A monthly public affairs bulletin, a simple précis, distilling and interpreting public policy and government decisions, which affect business opportunities in Victoria and Australia. Saving you time for twenty-four years.

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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.

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.

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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.

Wonderful locals having Coffee with the Editor in Spring Street
EDITORIAL

A stormy Edition to prepare you for the Summer

Over the last week, Editor has been musing as to the quiet after the storm, or before the storm, as the CFA (the Country Fire Authority) retains its independence from being merged with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, or perhaps a name to bring them both together.

Pow
Advertising for a new CFA Chief Executive Officer. A stand alone operation. All too much for The Age. Which on Tuesday 13 October ran a front page photo/article, being very harsh about the culture of the CFA, and then much of two more pages at about pages 5 and 6, which really hop into bullying in the CFA. Be it that the same union, the United Firefighters Union has the control over culture and protocols and rules and regulations of staff as at the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. A difficult article to read. Its focus seems to be to damn the CFA in any and all manners and matters.

Getting ready for the Victorian elections next October when many regional seats will have the full focus on the Freedom to FireFight at the booths. And the next day we have the same CFA focus, in the Age, rather than about union bullying… Perhaps not much to journalise about.

As we go to press, the ‘Euthanasia debate’ is coming to Parliament here in Victoria, with almost a bit late, the senior medical professionals rising to the occasion and getting the details of some of the very detailed issues, of which there are many, into the outer world, not at this time to the public the voter/yes that a bit, but more particularly focused on the 80? members of the Legislative Assembly and the…… in the Legislative council. Each member of parliament will have a conscience vote. That is, it will not be on Party lines in either House.

The Age is pro euthanasia, with of its ‘Independence. Always’. As are almost all of its Letter to the Editor contributors on this issue. Exactly the opposite with the Herald Sun’s Editorial Opinions and its contributors. This Editor is not so much aiming for a biased view, but to warn or remind readers, who might rush through the ‘papers’ on a busy day, as to just what is being said.

Roads
Something funny out is happening out on our roads. Editor mentioned this issue an edition or so ago seeking feed back. some of which has stabilised his musings. There is no doubt that with large CBD buildings, and lesser buildings, a combination of security rules and (behind the scenes) union influence is growing the number of witches hats on the roads, stretching for longer distances than any reasonable motorist requires as a warning, causing almost/chaos in City streets, even closing off a lane or two. A similar scenario/circus has grown in the inner suburbs, and perhaps further afield, as one sees large numbers of ‘safety-uniformed workers’ ‘standing around’ the witches hats, with a truck(s) or large machinery nearby, doing much less than they could at least look as though they were doing. Muchly, it is control freaks.

Energy
Much debate still to come, especially over the next year or so as some firm views based mostly on facts, might cause some Greens to shout even stronger, over the next federal and Victorian, and other state elections.

Education
Funny to think of it as a poor cousin. Maybe there are too many grandparents who think they can help their off-spring with dollars rather than perhaps supporting the necessary change of culture behind the scenes. Too many players in the system: unions, community leaders, teachers, principals. It is Australia’s greatest challenge and your Editor puts it very low down the success ladder of public policy. Editor offers Coffee to hard copy subscribers who would like to discuss this.

Cover
Shakespeare in Melbourne. Readers should visit The Pop Up Globe Theatre at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl until early November.

Bit of a long Editorial. There is much happening in Victoria presently.

Happy Reading…..

FEATURE

New State Director

An agreement (‘shock deal’) between Opposition Leader Matthew Guy and Victorian Liberal president Michael Kroger, to decide the party’s new state director, has ‘stunned’ federal and state MPs and party executives.

Current deputy campaign director Nick Demiris, a former staffer to federal MP, and former minister Kevin Andrews, had received the backing of Kroger and Guy to replace Simon Frost, who has taken a senior job in the Turnbull Government, the Herald Sun.

A Liberal source said Dermiris had impressed party bosses with a presentation on how to win the state election. He was ‘clearly the best candidate for the job’, the Herald Sun.

Avoiding Gatto

Premier Andrews abruptly left a charity event once he found out alleged underworld figure Mick Gatto was also in the room.

The function was a fundraising dinner for Shakespeare in Melbourne. Readers should visit The Pop Up Globe Theatre at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl until early November.

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Andrews had been scheduled to speak at the event but chose to leave instead.

Federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten spoke at the function. Victorian Attorney-General Martin Pakula told 3AW the fundraiser was a public event and tickets cost nearly $300. Gatto said he was invited to the birthday event because of the fundraising he’d done for the Father Bob Maguire Foundation in the past, The Age.

Guy’s Second Donation Scandal
Victorian Liberal leader Matthew Guy has been embroiled in ‘another’ donations scandal, following the Lobster in restaurant” event recently, (last edition) in which a false invoice for $10,000 was issued to give a developer exclusive access to the then planning minister in a private penthouse, The Age.

Shit fight probably coming
A former Country Fire Authority board member is set to mount a challenge to the man who sacked him, Deputy premier James Merlino, in the coming election. Liberal Party members have pre-selected former intensive care paramedic and CFA volunteer John Schurink as the candidate for the Monbulk electorate for the 2018 election.

Schurink was appointed to the CFA board in 2014 but was dismissed when Merlino, who is Emergency Services Minister, sacked all board members over a/the bitter pay dispute, The Age.

Burns Pre-Selected for Northcote
Union worker Clare Burns has been pre-selected to stand as Labor’s candidate for the state seat of Northcote in the coming by-election after the death of MP Fiona Richardson. Burns works as a political organiser and was previously Women’s Safety and Rights organiser at Trades Hall. She is also qualified as a speech pathologist. Burns, 32, has lived in Darebin for 18 years and is now living in a share house in Northcote, The Age.

Perhaps a Green Northcote
A social activist who supports the dumping of Australia Day celebrations is to contest the Northcote state by-election for the Greens. Lidia Thompson will run for the inner-city seat left vacant by the death of Fiona Richardson. If elected, Thorpe would be the first aboriginal woman to sit in Victoria’s parliament, the Herald Sun.

Donor Reform
Taxpayers might have to foot the bill for most political parties’ activities under a planned revamp of Victoria’s political donations laws. In a surprise move, the Andrews’ government has flagged a $4,000 cap on election donations from a single person or entity. Foreign donations (needing some definition!) would be banned, and donations of more than $1,000 would have to be disclosed in real time (immediately).

Presently, any individual can donate as much as they like to a party. Only sums of more than $13,200 must be disclosed. There is a long lag between when donations are made and when they are declared. The Premier said the reforms would end ‘secret payments’ and shine a light on the murky world of political donations.

The reforms would also necessitate greater public funding of political parties, and the Victorian Electoral Commission. Parliament would debate how much this would be. At 2014’s state election, about $10 million from the public purse went to parties and candidates. At just $1,646 a vote, this is one of the nation’s lowest public funding rates. Opposition leader Matthew Guy said reform was ‘well and truly overdue’, but further consultation was needed, the Herald Sun.

New Aboriginal Council
Victorian Aboriginal leaders will form a powerful new council that will help to set the Andrews government’s agenda on Indigenous affairs, in another step to a historic state-based treaty. Esme Bamblett, chief executive of the Aboriginal Advancement League, said the new council would give Victorian Aboriginals a bigger say in policies that affect them, The Age.

Branch Stacking Printing Rort
Hundreds of thousands of dollars were siphoned from MPs’ printing budgets to pay for ALP memberships. Speaker Colin Brooks and Legislative Council president Bruce Atkinson announced the inquiry into the allegations, that the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission being brought in. Whistleblowers claim hundreds of ALP membershships were bankrolled via the creation of invoices for printing jobs that were never done.

‘If the allegations are true, they involve criminal actions’ Atkinson said. The Cash for Stacks scandal could be referred to police if a crime is suspected. Invoices to be examined include one for $4,455 for 20,000 brochures for a small community festival, and another $4,345 for 20,000 brochures for a Moonee Valley event. Federal divisions where memberships were allegedly paid to stack the branch include federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s electorate, the Herald Sun. It is understood that invoices worth $200,000 were of concern. Khalil Eideh MP, his staff and the printing firm’s owners have all denied wrongdoing.

From Sex to Reason
Fiona Patten declares herself gratified to have played a significant role in Victoria’s path towards becoming the first Australian state to allow euthanasia, even though the proposed legislation falls far short of her original permissive ambitions. Ms Patten in the process of deregistering The Sex Party and replacing it with the vastly less confrontingly named Reason Party.

