

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.

Reflective Christmas Edition



IN THIS ISSUE:

Unsolid Energy future • Housing focus warming up • Fire Season warming up • Asthma Schools Students • Swimming as well • Euthanasia • Portland's Aluminium and Roads. Ombudsman gets the gig she wanted • Christmas!

LETTER FROM MELBOURNE

ABOUT US

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

Written for the regular traveller, or people with meeting-filled days, 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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Since 1994. A monthly public affairs newsletter distilling public policy and government decisions which effect business opportunities in Victoria, Australia and beyond. 2,500,000 words available to search digitally.

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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.

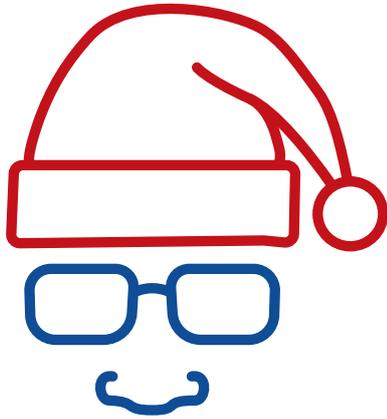
He was admitted as a barrister and solicitor to the Supreme Court of Victoria, and remains a (non-practicing) member of the Law Institute of Victoria. Previously, he graduated from high school in Bethesda, Maryland, and had many opportunities to become aware of the workings of Washington D.C.

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.



Coffee at Mediterranean super market



EDITORIAL: BIG E WORDS

Your editor recently attended a fascination presentation by a retired, but not that old, British Army Colonel, whose presentation 'Why War in Africa is Different' covered tsetse fly and their effect on horses and cattle which limits the carrying of armaments and food and the spoils of war to fellow humans who get rampaged out of villages. He spoke of wonderful largesse of donations of logistical and health items, which when they hit the ground, really do not achieve half of what the international donors think they are doing to help.

His big word was Education. Education. If only these Africans had a better education, they could start to make up new ground. He also said that, apart from war, much of Africa was a great place to enjoy.

Australia is a long way from Africa and has very different circumstances at all levels. But recent visits to friends in the Western suburbs and Western/North Geelong (evidently there is one shop which sells fresh fruit and vegetables) did leave Editor wondering about Education in this country.

Our scores on recent international measurements have us falling behind many countries. Education is being dumbed down by certain people in influential places in the Victorian education system. Your editor has been mulling for many years of becoming a geography teacher, but he has been told to hurry up by a friend who says that he might be the last geography teacher in Victoria, as there is more focus on social views/ideology.

Energy and Education might fight it out, with Economy, for the top role. Lots more on OBJECTIVE DISCUSSIONS on Energy in the new year. More people need participate.

As a Christmas present to myself, the Editor has forgiven but not forgotten, various Police activities, in Victoria, this past year or so. The Victoria Police culture is not in good shape on several fronts. One of my interests in the new year is to, in my normal way, to find out exactly who makes what decisions where and at what level.

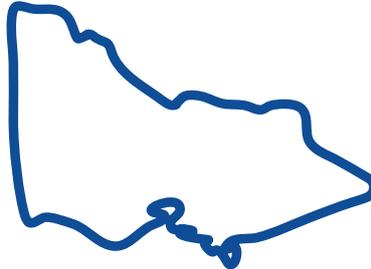
A video, sent by a friend but it could be rife, of people in a super market in France has a large Christmas Tree being pulled down and apart by raging youths and others. The Lennox Street and Victoria Street intersection is an easy place to buy drugs. Action is required.

Cover. Whilst having coffee at the European Café in Spring Street, in mid-December, the Editor's mind wandered as to the repairs to the Parliament building by a large crane, and how they might allow better decisions to come out of the Building in 2017.

Merry Christmas. Best Wishes.

FEATURES

- Unsolid Energy future
- Housing focus warming up
- Fire Season warming up
- Asthma
- Schools Students
- Swimming as well
- Euthanasia
- Portland's Aluminium and Roads.
- Ombudsman gets the gig she wanted



STATE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Christmas Holidays Thin Business

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry said it was deeply disappointed the government was reconsidering making December 25 in addition to December 27. WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOW DONE. The chamber's chief executive, **Mark Stone** said an extra public holiday would be a 'significant blow' for businesses, as per *THE AGE*.

The Grinch

Retailers are outraged by Victoria's last-minute decision to make Christmas Day – a Sunday – a public holiday, a move that has disrupted rosters and imposed tens of millions of dollars additional costs on employers. Anger over the **Andrews** government's backflip comes as new modelling from Coles reveals the job-crushing impact of restricted trading hours by showing that even small changes in opening times can create significant numbers of retail jobs, *THE AUSTRALIAN* reports.

Dan's Energy Crisis

How did Labor decide pandering to inner-city environmentalists was more important than energy self-sufficiency, affordable electricity and jobs? Flawed energy policy in Victoria has left us in the dark Rapid Population growth combined with the closure of Hazelwood plus the ban on exploration of new sources of gas, will soon have this state short of power.

Yet cheap and plentiful supplies of electricity and gas were, until recently, one of Victoria's great competitive advantages. Why are we sacrificing the ability to turn on the lights as much as we like, when we like, writes **Tom Elliott** for the *HERALD SUN*.

Andrews Too Focused on Inner-City Issues

Labor's state caucus is split over the direction of the **Andrews** Government midway through its term, with some attacking the premier for focusing too much on Left-wing social issues. Senior figures say Andrews must recalibrate and start to concentrate on 'bread and butter' policies targeted at the party's suburban and regional bases.

But the Premier's allies have defended the government's social agenda, saying a choice has been made to 'go hard and deliver as much as you can' rather than act cautiously. After almost two years in office, Labor has been hit with a series of crises, including ministerial sackings or resignations, the CFA workplace agreement debacle, and the shredding of the East West Link, which wasted \$1.2 billion spent on the project.

No Change to Land Tax

Victorian Treasurer **Tim Pallas** has ruled out making any changes to land tax despite fears a surge in 2017 land tax bills, due to rising land values, could send some landlords broke and force others to sell their holdings, reports *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW*

Ombudsman to Investigate

Victoria's police watchdog can now probe allegations Labor rorted taxpayer funds before the state election after the government's court challenge to stop the investigation was rejected. In a blow to Premier **Andrews**, the Court of Appeal dismissed the government's second attempt to block Ombudsman **Deborah Glass** from investigating the 'rorts-for-votes' scandal. The decision paves the way for a potentially damaging inquiry ahead of the next state election, according to *THE AGE*.

Pre-selection Controversy

Russell Joseph, who had worked for the former minister, **Martin Dixon**, since 2014, beat four other candidates for the safe seat of Nepean, held by the Liberals by a margin of 7.6 per cent. Some party insiders were shocked by the result, saying his selection flew in the face of the party's push for renewal and attempts for the parliamentary arm to be more diverse.

Others defended Mr Joseph's victory, saying he won fairly through the party's democratic system. His victory came a day after **James Newbury** won the Brighton pre-selection. Mr Newbury replaced **Louise Asher** in the seat. He defeated two female candidates, including upper house MP **Margaret Fitzherbert**, for the plush spot.

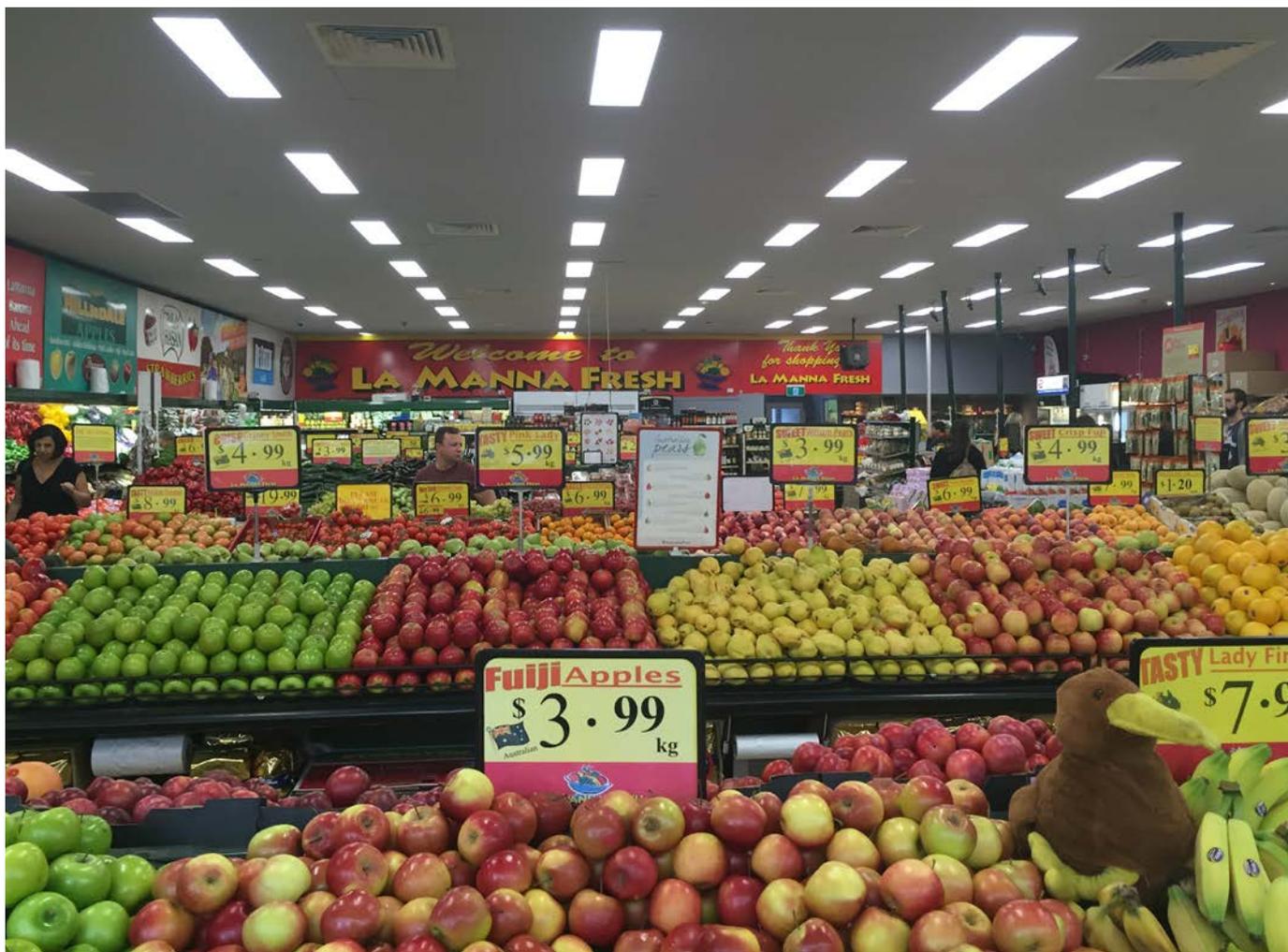
Both Mr Newbury and Mr Joseph worked for the **Naphthine** government. The pre-selections will reignite questions over how the party can promote more diverse candidates without undermining the membership's democratic process, as reported in *THE AGE*.

