-year-old trees. These gum trees are really significant I will never get them back again.' Residents report that the LXRA workers attempted to cut down 100-year-old gum tree near midnight, before driving often confronted by locals.

Other property owners are distraught about their properties being overshadowed by the nine-metre eyesore and believe the government should compensate them for any falling property values. The fear is that the **Andrews** government will extend the Sky Rail strategy to other lines. People living in Melbourne's sandbelt are particularly concerned about the Frankston line being next. It is that fear that could cost Labor dearly at the 2018 state election, as reported in the *HERALD SUN*.

Metro's Problems Swept Under the Rug Tracks on Melbourne's rail network riddled with serious faults – some left unfixed for years – a

leaked internal Metro Trains report shows. And an email sent by one of the rail operator's senior staff appears to show the company responding to the massive repair backlog by simply deleting reports of faults if they have not yet failed.

Public Transport Minister **Jacinta Alan** is preparing to offer Metro Trains another seven years running Melbourne's trains. Metro has received government payments of about \$6 billion since then Premier **John Brumby** appointed it in 2009. A report by Metro staff, compiled by track inspectors in the middle of August, showed there were 5838 track faults on the network.

The faults ranged from the mundane – broken bolts, loose screws, cracked sleepers – to more serious matters such as deep mud holes and a pedestrian crossing that was a 'hazard for wheelchairs and walking aids', as reported in *THE AGE*.

Race-Goers to be Left Waiting

Spring racing revellers could be left hanging on to their hats at train platforms with fears driver shortage could disrupt major event services. Metro trains will have to rely on drivers working overtime to fill shifts during peak periods because of training programs related to major government projects.

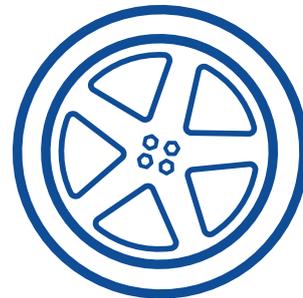
The *Sunday HERALD SUN* obtained a copy of a Metro report warning that dozens of new drivers will be required to cope with the demands of sky rail, level crossing removal and high-capacity signalling trials. 'Each of these projects creates a training requirement for train drivers,' the report says.

Level Crossing Collision

A horror level crossing smash in the state's southwest left a truckie fighting for his life and train passengers hurt. The Warrnambool-bound V/Line train, which had left Southern Cross station at 1.21pm carrying about 90 passengers, collided with the semi-trailer on the Phalps Rd crossing, as reported in the *HERALD SUN*.

Train Manufacturing Jobs Under Threat

Fears are emerging a fleet of new high-capacity trains will be manufactured in China, putting hundreds of jobs earmarked for Victoria at risk. The *HERALD SUN* has learned of widespread industry concerns the 65 new trains would be manufactured in China and assembled in Victoria, under a consortium backed by Changchun Railway Vehicles and Plenary, the Chinese state-owned manufacturer. WATCH THIS SPACE.



TRANSPORT – ROAD

Construction to Cause Headaches

Victoria will be turned into a construction zone, and thousands of people face transport headaches as dozens of major projects kick into gear. Billions of dollars of works will be underway simultaneously next year, and industry experts have warned the government must provide clear alternatives for commuters who are shuffled between modes of transport during the perfect storm of works.

Shovels have hit the ground for the \$400 million Monash Freeway upgrade, widening the busy road to 10 lanes between EastLink and the South Gippsland freeway, reports the **HERALD SUN**.

Taxi Backlash

Taxi drivers and licence-holders about to go to 'war' to against the State Government's industry shakeup, threatened to shut down AFL grand final services or blockade city streets. Hundreds of drivers and licence-holders met in Melbourne, and pledged to send Premier **Andrews** a message by rallying at his Mulgrave office, reports the **HERALD SUN**.

MP's Need for Speed

Motorists on some Victorian highways would travel at European-style speeds of up 130km/h under a push from an MP who was a traffic cop. Under the proposal, the limit on the Hume Highway would go from 110 to 130km/h and on the Princess Highway between Geelong and Melbourne from 100 to 110km/h.

Liberal MLA **Bill Tilley** who spent three of his 12 years on the force with the highway patrol, wants a parliamentary inquiry into speeds statewide. Although his plan is that odds with road safety groups, and with the Victoria Police, the MP denies it is a safety risk, saying: 'the default position in Australia is that speed kills. I disagree with that statement.' As reported in the **HERALD SUN**.

