



# BAILLIEUGATE 10

Peter Adamis July 2014

What a waste of man-hours, resources and money over an alleged stolen tape. My question is what was the end result? A Victorian public lapping it all up or a Victorian public fed up? My uneducated guess it's the latter. I read one blog comment recently that stated "Oh what a web we weave when we practice to deceive", but I will go on further to add "come into my parlour said the spider to fly".

## **Are politicians a pack of bastards?**

Although this question is on the mind of many Victorian voters at the moment, I do not believe that it is a fair comment when most of our representatives work long hours in trying to do the right thing. However having said that there is always in the back of our minds that with so many "side shows" and alleged scandals, it's not hard to think along those lines. For example, the past few weeks Victorians have been subjected to a line of circus acts that have been second rate. Acts that demonstrate our political representatives inability to create a stable environment that would be attractive to Victorian voters.

## **Ambition or political avarice.**

Innuendoes and inferences are but character assassination attempts by a few members of the Liberal socialist left and their activities can be traced back to their original source by monitoring their linguistic and voyeuristic behavior. These same left wing socialist Liberals involve, ambition, egotism, jealousy, thirst for power but most of all lack the political expertise and talent to replace the senior Victorian Federal Minister in Question. These ambitious little miscreants hide behind a veil of political respectability doing what is perceived to be the right thing in the eyes of Liberal party members.

All the time using "cherry boys" or scurrilous maids" to carry out their nocturnal political activities by trying to reduce the effectiveness of the Federal Minister in Question. Mind you ambition is not a bad virtue as long as greed, avarice and disloyalty are not attached to it. Whether they like it or not the Minister is here to stay and attacking and undermining the Prime Minister through third parties and proxies is doomed to fail. Ideological loyalty and political respect are the order of the day. See more below.

## **A week of Confessions and white anteing.**

This coming week appears to be one of confessions, pleading and coming to terms with political reality by a number of alleged senior Victorian Liberals white anteing the Prime Minister Tony Abbott. It's a pity that these so called senior Liberals cannot put a sock into their mouths and stop the undermining of the Australian Prime Minister. We have already seen the devastating effects of a Labor Government that tore itself apart by the numerous leadership challenges, political guerrilla tactics, innuendoes and public brawling. This is not what the Liberal party is all about. It's enough to drive a bloke to drink or even worse joining the Greens heaven forbid.

# ALP member admits access in tape scandal

July 28, 2014 **The Age Headlines**

A senior Victorian ALP member has reportedly admitted illegally accessing a stolen Age dictaphone recording.

The report comes as Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews prepares to break his two-day silence over the Age tape affair.

Mr Andrews will on Monday morning make a statement at Fairfax Media's Docklands headquarters after an interview with Neil Mitchell

## **Waste of resources.**

The question now remains as to who are the winners and losers from such a confession. Labor with mud on the faces or the Liberals with an unwarranted witch hunt. It is my opinion that neither political party can truly say that they are covered in glory and now we can expect to see political knives unsheathed, battle axes at the ready and a laughter begin in the political arena we call parliament. What a joke. Again I say what a waste of resources and waste of time when political parties should be looking to governing Victoria. Denis Napthine was entirely correct when he said that this was all a 'side show'. I do hope for his sake (Denis Napthine) and that of the Victorian Liberals that all petty infighting can now cease and concentrate on winning the State election.

## **Victorian voters are not stupid.**

Victorians voters are not stupid and should not be taken for granted or led up the garden path so to speak, but should be told the truth. Creating a political platform built on untruths, manufactured evidence, innuendoes, character assassinations and other nefarious activities leads Victorian voters to believe that their representatives lacks credibility and emotional intelligence. This rot must stop and our political leaders must return back to a stage of reality, commonsense and respect for those they represent. I say all of this due to the silly escapades of those who should know better than to fool the Victorian public.

## **Labor ideological mending.**

As for the Labor Party, the damage to its reputation and to that of Daniel Andrews is a matter for the Victorian public to decide in November. Whatever hierarchal infighting that is currently going on within the Labor party is a matter for the party and not that of their parliamentary wing. Labor needs to get their house in order to become and able and effective opposition so that Victorians can judge for themselves that the Labor party are worthy to take on the mantle of leadership and responsibility. Methinks that at the current moment with the Royal Commission in full swing, the silly little debacle over the leaked BaillieuGate tape amongst another matters, that Labor has an uphill battle in front of it.

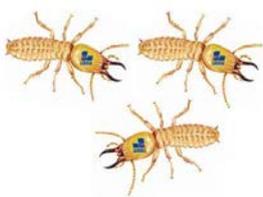
## **State Director.**

This does not mean that the Liberal party can now sit back comfortably in the misguided knowledge that Victorians will return them back into power. There is still much work to be done and Damien Mantach at the moment has his hands full. I have said this before and will continue to say it, that the Liberal party State Director needs to be allowed to focus on winning the State election without the interference of the Parliamentary wing and the hierarchal Neanderthals that hover over his every decision. The State Director responsibilities are many, but his main task is to win campaigns and manage the Secretariat without interference.

**Changes to office bearers.** If the labor Party is not going to take action against Victorian Labor's assistant secretary Kosmos Samaras, one wonders whether any action will be taken against Liberal party members whose actions have landed in the Federal Court. Will their membership be suspended pending the outcome of the court's decision and/or will it mean that those who are office bearers be requested to step down from their positions. If this is the case what ripple domino effect will it have on the electorate campaigns that are currently underway and will their absence greatly affect the outcome. This will surely be matter for Tony Snell and his management team to decide and one can only guess the damage that it will do to the campaign overall. The seat in question is winnable and much work has gone into creating a positive outcome at the next State election. Details of the members in question may be found in the article below.

**Vacant electorate representation.** At the present moment there are still Labor held seats that require to be filled with suitable candidates and this is becoming a problem in some safe Labor held electorates. On one hand the Liberal Party is according to Denis Napthine a political party that is proud of selecting community candidates while on the other hand it has been known to cast shadows of doubt on well meaning candidates who wish to serve and contribute towards a Liberal party ideology but lack the language and social skills to be selected. The irony of this is that it can send the wrong message to candidates whose origins and culture are not only alien but also differ greatly to the Australian political landscape. I am not saying that the Labor or Liberal Party are racist in their outlook, but one can fathom a guess that a candidate must have certain Australian characteristics that will endear them to the Australian public.

