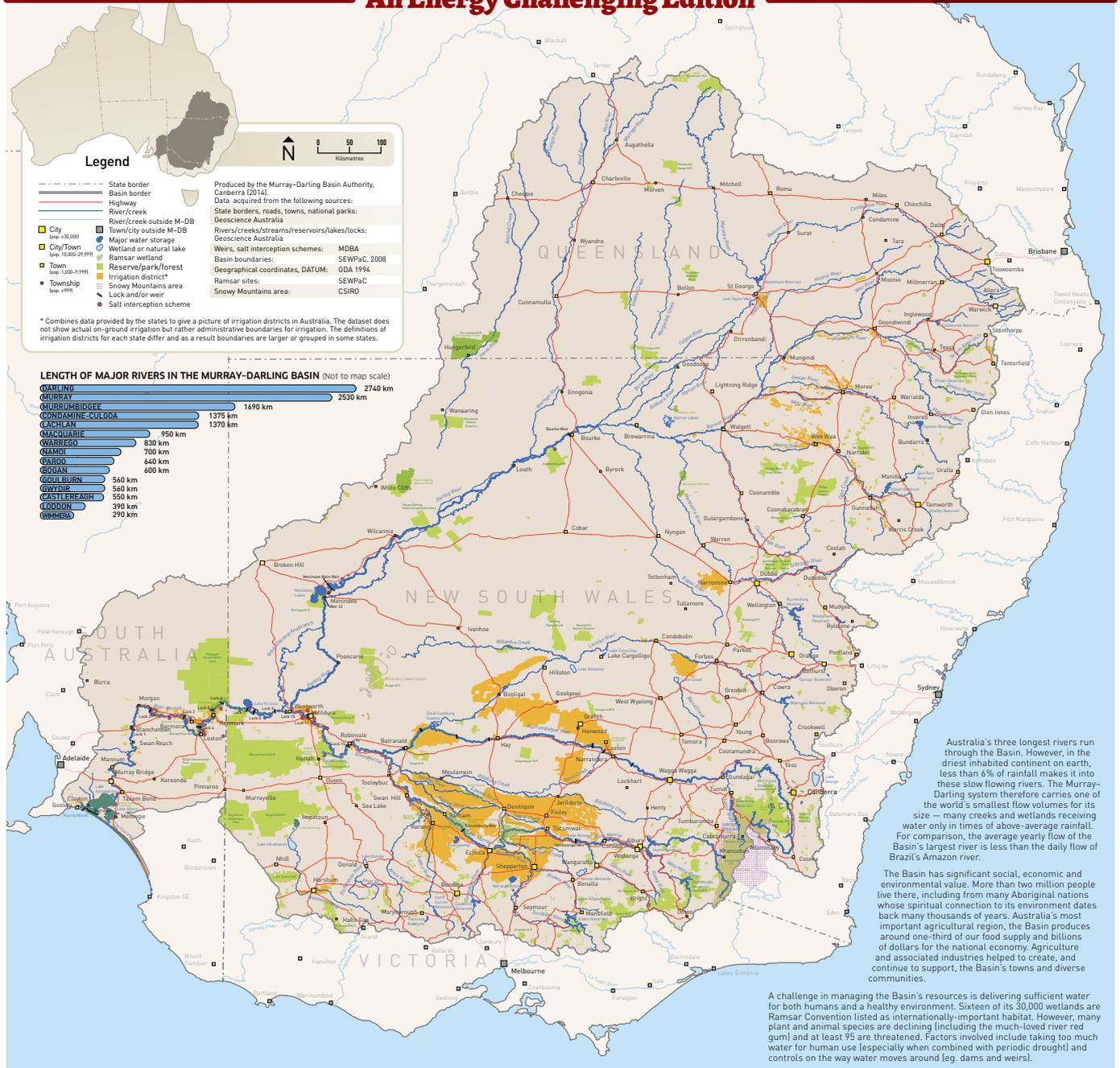


LETTER FROM CANBERRA

Now in our tenth year.

An Energy Challenging Edition



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- **51st Star..?!**
- **To change our Constitution...**
- **AMA wants same sex.**

LETTER FROM CANBERRA

A monthly digest of news from around Australia.
Saving you time; now in its tenth year.

ABOUT US

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

P +61 408 033 110
alistair@affairs.com.au
www.affairs.com.au

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

The only communication tool of its type, Letter from Canberra 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 Pasznyk
will.pasznyk@gmail.com

Interim Sub-editor: Thom Nixon

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.

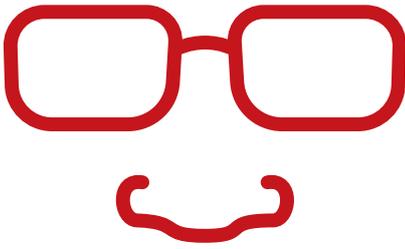
He was admitted as a barrister and solicitor to the Supreme Court of Victoria, and remains a (non-practicing) member of the Law Institute of Victoria. Previously, he graduated from high school in Bethesda, Maryland, and had many opportunities to become aware of the workings of Washington D.C.

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.



THE EDITOR OUTSIDE HIS FAVOURITE SPRING STREET CAFE WITH A WONDERFUL SCHOOL FRIEND. IN FRONT OF (SOME OF) THE VICTORIAN VERSION OF CANBERRA'S CIVIL SERVICE. A TOUCH OF HISTORY INCLUDED.



EDITORIAL

NEXT IN OUR TROUBLED LAND

Two of the quietest sectors 'behind the limelight' or spotlight, of the current Australian media, and hence out of the considered thoughts of the Australian public, are the small business sector and the coal industry. Might sound interesting to some purveyors for the Editor to write that, but yet despite his interest in public policy and government and business more generally, it is the former which are a large part of his heritage, career and deep interest. Not that the coal industry has that many players. However, it has and has had, and should have, a very significant part in Australia's productivity and prosperity, and should be marketed and promoted to the full Australian audience. Its interested parties, so many of them, should get out into the news more. Or are too many of them scared.

The small business community is like trying to herd cats. Very difficult to get them to rise up and hit the rallies together. There is COSBOA, the Council of Small Business Associations of Australia, based in Canberra, which brings (some thirty-two) professional associations together, professionally. Not quite sure how to say it, but the Australia as we have known it misses something like ASBA, the Australian Small Business Association, which bought busy small business owners out of their factories and farms and shops in the mid-1980's, to rise up to rallies around Australia, not to close off the streets as the unions and other social industries do, yet at city and community halls and outside union-picketed meat-works and placading rallies outside certain union head offices. The Objective was to give the smaller end of town, a very large percentage of Australian industry and business and Society, a Say, alongside the Big End of town, the unions and the non-knowing public servants and politicians. The Dollar Sweets Story was a part of it all. And Mudginberri. Gosh. The Seymour Abattoirs. City and Farming businesses

'fighting' together. And getting much of what they fought for. For those who might remember Peter Boyle, a leading instigator of those times and the ASBA national President. ASBA was across all states and territories. Peter died ten years ago, 17 September 2007. Many of us do miss him.

The new version of TV show Utopia is now playing and as boring as it makes itself, in one way, it is necessary to watch, to see acted out the shame which is (tooo much of) the Public Service(s) in Australia. In certain places and agencies and buildings and corridors, it is good but many people have been and are being hired without consideration of their contributing to a productive Australia.

Your Editor has been to several high quality energy forums in the past week, including on The climate issue, as well as several strong Coffee shop discussions on Society and a couple of challenging church sermons. Plus trying to communicate with the paperless optuS. So, again the rush to get out this Edition. No doubt all readers are also thinking hard on a range of societal issues and challenges at this time.

Cover. Energy comes after Water as the most important thing for anyone on the Planet. So the Cover map focuses on one of the main pieces of water geography that we have. Taken from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. Much more detail next Edition.

Good Reading.

Coming up

- Water and the Murray-Darling Basin. Whose is it?
- Doing Business in Indonesia, Leith Doody
- Gonski at Ground Level, Cheryl Lacel
- 100 years of Australian Industry, Dennis Troedel

Inside

- MPs without knowledge
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FEATURE

Making good citizens

If Prime Minister Turnbull wants to instil Australian values, how about we teach them as well. In all of the governments statements that I've read in the past week, I've not seen one reference to the need to ramp up civics education in schools to address what is widely regarded as a democracy deficit in this country, or, put another way, lack of confidence in the system. If this is not a values issue, then I'm not sure what it is. In the various Lowy Institute polls over the years, surely one of the more troubling – even shocking – findings is that less than half young people of voting age polled, 'those aged 18-29', believe democracy is preferable to the alternative.

Young people might not have heard of Winston Churchill's dictum that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others, but it would've seemed reasonable to assume they would understand better the attributes of a democratic system in contrast to the various alternatives. In an era when STEM subjects 'science, technology, engineering and maths' are prized, civic courses remain a poor relation, if they exist at all. Civics and citizenship education is no longer compulsory beyond year 6, and if taught thereafter occupies a mere 20 hours a year.

Professor Geoffrey Blainey believes Civics should be taught between ages 10 and 15. Civics teaching has also fallen victim to the tedious culture wars in which governments of right and left have sparred over the sort of influences they would like to see exerted – from John Howard's determination to counter a 'black armband' view of Australia's history to the latest iteration under former education minister Christopher Pyne, in which civics classes are being required to emphasise Australia's 'Judeo-Christian' heritage, writes Tony Walker in The Age.

Language requirements for would-be citizens

Liberal politicians from non-English speaking migrant backgrounds have defended toughened language requirements for aspiring Australian citizens, arguing that the ability to communicate properly with others is critical to successful migration and a multicultural society.

The parents of Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Jason Falinski and Julia Banks arrived in Australia with little or no English. But the federal MPs

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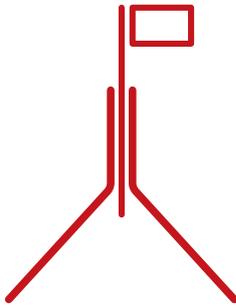
say their forebears either could have passed the Turnbull government's proposed test or that, even if they couldn't, times have changed. Under the sweeping citizenship package, applicants would have to score a sex on the IELTS, the primary international language test, amounting to a 'competent' level of English. Labor has rejected the measure out of fears it demands 'university level' fluency that many Australians could never reach, 25/06/17, THE AGE.

Sadly

Two federal Senators have had to leave the federal parliament because they do not meet the requirements to be a representative in the federal Parliament. Senator Larissa Waters, Green from Queensland, Canadian-born, Scott Ludlam Green from New Zealand.

Perhaps three

The Minister for Resources Matt Canavan has resigned from that position but not from Parliament, pending a High Court decision. He says his mother unknown to him signed him up for Italian citizenship some years ago without his knowledge. He has an Italian father and an Australian mother.



GOVERNANCE

Future of journalism...and objectivity

Liberal Senator Abetz released a statement criticising how senators would have the power to bring before the committee 'any journalist who they believe is publishing fake news, propaganda, disinformation or clickbait'. 'While the Senate rightly examines how taxpayer-funded broadcasters spend their money, individual journalists have never been dragged before Senate Estimates and the Senate shouldn't be in the business of doing so. This insidious proposal will undermine the freedom of the media and must be called out for the totalitarianism that it is'. THE AGE.

Utopia. Next week's

The Turnbull government will spend \$80 million a year on its new parliamentary entitlements authority, with its public servant CEOs to be paid a \$340,000 salary package. The government's budget papers reveal for the first time what it will cost to set up and run the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority – announced in the wake of the travel scandal that ended Sussan Ley's frontbench career – to monitor, administer, advise, audit and report on MPs' entitlement claims. The authority will cost taxpayers \$313 million over the next four years, starting at \$76 million next year and peaking at \$82 million in 2019-2020, THE AGE. For further detail, watch Utopia on TV.

ASIO boss sparks

Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation director-general Duncan Lewis has declined to elaborate on his claim that there is 'absolutely no evidence' of a link between Australia's refugee intake and terrorism, despite multiple Islamic terrorist acts in the past three years

involving individuals on humanitarian visas, or their children, WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

A better way

Prime Minister Turnbull has said Australia's century-old defence laws could be adjusted in accordance with the recommendations of the Coroner's inquest into the Lindt Cafe siege, raising the possibility of the Australian Defence Force being given greater leeway to step into terrorist incidents, THE AGE.

Force backs Dutton

An alleged incident involving a boy being 'led' into the Manus Island refugee compound was not referred to Papua New Guinea police until four days after Immigration Minister Peter Dutton sensationally raised it in a television interview. But the head of the Australian Border force strongly backed Dutton's view that the incident 'contributed' and was 'correlated' to the Good Friday rampage five days later in which drunken PNG soldiers opened fire on the compound, THE AGE.

Heading Bush

Twelve of the government's biggest public service departments could be on the move if they can't justify their presence in the capital. They might be forced to move to regional towns as the federal government begins forcing over-manned departments to relocate. Melbourne and Sydney-based offices could also be sent bush. The National Party push to force relocations of departments and agencies will be considered by cabinet in August, THE AUSTRALIAN.

NSW spending big

NSW is spending at a record rate on Infrastructure, with a strong focus on schools and hospitals, as it continues to recycle billions of dollars raised by selling power, port and registry business, THE AUSTRALIAN.

New security for flights to US

Flights from Australia to the US will be subjected to greater security screening as part of tougher rules for all US-bound flights to protect against terrorism. The move, announced by US Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, means all Australian US-bound passengers and their electronic devices will be subject to more robust screening and explosives testing.

The new measures are likely to slow the boarding procedure for flights to the US but are considered necessary to thwart the growing sophistication of terrorist devices. However, airlines will be relieved the measures did not include an expansion of the ban on carry-on laptops beyond the 10 Middle Eastern airports nominated in March, writes Cameron Steward in THE AUSTRALIAN.



PARTY HAPPENINGS

Greens' deceit threatens

Marcia Langton was spot on in her speech where she said Green groups were undermining the interests of Aboriginal people by deception, often

funded by wealthy foreign interests. On the same day as her speech, Greens senator Larissa Waters illustrated the point, authorising a political advertisement opposing the Adani mine that said: 'no consent from traditional owners. No way'. This statement is false. Adani has agreed to six Indigenous Land Use Agreements 'ILUAs' with three traditional owner groups- the Juru, Jaeggi and Berrimah native title groups. Adani also obtained the consent of the vast majority of Wangan & Jagalingou 'W & J'. The W & J agreement was approved by a 294-1 vote. Waters is wrong if she thinks there's no consent from traditional owners. Or was she demanding traditional owners withhold consent? If so, why are the Greens telling Aboriginal people what they can and can't agree to? Nyunggai Warren Mundine, HERALD SUN.

Latham moves on

On the eve of the federal budget, former ALP leader Mark Latham announced he was joining the Liberal Democratic Party, headed by David Leyonhjelm. Latham, who led Labor to defeat against former Liberal Prime Minister John Howard in the 2004 federal election, made the announcement via Facebook and immediately sparked speculation a return to active politics might be on the cards. 'I support 80 to 90 per cent of the Liberal Democrats' platform- pretty good for someone with strong views formed over a long period of time', THE AGE.

Liberal guidance on new fed director

Prime Minister Turnbull did face an unprecedented split in the national campaign operations of the Liberal Party, with the Queensland LNP threatening to direct its own state-based federal campaign for the next election. The potential split in the organisational wing of the party came as Liberal state presidents and senior party members launched a rearguard move to block the Prime Minister's candidate for the next federal director of the party, 32-year-old Andrew Bragg, a branch member from Turnbull's electorate, as the party's next federal director to replace veteran campaigner Tony Nutt, who resigned in March, THE AGE.

However, since mid-July, the new federal director is Andrew Hirst.

Rumblings as leaders locked in race to the bottom

Voters have stopped listening to both Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten. In the latest Newspoll, both have a negative approval rating (voter satisfaction minus dissatisfaction) of 23. At the last election, one in three didn't vote for either of the major parties, THE AGE.

Ritualistic

The Speaker is biased, the rules are broken, and democracy is shamed. If you look at almost every single question time answer in the current parliament, Malcolm Turnbull or the minister who was asked the question just bucket the opposition with little regard for relevance, Graham Richardson, a former federal labor minister, THE AGE.

Nearby

Turnbull's team would rather stare at their phones than help with the heavy lifting. Liberals' lifeless backbenchers just look bored. Coalition MPs have been heard to complain they find question time dull, writes David Crowe, THE AGE. And the other side of the House?

Labor MPs lash Albanese on criticism

Senior Labor MP Anthony Albanese's public interventions on the federal budget and a controversial '(Employ) Australians First' advertisement have infuriated Labor MPs, with some believing he has destabilised Bill Shorten. Shorten's supporters are now pushing back, claiming the NSW MP – who fought Shorten for the Labor leadership in 2013 – fears he has missed his chance to lead the ALP. In the past two weeks, Albanese has publicly criticised the 'Australian First' ad, about employing Australians first, as a 'shocker', and offered an alternative budget reply speech in which he said Labor should have claimed victory following the 'ideological surrender' of the Turnbull government in its 2017 budget, *THE AGE*.

'Uneasy' Howard breaks ranks

John Howard has broken ranks with the Turnbull government to express concern over changes to the superannuation and taxation system designed to improve housing affordability, the third key budget measure the former prime minister has failed to fully endorse. In an exclusive interview with *THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*, Mr Howard reiterated his 'unease' with the government's \$6.2 billion levy on banks and reserved judgement on the \$18.6bn school reforms because of claims it could strip almost 200 Catholic schools of future funding.