The registration of her party’s new name will occur about the end of November, just a few weeks after the Victorian Parliament is expected to vote on the bill that would allow Victorians suffering an advanced and incurable illness to seek a medically assisted death from 2019. Ms Patten says that on the day she was elected to Victoria’s Legislative Council in 2014, she promised the first legislative change she would pursue would be the legislation of euthanasia, The Age.

Coalition Cabinet Change
Opposition Leader Matthew Guy has taken on the population shadow ministry while Nationals Leader Peter Walsh gained decentralisation. “We’ve sharpened our focus particularly around population and decentralisation, taking the pressure off Melbourne and ensuring that all Victorians can grow sustainably”.

Tim Smith was among the big winners, being handed the Education and Scrutiny of Government portfolios. Guy described the new shadow Education minister as a ‘warrior’ who was focused on standards. ‘I’m really confident that Tim will be ready to take up that challenge,’ Nick Wakeling was the education shadow portfolio and now has environment.

However, Mr Guy denied that change was due to poor performance. Long-time MP Inga Peulich lost Scrutiny of Government but retained Multicultural Affairs. Deputy Liberal leader David Hodgetts dropped Public Transport but held Ports and gained Freight, Roads and Infrastructure. Planning spokesman David Davis was handed Public Transport, retained Planning and Equality but relinquished Local Government.

Ryan Smith takes on the Costing of Living and Special minister of state shadow portfolios. Nationals Deputy Leader Steph Ryan has gained the shadow ministry of Water, The Age.

Right Reprisal
Dumped Andrews government minister Adem Somyurek is firmly on the comeback trail after launching a determined attempt to control a fresh swag of Labor seats. After nominations closed for Labor preselections, Somyurek had taken another step in his quest for dominance of the party’s right faction, and seems well on his way to controlling a powerful voting bloc.

The coveted seat of Williamstown, left vacant by the surprise resignation of Employment Minister Wade Noonan, also emerged as a battleground with four potential candidates throwing their hats into the ring. It would be a dramatic reversal of fortune for the upper house MP Somyurek, who was humiliatingly sacked from his job as small business minister in 2015 after a complaint.
from his chief of staff Dimity Paul about threatening and intimidating behaviour.

Mr Somyurek maintained his innocence, alleging he was the victim of a factional vendetta, and in an extraordinary press conference he lashed out at his cabinet colleague James Merlino and others, The Age.

Euthanasia Debate
Victorians’ decision to access legal euthanasia could be overruled if doubts are raised about their capacity to make their own choice. The terminally ill could also get lethal drugs within just two days, in ‘exceptional circumstances’. The new details about Victoria’s proposed euthanasia laws emerged with the public release of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017.

It allows people with ‘special interest’ in a person’s medical care to apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to review the decision of doctors overseeing euthanasia cases, The Age.

Herald Sun Says Vote No on Euthanasia
Over the coming weeks the Victorian parliament will debate a Bill on voluntary euthanasia – the most important and controversial law to be voted on in the state in recent decades. Government-granted authority to prematurely end a life stands as the most serious action our elected parliamentarians could consider.

The issue of assisted dying for terminally ill patients transcends both partisan politics and individual religious faith. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017 before parliament sets out the basis for medically approved euthanasia and the regulatory framework that oversees the choice.

For centuries under English law suicide was a crime, underlining the sanctity of life and arguing to ‘destroy oneself is contrary to nature’. Suicide was decriminalised in Victoria in 1967 but it remains an offence to aid or abet suicide. The proposed assisted-dying laws, which if passed would make Victoria the first state in the nation with legalised euthanasia, sets out a rigorous request and medical assessment process as well as robust attempts at oversight and protection.

Victoria’s draft euthanasia laws include 68 safeguards to protect against the abuse or misuse of assisted dying provisions. Only adults with decision-making capacity, who are suffering and face an expected outer life limit of 12 months, can access the scheme. They must make three clear requests and have two independent medical assessments to verify eligibility.

Australia has a rapidly ageing population and the number of people aged over 65 will double by 2057. For advocates to argue the laws would only be subject to a small number of terminally ill people is misleading. The medical fraternity is also divided on the issue. This week, St Vincent’s director of palliative medicine Associate Professor Mark Boughey and deputy Dr Jenny Weil said the laws could add subtle pressure on patients and there were huge concerns about accurately measuring life expectancy.

Indeed, doctors will rarely offer definitive life expectancy forecasts in cases of cancer or terminal illness. It is not uncommon for patients to be told they may have just 18 months to live, yet remain alive and with some degree of comfort, or in limited cases in remission, years later. Any promise for people diagnosed with a terminal illness that a cure or effective treatment may be just around the corner is unrealistic and unfair.

Both sides of politics face a conscience vote on this important Bill. The Herald Sun believes greater resourcing and support for an expanded palliative care sector must be Victoria’s priority. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017 is a step too far. We believe parliamentarians should vote no, the Herald Sun.

Sad Story
Victorian parliamentarian Rachel Carling-Jenkins, (formerly Democratic Labor Party until June 2017 when she joined the Australian Conservatives), who spoke in Parliament about the shocking moment she and her son uncovered her husband’s secret child pornography collection, said she had done so to give victims a voice. Dr Carling-Jenkins told the Legislative Council her estranged husband Gary, a former Victoria Police officer, had been convicted and jailed for child pornography offences. She said that when she and her son, 18, found the vile material she had called police, packed her belongings and left the family home immediately, effectively ending the 10-year marriage, the Herald Sun.

FEDERAL
Rort Allegations
There is a realignment of forces in Left and Right Labor factions that is causing angst. For some time now, it has been clear that the influence of former federal powerhouseh Stephen Conroy (Right) and Kim Carr (Left) is waning. The most important factional player on the Right emerging in Victoria and federally at the moment is Adem Somyurek, who is gunning for a space once owned by Conroy.

Meanwhile, Left unions in Victoria like the CFMEU once controlled by Carr, and MFS close to them like Jane Garrett, have been flexing their muscles internally. Khalil Eideh – one of Carr’s close allies – was caught up in the latest printing rorts allegations. Eideh claims to know nothing about the scheme. It hasn’t been a good month for Eideh, who was refused entry to the US while on parliamentary junket, returning to Melbourne where he held a media conference next to Carr. There is nothing unusual about brutal preselection processes in the ALP. The latest allegations of rorting aren’t a game, as senior Labor people have pointed out. It’s a claim of criminal activity. The Labor Party can’t afford to be dogged down by such allegations leading into a state election next year, writes Matt Johnson for the Herald Sun.
Incentives to Save Energy
Australia’s energy market operator revealed that both Victoria and South Australia needed to take urgent measures to avoid an increased risk of energy shortfalls in the coming months. Under the plan, Victorian households and businesses would be able to volunteer to use less energy, for a discount on their bill, when the national power grid is under stress.

Energy providers who will take part in the $30 million trial – run by the Australian Energy Market Operator and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency – will be announced in late October. The scheme would provide incentive payments to consumers who volunteer to be on standby to cut their power use – for as little as 30 minutes – during emergencies or on days of high electricity demand, the Herald Sun.

Bill Calls for Lift on Gas Ban
Bill Shorten has heaped pressure on the Victorian government over its conventional gas exploration moratorium, urging states to think again about locking up gas reserves. The federal Labor leader said he understood state government bans on fracking but said Australia needed more conventional gas in the market.

‘In terms of conventional gas I do think we need to reconsider making sure we have got access to conventional gas supplies,’ Mr Shorten said. The Andrews government has banned coal seam gas tracking and has put a temporary ban on conventional gas exploration until 2020, the Herald Sun.

Asylum Debate
The Andrews government announced it would provide $600,000 to help about 100 asylum seekers in Victoria it claims had funding cut off by the federal government. But the Herald Sun has revealed each asylum seeker costs taxpayers about $110,000 a year in food, housing and healthcare benefits. While getting medical treatment, some have been given a free stay in $1 million-plus homes in Melbourne’s most sought after suburbs, the Herald Sun.

Funding Fight
Victoria is demanding Turnbull and Education Minister Simon Birmingham take immediate action to show they can co-operate with state governments on the future of education funding. Victorian Education Minister James Merlino has written to the federal government raising concerns that state education ministers are being kept in the dark about critical changes beginning next year, The Australian.

Public Servant Shift
Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce has unveiled plans for more long range moves of federal public servants, this time to Darwin. Public servants from his Agriculture Department, will be shifted from Geelong and Melbourne to staff a new $8 million ‘biosecurity hub’ in the Northern Territory capital. It is unclear how many workers will be moved.