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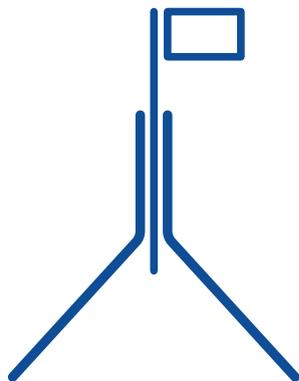


Pallas Staff leave

State Treasurer **Tim Pallas** has lost his two most senior staff inside a month. Chief of staff **Tom Considine** and deputy chief of staff **Donna Findlay**, the *HERALD SUN* reports. Staff movements happen all the time...

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FEDERAL

South Yarra Bargaining Chip

The **Turnbull** Government is threatening to pay \$600 million that is owed to Victoria only if South Yarra railway station is included in the Melbourne Metro Rail Project. The \$10.9 billion Melbourne Metro does not currently include plans for a stop at South Yarra, despite proposed new rail lines passing within 80 metres of the station.

The State Government says it would cost too much. Victoria is in a standoff with Canberra over a bonus owed the state under the federal Asset Recycling Initiative for the Port of Melbourne sale. The **Andrews** Government argues that under the original terms of the federal scheme. Victoria should receive \$1.45 billion – 15 per cent of the \$9.7 billion the state will get from selling the port.

But it is now debating whether to offer the rest only if a new South Yarra station is linked to the Metro project. The push to tie the \$600 million to South Yarra is being led by Assistant Treasurer **Kelly O'Dwyer**, whose seat of Higgins takes in the station, and who has been a vocal critic of its omission, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Victoria Not Biting Competition Incentive

A **Turnbull** government plan to boost productivity by paying the states to bear the pain of tough economic reforms is to be rejected by Victoria. Under the plan, first flagged by Federal Treasurer **Scott Morrison** in October 2015, states that scrap regulatory barriers and further open the door to competition will be offered incentive payments.

The scheme, similar to the broadly successful competition policy reforms of the 1990s follows a major review of Australia's competitive landscape by well-known economist **Ian Harper**, *THE AGE* reports.

Labor Branch-Stacking Allegations

Hundreds of new Labor Party members provided no contact details when they signed up for the ALP, a damning investigation into branch-stacking in Victoria has found. As reported by Fairfax Media, hundreds of Victorian memberships are being scrutinised by former Labor MPs

Cario Carli and **Mike Symon** after allegations of branch-stacking, centred on the Indian community and spread across three federal electorates, surfaced, according to *THE AGE*.

Fed, State and Union Come Together

The Federal Government has formed an unlikely alliance with the **Andrews** Government and a union to support Portland's Alcoa aluminium smelter amid fears it may struggle to recover from a damaging power failure, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Pro-Refugee Parliament Protest

Two Victorians protestors who draped Parliament House with a pro-refugee banner after breaching security and abseiling down the building's façade will face court. The professional climbers – who gave their names as 'Kat' and 'Pat' – joined a group of activists who forced the suspension of Question Time. The mix of professional protestors, Left-wing advocates and university students could also face charges for their behaviour in the House the previous day.

Many have previously been involved in disruptive behaviour at the offices of parliamentarians. Speaker **Tony Smith** told parliament an investigation would include cost recovery for damage to the chamber and could be referred to the Australian Federal Police. It comes as **Pauline Hanson** insisted claims she's a racist won't stop her from speaking out about Islam, and says murders on Australian streets would not be happening if immigration controls had been stricter, according to the *HERALD SUN*.



EDUCATION

Uni's and Spring Street Butt Heads

Victoria's universities are at war with the Victorian Government after the new higher education minister stopped key appointments already ticked off by recently resigned (dog-ferrying) minister **Steve Herbert**. Chancellors from every university in the state except the University of Melbourne have slammed the move by new Skills and Training Minister **Gayle Tierney** in an unprecedented letter to Premier **Andrews**.

It sparked accusations Tierney is handling university council positions to Labor and union-linked mates over more suitably qualified candidates, leaving universities exposed, as reported in the Herald Sun. Even the use of the expression dog-ferrying is not appropriate for a newspaper that thinks it is getting across objective news for Society.

New Chancellor

After steering a \$500 million fund-raising campaign for the University of Melbourne, Australia's richest barrister, **Allan Myers QC**, will take over as the university's chancellor. Mr Myers graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1969, *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW* reports.

Safe School Bully

Safe Schools founder **Roz Ward** is under mounting pressure to step down from running the anti-bullying program in Victoria after she was photographed harassing a bystander at a protest. *THE AUSTRALIAN* reports that the Victorian Government appeared to withdraw its unwavering support for the LGBTI rights campaigner following the latest scandal, insisting the multi-million dollar taxpayer-funded program was 'bigger than any one person'.

Persibling-ing

Jude Munro has effectively come full circle. After years fighting for equality, the former Brisbane Council chief executive was recently appointed by the Victorian government to chair Australia's first Pride Centre: a \$15 million hub to showcase the LGBTI community's culture and history.

The brainchild of Sexuality and Gender Commissioner **Rowena Allen**, the Pride Centre is expected to rival San Francisco's LGBTI community centre, occupying up to 600,000 square metres at a yet-to-be-decided location in the heart of the inner city, according to *THE AGE*.

Governments Gender Audit

The Victorian Government is expected to conduct a 'gender audit' of all departments as part of an Australian-first effort to track and improve women's workplace status. The audit will cover salaries and conditions of men and women across government departments, agencies and boards, identifying which are performing to high standards of equality and which need to improve.

The audit is a key part of the government's Gender Equality Strategy, which was written by Minister for Women **Fiona Richardson**, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Respectful Relationships Unconventional

Remember when schools focused on the traditional foundations of education: reading, writing and arithmetic? Parents can look forward to a few additional Rs being added to the curriculum when the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships program is rolled out at Victorian schools next year.

Instead of worrying about literacy and numeracy, the State Government appears preoccupied with filling young minds with ideological drivel based on activist research that paints boys as predators and girls as perpetual victims. The Safe Schools program has understandably received greater attention and criticism than the respectful relationships program.

But rest assured, both are sides of the same irrational coin, using highly contentious theories and easily discredited studies on gender and sexuality to indoctrinate young minds, writes **Rita Panahi** for the *HERALD SUN*.

Young Teachers Need Regional Resilience

Teachers need to spend time working in country or remote areas to help them cope with the demands of the job, principles say. Almost half of Australia's young teachers are resigning within five years of starting work because they don't develop enough resilience to cope with difficult students, heavy workload and bad relationships with colleagues, according to a new study published by the *Australian Journal of Education*.

Victorian Principle Association (Secondary) president **Judy Crowe** said young teachers might become more resilient if they worked regionally after graduating, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Kids Alive Do the Five

All Victorian kids will have to be able to swim 50m by the end of primary school in a radical push to stop drownings. The new water safety benchmark, to be part of the curriculum from 2017 comes after the *HERALD SUN* campaign for children to be taught how to swim. Schools will develop their own water safety programs but the State Government is now under pressure to commit to mandatory swimming lessons to ensure kids can meet the potentially life-saving target, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Grooming Taught at Schools

Victorian secondary students will be instructed to watch for signs they are being groomed for sex, as new figures reveal that schools across the state reported 258 suspected cases of sexual abuse in 2015. In a suite of new guidelines published by the Education Department, students will be warned that a perpetrator could be 'someone who you like or trust, someone you've known for a while' and that grooming was an adult's attempt 'to prepare you...for sexual activity at a later time'.

Grooming laws were introduced in Victoria in 2014, making it an offence for an adult to 'undertake predatory conduct' to prepare a child under the age of 16 for sex, according to *THE AGE*.

Teaching Standards Lifted

Only the top 30 per cent of year 12 students will be able to study teaching in Victoria following a dramatic shake-up of the profession. Under tough new entry standards, students wishing to enrol in an undergraduate teaching course will have to achieve a minimum ATAR of 65 in 2018. This will be raised to 70 the following year.

It coincides with growing concerns about slipping standards – the average ATAR of students starting teaching courses in Victoria was 57.35 this year, down from 63.4 in 2013, some courses required an ATAR of only 30, as per *THE AGE*.

ATAR Results Released...Prematurely

After an embarrassing technical glitch led to more than 2000 students seeing their results five days ahead of schedule, the majority of school leavers have found out their fate on the arranged date. On the 12th of December at 7am, mobile phones beeped across the state and computers were fired up as 44,628 students received their ATAR.

The end of year rank is the main criterion for entry into most undergraduate university courses, and symbolises 13 years of schooling coming to an end. The top rank of 99.95 was awarded to 35 students this year, 24 male and 11 female. They will have their achievements spruiked by their schools and will be courted by universities and offered scholarships.

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Students who registered to receive their results by SMS during a 90-minute period on Wednesday night were shocked to get their ATAR before the official release. The blunder was a major embarrassment for the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre, which had warned school principals just weeks earlier that they would face serious penalties if they leaked sensitive information about student's ATARs, as per *THE AGE*.

Teachers for Refugees

Hundreds of Victorian primary and high school teachers will wear pro-refugee T-shirts in classrooms as part of a national push to close offshore detention camps. Organisers say school-based action will shine a light on refugees' plight, but the state Opposition has criticised it as 'political indoctrination'.

Up to 500 teachers at 30 Victorian schools will don T-shirts emblazoned with 'Teachers for Refugees – Close the Camps, Bring them Here' and hold 'informal discussions' in class in a stance back by the education union. An international report has found Aussie teen are now less intelligent than they were in the naughties in the areas of reading, science and maths, the *HERALD SUN* reports.