Utopia I

Senators Bob Day and Rod Culleton are to repay their taxpayer-funded salaries and allowances. The Department of Finance has sent the pair letters telling them they are required to pay back the salaries, expenses and staff costs they accrued during the time they sat in the upper house invalidly. Both men are on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars, despite being officially declared bankrupt. 'I think it is a bit ridiculous really' says Senator Xenophon. 'Whatever you thought of Bob Day and Rod Culleton the fact is that they were declared elected. There was a process where they were found not to be duly elected but they turned up for work, they did so in good faith and it would set a very dangerous precedent', *THE AGE*.

Abbott's five points to election win

Tony Abbott has laid out a five point plan for the Coalition to have a chance at the 'winnable' net election, including cutting immigration and scrapping the Human Rights Commission at the launch of a new book, *Making Australia Right*, *THE AGE*.

Turnbull defends 'pragmatic' tax rises

In a major speech to the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia 'CEDA', Mr Turnbull will argue that while Labor floats

'grand schemes' such as the National Disability Scheme, it is the Coalition that has to find the money to fund these services, as well as those in health and education. He will also say that Labor's commitment to reinstate the deficit levy on high-income earners, combined with the hike in the Medicare Levy, would push the top marginal tax rate to 49.5 per cent – its highest level since 1988-89, when it was 50.25 per cent. Under the Coalition, the top marginal tax rate will be 46.5 per cent from July 1, *THE AGE*.

Former ALP leader slams tax

Former NSW Labor premier Nathan Rees is preparing to face-off with another former Labor premier, Anna Bligh, in his new role on the executive of the Finance Sector Union. Mr Rees this week replaced National Secretary of the FSU Geoff Derrick.

Senate loosens medicinal cannabis

Terminally ill patients will get faster access to medical marijuana after the Greens teamed up with Labor and One Nation to deliver a shock senate vote to kill off access and importation restrictions. But a furious Health Minister Greg Hunt called the move 'reckless and irresponsible', saying it would put lives at risk and potentially make it easier for criminals to get drugs. Greens leader Richard Di Natale spear-headed the motion, writes Adam Gartrell in *THE AGE*.

Joyce wants country relocation

Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce dismissed a report from the Productivity Commission that found forcing public servants to move from cities to country Australia was no miracle cure for regional economic woes. Retired columnist Gerald Tan, whose wife works for the Department of Social Services, one of the branches of government that could be split up and moved, said government needed to take into account the economic and social cost of uprooting families. 'The Nats (Nationals) want to do this purely for political purposes, there's no economic rational to do it', *THE AGE*.

Relationships

Stephen Conroy has just one option: he must immediately stand down from the Australian Labor Party national executive. The former senator, who is also an influential lobbyist for the gambling industry as executive director of Responsible Wagering Australia simply cannot wear both hats, *HERALD SUN*.

Back to the polls?

Prime Minister Turnbull may be forced to call an election after just two years after the Coalition's current three-year term, political hard-heads

believe. The problem for Mr Turnbull is a logjam of fixed-date state elections in 2018 and early 2019, and a constitutional requirement for senators who were elected to half-terms at last year's double dissolution election to face voters again. A senior Labor source said the 'very, very likely window' for the federal election was August to September 2018, *THE AGE*.

Close ties revealed

Chinese-Australian political donor Helen Liu had close business ties with a senior Chinese military intelligence operative at the same time as she was cultivating relationships with Australian Labor politicians. Fairfax Media can reveal one of Helen Liu's Australian companies sent \$250,025 to a Hong Kong company that American authorities believe was a front for Chinese espionage, *THE AGE*.

Coalition compromising on university controversy

The Turnbull government is prepared to significantly water down its plan to increase university fees and slash the HECS repayment threshold in a bid to pass higher education savings through Parliament. After the successful passage of the Gonski 2.0 school funding changes – with major concessions to the Senate crossbench – Education Minister Simon Birmingham will shift his focus to higher education. Senator Birmingham said the government would be 'pragmatic' in its efforts to legislate its higher education policies, which have drawn fierce criticism from across the university sector, *THE AGE*.

Greens are murky

The civil war inside the Greens is set to escalate with leaked internal emails raising questions about the power of 'faceless' party officials to dictate how MPs vote in Parliament. *THE SUNDAY AGE* revealed that all nine of NSW Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon's federal colleagues had signed a letter of complain about her behaviour during the Gonski 2.0 funding negotiations. Emails from the NSW Greens federal parliamentary liaison committee – a six-person group set up to 'enhance communication' between the state party and federal MPs – highlight the party's opaque decision making process.

In the leaked emails, committee members agree to bind Senator Rhiannon to block the government's bill even though the group's own terms of reference explicitly state they do not have the power to do so. The committee's terms of reference say advice to MPs is 'not binding'. If a Greens MP is likely to vote against federal colleagues, the matter should be referred to the State Delegates Council for consideration. Rhiannon told *The*

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Sunday Age: 'The way our state party handled the recent school funding bill was a case for celebration not condemnation. I don't think all wisdom lies with MPs and I value my engagement with Greens members', 2/07/17, SUNDAY AGE.

Hanson autism remarks

Senator Pauline Hanson certainly put the cat among the experts and the holier than thou brigade with her statement suggesting that children with autism should be removed from mainstream classrooms so other students are not held back. Sure, Senator Hanson's comments constituted a catch-all statement that missed the mark by failing to acknowledge integration and inclusion can work. But – and it is a significant but – she was entirely wide of the mark in her implication that non-mainstream education is best for some children with special needs? Writes Max Jackson, 2/07/17, SUNDAY AGE.

Payne sinks Abbott

A fresh round of Coalition infighting has broken out, with Defence Minister Marise Payne sharply rebuking Tony Abbott for suggesting Australia should consider buying nuclear powered submarines. The Turnbull government announced in April 2016 it would acquire 12 conventionally powered submarines at a cost of \$50 billion from French company DCNS. The boats are based on a French nuclear submarine but will be redesigned to allow for diesel electric propulsion, and are not expected to enter service until the 2030s, THE AGE.

Disunited they stand

Turnbull's response to the Liberal part discord has been underwhelming. Voters do not see this as a media beat-up, even with the media feeding frenzy. They see a deep-seated, structural weakness in the disunity of the Liberal Party, compounded by its Coalition partners that have also been free to run amok. Voters want to see Turnbull lead on this issue as well. Impose direction and discipline, and demonstrate that you can indeed govern yourselves, writes John Hewson in THE AGE.

Morwell MP takes break

Russell North, the member for Morwell in the Latrobe Valley, stood down yesterday for an unspecified period on doctor's orders to recuperate. He stood down from shadow Cabinet late last year. Hundreds of workers in his seat lost their jobs following March's closure of Hazelwood power station, HERALD SUN.

Abbott on warpath

A fresh battle has erupted over the Turnbull government's direction and its second budget after

leaked audio revealed former prime minister Tony Abbott's latest attack on the Liberal Party's leadership. Fairfax Media obtained recordings of Mr Abbott's speech to a Liberal branch meeting alongside Assistant Treasurer Michael Sukkar in which he bashed the May budget and called on disgruntled members to rise up against the party's current direction, THE AGE.

Government was warned

The federal government was warned more than three years ago of security deficiencies around personal Medicare data, with the Department of Human Services told it was not fully complying with spy agency rules. Questioning the departments ability to keep the data safe from 'security threats from external and internal sources', the government auditor made a series of recommendations in April 2014, but it is unclear if they were implemented.

The Australian National Audit Office concerns emerged as the Greens announced they would push for a Senate inquiry into revelations that Medicare numbers are available for sale on the 'dark net'. It remains unclear how the numbers are being accessed.

Depressed

John Brogden has resigned as chief executive of the Australian Institute of Company Directors after being hospitalised with depression. Wife Lucy Brogden told a lunch for the suicide counselling service LifeLine, of which Brogden has been chairman for five years, that he 'has been struggling with depression on and off over the past five months' and was in hospital. Brogden, a former NSW Liberal leader who tried to commit suicide in 2005, had been due to speak at the lunch, THE AUSTRALIAN.

Dear Reader. Write him a letter. A good man. Politics can be tough particularly for good an and women.

Pyne eats his words

Government minister Christopher Pyne has apologised for his 'unhelpful and damaging' same-sex marriage speech that ignited a factional firestorm, as Prime Minister Turnbull called on his MPs to stop focussing on internal party divisions writes Adam Gartrell and Fergus Hunter in THE AGE.
Note: the one third of a page article did not make clear to the editor exactly what the defence of his viewpoint was.

Rhiannon's future fleeting?

Greens senator Lee Rhiannon's future has been hanging in the balance as the party room's disciplinary meeting has occurred after she angered her party by campaigning against

the Turnbull government's Gonski 2.0 school funding package even as leader Richard Di Natale was trying to negotiate a deal to get it passed, THE AGE.

Labor repudiates threats

Bill Shorten and his Labor colleagues have been forced to distance themselves from a CFMEU boss who threatened to reveal the home addresses of construction industry inspectors, as the government flagged it would refer the unionist to police. A former government inspector who investigated the building industry says threats made by CFMEU union leader John Setka to hunt down inspectors are real, suggesting they have a 'better intelligence unit' than police. Alan, who wanted to remain anonymous, investigated strike action and breaches of the Fair Work Act for the Australian Building and Construction Commission. He said workers often cornered inspectors at construction sites, abusing them before spitting on them, THE AGE.

Senator has a whale of a time

Taxpayers have forked out almost \$4000 for Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young and her daughter to go whale watching in the Great Australian Bight. The South Australian senator, who wants a ban on oil and gas exploration in the Bight, took the overnight trip last September at a cost to taxpayers of \$3874.24, THE AGE.

PM trashes Libs, Pyne smiles

Christopher Pyne has let slip what seems Malcolm Turnbull's final explosive plan for the Liberal Party he's turned into Labor-lite. The Defence Industry Minister tipped the Turnbull Government would deliver same-sex marriage, and grinned: 'It might even be sooner than everyone thinks', HERALD SUN.

What future?

A future we can bank on? Forget it. Australia is now led by bank robbers – politicians who steal from banks to finance their wild spending. This is mad. Which foreign investors would trust their money with us? Writes Andrew Bolt, HERALD SUN.

Libs marriage plot

Two Liberal MPs have been secretly working on a plan to legalise same-sex marriage in Australia as soon as August, with a draft copy of the laws well advanced and consultation with advocates under way, THE AGE.

London no longer calling for Brandis

After being plagued for nearly a year by rumours he would be made Australia's next high commissioner to London, Senator Brandis has confirmed the extension of the term of the present high commissioner, Alexander Downer, THE AGE.

MP has a case to answer

The ALP has launched the challenge against Assistant Health Minister David Gillespie's right to stay in Parliament, asking the court to decide whether he has an indirect financial interest in the Commonwealth – grounds for disqualification from office under section 44(v) of the constitution. If he was removed it could topple the Turnbull government, which holds a majority of just one seat in the lower house. A by election in the NSW seat of Lyne would likely – but not certainly – return another Coalition MP.

Dr Gillespie owns a small suburban shopping complex in Port Macquarie and one of the shops is an outlet of Australia Post – a government-owned corporation. Professor Anne Twomey, from the University of Sydney,



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said Mr Gillespie's arrangements seemed to be 'reasonably remote', but 'you never can tell what the High Court will do', THE AGE.

National crosses floor

Queensland Liberal National MP George Christensen crossed the floor and voted with Labor for the first time in government in a failed bid to protect weekend penalty rates following the industrial umpire's decision to reduce pay-packets. Christensen said the Labor amendment he voted for would have overturned the Fair Work Commission's February decision to slash Sunday pay for retail and hospitality workers – a decision accepted and defended by the rest of his Coalition colleagues, THE AUSTRALIAN.

PM in fight for right

Yes, this is a war between two men who hate each other's guts. But it's much more than that, which explains why the Prime Minister looks gone yet Abbott is still miles from replacing him. It's a battle between rival ideas of politics. Turnbull reckons a government should do what's possible – which for him means getting things through a Left-leaning Senate. That's why he's gone Labor-lite – big spending and big taxing. Big on global warming. But Abbott reckons a government should fight to do what's right – which for him means Liberal things, writes Andrew Bolt in HERALD SUN.

Joyce warns Abbott

Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce has warned Tony Abbott's campaign over climate change policy has the 'potential' to damage the Turnbull government's election chances, as the former prime minister leads a backbench charge against the Finkel energy recommendations, THE AGE.

Schools review basic truth

It's understandable why the debate surrounding the Turnbull government's Gonski 2.0 funding model centres on money. Equally as important is that when Gonski 2.0 was launched, the Prime Minister also announced a review to identify the most effective way 'to raise the performance of schools and students' and to identify what constitutes 'effective teaching and learning strategies'. The good news is that, after years of investing billions in education with results in maths, science and literacy tests either flat lining or going backwards, the government finally realises that how the money is spent is equally, if not more, important than the amount invested.

The bad news, after the 2014 review of the national curriculum and the 2014 inquiry into teacher education by a ministerial advisory group, is that another review is a waste of time and resources. The OECD's director of education, Andreas Schleicher, has concluded that instead of technology, the initial focus should be on ensuring all students achieve a baseline level of proficiency in reading and mathematics.

Stronger performing education systems also set high expectations and have disciplined classrooms where there is a positive and constructive attitude to learning. That is unlike Australian classrooms which have one of the highest rates of disruption and badly behaved students.

Having committed teachers who are experts in what they teach is also associated with successful education systems. Unfortunately, that is not the case in Australia where teachers are overwhelmed by red-tape and a time-consuming and inflexible accountability system, leading to too many

leaving the profession. Equally disturbing is that the Turnbull government, much like the ALP Rudd/Gillard governments, is adopting a command and control approach to education where all roads lead to Canberra. Canberra. Built where it is, out of range of French or Russian battleship guns.

Ignored is the cutting edge of education reform overseas and the reason why Catholic and independent schools outperform the majority of government schools: autonomy, diversity and choice are preferable to centralised, bureaucratic control, writes Kevin Donnelly in HERALD SUN.

School funding

Funding increases for needy schools would be fast-tracked and tightwad state governments penalised under a plan offering a potential circuit-breaker for the Turnbull government's bid to create a new school funding model. The plan by the respected Grattan Institute think tank would allow the government to remain within its funding envelope while addressing many of the concerns the Greens have expressed about its legislation. The Greens originally indicated a willingness to work with the government on its changes but the party has toughened its stance in recent days following a backlash from public sector teacher unions and internal disagreement about how to proceed.

The government's plan treats the states and different school sectors more fairly and comes closer to the Gonski review's vision of a needs-based system, he will argue. Firstly, by moving more quickly to a 'floating' indexation rate the government could reach its school funding targets within six years rather a decade. Secondly, there should be tougher requirements on state governments to fund their schools to their appropriate Schooling Resource Standard 'SRS'. Thirdly, the creation of an independent National Schools Resourcing Body as recommended by the Gonski review, THE AGE.

Libs lazy and self-indulgent

The 'lazy' and 'self-indulgent' Liberal Party is facing an existential crisis after a horror week that exposed deep wounds from which it may never recover, the head of the influential Institute of Public Affairs think tank has warned. John Roskam, who recently hosted Tony Abbott for a speech in which he directly challenged Turnbull's policy agenda blasted both men for failing to deliver philosophical direction to the party, and took aim at 'so-called conservatives' Peter Dutton and Mathias Cormann.

He said the significance of front-bencher Christopher Pyne's leaked comments was seismic because they addressed 'the elephant in the room' of factional warfare and 'let loose' the boiling tensions between moderates and conservatives, SUNDAY AGE.



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

CFMEU fined

Australia's largest building union and several high-ranking officials have been collectively fined more than \$270,000 for illegally blocking a children's hospital construction project in Perth. The union leaders found to have breached industrial laws include Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union national secretary Dave Noonan. The federal government seized on the ruling, saying the construction union's most senior official had joined 'a very large barrel of bad apples' – CFMEU members who think they can break Australian workplace laws with impunity'. Employment Minister Michaelia Cash said the union's decision to target a children's hospital demonstrated that 'no construction project is immune from the CFMEU's illegal activity'.

Noonan claimed the protests had been 'peaceful' and the fines should be a 'concern to every Australian worker'. 'This may be the law', said Noonan, 'but the law is unjust'. The legal action, launched by the Australian Building and Construction Commission, alleged the officials had 'organised, incited and controlled' the blockades because John Holland would not cede demands for a 'whole-of-site' agreement that paid subcontractors the same rates as employees, THE AGE.

Unions fire last salvo for Sunday rates

Controversial cuts to Sunday penalty rates for hundreds of thousands of workers are facing a last-minute legal challenge, with unions seeking urgent hearings to stop them taking effect next weekend. United Voice union national secretary Jo-Anne Schofield said the union was 'compelled to take this legal step. The Fair Work Commission's decision to cut pay is significant. It symbolises a turning away from a long-held principle that has guided industrial law in this country for over a century, that the needs of workers should be placed on an equal footing with business and economic interests', 24/06/17, THE AGE. *Where should be the bounds to union demands?*

Carers jobs one of fastest growing

Australia is shedding jobs for retailers and farmers by the tens of thousands as we become a country of carers and builders. That's the verdict from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which released its detailed labour force data on Thursday, 23/06/17, THE AGE.

Blowing the whistle set to become safer

The Turnbull government is considering a bounty-style reward worth millions of dollars for those who blow the whistle on corruption or unethical behaviour at the hands of multibillion-dollar corporations, THE AGE.

Boring Bureaucracy

All Australian company directors would be assigned special ID numbers under a new Labor policy designed to prevent them deliberately

tanking their companies to avoid paying workers, creditors and the Tax Office. Also the scourge of corporate Australia, phoenix activity costs the economy billions of dollars a year, but little has been done to stamp it out. It occurs when a company collapses with a mountain of debts and then rises from the ashes – like the mythical bird – with the same assets and customers to avoid paying bills.