But the plan has done little to placate the Northern Territory government, which is still seething over the clear-out of the Australian Electoral Commission in Darwin. The AEC’s decision to move 14 of its 17 Darwin-based public servants to Queensland is part of the trend that has seen the Northern Territory lose a higher proportion, 15 per cent, of federal public servants since 2013 – more than any other state or territory. ‘Heralding a loss of jobs from Geelong as a win is breathtaking’ said Geelong Labor MP Richard Marles, The Age.

Calls for Danby to Retire
Top Labor figures have called for federal MP Michael Danby to retire as anger over his taxpayer-funded attacks on an ABC journalist sparked fresh speculation about his future. Federal and State ALP sources say they expect Mr Danby to announce his retirement before the next election – but are preparing for a possible preselection challenge in case he does not.

Mr Danby ramped up his attacks on the ABC’s Middle East reporter Sophie McNeill with a second ad – funded with his electorate allowance – in the Australian Jewish News. The ads have accused McNeill of an anti-Israel bias in her reporting. Mr Danby is an ardent supporter of Israel who holds the seat of Melbourne Ports – which has a large Jewish community – on a margin of just 2 per cent, The Age, Hayfield.

Agriculture
Saved. At last.
The troubled Hayfield native timber mill in Gippsland has been spared from closure after the Andrews government committed tens of millions of dollars in public money to keep it running. The state government would not reveal how much taxpayers spent to save the mill, arguing that to do so would put Victoria at a competitive disadvantage with Tasmania, which has sought to poach the timber jobs, The Age.

Arts & Events
Melbourne – The Conference Capital
Victoria is to benefit from conferences worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the economy in coming years. The city’s biggest conference – the World Ophthalmology Congress – has been booked for Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre in February 2022. It is expected to attract more than 14,000 delegates and generate $85 million for the state.

The business coup was driven by the Melbourne Convention Bureau, which has snared conferences worth $321 million from now until 2025. Lions International global event is also coming to Melbourne in 2024 for an $84 million boost. In 2016-17, the convention centre hosted conferences worth $194 million, with international delegates spending an average $1019 a day while here, the Herald Sun.
**ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY**

**Victoria’s Waste Problem**

Victoria is drowning in a sea of waste, despite recycling more than we did decades ago. Decaying food that emits greenhouse gases as it rots; shredded old cars and white goods that can’t be recycled; vast quantities of construction spoil; discarded televisions and computers that if mishandled could leach harmful chemicals into the environment.

Victorians produced 12.8 million tonnes of rubbish in 2015-16, a new report by government agency Sustainability Victoria shows, and are projected to generate more than 20 million tonnes of waste each year by 2043. Sustainability Victoria estimates it will cost between $3.6 billion and $5 billion in the next 30 years to manage the increase in waste and improve the state’s recycling regime so that less rubbish goes to landfill, The Age.

**Deer Problem**

Deer are pouring out of the high country, and into increasingly urban areas. Last year, nearly 100,000 deer were shot in Victoria by hunters. That is 30 per cent more than the previous year and almost twice the annual average of 55,681 deer culled since 2009. Increasingly, state and national parks and reserves are becoming nurseries and sanctuaries for animals that cause much damage and grief, writes Ed Gannon for the Herald Sun.

**Possums to Cost**

Leadbeater’s possum conservation will cost the Victorian timber industry more than $14 million in lost revenue by 2030, a new government report has found. The Arthur Rylah Institute has found logging exclusion zones have protected 436 Leadbeater’s colonies in Victoria’s central highlands. A report by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council earlier this year found harvest levels fell by more than half in the past decade.

It comes as ownership of the Australian Sustainable Hardwoods mill at Hayfield is expected to be transferred from Hermal Group to the government, in partnership with four existing managers, at the end of the month, The Weekly Times.

**Solar Backtrack**

The new owner of a solar project on which the Victorian government spent $15 million says it was ‘not commercially viable’. Plans to build one of Australia’s largest solar power stations at Carwarp, near Mildura, have been axed by new site owner, Ceramet Solar. The company will instead build a conventional photovoltaic panels project.

The previous owner, Solar Systems, planned to build a 100-megawatt plant – enough electricity to power 40,000 homes. The Victorian government poured $5 million into development of the project in 2013, and an additional $10 million into the first stage of the project – a 1.5 megawatt concentrator photovoltaics (CPV) dish system.

The federal government committed $75 million, which it later withdrew after further stages of the plant were abandoned. Victorian coalition energy spokesman David Southwick said Victoria could become ‘the home of abandoned renewables projects’ and warned of price rises, the Herald Sun.

**Renewable Target**

Australia’s peak industry lobby group fears Victoria’s decision to go it alone and pursue a 40 per cent renewable energy target within eight years will push up prices that are already hurting business. The Andrews government tabled legislation that set a statewide renewable energy target of 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025, The Age.

**Extreme Summer to Cause Blackouts**

Victorians will need costly emergency energy supplies – likely to include diesel generators – to avoid a risk of widespread blackouts this summer. Australia’s energy market operator has warned the state will be in a dire situation if it faces an extreme summer, and says urgent action is needed to ensure supply for household air conditioners and lights.

**Unreliable Renewables**

Victorian Premier Andrews is copying South Australia’s energy policy. He aims to lift wind and solar’s share of the state’s energy supply from its current 8 per cent to 40 per cent.

Wind is unreliable and, in Australia costs three times as much as coal; solar is even more expensive. Wind and solar facilities receive a subsidy whenever they run.

This has forced unsubsidised coal-fired power stations to close, causing electricity prices to double and reliability to deteriorate. During the 1990s, throughout Australia electricity supply was commercialised and partially privatised and became almost the cheapest in the world. In 1990s, energy ministers’ predisposition towards imposing harmful costs on to the industry were tempered by core advisors who, as energy experts, were able to demonstrate the damage this would cause.

Gradually those experts were replaced by environmentalists who fed interventionary measures to receptive politicians. Compounding the problem, premiers and prime ministers became involved. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Commonwealth where Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg is supervised by a Cabinet committee chaired by the Prime Minister, writes Alan Moran for the Herald Sun.

**Firefighting Fleet Boost**

Victoria’s largest fleet of firefighting aircraft will be rolled out ahead of ‘above normal’ bushfire warnings. Two large air tankers and two orange air cranes – similar to the existing monster ‘Elvis’ Erickson cranes – will be part of the $13.42 million fleet lease this year.

There will also be an additional water bombing helicopter, based at Bacchus Marsh, which will provide first response in the western and northern outer metropolitan area. Overall 49 aircraft will be on hand this fire season. Emergency Services Minister James Merlino announced the package to create ‘Victoria’s largest ever firefighting fleet’, the Herald Sun.

**Loy Yang Lacks Interest**

The new owner of a solar project on which the Victorian government spent $15 million says it was ‘not commercially viable’. Plans to build one of Australia’s largest solar power stations at Carwarp, near Mildura, have been axed by new site owner, Ceramet Solar. The company will instead build a conventional photovoltaic panels project.

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**Comms Connect 2017**

Our shared goal is to delay sexual activity in school-aged youth, it read. One parent, who did not want to be named, said the school was sending students ‘damaging archaic’ message by telling them to abstain from sex until they graduate, The Age.

**Quackacademics**

Four academics from RMIT University have been stood down after allegedly charging students to sit online tests. The major Melbourne university has now called in auditors to investigate the scandal. College of Business students were told they had to purchase textbooks written by their lecturers to access the mandatory tests, The Age.

‘While the vast majority of schools already offer the option of female students wearing shorts or pants, it is something I would expect all government schools to do,’ Momentum has been growing across Australia for schools to ditch uniforms that discriminate against girls and limit their movement.

The push for uniform equality has been driven by Girls’ Uniform Agenda, a group of Australian parents who say forcing girls to wear dresses and skirts reinforces ‘rigid gender stereotypes’, The Age.

**Email delays sex**

A state high school in Victoria has set a controversial goal to ‘delay sexual activity in school-aged youth’. Parents of year 8 students at Officer Secondary College were shocked to receive an email promoting abstinence as part of the school’s Respectful Relationship curriculum, a state government initiative aimed at stamping out domestic violence.

Phonics and Phonemic Approach

Year 4 Australian students are ranked twenty-second in an international study, and since the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy tests were introduced in 2008, results have either flatlined or gone backwards. Last year, the Australian Industry Group, the peak national body representing employers, reported that 93 per cent of its businesses complained that workers lacked basic literacy skills required to read manuals, fill out forms and write reports.

The Victorian Association for the Teaching of English argues that, based on a recent survey, literacy standards are falling because teachers without any formal qualifications or training in the subject are being made to teach English classes. Gone are the days when learning to read was based on a phonics and phonemic awareness approach, where beginning readers were taught the relationship between letters and groups of letters and sounds.