Travel times on Punt Rd have halved since 24/7 clearways booted cars off one of Melbourne's worst bottlenecks. Motorists seem to be united in the cause to bust open the logjam with only two drivers having their cars towed for breaking the rules since the long-awaited ban started at the end of August.

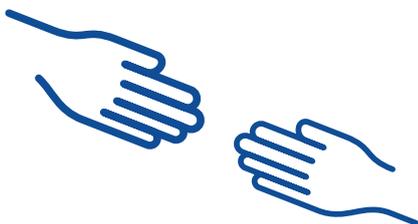
VicRoads will now consider implementing further permanent clearways on major roads with a push to cut choke points on Hoddle St, Alexandra Pde, Nepean Hwy, Warrigal Rd and Middleborough Rd. Figures show it takes five minutes to travel on a Saturday between Alexandra Ave and High St – compared with 10 minutes previously, reports the **HERALD SUN**.

Drink Ban Odd

Victoria's top road cop and the state government are at odds over a push for a zero blood alcohol limit for all drivers aged under 26. The **HERALD SUN** can reveal Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner **Doug Fryer** has discussed the law reform with Roads Minister **Luke Donnellan**. Mr **Fryer** says the time has come for more 'tough and brave decisions' to protect lives.

Road Reform to Protect Pedestrians. zzz

Motorists would be forced to wait several seconds longer at red lights, to allow elderly pedestrians extra time to cross, under a radical road safety plan. Some speed limits would also be slashed to 30km/h under the Victorian plan to curb seniors' road deaths. Give-way laws would also be overhauled to require drivers to give way not just to cars but also to pedestrians. The Bold push, being spearheaded by pedestrian safety group Victoria Walks, follows research that has been supported by the Transport Accident Commission and VicHealth, reports The **HERALD SUN**.



WELFARE

Human Services Investigated After Leaks

Victoria's leak-plagued Human Services Department will be investigated by the state's privacy watchdog, after revelations the addresses of protected foster children were handed to violent criminals. The Commissioner for Privacy an Data Protection met with senior figures from the Department of Health and Human Services and is understood to have asked for an explanation about a series of major security violations exposed by Fairfax media. Commissioner **David Watts** informed that the government of the wide-ranging investigation, which will begin immediately, according to **THE AGE**.

Foster Care

The new commissioner for children and young people, **Liana Buchanan**, said professional foster carers would be welcomed alongside increased support and training for existing and new foster carers, reports the **HERALD SUN**.

Second Chance for the Needy

An apartment complex billed as St Kilda's best development opportunity will instead continue to house people facing homelessness. The sale of the prime site overlooking the St Kilda Botanical Gardens to the Port Phillip Housing Association rather than developers means its 50 self-contained apartments will remain as homes to those in dire need of someone to stay.

The housing association bought the City Gate Apartments, which have housed the needy for decades, with the help from the state government. The Association has put in \$5.1 million for the acquisition, and the government has contributed \$5 million, which will also go towards upgrading the self-contained apartments, as reported in **THE AGE**.

Raising the Foster Age

Now, for the first time in Australia, an economic argument has been made for the benefits of raising **THE AGE** that young people leave foster care, from 18 to 21 years. Not only would it mean better outcomes for care leavers, but I would also save millions in areas like welfare, mental health and justice, according to research commissioned by Anglicare Victoria. The experience of young people in care – who lose support from the state, their 'parent', on their 18th birthday – stands in stark contrasts with the trend for young people in the general population, according to **THE AGE**.

Foster Risks

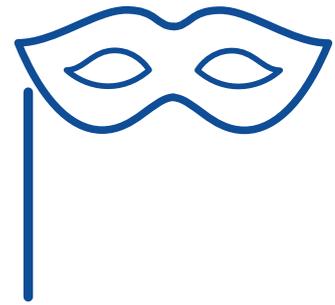
The state government has put vulnerable children and foster carers 'at direct risk of harm' at least 58 times in the past five years, a review of the leak-plagued child protection department has uncovered. The real number of families whose safety was compromised is likely to be higher, reviewer **John Leatherland** said in his report, according to **THE AGE**.

Squatters Take Over Needy Houses

The Salvation Army is raise concerns that people squatting in inner-city homes set aside to domestic violence victims include backpackers and university students. The Salvation Army and the Collingwood Football Clubs Magpies Nest Housing Project charity had leased three of the 13 occupied properties for the use of disadvantage people including women and children fleeing family violence.