Under current rules, it is easier to become a company director than it is to open a bank account. Under the Labor plan, existing and prospective directors – about 2.5 million of them – would be assigned a director identification number via the Australian Securities and Investment Commission for a \$50 fee. The unique ID number would allow tracking of directors that have been involved in multiple failed companies and expose fictitious directors, considered the bane of credit rating agencies and the Tax Office, THE AGE.

Pay fight: workers' losses put at \$184m

The Turnbull government has accused the public sector union of depriving 70,000 workers of pay rises totalling \$184 million, blaming the union for the failure to resolve their three-year pay battle. Employment Minister Michael Cash instructed her department to analyse pay lost by employees in the Australian Taxation Office and the Defence, and the Human Services departments since they voted down government wage offers. The losses are calculated from when Defence and DHS staff voted down the government's pay offer in February last year and ATO employees in December 2015. The votes were conducted after the government increased its three-year offer to an average 2 per cent annually.

Senator Cash said the union had been more focussed with organising industrial action and inconveniencing the public than securing pay rises for members. 'Does she really want to argue that the people who support our armed forces or administer our tax system are too stupid to work this out for themselves and have voted no because some union official told them to?' Ms Flood said the union, agencies and workers were battling 'ridiculous' rules that dictated workers must 'lose existing provisions from agreements, nothing can be improved or enhanced, and there's not a dollar for the last 3.5 years', WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

Wage at all time low

Real wage growth has fallen into negative territory and stalled at an all time low, figures

to be released are expected to show. As workers receive pay rises that have failed to keep up with the cost of living, THE AGE.

Coles underpaying

Supermarket giant Coles has admitted underpaying much of its workforce in cosy deals it struck with the conservative shop assistants union. In the Fair Work Commission, its lawyer Stuart Wood, QC, indicated that much of the Coles workforce – up to 60 per cent would be better off if they were paid minimum award rates rather than what they are paid from deals struck with the Shop, Distributive & Allied Employees Associate 'SDA', THE AGE.

Public whistleblowers

Company directors and corporate lawyers have pushed back against moves to protect whistleblowers who take their complaints public, saying claims of misconduct should be reported internally or to a government regulator. The Australian institute of Company Directors, which represents 39,000 company directors and senior business leaders, says new whistleblower protections currently being considered by the government should not extend to disclosures made to 'third parties', including the media, members of parliament and union representatives. It comes in the wake of a series of banking and wage fraud scandals exposed by the media that have rocked the corporate sector and led to a number of government inquiries, including ones examining the failure of the regulator to investigate claims, THE AGE.

Next?

Companies have been urged to consult with staff before attempting market strategies such as the ill-fated Coles 'I'm Free' campaign to avoid further risks of sexual harassment. The Shop Distributors' Association said companies needed to be more vigilant in their approach to protecting staff when using them in marketing campaigns. Coles was forced to ditch its Easter advertising campaign after some employees waving an 'I'm Free' paddle were sexually harassed by customers. The campaign was designed to help customers move through checkouts faster. The promotional video shows a female Coles employee fanning herself with the 'I'm Free' sign behind a muscly man in a singlet top, THE AGE.

Shopping for career

Struggling young job-seekers have won a helping hand from retailers who are offering up to 10,000

internships. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Employment Minister Michaelia Cash will today announce the Australian Retailers Associate has agreed to help get jobs for up to 10,000 people aged 15 to 24 who have been on welfare payments for six months or more. They will be trained under the federal governments PaTH program. After initial training they will enter a 12-week internship, with the goal of getting a permanent job. Employment Minister Michaelia Cash said the best form of welfare was a job, 3/07/2017, HERALD SUN.

Big win for casuals

Casual workers have won the right to demand a permanent full-time or part-time job after 12 months under a new Fair Work Commission ruling. But employers will still have the right to refuse the request if the change would substantially alter the worker's hours to accommodate them as a permanent staff member. Unions had called for the right to be available after just six months and for the minimum number of daily hours worked to increase to four, but these were rejected. In its decision, the Fair Work Commission said it was necessary for modern awards to contain a provision allowing casual employees to ask for conversion to permanent full-time or part-time work after 12 months, THE AGE.

Ombudsman to look into Uber

A Fair Work Ombudsman is investigating whether Uber's contracts with tens of thousands of Australian drivers are in breach of federal workplace laws, THE AGE.

GetUp! GetUP GetUP GetUp GetUP

Australian Press Council chairman David Weisbrot has bowed to pressure and resigned from the media watchdog in the wake of the appointment of a GetUp! activist to the independent council. In his resignation letter, part of which was released in the APC statement, Professor Weisbrot said his heart was 'simply no longer in the job' after weeks of sustained attack blaming a campaign of 'misinformation' over Carla McGrath's appointment and 'persistent personal attacks' for his decision. 'For the record, the basis of these attacks is thoroughly misconceived.

In fact, the whole appointment process was carried out with careful attention to good process and the requirements set down by the council's constitution'. Fairfax Media, owner of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, THE AGE and THE AUSTRALIAN *Financial*

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Review had voted to include Ms McGrath on the council, in a vote that was won 14 to one, THE AGE.

Shoppies union faces controversy

One of Labor's biggest backers, the giant shop assistants union, will be subject to a parliamentary inquiry over wage deals that have cost workers hundreds of millions of dollars. The new Senate probe is a response to the wages scandal revealed by Fairfax Media involving deals between some of Australia's largest employers, including McDonald's, Coles and Woolworths and the Shop, Distributive & Allied Employees Association (SDA), THE AGE.

Domino's probes deepen

The Fair Work Ombudsman has expanded its investigation into fast-food giant Domino's Pizza, revealing an extra 10 new investigations are now afoot into under-payment across the store network, THE AGE.

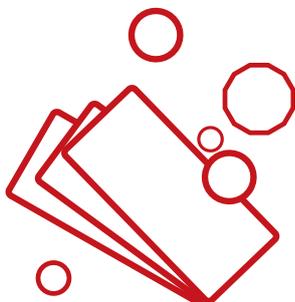
Myrtleford mill workers

Hundreds of families in Myrtleford have been without pay for almost 10 weeks, after the area's biggest employer lock out its workforce. On April 19, union members at Myrtleford's Carter Holt Harvey timber mill walked off work for four hours, after industrial talks stalled. In response, the company lock out its workforce of 207, THE AGE.

Cheats and Liars together

Federal Employment Minister Michaelia Cash has blasted the Transport Workers Union for attempting to 'smear' the reputation of the nation's largest aviation services company, Aerocare. The criticism comes after the ABC admitted an internal investigation found it had altered documents and twice breached its editorial standards in a report on its flagship current affairs program 7.30 into Aerocare's workplace and safety practices on March 20. Among the findings was that the broadcaster showed workers sleeping in a luggage loading contained at Sydney airport, wrongly implying one was an Aerocare worker.

Following multiple complaints about the report, the ABC's audience and consumer affairs investigations manager, Denise Musto, sent a letter to Aerocare's lawyers on April 21 admitting the program wrongly implied the image was an Aerocare worker. The TWU had approached the ABC to do the story on Aerocare and provided it with material ahead of an industrial campaign it had been waging against the Brisbane-based company, THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN. *Where is the Jail door?*



BUSINESS, ECONOMY, MANUFACTURING AND FINANCE

Your cheque's not in the mail

Figures released yesterday by the Australian Payment Network shows the use of cheques in Australia plunged 20 per cent to 111.6 million transactions last year – the largest drop ever recorded. The value of cheques dropped by 6 per cent over the same period, after remaining flat in 2015. Over the last five years, the use of

cheques has dropped by 56 per cent. Meanwhile, Australians made 7.4 billion card transactions last year, up 12.3 per cent year-on-year. Card transactions are up a staggering 72 per cent in just five short years, WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

MFS executives owe \$620m to investors

Four executives of the Gold Coast's failed \$2.5 billion MFS investment empire have been found to personally owe \$620 million to investors after they acted dishonestly, 'flagrantly ignored' laws and forged company documents, WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

Tradition on line in digital market

The century-old wool selling system is set to be digitally disrupted with Australian Wool Innovation splashing \$3.6 million to build and launch an online wool exchange program. On the back of the industry's Wool Exchange Portal working group advice, an online portal for wool will be built within two years, with hopes it will be cheaper and more transparent than the open cry auction, THE LAND.

Housing 'biggest threat' to economy

The OECD has said house prices are the biggest domestic threat to economic growth, as new figures push annual growth to its lowest point since the global financial crisis. The Australian economy grew just 1.7 per cent in the 12 months to March, down from 3 per cent three years earlier. The result is the worst since the 1.2 per cent recorded during the depths of the economic crisis in September 2009, THE AGE.

China could send Aussie to US50c

The Australian dollar could slump to US50c within three years should China ramp up efforts to devalue its currency and curb demand for our commodities, fresh analysis suggests, HERALD SUN.

A surplus of neat tricks

Budget projections for a year not too far away look curiouser and curiouser, writes Peter Martin, an Age economics editor, THE AGE.

Accounting tweaks dressed up as reform

Higher debt and zero surplus is a worrying trend. Australia's fiscal exceptionalism is fading fast. The broadly bipartisan support for low levels of public debt and a cautious approach to spending, which culminated in zero public debt

and a string of budget surpluses before 2008, is dissipating, writes Adam Creighton in *Inquirer*.

Elite schools in line for cut get more if bill fails

The nation's 24 most overfunded elite private schools, which lose money under the Turnbull government's education reforms, stand to reap an extra \$322 million if the overhaul fails in the Senate. A parliamentary defeat of the Coalition's \$18.6 billion changes would mean the Labor legislation stands, and federal funding for those prestigious schools – which include Sydney's St Aloysius' College and Waverly College, and Hillbrook Anglican School in Brisbane – would continue to grow at 3 per cent a year, THE AUSTRALIAN.

Jobless rate not a true indicator of labour pains

The Reserve Bank is puzzled why wages are growing at only 2 per cent, given unemployment is under 6 per cent. You should ignore the unemployment rate. It counts everyone working one hour or more per week as in work. Look at total hours worked. The market sector is 75 per cent of the labour force and growth in hours worked in the marked sector has stalled. There is no reason to expect a pick up any time soon. What growth there is in the hours worker is in the public sector. In the private sector, I suspect the gig economy creates part-time employment that undermines the competitiveness of companies providing full-time jobs. Just think of Uber, Airbnb and internet shopping. Emails have replaced letters and bank branches are being replaced by ATM and card payments. The labour market is weak despite a stable unemployment rate, writes Ed Shann, HERALD SUN.

Corporatised sector hands students a raw deal

Cutting federal funding will spur universities to even greater economies of scale, further diluting the education undergraduates receive, writes lecturer in English at Western Sydney University and member of the National alliance for Public Universities, Ben Etherington, THE AUSTRALIAN

Uber going under – a leading investor's bold prediction

One of Australia's wealthiest and most high profile investors, Hamish Douglass, appears to have engaged in 'new economy heresy' – calling

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out the ride sharing company Uber as being a Ponzi scheme and one that will be broke in 10 years, writes Elizabeth Knight in *THE AGE*

Ride share leader runs 'stupid' model

Uber's practice of persistently raising capital from private investors is akin to a Ponzi scheme, according to veteran investor and Magellan Financial Group chief executive Hamish Douglass. In an interview at the Stockbrokers and Financial Advisors Conference in Sydney on Wednesday, Mr Douglass lamented the dramatic losses awaiting Uber investors as automated driving technology permeated the market writes Jessica Sier in *THE AGE*.

Poor schools

Catholic education authorities are shortcoming needy schools by up to \$1.5 million a year to help keep fees low at schools in wealthy areas in Melbourne and Sydney, government data reveals. The release of the previously secret Department of Education data comes as the peak body representing independent Christian schools called on the Catholic sector to stop campaigning against the government and support its school funding 'breakthrough'.

The most socially disadvantaged Catholic school in Victoria, St Thomas Aquinas in Norlane, at the end of May, received 15 per cent less than its federal government funding allocation in 2015. Meanwhile St Columba's school in the affluent suburb of Elwood received 15 per cent more funding than its federal government allocation, *THE AGE*.

\$300m red tape removal

The small business budget sweetener of a \$300 million fund to reward state and territory governments that remove unnecessary regulation has come unstuck with key states refusing to participate. Small Business Minister Michael McCormack says the cash will go to state and territory governments who 'sign up' to the scheme and have their plans for red tape reduction approved by Treasurer Scott Morrison. But key state governments are baulking at conditions they say are tied to the \$300 million red tape reduction scheme, *THE AGE*.

Banks should get out of wealth

The banks have been internally investigating their wealth management businesses lately, inspecting individual advice files and trying to head off more PR problems. The whisper is that, on average, eight out of 10 files are 'disastrous' – the advice appropriate, writes Alan Kohler in *THE AGE*.

Future Fund

The Future Fund will more than double in value to an expected \$300 billion by 2027-28, enabling it to cover all future public servant superannuation payouts, chairman Peter Costello says. The former federal Liberal treasurer adds that the fund will also deliver more than half the Turnbull government's projected budget surpluses. He says that without the government's budget decision to suspend any drawings on the fund until at least 2027-28, it would have been drained entirely within 30 years, leaving the government with a \$20 billion annual bill for public service superannuation, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Wealth merger

Two of the nation's richest families, the Myers and Baillieus, are proposing to merge their family office operations to create a \$3 billion wealth management and intergenerational advisory powerhouse. Mutual Trust and MFCo both have focused on helping families

with the challenges of managing wealth and their financial affairs across generations. As a combined entity, client experience will be enhanced and the financial strength of the combined business will benefit all stakeholders' Mr Dickinson said, *THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

Catholic funds

Increased funding for Catholic schools will be locked in over a decade as the federal government bids to head off a 'scare campaign' from the sector. Education Minister Simon Birmingham said it was time for the Catholic sector to end its 'scare tactics' and 'campaigns for special treatment'. New modelling released today shows Catholic primary schools in Victoria – across all demographics – will gain increased funding over the next decade, *HERALD SUN*.

Effective planning is the key to a circular economy

Only through effective planning can policymakers unlock the power of the circular economy, writes Alex Serpo. To create a national resource recovery rate of 75% by 2040, we need to add a new recycling capacity capable of processing an additional 35 million tonnes per year – in 23 years. The circular economy model has been adopted by leading international organisations such as the European Commission and the International Solid Waste Association. To underpin sustainable development, the circular economy is increasingly gaining traction with Australian leaders in both business and government. *The 56 page June/July edition of Sustainability Matters features also the History of wastewater treatment in Sydney, Sustainability Matters.*

Banks may absorb tax

Bank customers may yet be spared the full brunt of the \$6.2 billion levy imposed on Australia's biggest lenders in the federal Budget, according to a top ratings agency. Moody's Investors Service says a beefed up competition watchdog is emerging as a key hurdle for banks seeking to pass on the impact. Chiefs at the big four banks have attacked the slug, labelling it a 'stealth tax' that would have to be borne by customers, shareholders or both, *HERALD SUN*.

'Labor-lite budget undermining a nation's wealth

In the federal Budget, the Coalition implemented policies established in the Rudd/Gillard years. The expansions in health, education and welfare budgets – now comprising two thirds of spending – were confirmed. Over the next four years, annual spending will increase by \$50 billion to \$340 billion – a levy on the average non-government worker of more than \$30,000 a year. Similarly there is an acquiescence of the cost impositions from renewable energy policy, including attempts to lighten up these with subsidies to the 'needy' and gas purchases to prevent the collapse of South Australia's renewable energy reliant economy. Two major expenditure initiatives: Conski education funding and the National Disability Scheme are now to be financed with tax hikes. The Coalition is also setting its own wasteful expenditures. Two white elephants in the Budget are an \$8.4 billion Melbourne-Brisbane rail link and the \$2 billion plus Snowy hydro storage scheme. Hopefully these will prove to be cosmetic announcements that disappear in the next wash. Inherited from the Rudd/Gillard years are energy regulations, dominated by measures to replace low-cost coal-generated electricity with subsidised renewables. With decent closures including Hazelwood in Victoria's

east, electricity wholesale prices have trebled boosting customers' costs by \$14 billion a year since 2015 writes Alan Moran in *HERALD SUN*.

Unrealistic pricing

Transurban chief executive Scott Charlton says the company will remain disciplined in bidding for new toll roads, and has warned of the danger of excessive debt levels and unrealistic traffic forecasts creeping back into the sector as financial buyers pay high prices for infrastructure assets. The company would be prepared to take minority equity positions in toll roads to build its network, which already included the majority of major privately owned roads in Australia. 'It doesn't have to be that we go in and buy and develop 100 per cent', *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Veteran funding

Advocates for veterans have welcomed news of a \$350 million support package for former soldiers and their families in the Budget, but say more needs to be done. The package is set to include more than \$220 million in spending on mental health, suicide prevention and programs to help personnel make the transition to civilian life, according to News Corp. That will include more than \$30 million for non-liability mental health services to ex-servicemen and women, who will no longer have to prove their mental health condition is linked to their service before receiving treatment, *THE AGE*.

Housing affordability

ANU Associate Professor Ben Phillips said the findings suggest Australians are willing to support government measures that would allow more homes to be built, as well as scrapping incentives such as negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions. 'This may suggest that the issue of housing affordability is acute enough that Australians may accept policy change that could reduce process or the rate of price growth to allow more equitable access to the housing market', he said, *THE AGE*.

