



Geoff Shaw the man who almost brought the Victorian government to its knees

JUNE 04, 2014. Conservative: Geoff Shaw does not support gay marriage or abortion. Picture: Norm Oorloff Source: News Limited

GEOFF Shaw is not afraid of a punch-up, allegedly taunted his colleagues with a masturbation gesture and misused parliamentary benefits. These are some of the controversies surrounding the man who almost brought the Victorian government to its knees.

GUILTY OF ASSAULT. Before he was elected as a state MP, Geoff Shaw worked as a bouncer at 21st Century nightclub in Frankston. In 1992 he was found guilty of unlawful assault after leaving a man with broken ribs and cuts. The victim's wife said [she saw her husband being thrown down two flights of stairs](#). "They were beating the living daylights out of him," she said. "Geoff Shaw picked me up and threw me in the gutter." While the magistrate decided Mr Shaw was guilty, he ordered that no conviction be recorded. Mr Shaw paid costs of \$400, contributed \$500 to a court fund and was placed on a \$2000 bond for 12 months.

His victim said Mr Shaw should have had a conviction recorded, but "I guess everybody makes mistakes".



Everyone makes mistakes: The club where Geoff Shaw once worked. Source: News Limited.

DEEPLY RELIGIOUS AND CONSERVATIVE. During his first speech in parliament, Mr Shaw snubbed the traditional "welcome to country" that respects the Aboriginal people as traditional custodians of the land. Instead he acknowledged the original owner as: "God, the Creator, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the Bible".

In 2011 Mr Shaw, who is a member of a Pentecostal church, was forced to apologise for comments he made to a gay constituent likening homosexuality to child molestation and dangerous driving. "What if I loved driving 150km per hour in residential areas?" [he wrote to a gay man who objected to religious organisations being able to discriminate on grounds of sexuality and gender](#).

"What if there was a convicted sex offender who stated that, or a child molester? Can they still do what they want? Under your statement the answer is yes. What if one wanted to get drunk, take drugs, steal and murder? What if one loved this? Can they also do what they want without thinking that they can't?" This year he planned to push for reform abortion laws

by [introducing into parliament a bill for six radical changes](#) including provisions for doctors to provide pain relief for foetuses and resuscitate babies who survived abortion attempts.

<http://www.news.com.au/national/geoff-shaw-the-man-who-almost-brought-the-victorian-government-to-its-knees/story-fncynjr2-1226942876586>



SCUFFLE WITH TAXI DRIVERS. Four taxi drivers were [charged over an alleged attack on Mr Shaw](#) late last year. The cabbies were rallying against the government's changes to the taxi licensing system when they say they were heckled by Mr Shaw as he walked into parliament. This turned into a scuffle on the steps of parliament house.

Mr Shaw was not charged over the incident, but has been [accused of provoking the attack](#). The court case is continuing with the cabbies saying they plan to contest the charges.

Video stills of the moment Frankston MP Geoff Shaw was involved in a brawl with taxi protesters. Source: Supplied



ACCUSED OF SIMULATING MASTURBATION IN PARLIAMENT. Innocent: Denied he made masturbation gestures in parliament. Picture: Ian Currie Source: News Corp Australia

Footage appeared to back a claim from five Labor MPs that Mr Shaw [made a rude gesture in parliament and labelled them "wankers" across the chamber](#). Mr Shaw denies this and said he was pointing and saying "whackers". Then premier Ted Baillieu said the video was inconclusive.



COMPLICATED LOVE LIFE. In 2012 he admitted he was wrong to put up a sign on a busy road pleading his ex-wife to forgive him. The year before police were called to their home over a domestic dispute.

The sign was [repeatedly put up on a busy road near his former family home saying](#): "Please forgive me, I love you Sally: Psalm 42:1".

A billboard being driven around Frankston drawing attention to criminal charges Mr Shaw faced over misuse of his government credit card and card which were later dropped. Source: News Limited

MISUSE OF PARLIAMENTARY BENEFITS. This year Mr Shaw was ordered to repay \$6838 after the [Victorian Ombudsman found he had misused his taxpayer-funded car and fuel card.](#)

Mr Shaw clocked up 8000km on his taxpayer-funded vehicle, which was used to make delivery runs for his hardware business as far as Albury, Sale and Adelaide. His parliamentary logbook was incorrectly filled out to indicate his parliamentary car was being used for private use, when it was actually being used for business.

At least \$1350 in fuel was also used for business and personal use. Mr Shaw denied he knew his car was being used for commercial purposes and the privileges committee stopped short of recommending that he be censured, which could have led to a suspension from parliament, because it was unable to say that Mr Shaw had been “wilful in contravening the code of conduct”. Fraud charges were later dropped.

Former Premier Ted Ballieu [ordered the investigation in 2012 following a Herald Sun report.](#) In the same year Mr Shaw faced an Australian Tax office investigation amid claims he short-changed an employee and underpaid debts to mum and dad investors who lost hundreds of thousands of dollars through his accounting and financial counselling business. Mr Shaw said he always planned to pay investors but had spread payments out to cope with cashflow issues. Also in 2012 it was revealed he failed to properly disclose interests in a private company, breaching the parliament’s register of interests laws.