ENERGY

Energy Debate Blackout

Hazelwood's French owner Engie was 'driven out of town' by the Victorian government, Federal Energy Minister **Josh Frydenberg** has claimed. In a sign that a sensible national debate on energy security is unlikely any time soon, a war of words has erupted between the state and federal governments in the historic decision by Engie to close Hazelwood by the end of March, *THE AGE* reports.

Hazelwood Shutdown Scares Big Energy Users

The government's plan to massively increase renewable energy sources in Victoria by 2025 would have helped secure Hazelwood's demise. Meanwhile another major Victorian employer nervously considering Hazelwood's shutdown and higher power prices is Alcoa, which operates Portland's aluminium smelter in Victoria's west.

The smelter is already feeling the pinch of high-energy costs combined with low international aluminium prices. The smelter uses a massive amount of electricity, meaning if it was to close, Victoria's power use would dive, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Hazelwood a Good Excuse for a Price Hike

The closure of Australia's cheapest electricity generator in Victoria could see power prices rise in nearby states, experts warn. The Hazelwood coalmine and power station's planned March closure has also been cited as the reason behind AGL raising residential power bills by 10 per cent, according to *THE AGE*.

Get the Frack Out of Here

A permanent ban on fracking is expected to become law in Victoria soon, despite fears it will force up gas prices. The State Government introduced legislation to prevent controversial coal-seam gas drilling, which is expected to pass parliament with support from the Greens and other crossbenchers.

Farmers, who led a major community campaign against fracking, celebrated the ban, saying it would secure their livelihoods and end concerns that their land and water would be contaminated. But Institute of Public Affairs research director **Brett Hogan** said banning an industry 'that is yet to exist makes no sense' and was 'short-sighted, will damage Victoria's future and will cost jobs', the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Next??

Legislation enacting Victoria's unprecedented bans on onshore petroleum exploration has arrived with the added but necessary insult of steps that explicitly protect the government from financial liability for the damage caused to drillers by this reactive, retrograde and unscientific decision.

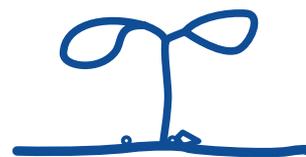
The liability protections established in the legislation have been made retrospective from August 24, 2012, and cover a range of possibilities created by legislation that purports to permanently ban the development of the state's rich onshore gas

potential and the onshore deployment of hydraulic fracturing, which is extensively used to maximise the potential of both conventional and unconventional petroleum resources, writes **Matthew Stevens** for *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW*.

READ, or at least visit this,

The State Government is reviewing its energy price comparison website amid claims tens of thousands of Victorians are being potentially cheated out of better electricity and gas savings. As households prepare to be hit with big New Year price rises, the Opposition has slammed the Victorian Energy Compare site's 'confusing and misleading' design.

To rank typically cheaper deals with conditions such as paying on time or e-billing, consumers had to realise they needed to click a separate 'discounted price' button, as reported in the *HERALD SUN*.



ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION

Female Frog Found

The Baw Baw frogs, which are found only on the Mount Baw Baw plateau, are in such a perilous position it has been estimated they may be extinct in the wild within five years. Captive breeding programs have been hamstrung, as they operate without females. Researchers collect fertilised eggs from the wild and hatch them in a purpose-built, temperature-controlled 'Baw Baw Bunker' at Melbourne Zoo, reports *THE AGE*.

Fire Season Off to Bad Start

Fire Authorities won't meet planned burn-off targets despite the state facing a higher-than-normal chance of bush and grassfires this summer, Victoria's emergency management commissioner **Craig Lapsley** has conceded. Less than 1 per cent of the 10 per cent pre-summer burning target was met. 'It's very minimal' Mr Lapsley said.

'We're behind by about 20,000 hectares running into summer.' The backlog is due to a wet spring creating unfavourable burning conditions in areas including the damp forest around the Dandenongs, Otways and Macedon Ranges, as reported in *THE AGE*.

The Grass is Now Greener in La Trobe

Silver lining to power station closure. The health benefit of the shutdown will be felt by La Trobe Valley residents. There is an opportunity now to remedy the injustice from pollution impacts the valley has borne for decades by making sure a just transition plan is quickly but thoughtfully developed, one that will not only assist the workers directly affected, but also transition the valley to a healthy and sustainable economy, writes **Nicola Rivers** who is a lawyer and director of advocacy and research with Environmental Justice Australia for *THE AGE*.



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EVENTS

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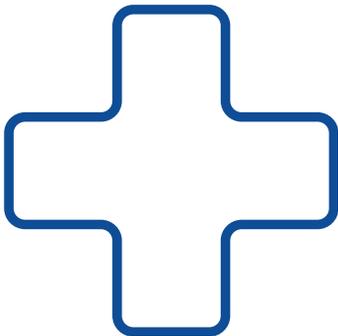
Tickets have gone on sale for the 2017 Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, the 10 day extravaganza will celebrate its 25th anniversary from a grass-roots industry event in 1993 to Australia's leading food and wine festival attracting heavyweights **Jamie Oliver**, **Nigella Lawson** and **Rene Redzepi** over the years. From March 31 to April 9, the festival will host more than 250 events for foodies and families across the state, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Crime Could Effect Events

Melbourne's youth crime crisis is threatening the city's reputation as a major event destination and requires urgent action by authorities, former lord mayor and businessman **Ron Walker** says. Mr Walker, who led Victoria's major events body for a decade, said that high levels of brazen crime would deter international visitors, according to *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Pentridge Shopping Precinct

Melbourne's newest shopping precinct will be on the grounds of one of the state's most notorious prisons. Pentridge Prison developer Shayher Group revealed the centre of the former prison's 6.7 hectare site would be open to the public as a piazza for markets, community events and performances as well as a retail laneway and for dining, as per the *HERALD SUN*.



HEALTH

Too young to die..

Premier Andrews promised his government would introduce laws to enable terminally-ill patients access to life-ending treatment by as early as 2019. A panel of medial, legal and consumer experts will design the legislative framework that will have strict safeguards in place, including that two doctors sign off on any patient's decision.

Community consultation will be held next year on the proposed model, during what is expected to be a heated and emotional debate inside and outside parliament. A survey of Legislative Council MPs, which will have the final say on proposed laws if they get through the Legislative Assembly, found almost half were likely to support assisted-dying laws, 18 MPs support the legislation, 8 do not, with 14 remaining undecided, as per *THE HERALD SUN*.

Health Victoria

Health Victoria is a 16-page, monthly magazine, which features stories on the happenings in Victorian health services. Hard copy, if you in this space

Mental Health Focus on Family Violence

Dedicated family violence workers will be recruited to work in Victoria's mental health and substance abuse services as part of the **Andrews** government's 10-year strategy to tackle the scourge of domestic violence, according to *THE AGE*.

Health Workers Under Attack

Public hospitals and the ambulance service have made the number of reports of abuse public for the first time, providing the clearest picture yet of the threat faced by doctors, nurses and other workers. There were 8627 reports of occupational violence in hospitals in the year to July, and of those 1166 cases resulted in staff injury or illness, an analysis of health services' annual report reveals.

That means the equivalent of three hospital staff each day last year were hurt by violence. But Health Minister **Jill Hennessy** believes this is still not the full picture, according to *THE AGE*.

Ambo Cost Spike

The cost of dispatching ambulances in Victoria has soared following a controversial pay deal with paramedics. Ambulance Victoria's latest annual report reveals it cost the state an average of \$826 to send out an ambulance in 2015-16. That was about \$80, or 10.7 per cent, more than the previous year, and a hefty \$156, or 23 per cent, more than 2012-13.

The report blamed the 2015-16 rise 'predominately' on pay increases following a deal with the Ambulance Employees Association after the 2014 state election. The deal came after the Fair Work Commission ruled the work of paramedics had become more complex and difficult over time and required higher skills. This prompted the **Andrews** government to announce the wage upgrade, *THE AGE* reports.

Pack the Deet

Melbournians be warned – mobs of mosquitoes here. Experts are predicting a bumper season of the stinging insects after recent heavy rain and floods provided ideal breeding grounds for them. Dozen of councils across the state were forced to rake early action. Flood-affected areas in the Murray River region were the worse hit, with Mildura Rural City Council resorting to smoking swarms of the pests out of town with fogging compounds, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Thunderstorm Asthma

The first public asthma warning was issued in the wake of eight deaths resulting from Melbourne's 'thunderstorm asthma' epidemic. Victoria's Inspector-General for Emergency Management interim report in to how emergency services managed the 'perfect storm' is expected to be delivered in January, Health Minister **Jill Hennessy** said, according to *THE AGE*.



BUSINESS & INVESTMENT

Who might be left out here?

Australia's big four banks have quietly destroyed all paper land titles they hold for 1.6 million Victorians mortgagees, forcing property owners to use a bank-owned electronic transaction system. Any future sales of properties whose titles are held by the bank will need to be transacted, at least in part, electronically.

The mass destruction of paper titles and their replacement with electronic certificates has been questioned by property lawyers who fear it will compromise security and effectively outsource the 150-year-old Torrens title system to private operators. The Law Institute of Victoria has been an outspoken critic of the electronic system, arguing it increases costs for consumers, undermines those holding titles for security against other assets, and adds complexity and legal uncertainty to what was once a simple and safe system.

The changes were ushered in by the Registrar of Titles who declared in a notice in the Victorian Government Gazette that paper-based titles will be void and of no effect from October 22, 2016. Property owners whose paper land titles are held by major banks were not told their title documents have been destroyed. The conversion of paper certificates of title to electronic versions was part of a national push to electronic conveyancing on the PEXA system, a spokesperson for Land Victoria said.

PEXA was set up in 2010 with federal government support after a meeting of Council Australian Governments urged modernisation of the antiquated system of paper-based transfers used by land titles offices and conveyancers, *THE AGE* reports.

Tanner on the Move

Bank of Melbourne chief **Scott Tanner** is to leave the helm of the lender he has run since it was relaunched by Westpac five years ago. Mr Tanner will take on the role of chief operating officer for the consumer bank at Westpac after building a strong reputation for innovation at the Victorian business. In his new role, he will continue to report to Westpac consumer bank chief **George Frazis**, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Gina Sues Vic Gov

A company part-owned by **Gina Rinehart** is suing the Victorian Government for \$2.7 million in damages over the state's ban on on-shore gas exploration, according to *THE AGE*.