Money matters

Senior Australian researcher Phil Ruthven examines current and former household spending and considers the implications this will have for business. Household income is a huge component of our economy, accounting for 88 per cent of our gross domestic product writes Ruthven in *THE FUTURIST*.

Qantas tries to drive out Virgin

Virgin Group boss Richard Branson says Qantas sought financial help from the federal government so it could flood the market with flights and drive Virgin Australia out of business. The British billionaire said Qantas only needed help when it went 'cap in hand' to the government in early 2014 so it could continue to fund a capacity war with Virgin, *THE AGE*.

Vegemite is back

Vegemite was set to return to Australian ownership when Bega was due to finalise its \$460 million deal to buy the spread from US food giant Mondelez. The Vegemite deal also hands Bega other brands, including ZoOsh and Bonox, and a manufacturing plant in Port Melbourne, *HERALD SUN*.

States face pressure

Many Catholic and private schools will be over-funded in coming years unless state governments overhaul the way they fund schools, including by slashing funding to some of Sydney and Melbourne's wealthiest private schools. After the passage of the Turnbull government's

'Gonski 2.0' funding changes, the focus of the school funding debate is set to shift the state and territory governments and how they respond to the new model. State governments will have to show 'courage' by cutting funding to some schools and redistributing the money to schools in greater need, the Grattan Institute's school program director Peter Goss said, *THE AGE*.

Anchorage seizes Slater and Gordon

Hedge fund giant Anchorage Capital Group is to gain control of debt-stricken listed law firm Slater & Gordon in a deal that sees chief executive Andrew Grech step down, a clean-out of the board and existing shareholdings smashed, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Insurers clash on policy

The life insurance industry has attempted to shore up its code of practice just days before it comes into force, with the \$44 billion sector agreeing for the first time to implement minimum standard definitions for cancer, heart attacks, and strokes in its trauma and critical illness policies, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Enterprise to help the world

Billionaire entrepreneur Richard Branson says free enterprise is still the best way to spread wealth and improve the world, and is confident the tide of populist rhetoric pushing back against trade and globalisation will soon pass. Reflecting on his native Britain's vote to leave the European Union and Donald Trump's election as US President on an anti-trade platform, Sir Richard said rebuilding barriers to the movement of people or goods was 'madness'. Branson was recently in Melbourne to launch Virgin Australia's new service to Hong Kong, *THE AGE*.

Universities attack cuts

The university sector has attacked the federal government for pushing through the biggest set of school-funding reforms in a generation, while slashing funding to tertiary institutions and hiking student fees. In a move that is set to reignite university funding battles, Group of Eight Universities chairman Peter Hoj blasted the Turnbull government for being 'myopic' in cutting money from higher education, *THE AGE*.

BankSA puts jobs on hold

BankSA and the broader Westpac Group have put on hold a plan to open a new back-end automated processing centre in Adelaide that would have created 150 jobs, in an angry response to the South Australian government's new bank levy to raise \$370 million over the next four years, *THE AUSTRALIAN Financial Review*.

Principals need lessons in budgeting

Managing organisations of this size requires serious financial expertise. This is no small task, a primary school of about 350 kids has a budget of well over \$3 million. A high school with roughly 1000 kids will often have a budget in excess of \$11 million. Managing organisations of this size requires serious strategic and financial expertise. But principles have been promoted because they were great teachers. They normally have little or no financial management experience. While this mismatch is clear, school principals must be experts in pedagogy, teacher development and learning. More work is needed connecting key budget decisions such as teacher training and professional development to improvements in student learning writes Ben Jensen, CEO of school education consultancy Learning First in *AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW*.

Businesses slam 457

Business leaders and one of the world's top economic experts have savaged the federal government's visa changes, accusing them of threatening the economy and labelling foreigners as barbarians. Coca-Cola Amatil managing director Alison Watkins, Woodside chief executive Peter Coleman and GE president Geoff Culbert described changes that will further restrict access to Australia's visa system as hypocritical and retro-grade. A survey of more than 800 NSW businesses in May by the Business Chamber has predicted a skill shortage of more than 54,000 jobs statewide next year, partly as a result of the new conditions, *THE AGE*.

BHP new chair taking on shale

Incoming BHP Billiton chairman Ken MacKenzie will confront growing shareholder pressure to boost returns and finally deal with the company's underperforming US shale assets, amid questions over what impact his appointment will have on the miner's relatively new management team. The former long-serving Amcor boss will replace Jac Nasser, *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

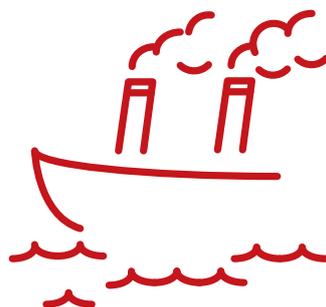
What's missing from the schools debate

The Australian Early Development Census – a government initiative – measure Australian children in their first year of school across areas such as emotional maturity, cognitive skills and communication. According to the 2015 results, 22 per cent of kids are 'developmentally vulnerable' on at least one measure when they start school. At an individual level, this is potentially devastating. If a five-year old starts kindergarten behind, they are more likely to stay behind for the rest of their school career.

Victoria University think tank the Mitchell Institute notes 28 per cent of Australian kids start high school without basic literacy and numeracy skills. Last year, Dr Stacey Fox, a Mitchell Institute policy fellow, co-authored a report arguing for two years of preschool. 'Early education is at least as important as school', Fox says, writes Judith Ireland in *THE AGE*

Quotas for equality

Australia should consider quotas for women on ASX boards, if the numbers don't improve, shadow treasurer Chris Bowen says, *THE AGE*.



TRADE

Delicate dance

The Deputy Prime Minister went to Europe for seven days to help map out Australia's trade future with Britain and the European Union in the wake of Britain's vote to leave the EU, *THE AGE*.

Growth story at risk, says Treasurer

Scott Morrison conceded risks to the government's 'growth story' in a major speech yesterday, just hours before National Australia Bank chief economist Alan Oster predicted a cocktail of sluggish wages and stagnant business investment could push Australia into recession within months

Global trader Noble Group is fighting for its life, warns S&P

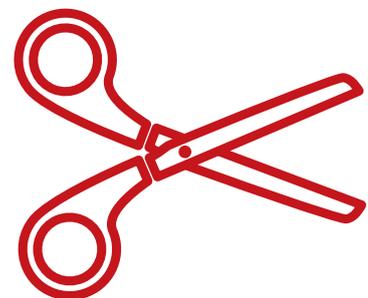
Noble Group Ltd's crisis deepened after S&P Global Ratings flagged a risk of default for the commodity trader within a year, triggering a rout in the company's shares before they were suspended in Singapore ahead of the company statement. The 2020 bonds fell to a record low. Noble Group, which holds stakes in several locally listed miners, including Yancoal and Xandu Mining, declined to comment on S&P's assessment. The Hong-Kong based trader's troubles are deepening after two turbulent years that have been marked by losses, asset sales and accusations of improper accounting that it has denied, *THE AGE*.

Latin-American free trade pitch

Business and agriculture groups have welcomed Australia's pioneering pitch for a free trade agreement with four major Latin American countries, predicting a major wind-fall for farmers and exporters. Trade Minister Steven Ciobo announced the start of trade negotiations with Mexico, Chile, Peru and Colombia, with the goal of bringing down prohibitively high tariffs in the Pacific Alliance trading bloc, *SUNDAY AGE*.

Cladding to hit property prices

The deadly Grenfell Tower fire is expected to finally prompt action on Australian residential towers covered in flammable cladding, with owners liable for multi-million-dollar remediation bills and facing a drop in their property values, an expert says. Australian Society of Building Consultants NSW president Chris Dyce said the 'nightmare' scale of the London Inferno had driven home the danger of plastic-based aluminium composite cladding and it would affect the Australian property market, *THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.



TAX

Gonski: cement tax rate into law

ANZ chairman David Gonski says the rate of the Turnbull Government's new bank tax should be set in legislation so future increases would have to pass both houses of parliament. The respected business veteran – the last head of the big four banks to comment on the tax announced this month – said yesterday that they industry should accept the levy was inevitable, *HERALD SUN*

Bank tax is no 'free kick' for regional banks

The banking tax is a step in the right direction, but it will not meaningfully level the playing field between the major banks and smaller rivals, says Bank of Queensland chief executive Jon Sutton, *THE AGE*.

Global women summit

The Global Summit of Women event will be held in Sydney next year. It is expected to attract more than 1000 business and government leaders from 80 countries, and inject more than \$2 million into the NSW economy. Key business leaders that helped pitched to win Business Event's Sydney's bid to host the event include former Telstra boss David

Thodey, non-executive director of AGL energy and Westfarmers Diane Smith-Garnder, retiring Sydney Airport boss Kerrie Mather, former director of Lend Lease Lynette Mayne and former sexual discrimination commission Elizabeth Broderick.

The bid was also backed by political figures including Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's wife and former Committee for Sydney chairwoman Lucy Turnbull, Liberal National Party MP Keith Pill, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, and federal Labor MPs Tanya Plibersek and Linda Burney, and NSW MP Pru Goward, THE AGE.

Keating blasts companies

Former Prime Minister Paul Keating has hit out at 'bludger' international companies operating in Australia but not paying enough tax, THE AGE.

Budget to balance income tax

Australia's return to budget surplus will be built on the back of an enormous 14 per cent increase in the income tax take. The Parliamentary Budget Office projection, prepared as part of its regularly scheduled assessment of the May budget, is that wage rises and bracket creep push up the income tax take from 11.1 per cent of gross domestic product to 12.6 per cent over 10 years, a jump of 14.4 per cent. The average personal tax rate would climb from 22.7 per cent to 25.9 per cent. Even then, the office says the budget would barely return to balance, recording a wafer-thin surplus of just 0.3 per cent of GDP, well short of the government's target of 1 per cent, THE AGE.

Politicians war with business

Politics is becoming less about trying to grow the pie than a mad dash to devour what's left. Political survival is the driving force. When the South Australian government announced that it too would levy a tax on the big banks, something snapped. Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westacott summed up the views of her members and peers when she took aim at Canberra, not Adelaide. 'The Turnbull government must bear responsibility for letting the genie out of the bottle' she fumed.

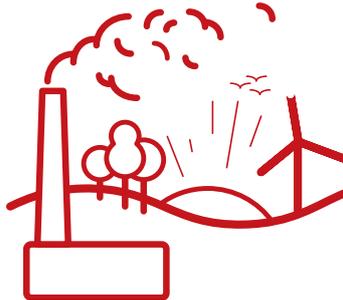
Australia is becoming a laughing stock of global investment circles as erratic governments – state, territory and federal carelessly undermine and chop and change the rules of doing business.' She's right. The federal government effectively used the unpopularity of the banks to hit them with a tax to help balance the budget. It was no more sophisticated than that. Little wonder a cash-strapped unpopular state government would do the same, AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Proper debate on sugar tax far from 'bonkers'

When think tank the Grattan Institute went public with its call for a sugar tax in Australia last year, Barnaby Joyce called the plan 'bonkers mad'. High sugar consumption is having a social, medical and economic impact, THE AGE.

Sting of the century

An alleged \$165 million tax fraud syndicate stretching from one of the country's highest tax officials to struggling drug addicts was almost derailed by a secret extortion bid. The biggest alleged white collar fraud racket in Australian history unravelled after 300 federal police officers raided 28 properties and arrested nine people, including the son and daughter of an Australian Taxation Office deputy commissioner, Michael Cranston, THE AGE.



CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Finkel sounds alarm on power generation

Victoria and South Australia are at risk of damaging blackouts this summer because of the closure of the Hazelwood brown-coal power station. The Finkel report warns that if power companies do not respond to high priced by installing fresh capacity, the reliability of the network could be compromised over the longer term. The Australian Energy Market Operator is taking steps to shore up supplies, banning any scheduled summer maintenance of generators and requiring any 'mothballed' plants to be made available from October. But the Finkel report says the key problem is the lack of any new generating capacity that is capable of being dispatched rapidly, such as gas, hydro or coal.

'The past few years has seen the retirement of significant coal-fired capacity from the National Electricity Market while there has been no corresponding reinvestment in new dispatchable capacity' it says. The report rejects the approach taken in Britain and the northeast of the US where the government holds an auction for companies to supply new capacity, saying it is too radical a step and should only be considered if there is an 'irresolvable failure' of the existing electricity market to encourage new generating capacity. However, it

recommends the creation of a new energy security board that would have responsibility for ensuring the reliability of the system, WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

Finkel recommendations

Prepare for the 2017-18 summer- closer collaboration with Bureau of Meteorology on heatwave forecasts and operate system with increased margin for safety, while ensuring adequate fuel supplies. Strengthen long-term security- Transmission companies required to keep spare capacity that can be brought online rapidly. A new 'generator reliability obligation' to guarantee capacity. Rejects creating a market for new capacity but calls for study of a 'strategic reserve' generating capacity. Emissions reduction- introduce a clean energy target requiring retailers to purchase clean energy certificates from generators producing emissions below the target level.

Government to produce an economy-wide emissions reduction strategy by 2020. Cyber security- Annual review of cyber-security in the National Electricity Market. Coal-fired power- Makes no recommendation on phasing out coal-fired power. Gas power- Energy Market Operator to have power to force existing gas-fired generators to maintain supply in times of gas shortage. Consumers- Better information on electricity prices. Governance- All COAG leaders to agree nationally consistent energy policy, consistent with Paris Commitments.

Climate row puts Turnbull in turmoil

Bitter divisions within the federal government over climate-change have reopened with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull facing a mini-revolt over energy policy. PM Turnbull faced a backlash over the prospect of introducing a Clean Energy Target – recommended by the scheme – in a battle which could again become a test of his leadership. About 10 MPs 'vehemently' opposed a push away from coal-fired power. Despite the CET having the support from senior government figures, it has not been endorsed by the backbench.

It's understood about 20 MP's expressed 'serious misgivings' over some of the recommendations of the review and argued the government should not force coal-fired power stations out of business. Several MPs also reinforced their opposition to Australia signing the Paris climate change agreement with a target of reducing emissions by 26-28 per cent by 2030. It's understood many of the misgivings focussed around household electricity bills and similar renewable energy targets of state governments of which the federal government has been critical, HERALD SUN.

Climate forces join up to mount Paris fight

Forces on the green-energy side are positioning for a renewed climate change debate in coming

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months, as the Turnbull government struggles to convince international dissenters of the need for tougher carbon reduction measures. The nation's preeminent advocate of strong laws against carbon emissions, the Climate Institute, will close its doors on June 30 after a dozen years in operation, and transfer its assets and intellectual property to high profile progressive think tank the Australian Institute.

The financial terms of the arrangement have been kept confidential. As the recipient body, the economically oriented Australia Institute will in turn establish a dedicated 'Climate and Energy Program' with the aim of stepping up the public pressure on lawmakers to meet Australia's obligations under the Paris accord. It comes as some opponents of renewable energy subsidies have called for the government to directly finance investment in coal-fired power writes Mark Kenny of THE AGE.

Relief for PM in one direction but not so in another

The Finkel clean energy target was cleanly excised from the Chief Scientist's 50 recommendations with the other 49 gaining a tick writes Mark Kenny of THE AGE.

Telstra's electricity costs rise by \$100m

Telstra has warned the federal government its power costs have surged by more than \$100 million in the past year, with a senior executive calling on Industry Minister Arthur Sinodinos for urgent action to address the crisis, WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

Snowy Hydro's cost tipped to double

The bill for the Snowy Hydro expansion could be twice the initial estimate, while the project's delivery time frame has been increased by two years. Executives from Snowy Hydro Limited have estimated that an essential upgrade of power transmission lines from the mountains into Sydney and Melbourne will cost up to \$2 billion, effectively doubling the cost of the total project. But Snowy Hydro now believes that would take up to six years. This is because of 'challenging' geology. As Snowy Hydro starts a \$29 million feasibility study, TransGrid has been assessing the scale of the upgrade needed to transmit another 2000 megawatts of electricity to the major centres in Victoria and NSW, THE AGE.

Anti-coal goal

Prime Minister Turnbull has made abandoning coal-based energy a signature policy. He made a key green entrepreneur, Alan Finkel, his chief scientist and tasked him with reviewing the electricity market. The Finkel review canvasses additional measures to expand the share of wind and solar energy. Though camouflaged, these will mean more costs to consumers and coal-based electricity generators and generators and regulations to shore up an electricity system made increasingly insecure by the forced displacement of coal by wind and solar. The US is now unwinding its Obama-era restraints on coal and gas. This is reducing energy costs and attracting energy-intensive business from across the world. Australia's move in the opposite direction is not only bringing a contraction of energy-intensive industry but is contributing to the general economic stagnation that this week's national accounts foreshadow. Unless our harmful energy policies are reversed, lower living standards are inevitable, writes Alan Moran in HERALD SUN.

China helps fund new CSIRO climate centre

CSIRO's re-embracing of climate change research will be stressed on Monday when the national science agency announced a new centre partly funded by Chinese interests. Based in Hobart, the \$20 million centre will examine the role of oceans in future climate change, including their influence on floods and drought. It will be half funded by China's Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology. The Centre for Southern Hemisphere Oceans Research will also look at the capacity of seas to keep absorbing carbon dioxide – more than 90 per cent of heat has been taken up by oceans in recent decades – and the expected impact of melting Antarctic ice, THE AGE.

Clean energy sector on way to record growth year

Australia's clean energy sector is heading for a record year in solar and wind-farm creation, generating thousands of jobs in regional areas and bringing the 2020 Renewable Energy Target within range. The Clean Energy Council's annual report released on Tuesday shows the country generated about 17,500 gigawatt-hours of renewable energy last year, more than half-way to the 2020 goal of 33,000 GW-hours a year, THE AGE.

