



BAILLIEUGATE3

Peter Adamis 26 June 2014

The following articles are but a roundup of online media reports that continually spew out their points of view and trying to keep a story alive by attacking and displaying information on the BaillieuGate leaked tape by it is now believed to be rogue Liberal party members.

Surprise surprise, we all say, but why the surprise when it is well known that the current leadership and management of the party has alienated much of the Liberal party grass roots. A perfect example is at the last state Council election where on one two thirds of the delegates did not attend. They decided it was best to remain at home rather than waste their time when their voices would not be heard but was only a platform for politicians to rub shoulders with the 'mere mortals' they are supposed to represent. This in itself is not a good thing and many of those that did attend did so in order to see that the system operates in democratic and impartial manner.

As one who attended, it was disappointing to see less debate, selective topics being aired and others being dismissed for one reason or another. Many left disappointed while others were enlighten by the strong messages sent by Tony Snell of being united in order to return a Denis Naphthine government and this was certainly the right thing to do under the circumstances. Denis Naphthine spoke about the Liberal Party priding itself on selecting local community candidates at preselections to represent their electorates.

On reflection and in light of the Mary Woolridge/Tim Smith Battle for Kew, The Northern Metro preselection sham battle between Mathew Guy and Ted Baillieu, The 'Pyrrhus' Yan Yean battle where Frank Greenstein's protégé was selected over a local candidate are but some of the bungled preselections based on numbers and not merit of local candidates being selected. This in effect means that candidates have been selected not to win the electorate but rather to lose it by having been handed a poison chalice that is full to the brim with seductive promises.

Many of these young hopefuls have been privately counselled and supported to ensure that they are not taken in by promises that cannot be kept or sustained. However despite all the good intentions the allures of political promises are far too seductive to refuse. All of these nefarious preselections only went to eroding the inspiring messages of Tony Snell and Denis Naphthine and leaving a sour and bitter after taste to many long time Liberals. Suffice to say, many have indicated that their were reconsidering the membership at the next State election. One hopes that this will not be the case and that Denis Naphthine is able to bring about a political miracle, one that addresses the rot within the parliamentary wing. While Tony Snell the current President finds the courage to make the appropriate decisions to quell, calm or make compromises with grass root members and obtain their support for a Liberal party victory.

Another myth that needs to be exposed is that of "never run against a sitting member". What a complete facade, lie and joke on all new members and those who don't understand the party structure well enough to understand that it is all based on fear, intimidation and harassment. One excellent example is where one Upper sitting member attempted to put the fear of God, was called being disloyal, creating disunity and creating problems for the party.

All these accusations and intimidation were designed to deter the long time member from contesting a vacancy in his electorate. However the long time Liberal and his team had decided that enough was enough and that the electorate was not going to be taken for granted or that a candidate who did not deserve to be representing the electorate was selected. It just so happened that there was a vacancy which had come about due to a change in circumstances and the position was open to all and there was no running against any local member.

What is so ironic about all of this is that this very same upper house member was instrumental in being behind the scenes to remove a sitting Victorian Senator some years ago and replacing them with one of their own. This caused much embarrassment, humiliation and unrest within the Liberal Party that it almost brought it apart at the seams. Suffice to say cooler heads prevailed and the matter was dropped but never forgotten. If we are to use history as a guide to all of this we only need to be reminded when Bill Forward stood against a sitting member, John Miles in Templestowe province, Nicholas Kotsiras against David Perrin in Bulleen, Carlo Furletti against Bruce Skeggs in Templestowe province are but some examples to indicate the fallacy and myth of not standing against a sitting member.

Constitutional amendments, red tape regulations, procedures and practices are also another myth that needs to be exposed. There are so many examples within the current constitution that go towards supporting an elite group within the parliamentary wing comprising a small group of individuals who 'feel' that they and they alone are the only ones in a position to dictate policy and who should be selected for a seat to represent an electorate. If one of the many candidates considering a challenge or seeking preselection is not of their choosing, this same group of parliamentarians would pool their resources in order to scuttle or reduce a member's chances of ever coming close to being selected. There are many examples of this and yet new members are not aware or prefer to disbelieve that such practices occur.

There have been candidates in the past who have performed brilliantly but failed to be selected, because either they were not known, had not worked within the party, were new members, were enticed to stand not knowing that they had no chance and/or were promised a political return. There was a time where a candidate who stood against Russell Broadbent some years ago and spoke brilliantly may I say (one of the best speeches I have heard even to this day).

This member answered all of the questions at the round tables in the correct manner, presented and dressed well, had the life experiences on the board, was an affable and compassionate person, but failed to win preselection. Why one may well ask, it's because all the numbers were stacked against him. This is a lesson that did not go unnoticed. The good news is that this same member has gone on to become an influential member within the party structure. All that the author can say is that they missed out on an excellent candidate.

John Roskam was another member that stood for a seat and failed to achieve his objectives but it was not for the want of trying. John Roskam was one of those rare individuals that you could meet in the street and take an instant liking to. John was not only brilliant at this particular preselection but highly thought of in political and academic circles that should have got him over the line. John unfortunately came close based on his performance and his due diligence to lobbying delegates, but again it was not enough and in the end he was defeated. Another loss and political opportunity to the Liberal party at a time when they could not afford to waste.

Another monumental blunder which cost a high profile candidate his seat was carried out either on purpose or by misadventure was when the secretariat in its wisdom sent out the wrong 'How to vote cards' a few days prior to the date of the Federal election and bingo, the result was that the member lost the seat by an extremely small margin that his defeat could be attributed directly to the Secretariat. This member took it in good grace and did not lash out but went on with his life to a successful law carer.

One could say that the conduct of the Liberal party preselection is a fair system if it is based solely on performance, ability to win over sufficient delegates as well as being a local, but unfortunately the system has been hijacked by recalcitrant members seeking political returns and favours and not about selecting the best candidate for the electorate. This system requires a thorough review and overhaul to return it to its former credibility and status.