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

No Longer Leaving It Behind

A landmark to allow tens of thousands of workers to transfer their long service leave entitlements from one employer to the next has been set in motion in Victoria. *THE AGE* understands the controversial proposal for long service leave to become 'portable' for security guards, social workers and contract cleaners was taken to the Labor Party's state conference.

UFU Joins Fight Against Feds

Andrew's Government is now at odds with the union it backed against volunteers in the CFA pay deal saga. UFU boss **Peter Marshall** is demanding changes to the deal to ensure it is not watered down under federal laws to protect volunteers. Otherwise, he wants the deal halted, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

SPC Jobs in Doubt

The future of hundreds of jobs and farms in the Goulburn Valley is in further doubt after SPC Ardmona lost a major supermarket contract. Woolworths announced it was dumping its 'goodwill' deal with SPC – made just two years ago – to source its own-brand line of tinned tomatoes.

Premier **Andrews** and Deputy Prime Minister **Barnaby Joyce** both took aim at the food and grocery giant, saying the public expected companies like Woolworths to buy local produce and support 'the jobs that come, the prosperity, the economic activity that comes from SPC', according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Pay Cut Urged for Maryvale Mill

More than 900 workers in the Latrobe Valley could give up at least \$100 a week to ensure Maryvale paper mill keeps its doors open. Just weeks after 700 workers at Hazelwood power plant were told they would lose their jobs next March, staff at the 80-year-old mill are considering a 5 per cent pay cut in an attempt to save their jobs.

The *HERALD SUN* can reveal the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union has urged its members to accept the reduction after 18 months of talks over a new workplace agreement. In return, the union wants a long-term commitment from Japan's Nippon Paper Group, the owner of Australian Paper, to invest in the mill and a federal government pledge to by Australian-made copy paper.

'It's the first time in 40 years in the paper industry I've been in the situation to ask people to consider a pay cut,' the CFMEU pulp and paper division secretary, **Alex Millar** told the *HERALD SUN*. 'it's not a situation we arrived at willingly and it's taken just under two years of negotiations'. The collapse of the mill would be a major blow to the struggling community, which is already facing more than \$100 million leaving the local economy each year when Hazelwood is closed.

Follow the Money

Victorian's anti-corruption watchdog has been asked to investigate secret payments made by the CFA to the fire-fighters union for its legal fees. The *HERALD SUN* revealed that the payments – which it emerged may be of \$481,000 and \$3000 – were made after the CFA was ordered by the **Andrews** government to hand the union \$ 2 million.

Premier Andrews told parliament that he first became aware of the payments 'when there was a media inquiry made to my office' and said it was 'a matter between the parties'. The Opposition has asked the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission to probe the payments. Opposition emergency services spokesman **Brad Battin** has also written to the CFA to demand answers.

Sources stated that within weeks of Mr Andrews's 2014 election, the state's fire services were told the union was demanding the cash from government and 'they would have to find it'. Three sources have told the paper that in February 2015 the government told CFA management it wanted funds to cover UFU legal fees.

The union had run up the huge bills in a legal dispute with the CFA and MFB during the Coalition's period in office. Sources say the UFU wanted to be paid after helping Mr Andrews's to

victory, and the government asked the CFA for cash. The UFU denied making any demands. But later in 2015, after a 'private binding arbitration', which legal sources have described as 'extraordinary' and 'disturbing', the CFA paid the UFU a sum believed to run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

FWC Grants Union Raid Powers

The Mornington Peninsula vegetable farm of high-profile Victorian grower A & G Lamattina & Sons was the scene of a dramatic raid by the National Union of Workers after the Fair Work Commission exercised a rarely used power to allow union officials to demand to see employment records for every worker on the farm. It is only the second time the FWC has granted the union this power to conduct a raid without notice – the first was in 2010, as reported in *THE AGE*.



JUSTICE & POLICE

Victoria - The Car Jacking Capital

Damning figures showed more than 18,000 cars were stolen in the past year, a 33 per cent jump in 12 months, making Victoria the nation's car theft leader. NSW experienced a 13 per cent drop to almost 12,000 car thefts over the same period, *THE AGE* reports.

Bail Granted to Young Thug

A magistrate freed a hammer-wielding teenage thug on bail, despite expressing doubts about the wisdom of doing so. The youth, 17, was among a gang of four who terrorised staff at three service stations during a 40-minute crime spree across northern and western Melbourne suburbs. The magistrate expressed shock that the youth, who pleaded guilty, could commit such crimes, but 'with considerable hesitation' bailed him. 'I'm not sure how good a decision it is,' the magistrate said, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Gangs Coordinating Together

Highly mobile youths of Sudanese, Pacific Island and Anglo origins are joining forces via social media to commit violent crimes in Melbourne. Victoria Police deputy commissioner **Andrew Crisp** said youth crime in Melbourne was different from five years ago, as gangs rarely fought each other by worked together to commit robberies in different parts of the city. Crisp said the Apex gang – and its Sudanese links – may get all the attention but it was only part of the story of youth crime in Melbourne, *THE AUSTRALIAN* reports.

Crime Taking Toll on Andrews Popularity

Galaxy research conducted exclusively for the *HERALD SUN* shows 68 per cent of voters polled believe authorities are losing the battle against Apex. And in a direct warning to the **Andrews** Government, 64 per cent believe it is not doing enough to tackle youth crime and 44 per cent think the state is less safe today than at the 2014 state election.

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Despite the troubling law-and-order results, the ALP has a slim lead over the Coalition on a two-party preferred basis (52-48), suggesting it would narrowly win an election if it was held today.

Anti-Trump Protests Hit CBD

A handful of masked men concealing their identities led hundreds of Left-wing protesters in a march through Melbourne in defiance of supporters of US president-elect **Donald Trump**. Despite fears of violent clashes, Victoria Police kept the two opposing groups separated, although rising tensions did result in a photographer suffering minor injuries in an altercation with Right-wing representatives, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Money Doubled but Closure Withheld

The Catholic Church has pledged to double potential compensation payments for child sex abuse survivors to \$150,000 but has back-tracked on a promise to publicly release an independent review into its controversial Melbourne response victim compensation scheme. Archbishop **Denis Hart** has defended the decision to withhold the report, saying it was being done in the interest of victims, according to *THE AGE*.

Community Centre Refurb to Fight Crime

Inner-city community centres could be upgraded under a council plan to fight the recruitment of African youths to groups like Apex. Lord Mayor **Robert Doyle** said he had been approached by African community leaders for help to engage troubled young men and avoid incidents similar to the incident at Moomba on March 12, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Black Saturday Settlements

Judges overseeing the record-setting Black Saturday bushfire class actions have called for sworn evidence from an independent auditor scrutinising law firm Maurice Blackburn's handling of the settlements, worth more than \$790 million.

The move to hear testimony from costs law specialist **John White** came as Maurice Blackburn warned it might take legal action against the Australian Taxation Office challenging an unfavourable tax assessment that would further reduce the pool of money available to the bushfire's victims.

More than two years since the firm announced it had negotiated a \$494m settlement – the largest in Australia's class-action history – for victims of the Kilmore East-Kinglake Blaze, the vast bulk of the payments are yet to be made, according to *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Lock Up Offenders

Violent crime, including assaults during home invasions, are further proof that the courts must stop putting dangerous offenders

back on the streets to commit further offences, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Cold Cases

More than 3300 of the Australian reported missing in the past eight years still haven't been found, research reveals. A report commissioned by the Australian Federal Police also shows those aged 13 to 17 are reported missing at a rate six times higher than other age groups, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Young Offenders

According to the Crime Statistics Agency, these youths begin offending around aged 10. By the age of 18 they will have, on average, almost 80 recorded offences. They are in and out of youth detention before graduating to the adult justice system. Expert says the system works for most kids, but is failing this group. And they don't know why.

Victoria youth rehabilitation system is among the best in the world, Commissioner for Children and Young People, **Liana Buchanan** says. But it is not working for these young people. The Crime Statistics Agency breaks youth criminals down into four groups. The kid who makes one mistake and learns. The youngster who commits crimes as a young adolescent but comes good as he moves into adulthood.

The late developer, whose criminality blooms as he ages. And the high offender. These kids start committing crimes at age 10 and never stop. They are disproportionately responsible for the worst, most serious crimes. They are generally extremely disadvantaged, and more likely to be Aboriginal than the other groups, the agency says. There are fewer than 200 of these children in Victoria, the CSA estimates. These ultras are responsible for almost one in four youth crimes, according to *THE AGE*.

Psychiatric Expansion

Victoria's overcrowded maximum security psychiatric hospital could be substantially expanded to cope with the number of inmates who need to be transferred from Victoria's prisons. An independent review into patient safety sparked by a cluster of potentially preventable baby deaths at a Bacchus Marsh Hospital has also found the bed-strapped Thomas Embling Hospital, the only hospital in the state that treats people found not guilty because of mental impairment, urgently needed resources, *THE AGE* reports

Community Outrage Spikes Prison Population

Legal changes driven by public outcry are behind an almost 70 per cent increase in Victoria's prison population in the past decade, despite only a small increase in the crime rate. New research by the Sentencing Advisory Council suggests the state's booming prison population

is largely being driven by community fears about violent criminals being let out on bail.

Sentencing Advisory Council chairman **Arie Feirberg** said courts were increasingly 'risk adverse' about releasing people on bail, which was driving up the number of prisoners remanded in jail, according to *THE AGE*.

Aboriginal Youths to Stay in Youth Detention

The **Andrews** government has backed down on its decision to place Aboriginal youths in an adult to prison to head off the Supreme Court battle. The government reached an out-of-court agreement with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service to move several indigenous youths from the maximum security Barwon Prison back to the Malmsbury or Parkville youth justice centres, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Andrews Knew

The "truth" about Sudanese refugees (according to **Bolt**) is now so obvious that even the ABC admitted to the danger. 'Growing youth crime rates, with car-jackings and home invasions doubling in the last year, ...have revealed a growing trend of out-of-control South Sudanese youth,' its 7:30 program conceded. So where are the sorries to **Kevin Andrews**, who warned nine years ago this would happen?