Think tank warns on power blackout in summer

Warnings of electricity blackouts next summer due to a lack of generation capacity should be used by government to implement a series of measures to avert the looming crisis, mainly in SA and Victoria the Grattan Institute has warned in a new report. To avoid shortages, energy market reform, rather than government using taxpayer funds to build power stations, is essential, the Grattan Institute said, along with the restart of some mothballed power generators. Power generators, for example, should be rewarded for being flexible and responding quickly to avoid supply interruptions, while customers should receive financial incentives to limit usage at peak demand times, which will help reduce pressure on supplies, it said.

Adani pressures Qld by putting mine decision on ie

Adani has postponed a final investment decision on its controversial Carmichael coal mine as the Indian conglomerate waits on the Queensland government to propose a royalty agreement, THE AGE.

\$23b to fund direct action

Taxpayers would pay up to \$23.6 billion for Australia to meet international climate targets if the Turnbull government were to continue with its 'direct action' emissions-reduction fund as its main policy. After a request by the Greens, the federal Parliamentary Budget Office estimated the cost of using the fund to meet the target the Coalition submitted at the Paris climate summit – a 26 per cent emissions cut compared with 2005 levels by 2030, THE AGE.

Cutting through emission schemes

If you don't know the difference between a carbon tax and an emissions trading scheme, or a low emissions target and an emissions intensity scheme, wise up. Malcolm Turnbull now has the Finkel Review and will later this year receive the report of the official review of his government's climate policies. Emissions trading scheme: It's like a carbon tax (in fact, the carbon tax was designed to transition into one) except it uses carrots as well as sticks. The government issues a limited number of pollution permits, then eaves the polluters free

to buy and sell from each other. If one manages to cut emissions easily and no longer need its permits, it can sell them to another who needs them more, perhaps for a profit. It means the market sets the price, and the price is no higher than it needs to be.

In his last days in office John Howard promised to use tradable permits to cheaply meet Australia's carbon emission reduction obligations. Emissions intensity scheme: Long championed by Turnbull, independent Nick Xenophon and Greg Hunt as environment minister, it would have the advantage of raising no money whatsoever, and not pushing up prices much. Each industry would be given a 'baseline' for its emissions intensity. For the electricity industry it would be a certain number of tonnes emitted per mega-watt hour produced. Plants above the baseline would have to buy permits from plants below it.

Low emissions target: Described by the Climate Change Authority as a second-best alternative to its preferred option of an intensity scheme, a low emissions target would operate pretty much in the same way as the current renewable energy target, THE AGE.

Cheaper energy

Business is demanding certainty on climate policy after years of political debate, but already there are rumblings from former prime minister Tony Abbott and conservatives on the government backbench over the review. Fairfax Media has been told the report will focus on four key outcomes: delivering energy security; reliability; affordability for households and business; and meeting Australia's emissions reductions targets. Dr Finkel told a briefing of state and territory energy ministers that under a clean energy target, coal would not be phased out as quickly as it would under an emissions intensity scheme.

Gas would play a less prominent role in Australia's energy mix in a clean energy target, because of its higher relative price, but there would be a greater role for renewable sources such as solar and wind. The scheme would be cheaper than business as usual, mostly because it would bring more investment and greater long-term confidence to operators that would deliver greater security. Its advantage over an emissions intensity scheme from a political point a view would be that the coal-fired sector would escape a penalty.

'It's more pro-coal [than an emission intensity scheme] because it won't be a tax on coal', one source said. A business-as-usual scenario would do the most to hasten the demise of coal, Finkel said, THE AGE.

Power price surge and smaller retailers

Due to the release of the Finkel review of the energy sector, the electricity market is bracing for significant change, with the risk that surging prices will force at number of smaller retailers to quit, THE AGE.

Fixing the gas crisis

Boral chief executive Mike Kane has declared Australia needs to allow fracking to increase gas supply and help fix the nation's energy crisis. The building materials company is one of the nation's largest energy consumers. Mr Kane said both the federal and state governments needed to open the country to more exploration. Under plans released by Malcolm Turnbull, the coalition intends to restrict offshore gas export levels to ensure there is enough supply for domestic needs. The Coalition is meeting with gas

suppliers and consumers as part of a consultation phase to introduce the planned changes. The government plans to have draft legislation prepared by June and passed into law by July 1.

Kane said governments needed to allow fracking, despite environmental concerns, to help lift gas supply. Fracking has led to a shale gas boom in Mr Kane's home country, the US. 'We need to lift the restriction of fracking in Australia', he said. 'It was the solution in the US and it will be the solution in Australia. Once everyone comes to the point of view, the problem will solve itself, THE AUSTRALIAN.

Finkel demands answers

The Finkel plan wouldn't have been necessary if other did their jobs. 'We need a plan' says the Finkel Review. Good idea- but it really shouldn't have been needed at all. That it was needed is a shocking indictment of all the people who are well paid to operate the electricity system and plan for its future- bureaucrats and politicians – but instead they have been milling about and squabbling- and just falling down on the job. There have been many plans and reviews over the years, but they were mostly consigned to the shredder of politics. There are two important recommendations in this one, apart from the existence of a plan at all: first, what Finkel calls the clean energy target and second, a demand response mechanism.

Demand response- that is paying consumers to moderate demand peaks rather than paying generators to supply them- is an obvious idea that was first suggested by the Parer Review of 2002, which was the first review after the National Electricity Market was set up. Like this one, it said: 'We need a plan!' writes Alan Kohler, THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

Finkel a game changer

Alan Finkel's long-awaited report was hailed as a potential game changer, with a recommendation that the CET succeeds the federal government's RET when it expires in 2020, providing a technology neutral guide for new energy investment that would also reduce emissions. Among the recommendations made to the Council of Australian Governments yesterday, the report calls for new generating capacity to guarantee supply, a move that forces wind and solar farms to have storage such as batteries or hydro power, as well as encouraging demand management systems. Business groups united to voice support, saying the report would mark the end of a decade-old climate and energy debate that has stalled investment and sent prices soaring. Energy Networks Australia chief executive John Bradley called the Finkel blueprint 'the last best hope' energy customers had for a secure, reliable and affordable transition to cleaner energy. Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westacott said: 'The individual measures in the blueprint need careful review but its greatest success would be compelling Australian governments to act together to lock down an agreed, national Strategic Energy Plan'.

The BCA said the report acknowledged the need for a long-term trajectory that would allow the market to decide the right energy mix to meet the target. 'removing ideological preferences for specific fuels and technologies contribute to security and reliability will allow fair competition on a level playing field, THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

Solar and wind power will never come cheap

Renewables are a poor alternative to coal-fired energy. Sorry, Alan 'Kohler', you are wrong. There is no way that wind and solar is cheaper to produce than coal-fired power, despite the assorted- and your- claims of the cost spiralling down. Wind and solar are not 21st century disruptive technologies but a back to a 19th century future ones.

The only way they are able to be competitive with coal is by massive direct subsidies and their mandatory use under the RET- the renewable energy target. What happens when every state is wandering around with a long extension cord, looking for somewhere to plug into? Writes Terry McCrann in THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.

Paris explained

What is the Paris agreement? In December 2015, 195 nations including Australia signed an agreement to keep global temperature rises to 'well below 2 degrees' compared to pre-industrial levels. It was deliberately not a treaty in recognition that then-US president Barack Obama would not be able to secure Republican-controlled Senate approval. Each nation offered voluntary 'nationally determined contributions' to curb greenhouse gas emissions versus business-as-normal pollution, mostly out to 2030. The agreement came into force in November 2016 when 55 nations, accounting for 55 per cent of emissions, ratified the accord, THE AGE.

State surge of unaffordable energy measures

Interfering in the market is likely to make matters worse than leaving well enough alone. We have some of the highest electricity prices in the world compared with the cheap prices we enjoyed a the turn of the century, writes Judith Sloan, contributing economics editor in INQUIRER.

Investors call for climate action

Some of the world's biggest investors have pleaded with governments of the world's largest economies, including Australia, to stick with their commitments to tackle climate change and to introduce carbon pricing to help achieve them. There is strong-speculation that American President Donald Trump could renege on his country's commitments under the Paris Accord signed in 2015, which aimed to hold temperature rises well below 2 degrees Celsius.

Now a group of investor organisations, committed to encouraging action on climate change has written to member nations of the G7 and G20 calling on all participants to move to implement the Paris agreement. 'While the private sector can provide the investment required to build a secure, affordable and low emissions global energy system, we urge the G7 to set strong policy signals which provide the investment certainty needed to drive trillions of dollars into new clean energy investment opportunities', THE AGE.

German gas all hot air

A report commissioned by the government to investigate exporting gas to Germany has kyboshed the idea, and declared it 'impossible' for Australia to meet its Paris Agreement emissions targets under current policy settings. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute report damages hopes of Australia expanding its liquefied natural gas exports into Europe. Following an energy security dialogue in Berlin in 2015, the ASPI was asked to study options for a 'strategic relationship

with Germany on energy security', with a view to becoming a strategic supplier of LNG in the region.

But author Vlado Vivoda, research fellow at the University of Queensland's Sustainable Minerals Institute, found Germany had almost no incentive or desire to import gas from Australia given its closure, more attractive options. Germany is doubling the capacity of its gas pipelines from Russia, despite the increasing turbulence of relations with Moscow. 'Australia LNG cargoes won't be reaching Germany's northern shores any time soon', Dr Vivoda said. Australia is the world's second largest exporter of LNG, mostly to Asia. Exporters have eyed the German market, and Europe more broadly, as a path to beating Qatar for the No.1 spot, THE AGE.

Energy cost \$100m a year

A plan by the Weatherill government to ship in a fleet of temporary diesel generators to prevent pre-election blackouts in South Australia will cost taxpayers up to \$100 million a year. The news comes after THE AUSTRALIAN revealed that South Australian residents pay the highest electricity prices in the world, according to calculations by energy market consultant Bruce Mountain. Mr Mountain said that South Australia would overtake Denmark to 'unequivocally' have the worlds highest power prices before and after taxes, THE AUSTRALIAN.

Cold storage firm finds itself frozen

Americold is a global cold storage company that participates in 'demand response' – curtailing its energy use at times of high power demand to help curb blackouts – in the United States, New Zealand and Western Australia. But when it comes to the National Electricity Market- which covers Australia's eastern states – the door to demand response is closed because of rules written by the Australian Energy Markets Commission. Americold operates in a highly competitive cold food storage market in Australia and its energy costs are rising faster than inflation, Peter Brice Americold's director facilities for Australia and New Zealand says;

'We would welcome enhancements to the National Electricity Market that provide the cold storage industry an incentive to be flexible with our demand and rewarded for serving the grid with demand response at specific times'. The lack of incentives for demand response, or demand management in Australia is a problem because the practice is thought by many to be the swiftest way to for shore up our fragile power grid as more wind and solar power comes in. The Finkel review of energy said rewarding consumers for demand management, combined with improved energy efficiency, could help reduce electricity bills. It called for new rules 'to better incentivise and orchestrate' demand response, AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW.

Energy majors' appeals shut off

Electricity network operators have hit out at federal government plans to remove their appeal rights, saying their role in recent price rises was limited and that recent court losses by the Australian Energy Regulator showed it had made mistakes that needed to be corrected. In a move that could cost network operators billions of dollars in revenue, the government wants to move unilaterally to remove the so-called limited merits review that allows network companies to challenge the AER's ruling on how much they can charge consumers, THE AUSTRALIAN.

Musk to build SA batteries

South Australia will attempt to ease pressure on its crisis-prone electricity grid with a world-leading battery station more than three times the size of its nearest rival, to be built by billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk. The 100 megawatt lithium ion battery, which will harness power from a French-owned wind farm north of Adelaide, will store 129 megawatt hours of electricity, enough to power about 13,000 homes for 24 hours, *THE AGE*.

Frydenberg lashes states

State government policies on renewable energy and 'mindless moratoriums' on gas fields were discussed at an energy ministers meeting as the Turnbull government tries to shift the blame for rising power prices, *THE AGE*.

Get real on gas

Business council of Australia president Grant King says 'What people need to understand about gas is you just don't go out and turn it on'. 'You've got to invest a lot of capital, and that gets all the way back to this question about creating the right decisions in Australia for people to invest'. Mr King, who oversaw large-scale LNG export development as managing director of Origin Energy for 16 years, said investment in gas supply was a long-term proposition, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Barrier Reef worth \$56b

The Great Barrier Reef is worth \$56 billion. That's the 'total asset value' according to a new Deloitte Access Economics report that calculates the World Heritage site's full economic, social and iconic brand value for the first time. While many Australians would consider the reef priceless, Deloitte believes you can put a number on it. At \$29 billion, tourism is the biggest contributor to the value, followed by \$23.8 billion from 'indirect or non-use value' – meaning people who haven't yet visited the reef but value knowing it exists.

Its value to recreational users – such as weekend divers – is \$3.2 billion. Commissioned by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, writes Adam Gartrell in *THE AGE*.

SE Asian coal

Clean coal technology will prove critical to providing affordable and reliable electricity to more than 600 million people in Southeast Asia, while reducing emissions by 1.3 billion tonnes in the next 20 years, a new report claims. The study by the ASEAN Centre for Energy and the World Coal Association (WCA) finds Southeast Asia will require 800 terawatt hours of electricity generation between 2020 and 2035. The groups say meeting this requirement through renewable sources of energy generation would require an additional \$500 billion capital investment, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Closing in on recycling targets

While the total number of active landfills in Australia is unknown, Commonwealth Government data indicates there are at least 600 mid to large sites, while there could be as many as 2,000 unregistered and unregulated landfills. The fact that we are unsure of the exact number of landfills in Australia requires immediate review. Small, unlined landfills can still have significant localised impacts and probably should be registered as contaminated sites on relevant registers.

For the foreseeable future, landfill will remain an integral part of the product/waste life cycle. Well-managed 'best practice' land-fills provide safe disposal of residual waste and average 50% gas capture 'whole of life'. Many council-owned

landfills do not price to cover the full cost of operation and remediation. Often they have been 'inherited' as quarries and don't include the cost of replacement in their pricing. This ultimately leaves an unfunded liability for residents to pick up. 'We are still a long way from achieving each state government's recycling targets' says Mike Ritchie from SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS.



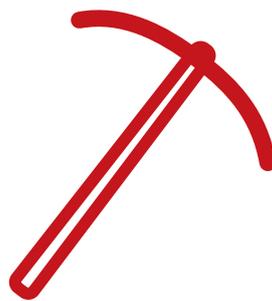
AGRICULTURE, CATTLE AND WATER

Food rots as labour shortage hits

A quarter of Australia's vegetable growers are forced to abandon valuable produce which is left to rot because they can't find enough workers to pick and pack it. The study's project leader, Associate Professor Joanna Howe, from the University of Adelaide Law School, said the challenge of finding labour had become unsustainable and the amount of waste was a significant loss to the Australian economy. Howe says policy reform is needed to support growers, *THE AGE*.

Farmers rally

Dairy farmers supplying the Fonterra processing company have called for consumers to boycott its products, including Western Star butter, Mainland cheese and Woolworths \$1-a-litre discount milk. Farmers are furious the New Zealand dairy giant is refusing to refund milk cheque receipts taken from farmers in the troubled 2015-16 financial year, when the company claimed farmers had been overpaid and crashed the milk price by 70 per cent, *THE AGE*.



MINING

Woodside wavers

Woodside Petroleum's giant Browse gas project, 425km off the coast of Exmouth and costing anywhere up to \$US75 billion (\$100bn) to develop in its various guises, is the megaproject that keeps getting up off the canvas. In the past five years, Woodside chief Peter Coleman as overseen extensive studies, and then rejection, of both a \$US75bn Broom LNG plant and a \$US40bn floating development, *The Land*.

'Billiton' axed as BHP opts to Think Big

Global miner BHP Billiton is taking its first steps to preparing to drop 'Billiton' from its name, with the launch of a global rebranding which will also mark the move away from styling the group as 'the big Australian'. In a \$10 million advertising campaign to commence this week,

BHP will instead use the slogan 'Think Big' as it seeks to improve its public image, *THE AGE*.

Ex-Rio boss 'has no fear of truth'

The former head of global miner Rio Tinto, Sam Walsh, 'has no fear of the truth at all' and a clear conscience over the miner's dealings in west Africa that have sparked at corruption investigation, *THE AGE*.

NSW gas

The backers of a proposed project to pipe gas from Narrabri, in north-west NSW, to Newcastle, want the government to force the gas from the project to be sold in NSW, rather than be transported across state borders for export abroad. The push comes as the manufacturing sector is gripped by surging gas prices, which have forced several companies to look hard at closing operations, to avoid looming losses. Gas prices have surged in the wake of the launch of several gas export projects in Queensland, which has linked east coast gas prices to international prices for the first time.

As a result, large users of gas have been hit by a spike in contract gas prices as they scramble to secure supplies. 'We want the NSW government to step in and ensure gas from Narrabri can only be sold to NSW users, and cannot be moved across state borders', said Garbis Simonian, the prime mover behind plans to build a new pipeline linking Narrabri to Newcastle, *THE AGE*.

Arrium-wrestle

Two overseas buyers have submitted final bids for the entire remaining assets of troubled steel and mining company Arrium, its administrator says, *HERALD SUN*.