One way of overcoming all of these blunders and righting the wrongs of the past is to allow new blood into the ranks of the hierarchy and at all levels of office bearers and provide them with realistic goals and objectives that are achievable and that they all acknowledged for their volunteer work. (By new blood, I mean a generational change sprinkled with the wisdom of party elders who can act as mentors.)

These positions should not be based on friendships, alliances, allegiances, perceived elite status, the right school tie so to speak or to the length of time that a member has been in the party. It should all be based on merit, competency, credibility, commitment and the ability to follow through with projects. Remember no matter what academics may say, leaders are never born but they are developed according to their environment and circumstances.

Leaders within the party that lack credibility should be weeded out and replaced by competent men and women who are capable of carrying their assigned roles. Suffice to say, the Secretariat did not follow up their errors or even own up to the fact that they were at the centre of the defeat of a seat that was in the bag so to speak. Still like all loyal members they move on but they never forget.

All of the above are but mere symptoms of what is currently ailing the Liberal party and it is in the opinion of this author that there are members waiting in the parliamentary and hierarchy wings for the fall of the Denis Napthine government. There are members who profess intense loyalty and yet conspire behind the throne to topple the leader. These members and their sycophant collaborators are extremely clever at hiding their tracks and only time will tell once that battles have been fought.

The leaking of the Ted Baillieu tape is but one devious method to effectively reduce or destroy another member's capacity of ever gaining the leadership mantle of responsibility. The removal of Ted Baillieu only leaves two possible contenders that may be considered suitable, that is Matthew Guy and Michael O'Brien, both of whom are not ready to take on the responsibility until after the State election. You have to give credit where it's due and that credit must go to Denis Napthine who is currently doing a sterling job in maintaining the status quo and focusing on winning the next State election.

The other member that should be given the credit is Damien Mantach whose job is being made harder by these side shows that have deflected him from his core responsibility and that of winning elections. Damien Mantach reports directly to the President, Tony Snell and that of the Administrative committee and nobody else. He is also responsible for the management of the Liberal Party secretariat in order to ensure that administrative and logistic practices are maintained at their optimum level of efficiency. Damien Mantach does not report to Denis Napthine or to the Parliamentary wing without the express authority of Tony Snell and the Administrative committee.

Those with management experience know full well if the head of an organisation does not have the credibility, the vision, the communication skills, relationship building skills, and a good team of individuals (not sycophants or yes people) that organisation is doomed to fail. Readers can make their own judgement in this case as to what ails the Liberal party at this point in time and what should be done about it to clear the toxic elements within the party so that it can move forward with some degree of confidence.

Alas with only five months to go, it is hoped that those who are in influential positions look beyond their own needs and take a longer view of the challenges facing the Liberal party. This author is always of the belief that the Party as a broad church (Ecclesia) is bigger than any individual and as such it will continue to survive. What it looks like after the State election is something yet to be determined.

Ted Baillieu in the eyes of the author deserves better than the current derisive media comments and that those who supported him in the past should be castigated for driving the nail of disunity even further. Bernie Finn to his credit has moved on and is reluctant to strike back, which is a positive reminder to all parliamentarians and Liberal party members that dismembering and cannibalising one of its own is not the Australian way. In fact what is occurring is very much un-Australian, that of kicking someone when they are down.

The problems are not with Ted Baillieu and readers need to be on the lookout by searching elsewhere to find the culprits responsible. Recent media reports which indicate that the leaking of the Ted Baillieu tape originated from the electorates of Menzies, Kooyong and Higgins is also an attempt to hide the truth from the general public and that of party members. It is the author's opinion that the lawmakers who have been elected on a Federal and State level are responsible for the dirty tactics now being aired in public via their recalcitrant and sycophant supporters who are ready and willing to do the work of their political masters.

Their aim is to bring the Denis Naphthine government down and create a new political sphere at the expense of the Denis Naphthine conglomerate, the Coalition of the willing, Peter Costello/Michael O'Brien, Ted Baillieu/David Davis mob and the Scott Ryan/Matthew Guy. With a mere five months to go, it is anybody's guess what will occur and the author shudders whether we are to witness further exposures, battles for influence or plain anarchy. All that remains to be heard now is for 'a Caesar' who ever that may be is to say, 'let the games begin'.



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NAPHTHINE AND KENNETT QUESTION THE AGE OVER MISSING RECORDING OF BAILLIEU CHAT

JAMES CAMPBELL STATE POLITICAL EDITOR HERALD SUN JUNE 26, 2014

PAST and present Liberal premiers have demanded Fairfax reveal more about *The Age* tape debacle — which is at the centre of a political storm. Read more at the following URL link below.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/naphthine-and-kennett-question-the-age-over-missing-recording-of-baillieu-chat/story-fni0fit3-1226967000260>



BAILLIEUGATE CRISIS HAS VICTORIAN COALITION ON ROPES

The AUSTRALIAN JUNE 26, 2014 John Ferguson Victorian Political Editor

THE ailing Naphthine government's election-year budget has failed to win over voters, as rolling political crises and federal spending cuts further weaken the administration's hold on office, the latest Newspoll shows.

The poll, taken exclusively for *The Australian* over the past two months, shows the government would have been comfortably defeated at the polls, with Labor holding a 54 per cent to 46 per cent lead over the Coalition on a two-party-preferred basis. See Newspoll below. Primary-vote support for the Greens has jumped to 16 per cent while the Liberal Party dropped three points to 33 per cent and Labor was largely unmoved on 38 per cent. The Nationals' primary vote was 4 per cent, nearly three points below the result at the 2010 election.