Where are the apologies from the journalists, Labor politicians and senior police who slimed him as racist? It was in 2007 that Andrews, immigration minister in the **Howard** government, said he was cutting back on refugees from Sudan and Somalia. 'Some groups don't seem to be settling and adjusting into the Australian way of life as quickly as we would hope,' he said.

The problem was a clash of cultures and the crime rate among the Sudanese was too high. All true and Andrews was punished for it, even though he stressed that many Sudanese were indeed settling in well. The ethnic lobby predictably denounced him as a racist, as did Labor politicians, writes **Andrew Bolt** for the *HERALD SUN*.

Police Give the Green Light to Protest

Cannabis-smoking protesters are free to blaze up in a city park under police noses. Victoria Police is not acting over illegal drug use at regular mass dope-smoking picnics in Melbourne, describing the events as 'freedom of expression'. The Police Minister has backed the stance but the Opposition has called for the government to get 'off the grass' and enforce the law.

At the most recent event, about 600 cannabis crusaders descended on Flagstaff Gardens, including a young child and a goat. The *HERALD SUN* photographed drug kits in full view and revellers smoking blunts and bongos at the '420 picnic', with brownies also on offer.

Police for years have turned a blind eye to the hundreds and sometimes thousands of users breaking the law at the events, run by pro-legalisation campaigner Free Cannabis Community. Victoria Police Spokeswoman **Leonie Johnson** said it was illegal to smoke cannabis, but police used discretion, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Teens Ran Riot

Teen thug inmates charged at prison guards with metal poles, pieces of wood and a fire extinguisher as they took control of the Melbourne youth justice centre, an internal report into this month's riot reveals. The document, seen

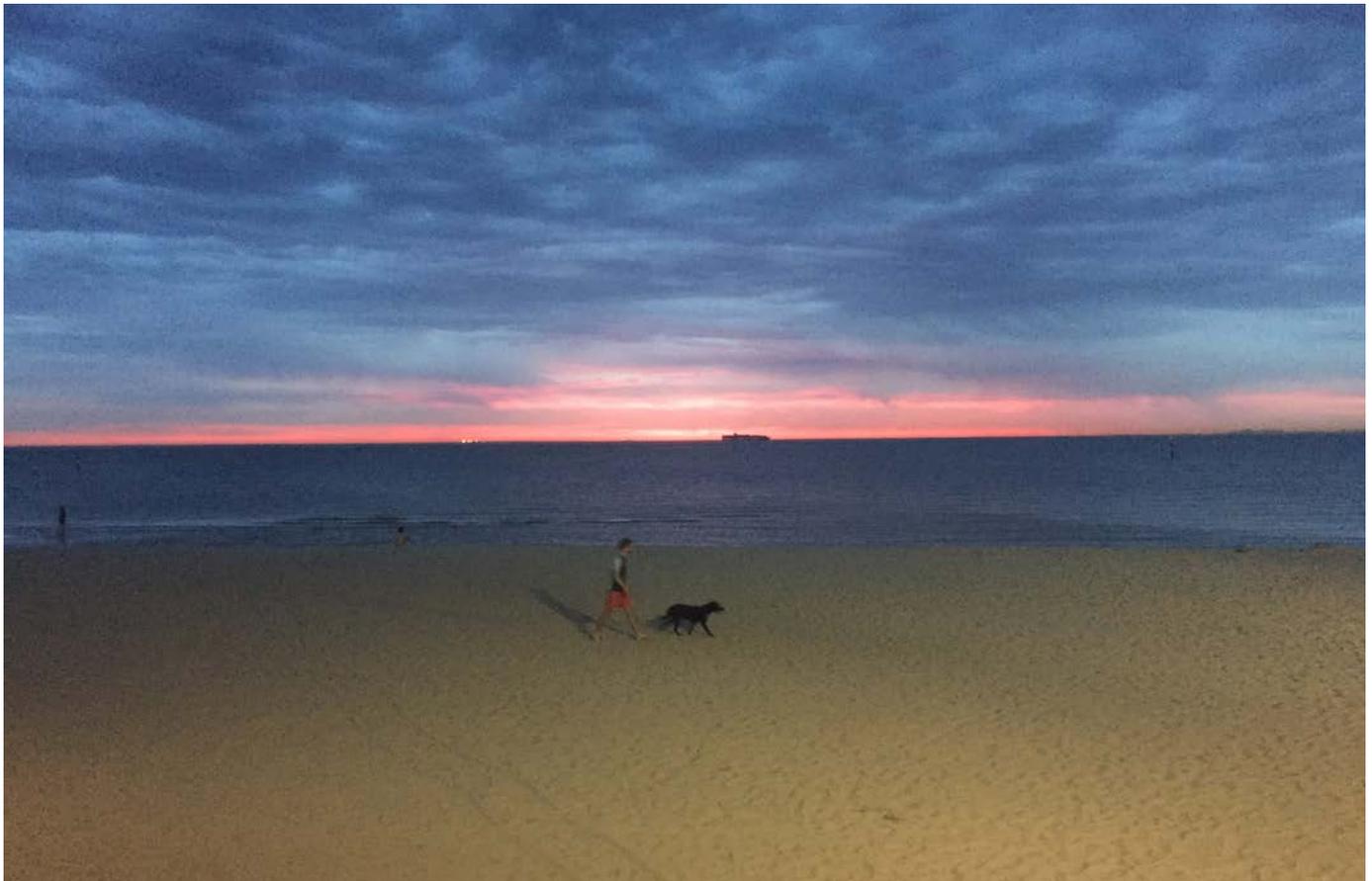
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DOG ON PORT MELBOURNE BEACH

exclusively by the *HERALD SUN*, shows a 28-strong group of teens engaged in a five-hour property damage rampage where they targeted other vulnerable inmates and threatened staff.

They even tried to set fire to one 15-bed accommodation unit., the Department of Health and Human Services incident report into November's riot at the Parkville centre says.

Youth Detention Riots

Dozens of images of two separate riots on May 6 and August 17, exclusively obtained by the *HERALD SUN*, show large holes in ceilings and walls, smashed doors and windows and office equipment destroyed by the thugs. Youth justice sources claim the damage bill from the mayhem in Parkville and Malmsbury detention centres over the past two years will cost taxpayers up to \$10 million.

Parole Reforms at Work

Victoria's Adult Parole Board has declared it has turned the corner. In releasing its annual report in parliament, the board says the 2013 Callinan review of the Victorian parole system, which came after a spate of murders committed by parolees, has been 'implemented thoroughly, expeditiously and successfully'. The report notes a dramatic reduction in criminals convicted of committing serious or violent offences while on parole, down from 60 released inmates in 2013-14 to 13 in 2015-16. There has also been a 50.5 per cent reduction in notifications to the board of parole breaches, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Cameras to be Installed in Dealing Hotspot

CCTV camera will be installed at a notorious Richmond intersection where dealers openly peddle drugs, despite the local council not wanting them. In a win for Victoria St traders, cameras will be installed on the corner of Lennox and Victoria St. Traders have long called for cameras to be

installed after raising concerns the area's seedy reputation was deterring shoppers and diners.

However, Yarra Council had resisted the calls, claiming cameras would only shift the problem on to residential streets. The president of the Victoria St Traders Association, **Meca Ho**, said the installation of CCTV cameras to prevent and monitor crime was a matter of urgency. A *HERALD SUN* investigation earlier this year capture more than 20 deals at the location in just two hours...

If any reader wants to see the Police in action, just rock up at about dusk or most other times.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Councils to Crackdown on Puppy Farms

Proposed puppy farm reforms before parliament will come at a significant cost to councils, which will be required to enforce the laws, says the peak body representing local government. Victoria's Domestic Animals Act will be overhauled to protect the welfare of breeding cats and dogs, and give consumers certainty that their puppies and kittens have come from good homes.

Municipal Association of Victoria interim president **Coral Ross** expressed frustration at the State Government's failure to consult with local government about the cost effects and enforceability of the proposed laws. 'We support measure to crack down on cruel breeders, but any

legislative reforms must take into account cost and work ability' she said, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

ON Hold. Woof.

Laws to crack down on puppy farms in Victoria should be scrapped and redrafted, a State Parliamentary inquiry has recommended. It is understood the report by Economic and Infrastructure Standing Committee calls for the **Andrews** Government to abandon its plan to limit breeders to owning a maximum of 10 female dogs, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Crime Spree Continues

Melbourne's ethnic crime wave has escalated, with 15-strong gang ransacking three Officeworks stores and attempting to steal from a fourth. The youths stole expensive headphones and computer equipment from the stores in Chadstone, South Yarra and Carnegie. Inspector **David Griffin** said the youths, who appeared to be of African decent were thought to be mostly teenage males. 'It certainly appears they are not too bothered about being caught, (they were) clearly very happy with what they have stolen', *THE AUSTRALIAN* reports.

Candidate Charged

Melbourne city council candidate **Brooke Wandin** and former councillor **Richard Foster** have been charged with unlawful nomination and false declaration. The charges, filed via the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office, relate to Ms Wandin allegedly nominating for October's election with an incorrect address. It is understood she allegedly nominated using Mr Foster's address, according the *HERALD SUN*.

Doctor Robert

Lord Mayor **Robert Doyle** has been awarded Monash University's highest honour – Doctor of Law *honoris causa*. The proper way to address him, apart from saying Lord Mayor is 'the Right Honourable'. Monash has bestowed the award on Cr Doyle in recognition of his distinguished

career in public life, and charitable and industry associations. Cr Doyle was a state Liberal member of parliament for 14 years and Opposition leader for four years, as per the *HERALD SUN*.



MELBOURNE

Melbourne – The Global City

Melbourne's unique reputation for liveability, culture and sport are paying off, with the city becoming the new headquarters for companies ranging from global tech firms to retail giants. The city's reputation has been cited by a range of international tech firms, which have decided that Melbourne will be their home and become a beacon for future talent recruitment.

As well as attracting tech firms Slack, GoPro and Zendesk during the past 12 months, Melbourne will also become corporate HQ for David Jones, while the NBN cyber security operation will bring 700 jobs to Docklands and Oxford University's global security capacity centre picked Melbourne to be its first international outpost.