Argus slams Elliott

Former BHP Billiton chairman Don Argus has attacked Elliott Management's attempt to overhaul the mining giant, accusing the US activist fund of fundamentally misunderstanding the legal structures governing the group. Plans put forward by New York based Elliott would not get off the ground under the provisions that have governed BHP since its 2001 merger with Billiton, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Statoil in Australia

Norway's national oil company plans to use its reputation as a safe driller in rough seas near sensitive industries to succeed where supermajor BP did not – drilling for billions of barrels of oil that could lie beneath the sea in the Great Australian Bight. Statoil, the junior partner in BP's failed bid to start drilling this year, yesterday revived the plan, revealing it had taken 100 per cent of the project in an asset swap, *THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

AMP piles on pressure

Influential fund giant AMP Capital has weighed into the debate around restructuring BHP Billiton, calling for an independent review of Elliott Management's plan to dissolve the big miner's dual-listed structure and for BHP to provide more information on its plans for the controversial US shale business, *THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

Adani to belong to the people- Hanson

Pauline Hanson has told the Turnbull government to build the billion-dollar Galilee Basin coal line itself, announcing she would oppose a 'foreign multi-national' from owning the crucial infrastructure. The rail corridor, which would run from the central Queensland coal basin to the Abbot Point port on the state's coast, has been

deemed a key feature of Indian mining company Adani moving forward with its project, *THE AGE*.

British firm beats Koreans for Arrium

Australian steelmaker and mining group Arrium is set to be sold to the London-based GFG Alliance, ended more than a year of uncertainty for the struggling company. In a move expected to secure the jobs of more than 5500 workers, administration KordaMentha announced. The deal remains subject to approval from the Foreign investment Review Board and the Arrium Committee of Creditors. 'This is a great result for Arrium employees and the city of Whyalla' said Administrator Mark Mentha, *THE AGE*.

Political risks

The local heads of oil giants ExxonMobil and BP have warned of growing political risks in Australia, as they weigh future investment here amid growing policy uncertainty. But ExxonMobil Australian chairman Richard Owen has delivered some good news for tight east coast gas markets, saying the US economy wants to produce gas at current levels from the Bass Strait joint venture it owns with BHP into the next decade, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Minerals council mounts more lobbying attacks

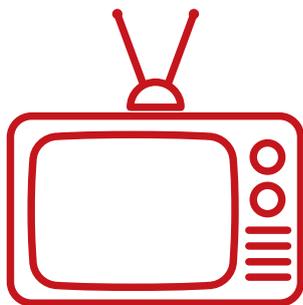
The Minerals Council of Australia has stepped up its lobbying efforts for a new coal-fired power plant to be built in Australia at a meeting with Coalition MPs in June. Under a plan advanced by the MCA's chief executive Brendan Pearson, a new HELE (high efficiency, low emissions) coal power plant would compete with other forms of electricity generation such as gas or renewables, backed up by storage, to provide reliable base-load power, *THE AGE*.

Mine fire

The owner of Hazelwood coal mine will face trial over the 2014 fire that blanketed the Latrobe Valley in smoke for 45 days. French owner Engie is facing 10 charges relating to the mine fire after a seven day committal hearing finished up in the Latrobe Valley Magistrates' Court, *HERALD SUN*

Coal mine transformed

The Alcoa Anglesea mine and power plant closed in 2015, but the community is now pushing innovative proposals for the land, including a floating solar farm. Alcoa's plan to fill the former open-cut coalmine with water is estimated to take up to five years, but the company said it will not determine the site's final use. This month the company released its rehabilitation plan, involving diverting a creek to fill the former mine and connect the new body of water to the Anglesea River, *THE AGE*.



MEDIA

Ex-ABC boss joins content rule push

Former director of ABC television Penny Chapman has joined mounting calls for the national broadcaster to be subject to local content quotas for TV drama, documentaries and children's shows. Ms Chapman, who was head

of drama and then head of television at the ABC in the 1990's, said content quotas that apply to the commercial networks should be extended to the public broadcaster, *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

Oz will boycott decisions of 'political stack'

Ms McGrath's role at GetUp! – an organisation that has in the past raised funds to publicly campaign against News Corp Australia publications and mock election coverage from some of the nation's largest newspapers – has raised serious concerns among editors, who fear they will not be given a fair hearing when complaints are raised about coverage of important public-interest issues on topics such as climate change and immigration. *THE AUSTRALIAN*'s editor-in-chief, Paul Whittaker, said the Australian Press Council's decision to appoint Ms McGrath to its board made a 'mockery' of the council's role in independently adjudicating complaints against news organisations, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Dastyari wades into the media crisis

Dastyari, at the head of a posse of fellow senators, including independents Nick Xenophon and Jacqui Lambie, and Scott Ludlam of the Greens, initiated a select committee on the worthy subject of the 'Future of Public Interest Journalism'. What Dastyari and his cohort might usefully do is give attention to the sort of tax incentives available in the US to encourage philanthropic and private sector support for public interest journalism. They might look particularly at requiring the Google and Facebook pirates to pay their fair share of tax, a portion of which could be set aside to provide tax relief for 'public interest journalism'. 'We need transparent debate about the reforms proposed for the embattled sector', writes Tony Walker, *THE AGE*.

ABC takes axe to Abdel-Magied program

The ABC is axing the program hosted by Yassmin Abdel-Magied a month after the television presenter and activist sparked outrage over her Anzac Day comments. Abdel-Magied has hosted *Australia-Wide* since 2016. Last month, the presented courted controversy after publishing an Anzac Day Facebook post that suggested Australians should also remember the suffering of refugees on Manus Island and Nauru, *THE AGE*.

Fairfax boss accuses ABC

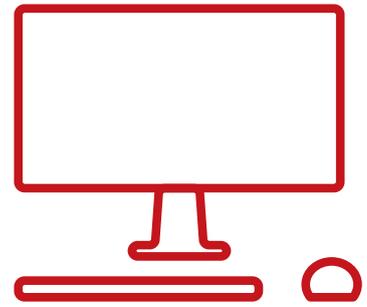
Fairfax Media chief executive Greg Hywood has hit out at the ABC for using taxpayer money to boost the profits of multi-national corporations, such as Google, and encroaching on to the terrain of newspaper companies in an appearance before a public enquiry into the future of journalism, *THE AGE*.

Journalism needed

There has been the launch of an Australian Senate Inquiry into the future of public interest journalism. 'The fourth estate is in trouble, and so would the future be without it' writes Sarah Gill, a Fairfax Media columnist in *THE AGE*.

Fairfax directors in talks

Private equity group TPG has approached Fairfax Media about a \$2.2 billion demerger of its online property classifieds business and metropolitan mastheads in a bid that will attract political scrutiny and earn a cautious reception from the company's board, 8/05/17, *THE AGE*.



IT

The bush push

A former public servant who oversaw the forced relocation of federal government IT workers to Canberra decades ago has warned the Nationals' 'bush push' will fall apart once 'cooler heads prevail'. David Brown helped to move one of the last major public service departments from Melbourne to Canberra in the late 1980's, *THE AGE*.

NBN withholds internet speeds

The National Broadband Network has details of the achievable internet speeds for every home it has connected but refuses to release the information despite widespread confusion among consumers seeking to connect. The fact NBN Co has both 'theoretical' speeds – the speeds it expects homes not yet connected will achieve – and actual speeds post-connection also raises questions as to the necessity of a \$7 million federal government program to monitor connection speeds in 4000 homes, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.



JUSTICE

More jail sought for Anzac Day plotter

A Melbourne man convicted over an Anzac Day terror plot where he planned to behead a police officer should be given a loner sentence because there is no evidence he rejected his radical beliefs. The Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, Sarah McNaughton SC, said yesterday too much emphasis had been given to Sevdet Ramadan Besim's youth, immaturity, previous good character and rehabilitation prospects when he was sentenced last year to 10 years in jail, with a minimum of 7.5 years. The Hallam man pleaded guilty to conspiring to do an act in preparation for or planning a terror act, which has a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, *THE AGE*.

Three federal ministers say sorry

A trio of Turnbull government ministers will make an apology to Victoria's highest court today, a week after they refused to say sorry for comments critical of the judiciary. Fairfax media has learned that Health Minister Alan Tudge and Assistant Minister to the Treasurer Michael Sukkar have now decided to reverse course and make the special apology. The hearing on a Friday went ahead at the request of the ministers and was designed to bring the matter to an end. Which it did.

The three Victorian ministers, all qualified lawyers, faced being charged with contempt of court for their public comments, which were made before the Court of Appeal had announced its ruling on the appeals of Besim and another teenager jailed for terrorism offences known as MHK. The judgement on the Besim and MHK cases is due at 10am on the Friday, before the ministers' apologised at 11.30am, 23/06/17, THE AGE.

Hinch scathing of judiciary

Cross bench senator Derryn Hinch slammed the Victorian Supreme Court for threatening three Coalition government ministers with contempt charges, saying the judiciary is not above criticism and he would have told the court to 'go jump', THE AGE.

Oh Dear

The NSW government has intervened in a financial scandal that threatens the future of the RSL's largest state branch, by appointing a former Supreme Court judge to investigate. Retired judge Patricia Bergin will have powers to compel co-operation from witnesses related to millions of dollars in consultancy fees paid to NSW branch councillors from the charity's \$1.3 billion aged-care arm RSL LifeCare, THE AUSTRALIAN.

ICAC chief slams developers, lobbyists

The outgoing head of NSW's corruption commission, Jerrold Cripps, QC, has slammed the relationship between property developers and the state government and said his organisation had insufficient resources for a major inquiry into political lobbying, AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW. *Ha.*

Federal prison for all jihadis

Terror suspects would be dealt with under Commonwealth laws and, if convicted, thrown into Australia's first maximum-security federal prison, under a bold plan by state governments. The HERALD SUN can reveal that Victoria and the two other state Labor governments are prepared to cede full responsibility for the prosecution, jailing and parole of terrorists to Canberra, in a bid to end the debate over who is responsible for national security, HERALD SUN.

Lawyers fury over Dutton's 'fake refugees'

Refugee lawyers are furious over what they are calling a breach of faith from the Turnbull government in its new deadline for boat arrivals to lodge their asylum claims. Immigration Minister Peter Dutton announced on Sunday a 'non-negotiable' October 1 deadline for about 7500 asylum seekers to submit claims for protection, or face deportation. Describing it as a crackdown on 'fake refugees' and con-artists, Dutton accused asylum seekers of failing or refusing to engage in the asylum process and instead 'taking the system for a ride'. But refugee lawyers argued the looming deadline was arbitrary and unfair, and would lead to thousands of rushed applications that were doomed to fail or likely to end up in the courts, THE AGE.

Peter Dutton's war on 'fake refugees' is misleading, based on a false premise and dangerous in that it pre-empts a fair hearing of claims for refugee status, writes Michael Gordon, THE AGE.

ATO boss quits

Senior tax official Michael Cranson has resigned as deputy commissioner after facing court over a white-collar fraud scandal linked to his son and daughter, THE AGE.

Bail changes hit gaols

The number of prisoners in Australian gaols has surged by up to 40 per cent in the past five years, new figures have revealed, as the Turnbull government pushes state premiers to toughen up bail laws at a meeting of federal and state leaders, writes Eric Bahshaw in THE AGE.

New doping tribunal

A new independent sports tribunal would end the practice of national sporting bodies ruling on doping charges within their game. In a bid to avoid scenarios such as the AFL sitting in judgement on itself in the Essendon doping case in 2015, a federal government-backed tribunal would determine doping, match-fixing and other serious charges against athletes. The change is mooted as part of a national sports plan – to be developed in consultation with sporting bodies – that will reform current systems that cover participation, professional athletes and integrity measures, HERALD SUN.

Brandis overhauls tribunal

Attorney General George Brandis has cleared the decks of the troublesome Administrative Appeals Tribunal, making more than 60 appointments, including several people with Liberal Party links. In recent months, the tribunal has been publically lambasted by senior government ministers, who have questioned the appropriateness of its decisions, particularly on immigration and visa matters, THE AGE.

Decisiveness

The positions of up to 100 AAT members expired on June 30 and the federal government removed a large number of them, including from the migration and refugee division. Protection Minister Immigration Minister Dutton in May flagged the overhaul when he hit out at the AAT for overturning decisions made by his office to kick foreign criminals out of Australia. The government replaced Justice Duncan Kerr as AAT president after his term expired last month, with David Thomas, a Queensland Supreme Court judge. Dutton said it was of 'great concern' the AAT had allowed people who had broken the law, to stay in Australia, HERALD SUN.

Lawyers hit back at Dutton

The Law Council of Australia has attacked Immigration Minister Peter Dutton for jeopardising the independence of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, after he questioned its decisions and political impartiality. Law Council president Fiona McLeod said tribunal members reviewed government decisions 'in accordance with law, not personal preference or ideology'.

'Any suggestion by government that Australian jurists are not acting with independence is dangerous and erosive to our justice system,' she said. 'It undermines the public perception of the legitimate role of the judiciary and weakens the rule of law'. Readers might have other experiences or coffee shop views. The AAT reviewed more than 11,300 visa decisions in the year to April, rejecting 39 per cent. Dutton said some of the cases were 'infuriating', THE AUSTRALIAN.

Jackson faces court

Disgraced former unionist Kathy Jackson is now facing more than 160 criminal theft and fraud charges for allegedly misappropriating hundred of thousands of dollars from the Health Services Union, THE AGE.

Corruption fighter wants to clean up Canberra

Legendary corruption fighter Tony Fitzgerald is challenging federal politicians to prove they truly are 'honourable' members. The former judge has teamed up with the Australia Institute think tank to survey MPs on their ethical values as part of a push to clean up Canberra and build momentum for a federal anti-corruption body. The Queensland QC – who presided over the Fitzgerald Inquiry that ultimately led to the resignation of the state premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen – has developed the questionnaire, THE AGE.

Croucher's restraint, coupled with her approach to freedom of speech, should reassure those who have come to see the Human Rights Commission as the greatest threat to fundamental freedom, writes Chris Merritt in THE AUSTRALIAN.

Pell to be treated fairly

Police have not detailed the charges, and will not be releasing any further official information before the hearing. It is now, up to the courts, and the courts alone, to deliver justice by rigorously testing the claims of the alleged victims and of the man they accuse, THE AGE.

Pell restates innocence

George Pell has reiterated his innocence, as one of Australia's most senior Catholic clerics defended the Cardinal from 'relentless character attacks' in relation to historic child sex abuse allegations. Victoria Police has received advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions about its investigation into Cardinal Pell, days after fresh details of the claims were aired, THE AGE.

My reply to hollow witch-hunt cries

Probing accusations against Cardinal Pell has nothing to do with left or right bias, writes Louise Milligan in THE AGE. *Note: The editor suggests that the focus on Pell is the bias, because Victoria Police, the Royal Australian Navy, the Education Department and the Premier's Department are particularly ignored as ever being involved or aware. What about putting some of those folk up on the stand, or take away respected memorials to their lives?*

Faith

Overlooked or ignored is evidence of another side to Pell, including his record as the first churchman of any faith in Australia to lead a campaign to remove paedophile priests and compensate their victims. Nor has the media shown much interest in the testimony of Pell defenders, including former choirboys and parishioners, who knew Pell well. Given all that, and his own stern demeanour, how can Pell hope that a jury will have an open mind to the evidence? Yet for Pell, nothing but a court hearing can end this nightmare or remove this stain on his character. But, for the rest of us, I fear the worst. Once again, the pillars of our society are being shaken hard.

Already, our trust in the big political parties that form our governments has been shredded. One-third of voters prefer any other party than Labor or Liberal. Meanwhile, contempt for our history has been taught so well that there are serious moves to change Australia Day from January 26, and calls to change our flag and anthem. And faith in our churches has crumbled so much that just 52 per cent of Australians now profess themselves as Christian, down from 61 per cent in just five years. Or, rather, in whom will younger salvation seekers now put their faith. Ahead lies danger, and not just for Pell, writes Andrew Bolt in HERALD SUN.



WELFARE

Dutton presides over huge financial waste

Immigration Minister Peter Dutton is the latest in a series of immigration ministers, Coalition and Labor, who have presided over one of the most wasteful and misjudged policies in modern Australian history – mandatory offshore detention of asylum seekers and refugees. This is not only a fiscal travesty, it's a moral and legal one – as many as 90 per cent of the relatively small number of asylum seekers who have arrived by boat are found to be genuine refugees. Under international law ratified by Australia, they have a right to seek asylum here and our government has a responsibility to treat them correctly. The editor says that keeping 'refugees' out of Australia, an Australian policy with which the Age obviously disagrees, was not even mentioned in this editorial, *THE AGE*.

Another vocational collage faces closure

A private college that notched up an extraordinary windfall from a badly-managed government loans scheme is the latest to face closure by the vocational education regulator. Royal Gurkas Institute of Technology had its registration cancelled following audits by the Australian Skills Quality Authority. *THE AUSTRALIAN* understands the chain has more than 200 staff and over 1400 students, most from overseas. On Thursday another college chain, Careers Australia, lapsed into voluntary administration. About 1100 Careers Australia staff have been stood down and all classes suspended, displacing more than 15,000 students.

The Electrical Trades Union slammed the decision to place the company into administration without warning, saying students and staff were promised training would continue throughout 2017. Both colleges appear to have come unstuck by bingeing on the failed VET FEE-HELP loans scheme, which fuelled a boom-bust cycle in the volatile vocational education and training market. Gurkas has four campuses in Melbourne, Hobart and Sydney, and teaches courses up to advanced diploma level in business, management, health, hospitality, English language and information technology, *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

'Mutual obligation' welfare

The government will now use data to identify problem areas, or people, and instigate a drug-testing regime for 5000 new recipients on a trial basis. There are also increased wait times for people with cash in the bank, and older job seekers will need to spend more time looking for work. Critics who have studied the New Zealand model Australia is basing a lot of its reforms on say while there have been good outcomes, it can also further marginalise some of the most vulnerable within the system. Social Services Minister Christian Porter said his aim was to change behaviours, *THE AGE*.