Labor leader Daniel Andrews's dissatisfaction rating climbed four points to 37 per cent and dissatisfaction with Premier Denis Napthine jumped five points to 40 per cent. State Opposition leader Daniel Andrews. Picture: Mike Dugdale Source: News Limited



Napthine's better-premier rating climbed three points to 42 per cent and Mr Andrews was statistically unchanged on 29 per cent, with nearly a third of voters yet to commit to either leader. Victorian Premier Denis Napthine at State Parliament. Picture: Hamish Blair Source: News Corp Australia

The poll result will alarm government officials who were expecting last month's big-spending budget would have been the stepladder to election victory on November 29, with surpluses totalling \$11 billion and \$27bn worth of infrastructure spending. Adding to his troubles, Dr Napthine spent yesterday fighting off controversy over a leaked recording detailing former premier Ted Baillieu unloading on colleagues and fuelling the abortion debate during an off-the-record conversation with a Fairfax Media journalist.

A recording of the conversation was leaked, probably by rogue Liberals, sparking a police investigation and condemnation from the government over how the recording was made and then leaked. The News poll was conducted in May and this month, taking in the state and federal budgets and the crisis over suspended independent Geoff Shaw. Dr Napthine's inner sanctum has blamed the Coalition's poor showing on the fallout from the federal budget. But the government has been enveloped in controversy, specifically over Mr Shaw, who is suspended from parliament.



VICTORIA: PRIMARY VOTE

%	2010	2013				2014	
	Election Nov 27	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Jan-Feb	May-Jun*
Coalition	44.8	43	43	41	39	38	37
Liberal	38	38	40	37	36	35	33
Nationals	6.8	5	3	4	3	3	4
Labor	36.2	37	35	38	38	39	38
Greens	11.2	12	12	13	14	13	16
Others	7.8	8	10	8	9	10	9

*4% 'uncommitted' and less than 1% 'refused' excluded

Question: If a state election for the lower house were held today, which one of the following would you vote for? If 'uncommitted', to which one of these do you have a leaning?

TWO-PARTY-PREFERRED+

%	2010	2013				2014	
	Election Nov 27	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Jan-Feb	May-Jun
Coalition	51.6	50	51	49	47	47	46
Labor	48.4	50	49	51	53	53	54

+ Based on preference flow at November 2010 state election

These surveys were conducted on the telephone by trained interviewers among voters throughout Victoria. Telephone numbers and the person within the household were selected at random. The data has been weighted to reflect the population distribution of Victoria. The latest survey is based on 1151 interviews among voters. The maximum margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Copyright at all times remains with Newspoll. More poll information available at www.newspoll.com.au



NAPHTHINE'S PERFORMANCE

% Question: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Ted Baillieu/Denis Napthine is doing his job as Premier?	2013				2014	
	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Jan-Feb	May-Jun
Satisfied	50	53	53	42	43	44
Dissatisfied	19	26	31	36	35	40
Uncommitted	31	21	16	22	22	16

ANDREWS'S PERFORMANCE

% Question: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Daniel Andrews is doing his job as Leader of the Opposition?	2013				2014	
	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Jan-Feb	May-Jun
Satisfied	42	35	38	35	32	35
Dissatisfied	28	34	32	31	33	37
Uncommitted	30	31	30	34	35	28

BETTER PREMIER

% Question: Who do you think would make the better premier?	2013				2014	
	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Jan-Feb	May-Jun
Napthine	43	49	47	41	39	42
Andrews	24	26	25	27	28	29
Uncommitted	33	25	28	32	33	29

Labor's strong two-party-preferred vote is despite its own primary vote being less than two points higher than in 2010. The Liberal Party is down five points and the Nationals nearly three points. Labor will be closely monitoring the three-point increase in the Greens vote, which has climbed to be nearly five points above the election. Government ministers condemned Fairfax Media's handling of the leaked tape controversy, Dr Napthine urging *The Sunday Age* to explain how it fell into hostile hands.

It is unclear if Mr Baillieu gave the newspaper permission to record the conversation. It has not been ruled out that the recorder, which *The Age* claims was stolen, was picked up by the Labor Party and then handed to Liberal operatives. A small group of rogue Liberals have been blamed for disseminating the recording and *The Age* says it has complained to police about misuse of the conversation. *The Age* did not respond to questions.

Police did not comment.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/crisis-has-victorian-coalition-on-ropes-newspoll/story-e6frgczx-1226967010901>

NAPTHINE GOVERNMENT HEADED FOR CRUSHING ELECTION DEFEAT, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN POLL INDICATES

Alison Savage 26 JUNE 2014



PHOTO: Victorian Premier Denis Napthine has played down the implications of the polls. (ABC News)

The Napthine Government is headed for crushing defeat at the Victorian election in November, according to the latest Nielsen poll.

The poll of 1,000 Victorians published in *The Age* newspaper showed support for the Napthine Government had dropped six percentage points, leaving the Coalition trailing Labor 59 to 41 on a two-party preferred basis.

If the result was replicated at the November election the Coalition could lose up to 16 seats. A Newspoll in *The Australian* had the Coalition on 46 per cent to Labor's 54, two-party preferred. Deputy Premier Peter Ryan said the federal budget was hurting the Victorian Government. "No doubt it's washing through us," he said. "We understand that, it's just a fact of life. The feds have a difficult task."

Mr Ryan said the Government's poor performance in the polls should put the spotlight on the Labor Party. "I think in their own way [the polls] are a good thing," he said. "They will focus attention on who is this man, the alternative premier of Victoria?" The Premier denied the polls would make some of his backbenchers nervous. "Our backbenchers and our team are very united because we have a great budget," he said. "There's only one poll that counts and that's on the 29th of November."

But Government backbencher Michael Gidley expressed concern. "I think [the polls] clearly show the Liberal National coalition is the underdog for this coming election and that Labor is in the box seat," he said. "There's always room for improvement across the team, but we're working hard, we've got another five or so months." The Nielsen poll showed the two leaders virtually neck-and-neck in the preferred premier stakes, with Dr Napthine leading Daniel Andrews by just one percentage point.