Daniher Melbourne's Best

AFL great **Neale Daniher** has been announced as the 2016 Melburnian of the Year for his work raising funds to combat motor neurone disease. Daniher was diagnosed with MND in 2013, and has since dedicated his life to funding research into the disease. Past winners with a link to sport include **Jim Stynes**, **Ron Barassi**, **John Bertrand** and **Andrew Gaze**, *THE AGE* reports.

Book of Melbourne's Lost Gems

All cities change and evolve as they grow. As new buildings go up, others come down. But it's hard to conceive the magnitude of what came down in Melbourne in the 20th century, with so many of its most glorious buildings allowed by state and local governments to be reduced to rubble. A new book makes conceiving the scale of the loss a lot easier: *Remembering Melbourne* might more easily have been titled *Lost Melbourne*.

Within its 366 pages are literally hundreds of heritage buildings that went under the wrecker's ball. 'There are 189 uses of the word demolish in the book,' said historian **Richard Broome**, the lead editor and one of the writers of *Remembering Melbourne*, which went on sale in mid-November. The book details 230 buildings no longer standing, said Professor Broome, a La Trobe University emeritus professor, as reported in *THE AGE*.

Laneway Makeover

Melbournians have, on the whole, heard more than enough about their city's 'iconic' laneways. Meyers Place was among the first to really kick off the idea that the city's lanes were something that could be an important feature of Melbourne's culture. For decades, the Waiters Restaurant was the only business in the street, and then cam bar Six Degrees in the 1990s.

The lane's success spawned many similar ventures – some successful, others less so. The laneway, near Parliament House and running between Bourke and Little Collins streets, was 'greened' with plants, fake grass, and a street closure to show the possibilities in the \$1.3 pilot program to turn four well-known laneways into green havens.

Also having the green treatment are Katherine Place, Guildford Lane and Coromandel Place. The lanes were selected by council-appointed engineers, sustainability experts and landscape architects from 800 public nominations made after the plan was floated in March, according to *THE AGE*.

Melbourne's Tree Change

The days of Melbourne's boulevards being lined with exotic elm trees are numbered. A warming climate has prompted Melbourne City Council to reassess which tree species it will plant in the future. And rather than sticking with the European elms, the city's landmark boulevards, including St Kilda Road and Royal Parade, will be lined with trees that can tolerate the higher temperatures forecast in the future.

But don't think that automatically means gum trees. A report commissioned by council suggests North America's fiery foliaged red maple is suitable candidate to replace the elms, some of which date back more than a century. Melbourne University horticultural researcher **Dave Kendal** said the city's mean annual temperature of 16.5 degrees had already increased by 2 degrees since the 1950s.

Many of the cold-climate European deciduous trees, such as the silver birch, Dutch elm, Scots pine and European beech, already exist at the upper limits of their temperature range, according to *THE AGE*.

Melbourne's Growing Pains

Melbourne and its surrounds can only continue to provide food for a population of 7-8 million if Melbournians accept a hard urban boundary and more density, a new report says. A report from the Victorian Eco-Innovation Laboratory at Melbourne and Deakin universities says Melbourne's food self-sufficiency from the surrounding food bowl could fall to just 18 per cent as the population almost doubles to 7-8 million by 2050 without a change in planning policy, *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW* reports.

City Shines While Country Suffers

Melbourne has been credited for its role in helping to drive the national economy, contributing almost a third of all GDP growth. Research shows Melbourne and Sydney are powering the nation, with two-thirds of Australian Gross Domestic Product growth generated in our two largest cities. But the picture is not so rosy for regional Victoria which is languishing behind the rest of the country.



MEDIA

Victoria Overlooked for Mobile Upgrade

Prime Minister **Malcolm Turnbull** announced a second round of funding under

the flagship Mobile Black Spots Program, with \$60 million set aside to build and upgrade 266 mobile towers nationwide. But in an escalating stoush, almost half of the upgrades requested by Victoria have been rejected by the Turnbull government as a 'waste of money' providing little or no benefit.

The latest carve-up – targeting 400 black spots – has left the **Andrews** government fuming and accusing Turnbull of short-changing Australia's most bushfire prone state. Out of 266 new and upgraded mobile towers, 32 are in Victoria, about 12 per cent of the total and less than half the state's 25 per cent population share. An assessment by Emergency Management Commissioner **Craig Lapsley** handed to the Commonwealth requested upgrades for 63 areas still suffering from poor coverage, as reported in *THE AGE*.

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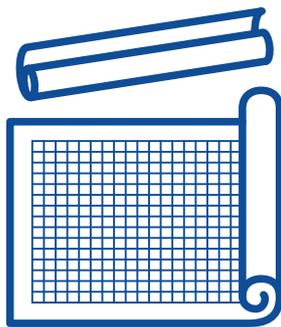
Apple is believed to be in the final stages of negotiating a deal to open a new \$50 million megastore in Federation Square, almost a decade after it first started looking for an appropriate central city store, industry sources say, according to *THE AGE*.

ABC Cuts

The Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne has blasted the ABC for axing most of its religious programming, claiming it is inconsistent with the national broadcaster's charter that requires it to broadly reflect Australia society. Archbishop **Phillip Freier** said the ABC had 'considerably reduced' its religious coverage over the past two years, and that more cuts occurred in November, particularly on radio programming, *THE AUSTRALIAN* has reported.

The Age Editor Steps Down

Mark Forbes has apologised to a female journalist over sexual harassment allegations which forced his resignation as editor-in-chief of *THE AGE*. Forbes said he had 'let down' staff and admitted responsibility for his actions. He said his position had become 'untenable', according to the *HERALD SUN*



PLANNING

Andrews to Regulate Fishermans Bend

A skyscraper proposed by the Liberal Party's federal treasurer is among the apartment towers set to be rejected by the **Victorian** government under strict new planning rules for the troubled Fishermans Bend development precinct. The rules will likely scupper seven high-rise towers, a handful of those proposed after former planning minister **Matthew Guy** in 2012 controversially rezoned 250 hectares of industrial land south-west of the CBD and dubbed it Fishermans Bend.

Another 11 towers are expected to be sent back to the drawing board for minor redesigns. Mr Guy's

snap rezoning, without height or design controls, triggered a multibillion-dollar hike in land values and windfall profits to landowners without a cent captured for the wider Victorian community or for infrastructure in the area, as reported in *THE AGE*.

Making Way for Metro Project

Fast food chains McDonald's, Hungry Jacks, KFC and Starbucks and bank CBA will be forced out of their prime, high-trading Swanston Street stores to make way for the government's \$10.9 billion Melbourne Metro Rail project. The businesses will join a growing exodus of key retailers abandoning the city's main shopping core ahead of years of disruption expected from work on the project's centrepiece tunnel and two city stations.

Metro authorities are negotiating the compulsory acquisition of four Swanston Street properties between Young & Jackson's Hotel on Flinders Street and the Nicholas Building on the corner of Flinders Lane. All four buildings – along with the Port Phillip Arcade behind – will be razed to make way for the rail project's CBD South Station. Colliers International retail director **Cam Taranto** said the rail project was pushing retailers to open shops in other high-traffic locations such as Elizabeth and Bourke streets, *THE AGE* reports.

Beechworth Gaol Bought

The historic Beechworth Gaol has been purchased by a group of almost 50 people who have just paid \$2.5 million for the property. After housing prisoners for more than 140 years, including bushrangers **Ned Kelly** and his mother **Ellen**, the jail was closed in 2004. Since then, it has been in private ownership and open for tours, as reported in *THE AGE*.

Victoria Plans for Biomed Hub

A plan to reshape Victoria's economy by creating a Silicon Valley-type biomedical hub for 10,000 workers is being stalled by the Federal Government. Backed by the State Government and private benefactors, the \$180 million Aitkenhead Centre for Medical Discovery, based at St Vincent's Hospital, is expected to kick-start dozens of start-up biotechnology companies and improve health globally.

Researchers from the 11 institutes involved believe they can fast-track projects including the bionic eye, robotic limbs, brain implants to overcome epilepsy, and heart muscles grown in a laboratory, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Sky Not the Limit in Yarra

New apartment blocks in Melbourne's inner north should be capped at four levels, a council says. Yarra Council has also asked the **Andrews** government to virtually curtail development of apartments along inner-city shopping strips, *THE AGE* reports.

Grandstand Finish

The end of the 2016 Flemington carnival has also seen the end of an era, with the 92-year-old members' grandstand to be demolished and replaced by the \$128 million 'Club Stand'. Aided by \$10 million from the State Government, the Victorian Racing Club will make the modern 10th addition to the course, which will be ready in time for the 2018 Melbourne Cup Carnival.

It's part of a \$135 million upgrade to the Flemington layout, with the 20-month build set to limit capacity for the 2017 carnival, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

HOUSING

Body Corporate Reform

The regulation of flats and apartment blocks in Victoria is facing a shake-up. A review of the

operation of owner's corporations, formerly known as body corporates, has followed a finding that many split by factionalism, and that many residents were apathetic about them. Consumer Affairs Victoria has released a discussion paper on tougher regulation, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Social Housing Redevelopment

Prime real estate in the old low-rise public housing tenements in some of Melbourne's most affluent suburbs will be opened up to the private market as part of a massive redevelopment of social housing. Public housing properties in highly sought after spots including Prahran, Clifton Hill, Brighton, Brunswick, Northcote and Hawthorn will be upgraded as part of the **Andrews** government's \$185 million plan.

The government has promised to increase social housing by at least 10 per cent on 1100 properties across nine sites, which are mostly four-storey developments that have become dilapidated. But private units will be included in the rebuild, the government says, according to *THE AGE*.

Public Housing Crisis

Rapid population growth is worsening Victoria's social housing crisis, sparking calls for co-ordinated action to tackle the lack of accommodation. A high-level meeting of public, private and non-government organisations was told, rising homelessness on city streets was a 'canary in the coalmine' warning of much deeper problems. Not-for-profit group Housing Choices Australia, which provides housing for people who struggle to rent private homes, estimated that investment of \$600 million a year would be needed up to 2031 to keep pace with demand for social housing, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Woof Woof

With tenancy laws under review in Victoria, the issue of pets in rental homes has become a bone of contention. Many tenants – backed by the Tenants Union of Victoria and the RSPCA – want a law change that would allow people to keep pets in rental homes without needing approval from their landlords. Pets aren't outlawed from rentals in the Residential Tenancy Act, but landlords often include clauses in tenancy agreements banning them, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Maintaining CBD's 'Commercial Core'

Developers will be allowed to build taller apartments towers in Melbourne's CBD as long as they provide 'public amenities' including office space as the city council seeks to maintain the city's commercial core. Melbourne's move to control CBD development comes as Sydney also pushes back against a flood of high-rise apartment towers.