Instead, children are taught to look and guess, on the mistaken assumption that learning to read is as natural as learning to speak. Beginning in the late 1970s and early ’80s, memorising spelling lists and learning how to analyse a sentence based on correct grammar, spelling and syntax also fell out of favour.

Teachers were told that failing or criticising students for faulty spelling and grammar stifled their creativity, and that with practice, students would eventually discover for themselves without being explicitly taught. It shouldn’t surprise that 27 submissions to the 2014 review of the national curriculum I co-chaired ‘supported a ‘back to basics’ approach to the English curriculum which focuses on spelling, grammar and reading particularly in early education years’.

Another 12 submissions advocated a focus on phonics in place of the existing whole word look and guess approach to literacy pedagogy. Another criticism of the national curriculum, which Victoria is implementing, is that it is unnecessarily complex and opaque. Reading gifted and skilled playwrights and authors provides examples of language at its most powerful, evocative and persuasive, writes Dr Kevin Donnelly, a senior research fellow at the Australian Catholic University, for the Herald Sun.

Moaning and Groaning

More Victorian primary school students believe classmates are disruptive compared with last year, while high school students are more likely to complain that other students are being rowdy. There were also fewer Victorian state students in all grades who reported feeling safe in 2016 compared with 12 months earlier.
This was despite investments in the Safe Schools program designed to reduce homophobia and transphobia, the Bully Stoppers initiative and the eSmart Schools program in partnership with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation to foster a culture that promotes responsible use of technology, The Australian.

Private School Cash Splash
Some of Victoria’s most prestigious private schools are set to receive millions of extra taxpayer dollars after they were reclassified from overfunded to underfunded. Lauriston Girls School is one of the big winners, standing to gain almost $3.2 million of extra federal funding between 2018 and 2027, according to an analysis of previous secret data that will inform the Turnbull government’s new Gonski 2.0 funding model.

The dramatic change in estimated funding has largely been driven by these schools reporting ‘significantly higher’ numbers of students with a disability, according to the federal Education Department, The Age.

Alleged Complaint Submitted 18 Months Ago
One of the women who spearheads a national television ad campaign against same-sex marriage had complained directly to Victorian education officials about her son being told he could wear a dress to school more than 18 months ago. This is despite claims by the school’s principal that he first heard about the incident via the media, The Australian.

Safe Injecting Questions
The prospect of a safe injecting room in Victoria has been formally debated in parliament throughout September. It is a vexed issue, which raises real conflict between the need for all to be subject to the rule of law, the distinction between drug use and addiction as a crime and/or a health issue, and the risks or benefits of applying a harm minimisation approach, the Herald Sun.

Free Vax for Kids?
A plan to make the influenza vaccine free for children is being considered by health authorities after the death of an eight-year-old girl in Melbourne’s outer east. Rose Andersen had been sick with the flu for a number of days before she suffered cardiac arrest and died on Friday morning at the Angliss Hospital. Victoria’s deputy chief health officer Dr Brett Sutton said that Australia needed to discuss making the flu vaccination free for all children, The Age.

Being Smart Not Soft
Penington Institute has completed a review for a second year as part of our International Overdose Awareness Day campaign. Through our taxes we spend millions of dollars on drug control and yet the death toll keeps on rising. Clearly, something isn’t working. Our report – Australia’s Annual Overdose Report 2017 – shows that more than twice as many Australians are dying due to accidental overdoses compared with those dying from car accidents.

The stigma surrounding drugs means that it is difficult to have a sensible discussion about drug use in Australia. A health approach that is focused on early intervention, supporting people before their drug use escalates and before addiction leads to crime.

Prohibitive costs to treatment, insecure housing, limited availability of support services and a punitive approach push people further into a cycle of crime and poverty. We need to do more to give these people the chance to recover. We need to shift to a health-focused approach – this isn’t going soft on drugs, it’s getting smart on drugs.

The renewed call to establish a trial injecting centre in Richmond is the latest in a long line of compassionate and sensible public health proposals to better tackle this problem. The namesake of the organisation I lead, Professor David Penington, first suggested this initiative in the 1990s; it is long overdue, writes the CEO of the Penington Institute John Ryan for the Herald Sun.

Rally for Safe Injecting Rooms
Hundreds called on the Andrews government to reconsider its opposition to safe injecting rooms following the deaths of 34 drug addicts in the laneways of North Richmond last year. A crowd of 600 listened to the heart-wrenching accounts of families who had lost loved ones to drug addictions.

But Premier Andrews again refused to budge on the issue, which could play a key role in the battle with the Greens for the seat of Richmond at next year’s election. Prominent barrister Robert Richter, QC, who is also president of the Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation, said a safe injecting room for North Richmond was a ‘no-brainer’.

Three Victorian coroners have also endorsed the introduction of a facility similar to the Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in Sydney. While many local businesses in Richmond support the plan, some object to a supervised injecting centre on busy Victoria Street. A small gathering of business owners briefly clashed with members of the rally, before police intervened, The Age.

Hospital Healthy Initiative
Alfred Health has successfully slashed sales of unhealthy foods across all hospital sites by 30,000 meals each year as part of a trial to tackled obesity and promote healthy eating. The trial also substantially boosted the number of healthy meals sold, while overall food sales remained consistent.

The system was launched at The Alfred’s main café in August 2016 in a bid to steer consumers away from purchasing food that has low nutritional value and high fat, Health Victoria (a 16-page monthly newsletter).

Anti-Vax GP Probe
State and federal health authorities are reviewing the validity of vaccination exemptions overseen by a group of Melbourne practitioners allegedly involved in an anti-vaccination cell, the Herald Sun.

Right-to-Die Laws
Victorian doctors who help their terminally ill patients to die could be jailed for life, under the state’s proposed ‘assisted dying’ legislation. There will also be harsh penalties for friends or family who help a sick person take their own life, under laws introduced to State Parliament. As the Labor government officially launches its bill, Health Minister Jill Hennessy broke down on ABC radio speaking about her mother’s slow and excruciating death less than a month ago.

The minister said she was helping draft the legislation as she watched her mother, Joan Hennessy, slip away, with the dying woman urging her daughter, ‘Keep going, love, keep going’. ‘There are people with terminal illnesses that are taking their own lives in very violent...', circumstances now,’ Ms Hennessy said.
Premier Andrews said Victoria’s right-to-die regime would be strictly ‘self administered’ with 68 ‘safeguards’ built into the legislation and new criminal offences created in an effort to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Medical assistance will only be allowed in cases where patients are too sick to administer the lethal drugs themselves.

But the vital question of which substances would be used under the new laws remains unresolved, with the government saying it will be worked out during the 18-month ‘implementation period’, The Age.

**BUSINESS & INVESTMENT**

Amazon to Expand

US retail giant Amazon has sounded an ominous warning by declaring the opening of a maiden fulfilment centre in the Melbourne suburb of Dandenong South ‘is just the start’, as it prepares to wrap its tentacles around the nation’s $300 billion retail sector just as it has dominated North America. Its location prompted speculation that Amazon will seek out another centre to service Melbourne’s western suburbs, The Australian

**CFA Good Job and Good Challenge**

The Country Fire Authority is a modern firefighting agency protecting millions of Victorians from fire and other emergencies. A statutory authority, CFA has an annual budget of about $650 million and is supported by volunteers and staff working across the state.

The CFA Board is seeking a transformational leader to manage the organisation, staff and volunteers to ensure the agency continues to protect lives and property across the state.

**JUSTICE**

Amnesty

Victorian gun owners are lagging behind those in New South Wales and Queensland in the number of weapons handed in during the national firearms amnesty. The start of the amnesty, in August, triggered the forfeiting of 6,400 firearms in NSW and 3,500 in Queensland. But only 751 weapons so far been given up in Victoria.

‘I encourage Australians to continue to take advantage of the amnesty, which continues until September 30, to help removed unregistered firearms from the community’ said federal Justice Minister Michael Keenan. ‘This is the first nationwide gun amnesty since 1996, when the Howard government took decisive action following the devastation of the Port Arthur Massacre, the Herald Sun.

**Graffiti Conundrum**

Nillumbik Council, in Melbourne’s outer North East, has cut its graffiti problem by almost 60 per cent in a year, by putting convert cameras in known tagging hotspots, which live-stream vision direct to its contractors. More than 120 offenders have been caught, saving the council an estimated $350,000 in clean-up costs. The City of Melbourne also spends more than $800,000 on cleaning graffiti every year.

But two inner-city councils, Moreland and Yarra, no longer clean graffiti from ratepayers’ property, advising them to get a cleaning kit from council and do it themselves. The Public Transport Users Association’s Tony Morton said transport operators should tackle graffiti as a ‘matter of course’. But he welcomed the new contract conditions, saying Public Transport Victoria, the government and local councils had all attempted to skirt responsibility, the Herald Sun.