The poll also showed Canberra was having a significant impact on the Victorian Government, with 39 per cent of those polled saying they would be less likely to vote for the Coalition because of the federal budget. It also found support for Labor's transport agenda over the Government's. Forty-five per cent of respondents thought Labor's plan to remove 50 of Melbourne's most dangerous level crossings should be the top priority, compared with just 20 per cent who thought the western section of the East West Link was the most important. The polls are another big headache for the Government after weeks of controversy surrounding the suspension of Independent MP Geoff Shaw, and growing speculation about factional infighting surrounding the former premier Ted Baillieu.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-26/napthine-government-headed-for-crushing-defeat-nielsen-poll/5551068>

DARK DEEDS AND GOINGS ON AT SPRING STREET

EDITORIAL HERALD SUN JUNE 25, 2014

FORMER leaders often become baggage for a political party, their successors preferring them to pack their bags and depart.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/opinion/dark-deeds-and-goings-on-at-spring-street/story-fni0ffsx-1226966885291>



LIBERALS CLOSING IN ON SOURCE OF LEAKED RECORDING

MICHELLE AINSWORTH AND JAMES CAMPBELL HERALD SUN
JUNE 25, 2014

Former premier Ted Baillieu with fellow Liberal MP Gary Blackwood at State Parliament. Picture: Hamish Blair

BERNIE Finn, the Liberal MP slammed by Ted Baillieu in the phone conversation with a Sunday Age journalist, has refused to bite back in public at the former premier. "I won't be commenting on colleagues, I'll leave the slicing and dicing of fellow Liberals for those who have far greater expertise than I," Mr Finn said.

In the leaked recording, Mr Baillieu can be heard criticising Mr Finn and his “crazy mates” for backing sin-binned anti-abortion MP Geoff Shaw in his 2010 liberal preselection for the seat of Frankston. Earlier the outspoken western suburbs MP had taken to his Facebook page in support of former premier Jeff Kennett, who has called on Mr Baillieu to quit parliament at November’s state election.

“Jeff Kennett often brings a great deal of common sense to the table,” the MP wrote. When a friend criticised Mr Kennett on his Facebook page, Mr Finn said Mr Kennett was “talking common sense now”. The tape debacle is a damaging distraction for the Napthine Government, and the Liberal Party is desperately trying to find out who leaked the recording. Yesterday Mr Kennett widened his attack on Mr Baillieu following his call in Tuesday’s Herald Sun for the former premier to leave politics. Speaking on 3AW, Mr Kennett linked Mr Baillieu’s decision to hang on in a job that was making him unhappy with Mr Kennett’s work on the mental illness of depression.

“What this tape does is indicate that Ted is unhappy still and isn’t happy with the people he works with,” he said. “We at Beyondblue have just started a major campaign around Australia called ‘Heads Up’ where we’re encouraging employers to create mentally healthy workplaces because we know 25 per cent of people don’t want to go to work because they’ve got stress and anxiety. Why would you want to continue in a workplace if you’re unhappy with those you’re working with?” Mr Kennett’s view that Mr Baillieu should exit politics was echoed by several Coalition MPs yesterday. “Kennett’s just said what everyone is thinking. Everyone wants him to go,” one Liberal MP said.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/age-tape-debacle-liberals-closing-in-on-source-of-leaked-recording/story-fnii5smt-1226967003967?nk=6c32fb6d0608b6316dfeb27bb0888f63>



LABOR LEADS NAPTHINE GOVERNMENT 59 TO 41 IN AGE/NIELSEN POLL

June 25, 2014 Josh Gordon *State political editor for The Age.*

Labor has its biggest two-party-preferred lead since 2008: Opposition leader Daniel Andrews and Premier Denis Napthine.
Photo: Wayne Taylor

Napthine’s response to poor poll results. See below. Denis Napthine says Victorians will be choosing between a “tired old Labor Party” and his Coalition government at the end of November. Labor has extended a crushing lead over the Napthine government as fallout from the federal budget, ongoing chaos in the Parliament and internal Liberal Party ructions continue to erode the Coalition’s re-election hopes.

FAIRFAX/NIELSEN POLL

TWO-PARTY VOTE

Labor	59%	▲ 6
Coalition	41%	▼ 6

PARTY

Labor	42%	▲ 5
Coalition	37%	▼ 4
Greens	14%	=
Palmer Utd	3%	n/a

LEADERS

Denis Napthine

Approve	48%	▼ 3
Disapproval	37%	▲ 5
Uncommitted	16%	▼ 1

Daniel Andrews

Approve	41%	=
Disapproval	36%	▼ 1
Uncommitted	23%	▲ 1

PREFERRED PREMIER

Napthine	41%	▼ 4
Andrews	40%	▲ 5
Uncommitted	18%	▼ 2

Has the state budget made you more or less likely to vote for the Coalition?

More likely	4%
Less likely	29%
No difference	65%

Has the federal budget made you more or less likely to vote for the Coalition?

More likely	5%
Less likely	39%
No difference	54%

Which of these projects do you think should be the higher priority?

West section of East West link	20%
Melbourne Metro tunnel	30%
Upgrades to level crossings	45%

The Nielsen Poll is designed to provide estimates of voting intention on a statewide basis. The poll is of 1000 Victorians from June 19-23 and compares responses from a Feb 22-26 poll. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Five months from the November 29 state election, an Age/Nielsen poll reveals the state government failed to gain political traction from the May budget, despite a \$27 billion major projects agenda. The poll of 1000 Victorians reveals the Coalition is now deeply mired, trailing Labor 41 per cent to 59 per cent in two-party preferred terms based on voters' intended preference allocations.

If an election were held now the Coalition would lose, becoming Victoria's first single-term government since 1955, with the loss of up to 16 seats under new electoral boundaries, assuming a uniform 11 per cent swing since the November 2010 election.