**Silly nilly lily white anteing & leaking senior socialist left Liberals.** Who are these "senior Liberals" that are leaking to the press and saying that they were confident who was responsible for the emails. Who are these so called silly little puffed up 'senior left wing socialist Liberal officials' who told the Herald Sun that the party was confident who was responsible and the guilty parties were very nervous."



What a load of hogwash and broken down has-been former politicians big noted themselves to make themselves appear relevant and credible to the media. They are a disgrace to the political volunteer profession. One hope that they are not the band of "Leakers" mentioned by the media during the past few weeks.

This is only creating further instability within the Liberal party when all members should be concentrating on the State election. One does not have to be prophet of doom to see what will happen if the Liberals lose the election. This author has been saying it for some time for Liberals to pull together and get behind Denis Napthine to win. I am compelled to say that in days gone by disloyal subjects were taken out the back shot, drawn and quartered. In it is my opinion that the same rule applies to all and that is suspend or to cancel their membership.



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## VICTORIAN LABOR ADMITS LISTENING TO DAMAGING TAPE BUT DENIES LEAK TO LIBERALS

PIA AKERMAN & Additional reporting: John Ferguson The Australian July 28, 2014. Victorian Labor admits listening to damaging tape but denies leak to Liberals. VICTORIAN Labor leader Daniel Andrews has accepted responsibility for investigating how a damaging, unauthorised recording obtained by Labor was leaked to the Liberals, while vowing that no one in his office was involved in distributing the tape.

Mr Andrews has been under immense pressure since it was revealed last week that senior Labor figures had held and listened to a dictaphone after Fairfax Media journalist Farrah Tomazin lost it at the ALP state conference in May. Tomazin had recorded off-the-record conversations with senior political figures without their knowledge, and a tape of former premier Ted Baillieu criticising some of his colleagues was publicly leaked last month. Mr Andrews said he had only learnt on Friday that his chief of staff John McLindon had listened to the tape before it was leaked. "Nobody in my office had any involvement whatsoever in the distribution of this material," he told radio 3AW.

He said the dictaphone was found by staff at the conference venue and given to Labor's registration desk where it sat for two days before being taken to head office. Assistant party secretary Kosmos Samaras said he then listened to the tape and was "shocked and angry" to discover Tomazin had recorded an off-the-record conversation with him without permission. Mr Andrews said Mr Samaras had erred by not returning the tape, instead deciding with state secretary Noah Carroll and Mr McLindon to destroy the tape recorder after seeking legal advice. All files were deleted and the dictaphone's memory card removed and cut up with scissors, Mr Andrews said.

"I do not know how this was leaked by the Liberals to other Liberals ... neither does the Liberal party," he said. "All the copies from the tape recorder were deleted. "The whole thing is a dirty mess." Mr Andrews said Tomazin had also recorded off-the-record, private conversations with two shadow ministers and conversations with premier Denis Napthine and Health Minister David Davis, although it is unclear whether the government MPs knew they were being recorded. Mr Andrews said it was wrong to say senior staff from his office were involved in the theft and dissemination of the recorder, as The Age reported last week, and he was awaiting legal advice on a possible defamation case.

But he accepted responsibility for the fact that the tape had come from Labor. "I accept full and complete responsibility for getting to the bottom of this," Mr Andrews said. Senior Liberal minister Matthew Guy said there should be a full investigation into the leak, with Labor officials involved stood down until it was completed. Computers and USB sticks involved should be handed to police. "Mr Andrews said he would take full responsibility for this, he had taken none," Mr Guy, the planning minister, told reporters. "He's running a protection racket for those in his own office, including his state secretary, who he knows has done the wrong thing." Mr Samaras says he listened to the device after it was found in the party's lost property after the May state ALP conference and not claimed.

After finding a conversation he had with the journalist had been recorded without his knowledge, he listened to ascertain whether "there were any other recordings of my private conversations". "In doing so I listened to numerous senior politicians on both sides of politics and others whose private conversations which I presumed had also been recorded without their knowledge. "After some consideration I decided that given the device contained unauthorized private conversations, it was not appropriate to retain, return or disseminate the device. I destroyed it. "In hindsight this was the wrong thing to do. I should have returned the device and sought an explanation for why I was being recorded."

Mr Samaras said he apologised to Tomazin and the Age for not having returned the device. He denied leaking the unauthorized interview between The Sunday Age and Mr Baillieu. ALP state secretary Noah Carroll said Labor "reiterates its long standing statement that it has not been involved in the theft of any dictaphone nor the distribution of the contents of any dictaphone and categorically rejects any such accusation". "I am personally unaware of any information as to who may have broadcast such content, nor am I aware of anyone who would have reason to know." He said Mr Andrews had instructed the party to issue a public clarification of the matter.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/victorian-labor-admits-listening-to-damaging-tape-but-denies-leak-to-liberals/story-e6frczx-1227003874542#>



**Kosmos Samaras** is an Australian political activist, currently the Assistant State Secretary of the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party. He was appointed on August 26, 2005. Kosmos Samaras is one of the leaders of the Victorian Socialist Left faction of the ALP. Prior to his elevation to the Victorian ALP State Office, he served as an electorate officer to Senator Kim Carr, the leader of the Socialist Left in Victoria.

He is currently responsible for the Victorian ALP marginal seat campaign strategy. Fairfax Community Newspapers publication *Hume Community News* described him as being a leader of the Socialist Left faction. Currently the Assistant State Secretary Kosmos Samaras and can be reached via email: [admin@vic.alp.org.au](mailto:admin@vic.alp.org.au)

Sources: <https://www.viclabor.com.au/about/state-party/>  
[http://www.thefullwiki.org/Kosmos\\_Samaras](http://www.thefullwiki.org/Kosmos_Samaras)

## LABOR OFFICIAL KOSMOS SAMARAS FOUND UNAUTHORISED RECORDINGS ON JOURNALIST'S DICTAPHONE

THE AUSTRALIAN JULY 28, 2014 John Ferguson Political Editor. A SENIOR Labor official in Victoria has admitted obtaining a journalist's lost dictaphone and says it reveals numerous apparently unauthorised recordings with senior politicians on both sides of politics.

Victorian Labor leader Daniel Andrews is under siege over the alleged involvement of Labor staff in the obtaining of a Fairfax Media reporter's dictaphone containing unauthorised recordings of key political figures, one of which was leaked to Liberal MPs.