Independent: Geoff Shaw left the Liberal Party last year. Picture: Norm Oorloff Source: News Limited

HAILED A HERO, LEFT TRAIL OF CARNAGE FOR LIBERAL PARTY. A 6.8 per cent swing in his favour in 2010 gave Mr Shaw his Frankston seat, which had been held since 2002 by the ALP’s Alistair Harkness. The Liberal Party under Ted Baillieu held government by a single seat and the former premier continued to back the MP despite several controversies.

However, when he was found guilty of misusing his car and fuel card, Mr Shaw resigned from the parliamentary Liberal Party in March, 2013 and then the party itself to avoid being expelled. He has since voted as an independent. Mr Baillieu stepped aside from the leadership when Mr Shaw’s vote was in doubt, and so did former speaker Ken Smith, who Mr Shaw ridiculed for having lost control of the Legislative Assembly. The [former speaker is now](#)

[threatening to vote with Labor](#) to overturn a recommendation of the privileges committee that Mr Shaw only be fined, and not censured, for misusing his car and fuel card.

This has led to the current crisis, with Mr Shaw reportedly furious that current Premier Dennis Napthine has not stopped the former speaker from voting with Labor, which could potentially lead to him being suspended or expelled. Mr Shaw declared that he would back any Labor no-confidence motion against the coalition government but Labor has rejected his support. Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews [said today he'd instead push for Mr Shaw to be expelled from parliament](#).

<http://www.news.com.au/national/geoff-shaw-the-man-who-almost-brought-the-victorian-government-to-its-knees/story-fncynjr2-1226942876586>

No good options for Napthine in Shaw crisis

4 JUNE 2014 AUSYTRALAIN FINANCIAL REVIEW MATHEW DUNCKLEY



Without Geoff Shaw's support on the floor of the parliament, the government can muster only 43 votes - the same as Labor. **Photo: Andrew Wylie.** Geoff Shaw might finally have overplayed his hand. Having played starring roles in the departure of a Premier, a Speaker and a fair bit of political convention, the independent member for Frankston has used his fulcrum position as the swing vote in the Victorian Legislative Assembly to devastating effect in the 15 months since he quit the Liberal Party.

The fuse was lit late last week. Before Friday, all the signs were the Coalition government would bear the pain of being accused of pandering to Shaw in the fallout of a pretty soft privileges committee report into the flagrant misuse of his parliamentary vehicle. It would go through the motions, ask Shaw to repay some money and get on with something else. But then Ken Smith – the Speaker chopped down at Shaw's hand – indicated he might not play ball. Smith threatened to cross the floor on a vote that could see Shaw booted from parliament.

Some put this down to the men's hatred of one another. Shaw, though, seems to think it is part of a Liberal conspiracy. Quite why a minority government would seek a by-election that would potentially tip it from office is not unclear. Whatever the case, Shaw saw red. He demanded and did not receive Napthine's guarantee of protection from further parliamentary sanction. In an insight into his growing delusion about his own power, Shaw also apparently attempted to dictate a judicial appointment. Napthine had enough, and told him "no". Shaw then went on radio and did what had been long speculated he might do. He said he would support a vote of no confidence in the government. So where does that lead?

Without Shaw's support on the floor of the parliament, the government can muster only 43 votes. If Shaw votes with Labor, that will total 44. The arithmetic might seem straight-forward but the process is not. There are truck-size holes in the words in the state's constitution about how to call an early election outside the set four-year terms. This is no doubt part of the reason why Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews wants to meet the state's governor, Alex Chernov, with Napthine. He wants a ruling on how the governor, a former Appeal Court judge, sees the letter of the law.

If an election is possible, senior Labor figures suggest they have no compunction about the prospect of voting with the "tainted" (to borrow a term from Tony Abbott) Shaw to bring down a government and force an early poll. There is a complicated process to be followed that theoretically could take weeks to work through, but it could also happen quickly if Labor and Shaw work together to vote up changes to the working of the parliament. Do Labor want an election? You bet. Labor leads in most published polls and has done for some time. The angst over the federal budget has plunged the federal Coalition's standing in Victoria into polar depths.

Remember the government holds only one more seat than Labor at the starting line for any campaign. The earliest date tipped for an election is late July. Another carrot for Labor in an early poll is it means the government's list of contracts to sign before the November election is suddenly up for contest. Number one on that list is the \$8 billion East West Link's first stage, which Labor opposes strongly but was likely to be snookered on, with contracts due for signing ahead of the election. Another political path would be to take Ken Smith up on his offer, vote Shaw out of parliament, fight a byelection and enjoy months of chaos in parliament and campaigning on the streets.

On the Coalition side, Napthine faces several bad options. He can lambast Andrews for "accepting" a "tainted" vote – but this opens him to allegations of hypocrisy, given his government has depended on Shaw's vote to pass bills. There are questions over assertions from conservatives that Andrews has promised explicitly never to "accept" Shaw's vote. Napthine could also roll with the opposition towards a poll, but the Coalition had been banking on getting some kind of clear air in the months ahead to improve its polling. The truth is the Premier is not the one choosing the options. It is others who hold his fate in his hands. And what of Shaw? Well one thing that might be on his mind is that if he loses his seat at a general election he gets six months pay; if he is turfed out under a censure motion he will not.

http://www.afr.com/p/national/no_good_options_for_napthine_in_FQAGovaj5uZW9N9nOuF3mJ