Even using a more conservative two-party-preferred measure based on preference flows at the 2010 election, the Coalition is in strife, according to the poll – trailing Labor 44 per cent to 56 per cent. The result comes amid a growing sense of panic within government ranks after months of controversy – the latest involving a leaked recording of former premier Ted Baillieu criticising colleagues.

Party sources are now warning that right-wing Liberal "jihadists" are seeking to undermine the government in an attempt to seize control of the party and its agenda following the November 29 election. Premier Denis Napthine on Wednesday insisted the government was united and focused on delivering results for the people of Victoria, saying he "totally disagreed" with claims the party was in danger of being hijacked.

"This is of interest to the media, but the general public ... want us to get on with governing for the people of Victoria," Dr Napthine said. The Coalition's primary vote has fallen from 41 per cent to 37 per cent, with Labor on 42 per cent and the Greens on 14 per cent. The poll confirmed the deep cuts inflicted by the Abbott government's first budget and Prime Minister Tony Abbott's unpopularity in Victoria have significantly damaged the state government's re-election chances.

Almost four in 10 voters, 39 per cent, said they were less likely to vote for the Coalition at the state election because of the federal budget, with only 5 per cent stating they were more likely. And despite the state government's big-spending infrastructure agenda which now includes both sections of the East West Link, a new train tunnel to boost capacity on the rail network, an airport rail link and level crossing upgrades – the state budget appears to have had little positive impact.

Only 4 per cent of voters said they were more likely to vote for the Coalition because of the state budget, with 29 per cent saying they were less likely and 65 per cent stating it would make no difference. Although Dr Napthine remains relatively popular, the Premier's approval rating fell 3 percentage points to 48 per cent, while his disapproval rating leapt 5 percentage points to 37 per cent.

Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews' approval rating remained steady at 41 per cent, with his disapproval rating down slightly to 36 per cent. But the poll revealed Mr Andrews is now closing the gap as preferred premier, with Dr Napthine leading by 41 per cent to 40 per cent. Nielsen pollster John Stirton said it was Labor's biggest two-party preferred lead in Victoria since February 2008.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/labor-leads-napthine-government-59-to-41-in-agenielsen-poll-20140625-zslo3.html>

LIBERALS CLOSING IN ON SOURCE OF LEAKED RECORDING

MICHELLE AINSWORTH AND JAMES CAMPBELL HERALD SUN JUNE 25, 2014

Bernie Finn, the Liberal MP slammed by Ted Baillieu in the phone conversation with a Sunday Age journalist, has refused to bite back in public at the former premier. **Read full article on url link below:**

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/age-tape-debacle-liberals-closing-in-on-source-of-leaked-recording/story-fni0fit3-1226967003967>

ANDREWS WINNING RACE BY DOING NOTHING

June 26, 2014 Josh Gordon State political editor for The Age.

Denis Napthine is correct when he says the latest scandal dogging his government a sideshow. It is an event the political class is clamouring to attend - including some tin-foil-hat-wearing conspiracy theorists on his own front bench who seem all too happy to contribute to the spectacle. As a result, Napthine's circus tent is all but deserted, leaving the government bereft in its efforts to sell its big spending state budget and law-and-order agenda. Five months out from a state election, this is a disaster.

Despite being able to boast of a \$27 billion major projects agenda and the strongest budget position in the nation, the government has failed to gain a political bounce. According to Napthine's detractors in the Labor Party, it is the least effective \$27 billion spent in Australia political history.

Instead his government appears to have sunk more deeply into the doldrums, trailing Labor 59 per cent to 41 per cent in two-party-preferred terms. How did it come to this? Napthine's political problems appear to emanate from several distinct sources which have combined to create a perfect storm. First, the Coalition is riven by internal tensions. There are tensions between moderates and a troublesome group of tea-party style right-wingers agitating for changes to abortion laws.

There are old factional wounds, constantly needled by fresh events, including a brutal preselection battle over the plum seat of Kew and the latest scandal involving the release of a recording between Ted Baillieu and a *Sunday Age* journalist, during which the former premier criticises some colleagues.

And there are tensions between the Liberals and Nationals, most recently fuelled by a Liberal Party decision to contest the newly created seat of Euroa, which the Nationals see as their territory. Second, there has been months of chaos in parliament linked to the government's tenuous grip on power including periodic and spectacular distractions created by balance of power MP Geoff Shaw and former speaker Ken Smith.

Third, perhaps most importantly of all, is the impact of the Federal Budget. Tony Abbott is so now so unpopular in Victoria that state MPs are openly suggesting that he should stay away from the November state election campaign. The poll shows why, with 39 per cent of respondents stating they are less likely to vote for the state Coalition as a result. Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews has gained much by doing little. It's not hard to see why. With so many forces working against Napthine, at this stage he need do little but join the clamour wanting to catch a glimpse of the sideshow.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/andrews-winning-race-by-doing-nothing-20140625-3atof.html>

SELECTIVE COMMENTS

Mark. I've always thought Napthine was a decent man and a pretty good politician. Nevertheless, it's very gratifying to see conservative governments everywhere starting to struggle. Even more gratifying to see their supporters outraged that the right to rule is being challenged by the lowly electorate who doesn't seem to understand that democracy is only supposed to be a theoretical concept used to enable money to rule in actuality.

David. Three things have happened since Ted Baillieu's Liberals accidentally won the last Victorian State election.

1. From Day 1 Baillieu let the unions run rampant and hold the state hostage. The Education, Police, Nurses and Ambulance unions have had a field day toying with this government and the Government has appeared 100% weak and ineffectual in being able to handle any of them. The majority of Victorians wanted a a tough stand - instead they got jelly backs and excuses from Baillieu's government.

2. Post the election the Liberal Party thought it would be smart politics to make friends of their ALP enemies rather than take them head on over the waste, waste and incredible waste and mismanagement foisted on this state.

Once the election was over all we heard were excuses for the failures not any real attempts to make those in the ALP accountable - and to this day the Desalination Plant rolls on as a monument to Labor failure yet to the voters it all seems like one big cosy 'boys club' down there at Spring Street with no one accountable for anything.