Disability welfare disappears

More than 1200 families have had their National Disability Insurance Scheme packages expire

without a further plan in place – many without warning – as the agency responsible scrambles to confront a litany of planning problems at a critical time in its history, *THE AGE*.

New drugs

'Australia's PBS is one of the foundations of our universal health care system and is the envy of many countries, Mr Hunt said. 'The Turnbull government has a rock-solid commitment to Medicare and part of this commitment is ensuring people have access to medicine when they need it', *THE AGE*.



TRANSPORT

Uber faces probe into driverless tech 'theft'

Uber Technologies, already plagued by a string of scandals, now faces the threat of a federal criminal probe into its development of driverless cars, a crucial initiative for the high-flying ride-hailing business, *THE AGE*.

Qantas' Dreamliner service is a disservice to loyal Australians

After months of fanfare, Qantas recently released the details of its non-stop flight from Perth to London aboard its new Dreamliner. And the loser is...Melbourne. Of course, increased competition means there are alternative airlines writes James Pawluk in *THE AGE*.

Business flights for MPs kids go

Federal politicians using travel perks to bring their children to Canberra will lose access to business-class fares from July, while former MPs will have fewer free flights to the capital after they leave Parliament. The Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal said on Monday it had formalised a range of recommendations from the Turnbull government's independent review of the travel rules for politicians, *THE AGE*.

Police care less

Passengers on Malaysia Airlines flight MH128 had to wait 100 minutes after the plane returned to Tullamarine airport for Special Operations Group officers boarded the plane. By the time the police moved in early yesterday morning, a mentally unstable man who allegedly brandished a suspicious object and threatened to blow up the plane soon after takeoff had been subdued and restrained by fellow passengers for nearly two hours. He had been released from a psychiatric ward on the same day he boarded the busy flight to Kuala Lumpur.

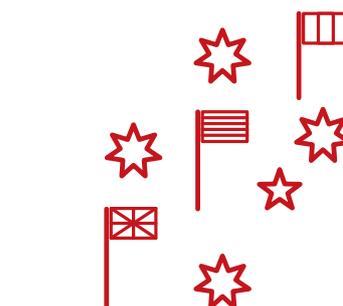
Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton said: 'Looking chronologically last night, I'm not seeing any time gaps or delays that were problematic'. Ashton said last night that the delay boarding the jet was because police were investigating who was on board, the potential for terrorism and the potential for another device or devices. 'These things had to be assessed in the interests of the safety of the passengers' he told ABC, *THE AUSTRALIAN*

Sydney airport

The federal government has been told to find new ways of involving the private sector in delivering the multi-billion-dollar Western Sydney Airport after the operator of Sydney's main domestic and international terminals said it could not make the project stack up. The federal government decided it would develop the \$6 billion project itself, in a move key players said overturned more than a decade of political consensus on using private sector funding and expertise to deliver major projects, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Port charges

Patrick Terminals has blamed higher rents from port privatisation in Sydney and Melbourne and rising electricity costs for increasing its infrastructure charges at its four shipping terminals, *THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Australia pushes to end class action

The Australian government says it will not be represented before a Jakarta court hearing a \$103 million class action on behalf of 115 youths incarcerated in Australia for alleged people smuggling. The Australian government ad conveyed its position in writing to the Central Jakarta District Court that as a sovereign state, its agencies were not subject to the jurisdiction of the court. Lisa Hiariej, said the case, on behalf of the 31 alleged people smugglers who were jailed while juveniles and 84 who were put in immigration detention, was being brought to an Indonesian court because it was a human rights case. This was despite the fact that the Office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions had a legalised copy of his birth certificate that stated he was still a child.

The Immigration Department had also interviewed Mr Jasmin and formed the view he was about 14. The policy at the time was to not charge anyone with people smuggling who wasn't established to be 19 and to instead return them home. A 2012 Human Rights Commission Enquiry found the Federal Police were aware of material that called into question reliance on wrist X-ray analysis but continued to use the procedure as a means of age assessment. It is a method that has now been discontinued, *THE AGE*

States slam 'homeland' security plan

Foreign investment is set for its biggest shake-up in a generation under a proposal that could put rail, energy and port assets out of bounds and give the federal government sweeping 'last resort powers' to take direct control of businesses if national security is at risk. In submissions to the federal government's US Department of Homeland Security- style Critical Infrastructure Centre, state governments, the Law Council of Australia and Infrastructure Partnerships Australia have criticised proposals that could discriminate against foreigners and undermine the responses of state-based emergency services, *SUNDAY AGE*.

Ireland chooses gay son of Indian immigrant for PM

Ireland's governing Fine Gael party has elected Leo Varadkar as its new leader, choosing the gay, 38-year-old son of an Indian immigrant to succeed Edna Kenny as prime minister in a striking sign of the country's rapid social change writes Padraic Halpin, *THE AGE*.

Friends with both, ally of one

Australia doesn't need to sacrifice its US alliance to build closer China ties. It is certainly true that without US leadership and involvement, we would not have been in most conflicts since 1951. But the alliance has not always been the sole driver of decision-making, *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

Cut to Aid

The Turnbull government is set to cut \$300 million from its aid budget just as it receives a warning that China is attempting to increase its leverage in Asia through aid, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

May meeting

Trump and Turnbull fully recommitted themselves to a traditional understanding of the alliance. They did this because it is right for both nations. It serves the fundamental national interests of both. Consider Trump's words when talking about the alliance: 'on behalf of America I want to thank the people of Australia'. Or: 'Americans have had no better friends than the Australians'. Or: 'We are proudly and profoundly grateful for Australia's contributions in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan' writes Greg Sheridan in *INQUIRER*.

PM sets regional tee

At the premier Asia-Pacific defence conference in Singapore on the 2 June, the Prime Minister put Australia's view that the region must counter the growing terrorist threats in the region as well as economic nationalism to ensure security and economic stability. Regional ministers and leaders attending the dialogue are concerned about the return of foreign fighters from the Middle East creating Islamist terror threats at a time of growing regional tensions over North Korea and China, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Canberra backs Taiwan

The Australian government is backing the right of Taiwan to attend a global health summit in Geneva next week, after China blocked Taiwan's invitation, *THE AGE*.

No levy will satiate Chinese hunger

Soaring prices of property in China are contributing to the stratospheric rises locally, writes Peter Hartcher in *THE AGE*.

Middle East

What a pity the Christian children of the West have never been exposed to the history of the Middle East, except perhaps through the murky, distorted lens of the Crusades which effectively demonised Muslims. Our terrible ignorance of the Middle East is a crying shame, writes Michael Hutchinson from Port Melbourne in *THE AGE*.

UK migration hits Australians

Anti-migrant policies announced by British Prime Minister Theresa May will make it harder for Australians to work in Britain, and increase healthcare costs. The bad news comes as Australians are flocking to Britain to take jobs in unprecedented numbers, according to statistics out this week, *THE AGE*.

UK election

The election has deeply divided the country on demographic lines, with the under-25s even more opposed to the Tories than they were to Brexit, and retirees flocking to the Conservatives. The Tories can count on about two-thirds of the over-64s. Polls differ strongly, giving the Conservatives a lead of between 1 per cent and 12 per cent coming into the last week of the campaign, *THE AGE*.

Anti-slavery law

Federal Labor will announce the new policy today and call for the introduction of a Modern Slavery Act to impose new requirements on big business to report on slavery and human trafficking in their supply chains. Britain introduced its Minister for Modern Slavery six or so years ago, *THE AGE*.

Tories weakened

In April, Prime Minister Theresa May called a snap election, risking her government for the chance to bank a bigger majority against an apparently sham-bolic Labour opposition. With the Conservatives 20 points ahead in the opinion polls, it looked like a one-way bet to a landslide and a renewed five-year term for her party. But there followed one of the most dramatic collapses in British political history. The talk back then was of a Conservative majority of more than 100 MPs. The best case for the Tories today is a wafer-thin majority under a prime minister whose authority may never recover.

'In her constipated, ill-tempered campaign May tried to talk almost exclusively of Brexit. But Labour was not running against her on Brexit' writes Greg Sheridan. Whoever becomes prime minister will very soon have to grapple with three crises. First is the chronic instability that has taken hold of Britain's policies and that will be hard to suppress. This week's poll reveals a divided country. Second, the economy is heading for the rocks in a way that few have yet registered. With the Brexit referendum result and a government with a small but stable majority, the British government will now be constantly hanging by a thread.

The statistical oddity of this election is dizzying. The Conservatives seem to have won 319 seats in a parliament of 650, leaving them seven short of a bare majority. Another irony: they were saved by winning 13 seats in Scotland, their best result since 1983. They also barely scraped across the line in three London constituencies whose neighbours all went Labour (London was a disaster for the Conservatives) apparently because of a sizeable Jewish vote in those electorates. British Jews used to vote Labour. Corbyn's ugly roll of anti-Semite gargoyle friends seems to have affected only this small corner of Britain, writes Paul Kelly in *Inquirer*.

Fry facing blasphemy

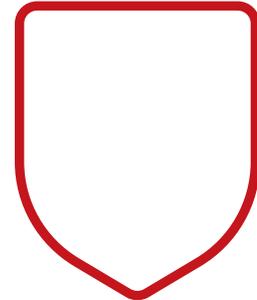
Irish police have launched an investigation into Stephen Fry after a viewer claimed comments made by the British comedian on a TV show were blasphemous. Officers are understood to be examining whether the actor committed a criminal offence under the Defamation Act. On the show, Fry was asked what he would say if he met God outside the pearly gates. He responded: 'I would say, 'Bone cancer in children? What's that about?' 'How dare you create a world in which there is such misery that is not our fault? It's not right, *THE AGE*.

Nod to Palestine

This nasty anti-Israel resolution, passed at the NSW Alp state conference, has embarrassed senior ALP leaders, writes Greg Sheridan in *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Carr praises Gillard

Former foreign minister Bob Carr says Julia Gillard should be congratulated for sending Israel a 'very strong message' on home turf, after she told the country's politicians of her 'mounting concern' over settlement policies. The former prime minister weighed in on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a lecture before receiving an honorary doctorate from Israel's Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. 'Like so many other supporters of Israel around the world, I have watched with mounting concern some of the political discussion in Israel which is inconsistent with achieving a two-state solution'. *THE AUSTRALIAN*.



DEFENCE

RAAF to join spy patrols

The RAAF will start flying advanced intelligence-gathering planes over the southern Philippines to help the country's military beat back an onslaught by Islamic State-affiliated insurgents, *THE AGE*.

Future Submarine to be sized up next year

Just over a year since French naval contractor DCNS was selected to build Australia's \$50 billion fleet of next-generation submarines, program heads are confident that early concept design work under way will have determined the final dimensions of the Future Submarine by September next year. Brent Clark, chief executive of DCNS Australia, confirms that they reported 8.8 metre diameter of the submarine will not change. The length of the 94m-97m referred to in DCNS marketing material was 'pretty spot on, although a couple of metres added to the length of a submarine is neither here nor there', he says. 'My guess is that it'll probably be closer to 97m than 94, *Defence Special Report in THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

Australia should challenge China

The recently retired Defence head Dennis Richardson has said Australia should carry out its own 'freedom of navigation' naval operation to challenge China's claim over waters surrounding artificial islands in the South China Sea, *SUNDAY AGE*.

Climate change a threat to security

Former Defence Force officers have warned that climate change will emerge as the defining security threat of this century and have urged governments to step up their responses accordingly. The government has dismissed the call arguing the Defence Force is already taking necessary action. But a former Defence Force chief, retired admiral Chris Barrie says the overall response to the 'existential threat' needs to be ramped up as Australia faces particular exposure to the consequences of extreme weather events, *SUNDAY AGE*.

Ballistic missiles 'needed'

Australia needs to consider a missile defence system to defend against attack from nuclear-armed North Korea, former prime minister Kevin Rudd says. Mr Rudd has reversed the position he

held in office, saying North Korea's newly demonstrated ability to reach northern Australia meant it was time to consider homeland defence, *THE AGE*.

Army buys \$100m fleet of drones

The army will buy a fleet of the 1.3 kilogram drones, which have a wingspan of less than one metre and can fit into a backpack disassembled. They can be easily put together and flown ahead of a team of soldiers to send back colour and infrared images, looking over hill-tops and other obstacles. Defence Industry Minister Christopher Pyne and Defence Minister Marise Payne announced the \$101 million purchase, continuing a military trend in which machines and software play an ever greater role on the battlefield. They will initially buy US-designed WASP AE drones, but will tailor them to Australian needs using technology provided by firms in Melbourne and Canberra, *THE AGE*.

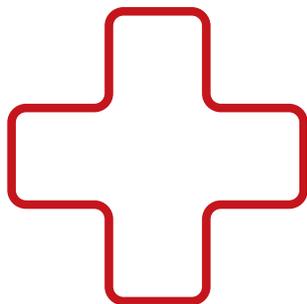
Time to get real

The murderous rampage mowing down pedestrians on London Bridge comes as the latest incident less than two weeks after the Manchester suicide bombing that killed 22 and left dozens more seriously injured, and just over 10 weeks after the Westminster terror attack that killed five and left more than 40 injured. And yet no matter how loudly and proudly terrorists proclaim their motives, there are some who want to blame the West, marginalisation, mental illness, anything but the root cause of worldwide terror; Islamism.

Prime Minister Turnbull did not mince his words in calling Islamist terror real and vowing to find and destroy them. We can only hope that rhetoric is followed by tough action. As it stands, only two returned jihadists have been prosecuted, the remainder walk free with counter-terrorism authorities unable to prosecute them because of the difficulty in obtaining evidence from Syrian and Iraqi authorities, writes Rita Panahi in *HERALD SUN*.

Day reserved for tanks and praise

The annual Reserve Forces Day Parade is held at the Shrine of Remembrance, this year's service commemorated the century of the Battle of Beersheba and the Takh Battle of Cambrai. Lighthorse men on horseback dressed in WW1 costume took part in the parade, which also included an RAAF vintage aircraft flyover and a display of heritage service vehicles, *HERALD SUN*.



HEALTH

Drugs supply scarce

Australia's hospitals reported shortages of more than 1500 medicines on a single day, including lifesaving antibiotics and chemotherapy drugs. A snapshot national survey on April 4 found 1577 individual medicine shortages in 280 hospitals across the nation, *HERALD SUN*.

Doctors divided over Medicare policy reset

Doctors have split over the Turnbull government's health budget, with the NSW arm of the peak lobby group going rogue to describe it as a 'crushing

blow' for GPs that won't improve affordable access to healthcare. The federal president of the Australian Medical Association, Mr Michael Gannon, welcomed the government's health policy reset – particularly the early lifting of the controversial freeze on Medicare patient rebates. But the AMA's leadership in NSW has broken ranks to brand it a major disappointment, *THE AGE*.

Shorten accuses PM of buying doctors' silence

Bill Shorten has described the Turnbull government's slow thaw in the Medicare rebate freeze as 'cash for no comment' designed to buy doctors' silence on healthcare issues. Shorten was to release new independent costings of the government's plan, which he says shows the budget locks in \$2.2 billion in Medicare cuts over the next four years. The Parliamentary Budget Office analysis shows that fully lifting the Medicare rebate freeze on July 1 would have cost \$3.2 billion, but Mr Hunt's policy will cost less than \$1 billion, *THE AGE*.



SPORTS

Avoiding a new 'Montreal moment'

The Australian Institute of Sport is facing a crisis of neglect, writes Andrew Leigh, federal member for Fenner. Since 2007, annual visitor numbers have dropped from 123,900 to 113,700. As fast as the Australian population is growing, visitor numbers to the institute seem to be shrinking. More than one critic has described it as a 'ghost town'. My fear today is the AIS may one day experience its own 'Montreal moment'.

In June, the Turnbull government announced it was developing a 'national sports plan'. But the Institute seems to be only a minor part of that discussion. That's why I'm keen to hear your ideas for reinvigorating the institute. Drop me an email, and let's start the conversation about how to make sure the Australian Institute of Sport keeps bringing home gold for Australia writes Andrew Leigh in *THE AGE*.

Payne's drug pain

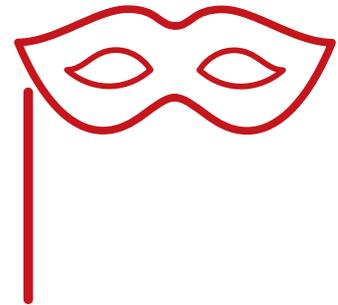
Michelle Payne will return from a drug-related suspension in time to take on the world's best jockeys in England. Payne was handed a one month ban by Racing Victoria stewards following a positive urine test for banned substance Phentermine, included in a weight-loss drug, *HERALD SUN*.

Swiss probe

Swiss prosecutors have examined multi-million-dollar Australian taxpayer-funded payments to controversial lobbyists hired at the behest of billionaire Frank Lowy to help Australia win the right to host the 2022 World Cup. Fairfax Media ca reveal that the examination of the Football Federation Australia's records is part of a major Swiss criminal probe into an alleged corruption conspiracy said to involve a handful of former European football officials, *THE AGE*.

Cricket bats

Cricket Australia and its players, through the Australian Cricketers Association, remain at loggerheads over a new pay deal, prompting the extraordinary step to cancel the July Australia A tour of South Africa. Since the original MOU was brokered in 1997, players have been paid from gross revenue from broadcast rights, gate receipts and advertising. Players maintain they want a gross, not surplus, share of funds, *THE AGE*.