[http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/labor-official-kosmos-samaras-found-unauthorised-recordings-on-journalists-dictaphone/story-e6frczx-1227003874542?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+TheAustralianNewsNDM+%28The+Australian+%7C+News+%7C%29#](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/labor-official-kosmos-samaras-found-unauthorised-recordings-on-journalists-dictaphone/story-e6frczx-1227003874542?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheAustralianNewsNDM+%28The+Australian+%7C+News+%7C%29#)



## LABOR OFFICIAL ADMITS ROLE IN TAPES

Lauren Hilbert 28 July, 2014

Senior Labor officials have admitted to listening to and downloading the contents of a dictaphone belonging to an Age journalist. Until now, Labor has refused to comment on reports that senior officials were involved in the theft of a dictaphone and the distribution of a private conversation involving former Premier Ted Baillieu.

The dictaphone was lost at the Labor party state conference. In a statement, assistant state secretary Kosmos Samaras says he obtained the dictaphone and listened to its contents to determine the owner. He says he heard a private conversation between himself and the journalist and he says he was angry it had been recorded without his knowledge. He says he and other staff considered whether the contents should be distributed but it was decided it should be destroyed. Mr Samaras says he has no knowledge as to how the recording was subsequently disseminated.

<http://www.3aw.com.au/blogs/3aw-news-blog/labor-official-admits-role-in-tapes/20140728-3co8o.html>



## VICTORIAN LABOR LEADER DANIEL ANDREWS UNDER SIEGE OVER DICTAPHONE SCANDAL

THE AUSTRALIAN JULY 28, 2014 John Ferguson Victorian Political Editor. VICTORIAN Labor leader Daniel Andrews' leadership authority is under siege over his failure to deal with his office's involvement in a dirty tricks campaign.

Senior Labor figures are demanding he sack one or more members of his staff over their alleged involvement in the seizure of a Fairfax Media reporter's dictaphone. The dictaphone contained a series of unauthorised recordings of key Victorian political figures, one of which was leaked to Liberal MPs.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/victorian-labor-leader-daniel-andrews-under-siege-over-dictaphone-scandal/story-e6frgczx-1227003494305#>

## LABOR OFFICIAL KOSMOS SAMARAS FOUND 'UNAUTHORISED RECORDINGS' ON JOURNALIST'S DICTAPHONE

THE AUSTRALIAN JULY 28, 2014 John Ferguson Victorian Political Editor. A SENIOR Labor official in Victoria has admitted obtaining a journalist's lost dictaphone and says it reveals numerous apparently unauthorised recordings with senior politicians on both sides of politics. Victorian Labor leader Daniel Andrews is under siege over the alleged involvement of Labor staff in the obtaining of a Fairfax Media reporter's dictaphone containing unauthorised recordings of key political figures, one of which was leaked to Liberal MPs. Labor denies stealing the dictaphone or leaking any of its contents.

Labor Assistant Victorian Labor secretary Kosmos Samaras says he listened to the device after it was found in the party's lost property after the May state ALP conference and not claimed. He said he was "shocked and angry" to hear a conversation he had with the journalist had been recorded without his knowledge. "I listened through the device to ascertain whether there were any other recordings of my private conversations," Mr Samaras said in a statement.

"In doing so I listened to numerous senior politicians on both sides of politics and others whose private conversations which I presumed had also been recorded without their knowledge. "After some consideration I decided that given the device contained unauthorised private conversations, it was not appropriate to retain, return or disseminate the device. I destroyed it. "In hindsight this was the wrong thing to do. I should have returned the device and sought an explanation for why I was being recorded."

Mr Samaras said he apologised to journalist Farah Tomazin and the Age for not having returned the device. He denied leaking the unauthorised interview between The Sunday Age and former premier Ted Baillieu. ALP state secretary Noah Carroll said Labor "reiterates its long standing statement that it has not been involved in the theft of any dictaphone nor the distribution of the contents of any dictaphone and categorically rejects any such accusation".

"I am personally unaware of any information as to who may have broadcast such content, nor am I aware of anyone who would have reason to know. He said Mr Andrews had instructed the party to issue a public clarification of the matter. Mr Samaras says the dictaphone was handed to a temporary registration desk at the conference but was never claimed. The device was returned to ALP head office and remained undiscovered for some time. "Sometime later after no claim was made for the device I took responsibility for determining what should happen to it. I listened to it to ascertain its ownership."

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/labor-official-kosmos-samaras-found-unauthorised-recordings-on-journalists-dictaphone/story-e6frgczx-1227003874542>



### **VICTORIAN LABOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY KOSMOS SAMARAS DESTROYED JOURNALIST'S DICTAPHONE AFTER HEARING PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS**

28 July 2014 ABC. Victorian Labor's assistant secretary has said he destroyed a journalist's dictaphone after listening to its contents and hearing a conversation with himself and other senior politicians.

Kosmos Samaras issued a statement apologising for not returning the dictaphone, which belonged to The Age journalist Farrah Tomazin."After some consideration I decided that given the device contained unauthorised private conversations, it was not appropriate to retain, return or disseminate the device. I destroyed it," Mr Samaras said in the statement. "In hindsight this was the wrong thing to do. "I should have returned the device and sought an explanation for why I was being recorded. "I apologise to Ms Tomazin and The Age for not having returned the device." A recording of an off-the-record discussion between former premier Ted Ballieu and Ms Tomazin from the dictaphone was sent to Liberal Party members in an anonymous email last month.



## VICTORIAN ALP MEMBER ADMITS ACCESSING STOLEN AGE RECORDING

July 28, 2014 Robyn Grace and Deborah Gough. *Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews*. Photo: Luis Ascui. A senior Victorian ALP member has admitted accessing a missing dictaphone recording made by a journalist for *The Age*. Victorian Labor assistant secretary Kosmos Samaras on Monday morning said he listened to the recording, which contained private conversations between *The Sunday Age's* state political editor Farrah Tomazin and several politicians including former premier Ted Baillieu.

Mr Samaras's statement came as Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews broke his two-day silence over the affair, telling radio station 3AW he accepted full responsibility for "getting to the bottom" of the distribution of the recording. "I spent the weekend doing just that," he said. Mr Samaras said he was "shocked and angry" to hear a private conversation between himself and Tomazin. "Had it been put to me that I was being recorded I would have ended any such conversation," he said in a statement. As *The Age* can reveal, the dictaphone was handed in to lost property by security at Labor's state conference in May, before being taken back to ALP headquarters and listened to by Mr Samaras.