3. The Liberal Party give the very real impression that they couldn't organise a P up in a brewery. Weak ineffectual leadership from soft L liberals like Baillieu and now Naphthine have left true conservative voters confused as to exactly what the Liberal Party represents. This ambivalence is now writ large as many Liberals now couldn't care who runs the State as there appears little philosophical difference to either party - only we know the ALP will waste more...but who cares anymore.

A few weeks ago there was Naphthine attacking Abbott publicly over the Federal Budget??? Denis you are never going to win government for the Liberal Party whilst you are convincing swinging voters not to ever vote Liberal.

Bottom line is Naphthine and the Liberals deserve to be one term wonders. Such a shame for Victoria and we conservative voters.

Elizabeth. @David Excellent summary of Coalition ills in Victoria. As ex-Victorians you have summed up some of the ills we have noticed from the lofty heights (geographically speaking) of Queensland. Unions have always been a menace in Victoria and have done much damage, something we are only too aware of as we watch what is going on with the conservative government here in Queensland, who are trying to do a Kennett with our economy.

You see this write large in the federal sphere at the moment. It almost seems to be the case that the National Interest has become an insignificant bauble, when a little thought, commonsense and a lot less hankering after other taxpayers money to meet lifestyle would show voters that the national interest is also their single, most important interest.

MARGARET @David Couldn't agree more David, excellent summary of the state of the State of Victoria. Every time I see an ambulance or fire engine covered in ALP/Union propaganda graffiti slagging off about the government, I find it incredulous that there doesn't even appear to have been any dissent from the government about it. I have no respect for the ambos and firies anymore, they totally lack professionalism and their politization astounds me.

I am sure this unsubtle propoganda by members of professions that are seen as 'honest' is part of the new love the polls have found for Labor. Baillieu promised to get rid of smart meters, desal plant and the hopeless Myki ticket system. Guess what, all of them were retained with barely a murmur despite the public discontent. Baillieu was a total, total failure. The only successful policy he implemented was the Protective Services offices on the public transport system, this has been a definite winner.

Elizabeth. I don't really understand the problem for Victorian voters, when it seems the economy is doing well, and has a 3 star rating, there is, or is to be a small surplus, and, much needed infrastructure is being built. As an ex-Victorian I well remember the days when Victoria was driven into an economic mess, when the State Bank of Victoria was lost and

many other large commercial enterprises suffered heavily as a consequence of poor government.

Kennett steadied the ship and was thanked with a hefty boot. Looks as if the Coalition are going to be administered the same medicine, mainly due to the disruptions caused by a couple of mavericks and as a consequence of a tiny majority.. What a shame this is and particularly with what seems to be a rather inept opposition leader with the CMFEU hanging around his neck as the alternative, from what I can gather.

Janice. Victoria love Labor despite a history of 'no freeways' (Cain/Kerner) soft sentencing myki waste 'no dams' they want us all on public transport but the only solution they gave us was a card that does no more than the met card instead of upgrading trains and lines. They leave a fiscal mess with nothing to show for it but still, Victoria loves Labor

Elizabeth. @Janice You are correct, I think, that Victoria loves Labor which has always struck me as more than passingly strange considering they were once a very conservative state. It seems they like the coalition when an economic repair job is required (as does all of Australia), accept the better results, then immediately opt for more of the inept government which led to the need for repair. Must be something in the water.

The Victorian Coalition are in a bit of a mess at the minute, leaked interview, Geoff Shaw - but they have a Premier and Treasurer who are keeping the budget in a good position. O'Brien communicates well as does Napthine and they deserve to be given another opportunity to consolidate their plans.

Shaw has taken so much time and attention that it is difficult to see the gains the coalition have made. Another three years of the Coalition government, without the Shaw sideshow, would be good for Victoria Voting Labor is not the answer to the political mishaps that have made the headlines lately. There is a budget surplus. Remember that when voting. Victoria is in good hands.

KENNETT BELIEVES LEAKED BAILLIEU TAPE DELIBERATE

Fenella Wagener 26 June, 2014

Jeff Kennett says the leaked tape involving former premier Ted Baillieu was "no stuff up", but a "deliberate" ploy. Speaking with Neil Mitchell, Kennett said he suspected if the tape was stolen, it was stolen from the budget party that was thrown in the media rooms after the budget was brought down in May. "Someone, at that function, stole one, or maybe two, but I suspect one, or was given one tape – stolen or given – went away, listened to it, tricked up the material, hawked it around," he said.

"And no one did it, because no one would accept it in the media and then went back and put together this list that they circulated it to. "I think *The Age* owes its public the same transparency it demands of us. "It's got nothing to do with Ted, this is the credibility of the newspaper. "There's a bigger issue here, particularly as we go into an election, is a newspaper going to betray views when it won't uphold the same standards that it expects of others."

But *The Age* editor in chief Andrew Holden maintained there were “no dirty tricks”. He assured Neil Mitchell it was not a cover up. “What I do know is the tape recorder went missing, I don’t know exactly where, I don’t know exactly when,” he said. “Fundamentally it’s gone and somebody has got hold of it and I do regard it as stolen at that point because they clearly know who’s on it and they’ve used it in this purpose which I find quite appalling.”

Holden said the tape recorder that they knew was misused belonged to Farrah Tomazin, the political editor of the *Sunday Age*. He added another tape was also missing – that tape belonged to Josh Gordon. “I have absolutely no idea whether they’re connected in any way whatsoever,” he said, adding they went missing within the same week.

“Again, conspiracy theories might say that Fairfax journalists have been targeted, I can’t categorically say that. “Until it’s proven to me that somebody has got hold of (Josh’s) tape and are using pieces of his audio, it is purely coincidence as far as I know.”