'We have filled 17 properties of homeless people and women were escaping domestic violence' The Salvos' Major **Brendan Nottle** said. 'However, while we were waiting for three of the houses to be

handed over, the squatters occupy the properties. We've got people on our waiting list ready to go into those houses. Finding safe accommodation is hard enough. If those stories are true, that is really disappointing,' as per the **HERALD SUN**.



SOCIETY

Werribee's Unclaimed Super

Werribee residents are sitting on a gold mine – and they don't even know it. Your strain taxation office has revealed about \$35.5 million in lost superannuation is waiting to be claimed by residents of our western suburb, reports the **HERALD SUN**.



THE EDITOR WITH A FELLOW BAGPIPER BOB SEMPLE. BOB PLAYED TO DROWN OUT THE GERMAN BOMBERS AND ARTILLERY AT TOBRUK A FEW YEARS AGO.



VALE

HOME, Ian, 9.3.1929 – 8.5.2016, Ian Home was one of the unsung heroes of Australian wine. He died with few wine lovers knowing his name. He was a visionary wine man, a successful businessman, a winemaking innovator (he founded Yellowglen), an inspired marketer and the catalyst for many of the revolutionary changes that have occurred in the new age of Australian wine.

MACFARLANE, Donald, 25.7.1939 – 11.6.2016, Don was an unusual Melbourne-based CEO who refused to be part of the establishment. In retirement Don, like many ex-CEOs, could have collected non-executive dictatorships. Instead he continued to be an outstanding example of the modern Renaissance Man – devoting his time to music, art, love of all things Italian, and community support. He was also the chair of Leadership Victoria – the Williamson Community Leadership Program, which has mentored CEOs, MPs, public servants and successful professionals, as reported in the **HERALD SUN**.

MAY, Norman 'Nugget', it's worth listening to Norman 'Nugget' May's entire race call of the Australian men's medley relay win at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, not just his immortal 'gold, gold for Australia, gold', to get an appreciation of how good he really was. He covered everything from rugby to cricket to surf lifesaving but his signature call was of swimming and how **Mark Kerry, Peter Evens, Mark Tonelli** and **Neil Brooks** delivered a victory that has become a part of Australian sporting folklore. It was his line 'gold, gold for Australia, gold' that has passed into history but it was his infectious excitement as he built the drama of the race that made the climax so unforgettable, as per *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

NIELSEN, Carl, Designer, 30.6.1930 – 30.7.2016, Carl Nielsen, a pioneering giant in Australian design who has died aged 86, has left an impressive and significant legacy.

RODGERS, Bruce, Didgeridoo maker, 14.3.1964 – 18.7.2016.

SHEARS, Lawrie, Educator, 1.7.1921 – 27.7.2016, as the most senior public servant in education until 1984, he was insightful, clear-minded and powerful.

SPUNNER, Ken, Shire President, 24.8.1927 – 18.6.2016, he trapped rabbits and foxes as a boy, and politicians and bureaucrats as a man.

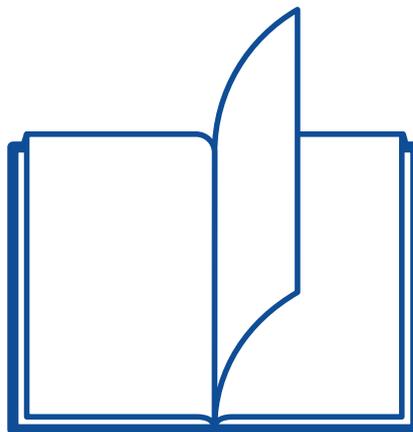
WILDER, Gene, his role in the 1971 film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* is the film with which Wilder remains most associated. For a generation of children it was the definitive adaptation of the 1964 novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl.

ARCHER, Denise Margaret; **AMORY**, Alice Marie Helene; **ANDREWS (nee Scott)**, Eda Mary; **BARRY**, Jean Audrey; **BARTLETT**, Ray; **BARTLEY (nee Lodge)**, Yutha; **BERGEMANN**, Len; **BEECROFT**, Joan Margaret (Frew); **BERGEMANN**, Len; **BOURKE**, Hugh Aloysius (Hughie); **BOYD**, John Owen; **BRACE**, John Herbert; **BRYANT**, Anne Florence; **BURGAN**, Beverley (Bev) Lynette, 28.5.1945 – 25.8.2016; **CASSON**, Anthony; **CAMPBELL**, Ian Gordon;