The private conversation between Tomazin and Mr Baillieu was then copied, and listened to by a small group of senior party operatives, including state secretary Noah Carroll and Mr Andrews' chief of staff, John McLindon. A decision was made by Mr Samaras not to release it after legal advice was provided by Slater and Gordon lawyer James Higgins. Despite the advice, and against the wishes of Mr Samaras, the recording was forwarded to a third party, before being emailed to hundreds of Liberal Party members. Mr Kosmos said he listened through the device and heard "numerous senior politicians on both sides of politics".

The editor-in-chief of *The Age*, Andrew Holden, said he was disappointed that Mr Samaras was attempting to deflect blame for the scandal to Tomazin. "We stand completely by her integrity. The simple fact is that Mr Samaras should have returned the recorder as soon as he saw the Fairfax Media sticker on the back, there was no need for him to listen to any of the recordings," Holden said. "This is also only half a confession from the ALP. They admit they made copies of the Baillieu recording, which means they should be able to determine who passed it on to the Liberal Party. This investigation is far from complete." Mr Andrews said the scandal was "a dirty mess" but the ALP did not accept responsibility for the tape's distribution.

"Nobody in my office had any involvement whatsoever in the distribution of this material," he said. Mr Andrews said Mr Samaras would not lose his job. "He is a good and decent person who made the wrong call and he will not be losing his job over this," he said. Mr Samaras said: "After some consideration, I decided that given the device contained unauthorized private conversations, it was not appropriate to retain, return or disseminate the device. I destroyed it," he said.



Photo: Mr Samaras. "In hindsight this was the wrong thing to do. I should have returned the device and sought an explanation for why I was being recorded. I apologize to Ms Tomazin and *The Age* for not having returned the device." Mr Samaras said the device was copied "for the purposes of listening to it" at some point prior to being destroyed. "The question of whether it should be distributed was considered," he said.

"It was determined by myself and others who were consulted [who I understand will make their own statement] that it should not be distributed and was subsequently destroyed along with the device. "It was a decision I strongly supported as I had personal sympathy for those who had also been recorded without their knowledge. The purpose of my destruction was in part to end any possibility that a recording be disseminated.

"I have no knowledge of how a recording was subsequently disseminated and I sympathise and understand why Mr Baillieu would be distressed by that publication." State Labor secretary Noah Carroll said Mr Andrews had instructed the party to issue a "full public clarification on these matters".

"The ALP reiterates its long standing statement that it has not been involved in the theft of any dictaphone nor the distribution of the contents of any dictaphone and categorically rejects any such accusation," Mr Carroll said in his statement. He said it had kept silent due to the ongoing police investigation. Since Friday Mr Andrews has dodged and denied questions about his staff involvement in the theft and distribution of the private conversation. "Any allegation that opposition staff were in any way involved in the theft or dissemination of this material is wrong and defamatory," Mr Andrews said through a spokesman on Saturday.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/victorian-alp-member-admits-accessing-stolen-age-recording-20140728-zxiet.html>

## **LABOR DID NOT LEAK TAPE VICTORIAN ACCORDING TO OPPOSITION LEADER**

AAP 28 JUL 2014

Victorian Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews says his officials did make copies of files on a journalist's lost tape recorder, but didn't leak them. Victorian Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews has again denied that Labor officials leaked the contents of a journalist's tape recorder left behind at his party's state conference. Mr Andrews on Monday admitted that a party official was handed the lost recorder and had copied all files on it "for the purpose of listening to it", but he said a decision was made to destroy all of the files.

"Every item from the tape recorder was deleted and destroyed," Mr Andrews told Fairfax Radio. "They deleted it, they destroyed the files; how it was leaked to the Liberal Party and distributed to other Liberals I do not know. "Nobody in my office had any involvement in the distribution of this material." Mr Andrews also said his official, Labor Victorian assistant secretary Kosmos Samaras, made an error by not returning the tape recorder to the journalist who owned it.

He said Mr Samaras was angry after hearing a recording of a conversation between himself and the journalist, which Mr Andrews didn't know was being recorded. "Mr Samaras has `fessed up to the fact and fully acknowledges he should have handed back the recorder," Mr Andrews said.

Mr Samaras issued a statement on Monday admitting to copying, and then deleting, the files. The tape recorder belonged to a Fairfax journalist and was left behind at the Labor Party state conference in May. An audio file from the recorder - a conversation with former Premier Ted Baillieu - was distributed to embarrass the government, however Mr Andrews has denied Labor officials played any part in it.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/07/28/labor-did-not-leak-tape-vic-opp-leader>

## **DANIEL ANDREWS BREAKS SILENCE ON TED BAILLIEU TAPE AFFAIR**

JAMES CAMPBELL HERALD SUN JULY 28, 2014. State Opposition leader Daniel Andrews says Labor didn't leak the tape. OPPOSITION Leader Daniel Andrews admits it was the "wrong call" to destroy a dictaphone and tape belonging to a Fairfax reporter, but denies the ALP leaked its contents containing audio of former premier Ted Baillieu slamming some of his colleagues.

Mr Andrews spoke publicly about the crisis for the first time today, saying that "it's a dirty mess", as ALP state secretary Noah Carroll and assistant state secretary Kosmos Samaras admitted to listening to the tape's contents. He told 3AW that he didn't know how the tape was sent to hundreds of Liberal Party members, and that he "doesn't accept" that the leak rested with the Labor Party. Mr Andrews said there was only one copy of the tape and that it was destroyed with scissors. "Nobody in my office had any involvement whatsoever in the distribution of this material," Mr Andrews said. "The copy of this, all the files ... and there are separate files ... all the copies, all the material from the tape recorder was deleted. "They deleted it, they destroyed the tape recorder, that is the fact."

He said the dictaphone had been left to "lay around" Moonee Valley racecourse during the ALP state conference in May. He said Mr Samaras would not be sacked following this morning's revelations. Mr Noah Carroll this morning issued a statement in an attempt to clear the air on the crisis that has rocked Labor's election campaign. He said ALP has, to date, maintained silence on the matter of the dictaphone out of respect for ongoing police inquiries.

"The ALP reiterates its longstanding statement that it has not been involved in the theft of any dictaphone nor the distribution of the contents of any dictaphone and categorically rejects any such accusation," he said. "I am personally unaware of any information as to who may have broadcast such content, nor am I aware of anyone who would have reason to know."