<http://www.3aw.com.au/blogs/3aw-news-blog/kennett-leaked-baillieu-tape-deliberate/20140626-3auj4.html>



STOLEN RECORDING OF BAILLIEU AND REPORTER FARRAH TOMAZIN SENT TO LIBERAL MPS

June 24, 2014 Mark Hawthorne *Mark Hawthorne is Senior Editor at The Age. Ted Baillieu Photo: Luis Enrique Ascui*

A tape recording of a conversation between former premier Ted Baillieu and a journalist has been widely distributed via email to sitting Victorian MPs.

In the recording Mr Baillieu is critical of some of his parliamentary colleagues, including upper house MP Bernie Finn and rogue Frankston MP Geoff Shaw. An email accompanying the recording calls for penalties to be imposed on Mr Baillieu. Fairfax Media believes the private conversation was taken from the tape recorder of *The Sunday Age's* state political editor Farrah Tomazin, which was stolen just after the state budget in May.



Bernie Finn *Photo: Matthew Furneaux*

An email containing the stolen recording, and an edited transcript of that recording, were emailed to sitting Liberal MPs on Tuesday. The email claims that Tomazin is actively involved in the Liberal Party preselection process with Mr Baillieu, “as she and Mr Baillieu conspire to attack sitting MPs and candidates in the media”.

Editor in chief of *The Age*, Andrew Holden, said he was “appalled by the defamatory claims made in the email and rejects them totally”. “Our reporters do not take part in the internal matters of political parties and we always respect confidentiality of information and sources,” Mr Holden said.

"Indeed, we have been to court many times at great cost to protect our sources from legal challenges. "It appears that the dictaphone of one of our reporters has been stolen, and one conversation on that recorder used to attack her and a member of parliament. The actual recording proves that the transcript has been edited in such a way as to support those attacks.

"I will leave it to readers to draw their own conclusions as to who might be behind this campaign. It is a simple fact that *The Age* provides independent coverage of politics untainted by any political allegiances." The email, which purports to have been sent by a Liberal Party member - who does not appear to exist - also alleges that the tape recording was released by *The Age* state political editor Josh Gordon last week, after a private conversation with a person in the Liberal Party.

"I strenuously deny the allegations," said Gordon. "At no stage have I ever been privy to or had access to the private conversations of my friend and colleague Farrah Tomazin. I did not contact anyone last week to discuss internal party matters and I certainly did not email any private conversations to anyone in the Liberal Party," he said.

"Integrity is paramount in journalism. I would certainly not risk compromising my integrity or undermining a friend and colleague in the manner described in the email." The email is highly critical of Mr Baillieu and accuses him of "briefing out against his parliamentary colleagues". The email also identifies possible breaches of the Liberal Party constitution by Mr Baillieu. The former premier is defying the wishes of rival factions within the Liberal Party by standing for re-election in November.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/stolen-recording-of-baillieu-and-reporter-farah-tomazin-sent-to-liberal-mps-20140624-zsjv9.html>



**FEDERAL FACTORS HURTING
VICTORIAN COALITION, PETER
RYAN SAYS**

THE AUSTRALIAN JUNE 26,
2014 John Ferguson Victorian
Political Editor

Victoria's Deputy Premier Peter Ryan says federal factors are plaguing Victoria. *Source: News Limited*

VICTORIAN Deputy Premier Peter Ryan has blamed the fallout from the federal budget cuts and tax changes for the Napthine government's parlous position in the polls. Mr Ryan, the Nationals leader, said today the commonwealth had faced a tough financial challenge but that its measures were "no doubt" undermining his own government's standing in the polls. As his colleagues also blamed rolling "own goal" crises that have crippled the Napthine government, Mr Ryan said federal factors were plaguing Victoria.

"No doubt it's washing through us, we understand that that's just a fact of life," he said. "The feds have a difficult task and it's hard yards and a lot of it washes off on us. That's the fact." Police Minister Kim Wells said the government also had been harmed by the relentless uncertainty surrounding rebel independent Geoff Shaw and the latest scandal where former premier Ted Baillieu was taped slamming several colleagues and fuelling the abortion debate.

"The Geoff Shaw stuff has been a distraction. Obviously the tapes with The Age have also been a distraction," Mr Wells said. The latest Newspoll, taken exclusively for The Australian over the past two months, shows the government would have been comfortably defeated at the polls, with Labor holding a 54 per cent to 46 per cent lead over the Coalition on a two-party-preferred basis. Primary-vote support for the Greens has jumped to 16 per cent while the Liberal Party dropped three points to 33 per cent and Labor was largely unmoved on 38 per cent. The Nationals' -primary vote was 4 per cent, nearly three points below the -result at the 2010 election.

Labor leader Daniel -Andrews's dissatisfaction rating climbed four points to 37 per cent and dissatisfaction with Premier Denis Napthine jumped five points to 40 per cent. Dr Napthine's better-premier rating climbed three points to 42 per cent and Mr Andrews was statistically unchanged on 29 per cent, with nearly a third of voters yet to commit to either leader. The government was hoping last month's big-spending budget would have been the stepladder to election victory on November 29, with surpluses totalling \$11 billion and \$27bn worth of infrastructure spending.

Adding to his troubles, Dr Napthine spent yesterday fighting off controversy over a leaked recording detailing -former premier Ted Baillieu unloading on colleagues and fuelling the abortion debate during an off-the-record conversation with a Fairfax Media journalist. A recording of the conversation was leaked, probably by rogue Liberals, sparking a police investigation and condemnation from the government over how the recording was made and then leaked. The Newspoll was conducted in May and this month, taking in the state and federal budgets and the crisis over Mr Shaw, who has been suspended from parliament for rorting his car and petrol allowances. Labor's strong two-party-preferred vote is despite its own primary vote being less than two points higher than in 2010.

The Liberal Party is down five points and the Nationals nearly three points. Labor will be closely monitoring the three-point increase in the Greens vote, which has climbed to be nearly five points above the election. Government ministers condemned Fairfax Media's handling of the leaked tape controversy, Dr Napthine urging The Sunday Age to explain how it fell into hostile hands.