**Police Neutral**

Victoria Police doesn’t support or oppose a trial of a safe drug injecting room in inner Melbourne, Chief

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Commissioner Graham Ashton has told a parliamentary inquiry, the Herald Sun.

**Hinch Names Paedophile** Crossbench senator Derryn Hinch has used the legal protection of the Senate to name a paedophile policeman who sexually brutalised nine children during 12 years in the force. The County Court heard last year Victoria Police failed to act on complaints about the policeman and instead the organisation forced the officer to resign in 1979, The Age.

**Face Off** Police used newly enacted powers that allow them to disperse masked protesters to charge participants of a Melbourne anti-fascist rally, where several members of the hard left clashed with officers. A man dressed in all black wearing a dark face covering standing in the crowd of the anti-racism and anti-fascist protest refused to leave the area when asked by officers, resulting in a violent scuffle with police.

He was handcuffed after he resisted arrest and began shouting at nearby media, but was eventually released and charged with wearing a face covering, The Australian.

**Neighbourhood Watch Revival** Young families in Melbourne’s crime-hit fringes are behind a resurgence in long-standing group Neighbourhood Watch. The number of supporters in one area has surged to 50 per cent in the past year alone. Young people are also flocking to the organisation in the country.

Neighbourhood Watch president Michael Strong, a former Officer of Police Integrity director and County Court judge said ‘I think many in the community associate Neighbourhood Watch with those of us from the ‘80s and ‘90s. But with the rise in crime, perceived and real, there is certainly much genuine concern particularly over home invasions, burglary and car theft.’

‘This has resulted in a marked increase in interest in Neighbourhood Watch from young families, particularly in the outer suburbs and in new estates. Neighbourhood Watch has 5000 members, while supporter numbers via social media are 70,000 and rising, the Herald Sun.

**Lotto Ban** A foreign ‘fake lottery’ betting company could soon face bans in three states – including Victoria – as gambling regulators come under growing pressure to outlaw its business model. The rising popularity of Gibraltar-based Lotolland, in which people bet on the outcomes of local and overseas lotteries, has spawned a national campaign from news and lottery retailers, the Herald Sun.

**Fines for Stunt** Three men involved in a video stunt in which a dummy was ‘beheaded’ as a protest against the building of a mosque in Bendigo were each fined $2000, the Herald Sun.

**Sexual Misconduct in Policing** One policeman is sacked or quits every month as part of high-level sexual misconduct purge after a damning investigation found a chronic level of gender discrimination within Victoria Police. The revelation comes as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission releases results of a comprehensive audit into how police have moved to fix the deep-seated problems it revealed in its December 2015 report into sexual discrimination, harassment and predatory behaviour in policing, The Age.

**Local Government**

**Moreland Join Growing List** Moreland City Council’s decision to dump Australia Day celebrations, comparing it to ‘celebrating the Nazi Holocaust’, has been condemned by the federal government. Socialist Alliance councillor Sue Bolton said hosting ceremonies and events on that date was ‘grossly insensitive’ to Indigenous people. ‘It would be like celebrating the Nazi Holocaust,’ Cr Bolton said, The Age.

**Western Wish List** An airport rail link to help Melbourne prepare for population growth will be on the wish-list a delegation of mayors and council chief executives from the city’s west has taken to Canberra. Melbourne is predicted to become the nation’s biggest city, reaching 8 million people by 2051 – and the city’s west is expected to grow most quickly, from its current 835,000 residents to 1.8 million.

To help accommodate the extra residents, lobby group Lead West has taken a set of projects and policies to Turnbull government ministers, the federal infrastructure department, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and Labor MPs. Counting among its members six western suburb councils, Victoria University and City West Water, the group wants to cut a ‘city deal’ – an agreement for co-ordinated plan of investment – with the federal government to improve infrastructure, The Age.

**Heritage Overlay Headache** In a gentile streets of some of Melbourne’s wealthiest suburbs, one of the city’s biggest bugbears is again a hot topic: in the midst of a development frenzies, what properties are worthy of protection? Some councils, already opposed to state government moves to lock swatches to their suburbs to broader development, have deployed teams of heritage consultants on bicycles to assess which houses should be earmarked for protection.

Caught in the crossfire, homeowners have criticised councils for slapping heritage overlays on houses and entire precincts with little regard for the consequences. Home buyers and sellers are also left uncertain, with multimillion-dollar house sales collapsing and other top-end properties being taken off the market.

Mal James, a prominent buyers’ advocate specialising in prestige properties across the eastern suburbs, said high-end properties were already being taken off-market out of fear a sales campaign could attract 11th-hour heritage assessment, writes Allison Worrall for The Age.

**Yarra’s Spending Problem** The City of Yarra documents show spending on consultants is set to soar, with the most recent annual report anticipating a blowout in consultancy fees from $2.6 million to $17.1 million over the next five years for architectural services, strategic and technical consultants, heritage advisers, project managers and civil designers.

Maintenance and upgrades on the three underused historic town halls – in Fitzroy, Collingwood and Richmond – are among the drains on coffers, costing $9 million in the past three years alone. The rampant spending comes despite the council being $46 million in debt at the end of the 2016-17 financial year, the Herald Sun.

**Failure to Consult** The City of Darebin faces accusations from the state government, several of its own councillors and a local Wurundjeri elder that it didn’t properly consult the community before it made radical changes to its Australia Day celebrations.

It emerged that the council’s community consultation was based on 81 responses to a survey issued to about 200 people.

The Turnbull government stripped the north Melbourne council of its power to hold citizenship ceremonies after it voted to move its Australia Day celebrations and award ceremony from January 26 to an alternative date, The Australian.

**Shires Speak on Moratorium** Regional councils in Victoria have called on the state government to lift its moratorium on conventional gas exploration, amid growing concerns over skyrocketing power prices. Councils in the southwest of the state say the moratorium has locked up local onshore conventional gas resources that could be used to help lower power prices.

Mayne Shire Council, on the state's southwest coast, has joined neighbouring Corangamite
Shire as the most recent local government area to formally oppose the government’s moratorium. The Andrews government passed legislation earlier this year to prevent all coal-seam gas-mining, as well as extend a moratorium on onshore conventional gas exploration and development until 2020.

The move has been criticised by Turnbull who has accused the Victorian Labor government of ‘locking up’ has supplies on an ideological basis. Councils petitioning for change at a local level hope their actions set a precedent and encourage other local government areas to speak out, The Australian.

**Population Pissing Contest**

At the moment the official definition of Greater Sydney stretches all the way to Lake Macquarie, about 120km north of the CBD. That means the city’s population is bolstered by the inclusion of the heavily populated NSW Central Coast. That region rates as Australia’s ninth largest ‘significant urban area’ in its own right, according to the Bureau of Statistics.

But if you remove the Central Coast’s 335,000 residents from Sydney’s tally it is a different story. That drags the harbour city’s population back to 4.7 million – about 25,000 fewer than Greater Melbourne. So if Greater Sydney did not include the Central Coast and Greater Melbourne did include Geelong, the Victorian capital would be Australia’s biggest city by a significant margin, The Age.

**Exploring Change**

The descendants of colonial pioneers Burke and Wills are asking for a say in any changes to a Melbourne statue after a Greens councillor said he would seek to alter the 152-year-old monument. Stephen Bargwanna, 68, is the great-great-great-nephew of William John Wills, who died on the ill-fated expedition across the continent with Robert O’Hara Bourke.

Calls to recognise the Indigenous Australians who explored the continent before Burke and Wills’s 1860 expedition and the Aboriginal guides who helped the pair on their journey come as the latest Newspoll revealed 58 per cent of Australians don’t want changes to the nation’s historical monuments, The Australian.

**MEDIA**

**Facebook Ads Costing Taxpayers**

Premier Andrews wants voters to ‘like’ him on social media, and has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers’ money enticing Victorians to do so. The Herald Sun has revealed at least $281,469 has been spent simply on promoting the Premier’s Facebook page.

The two-year advertising bill does not include staffing costs to run the page or to produce the flashy videos of Labor projects often shared.

**Ten Jobs Slashed**

Melbourne Ten Network viewers could have to make do with nightly news broadcasts from Sydney. The five-year plan, formulated as Ten was going under in July this year, reveals a savage 15 per cent cut to staff numbers nationally – mostly from the ranks of journalists and production staff, The Herald Sun.
Demolishing Melbourne’s Urban Fabric
Lobby group Melbourne Heritage Action was more incensed that a number of historic buildings in the CBD are slated for demolition including the 1850s era Great Western Hotel, raising concern that Melbourne’s urban fabric will not be replaced by a series of generic high-rise towers, The Age.