But Mr Carroll has admitted he was made aware by Mr Samaras that after the ALP state conference, Mr Samaras "discovered the contents of a dictaphone left at state conference, which included a recording of himself speaking with a journalist without his authorisation." "I had a subsequent discussion with John McLindon, (chief of staff to the Opposition Leader) about this, and requested he attend a meeting to discuss the matter which he did. Mr McLindon, Mr Samaras and myself listened to one of the files and we were informed by Mr Samaras that there were many more like them," he said.

"It was collectively agreed later that same day that all of the contents should and could not be circulated further in anyway. Subsequent to this, all files from the device were destroyed." Despite this, Liberal Party officials remain convinced that the recording was passed by a Labor figure to a rogue member of their party who, in June, emailed it to hundreds of Liberals, including MPs. Mr Samaras said in his statement: "There was no lost property section or policy in place at the conference. A number of other items were handed in and subsequently claimed.

To the best of my knowledge items in our registration area remained exposed and accessible for the full two day conference. No one claimed or has since claimed the dictaphone. The device returned to ALP Head Office in one of numerous boxes that contained the remnants of the registration desk set up. It then remained undiscovered for some time before the boxes were unpacked. "Sometime later after no claim was made for the device I took responsibility for determining what should happen to it. I listened to it to ascertain its ownership. In doing so I heard a conversation between (reporter) Farah Tomazin and myself. That conversation was a private conversation in which I was a confidential source for her.

I was shocked and angry that I had been recorded without my knowledge. Had it been put to me that I was being recorded I would have ended any such conversation. "I listened through the device to ascertain whether there were any other recordings of my private conversations. In doing so I listened to numerous senior politicians on both sides of politics and others whose private conversations which I presumed had also been recorded without their knowledge. "After some consideration I decided that given the device contained unauthorised private conversations, it was not appropriate to retain, return or disseminate the device. I destroyed it. In hindsight this was the wrong thing to do. I should have returned the device and sought an explanation for why I was being recorded. I apologise to Ms Tomazin and *The Age* for not having returned the device.



Opposition leader Daniel Andrews. "At some point prior to the destruction of the device and all of its contents, it was copied for the purposes of listening to it. The question of whether it should be distributed was considered. It was determined by myself and others who were consulted (who I understand will make their own statement) that it should not be distributed and was subsequently destroyed along with the device.

It was a decision I strongly supported as I had personal sympathy for those who had also been recorded without their knowledge. The purpose of my destruction was in part to end any possibility that a recording be disseminated. "I have no knowledge of how a recording was subsequently disseminated and I sympathise and understand why Mr Baillieu would be distressed by that publication. Since the publication I have not commented as a police investigation was in progress.



Given the events of the last two days and accusations that have been made I feel compelled to make this statement. I intend to make no further comment on the matter." A senior Liberal official told the *Herald Sun* that party authorities were confident they knew who was responsible and the guilty parties were very nervous. The official said that in the next few days, party leaders would begin having "discreet conversations" with the suspects. "We're going to keep pushing people on it," he said.

The official said that authorities had heard that the group responsible was now worried that one of their number would talk. "The anger across the party about this is white hot," he said. The Liberal officials' confidence comes as Labor figures debated how their party should handle revelations that their party was involved in the affair. "The smart thing — really the only thing to do at this point — is to make a full confession," a senior Labor figure said yesterday. "It's the only way to put the ball back in the Liberals' court."

On Friday, the *Herald Sun* put it to Mr Andrews' office that Mr McLindon had listened to the recording in the weeks before it became public. His office did not address the question. Instead, Labor responded that any allegation that he "was in any way involved in the theft or dissemination of this material is wrong and defamatory". On Sunday, the *Herald Sun* asked Mr Andrews' office if another senior member of his staff had known about the tape before it became public. His spokesman, Murray Newton, said the staff member "had no knowledge of the recording prior to it being emailed out by Liberal Party members". Then-premier Ted Baillieu was heard criticising colleagues in the now-infamous tape.

## TIMELINE

- MAY 17: A dictaphone is misplaced by *Sunday Age* reporter Farrah Tomazin during the ALP state conference at Moonee Valley racecourse. It ends up in a lost property box and is later discovered by Labor officials.
- JUNE 6: After getting legal advice, senior ALP figures decide not to release the tape.
- JUNE 24: The recording, which contains audio of former Premier Ted Baillieu slamming some of his colleagues, is sent to hundreds of Liberal Party members. Labor leader Daniel Andrews and deputy James Merlino deny Labor had anything to do with the contents of the tape being made public.
- JULY 25: Following revelations that Victoria Police had studied CCTV footage from the ALP state conference, Mr Andrews says: "This is 100 per cent an internal Liberal Party matter. The distribution of that material was conducted by the Liberal Party to the Liberal Party, and it's them that should answer to that, not anyone else."
- JULY 26: The *Herald Sun* reveals John McLindon, chief of staff to Mr Andrews, heard the recordings in early June.

■ JULY 27: Mr Baillieu breaks his silence on the scandal and calls for Mr Andrews to come clean about his office's involvement in the affair.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/daniel-andrews-breaks-silence-on-ted-baillieu-tape-affair/story-fni0fit3-1227003570366>

## FORMER PREMIER TED BAILLIEU CALLS ON LABOR LEADER DANIEL ANDREWS TO COME CLEAN ON STOLEN TAPE CRISIS

TOM MINEAR, JAMES DOWLING HERALD SUN JULY 27, 2014

TED Baillieu last night broke his silence on the leaked tapes crisis as pressure mounted on Daniel Andrews to come clean about his office's involvement in the affair. The former premier said the Opposition Leader couldn't hide from questions about how a private conversation Mr Baillieu had with a journalist was leaked. "It's not about me, this is about the way Daniel Andrews has handled his job," Mr Baillieu said.



State Labor Leader Daniel Andrews is under pressure over his handling of the controversy.



Ted Baillieu says it is time for Mr Andrews to come clean.

"There are lots of questions to be answered but the starting point is for Mr Andrews to answer the questions that have been addressed to him. He can't hide," Mr Baillieu said. The *Herald Sun* yesterday revealed Mr Andrews' chief-of-staff John McLindon listened to the recording of Mr Baillieu talking to a Fairfax reporter before it was eventually leaked by rogue Liberals.