It is unclear if Mr Baillieu gave the newspaper permission to record the conversation. It has not been ruled out that the recorder, which The Age claims was stolen, was picked up by the Labor Party and then handed to Liberal operatives. A small group of rogue Liberals have been blamed for disseminating the recording and The Age says it has complained to police about misuse of the conversation. The Age did not respond to questions. Police did not comment.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/federal-factors-hurting-victorian-coalition-peter-ryan-says/story-e6frgczx-1226967432861>

GUT FEELING

THE AUSTRALIAN JUNE 26, 2014 James Jeffrey Strewth Editor Sydney

Ups and downs

WHEN you're talking up a restaurant to a friend, where do you start? The food? The service? The decor? For one Strewth agent being enticed to Melbourne's Bamboo House on Tuesday evening, the sales pitch was that it was "somewhere Liberals like to meet and plot". Sales pitch successful, our agent arrived at the restaurant to be met with the vision of former Victorian premier **Ted Baillieu** and former Speaker **Ken Smith** "looking quite miserable", presumably in a funk of commiseration over Baillieu's leaked colleague-slagging chat with a reporter from *The Age*.

We hope their appetites were OK. But the Bamboo House proved to be a broad church that night. Sometime later, the national secretary of the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union's construction division, **Dave Noonan**, swaggered in with his entourage, which included Master Builders Australia chief executive **Wilhelm Harnisch**; the atmosphere at their table provided the upbeat yang to the subdued yin at the Baillieu-Smith table.

Our agent likened the Noonan-Harnisch dining experience to Queensland Premier **Campbell Newman** chummily breaking bread with the head of the Bandidos (something we'd like to see in the interests of world peace), albeit without specifying who was the premier in this scenario and who was the bikie.

When the chat escapes. ANOTHER former Victorian premier, **Jeff Kennett**, was on radio talking about the Baillieu leak, though it was impossible not to think of his own adventures in the realm of leaked colleague-slagging. We speak, of course, of his intercepted **John Howard**-bucketing chat with **Andrew Peacock** in 1987. It's worth revisiting, and not just for its plentiful rude bits and Peacock's hopeful pleas ("No! Don't do that, Jeffrey"). No, the best bit surely remains Kennett's gentle reflection on the effect of his salty tirade on Howard: "And the poor little fellow didn't know if he was Arthur or Martha."

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/strewth/gut-feeling/story-e6frgdk6-1226966866364>

TED BAILLIEU RECORDING: IT'S ALL IN THE BACKGROUND

June 24, 2014 Darren Gray *Rural affairs reporter for The Age*

I'm not going to say who was involved, but I've had plenty of them with parliamentarians over the years. "Background" discussions that is – on political events, issues, policies, internal party infighting and preselection tussles – briefings designed to inform my understanding of important political circumstances and developments. They came from senior MPs right near the top of government, they came from shadow cabinet ministers, and they came from MPs who were either on the way up or wanted to be.

Of course they came from MPs on both sides of politics. Sometimes they came from a lone MP, but sometimes the MP was not alone. Sometimes we were sitting in a restaurant having

lunch or dinner, in a cafe having a coffee, in the parliamentarian's office, or perhaps just speaking on the phone. In my time covering politics they helped me write all types of articles.

Background briefings from parliamentarians, not to mention from people active in a political party who are not MPs, are not unusual events. They happen and they happen regularly. They happen in the state parliamentary offices of Victorian MPs, in the large offices enjoyed by federal MPs in Parliament House, Canberra, and in the eating establishments nearby both seats of government. And although I've never reported on politics in other state capitals, I'd confidently bet a month's pay packet that they happen in those jurisdictions too. As a reporter, the fact that I received background briefings did not make me unique. I'm sure reporters covering politics for rival newspapers also received them, and I'm sure they still do.

It must be remembered, sometimes politicians will only speak their mind about particular events to a reporter when it is a "background" conversation. Don't be naive and think politicians on the same side of politics automatically like each other and all get along. They most certainly do not. Some important issues only get fully ventilated because sometimes, politicians speak on background to reporters.

Which brings me to the leaked recordings of a conversation between a Fairfax reporter and former premier Ted Baillieu, a politician whom I dealt with as a politics reporter and who clearly was from a different mould to most MPs. He was quieter than many, not as ruthless as many, and yet he ended up in the job that all very ambitious Victorian MPs want - that of Premier. In releasing this recording of a conversation between Mr Baillieu and *Sunday Age* journalist Farrah Tomazin, someone (or more likely some people) has gone to an enormous amount of effort.

The recording has been widely distributed via email to sitting MPs, and a lengthy transcript has even been produced. In the process, those who released the tape have skewered Mr Baillieu and inflicted serious damage on the Liberal Party - which faces a state election in just five months and has a wafer-thin majority. The release of the recording and associated email has also sought to damage two respected Fairfax political reporters, Ms Tomazin and Josh Gordon, respected members of the state parliamentary press gallery.

So what's at play here? Who did it? They are hard questions to answer, and they probably pose even more questions again. Questions like these; Why did Ms Tomazin's dictaphone get stolen; why did the email make outrageous and wrong claims about the behaviour of Mr Gordon; and why are some people still keen to damage Mr Baillieu so long after he departed?

While those questions are not likely to be answered soon, if at all, what we do know is that it is not the first time a leaked tape recording has been used to destabilise Ted Baillieu. In March 2013, the release of secret recordings of conversations between Liberal heavyweight Tony Nutt, Liberal Party state director Damien Mantach and former ministerial adviser Tristan Weston led to Mr Baillieu's downfall. Despite the fact Mr Baillieu is long gone from the Premier's office and will never return there, someone extremely close to Spring Street remains intent on causing the former premier maximum damage.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/ted-baillieu-recording-its-all-in-the-background-20140624-zsk72.html>