Highrises at Royal Park
When former premier Steve Bracks was poised to sign off on the Commonwealth Games Village in Parkville in 2003, protestors fought bitterly to ensure it was largely low-rise housing. They mostly won, with the majority of the 900 homes built on the site next to Royal Park kept to two or three levels, or within medium-rise apartment blocks bordering CityLink.

The tallest building was 11 levels. But 14 years, the developers have gone back to the government and persuaded its planning adviser to recommend towers rising to 22 levels in the project’s final stage. But residents and community groups say 22 levels is far too high and the development must adhere to the original terms for the site struck in 2004. Melbourne City Council also opposes the plans, which it argues is too high for the area and would overwhelm Royal Park, The Age.

Locals Offered Alternative Living
Families living metres from the path of a noisy ‘monster’ sky rail crane have been offered several weeks alternative accommodation so they can get some sleep. In a letter sent to households in Melbourne’s southeast, the Level Crossing Authority has invited residents to relocate because of the projects ‘high impact’.

The two-storey blue crane will start loading concrete beams onto a steel carrier in Murrumbeena, and work will move progressively down the Cranbourne-Pakenham line. The government’s $1.2 billion project is elevating 3.2 km of track to eliminate nine level crossings, the Herald Sun.

State Controls Rezoned Land
A controversial 13-storey tower above Ormond railway station will go ahead after the Andrews government took control of the land, setting a precedent for other level crossing and major infrastructure programs. Changes to the local Glen Eira Planning Scheme, have rezoned the land around Ormond station and handed decision making powers to

Planning Minister Richard Wynne, allowing the controversial tower to be constructed, The Age.

Tim Veitch is a director of transport modellers Veitch Lister Consulting, employed by the government to assess the West Gate Tunnel. The firm – which is currently contracted to do more than $3 million worth of traffic modelling for the government – is highly supportive of the proposed road, The Age.

A little-known road rule could see Victorian motorists stung with a $476 fine. Forgetting to lock your car while you pop into a service station to pay for fuel could see you pay dearly. According to a longstanding road rule, not securing the windows or locking the doors of an unattended vehicle when you are more than 3m away can see the driver hit with a fine of up to $467.

Robyn Seymour, VicRoads acting executive director of access and operations, said road rules were designed to encourage safe driving and not unfairly punish drivers, the Herald Sun.

Go Under the River
Melbourne Water wants the West Gate Tunnel to go under – rather than over the Maribyrnong River. The proposed toll road

Traffic Level Critique
A second transport expert hired by the Andrews government to review its proposed ‘congestion busting’ West Gate Tunnel was critical of the road’s claimed likely traffic levels, it has emerged. The government’s star traffic expert appeared before hearings into the impacts of the proposed $5.5 billion toll road through Melbourne’s west.

A window is deemed secure providing it is open no more than 2cm. If a driver leaves the keys in the ignition, is more than 3m away from the vehicle and there is no one else sitting in it, that’s another maximum fine of $467. But it’s not all bad news. A driver reversing a vehicle does not have to wear a seat belt. This is an Australian-wide road rule.

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Robyn Seymour, VicRoads acting executive director of access and operations, said road rules were designed to encourage safe driving and not unfairly punish drivers, the Herald Sun.
through Melbourne’s west would use a bridge to cross the river and connect the tunnels with Footscray Rd, providing access to the Port of Melbourne and CityLink, the Herald Sun.

**Truck Bans in the West**
Trucks will be banned from two more roads in Melbourne’s west once the West Gate Tunnel is complete. The move would take 5000 trucks off local streets every day, according to the Andrews government. The truck bans on Blackshaws Road in Altona North and Hudsons Road in Spotswood will apply 24 hours a day across the week.

They are expected to be introduced in 2022. The decision follows previously announced truck bans in Yarraville and Footscray where residents have rallied against so-called rat runs in which trucks use suburban roads. Noise, pollution and the danger posed by constant truck movements are among the chief complaints from residents who have put up with the heavy traffic, The Age.

**Mending Bridges**
Worn-out bridges across Victoria are to get $20 million from the federal government for urgent upgrades. Among the biggest projects are a $2.7 million renewal of the Altona Bridge and $3.2 million for works to improve the Corio Quay Rd Bridge in North Geelong. The Commonwealth will also cough up $750,000 towards a $1.5 million replacement of the Franklin Bridge in Ballarat, the Herald Sun.

**RACV Profits**
For 2016-17, our profit after tax of $41 million reflected solid performances in our core motor insurance services and increasingly from broader initiatives in the areas of mobility, home and leisure, writes RACV President and Chairman of the Board Kevin White for Royal Auto.

**Improving the Image of Ticket Inspectors**
The phone rang after dinner. Some poor bloke at a call centre in East Richmond was doing a survey for Public Transport Victoria and the public transport service providers. It wouldn’t take too long. PTV clearly have a PR problem, but one that’s easy to fix.

Here, absolutely free of charge, are my recommendations for improving the image of authorised officers. On our trams and improving service, too. Stop calling them authorised officers: call them conductors instead. Take away their myki scanners; give them portable ticket machines.

Rather than a gang of six authorised officers boarding the same tram at a busy stop as it leaves the CBD free fare zone, have six separate authorised officers board one tram each, and stay on it for the whole trip. And finally, train these ‘conductors’ to use their portable ticket machines so they can sell tickets to unticketed passengers, not drag them off the vehicle in a choke-hold, writes Matt Holden for The Age.

**Modelling Secrecy**
The Andrews government is trying to keep Victorians in the dark on doubts over the proposed West Gate Tunnel, in part relying on a precedent of confidentiality set by former premier Denis Napthine during his failed bid for the East West Link. The precedent is being used to deny the government’s own hand-picked experts access to a review of traffic predictions for the $5.5 billion toll road.

The report by New Zealand transport expert John Allard is critical of traffic modelling done by project builder Transurban and the government. That modelling helped Premier Andrews justify his support for the toll road, and to claim it would return $1.30 to the Victorian economy for every $1 spent building it, The Age.

**Sound Familiar?**
Daniel Andrews was utterly ferocious in opposition about the East West Link. His attacks on the secrecy surrounding what he called a ‘dog of a project’ were central to his 2014 election campaign. He was particularly critical of its traffic projections, once describing them in Parliament as having been ‘plucked out of thin air’.

So it comes as something of a surprise to see his government using the East West Link as one justification for blocking the release of a report critical of traffic modelling for Mr Andrews’ own mega-road project, the West Gate Tunnel, writes Clay Lucas for The Age.

**Ferry Terminal Upgrade**
Mornington Peninsula Council wants to change local planning rules so that the two-storey, almost 10-metre high ferry terminal can be built. About 850,000 passengers take the ferry each year, a number growing by more than 3 per cent annually. The existing terminal is just a small kiosk and ticket booth, and a vehicle docking zone. The new terminal would have a lounge and café, small shops for souvenirs and ticketing and improve car access, The Age.

**Public to Name Stations**
Melburnians could soon be boarding a train from Winterfell, Dorne or Westeros stations if Game of Thrones fans have their way. The Melbourne Metro Rail Authority wants ideas for new Metro Tunnel station names, with more than 20,000 suggestions received to date, including many Game of Thrones references, the Herald Sun.

**VicRoads Full Page Advert**
‘We’re talking to local communities about how we can better plan, build, manage and maintain the 19,000kms of country arterial roads in Victoria. Join the conversation online at engage.vicroads.gov.au/countryroads.’

**Toyota Supply Chain Jobs at Risk**
Thousands of supply chain jobs are under threat as car manufacturing grinds to a halt in Victoria. Toyota’s last Camry has rolled off the production line with the company’s Altona plant now closed. The closure will slash 2600 jobs, although there are hopes about 40 per cent of staff will secure new jobs after a long transition period.
But the Australian Workers Union has warned more than 3,000 supply chain jobs could also be affected by the long-mooted closure. A Toyota employee of 30 years said there was a ‘definite sadness’ among factory workers, the Herald Sun.

**Manufacturing Still Has a Roll to Play**
For the first time in 92 years, there are no vehicles being manufactured in Victoria. As Toyota becomes the last automotive manufacturer to shut down its production line, this will be one of the greatest challenges its automotive workers and their families will face. It would be easy to suggest the end of car manufacturing sounds the death knell for manufacturing in Victoria.

But this is not correct. Advanced manufacturing is already changing the way we all live and work. It touches all Victorians from the food we eat to the trains and trams we travel on. It is pivotal to the future success of manufacturing, which now employs 278,000 Victorians and contributes $26 billion to Victoria’s economy each year.