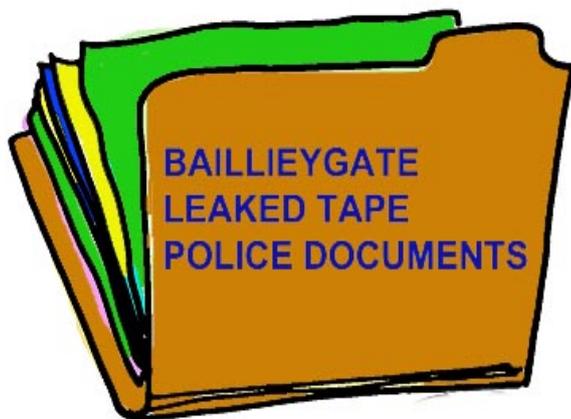
Mr Baillieu attacked colleagues — including backbencher Bernie Finn and his "crazy mates" — on the recording for their anti-abortion stance. He also criticised those who he thought had derailed Community Services Minister Mary Wooldridge's bid for the seat of Kew. But he said last night said he had no regrets about his comments. "It was a private conversation, I don't regret private conversations," he told Channel 7.

Labor has dodged specific questions about Mr McLindon's listening to the tape, only denying he was involved in obtaining the Dictaphone and disseminating it. "Any allegation that Mr McLindon was in any way involved in the theft or dissemination of this material is wrong and defamatory," Labor said on Friday. The party refused to answer questions about the tapes scandal yesterday.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy said his party was investigating if a Liberal Party member had leaked the tape and called on Labor to release legal advice it sought after finding the recording. The recording was on a Dictaphone owned by Fairfax reporter Farrah Tomazin that went missing at a state Labor conference held at Moonee Valley Racecourse in May.

ALP officials discovered the Dictaphone in a lost property box and listened to its contents. Mr Andrews' chief-of-staff was involved in discussions about whether to release the recording, but after the party received legal advice a decision was made not to make it public. But on June 24 the recording was sent via email to hundreds of Liberal MPs and party members, sparking a major political storm that put heat on Mr Baillieu, Premier Denis Napthine and *The Age* newspaper, which later apologised to the former premier for the recording. Police have obtained CCTV footage from Moonee Valley Racecourse and quizzed ALP officials about what happened to the Dictaphone.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/former-premier-ted-baillieu-calls-on-labor-leader-daniel-andrews-to-come-clean-on-stolen-tape-crisis/story-fni0fit3-1227002879887>



### WHAT WOULD LABOR DO WITH POLICE FILES?

Andrew Bolt Blog 28 July 2014 Herald/Sun. I wouldn't trust these Labor jokers with any access to any confidential information - like the information they'd access to in government: Victorian Labor assistant secretary Kosmos Samaras on Monday morning said he listened to the recording.

A recording which contained private conversations between The Sunday Age's state political editor Farrah Tomazin and several politicians including former premier Ted Baillie. As The Age can reveal, the dictaphone was handed in to lost property by security at Labor's state conference in May, before being taken back to ALP headquarters and listened to by Mr Samaras.

The private conversation between Tomazin and Mr Baillieu was then copied, and listened to by a small group of senior party operatives, including state secretary Noah Carroll and Mr Andrews' chief of staff, John McLindon. A decision was made by Mr Samaras not to release it after legal advice was provided by Slater and Gordon lawyer James Higgins. Despite the advice, and against the wishes of Mr Samaras, the recording was forwarded to a third party, before being emailed to hundreds of Liberal Party members.

**UPDATE.** You expect honest people to return lost property and not to destroy it - after exploiting it: OPPOSITION Leader Daniel Andrews admits it was the "wrong call" to destroy a dictaphone and tape belonging to a Fairfax reporter, but denies the ALP leaked its contents involving a conversation between former premier Ted Baillieu and the reporter.

Mr Andrews spoke publicly about the crisis for the first time today, saying that "it's a dirty mess" on 3AW radio, as ALP State Secretary Noah Carroll and Assistant State Secretary Kosmos Samaras admitted to listening to the tape's contents. Mr Andrews said that the dictaphone was destroyed and the tape cut with scissors.

A SENIOR Labor official in Victoria has admitted obtaining a journalist's lost dictaphone and says it reveals numerous apparently unauthorised recordings with senior politicians on both sides of politics. Labor Assistant Victorian Labor secretary Kosmos Samaras says ... he was "shocked and angry" to hear a conversation he had with the journalist had been recorded without his knowledge. "I listened to numerous senior politicians on both sides of politics and others whose private conversations which I presumed had also been recorded without their knowledge."

[http://blogs.news.com.au/heraldsun/andrewbolt/index.php/heraldsun/comments/what\\_would\\_labor\\_do\\_with\\_police\\_files/](http://blogs.news.com.au/heraldsun/andrewbolt/index.php/heraldsun/comments/what_would_labor_do_with_police_files/)



### AGE TAPES SCANDAL A MESS FOR DANIEL ANDREWS' LEADERSHIP, LABOR ELECTION CAMPAIGN

July 28, 2014 Shane Green *Associate Editor of The Age*. Andrews adamant dictaphone was not stolen. The allegation that a Fairfax journalist's dictaphone was stolen by someone in state Labor is "completely wrong" says Victorian opposition leader Daniel Andrews.

**COMMENT.** Daniel Andrews says *The Age* tape scandal is a dirty mess. On this point, he is absolutely correct: a mess for his leadership, and a mess for Labor's 2014 state election campaign. First, he deserves some credit for finally retreating from his unsustainable position of complete denial, pretending there was no case to answer. His initial response was a poor judgement call, for clearly, there was substance to the allegations that Labor officials accessed a dictaphone recording by Fairfax's Farrah Tomazin.

Daniel Andrews needs to give Victorians full and frank disclosure. Photo: Craig Abraham. He spent the weekend getting to the bottom on the saga. This resulted in the chapter and verse admission explaining how ALP state assistant secretary Kosmos Samaras listened to the tape, as did the Labor leader's chief of staff, John McLindon.

This should have been his immediate response when *The Age* published on Friday: investigate, then respond fully. It is a case of better late than never, for he needed to act to stop the damage to both Labor and his leadership. But there are some glaring gaps in what we have heard from the Labor leader — primarily, if the tape and a copy were destroyed, how did it leak to enemies of former premier Ted Baillieu in the Liberal Party? When confronted with this question on Monday, the best the Labor leader could offer was "believe me, I wish I did".