SOCIETY

Defending free speech

The level of public debate in Australia hit a new low on Tuesday when Leftist activists stalked and physically assaulted conservative columnist Andrew Bolt as he was about to launch his new book at a restaurant in Carlton. Bolt is auctioning the suit the attackers ruined with proceeds going to Very Special Kids. The top bid last night stood at \$5500. Mary Aldred, *HERALD SUN*.

Don't attack the man, students told

'Privileged' male students have been told to be more like women by curbing their confidence and refraining from dominating or showing off during classes, following workshops run by the University of Melbourne Student Union. Men should acknowledge that being born male and white affords them certain privileges and reconsider the use of 'Australian banter' during tutorials because of the risks of excluding students from other cultural backgrounds. Following recent workshops on 'how privilege manifests itself in tutorials', recommendations were given to university staff last week. 'The workshops are a direct assault on masculinity...designed to make men feel ashamed of being men' says Bella D'Abrera of the Institute of Public Affairs, 19/05/17, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Leaders 'gutless' on Uluru plan

One of the key lawyers in the Mabo case, Bryan Keon-Cohen, has described the proposal to enshrine an Indigenous voice in the constitution as modest and conservative, and challenged 'gutless politicians' to support it. 'It provides advice only and Parliament can do what it likes with that advice, including ignoring it'. Prominent constitutional lawyer, Professor Adrienne Stone, has also supported the proposal as consistent with Australia's constitutional culture, *THE AGE*.

Our constitution already gives first nations a say

We can admit to decades of failure, but let's not risk dividing Australians. What is a viable path that addresses as much of the desires of indigenous Australians as possible while avoiding conflict? James Patterson, Liberal Senator for Victoria, 02/06/17, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

Some serious dancing

Mr Yunupingu, almost 70, has sent a delegation of Gumatj clan leaders to Uluru, were about 250 Indigenous Australians gathered to discuss what form of constitutional recognition to seek

from Malcolm Turnbull and Bill Shorten. The unprecedented, three-day Indigenous dialogues nationwide where the message has been that minimalist or purely symbolic change won't cut it, and that whatever emerges must give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more power over their lives and more freedom. Noel Pearson has used the metaphor of the debate over same-sex marriage to make the point that partial recognition will not suffice. But the task is fraught, perhaps more fraught than the one that confronted activists before the 1967 referendum, half a century ago, for two reasons.

The first is that there is no clear consensus among Indigenous people about what form of recognition should take, though there has been strong support at the dialogues for enshrining in the constitution an Indigenous voice to the parliament. The other is the doubt about whether the politicians will be willing to embrace what is decided and put it to the people, given that only eight of 44 referendums have been successful, writes Michael Gordon for *THE AGE*, 24/05/17.

PM challenged to deliver indigenous voice, treaty

Indigenous leaders have issued a united challenge to Malcolm Turnbull to back a constitutionally recognised Aboriginal 'voice' to parliament that would influence legislation, and a separate process leading to treaties. A historic three-day Referendum Council in the shadow of Uluru has repudiated advocates of so-called minimalist symbolic change to the Constitution. Indigenous leaders called for a referendum to be put to the Australian people to provide 'constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country', *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

Constitution change

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has cautiously responded to Indigenous leaders' calls for a constitutionally enshrined 'voice' to Parliament, warning that Australians are 'conservative' about constitutional change, *THE AGE*.

Where's the representation?

A former governor-general and a former defence force chief have declared constitutional indigenous recognition must produce 'tangible, positive results', an intervention that will boost support for an elected parliamentary advisory body. Michael Jeffery and Angus Houston have dealt a fresh blow to attempts to achieve indigenous constitutional recognition by a so-called minimalist model by backing efforts to put a question to a national referendum that could produce wide ranging constitutional change.

They are the most senior establishment figures yet to acknowledge the mood at indigenous consultations nationwide against minimalism, which is said to be preferred by politicians, calling instead for 'a full and dignified reconciliation' and 'tangible, positive results' from the outcome, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.

From the Heart, for the children

'Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates; this cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers; they should be our hope for the future', *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

There's no fair go if love's unequal

It's not ok to persecute people because of their sexuality, writes Michael Short. Second, the abused CEO. In the days after Jon Jon and Rod's wedding party, openly gay Qantas boss Alan Joyce was

publically assaulted by a pie-hurling, Bible-bashing homophobe. Why? Because Joyce, like so many other prominent Australians, including a growing chorus of business leaders, advocates for marriage equality. For such unremarkable decency, Joyce not only got whacked in the face with a pie. He was attacked, too, by charming, comedic Immigration Minister Peter Dutton, who, bless him, reckons CEOs should focus on running their companies instead of jamming 'politically correct views down our throat' writes Michael Short, 14/05/17, *THE AGE*.

Terror experts back ASIO chief over Hanson

Counter-terrorism experts have overwhelmingly backed spy boss Duncan Lewis in his assessment there was 'no evidence' linking refugees to Islamic terrorism, cautioning his critics against inflaming tensions with Muslims. Mr Lewis, director general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, also told One Nation leader Pauline Hanson there was no evidence the children of refugees were more likely to convert to radical Islam, *THE AGE*.

Forrest's \$400m gift sparks calls for others to dig deep

Andrew Forrest believes the huge scale of the philanthropic donation made by his family will encourage other wealthy individuals to follow suit, leading to a new age of Australian giving. The iron ore baron turned social policy benefactor on Monday unveiled ambitious targets for the unprecedented \$400 million his family has devoted to international cancer research, early childhood education and social cohesion. Through it he hopes to catalyse government and private sector co-investment and also to inspire other wealthy private citizens to give back to their communities.

The money will be allocated as follows: \$75 million to coordinating world cancer institutes to make lethal cancer history for the coming generation. \$75 million to giving every child their best chance. \$75 million to higher education and breakthrough research. \$75 million to removing modern slavery from human history. \$50 million to creating equality of opportunity among all Australians, and \$50 million to building stronger communities. 'The generous person, the loving person, gives back' commented PM Malcolm Turnbull, *THE AGE*.

Doctors push for same-sex marriage

The nation's most powerful doctors' group has thrown its weight behind same-sex marriage for the first time, declaring it a public health issue and calling on politicians to end the divisive debate. After a 14-year internal tussle, the Australian Medical Association will today issue a new policy position paper that states excluding same-sex couples from marriage has significant mental and physical health consequences and contributes to high suicide rates in the gay community.

The president, Dr Michael Cannon said the prolonged, divisive public debate about marriage equality had damaging effects and the Parliament should legislate for same-sex marriage as soon as possible. Sydney physician and campaigner Kerry Phelps became the inadvertent early figurehead of the same-sex marriage movement when she was publicly outed by the media in 1998, shortly after she travelled overseas to marry her partner Jackie Striker. Two years later, she was elected head of the AMA – the first woman and first gay person to fill the role. 'I don't think the religious, cultural right-wing conservatives now have anywhere to hide.

There is no excuse for delaying this any further. The medical profession has carefully considered the health consequences of continued discrimination and made an emphatic statement that it should end. I think politicians now have a duty of care to the community to make sure marriage equality is introduced as soon as possible' she said, *THE AGE*.

Divide of rich man poor man

The yawning gap between rich and poor in Australia should be formally tracked by the nation's prime economic review body, the Productivity Commission, according to a Labor senator who has drafted legislation to bring it about.

The proposal would ensure any negative impacts on the poor arising from government policies are specifically measured and taken into account in program design. Known for its market-oriented, pro-business disposition, the Productivity Commission is the government's prime, independent economic adviser, *THE AGE*.

We need science

The protest march on the 23 April in support of science and research saw more than 3,000 people in Melbourne supporting thousands more around Australia and tens of thousands in the US and elsewhere including Brazil and Chile, *SUNDAY AGE*.

Abbott on cultural cowardice

Tony Abbott has accused political leaders of not doing enough to promote 'Australian values', claiming that a 'cultural cowardice' at the heart of public institutions such as the ABC and the federal public service had caused many voters to walk away from the major parties, *THE AGE*.

DIY infrastructure

As population growth puts a growing strain on public facilities, former Treasury Secretary Ken Henry says local communities and businesses should play a bigger role in developing infrastructure projects that do not rely on government. The National Australia Bank chairman will launch a new paper setting out a model for 'customer-led DIY infrastructure', an attempt to get local communities more involved in infrastructure development.

Henry will highlight the importance of smaller-scale local infrastructure such as sporting grounds and parks, alongside larger projects such as rail lines or airports. The NAB-sponsored paper he is launching, by John Grill Centre executive Garry Bowditch, sets out a model that could make infrastructure less dependent on governments, *THE AGE*.

Change in honours climate

The 2017 Queen's Birthday honours list is the most progressive in Australian history with the top award going to advocates of climate change, same-sex marriage, philanthropists and the nation's leading actress. Nine hundred and sixty-eight people were honoured. Since 1975 these awards have helped define, encourage and reinforce Australian goals and values. They identify role models who give without thought of recognition or personal gain, *THE AGE*.

Australia lags behind in preschool

Australia is lagging significantly behind other OECD countries when it comes to the number of three-year-olds enrolled in high-quality preschool programs, which could be affecting students' academic performance up to at least year 10, *THE AGE*.

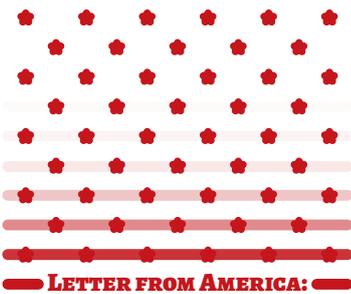
Sir Frank

Frank Lowy received a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours announced in London. Sir Frank was recognised for his contribution to



WHAT A WAY TO BRING TRUMP'S MOTHER INTO THE DEBATE.

the British economy, after Westfield built two enormous shopping centres. Westfield London opened its doors in 2008 while Westfield Stratford City opened in 2011, a year ahead of the London Olympic Games. Sir Frank, born in 1930, survived the Holocaust in Hungary and fought for the Israeli army as the country won independence in 1948. He arrived in Australia in 1952 with a suitcase and little else, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.



NATO critique

President Trump recently launched an extraordinary broadside at NATO allies for failing to pay their fair share of the defence bill. The US President used the most public forum possible – his first NATO summit in Brussels – to accuse members of the alliance of owing ‘massive amounts of money’, *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is an inter-governmental military alliance between several North American and European states, based on the North Atlantic Treaty that was signed in 1949, headquartered in Brussel Sprouts. Sixteen nations.

Perhaps more Diggers in Afghanistan

The US has asked Australia to commit more troops to Afghanistan, under a NATO push

for greater strength to combat a resurgent Taliban, *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

Just perfect

President Trump feels ‘completely and totally vindicated’ by testimony from sacked FBI boss James Comey, according to the President’s personal lawyer. Comey, who was to appear before the Senate intelligence committee overnight, said in seven pages of prepared testimony that Trump has raised the FBI probe into Russian meddling in the US election a number of times, and asked for ‘loyalty’ and an announcement that he was not the target of the investigation. Comey says he offered Mr Trump that ‘assurance’ but resisted appeals to make this public, ‘most importantly because it would create a duty to correct, should that change’, *HERALD SUN*.

Flynn pleads the fifth with Senate

Former White House national security advisor Michael Flynn refused to comply with a subpoena from the Senate intelligence committee as it investigates possible Russian interference in the 2016 US election, writes Patricia Zengerie of *THE AGE*.

Trump probe

In Washington it seems few people outside the White House are challenging the central claims made by Comey about Trump’s attempt to influence the FBI’s Flynn investigation, *Inquirer*.

In a signal to President Trump that the sacking of FBI director James Comey would not prompt a back-pedal on investigations, the US Justice Department has appointed a special counsel to investigate possible collusion between Mr Trump’s campaign and associates and the Kremlin, *THE AGE*.

Another Alistair

The term of Australia’s Consul-General in the Big Apple, Nick Minchin, is up after three years. Alistair Walton, currently Australia’s Trade Commissioner in Texas and former Goldman Sachs Australia chief. Walton was a university contemporary of Peter Costello and Michael Kroger, *AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW*.

Moving right along

A parliamentary committee last week endorsed a \$236.9 million plan to replace the 50-year-old embassy in Washington, DC, with an environmentally friendly building. The new structure on Scott Circle at 1601 Massachusetts Avenue, little more than a kilometre from the White House, would use natural light, openness and an array of solar panels to boost environmental efficiency. Bates Smart, the Melbourne firm behind the original embassy, won the bid to design the new one. Scaffolding and netting was erected around the exterior of the embassy three years ago and remain in place to prevent pieces of the facade falling and hitting visitors or pedestrians, *THE AGE*.

Trump leaves summit

President Trump, on 2 June withdrew the United States from the Paris climate accord, dealing a huge blow to international efforts to combat global warming. US allies signalled their strong opposition to this decision that would cut the Americans adrift from international targets on emissions reductions, *THE AGE*. *The Australian probably gave another/contra perspective.*

Pumped up Trump

US President Donald Trump spent his 100th night in office the same way he spent much of his winning campaign – whipping an ebullient rally into a near-frenzy by slamming the media, Hollywood, Hillary Clinton and undocumented immigrants, while also talking up what he felt were his unsung achievements over ‘100 days of action’. The Speech was significant not only as a marker of where Trump was – a key state he flipped from Democrat to Republican in the 2016 election – but also because of where he was not – at the traditional White House Correspondents’ Dinner in Washington. Trump, who was famously ridiculed by President Barack Obama at the 2011 black tie dinner, thumbed his nose at the press and at tradition by skipping the event and holding his own celebration with his true believers instead.

Trump, ‘I could not possible be more thrilled than to be more than 100 miles away from the Washington swamp spending my evening with all of you and with a much much larger crowd and much better people’. Earlier that day, tens of thousands of protestors had jammed the nation’s capital for the People’s Climate March, urging action on climate change. Trump also talked up his achievements over what he said had been ‘100 days of action’ – appointing a new justice to the Supreme Court, withdrawing the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and ending the ‘war on beautiful clean coal’.

He again promised to build a wall along the border with Mexico, despite not yet securing funding from either Mexico or Congress, *THE AGE*.

Another Star to the Flag?

Puerto Ricans have voted overwhelmingly to become the United States’ 51st state. Puerto Rico has been a US territory since 1898, when the island was acquired from Spain after the Spanish-American War. Any hard-copy subscriber

to *Letter From Canberra* who contacts the Editor as a result of reading this item will receive a copy of the book *Take a Message to Garcia*. The recent non-binding referendum was the fifth time that Puerto Ricans have voted on their future.

They have generally chosen from statehood, independence and remaining a territory. 'A 97 per cent win is the kind of result you get in a one-party regime'. The vote came weeks after Puerto Rico declared a form of bankruptcy in the face of \$US74 billion '\$98 billion' in debt and \$US 49 billion in pension obligations it cannot pay. More than 150 public schools are being closed as a mass exodus of Puerto Ricans head for the mainland, *THE AGE*.

JFK grandson has political ambitions

John F. Kennedy's only grandson has given his first major interview, discussing how Barack Obama inspired him and fielding questions about his own future political ambitions. Jack Schlossberg, who is about to begin a course at Harvard Law School, Obama's alma mater, spoke alongside his mother, Caroline Kennedy, the former US ambassador to Japan, *THE AGE*.

Trump has scared us

The vast majority of Australians say the world is becoming more hazardous and their confidence that America will play a constructive role in global affairs has plummeted since Trump became president, *THE AGE*.

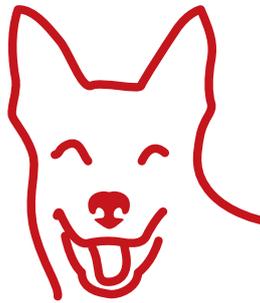
Editor's note: The Age says this on its front page. Most city Australian voters would only have the Age and the Sydney Morning Herald and the ABC as their presenter of news. Evidently, readership of The Australian and the (Victorian) Herald Sun might well have a more empathetic view of America and its leadership.

US ethics chief resigns

Walter Shaub Jr, the United States government's top ethics watchdog who has repeatedly gone head-to-head with the Trump administration over conflicts of interest, is calling it quits. Shaub's five-year term as the director of the Office of Government Ethics is not set to expire until January, but with little chance of renewal and an appealing offer in hand from a non-partisan advocacy group, he said the time was right to leave, *THE AGE*.

Putin loves Hillary

President Donald Trump, battling allegations that Russia helped him win the White House, now says Vladimir Putin would have preferred a Hillary Clinton victory. He also came to the defence of Donald Trump Jr after the release of emails showed his eldest son's embrace of an 'official' Russian offer to provide 'incriminating' evidence on the Democratic candidate, *THE AUSTRALIAN*.



DOG CORNER

Coffee Dog

A Lady and her lovely Labrador were in the Excellent Excello Spring Street Coffee Shop, in late July 2017. Evidently, they fly over from Perth about once a year or so, to see a couple of shows. Aladdin and some Rock Shows on this visit. Editor has always refrained from patting Assistance Dogs, but on this occasion the Lady said it was quite fine to do so!

Woof Woof

Chinese authorities have banned dog meat sales at the country's notorious Yulin dog-eating festival. The annual festival in Yulin, in China's south-west, has in recent years emerged as a lightning rod for animal rights campaigners, *THE AGE*.

Man's best pal

Kennel Club's annual Dog Photographer of the Year contest, the world's largest canine photography awards. Now in its twelfth year, the competition received almost 10,000 entries from 74 countries around the globe, *HERALD SUN*.



VALE

Mark Colvin died at the age of 66 last month will be remembered as a great mentor and a mate who will be sorely missed. He was known for his programs 'PM' on ABC radio and *The World Today*, *WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN*.

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