Since the first improvised production line in 1925, Victoria has experienced constant change and transformation, and will continue to do so as our population grows and Melbourne becomes Australia’s largest city by the 2030s, writes Mark Stone for the Herald Sun.

**SOCIETY**

**Fox Super Car**
Trucking magnate Lindsay Fox has spent more than $5 million on a Formula One car for the road. It will cost $5.1 million to bring to Australia, including $1.1 million in Luxury Car Tax. But due to local regulations the left-hand drive vehicle is currently not allowed to be driven on the road. Fox may store it in his classic car museum in Docklands, where he keeps his extensive super car collection.

The Project One is powered by a 1.6 litre V6 Formula One engine with a staggering 1000 horsepower – or 740KW in modern terms – paired to hybrid electric motors to give it all-wheel-drive acceleration, the Herald Sun.

Changing the way we record history can be tricky business: the inscription and subsequent revisions on Melbourne’s John Batman monument are a case in point. The towering 1881 bluestone monument, which sits on the corner of the Queen Victoria Market site where the controversial pioneer and city’s ‘founding father’ was originally buried, referred to the land now known as Melbourne a being ‘unoccupied’ when he arrived.

**Batman’s Contentious History**
In 1992, the monument quietly received a corrective plaque, which has since been subject to modification. ‘When the monument was erected in 1881, the colony considered that the Aboriginal people did not occupy land’ the small bronze 1992 plaque reads. ‘It is now clear that prior to the colonisation of Victoria, the land was inhabited and used by Aboriginal people’.

However, in 2000, the City of Melbourne’s Aboriginal consultative group requested a revised plaque, saying the wording of the original plaque was ‘too weak’. In 2004, a new plaque was installed, which reads: ‘The City of Melbourne acknowledges that the historical events and perceptions referred to by this memorial are inaccurate. An apology is made to indigenous people and to the traditional owners of this land for the wrong beliefs of the past and the personal upset caused.’, The Australian.

**Generosity Dampered By Uncertainty**
Victorians are among the nation’s most generous people but fewer Australians are donating to charities because of growing uncertainty about whether their money will actually help those in need. Two landmark reports on the generosity of Australians show 14.9 million people donated $11.2 billion last year, the Herald Sun.

**SPORT**

**Tiger Time**
Richmond have won their first Grand Final since 1980 in emphatic fashion, defeating favourites Adelaide by 48 points. Led by Brownlow and Norm Smith medallist Dustin Martin, the Tigers gained the lead halfway through the second quarter and never looked back to win their first premiership in 37 years.
A Melbourne father of three, who drowned while rescuing a child from rough waters at a beach in New South Wales, has been hailed as a hero. Shaun Oliver, 32, died while trying to rescue a 12-year-old child, who was caught in a rip at Wollongong’s City Beach, The Age.

**FEATURE ARTICLE**

Local Government is not all about the 3 Rs: Roads, Rates and Rubbish, it also provides extensive services to its residents far and above what most people think.

The recently introduced Andrews Government’s rate capping policy provides a wonderful opportunity to highlight the effectiveness of Local Governments.

Certainly, there may be some councils that are not as prudent in their planning as others, but it does not warrant a dictatorial decision to cap council rates and denigrate good work, a clearly interventionist approach that is an attack on the sovereignty of the most distinctive responsive and maturest level of Government.

State and Federal Governments are particularly adept at cost shifting – in the case of State Government, moving responsibility locally for home and community care workers, and child care whilst the Federal Government recently removed the increase indexation of the Whittlam Governments instigated Federal Assistance Grants (FAGS), 2014 – 2017 costing the Victorian community $300M.

The Victorian Local Government Sector provides an enormous number of responsive services that go far beyond what is often expected, most councils provide in excess of over a 100 services from cradle to grave that include planning and development, swimming pools, library services, children and family services, aged care, environmental health disability services, senior citizens clubs, community grant, festivals and events, arts and recreational services, graffiti removal and free cultural and neighbourhood community based events.

The State Government imposed rate capping will eventually impact on what councils do and how they do it, especially may of the state’s rural and regional councils, and this will be evident over time in our local neighbourhoods.

Make no mistake, it is sensible and responsible for any organisation or business to review its expenditure but to argue that a one size fits all rate cap policy is necessary, is to treat local government as a kind of recalcitrant child. Rate rises occur because of increasing costs like maintenance, such as street cleaning, care of parks and gardens, tree planting and environmental measures, like a sector wide move to LED lighting, which has initially high outlay capital costs.

So in the end, who suffers from Rate Capping? - The community, you and I, councils exist to fill the ‘care in the community’ gap where the private sector can’t make money, there are no businesses who compete with Councils in the areas of Libraries, School Crossing Supervisors, home care or meals on wheels, and why? Because Local Governments subsidise services in order to provide community care directly in response to community necessity that is what Local Governments are about, and what they do.

Do the State Government make an exerted effort to ensure that their annual indexation of fines fees and charges do not exceed CPI? After all are these not cost of living expenses for you and I as well?

Councils provide the best possible facilities and services for their rate payers with what they have and capping rates, whilst politically popular in theory and supported by Victorias major political parties in effect disadvantages further the people who provide the most benefits from their rates.

Another important area is planning, whether it’s a home renovation or a long-term development of an area. Most people think Councils are the relevant authority and that, to a degree, is true. Councils often spend large amounts of money defending residents and their communities at VCAT (Victorian

**VALLE**

ULLIN, Claude AM Gosh. So many us will miss this wonderful man. A personality A hard-working Mayor of Stonnington, and much else besides.

A Melbourne father of three, who drowned while rescuing a child from rough waters at a beach in New South Wales, has been hailed as a hero. Shaun Oliver, 32, died while trying to rescue a 12-year-old child, who was caught in a rip at Wollongong’s City Beach, The Age.

BENTLEY, Charles – led a team of scientists who measured the West Antarctic Ice Sheet for the first time in the 1950s.

KELLY, Ben – was the inspiration for the man in overalls in the sculp-

LUCK, Peter - Acclaimed TV reporter, presenter and historian has died after a long battle with Parkinson’s disease. Luck worked on variety of shows including: This Day Tonight, Four Corners, Sunday, Today Tonight and Inside Edition.

LUD BROOK, John – Professor, was a surgeon and medical researcher, who died aged 87.

ACKMAN, Noel; ALEXANDER, Fida; AUSTIN (nee Burns), Kathleen Veronica; BALAZS, Wend; BEALE (nee Osborne), June Mabel; BEL EYA, Anne Irving; BIRCH, John Charles, Rotary Richmond; BIGGS, Adam Mikkos Istyan; BL A ZEVIC, Joseph ‘Joe’; BOAG, John Henry; BOATMAN, Ray; BOURNE, Jack; BURDON (nee Woodruff), Marilyn June; BREEN, Stephen John; B R ITTEN, Shirley Lynnette; BROPHY, Leo; BROWN, Ruth Ellen; BURN, Josie; BUTLER, John; BYRNE, William ‘Bill’ Edmond; CALW A Y, Rosemary; CALWELL (nee Prentice), Maureen Catherine; CAMERON, Dr Alexandra MBE; CASSELL, Alan Louis; CAVILL, Amanda; CHAMBERS, John Lindsay; CHEGWID DEN, John Francis; CHRISTIANSEN, June; CLARKE, Ian Raleigh Edgerton; COAKLEY (nee Allan), Moira; COX SE DGE, Cedric William; C RE LLIN, John; CROWLEY (nee Ruth), Connie; CURTISS-JONES, Nerele; DALZIEL, Rodney Elston; DE STEFAN IS, Luisa; DE STOOP, Wivine; DICKINSON, David John Bigland; DOBELL, Arthur; DONOVAN (nee Walden), Judith Lorraine; DOUGLAS, Diane; DRURY (nee Castles), Jean Edith; DUNN, Jol; EDGE (nee Martin), Betty Broun; EDWARDS (nee Whitehouse), Judith Ann;
The sector is often treated as scapegoats and easy targets for problems created elsewhere.

Councillors are often called into question regarding travel expenses, but very few councillors that I have known have ever taken any overseas and interstate trips, most councils have a policy in place that that sees the council pay for registration to attend whilst the transportation costs are incurred by the Councillor, not a bad outcome given that a Councillor has no salary, but a small stipend that is taxed at the highest rate.

It is often commented from other levels of government and the broader community that some councils pursue agendas that do not have any benefit to their community, such as the plight of refugees and same sex marriage, nuclear free zones etc and I guess that such province rests with each of the elected representatives and their communities to contemplate.

It is most unfair that some members of Parliament, the media and sections of the public have a negative view of Local Government.