It leads to the suspicion that not everyone is being frank and honest within the ranks of the Labor Party. Somebody knows — and Victorian voters deserve to know. The leaking of the conversation in which Ted Baillieu was critical of Liberal colleagues was an immature dirty trick, the kind of politics that the community at large disdains. What should Daniel Andrews do? He should continue demand an answer to this question, for it is fundamental. It's time for those responsible to come clean, for the greater good of the party. The Labor leader has gone some of the way to stemming the bleeding, and the damage to Labor's prospects. But what we need now is a full and frank disclosure.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/age-tapes-scandal-a-mess-for-daniel-andrews-leadership-labor-election-campaign-20140728-zxjra.html#ixzz38iuxxhHb>

## **FAILED PRIME TRUST DIRECTORS FACE CORPORATE CHOP**

The Australian Financial Review. Nick Lenaghan 28 Jul 2014 PRINT EDITION: 28 Jul 2014. Former federal health minister Michael Wooldridge, who is currently on the boards of two other ASX-listed companies, has asked the Federal Court to consider waiving any fines or bans in his case. The judge considered Bill Lewski's testimony to be 'self-serving' and 'unreliable'.



The Federal Court on Monday will consider how to punish five directors of the failed retirement village group Prime Retirement and Aged Care Property Trust, including its founder Bill Lewski and its chairman, former federal health minister Michael Wooldridge. The directors – among them is another Liberal Party stalwart, Peter Clarke, who is a former Places Victoria chairman and city councillor



They breached their corporate duties when they allowed a \$33 million listing fee to be paid out of trust funds to Mr Lewski after Prime went public in 2007. Photo: Luis Ascui. Justice Bernard Murphy has already found each of the five directors "failed to act with undivided loyalty solely in the interests of the members" of the property trust when they waved through the \$33 million fee. That ruling was handed down in December last year.

On Monday, nearing on four years since the \$400 million trust went under, the five directors face the prospect of lengthy corporate bans and fines of up to \$200,000. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission wants Mr Lewski banned for "the longest period" of disqualification, which is 25 years or more, according to court documents.

Dr Wooldridge, who is currently on the boards of two other ASX-listed companies, has asked the Federal Court to consider waiving any fines or bans in his case. "Unquestionably, in addition to the vast contributions Dr Wooldridge has made to Australian society in general, he has made profound contributions to the company boards he has and does sit on and will do so in the future, if he is not disqualified as a director," his submission said. In his plea for leniency, Dr Wooldridge draws heavily on the Centro Properties Group case, where the Federal Court took into account the damage that case did to the reputations of the Centro directors.

"Dr Wooldridge has been the subject of substantial and widespread negative publicity," his submission said. "The reputational damage Dr Wooldridge has suffered, which is probably irreparable, cannot be understated." Justice Murphy has already given a scathing assessments of the directors' evidence over allowing a \$33 million fee be paid to Mr Lewski, who controlled the trust's responsible entity. Mr Lewski's evidence was "implausible", as well as "self-serving and designed to assist his defence", the judge said. "I reached an unfavourable view of his credibility and I consider his evidence to be quite unreliable."

Dr Wooldridge was the most reliable witness among the five defendants and at least "endeavoured to give a truthful account". Even so, the former health minister's testimony was "implausible and inconsistent", the judge found. A similar criticism was levelled at Mr Clarke. "I reached an unfavourable view of his credibility," the judge said. In response to that damning finding, Mr Clarke is seeking to re-testify, after acknowledging that some of his previous evidence was "untrue", according to an ASIC submission. "He does this in the hope he will rehabilitate his character," the corporate watchdog said.

For his part, Mr Lewski has argued that the fact he "obviously sought payment of the fees does not make his contraventions more serious" than the other directors. Thousands of investors lost as much as \$500 million in the Prime collapse. Prime's receiver, KordaMentha, is pursuing a separate case to recover the \$33 million fee in the Victorian Supreme Court.



### **PRIME TRUST DIRECTOR PETER CLARKE GAVE FALSE EVIDENCE.**

July 28, 2014 Ben Butler and Vanessa Desloires. Prime Trust directors (from left) Peter Clarke, Michael Wooldridge and Bill Lewski. *Photo: Uis Ascui.* Liberal Party powerbroker Peter Clarke has admitted giving untrue evidence under oath during a lawsuit that found he and others who controlled \$500 million retirement village flop Prime Trust breached their duties, a court has heard.

As Mr Clarke and other directors of the company that ran Prime Trust prepared to face the Federal Court on Monday, it also emerged the Australian Securities and Investments Commission wants the group's founder, Bill Lewski, banned for life from running a company. In other submissions to the court by directors of Prime Trust's responsible entity, Australian Property Custodian Holdings, Howard-era health minister Michael Wooldridge begged to be spared any penalty because of his "vast" and "profound" contributions to public life and the company boards on which he has served.

Mr Lewski, who received a \$33 million fee at the centre of the Federal Court case, told the court his was "a serious but not worst-case contravention". The Federal Court is to begin hearing arguments on Monday as to what penalties - bans and fines of up to \$200,000 - it should impose on Mr Clarke, Dr Wooldridge, Mr Lewski, Mark Butler and Kim Jaques, who were directors of APCH in the lead-up to its collapse in 2010.

In December, Justice Bernard Murphy found that the five businessmen breached their duties as directors of APCH by approving Mr Lewski's \$33 million fee, paid in 2007 when Prime Trust listed on the ASX, at the expense of Prime Trust unitholders. Separately, Mr Lewski, and Prime Trust's lawyers and advisers, face a \$100 million lawsuit over a second fee, of \$60 million, the trust paid to Mr Lewski for retirement village management rights. Mr Clarke, a former City of Melbourne councillor, was chairman of the state's urban development authority, Places Victoria, until he was forced to stand down in August 2012 over the Prime Trust scandal, and is a key ally of former Victorian premier Ted Baillieu. "He [Mr Clarke] acknowledges that part of the evidence he gave at trial was untrue and seeks to explain it," ASIC said in a submission to the court.

"He does this in the hope that he will rehabilitate his character, having regard to the unfavourable view of his credibility expressed in the liability reasons." Justice Murphy found Mr Clarke's evidence about a crucial board meeting in 2006 "sometimes implausible and inconsistent" with company documents and the evidence of other directors. ASIC said Mr Clarke wanted to expand on the explanation he gave the court for why he had given evidence he was at the meeting even though its minutes showed he was not. It said Mr Clarke's "woefully inadequate" explanation for the discrepancy consisted of an acknowledgment he had not checked the facts in his original affidavit, even though he "could easily have, and should have, done so". "In those circumstances the new evidence can be accorded little weight," ASIC said.