Danni Addison, chief executive of the Urban Development Institute of Australia, a lobby group, said the new rules for the Melbourne CBD were 'a very blunt tool' but had enough flexibility 'to negotiate outcomes on a site-by-site basis'. Planning Minister **Richard Wynne**, has now made permanent a set of interim development rules for central Melbourne introduced in 2015, *THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW* reports.

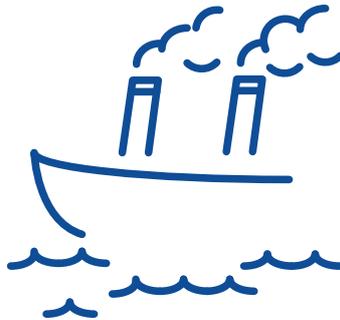


SPORT

World Class Tennis Precinct

A redevelopment is being served up to make the home of the Australian Open the best grand slam venue in the world. Features of Melbourne's tennis precinct include a new public piazza, sunken show court, function centre and eastern entrance. A new court to seat 5000 fans will be built between Rod Laver and Hisense arenas as part of the next phase of the Melbourne Park expansion.

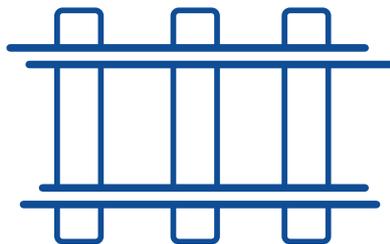
Two more courts to seat another 2000 spectators and a new grassed viewing area are also planned as event directors aim to capitalise on record crowds and improve the fan experience during the popular tennis event. The \$338.1 million stage two of the redevelopment is expected to be finished by 2021; however, a new footbridge from the CBD to the precinct will be open in time for the January 2017 tournament, the *HERALD SUN* reports.



TRANSPORT – PORTS

Port Phillip Ferry Given Go Ahead

The Portarlington ferry service to Melbourne will run for the next three years, the State government has announced. Port Phillip Ferries, which is owned by the Little Group, began its trial of the service from Portarlington pier to Victoria Harbour in July. It ran until October, the *HERALD SUN* reports.



TRANSPORT – RAIL

W-Class an Old Favourite

A wave of nostalgia could help save Melbourne's mothballed W-Class trams from their trundle to the scrapheap. Research by Public Transport Victoria has uncovered strong public sentiment toward the heritage icons, prompting a state government audit of almost 200 remaining trams for potential refurbishment or use.

Many of the decommissioned trams are in storage, at risk of rot, rust and vandalism. Melbournians felt most strongly about keeping the W-Class trams on the popular City Circle tourist and restaurant routes. There was less support

for their continued use on commuter routes 78/79 and 30, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Warrnambool Line Provides Headache for V/Line

Chaos has struck Victoria's regional rail network once more: track faults and boom gate problems shut down the entire Warrnambool Line for almost a week. The closure follows an incident in which a passenger train went through a level crossing before the boom gates came down. V/Line has launched an investigation, whilst passengers were forced to use coaches to travel the line, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Mind Your P's and Q's

Heavy-handed ticket inspectors are 'intimidating' passengers on trams and trains – and even calling police when they don't get their way. The Public Transport Ombudsman has criticised their behaviour and wants them to improve their manners before they issue fines to fare evaders. Complaints about the behaviour of authorised officers jumped 16 per cent to 282 cases this financial year, shows the Ombudsman's annual report, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

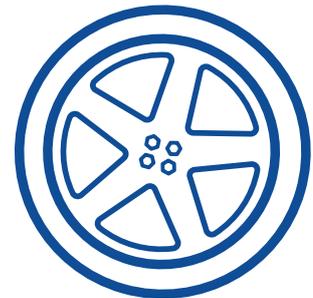
Tram Incidents on the Rise

Trams are crashing into other vehicles more than twice a day on average, a nagging problem that has been blamed on motorists disobeying the road rules. The number of serious injuries on trams has risen this year, driven by a sharp increase in passenger slips, trips and falls. New figures published by Victoria's transport safety watchdog reveal Melbourne is on track to record the greatest number of passenger falls, serious injuries and tram-vehicle collisions in at least five years.

The data, compiled by Transport Safety Victoria, indicate that not enough is being done to separate trams from generic traffic, a public transport expert said. 'You can't keep on running the trams in mixed traffic' said Professor **Graham Currie** who leads Monash University's Public Transport Research Group, which has recently begun a study into why passenger falls on trams are increasing. He said researchers had interviewed tram drivers for the study and found many feel anxious about a crash every time they drive, as per *THE AGE*.

Big Brother Watching You

Passengers on every train and tram carriage will be monitored live in the future in a bid to make Melbourne's public transport network safer. Victoria Police Chief Commissioner **Graham Ashton** said the new eye-in-the-sky technology would help stamp pit crime on trains and trams. As well as acting as a deterrent, the system will allow police to monitor events on the network and intervene more quickly, the *HERALD SUN* has reported.



TRANSPORT – ROAD

Automated Car Regulation Needed

Driverless cars are being run illegally in Melbourne, the State Government revealed. Roads Minister **Luke Donnellan** said that he had

been told of someone using automated Tesla vehicle from one side of the city to the other. Donnellan said he was concerned about the practice, and VicRoads was considering rules and regulations to manage the emerging issue that is tipped to become much more common over the next decade, reports the *HERALD SUN*.

Crackdown on Servos

Victorian petrol stations have been banned from displaying discounted prices on fuel boards. Motorists are being urged to do in any outlets that flout the new rules in force since November 30. Supermarkets and other servos will be forced to show full prices available to all customers, rather than those conditional on a shopper docket, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Arterial Safety Risk

Safety issues are so serious on one of the city's busiest suburban arterial roads that the state's truck industry has taken the unusual step of calling for a 40km/h speed limits. Accidents continue on Heidelberg's Rosanna Road, but residents say almost nothing is being done to fix the problem created by its evolution as a major truck route, as reported in *THE AGE*.

Portland's Rough Roads

The wrecked main roads of Victoria's far south-west arterials for tourists, locals and \$2 billion worth of exports being freighted each year to the busy port of Portland, are the worst roads in all of Victoria, the RACV's roads and traffic manager, **Dave Jones**, declared.

No passenger trains have run in the area since the 1980s. Buses, cars and motorcycles share the road with around 145,000 trucks each year – almost 400 a day travel to the port, many of them larger than B-doubles. The state government is refusing to release \$20 million because it says it wants the federal government first to agree on a carve-up of the \$1.5 billion earmarked for the stillborn East West Link.

The chief executive of the port of Portland, **Jim Cooper**, said Portland was now the world's biggest exporter of hardwood woodchips, all of which were freighted to the port by road, many as logs. Mineral sands, cattle, and other agricultural produce all arrive at the port by road. The chief executive office of the Glenelg Shire, **Greg Burgoyne**, agreed the shire's disintegrating roads were a result of inertia by a series of governments, but said there has been no increase in funding, 'in fact, in real terms it's gone backwards', according to *THE AGE*.

Cab Test Abandoned

More cabbies are out on the roads after the qualification bar was lowered – but there is no guarantee they can get you where you want to go. In August, when the State Government announced that it would legalise ride-sharing, the taxi industry's knowledge test – based on London's famous test for black cab drivers – was scrapped, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

East West Funding Redistribution

Victoria is due for a \$3 billion infrastructure spending bonanza after the state and federal governments finally struck a deal on how to spend the Commonwealth's contribution to the scrapped East West Link project. The biggest winners will be motorists in Melbourne's southeast, thanks to a \$1 billion upgrade of the Monash Freeway.

The deal, under which the state will match every federal dollar, also includes a \$700 million upgrade to the M80 Ring Road and \$690 million for rural and regional roads, including \$192 million for a bridge across the Murray River at Echuca Moama, as reported in the *HERALD SUN*.

Pursuit Brings Traffic to Standstill

Peak-hour traffic was thrown into chaos after extraordinary police pursuit on one of Melbourne's busiest arterials. Four lanes became a police stomping ground with motorists forced into one lane at the top of the West Gate Bridge. Lengthy delays were still felt more than an hour later with traffic at a standstill as far back as Millers Rd

Last Car off the Lot

The very last Holden six-cylinder motor rolled off the company's Port Melbourne production line at 10:47am on Tuesday the 29th of November, bringing to an end almost seven decades of local engine manufacturing. Holden has manufactured at the Fishermans Bend site since 1936, made engines there since 1943, and the Port Melbourne factory has been the centre of the company's engine production since 1931.

More than 10 million engines have been built for domestic and international markets. Since 2003, a total of 1,137,282 HFV6 series engines have been built by the plant; 699,806 were for domestic vehicles, and 437,436 were exported. 'The best way we can honour our people and their legacy is by building a bright future and that's exactly what we're doing' said **Mark Bernhard**, Holden's chairman and managing director.

'While it was an emotional time to see the last engine built today, we are proud to retain a significant presence in Australia for the long-term', as reported in *THE AGE*.

PSA for Melbourne Airport Taxi Rank Access Fee

Effective from November 1 2016, Melbourne Airport's taxi rank access fee will be \$3.58 inclusive of GST. This fee will be passed on to taxi customers in the form of an airport rank fee. The taxi rank access fee will enable Melbourne Airport to recover the cost of building and maintaining infrastructure for taxi services, including holding bays and driver amenities, queue management services and managed taxi ranks.

Drunk Cyclists and Pedestrians Part of the Problem

Drunk cyclists and pedestrians are potentially causing scores of car accidents every year in Victoria, prompting calls for them to be breath-tested and subject to the same road rules as drivers. The Alfred hospital emergency and trauma specialist **Biswadev Mitra** and his colleagues look at 1323 Alfred patients who were seriously injured in road accidents when they were not driving. They found that 248 had alcohol in their system and 211 were deemed to be intoxicated because they had a blood alcohol reading of .05 or more, *THE AGE* reports.