COBBIN (nee Gunn), Lesley Valda; **COCKBURN**, Dr David Michael; **CONDON**, Daniel Gartlan; **COONEY**, Anthony Michael (Tony); **CORR**, Denis Alan; **COUSINS**, Esther Catherine; **CHARLESTON**, Dennis; **CHKORBATOV**, Nina; **CLENDINNEN**, Inga; **DALE**, Jennifer Christine (Jenni/Dodie); **DICKSON WILLIAMS (nee Williams)**, Margaret Isla; **DODDS**, Joyce Florence;

DONOHUE, Henry A; **DUNSTAN**, Richard James Trevethan; **EGERTON**, Christopher Charles; **FABINY**, Anya; **FAVILLA**, Ian; **FRASER**, Kenneth William; **GARDYNE**, Mary Ruth 'Mem'; **GREENWOOD**, Kevin Kingsley; **HOLMES (nee Dufty)**, Edith Alice ('Margot'); **ISSACS**, Phyllis Rita; **JOHNSTON (nee Cockfield)**, Patricia Mildred; **KLINE**, Colin; **LAURICELLA**, Bernard Xavier; **LAURITZ**, David John; **MACDONALD (nee Gronich)**, Judy Jacqueline; **MANRICKS SEKARAJASINGHAM**, Heather (Dinky);

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VALUE ADDING TO OUR SCHOOLS

A feature by Cheryl Lacey

Public schools are valuable assets. Most occupy prime real estate in central locations – ensuring ready access to students who live within reasonable proximity. Public schools are often seen as the heartbeat of their community. The local Church and the Scout Hall might have lost patrons over the years, but the public school continues to serve the neighbourhood, despite the fact that in some locations its site and its facilities are stretched to the limits by growing student numbers.

In 2012, the United States had a staggering 98,454 public schools. In 2015, New Zealand recorded 2,441 state and state-integrated schools, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics recorded 6,651 public schools in 2014.

Among the many challenges educational leaders must face, the primary one is student enrolments. Each year Principals and School Boards must navigate the waves of enrolments, and the impact they have on student-teacher ratios, staff employment, timetables, funding, allied services, operational expenses and so on.

Indicators such as birth rates, transitional housing, and community demographics can generally be relied on to give indicative estimates of student enrolment figures. But sudden population changes, caused by migration, for example, and the consequent increase in student numbers can occur at a faster rate than schools can manage. And there's the dilemma. How can schools continue to provide the best possible education for their communities?

According to *THE AGE* (October 10, 2016), the number of students attending Victorian public schools will reach one million by 2020. Some public schools won't be affected, and the construction of new schools will ultimately prove a solution. Principals and School Boards in major growth corridors, however, are already working hard to deal with massive overcrowding.

Schools are compensating for overcrowding with staggered start and finish times, staggered playtimes, and staggered lunch breaks.

Two factors help. Legislation does not mandate start and finish times. Teachers' face-to-face classroom time is no more than 22.5 hours per week. This means there is ample room for flexibility to start the school day earlier and finish it later. Where schools have tried this, the management of student growth has been achievable. *Staggering* is a terrific approach to an otherwise complex issue.

Is it possible to build on the concept of staggered days and extend it further? Could we consider staggering the school year?

For Victorian students the school year is currently 40 weeks. Teachers, like most professionals, are employed for 48 weeks and are entitled to 4-weeks leave *per annum*. Principals have the authority to approve staff leave, and in some overcrowded schools, which have successfully introduced a more flexible school day, perhaps staggered annual leave for staff, and staggered holidays for students, might be worth further exploration.

Could staggering be the catalyst for reviewing other educational and social issues? What about spending more time on targeted teaching, or increasing flexible work options? Could it reduce peak traffic, or avoid high season travel costs during holiday times? Could schools become employment hubs for small businesses – for the teaching of English, sport and recreation, art and technology classes, or for support groups, to name just a few?

Today, 1,524 Victorian public school buildings lie dormant for 12 weeks of the year. That's a great many valuable resources sitting idle for almost a quarter of the calendar year.

Rather than simply ask 'Why?' perhaps we should be thinking of ways to maximise their value, and then ask 'Why not?'

CHERYL LACEY IS PRINCIPAL OF CHERYL LACEY CONSULTING, A FIRM FOCUSED ON ELEVATING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES BY PUTTING THE RIGHT PROFESSIONALS AT THE CENTRE OF THE RIGHT IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES.

TO LEARN MORE CONTACT CHERYL AT CHERYL@CHERYLLACEY.COM

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LETTER FROM
MELBOURNE

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