The Federal Court has provided BusinessDay with copies of ASIC's response to Mr Clarke, together with submissions from Mr Lewski, Dr Wooldridge and Mr Butler. However, it has not provided Mr Clarke's submission, and he could not be reached on Sunday. Dr Wooldridge drew on character evidence from Monash University vice-chancellor Ed Byrne to argue he had been "superb" as chairman of Neurosciences Australia. Dr Wooldridge is also a director of two ASX-listed companies - Australian Pharmaceutical Industries and Vision Eye Institute. "Unquestionably, in addition to the vast contributions Dr Wooldridge has made to Australian society in general, he has made profound contributions to the company boards he has and does sit on and will do so in the future, if he is not disqualified as a director,"

Dr Wooldridge said in his submission. He said the damage to his reputation was already "probably irreparable" and "cannot be understated". Mr Lewski rejected allegations by ASIC of "concocting a story" and using his position of influence to "orchestrate the wrongful conduct". "The imposition of the 'longest' period of disqualification in circumstances of no dishonesty, no conscious wrongdoing and no satisfactory proof that Mr Lewski's actions alone caused the alleged \$33 million loss, is simply not open," he told the court. Mr Butler said he accepted "that his contraventions of the act as found are serious and he has expressed remorse and contrition for them". He said he should either be relieved from liability or serve only a short ban as a company director.

Investor Steve O'Reilly of the Prime Trust Action Group called for a lifetime ban on Mr Lewski "as the architect and ringleader" of the failed venture. "We're very pleased to hear that ASIC is recommending to the court that a lifetime ban would be appropriate," he said. Mr O'Reilly said the collapse of Prime Trust had caused hardship including relationship breakdowns and the loss of family homes. "The saddest part of all is that we've had two people commit suicide as a result of the collapse of this trust," he said

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/prime-trust-director-peter-clarke-gave-false-evidence-20140727-3cnkx.html#ixzz38ivqjV00>

## **FORMER MINISTER FACING LONG BAN**

*SARAH DANCKERT* Property Reporter Melbourne The Australian July 28, 2014

FORMER federal health minister Michael Wooldridge and disgraced businessman Bill Lewski face being banned as company directors over their role in the \$500 million collapse of Prime Trust, while former Liberal Party official Peter Clarke has admitted lying to a court over the board's decision to allow Mr Lewski to be paid a \$33m fee from company funds. Mr Clarke's explosive admission that he gave false evidence in the Australian Securities & Investments Commission civil trial over the collapse of the \$560m company was revealed in a submission to the court made by the corporate regulator.

He is now seeking to correct the record and provide the court with further information this week about events leading up to the collapse. Mr Lewski could face a lifetime ban over his role in the group's collapse, according to court documents. The length of the possible bans the other directors could incur remains at the discretion of the court, though documents show there are expectations Dr Wooldridge and his fellow directors could be banned for up to 10 years.

Dr Wooldridge, Mr Lewski, Mr Clarke and fellow directors Kim Jaques and Mark Butler face a penalty hearing this week over the collapse. The hearing comes after judge Bernard Murphy found the directors breached company laws when they paid Mr Lewski a \$33m listing fee upon the group's 2007 float on the Australian Securities Exchange. The \$560m trust collapsed in 2010 affecting about 8000 investors. Mr Lewski and his fellow directors face further legal action over the board granting Mr Lewski management rights for the trust's aged care homes for nothing. Mr Lewski later sold the rights to Babcock & Brown for \$60m. Prime Trust Action Group head Steve O'Reilly said he was pleased Mr Lewski could be banned permanently from being a company director.

In submissions to the court ahead of the penalty hearing, lawyers for Mr Lewski implored the court not to issue the harshest penalty possible for non-criminal breaches of the Corporations Act. "The penalties imposed upon Lewski should be on a par with those of the remaining directors," the lawyers said. Mr Lewski believes he should receive no penalty for receiving the listing fee, according to his submission. Dr Wooldridge is also seeking to be exonerated from any liability, with his legal team saying he acted "without moral turpitude". Lawyers for the former Howard government minister said he had learned a valuable lesson from his involvement in the collapse of Prime Trust. Mr Jaques and Mr Butler have also asked to be exonerated by the court.

<https://plus.google.com/109007774161499144775>

## **VICTORIAN LIBERALS TO SPURN TONY ABBOTT IN NOVEMBER POLL**

*JOHN FERGUSON* Victorian Political Editor The Australian July 28, 2014

THE Victorian Liberal Party has given up hope of Tony Abbott's popularity improving in the nation's second-biggest state, guaranteeing a minor role for the Prime Minister in the November 29 state election. And senior Liberals are calling for a senior Victorian member of the frontbench to become a defacto spokesman for the commonwealth in the southern capital.

While the Napthine government has dumped its strategy of publicly confronting Tony Abbott over his budget cuts, senior Liberals have ruled out any major role for Mr Abbott during the state campaign. Senior Liberals have revealed that the state government will continue to embrace Canberra on big-spending initiatives, but distance itself from the unpopular budget measures that have dented Mr Abbott's popularity.

Several senior Victorian Liberals have told *The Australian* that Mr Abbott, as a conservative NSW Prime Minister, was unlikely to gain traction in Victoria, despite his best efforts to campaign vigorously in the state before the 2013 federal election. There is a strong view among many Liberals the Abbott government is suffering in Victoria because it lacks a senior, credible minister who has the ability and portfolio to talk widely across government issues. A former federal frontbencher said the absence of a strong personality like former Treasurer Peter Costello appeared to be harming the Abbott government. "Tony is unpopular, and there are complicated reasons for that, but we don't have anyone who can fill Peter's shoes," the former minister said.

The issue of Mr Abbott's unpopularity in Victoria is gaining traction in the Liberal Party as the organisation focuses its attention on the November 29 election. Several senior party figures have told *The Australian* that there is no animosity towards Mr Abbott and that Premier Denis Napthine wants to maintain a strong relationship with the Prime Minister. However, there was an acceptance that Mr Abbott would not be a campaigning positive for the government. "The Prime Minister will be a part of the campaign, but he won't be a big part of the campaign," a senior government source said.

"There isn't going to be a fight or anything and he will be around, but the focus will be on Denis and the team." The angst over Mr Abbott's standing in Victoria comes despite a marathon pre-election effort to appeal to the Melbourne constituency. The two most senior Victorian ministers are Social Services Minister Kevin Andrews and Trade and Investment Minister Andrew Robb. While Mr Robb is frequently overseas, Mr Andrews is often targeted by the left-wing media over his conservative social values.

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