The sector is often treated as scapegoats and easy targets for problems created elsewhere.

Clearly, most Councillors do the job not for the money (allowance) but to give something back to their communities, civic duty is an honourable and passionate act. Performance varies in all walks of life but most councillors are dedicated to making their community the best possible place it can be to live, work and raise a family.

It would be good from time to time if we were all a bit more aware of the good councillors do, and the enormous range of areas that councillors operate in, the many responsibilities they have in allocating the budget, community grants crafting the council plan that defines their municipalities into the future, infrastructure maintenance and up keep, and of course the strict auditing and scrutiny of their personal behaviour by differing agencies.

No other level of government is subject to such constraints and probity.
City of GLEN EIRA

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL • ONE COUNCIL • 24 HOURS

Letter From Melbourne // Issue 224

Glen Eira City Council delivers hundreds of varied services to its 24,000 residents every day. The work of Council is a 24-hour operation, with many services performed outside normal business hours to fulfill the community's needs or maintain the city's infrastructure.

6am
- Council's waste collection crews arrive in Glen Eira at the crack of dawn. The eight garbage collection crews, six recycling crews and two green waste crew start collecting more than 10,000 garbage bins, 1,400 recycling vans and 750 green waste bins. By the end of the day 150 concerns of garbage, 87 concerns of recyclables and 68 concerns of green waste have been removed from the City.
- The delivered meal staff delivers a diet to a home and starts preparing for the day deliveries.

6.30am
- Council's strategic crew begins routine maintenance for the day. Glen Eira's 1,600 sewerage pits and 400 stormwater drainages. The strategic crew will clean over 90 pits before 11am today.
- The asphalt crew begins repairing roads and footpaths. The crew will have repaired about 40 square metres of pavement by the end of the day.
- In-home support workers arrive at clients' homes to assist with personal care needs such as showering and dressing. More than 22,000 hours of personal care are provided every year.

7am
- More than 350 residents who have pre-booked Council's free rabbit collection service will have their rabbit collected at the rabbit sanctuary to be collected.
- Sweeper crews start cleaning 46 kilometres of the 470 kilometres of local roads.
- The two Crescent crew clean the streets to replace about 79 per cent of dirt and dropped footprints.
- Parents begin to drop off their children at one of Council's 25 family day care providers.

7.15am
- Inspections, maintenance and repairs begin on parks 304, trees, pathways, playgrounds, footpaths and lighting within Glen Eira's 120 hectares of parks and reserves.
- Litter is collected and leaves moved as Glen Eira's 350 prawn crews.
- Council's fire/nursing specialists care for the annual soil and perennial flower beds and pruning tree and garden maintenance.

7.26am
- At Council's three residential aged care facilities - Rosswave, St James and Harleysville - overnight staff prepare to leave on the morning of shift as staff and support staff arrive.
- Council's children's centres open their doors to care for 400 children aged 0-12 years.
- Staff support service staff arrive at 173 locations to help 11,000 children across 600 schools in regional Victoria.

8am
- Council's primary care nurse visits homes to attend to the needs of older residents or residents with a disability to change light globes, replace taps and change other maintenance issues.
- In-home support workers start to arrive at the homes of clients to assist with household tasks, shopping and errands. More than 45,000 hours of care are provided each year.
- Council's four community health nurses are picked up by a group of Fareham residents for their services.
- Mental and child health nurse begins work and will support 500 new families this week.
- Town planning support officers begin their day responding to customer enquiries. The 60-person planning department assists approximately 100 applications, receives 1000 phone calls and 8000 customer enquiries per year.

8.15am
- Bay Council's building supervisor approves new building permits. Recruitment staff issue keys to a local resident using Fairfield Park for a family function.
- A car delivers approximately 300 meals to clients. Staff and volunteers also monitor the health and wellbeing of clients and report any concerns to Council to follow up.
- A welfare officer inspects an intersection following a complaint from a nearby resident.
- Environmental health officers visit local food businesses to control the food of over 100 large businesses in the City.

9am
- Council's senior citizens center opens its doors to enable senior citizens groups to use the facilities.
- About 25 residents will attend Council's youth program that includes art and craft activities and discos and games.
- A large meal opens Duncan Macmillan Reserve. Footballers to use the Vicarious Primary Schools Sports Association Championship.

9.15am
- A Council-event building is under repair. It is expected to be completed by the end of the week.
- A municipal parking officer patrols on designated areas to ensure that all vehicles are parked legally. This will be achieved by neutral parking officers.

10am
- Council's four libraries - Caulfield, Glen Iris, Carnegie and Bentleigh - open their doors. Today 1500 library visitors will borrow more than 6000 books.
- Council's library opens its doors. About 1500 visitors will view an exhibition of contemporary or traditional art today.
- Council's strategic planning officers meet to discuss town planning policies to protect residents' amenity.
- School children arrive at the Duncan Macmillan basketball courts to participate in the Community Access to Netball for All Program.
- Counsellor of the social support service arrives at the Laude Road Centre for the day.

10.30am
- Maintenance work is carried out at the City's sports grounds. During summer, surf widows are kept in good condition, pools are mowed, and irrigation systems for correct operation during winter. While pools are finished and all sports grounds are inspected to ensure the surface is safe for players to use.

11am
- A potential business owner calls Council for advice on starting a new venture.
- A building maintenance officer inspects a Council building to ensure it is safe and repairs are made. This is just one of 21 such repairs being done today.
- Council's heritage advisor reviews plans on site to discuss a proposed renovation.
- Young workers speak with a group of secondary school students about the World Surfing School Development Program as part of its curriculum.

11.30am
- Council's building supervisor approves new building permits. Recruitment staff issue keys to a local resident using Fairfield Park for a family function.
- Home Library service delivers 100 specially made books to the homes of 15 residents.
- A service centre customer asks $26.50 on a top-up. This is just one of approximately 300 top-up transactions that will be made through the Service Centre today.
- Council's community shopping service will transport 19 elderly residents to local shopping centres.

12pm
- Fast food workers make home visits to deliver and exchange equipment and perform safety checks.
- Environmental health officers investigate a complaint about residential moike. After inspecting the complaints it will be investigated today.

1pm
- About 70 parents and grandparents attend a new parents group at one of Council's seven maternal and child health centers.
- A building inspector visits a local business to check smoke and alarms are working.

2pm
- A local law officer issues a vehicle, which has been illegally dumped.
- A resident contacts Council about smoke alarm issues. For compliance with requirements.
- A paramedic arrives at the Town Hall. 911 vaccinations are administered to children and adults.
- The evening meal is served at regional aged care facilities.

2.30pm
- The bar Children in Council's children's centers go home with their parents.
- About 8,600 street lights turn on in the city to make streets safer for motorists and pedestrians.
- An immunisation session starts at the Town Hall. 911 vaccinations are administered to children and adults.
- The evening meal is served at regional aged care facilities.

3pm
- An animal management officer patrols the park for the day, ensuring animals are being enjoyed with all hands-off and dogs not barking or jumping on their paws.
- A town planning officer facilitates a planning conference of discuss residents' concerns regarding a proposed medium density housing development.
- Business development teams welcome local financial businesses and non-profit organisations to the bank as part of a business information seminar.

3.30pm
- A recreation officer attends a reserve advisory committee meeting.

4pm
- Staff organisational at Rosswave, St James and Harleysville for the evening and overnight.
- Youth services' Musical Chairs basketball team plays in a local community basketball competition.

5pm
- Editing closing at Council's larger library. The last books are checked out as libraries help their final outcomes for the day.
- Flower shop begins to deliver flowers. The machine will work through the night, closing the day about 120 kilometres by 5am.

6pm
- Evening meetings are given to residents as Council’s aged care facilities.
- The reasons for someone's delivered meals arrives at the head office in 60 Rescue Cupcakes.

6.30pm
- Business development staff hand out the latest newsletter at the local hall.

7pm
- Overnight staff at aged care facilities check on residents multiple times during the next 24-hour period.
- Staff members continue to access the library catalogue and databases via Council's website while the libraries are closed.

8pm
- Automatic irrigation systems water parks and sportsgrounds overnight. They are programmed to water with precision and reliability.

9pm
- Facility services officers close the balustrade and prepare for an early-morning community group meeting.

10pm
- Council's small animal management officer responds to an emergency callout on a dog attack in a residential street.

11pm
- Garbage is collected from more than 400 public litter bins and collected from footpaths and parks.

12midnight
- After a windy night, the emergency team and park reserve teams are called to review a fallen tree that is blocking a driveway.
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THRIVING IN THE AGE OF ACCELERATION.
A creativerse INITIATIVE
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