Sydney Rd Tow Hotspot

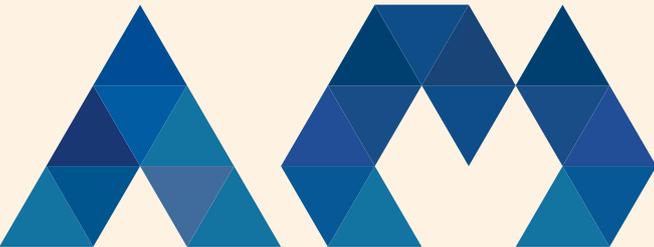
Sydney Rd in Brunswick is the state's towaway zone hotspot with as many as five vehicles towed from the popular shopping strip every weekday. A total of 1349 cars were removed from the street's peak-hour clearway zones in 2015 and this year's total is already past 1100. More than 10,000 vehicles are towed every year state-wide, according to VicRoads, reports the *HERALD SUN*.

Traffic Nightmare

Melbourne motorists will be fuming at delays of up to an hour as major arterials are shut for summer road works. Traffic will be booted off the Tullamarine Freeway in both directions over three days, causing headaches for travellers to Melbourne Airport. Logjams are expected along the West Gate Freeway as key exit Montague St is closed for 20 days and on the West Gate Bridge, which will have lanes reduced over two days. Motorists are being warned to use the roads only if necessary, consider using public transport where they can and to take the designated detours, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Future Toll Plans

The Victorian Government has ruled out a network-wide system of road tolls and charges, but admits the radical idea may be needed in the future. Infrastructure Victoria released its \$100 billion 30-year blueprint for the state and declared road pricing the best way to reduce congestion. The North East Link, a train to


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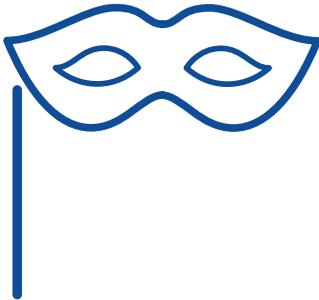
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Melbourne Airport, closing coal mines and building new hospitals, prisons and police stations were among the report's other recommendations.

Infrastructure Victoria chief executive **Michel Masson** said both major parties had a 'very respectable view' in opposing road pricing, but Victorian deserved 'an informed debate on controversial issues'. 'We cannot build our way out of congestion' he said. Special Minister of State **Gavin Jennings** said the government vowed at the last election not to toll existing roads. 'we have not changed from that commitment' he said, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Parking Keeping Shopper Away

Victoria's independent retailers are tipped to lose billions in Christmas revenue to shopping centres and online store, research shows. Parking issues have been blamed for sending gift-givers online and to malls, with independent shops predicted to miss out on \$7.83 billion, according to the *HERALD SUN*.



SOCIETY

Provincial Victoria Doing it Tougher than City Slickers

Regional Victorians are having a harder time meeting home loan repayments than their inner-city cousins. Rising unemployment outside Melbourne is behind a steep lift in mortgage arrears, a report by global credit ratings agency Standard & Poor's says, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Eureka Ban for Political Purposes

The Eureka flag – a symbol of the uprising on Victoria's goldfields – could soon be banned from being used for political purposes. Ballarat MP **Katherine King** has brought a private member's bill aimed at blocking the use of the flag on political logos. It comes after the Australia First Party, a far-Right, anti-immigrant party, was given permission by the Australian Electoral Commission to use the flag on its logo, the *HERALD SUN* reports.

Safer Cities

Young women are being invited to map the creepy places and welcoming spaces across inner Melbourne as part of an international project to design safer cities for girls. After Plan International ran the program in cities including Cairo, Lima and Hanoi, Melbourne women now have their chance to plot their good and bad experiences across the CBD on an interactive online map for the rest of 2016.

The data will be collated and presented to Melbourne City Council policy makers, Victoria Police, public transport operators and traders to form plans to make the city more inclusive, as per the *HERALD SUN*.

Perils of Bureaucracy

The kinds of activities that can be undertaken in the swimming zones at the beaches of Port Phillip Bay and Western Port Bay are now up for review. And Parks Victoria, the waterway manager, is eyeing a significant change to the rules. It has proposed that 'human-powered paddle craft'

such as surf skis, stand-up paddle boards and kayaks should be permitted in swimming-only zones, from which currently they are banned.

Parks Victoria has identified a number of reasons for the proposed changes, including a surge in the popularity of paddle craft in recent years and that some paddle craft users say they want to see their device close to shore, away from powered vessels and sailing vessels.

Graeme Davis, Parks Victoria district manager for Port Phillip and Western Port, said there had been a 'phenomenal increase' in the use of paddle craft in recent years, and the proposed changes were logical. 'It is the biggest single issue we have, 'why can't I use my kid's paddle craft next to where I'm swimming?', as reported in *THE AGE*.

Homes for the Homeless

The Salvation Army's Major **Brendon Nottle** said squatters had trashed houses homeless people would treasure, as he called for an end to protests over the controversy. Maj Nottle said the squatters and the related political protests in Bendigo St, Collingwood, had been a 'tragedy' that had kept vulnerable Victorians living out on the streets, or in dangerous rooming houses, according to the *HERALD SUN*.

Boxed In

Brighton's famous Dendy beach boxes. Bayside City Council builds one or two new boxes each year, but to become an owner, you need to be a local or a ratepayer. In January, a record price for a Brighton bathing box was set when 76E sold for \$285,000. The bathing boxes, originally used as ladies changing sheds in the 1800s, continue to capture the interest of Bayside residents and visitors from around the world, *THE AGE* reports.



VALE

ASLANIS, George, artist and teacher, acclaimed as a leading Australian glass artist. **BALL**, Michael, Advertising man and philanthropist, 5-8-1936 – 25-9-2016.

CORRIGAN, Peter, 'A building for young people,' was Corrigan's description of his most provocative and public building, RMIT's Building 8 on Swanston Street. For Corrigan work as an educator at RMIT and architect with Edmond & Corrigan was always directed at the next generation, according to *THE AGE*.

HAZZARD, Shirley, Author, aged 83, She wrote four novels, *The Evening of the Holiday* (1966), *The Bay of Noon* (1970), *The Transit of Venus* (1980) and *The Great Fire* (2003).

FOX, Bernard, known to TV viewers as Dr Bombay on *Bewitched* and Colonel Crittendon on *Hogan's Heroes*, has died at the age of 89.

QUIN, Father Peter SJ, an alumnus of Xavier College (OX 1949), and he returned to Xavier as a scholastic (1956-58), was 2nd Division Prefect (1970-73) and Director of Pastoral Care (1989-92). As well as his

time at his alma mater he became Headmaster of St Ignatius College Riverview, in Sydney (1974-81).

ROHAN, Glen, Publisher, 13-6-1946 – 29-11-2016, died of advanced prostate cancer. His death at the age of 70 grieved his wife Lynnda and others working on their magazine *North-by-North-East*, which enjoys wide support in Victorian country areas ranging from Wangaratta to Alexander and from Euroa to Myrtleford.

SARGOOD, Graham, Physicist, 2-7-1926 – 19-11-2016, Associate Professor Graham Sargood, noted Melbourne physicist, physics teacher and nuclear astrophysics researcher, has died in Melbourne at the age of 90.

TAYLOR, Greg, Newspaper executive, 31-3-1931 – 13-12-2016, editor and ultimately managing director of David Syme and Company, publisher of the newspaper. He was 85.

WATSON, Jane, Social Worker and Advocate who played a leading role in creating a response to the challenge of HIV and AIDS, 29-7-1942 – 30-8-2016

WITYNSKI, George, Lawyer, 31-7-1950 – 12-10-2016, Witynski SC passed in Canberra at the age of 66.

ARCHER, Gerard Patrick; **ARESKOG**, Peter Carl; **BAIN**, Wilma; **BAILEY**, Joanna May; **BARHAM**, Margaret 'Mollie'; **BARTSCH**, William Peter (Bill); **BOYCE**, Lola; **BULL**, Donald 'Don' Stewart; **CAMPBELL**, David; **CANNON**, Thomas James; **CARLSSON**, Robyn Elizabeth; **CARR**, Peter McPherson; **CHARLESTON**, Kenneth Francis; **CONNOLLY (nee Begg)**, Jocelyn Mary; **CRAIG**, Dr John H.A.; **DALE**, Lois Alison;

DALY, Michael Alphonsus; **D'AMELIO (nee Bini)**, Sue; **DAVIS**, Marie Valerie; **DONNE**, David Paul; **DRUMMOND (nee Candy)**, Deirdre Jane; **DULLARD**, Bill; **EATON**, Robert John (Bob); **ENGLISH**, Peter; **FERNANDEZ**, Mark Alexander; **FINCH**, Stuart Edwin (Bloody); **FLANAGAN Sr**, Carmel; **FOTHERINGHAM**, Donald James; **GILL**, Rev Rowan Clifford; **GILLESPIE**, Keith William; **GLASSER (nee Marks)**, Peggy; **GOWTY**, William James (Bill); **GUNN**, Brother Thomas Kenneth;

HALL, Kenneth Tudor; **HANCOCK**, Lachlan 'Lachy'; **HANLIN (nee Coghlan)**, Anna Elvira; **HARDING**, Gary; **HARLE**, John Robert; **HATCHER (nee Crawford)**, Joan; **JENKINS**, Peter M; **KENNEDY**, Lois; **LOVE**, Belinda; **MENCE**, Dr Olive OAM; **MILLAR**, William McMullan (Bill); **MILLER (nee McManus)**, Noreen; **NOTLEY**, Gweneth; **PRICE**, Valda Gertrude; **PURNELL**, Mark Dowell; **ROBERTSON**, Peter;

RODRIGUE, Bruno; **ROSALION-SOCHALSKY (nee Dackiw)**, Olesia; **SHEPHERD**, Malcolm; **SIMS**, Rex Victor; **SLEIGHT**, Donald Hugh; **SLATTERY**, Bill (Vivian) Joseph; **STORY**, Dorothy (Goy); **STEGGALL (nee Stephenson)**, Valarie Anne; **SKYES (nee Gittus)**, Margaret 'Margo' Jessie; **THOMPSON**, Bruce Muntz; **TOOGOOD**, Clarence Edwin; **TOOHEY**, Kevin James; **WAGLAND**, Nancy Irene; **WILSON**, Rosemary Alice; **YATES**, Colin Roderick;

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